

# Irish Background Information for Activities!

## St. Patrick

Saint Patrick is the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland. St Patrick is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland. Saint Patrick is said to have driven the snakes from Ireland. Born in Britain during the 4th century, St. Patrick was kidnapped and enslaved by Irish raiders when he was a teenager. Although he was able to escape after six years and become a priest in Britain, he later chose to return to Ireland as a missionary, in order to help spread the teachings of Christianity to pagans.

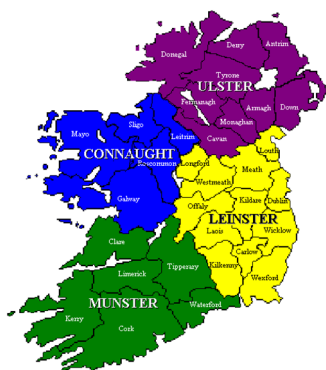
## The 3 Leaves of the Shamrock

'Why is the Shamrock so synonymous with Ireland ?' The reason is that St. Patrick used it to explain the Holy Trinity to the Irish people. It stood for the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Apparently, this spiritual teaching tool caught on and spread amongst the community because to this day the symbolic shamrock meaning is iconic of St. Patrick and his spiritual passion.

## Harp as a symbol for Ireland

The Irish harp, though not as popularly well-known around the world as the shamrock for being an Irish symbol, is the official emblem of Ireland. This status dates back several centuries.

Today, a representation of the traditional harp is to be found on the Presidential Seal and on many official documents, on passports, on the flag of Leinster (but no longer on the national flag), on Irish euro coins and as a logo for a number of prominent state-supported organisations such as the National University of Ireland



## Leprechauns and their pot of gold

A **leprechaun** is a type of fairy in Irish folklore, usually taking the form of an old man, clad in a red or green coat, who enjoys partaking in mischief. The Leprechauns spend all their time busily making shoes, and store away all their coins in a hidden pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

If ever captured by a human, the Leprechaun has the magical power to grant three wishes in exchange for their release. Popular depiction shows the Leprechaun as being no taller than a small child, with a beard and hat.

## Irish Flag

The national **flag of Ireland** frequently referred to as the **Irish tricolour** – is a vertical tricolour of green (at the hoist), white, and orange.

The Irish government has described the symbolism behind each colour as being that of green representing the Gaelic tradition of Ireland, orange representing the followers of William of Orange in Ireland, and white representing the aspiration for peace between them.

## Story of St Brigid's Cross

Making a St. Brigid's cross is one of the traditional rituals in Ireland to celebrate the beginning of early spring, 1st February. The crosses are made of rushes that are pulled rather than cut. They are hung by the door and in the rafters to protect the house from fire and evil. According to tradition a new cross is made each St Brigid's Day, and the old one is burned to keep fire from the house

St. Brigid and her cross are linked together by the story that she wove this form of cross at the death bed of a pagan chieftain, who upon hearing what the cross meant, asked to be baptized.

## Irish Plasticine Pictionary

Give each Patrol a small ball of plasticine.

One member of each Patrol goes to a Leader and is told an Irish item to make.

The first Patrol to identify the item gets a point and the next person has a turn.

Some suggestions:- Round Tower, Waterford Glass, Tara Brooch, salmon, brown bread, St. Patrick, leprechaun, Hurley,....

For non-Irish players, the girls could be allowed study picture cards for a few minutes beforehand.



**Round Tower**



**Waterford Crystal**



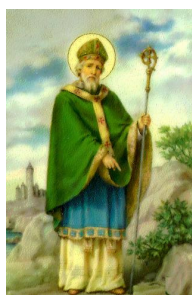
**Tara Brooch**



**Salmon**



**Brown Bread**



**St. Patrick**



**Leprechaun**



**Hurley**



**Harp**



**Aran Jumper**



**Potatoes**



**Sheep**



**Turf**

# St Patrick's Day Themed Games and Activities!

## Straw and St. Patrick's Cup Relay

Equipment: A bendable straw for each girl  
A 'green' disposable cup (or one with a shamrock stuck on it!) for each team

### How To Play:

Each girl receives a bendable straw and places the short piece in her mouth.

A cup will be placed on the first person of each team's straw.

The first person passes the cup to the next person in line without touching the cup, only by using the straw. First team with the cup to the end wins!

## Shamrock Relay

Equipment:

2 Large paper shamrocks per team

### How To Play:

- Divide girls into teams. The first person in a team takes the two shamrocks and lays one of the shamrocks out on the floor. She steps on the first shamrock and then places the second shamrock in front of her.
- The girl steps on the second shamrock, reaches back and picks up the first shamrock and then places that shamrock in front of her.
- Continue to the end of the course and then run back and tag the next team member.

## St. Patrick's Day Mini Cake Walk

### Equipment:

Mini cake for each girl, 2 sets of numbered pieces of paper, (one set to be put on the floor and one set to be pulled from a hat), Irish Jig Music

### How To Play:

When the music starts the girls begin to walk around the room stepping on each of the numbers as they go.

When the music stops the girls should step on the number closest to them. A number is pulled from the hat by a Leader and the girl standing on that number is given a cupcake and sits on the side lines. Continue until every girl has a cupcake!

## Shamrock Hunt

Equipment: 50 x green paper shamrocks with a score of 1 to 5 marked on them. 10 x 3 leafed shamrocks with a score of 10 marked on them. (make them another colour other than green)

How to Play: Hide shamrocks around room/playing area. Girls hunt in teams/sixes/patrols.

Scores are added up when all shamrocks have been found or after a certain time.

## Find the Leprechaun's gold

All you need is a Coin!

- First select a leprechaun and have her cover her eyes or look away while you hand a coin to one of the other players. Then have all the players sit in a circle with the leprechaun standing in the middle.
- At "Go," the seated players begin slyly passing the coin around the circle, being careful to hide the coin from the leprechaun's view. The coin can reverse direction at any time, and players without the coin can pretend to pass it along to add to the challenge.
- When the leprechaun thinks she knows who has the coin, she calls "stop" and names her suspect. If the leprechaun guesses right, the 2 players switch places. If not, play continues.

## Can You Let Go of the Leprechaun's Gold?

The Setup: Put your hands together, palms facing. Bend your middle fingers over the opposite hand—holding all your other fingers together finger tip to finger tip, then ask someone to slip a coin between the tips of your ring fingers.

The Challenge: Try to release the coin by pulling apart your ring fingers. Letting go of money is usually easy, so how come here it's so hard?

What's Going On: Because it lacks certain tendons that your other fingers have, your ring finger is at the mercy of its next-door neighbour, the middle finger. The two are connected by a piece of cordlike tissue, and when your middle fingers are bent as they are here, it tightens, drawing together your ring fingers. Until you

# More Games and Activities!



## Traffic Lights

You need 3 pieces of black card or paper, with a green, red or orange circle on each one.

When “red” (dearg) is called the girls must stand absolutely still, or sit on the floor.

When “orange” (oraiste) is called they must go in slow motion.

When “green” (glas) is called they must run around pretending to be cars, buses, lorries, etc.

## Hide a Girl Guide

(This is a good game to help the girls learn each others' names)

All the girls run around the hall (to music, if you like). When the Leader calls “STOP” all the girls curl up on the floor and cover their eyes. The Leader walks around the group and covers one girl with a rug. She then tells the girls to stand up and they have to guess who is missing. If the girls are close together two or three can be covered at the same time and the guessing can continue.

## Promise Game

The girls hold hands in a circle; on the floor in the centre of the circle put pictures (face up) depicting mum, dad, elderly person, refugee, homeless person etc. Everyone walks around saying the Promise together and as it ends, one girl chooses a picture and says how she could help this person.

Repeat until several or all of the girls have had a turn.

## What time is it Mr. Leprechaun?

The girls all line up against a wall. One girl – Mr. Leprechaun – stands a good distance away from the others with her back to them. The girls shout “What time is it Mr. Leprechaun?”.

Mr. L. replies “1 o'clock” and the girls take one step towards Mr. L. The girls shout again, “What time is it Mr. Leprechaun?” Mr. L. answers “\_\_ o'clock” and the girls take that number of steps towards Mr. L.

This continues until Mr. L. answers “Midnight” and chases the girls back to the wall. Whoever she catches then becomes Mr. Leprechaun.

## LEPRECHAUN'S TREASURE

### Materials:

- a collection of yellow/orange/gold items (tennis ball, lemon, banana, pencil, marker, etc.)
- An empty crock/cauldron, score card per team/six, small stickers.

### Instructions:

1. Tell the girls a story about poor Larry leprechaun who has lost all his treasure (it is hidden around hall/yard)
2. Girls search for treasure and get a sticker on their team's score card for each item found and put in the crock of gold.



## FAMOUS PEOPLE



Each girl pins the name of a famous person on the back of her neighbour. Girls mingle and ask questions to try and guess the name of the person. Questions can only be answered by “yes” or “no”. When identity is found, the girl sits down.



# More Games and Activities!

## BEAMING GIRL GUIDES

Each group of girls is given a set of features - two ears, two eyes, a nose and a mouth (with a big smile) - all cut out of paper with a piece of Blu-tac on the back.

The groups line up at one end of the room. Pinned to the wall opposite each group is a large sheet of paper with a circle drawn on it. These are 'faces'. The girl guide at the back of each line is blindfolded.

On the word 'GO', the girl at the front of each line runs up to her group's face and sticks on one of the features (apart from the mouth). She then runs back to her group and the next girl runs up with another feature. The game continues in the same way until only the mouth is missing. The blindfolded girl in each group must then be guided verbally to the face by her team where she endeavours to stick on the mouth.

## KNOTTY PUZZLES

*Girls get into circles of at least five.*

*They take hands with different people, not their next door neighbours.*

*They try to get into a circle again without breaking the link.*

## GUIDING AROUND THE WORLD

As we think about Girl Guides all around the world at the 'Thinking Day season' your girls may enjoy this activity and provide, at the same time, wonderful posters to decorate your hall for a parents' evening etc.

Equipment: A piece of wallpaper per girl big enough to lie on. Chart or book showing uniforms around the world  
Pencils, scissors, paints, paintbrushes and old newspaper

### Instructions:

Girls take turns to lie on their piece of wallpaper while another girl draws around them.

Using this outline each girl chooses a foreign Girl Guide and draws in the uniform. (If doing this project over two weeks ask the girls to write on their picture the colours of the uniform and it will not be necessary to refer to the books/uniform charts website the second week.)

Place old newspaper under the wallpaper and paint in the uniform.

Cut the figure out when the paint is dry or leave it as it is. Either way you will end up with life-size international Girl Guide!



## Shamrock Hop

Materials : Scissors, One sheet of green card per girl, String

### Directions

- Cut a large shamrock shape from each sheet of card.
- Mark a start and finish line with the string.
- Divide Ladybirds into pairs with two shamrocks. One Ladybird in each pair stands at the start line with a shamrock.
- Her partner has the other shamrock and stands next to her.
- At the signal the Ladybirds at the starting line hop onto the shamrock in front of her.
- Her partner puts down her shamrock in front of her.
- The hopping Ladybird then hops onto the second shamrock while her partner takes the first shamrock and moves it in front of her.
- Ladybirds continue moving shamrocks and hopping onto them until one pair moves both of its shamrocks over the finish line.

## St. Patrick's Kim's Game

Collect up a number of items that are related to Ireland and St. Patrick. Pictures can also be drawn onto card, coloured and cut out.

Then place them on a table and allow the girls to look and memorise all the items. Cover the table with a blanket or get the girls to look away, and remove an item. The girls have to guess what has been removed.

