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night.*  
— Irish Blessing

## Saint Patrick's Day Milestone Moment

The modern St. Patrick's day observance which is held around the world on March 17th started in 1631 when the Church established a feast day to honor St. Patrick who had been a Patron Saint of Ireland. It is a time when people gather together and celebrate the missionary life of St. Patrick, the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and the heritage and culture of the Irish. It wasn't until 1798, the year of the Irish Rebellion, that the color green became officially associated with St. Patrick's Day and Irish nationalism. It was used by republican United Irishmen in a rebellion against British rule.

St. Patrick (known as *Patricius*) was born around 386 A.D. and grew up in Roman Britain. He was captured by Irish pirates at the age of 16 and taken to Ireland as a slave. He escaped after six years and returned to Britain and his family. He became a priest and returned to Ireland as a Christian missionary around 432 to convert the pagan Irish to Christianity. By the time of his death on March 17, 461 he had established monasteries, churches, and schools. According to legend, St. Patrick used the three-leaved shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity to Irish pagans.

This Saint Patrick's Day Milestone Moment is an opportunity for family and friends to gather together to celebrate this occasion and in addition to the feast and festivities, examine and discuss the missionary heritage passed on by St. Patrick and what it means to us today.

The opportunity for families and friends to gather in small groups or the home to commemorate St. Patrick is a fun and special time. This Saint Patrick's Day Milestone Moment has a simple five stage structure that includes naming, equipping, blessing, gifting, and reinforcing so that the Milestone Moment has a greater chance to take deeper root in lifelong faith formation.

**Naming** – Observing and celebrating St. Patrick's Day allows us to have meaningful conversations about the Christian faith and sharing that faith with others.

**Equipping** – Observing St. Patrick's Day through caring conversations, reading scripture, and praying builds a Christian connectedness and an ongoing sense of history and purpose.

**Blessing** – Offering a traditional Irish blessing to all honors the memory of St. Patrick and the work of Christians around the world.

**Gifting** – Giving each person a three-leaved shamrock or some other reminder of the moment is a reminder of the importance of sharing our faith with others as a significant role of the Christian life.

**Reinforcing** – Place the three-leaved shamrock or other gift received in a visible place to reflect on your time together and pray for the work of Christian missionaries around the world.



# + Saint Patrick's Day Milestone Moment

## *For a Small Group or Family Gathering*



### *Growing People in Faith when at Home and Away*

*"and talk about them when you are at home and when away, when you lie down and when you rise."*

– Deuteronomy 6:7b

*A follow-up for the Saint Patrick's Milestone Moment can be done with caring conversations and prayers as you remember the work of Christian missionaries in the world. It gives family and friends the opportunity to share experiences and talk about the importance of fulfilling the Great Commission to go and make disciples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

*An important step after experiencing the Four Key Faith Practices in a small group or home setting is to bless and equip friends and families by using faith practices daily as an intentional step to encourage faith traditions in the home.*

*A suggested resource for continued caring conversations:*

*[Taking Faith Home](#)  
[Taking Faith Home Cards](#)  
[For Everything A Season Book](#)*

*Additional Milestone Modules and Moments can be found at:  
[www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)*



At the heart of equipping people for their lifelong faith formation are the Four Key Faith Practices: Caring Conversations, Devotions, Service, and Rituals and Traditions. They provide an opportunity for people to learn, experience, and grow in their faith together. The next page is a discussion guide handout to assist with the conversations.



As you gather together, begin by sharing a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your lives and then use the outline below to talk about faith and God's presence in this moment.



#### **Caring Conversations**

Discuss these thoughts and questions:

- Do you have any Irish ancestry in your family tree? If so, what do you know about them?
- Name some ways you have celebrated St. Patrick's Day.
- What traditional Irish foods come to mind when you think of St. Patrick's Day?



#### **Devotions**

Read the following: *Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.* Matthew 28:19-20 (NRSV)

- St. Patrick was a Christian missionary. Why do you think this verse would be important to him?
- Talk about a time when you felt Jesus was with you.



#### **Service**

Special holidays provide an opportunity to celebrate and bring joy to those who are lonely or homebound. Who do you know that would appreciate a visit on St. Patrick's Day? How can you bring joy to their day?



#### **Rituals and Traditions**

Host a St. Patrick's dinner feast in your home. Decorate using the color green. Other ideas to decorate include tea candles, chocolate gold coins, and a shamrock floral arrangement. Serve Irish food, drinks, and desserts.

Finish the meal by praying together: The Lord's Prayer.

Then conclude with this famous and loved Irish blessing:

*May the road rise up to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
The rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.*



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# Saint Patrick's Day Discussion Guide



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