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# Celtic Saints & Legends: An 8-Week Main Lesson Block for Class 2

*Curriculum Focus: Australian Steiner Curriculum Framework, Class 2 - Stories of Saints and Righteous People. This block explores the moral qualities of courage, compassion, reverence for nature, and perseverance through storytelling and artistic work.*

## Materials Needed

- A3 Main Lesson Book (good quality drawing paper, bound)
- Beeswax stick and block crayons
- Watercolour paints (stockmar or similar) and watercolour paper
- Modelling beeswax or natural modelling clay
- Natural materials: rushes, reeds, wool fleece, stones, shells, twigs
- A large map of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales (can be hand-drawn)
- Books of Celtic legends and saint stories for inspiration (e.g., collections by Rosemary Sutcliff, Padraic Colum, or specific picture books)
- Kitchen supplies for simple baking/cooking (oats, flour, butter, honey)
- Blue and yellow silk cloths for storytelling
- A small candle for opening the lesson time

## Weekly Lesson Structure

Each week follows a similar rhythm to build security and focus for H. The main story is told orally over 2-3 days, allowing the images to live in H's imagination before being translated into art. The Main Lesson Book is the central portfolio of H's work and understanding.

- **Day 1:** Tell Part 1 of the story. Discussion.
- **Day 2:** Retell Part 1 and tell Part 2. Main Lesson Book drawing inspired by the story.
- **Day 3:** Retell the whole story. H writes a few sentences (or dictates them) in the Main Lesson Book to accompany the drawing.
- **Day 4:** Handcraft or practical activity related to the week's theme.
- **Day 5:** Nature connection activity and review of the week's verse.

## Week 1: Entering the Celtic World & Saint Columba's Journey

- **Guiding Virtue:** Courage and Purpose
- **Main Story:** The story of Saint Columba leaving Ireland in a small coracle boat, trusting his faith to guide him to the shores of Iona. Focus on his love of books and his courage to start anew.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** H will draw a large map of Ireland and Scotland, marking Columba's journey across the sea. The drawing can be of Columba's coracle on a vast, star-lit ocean.
- **Handcraft:** Make a small boat from a walnut shell, beeswax, and a leaf for a sail. Float it in a bowl of water.
- **Nature Connection:** Go for a walk and look for "journeys" in nature. An ant carrying a crumb, a seed pod travelling on the wind, a stream flowing to the sea. Discuss how everything has a

purpose and a path.

- **Weekly Verse:**

*From the land of green I sail,  
Trusting wind and wave and whale.  
A guiding star, a holy quest,  
To find the island of my rest.*

## Week 2: Saint Brigid, Hearth and Harvest

- **Guiding Virtue:** Hospitality and Care for Creation
- **Main Story:** The story of Saint Brigid of Kildare. Focus on her miraculous cloak that grew to cover the land, her kindness to animals, and her association with fire, poetry, and healing. Tell the story of her turning water into milk for a thirsty visitor.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** A watercolour painting of Brigid's vibrant cloak spreading over the green hills of Ireland. Or a drawing of her surrounded by the animals she cared for.
- **Handcraft:** Weave a Saint Brigid's Cross using rushes, long grasses, or paper strips. This is a fantastic activity for developing fine motor skills and geometric sense.
- **Practical Art:** Make butter. Put cream in a sealed jar and shake it until butter forms. Eat it on oatcakes while retelling the story.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*Saint Brigid's cloak upon the land,  
A blessing from her gentle hand.  
For beast and bird, for flame and bread,  
By her kind heart, all are fed.*

## Week 3: Saint Kevin and the Blackbird

- **Guiding Virtue:** Stillness and Reverence for Life
- **Main Story:** The gentle story of Saint Kevin of Glendalough, who stood perfectly still for days with his hand outstretched so a blackbird could build her nest, lay her eggs, and raise her young.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** He will draw Saint Kevin with the blackbird's nest in his hand. Focus on the expression of peace on his face and the beauty of the nature around him.
- **Handcraft:** Create a small bird's nest using clay for the base and weaving in twigs, grass, and wool fleece. Model three tiny "eggs" from beeswax to place inside.
- **Nature Connection:** Find a quiet spot outdoors. Sit perfectly still for five minutes and just listen. What do you hear? What do you see? Afterwards, discuss what it felt like to be still like Saint Kevin.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*In my hand, a sacred space,  
A feathered nest, a gentle grace.  
For life so small, a watch I'll keep,  
While all the world is fast asleep.*

## Week 4: The Legend of Saint Brendan the Navigator

- **Guiding Virtue:** Faith and Wonder
- **Main Story:** A more fantastical tale of Saint Brendan's voyage across the sea. Describe the "Island of the Sheep," the crystal pillar, and landing on the back of the great whale, Jasconius, to celebrate Easter.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** A dynamic drawing of one of the wondrous islands Brendan visited.

H could choose to draw the giant whale with the monks lighting a fire on its back. This encourages imaginative freedom.

- **Handcraft:** Model Jasconius the whale from grey modelling clay. Create a scene in a tray with blue silk (the sea), the clay whale, and the walnut shell boat from Week 1.
- **Nature Connection:** Cloud-gazing. Lie on the grass and look at the clouds, imagining they are the fantastical islands and creatures that Brendan saw on his journey.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*The sea is wide, the world is vast,  
Behind us now the shore is cast.  
We sail to find what God has made,  
Of faith and wonder, unafraid.*

## Week 5: Saint Patrick and the Light of Ireland

- **Guiding Virtue:** Perseverance and Forgiveness
- **Main Story:** The story of Patrick's capture by pirates, his time as a shepherd in Ireland where he found his faith, and his brave return to the land of his captors to bring a message of peace. Focus on his inner strength rather than the legend of the snakes.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** A "form drawing" of a spiral, representing Patrick's journey away from and back to Ireland. Alternatively, a drawing of Patrick as a lonely shepherd boy on a hill, with the stars and his flock for company.
- **Handcraft:** "Illumination" painting. H can draw a large, beautiful letter 'P' for Patrick in his Main Lesson Book and decorate it with intricate Celtic knots and patterns, mimicking the style of the monks.
- **Nature Connection:** Go on a "Shamrock Hunt." Find clover or other three-leafed plants. Discuss the idea of "three-in-one" found in nature (leaf/stem/root, water/ice/steam) as a way to understand the concept of the Trinity that Patrick taught.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*A shepherd boy on hills so green,  
A lonely life, a world unseen.  
But in his heart, a fire grew bright,  
To fill the land with holy light.*

## Week 6: The Book of Kells - The Work of Many Hands

- **Guiding Virtue:** Patience and Devotion to Beauty
- **Main Story:** This week, the "saint" is the collective of monks who created the beautiful illuminated manuscripts like the Book of Kells. Tell a story about a young monk named Aidan who learns to grind pigments from berries and minerals, make ink from oak galls, and paint tiny, perfect details with a single-haired brush made from a cat's whisker.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** H creates his own "Book of Kells" inspired page. He can choose the first letter of his name, draw it large and decoratively, and fill it with spirals, animals, and beautiful colours. This is a wonderful culmination of the illumination skill from last week.
- **Handcraft:** Make natural paints. Crush soft, colourful rocks into powder, or use berries, turmeric, or spinach to create pigments. Mix with a little egg yolk or water and try painting with them.
- **Nature Connection:** Go on a colour walk. Collect fallen leaves, petals, and stones of as many different shades as possible. Arrange them into a beautiful mandala or rainbow pattern.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*With berry-juice and powdered stone,  
A line is drawn, a seed is sown.*

*With patient hand and prayerful art,  
A holy beauty fills the heart.*

## Week 7: Saint Ciarán of Clonmacnoise

- **Guiding Virtue:** Friendship and Community
- **Main Story:** The story of Saint Ciarán, a carpenter's son, who founded the great monastery of Clonmacnoise. Tell the legend of his first companions: a badger, a fox, and a deer, who helped him build the first church. Focus on how different beings can work together in harmony.
- **Main Lesson Book Work:** A colourful drawing of Ciarán and his animal friends building the church together. The fox carrying tools, the badger digging foundations, the deer lifting beams with his antlers.
- **Handcraft:** Build a small "monastery" outdoors using twigs, stones, moss, and mud. Create a space that feels peaceful and welcoming.
- **Nature Connection:** Observe cooperation in nature. Watch ants working together, see how plants in a garden grow alongside each other, or how a flock of birds flies in formation. Discuss what makes a good friend and a strong community.
- **Weekly Verse:**

*The fox, the badger, and the deer,  
They built a home with naught to fear.  
With claw and paw and antler strong,  
They worked together all day long.*

## Week 8: A Festival of Saints - Bringing It All Together

- **Guiding Virtue:** Celebration and Gratitude
- **Main Story:** No new story this week. Instead, H will retell his favourite story from the past seven weeks to you.
- **Culminating Project:** Create a "Saints' Gallery." H can choose 2-3 saints and create a special piece of art for each. This could be a clay figure, a watercolour painting, or a small diorama in a shoebox.
- **Presentation:** H presents his gallery and retells the stories associated with each piece of art. This is the primary assessment for the block. We can light a candle, share the oatcakes from Week 2, and celebrate all that H has learned and created.
- **Review and Reflection:** Look back through the Main Lesson Book together. Discuss which story was the most fun, which craft was the most challenging, and which virtue H feels he understands the best. This solidifies the learning and honours the student's journey.

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## Assessment Approach

Assessment for this block is entirely formative and portfolio-based, in line with Steiner pedagogy. There are no tests or quizzes. Success is measured by:

1. **Engagement and Participation:** H's willingness to listen to the stories, ask questions, and participate in the activities.
2. **The Main Lesson Book:** This serves as the primary record of learning. Assessment is based on the care, effort, and developing skill shown in the drawings and writing, not on artistic perfection. It should reflect H's unique interpretation of the stories.
3. **Oral Retelling:** H's ability to recall and retell the key elements and moral feeling of the stories in his own words.
4. **Culminating Project:** The "Saints' Gallery" in Week 8 demonstrates a synthesis of the block's

themes and H's ability to creatively express his understanding.

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