St. Patrick's Day

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St Patrick's Day is celebrated March 17, the feast day of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. St Patrick becomes known as the Apostle of Irish. His name is Latin us Patriceus.

When Patrick was 16-years-old, pirates captured him during a raid and sold him as a slave in Ireland. He escaped after six years of slavery and returned to France where he studied for the priesthood. As a result of his experience in Ireland, Patrick became driven by the idea of converting the Irish to Christianity. He returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary in 432 AD.

Patrick began his work in Northern and Western Ireland, where no one practice Christianity. He gained the trust and friendship of several tribal leaders and soon made many converts. Patrick is said to have founded more than 300 churches and baptized more than 120,000 people.

Many stories about Patrick are based upon legend. One of the best known tales tells how he charmed the snakes of Ireland into the sea so they would drown. According to another legend, Patrick used a three-leaf shamrock to illustrate the idea of trinity to explain the holy trinity. (The idea that God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one) Many people believe the shamrock came to be the traditional symbol of Ireland as a result of this legend.

In Ireland today, St Patrick's Day is primarily a religious holiday. People honor this day by attending special religious services, enjoying family and community gatherings and wearing the shamrock.

It is also celebrated outside of Ireland in cities with a large number of people of Irish descent. In the United States, St. Patrick's Day is primarily a non-religious holiday. Many people wear green, hold parties and march in parades.

The first St. Patrick's celebration in the United States was held in Boston in 1737. Today more than 100 cities hold parades. The largest St. Patrick's Day parade today is held in New York City.