



4: St Brigid (1 February)

This one-week lesson should be undertaken during the week in which St Brigid's Day is celebrated

FROM THE CURRICULUM

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

During this theme of work, the children will engage with the following knowledge and concepts from Level 2:

CHRISTIAN FAITH

Mystery of the Church

- The Church is a community of people gathered together to hear God's Word and live out his Gospel commands
- Saints are those who love God and are in heaven with God after death. The Church honours them with a feast day

- Saints are a great example of how to live and Christians ask their help in prayer

LITURGY AND PRAYER

Prayer: Additional Prayers

- Simple versions of psalms praising God for Creation (e.g. Ps 148, Ps 150)

PRAYER SPACE

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

- Green cloth (Ordinary Time)
- Bible
- Candle
- St Brigid's Cross
- Holy water
- Rosary beads

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

- St Brigid's Cloak (*Let's Live Art Activity*)



BEFORE YOU BEGIN

It is believed that St Brigid was born near Faughart in County Louth around the year AD 454, but she is more closely associated with County Kildare, where she established, and was abbess of, the abbey in Kildare town. Under Brigid's leadership, Kildare became a centre of pilgrimage for bishops, priests and chieftains, as well as a place of refuge for those who were poor and sick.

In *Grow in Love* for Senior Infants/P1, children were introduced to St Brigid as a woman who

was aware of the needs of others and who felt compelled to respond to them. In this programme, we explore the story of how St Brigid came to acquire land on which she built her church and abbey in Kildare. This well-known and well-loved story points to Brigid's trust in God and her persistence and determination to spread the Gospel message. Other stories about St Brigid will be told as the *Grow in Love* series progresses.

OBJECTIVES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The children should be enabled to:

- *Understanding:*
 - » Name 1 February as the Feast Day of St Brigid, and identify ways in which they can celebrate this day
 - » Think about the ways in which they can show their love for God, as St Brigid did
- *Communicating and Participating:*
 - » Discuss and retell the story, 'St Brigid Builds her Church' in their own words, according to their own ability

- » Work together to create a version of St Brigid's cloak
- » Participate in a prayer service in honour of St Brigid

FAITH FORMATION GOALS

That the children would also:

- Be inspired by the story of St Brigid

YOU WILL NEED

- A soft ball (*Let's Learn* Song)
- For the *Let's Learn* Art Activity
 - » A copy of the template on p. 308, enlarged as much as possible, if you chose to use it
 - » Some small pieces of fabric for the children, the size of which will depend on how big

- the St Brigid's cloak template on p. 308 is when it is enlarged. You can gather these by cutting up old clothes, cushion covers, sheets, etc., or by purchasing some of these from your local charity shop
- » Some glue

AT A GLANCE

SLIDESHOW

- I Want to Build a ...

PRAYER

- Psalm 148

Let's Look

STORY

- 'St Brigid Builds her Church'

SONG

- 'We Sing a Song to Brigid'

CHILDREN'S BOOK

- In School: p. 60
- At Home: p. 61

Let's Learn

ART ACTIVITY

- St Brigid's Cloak

Let's Live

END OF THEME PRAYER SERVICE

- This prayer service is designed to take up one class period

Prayer Service

Let's Look ...



SLIDESHOW

I Want to Build a ...

Tell the children that you have some pictures of people who are thinking of building some things, and that you would like them to work out what would be needed to build them. Then chat about each of the pictures using these or similar questions:



Picture 1: Fatima

- This is Fatima. What will she need to build a snowman? Where will she get each of these things?
- Where would be a good place in our school to build a snowman? Why?
- Do you think we can build a snowman today? Why or why not?



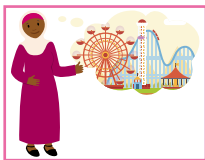
Picture 2: Cathal

- This is Cathal. What will he need to build this kennel? Where will he get each of these things?
- Cathal lives in a flat, so he doesn't have a back garden. So, if he wanted to build a kennel, what's the very, very first thing that he would need? Where might he get a piece of land?



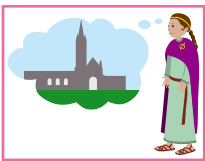
Picture 3: Naoise

- This is Naoise. What will she need to build a castle? Do you think she would get it done today if she started now?
- Would Naoise need a lot of space to build a castle? Could we build it beside our school? Why or why not?
- Where might be a good place in our parish to build a castle? Why?



Picture 4: Mrs Dija

- This is Mrs Dija. What will she need to build an amusement park? Would it be an easy or hard thing to do?
- What is the very, very first thing Mrs Dija will need if she decided to build an amusement park? If she didn't have any land of her own, what would she do?



Picture 5: St Brigid

- Does anyone know who this woman is? She is a person who is very close to God, and who now lives at home with God in heaven. What do you already know about St Brigid?
- St Brigid also wants to build something. Can you guess what that might be?
- What is the very, very first thing Brigid would need to build a church? If Brigid didn't have any land on which to build her church, what would she do?

After discussing the slideshow, chat with the children using these or similar questions:

- Is it easy or hard to build something? Why?
- Do you remember a time when someone in your family built something? What did they build? Did it take a little while or a long time? Why?
- God created the whole world. There was nothing at all there when God started, and now look at all of the things that are around us that live and grow. Did that all take a short time or a long time? What does that tell us about God?

Psalm 148

Sign of the Cross

T: God created the world and everything in it. Now that winter is almost over, and spring is on the way, we can see the world that God made coming to life again. Today, let's listen to a psalm from the Bible, praising God for all of Creation. You can respond to each part of the psalm by saying, 'Come and offer God praise'.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: Sun and moon, and all of you bright stars, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: Highest heavens, and the water over the heavens, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: All creatures on the earth, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: Sea monsters and the deep sea, fire and hail, snow and frost, and every stormy wind, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: All mountains and hills, fruit trees and cedars, every wild and tame animal, all reptiles and birds, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: Every king and every ruler, all nations on earth, every man and every woman, young people and old, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: All Creation, come praise the name of the Lord, come and offer God praise.

C: Come and offer God praise.

T: Let's finish by offering God praise as we say the *Glory be to the Father* together:

All: *Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit;
As it was in the beginning,
Is now and ever shall be,
World without end.
Amen.*

Sign of the Cross



Let's Learn ...

STORY

'St Brigid Builds her Church'

Begin by recalling all the things that Brigid needed to build a church using the children's responses from the *Let's Look* section of this lesson. Then read 'St Brigid Builds her Church'.



'St Brigid Builds her Church'



Brigid and her friends wanted to tell all the people in the land about the love of God. They wanted everyone to hear the good news that God

loved them. Brigid decided that she should build a church, so that everyone would have a place to come to when they wanted to talk to God. But Brigid had no land to build her church on.

'Someone will have to give me land on which to build my church,' she said to her friends. 'I will go to the local chieftain and ask him for a piece of ground.' And off she went.



The chieftain was the man who owned all the land in the area where St Brigid lived. He was a very sly man. He did not know anything about

God's love and he did not want to listen to Brigid. So, when he saw her coming, he decided he would play a trick on her.

'I want to build a church,' explained Brigid 'so that people can come together to pray to God.'

'Very well,' answered the chieftain. 'Come with me.'

The chieftain took Brigid to the top of a high hill. 'Look down there,' he said. 'All the land, as far as you can see, is mine. It belongs to me.'

Then he told Brigid to take off her cloak.

'You asked me for land,' he said. 'I will give you as much land as your cloak can cover. Take it off and lay it down on the ground and see how much it covers.'

Brigid was very disappointed. She knew her cloak was very small and would not cover nearly enough land to build a church. The chieftain

laughed and laughed. But when Brigid laid her cloak on the ground, you would hardly believe what happened next ... the cloak began to

grow bigger and bigger. It spread out wider and wider, further and further. The chieftain stopped laughing. His face grew pale. The cloak was still growing.

'Stop it!' cried the chieftain. 'Stop it, please! Stop it quickly! Stop it now!'

Now it was Brigid's turn to laugh. She told the cloak to stop. She had more than enough land now to build her church on. She went back and told her friends what had happened. That night they thanked God for helping them with their church.



Having read the story, check for understanding using questions such as, 'Why did Brigid want to build a church?' Then dig deeper using these or similar questions:

- What words would you use to describe the chieftain? Why do you think he didn't want to help Brigid? If you were the chieftain, would you have given some land to St Brigid? Why or why not?
- What kind of person was St Brigid? What did she need to go to the chieftain to ask for land? When have you ever needed courage to do something difficult?
- Who did Brigid think helped her to build her church? I wonder ... why would God have wanted Brigid to build a church?

SONG

'We Sing a Song to Brigid'

Begin by gathering the children into a circle on the floor. Explain to the children that when you roll the ball towards one child they will begin to tell a little of the story of St Brigid and her church. Then that child will roll the ball to someone else who continues to tell the story. This continues until the story has been told.

Then introduce the song, 'We Sing a Song to Brigid' (Track 22, p. 307) to the children and chat with them about the lyrics. The lyrics of the second verse reflect the story of St Brigid and her church. You can sing this song throughout the week.

Teacher Tip:

You will need a soft ball for this activity.

Teacher Tip:

This first verse and the chorus of this song was taught as part of *Grow in Love* for Senior Infants/P2.

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS

In School

P. 60: Children explore the story of St Brigid's cloak.

At Home

P. 61: Children and their families read the story of St Brigid together and chat about why St Brigid wanted to build a church. They are also invited to pray together.



Let's Live ...

WHAT HAVE YOU TAUGHT?

Brigid wanted to build a church so that everyone would have a place to come to to pray to God, but she didn't have any land on which to build it. Brigid knew it wouldn't be easy to build a church, but she knew that was what God wanted. So Brigid went to the local chieftain who had lots of land. But the chieftain would only let her have as much land as her cloak would cover. Brigid put her cloak down on the ground and it grew and grew, until it was more than big enough for her church. The chieftain was shocked, but Brigid knew that it was God who had helped her.

ART ACTIVITY

St Brigid's Cloak

Begin by recalling why St Brigid wanted to build a church. Explore how lots of people would have needed to help Brigid to do this, even after she had the land she needed. She would still need bricks, windows, and furniture for the inside. Chat about Brigid's determination using these or similar questions:

- Was it easy or hard for St Brigid to build her church? Why didn't she just give up, or let someone else do it?
- Do you remember a time when you kept trying to do something, even though it was very hard? Let's Think-Pair-Share.
- Brigid knew that God wanted her to build the church, so that the people would have somewhere to go to, to pray together. What kinds of things does God want us to do? Are those things always easy? Do we sometimes give up? Why or why not?

Then distribute the pieces of fabric to the children. Perhaps give each group of children several from which they can choose. Display the picture of St Brigid's cloak and explain that, at the moment, the cloak is too small, but perhaps they could help. Then invite each child to come up, one by one or in small groups, as appropriate, and to glue their piece of fabric to the poster. In doing so, the cloak will grow and grow, and the children can help St Brigid to get the land she needs to build her church.



In preparation for the end of theme prayer service.

- The end of theme prayer service uses the technique of Reader's Theatre to present the Christmas story. In Reader's Theatre, students 'perform' by reading scripts without costumes and props. The goal is to enhance reading skills and confidence by giving them a real reason to read aloud. There are four parts in this Reader's Theatre script which have speaking parts:
 - » Brigid
 - » Brigid's friend(s) (can be more than one person)
 - » Chieftain
 - » Narrator
- The script of the Reader's Theatre is printed on p. 306, should you wish to photocopy and distribute it in advance of the prayer service. It may be helpful to highlight each child's part to help them to follow the script.

Teacher Tip:

If you choose to use it, you will need to copy and enlarge the template on p. 308 as much as possible for this activity. You will also need glue and some small pieces of fabric for the children, the size of which will depend on how big the template is when it is enlarged.

Prayer Space:

Display St Brigid's Cloak near the prayer space.

Prayer Service

Theme: St Brigid

If possible, have the children sit around or close to the prayer space. If this is not possible, have the children turn their chairs towards the prayer space.

Opening Song: 'We Sing a Song to Brigid' (Track 22, verse one, p. 307)

Sign of the Cross

T: We begin by lighting our candle. Our candle reminds us that God is with us.

Light candle

T: This week, we heard the story of St Brigid and her cloak. Let's remind ourselves of the story.

Narrator: Brigid and her friends wanted to tell all the people in the land about the love of God. So Brigid decided that she should build a church. But Brigid had no land to build her church on.

Brigid: Who could I ask for some land?

Brigid's friends: What about the chieftain? He has lots of land!

Brigid: That's a great idea!

Brigid's friends: But be careful, Brigid. He is a very sly man.

Narrator: So off Brigid went. When the chieftain saw Brigid coming, he decided he would play a trick on her.

Brigid: Can I have some land, please? I'd like to build a church so that everyone can come together to pray to God.

Chieftain: Hmm ... come with me.

Narrator: Brigid was delighted. She thought the chieftain was going to give her as much land as she wanted. He took Brigid to the top of a high hill.

Chieftain: Take off your coat the put it on the ground.

Narrator: Brigid did as the chieftain asked.

Chieftain: You can have as much land as your cloak can cover.

Narrator: Brigid was very disappointed. She knew her cloak was very small and would not cover nearly enough land to build a church.

Chieftain: Ha! ha!

Narrator: But Brigid did as the chieftain asked. And you would hardly believe what happened next.

Chieftain: Your cloak! It's growing!

Brigid: So it is!

Chieftain: Make it stop!

Brigid: I'm afraid I can't.

Chieftain: 'Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!'

Brigid: I'm really not sure how to!

Narrator: When Brigid knew she had enough land, she told the cloak to stop.

Brigid: Stop it. That's enough.

Narrator: Now Brigid had more than enough land to build her church on. She went back and told her friends what had happened.

T: Brigid was a very special person. That is why we call her a saint. We can learn a lot from Brigid, and we can try to be like her in all that we do. Together, let's pray in honour of St Brigid by saying, 'St Brigid, pray for us'.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: St Brigid teaches us to pray to God.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: St Brigid teaches us to ask God for what we need.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: St Brigid teaches not to give up.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: St Brigid teaches us to have courage to do what God asks.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: St Brigid teaches us to say thanks to God.

C: St Brigid, pray for us.

T: Loving God,
Thank you for the life of St Brigid.
Thank you for her determination to build her church.

Help us to learn from her, and to help people to come to know your love, as she did.

We ask this through Jesus, our friend.

C: Amen.

Closing Song: 'We Sing a Song to Brigid' (Track 22, verse two, p. 307)



READER'S THEATRE SCRIPT FOR THE END OF THEME PRAYER SERVICE

Narrator: Brigid and her friends wanted to tell all the people in the land about the love of God. So Brigid decided that she should build a church. But Brigid had no land to build her church on.

Brigid: Who could I ask for some land?

Brigid's friends: What about the chieftain? He has lots of land!

Brigid: That's a great idea!

Brigid's friends: But be careful, Brigid. He is a very sly man.

Narrator: So off Brigid went. When the chieftain saw Brigid coming, he decided he would play a trick on her.

Brigid: Can I have some land, please? I'd like to build a church so that everyone can come together to pray to God.

Chieftain: Hmm ... come with me.

Narrator: Brigid was delighted. She thought the chieftain was going to give her as much land as she wanted. He took Brigid to the top of a high hill.

Chieftain: Take off your coat the put it on the ground.

Narrator: Brigid did as the chieftain asked.

Chieftain: You can have as much land as your cloak can cover.

Narrator: Brigid was very disappointed. She knew her cloak was very small and would not cover nearly enough land to build a church.

Chieftain: Ha! ha!

Narrator: But Brigid did as the chieftain asked. And you would hardly believe what happened next.

Chieftain: Your cloak! It's growing!

Brigid: So it is!

Chieftain: Make it stop!

Brigid: I'm afraid I can't.

Chieftain: 'Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!'

Brigid: I'm really not sure how to!

Narrator: When Brigid knew she had enough land, she told the cloak to stop.

Brigid: Stop it. That's enough.

Narrator: Now Brigid had more than enough land to build her church on. She went back and told her friends what had happened.

22. We Sing a Song to Brigid

Words: Claire Maloney
Music Patricia Hegarty



D Am7 D Am7 D Am7

We sing a song to Brig - id. — Brig - id brings the

4 D G A Bm C

spring. — A - wak - ens all the fields and the flowers and

7 D Am7 D *Fine* D Am7

calls the birds to sing. — 1. All were wel - come

10 D Am7 D Am7 D

at her door. No - one was turned — a - way. — She

13 G A Bm C D Am7

loved the poor, the sick and the sore, she helped them on their

16 D D Am7 D Am7

way. — 2. She laid her cloak out on the ground and

20 D Am7 D G A

watched it grow — and grow. — In wells and streams and

23 Bm C D Am7 D

fields — of green Saint Brig - id's bless - ings flow. —

