

Theme 5: St Brigid and the Spring

1: St Brigidp. 138

2: God cares for us in springp. 143

FROM THE CURRICULUM

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland (2015)

During this theme of work, the children will engage again with the following knowledge and concepts:

Christian Faith

Creation

- God cares for all creation

Mystery of the Church

- The saints: God's special friends who are part of the family of the Church in heaven: St Patrick, St Brigid, St Columba (Columcille)

Liturgy and Prayer

Liturgical Year

- Although we worship only God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we can also pray to Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, and to the other saints, asking them to pray for us

FROM THE CORE SYLLABUS FOR RE

Department of Education, Northern Ireland (2007)

Learning Objective 1

The Revelation of God

B. God's care for Creation

- God is the Creator of all things
- Creation is good
- God cares for the universe, people and animals

Learning Objective 2

The Christian Church

A. Belonging

- We can learn from the lives of people who show us how to belong, share and care for each other

Introduction

The ongoing creative action of God is evident in the new life and growth of springtime. The changing seasons speak to us of the care and providence of God, the Creator, who sustains all life. Children who live in the countryside will have ample opportunity to notice the new green leaves, the flowers, and the work of farmers. Even in urban settings, children will gradually notice changes in the weather, flowers blooming in gardens and the longer, brighter days.

It is in this context that we introduce the children to St Brigid who, together with St Patrick and St Columcille, is one of the three patron saints of Ireland. St Brigid's feast day is celebrated on 1 February, the day on which Irish people traditionally mark the first day of spring. St Brigid is said to have been born at Faughart, County Louth, in the middle of the fifth century. She eventually settled in County Kildare, where she built a church and convent. Brigid is revered for many things, including her care for those who were sick and poor.

In this theme we give the children opportunities to become aware of the new life that emerges in the natural world during the springtime and to see it as a sign of God's continuing care for creation. We also introduce them to one of the many stories associated with St Brigid.

TEACHER REFLECTION

*No matter how long the winter,
spring is sure to follow.*

Proverb



PRAYER SPACE

Place the following items in your prayer space as you begin this theme:

- Green cloth (Ordinary Time)
- Bible, open at Psalm 104
- Candle
- Cross or crucifix
- Holy water

As the theme progresses, the following items should be added to the prayer space:

1: St Brigid

- Poster 7: St Brigid
- The children's 'Kindness' artwork (*Let's Live Art Activity*)

2: God cares for us in spring

- The children's 'spring trees' (*Let's Learn Art Activity*)



TEACHER NOTES

Faith Words

saint

Learning Through Play

Help the children to role play scenarios in which they can be kind and generous, like St Brigid was, such as by sharing their lunch, colouring materials, toys and so on.

Ecumenical link

Did you know?

The Church of Ireland (Anglican Communion in Ireland) recognises Brigid as an exceptional Christian or saint and celebrates St Brigid's life. However, members of the Church of Ireland generally do not pray *to* the saints but *with* the saints to God.

Differentiation

Children with SEN could create a wall-frieze/poster on the theme of spring by tearing/cutting pictures related to spring from newspapers or magazines.

1: St Brigid

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

It is believed that St Brigid was born near Faughart in County Louth around the year AD 454. From an early age she was aware of the needs of others and felt compelled to respond to them. Many legends about her kindness are still told today. It is this aspect of the life of St Brigid that we focus on in *Grow in Love* for Senior Infants/P2. Other stories about Brigid will be told as the series progresses.

People still visit St Brigid's Well and Shrine near Faughart today. Work in her name is carried on by the Brigidine Sisters, a religious congregation founded in Kildare in 1807. As well as their mission in Ireland, the sisters also continue to minister in the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.

This week we want the children to be inspired by the kindness of St Brigid, and to be encouraged to act in the same way.

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- *Understanding:*
 - » Decide on one way in which they can be kind like St Brigid, and illustrate this
 - » Explore the story of St Brigid
- *Communicating and Participating:*
 - » Tell the story of St Brigid in their own words, according to their own ability
 - » Discuss St Brigid's characteristics
 - » Sing a song in honour of St Brigid

FAITH FORMATION GOALS

- That the children would also:
- Desire to do acts of kindness, following the example of St Brigid

YOU WILL NEED

- The template on p. 153 photocopied for each child (*Let's Live Art Activity*)

AT A GLANCE

Let's Look

POEM

- 'Kindness'

PRAYER

Let's Learn

STORY

- 'St Brigid'

CHATTING

- About Spring

VIDEO

- St Brigid

SONG

- 'We Sing a Song to Brigid'

CHILDREN'S BOOK

- In School: p. 30
- At Home: p. 31

Let's Live

ART ACTIVITY

- 'I Can Be Kind Like St Brigid by ...'

PRAYER

Let's Look ...

POEM

'Kindness'

Begin by telling the children about an act of kindness that you once witnessed. For example, perhaps a woman dropped her purse on the footpath. She never noticed that it had fallen and she kept walking on towards her car. Then a child picked up the purse, followed the woman and returned it to her. Then chat with the children about kindness using these or similar questions:

- Can you remember a time recently when someone was kind to you? Tell us about it. What did the person do? Why did they do it? How did it make you feel?
- Was there a time when you were kind to someone else? Tell us about that too: what did you do? Why did you do it? How did you feel about it?
- Is it ever difficult to be kind? Why? Do you find it difficult to be kind to some people? Why?

Then read the poem 'Kindness'. The children can repeat each line after you. Use the suggested actions as appropriate.

Kindness

Kind hands (*Wave hands*)
Kind feet (*Stamp feet*)
Kind words (*Point to mouth*)
That's sweet. (*Thumbs up*)

Kind mind (*Point to head*)
Kind heart (*Hands over heart*)
Kind ears (*Hands over ears*)
That's smart. (*Thumbs up*)

I like (*Nod*)
When you (*Point to another*)
Are kind (*Thumbs up*)
To me. (*Point to self*)

And I'll (*Point to self*)
Be kind (*Thumbs up*)
Right back (*Point to another*)
You'll see. (*Nod*)

Teacher Tip:

This poem works best as a chant, which the children repeat after you.

PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

T: When we are kind to others, we share the love of God with them. Today let's pray for people who are kind to us.

Close your eyes for a moment. (*Pause*)

Think about something kind that someone did for you. (*Pause*)

Think of the person who did it. Maybe it was your mammy or daddy, or maybe it was one of your friends. (*Pause*)

Now with your inside voice ask God to bless that person. (*Pause*)

Open your eyes. Together let's ask God to bless those who are kind to us.

T: For the people who share their things with us let's say, 'God bless them'.

C: God bless them.

T: For our teachers who help us to learn let's say, 'God bless them'.

C: God bless them.

T: For our friends who make us laugh let's say, 'God bless them'.

C: God bless them.

T: For our families who take care of us let's say, 'God bless them'.

C: God bless them.

Sign of the Cross

Let's Learn ...

STORY

'St Brigid'

Begin by saying the poem 'Kindness' with the children. Then tell the children that you know a story about a woman who was very kind. This woman lived long, long ago, but we still remember

her in a special way on 1 February every year. Her name is Brigid and she is a saint. Assess children's prior knowledge about the saints. Then read the story 'St Brigid'.

TEACHER NOTE: In *Grow in Love Junior Infants/P1*, the children learned that saints are people who try to be good and generous and loving, just like God created people to be. Saints are God's special friends who live with him in heaven. In *Grow in Love for Junior Infants/P1*, the children learned the stories of St Francis and St Patrick.



Teacher Tip: Children will learn other aspects of the story of 'St Brigid' as the *Grow in Love* series progresses.

'St Brigid'



Long, long ago, there lived a woman called Brigid. Brigid was born in Ireland, in a place called County Louth. She was a very good and kind

person. She was especially good and kind to people who were poor. She wanted to share love with everyone that she met, but especially with people who were poor.

One day Brigid set out on a long journey. After a little while she stopped to rest by the side of the road. A rich woman was going by and she saw Brigid. This woman had heard about Brigid and she wanted to give her something. She asked her servants to run to her orchard and to fill a basket of delicious apples for Brigid.

'Oh, thank you!' said Brigid. 'You are so kind. These apples will certainly keep me from being hungry on my journey.'

The woman hadn't even left when a group of people who were very poor came by. They saw Brigid's basket of apples.

'Please give us an apple,' one of them said. 'We have not eaten for days and days, and we are so hungry.'



Brigid felt very sorry for the people. They looked very tired and very hungry. 'Here,' she said giving them the basket. 'Take all of them. You need

these much more than I do. You should have the apples.'

The rich woman who had given Brigid the apples heard what Brigid said. 'Hey!' she shouted. 'I brought those apples for you, not for them!'

Brigid looked at the woman, smiled, and said, 'What is mine is theirs.' Brigid explained to the woman that she was doing what God wanted her to do. God wants us to be good and kind and generous to everyone, especially those who are in need.

The people were very grateful to Brigid. They realised right away that she must be a very special person indeed.

After reading the story, check for understanding using questions such as 'Why did the rich woman give Brigid the apples?' Then dig deeper using these or similar questions:

- Why do you think Brigid gave the people the apples?
- How do you think the rich woman felt when she saw Brigid give them away? Why do you think

she felt like this? I wonder ... why do you think she didn't share with the other people herself?

- Earlier this year, we learned about another woman who wanted to help people who were poor. Tell us what you can remember about Mother Teresa. In what way was she like St Brigid?

Then help the children to learn this prayer to St Brigid. Explain that we can ask St Brigid to help us to be kind and loving, just like she was.

St Brigid of Ireland
 Help us, we pray,
 To be kind and loving
 In our work and play.

Teacher Tip:
 You can pray this prayer throughout the week.

CHATTING

About Spring

Remind the children again that we remember Brigid in a special way on 1 February each year. Tell the children that 1 February is also a special day because it is the first day of spring. Chat with the children about spring using these or similar questions:

- Can you remember what happened to the leaves on the trees in autumn? Do you know what will happen to them in springtime?
- During the summer, there were lots of flowers growing outdoors. Are there flowers growing at the moment? Why? What do you think happens to them in spring?
- What words would you use to describe the weather at the moment? Do you think it will get warmer or colder from now on? Why? What type of weather do you prefer: hot or cold? Why?

Teacher Tip:
 The second lesson in this theme, 'God cares for us in spring' deals with this topic in greater detail.

VIDEO

St Brigid

Watch this video which introduces children to the story of St Brigid.



SONG

'We Sing a Song to Brigid'

Help the children to recall the story of St Brigid using Poster 7. Then introduce the song, 'We Sing a Song to Brigid' (Track 11, p. 151) to the children, and chat to them about the lyrics. You can use this song throughout this week and next.



Prayer Space:
 Display Poster 7 in the prayer space.

CHILDREN'S BOOK

In School

P. 30: This week the children have been learning about St Brigid. On this page they choose from a list of words and mark the words that describe St Brigid (for example, by colouring or underlining them). They can also colour the picture.



At Home

P. 31: Families are invited to read the story of St Brigid with their children. They are also invited to chat about how they can be kind to others, and to pray to St Brigid together.



Let's Live ...

WHAT HAVE YOU TAUGHT?

St Brigid is known throughout Ireland as a woman of kindness and generosity. She helped those who were poor and those who were sick, because she realised that God has a special love for these people.

ART ACTIVITY

Teacher Tip:

Photocopy the template on p. 152 for each child in advance.

Prayer Space:

Display the children's artwork near the prayer space using the caption 'We can be kind like St Brigid'.

'I Can Be Kind Like St Brigid by ...'

Ask the children what words they would use to describe St Brigid. When they come up with the word 'kind' say the poem 'Kindness' together. Ask the children if they think they would like to be kind like St Brigid. Then ask them to think about one way in which they could do just that. This might be by helping at home, sharing at school, or by being friendly to people in their local area. Then distribute a template to each child, and ask them to draw a picture of the ways in which they can be kind. Then, using the Artist's Chair technique, invite some children to show the class their picture and to tell you about how they can be kind like St Brigid.



PRAYER

Sign of the Cross

T: St Brigid was very close to God. She was kind to people, especially those who needed help. St Brigid now lives with God in heaven. We can ask saints like St Brigid to pray for us, and to help us to be good and generous and loving, just like they were. Together, let's say 'Pray for us' after the name of each saint.

T: St Brigid ...

C: Pray for us.

T: St Francis ...

C: Pray for us.

T: St Patrick ...

C: Pray for us.

(Add to this litany the names of any saints that the children may know, such as the saints after whom their school/church is named)

T: Loving God,

Help us to be kind like the saints were,
so that we too grow close to you. Amen.

Together, let's say our prayer to St Brigid:

All: St Brigid of Ireland,

Help us, we pray,
To be kind and loving
In our work and play.

Sign of the Cross