

At the beginning of **Early Medieval Ireland**, over **1500 years** ago, the Irish people were taught about Christianity. Saints like Patrick, Brigid and Columba travelled around Ireland to teach people about God and how to pray. Some people became priests and monks and they built monasteries and churches for people to pray to God. They also wrote and decorated beautiful **manuscripts**. Many fine metal objects made from **gold, silver and amber** were made and used at these places. They made chalices for celebrating mass, and special shrines to keep relics of saints safe.

# EARLY MEDIEVAL IRELAND



*The Ardagh Chalice, made over 1200 years ago to celebrate mass*

Some of these objects are now on display in the **Treasury Exhibition** at the National Museum of Ireland – Archaeology. Here you will find the Ardagh Chalice, made over 1200 years ago to celebrate mass in an Early Medieval church. There is also St. Patrick's Bell and Bell Shrine made to keep the saint's bell safe, and the Clonmacnoise Crozier, believed to have been used by St. Ciaran.

**museum**

National Museum of Ireland  
Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann

Archaeology

In Early Medieval Ireland there were many saints that built monasteries and taught people about God and how to pray. We know a lot about the lives of saints as many of their stories and miracles were written down.

Some saints have relics and reliquaries. A relic is an object which is believed to have belonged to a saint. They were kept safe in specially made containers, called a shrine or a reliquary.

People would pray over these and it is believed that some are able to cure certain illnesses.

# IRISH SAINTS



St. **Patrick** is Ireland's **Patron** Saint. There are many reliquaries dedicated to St. Patrick including a bell shrine, an arm shrine and even a tooth shrine! There are many stories and **miracles** about St. Patrick, including how he banished, or drove, all the **snakes** from Ireland.

The **bell** is believed to have been used by the saint and the bell shrine was made much later, in the 12th century. The bell is made from iron and coated with **bronze**, and it has a clapper on the inside to make it ring. The bell shrine is made from bronze, gold, silver, and it is decorated with **amber**. A lot of the decoration is made using animals, including snakes, and the handles are decorated with **peacocks**.



St. **Brigid** built her **monastery** at Kildare. She went to the King of **Leinster** to ask for land to build her church. The King told her she could have as much land as her cloak would cover. She laid her **cloak** on the ground and it grew and grew! She is known for using reeds to make **crosses** to teach people about God. There is a shoe shrine dedicated to her, believed to have once kept her shoe safe.



St. **Ciaran** built his monastery at Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly. The Clonmacnoise Crozier is believed to have been used by him. A **crozier** is shaped like a shepherd's crook and is used by bishops. It represents how a bishop brings people to God – like a **shepherd** brings in his flock of sheep.



St. **Columba**, also called Colum Cille, was known for the **manuscripts** that he wrote. He started life in Ireland, but he was banished and went to the Island of **Iona** in Scotland, when he was caught copying the manuscript of another monk. St. Columba has a crozier, and a book and book shrine called the Cathach dedicated to him.



St. **Lachtin** is a **saint** from Donaghmore, Co. Cork, where he built his monastery. St. Lachtin has one of the most unusual shrines as it is an arm **shrine!** It is believed to have once kept the bones of the saint's arm. People used this **relic** to make promises or swear oaths over.



The **Moylough** Belt Shrine was found in a bog in Sligo in 1945, so it is unclear which saint this relic belonged to. The shrine is made from **copper** alloy and **silver**. Amazingly, a leather belt survived inside! It may have been worn by monks for protection and to cure illnesses.



Every underlined word in each paragraph on the opposite page is hidden somewhere in the grid – forwards, downwards or diagonally. There are 26 to find altogether

**GOOD LUCK!**

P	<b>A</b>	S	L	I	M	O	N	F	R	U	H	C	M	O	Y	L	O	U	G	H	E
C	E	P	O	B	R	I	G	I	D	<b>E</b>	<b>R</b>	S	U	N	O	I	A	H	T	U	S
R	L	A	C	T	F	G	I	Q	A	K	D	O	N	J	Y	U	E	P	B	H	A
O	B	T	H	E	V	A	M	I	G	C	U	R	B	A	T	F	D	M	R	G	I
Z	A	R	G	M	L	<b>N</b>	P	O	Y	I	Z	B	E	T	K	I	N	C	O	T	N
I	H	I	C	R	O	P	L	N	T	A	D	A	E	C	L	E	H	S	N	U	T
E	S	C	L	C	P	N	G	A	B	R	E	M	Y	L	O	T	S	O	Z	E	R
R	T	K	C	L	H	T	A	M	I	A	H	U	C	O	L	P	A	B	E	O	N
Y	C	P	B	O	F	I	M	S	U	N	K	G	L	E	I	N	S	T	E	R	I
A	R	E	L	A	N	C	O	S	T	U	R	V	Q	A	K	L	C	U	G	D	M
K	M	I	D	K	L	M	G	U	B	E	M	D	R	L	A	C	H	T	I	N	<b>A</b>
E	A	B	Z	I	O	C	E	P	H	B	<b>R</b>	<b>I</b>	J	N	H	G	E	P	V	U	C
P	L	H	E	V	C	O	P	P	E	R	O	Y	M	C	H	S	A	T	M	E	K
E	D	S	B	R	I	H	U	<b>E</b>	K	J	S	S	C	O	P	Q	I	N	O	P	Z
A	<b>P</b>	R	L	U	M	I	R	A	C	L	E	S	D	L	N	B	V	L	E	C	A
C	H	E	W	O	A	D	N	G	K	Z	C	R	I	U	Y	S	L	T	V	K	U
O	G	M	A	N	U	S	C	R	I	P	T	S	H	M	W	A	H	R	P	E	B
C	A	S	F	Z	I	C	K	R	D	Y	F	E	T	B	U	V	C	R	F	O	R
K	M	P	A	T	R	O	N	S	E	L	P	G	B	A	L	Z	A	D	I	S	Y
S	H	E	J	D	I	Z	T	C	V	L	A	H	O	D	E	V	G	H	T	N	D
O	K	L	B	M	V	R	Q	<b>S</b>	H	E	I	D	M	O	F	<b>B</b>	<b>L</b>	A	J	R	E
C	S	H	E	P	H	E	R	D	T	N	G	C	I	P	C	R	O	S	S	E	S

Now take the **red** letters and rearrange them to complete this joke:  
**Why did Saint Patrick drive all the snakes out of Ireland?**

*Because \_\_\_\_\_ weren't invented yet!* (9 letters)



One of the most famous objects associated with St. Patrick is his **bell** and **bell shrine**. The bell is believed to have been used by the saint and the bell shrine was made much later, in the 12th century, to keep it safe. The bell is made from iron and coated with bronze, and it even has a clapper on the inside to make it ring. It would have been used to call people to prayer. The bell shrine is made from **bronze, gold, and silver**, and it is decorated with **amber**. A lot of the decoration is made up using animals, including **snakes**, and the handles is decorated with **peacocks**.

## ST. PATRICK'S BELL SHRINE



When you have finished the wordsearch please let us know how you got on. You can contact us at [bookings@museum.ie](mailto:bookings@museum.ie) or on Twitter using **#MuseumAtHome** or Facebook.