St. Patrick’s Day

Pre-reading

Questions:
- What do you know about St. Patrick’s Day?

Definitions:
- Mass – a religious service in the Catholic church
- Bishop – a high-ranking minister or clergyperson
- St. = Saint – a very holy person

Reading

People of all backgrounds enjoy sharing in the fun of St. Patrick’s Day. Many Americans say “Everyone is Irish on St. Patrick’s Day!” It is a day to dress in green and go to parties. It is a time to celebrate Irish culture and history. March 17 is also a day to honor St. Patrick.

Green is the national color of Ireland. It is a country covered with green grass and shamrocks. Shamrocks are small green plants with three leaves. People wear green hats and clothes on St. Patrick’s Day. In Chicago, the Chicago River is even dyed green.

Many cities have St. Patrick’s Day parades and parties. People sing Irish songs and dance to Irish music. They enjoy Irish food. Some people even drink green beer! On this holiday you can buy a shamrock-shaped pizza, or try a green, shamrock shake.

St. Patrick’s Day has been celebrated for many years all over the world. In Ireland it is a national holiday, like Christmas and Easter. On March 17 most businesses are closed, and people go to mass.

St. Patrick’s Day came to America in the 1700’s. It is not a national holiday in the United States. Stores are open and people go to work. However, many Catholics do attend St. Patrick’s Day mass.

St. Patrick’s Day honors the life of St. Patrick. He was born in 387 in Scotland. At the age of 16, he was kidnapped by pirates and sold into slavery. He was a slave in Ireland for six years.

Patrick became a Catholic priest and taught many Irish people about God. He started many schools and churches. He also became Bishop of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

There are many stories about St. Patrick. Some are fiction, some are fact. One story says there are no snakes in Ireland because St. Patrick drove them away. However, Ireland is a country that has never had any snakes. Another story tells of St. Patrick raising people from the dead.

It is known that St. Patrick often used 3-leafed shamrocks to explain the Trinity. These small plants were used to explain how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit could be separate, but also together as one. St. Patrick died on March 17, 461. Many Christians wore shamrocks in his honor.

Level 6.0
Understanding

1. How old was Patrick when he died? ______________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

2. What are shamrocks? _________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

3. When is St. Patrick’s Day? ____________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

4. Where did this holiday begin? _________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

5. What does the word fiction mean? ______________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

6. Why are shamrocks a symbol of St. Patrick’s Day? _________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________________

7. How do people celebrate this holiday? __________________________________________________
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Writing

Option A: In your own words, write about St. Patrick’s Day.

Option B: How do you celebrate St. Patrick’s Day?

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