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Celebrating St Brigid Teacher's Guidance

Introduction

The Connected Learning Company in collaboration with the Irish Embassy of Madrid, have designed this creative classroom resource celebrating the life and legacy of St Brigid.

We have created three connecting workshops, one with digital based learning, the second drama based learning and a third with arts and crafts. The order of workshops two and three can be interchanged but workshop one should always come first.

The resources will be creative as they challenge learners to discover the life and times of significant figure in Irish history and culture and to recreate aspects of her legacy.

Celebrating St Brigid will emphasize the contribution of Irish women to our cultural heritage.

The celebration also aims to:

- 1/ Impact on the learners. Introduce St Brigid, her life, legacy and values.
- 2/ Engage teacher professional development in cultural heritage teaching and innovative pedagogy.
- 3/ Promote greater visibility of diversity in Irish history.

These workshops have been designed for learners in upper primary classes, (10-11 years old)

Content

Workshop One (45 minutes)

Web based investigation of St Brigid looking at who she was, the Ireland and Europe of her times and the spread of Christianity.

The legends, just like St Patrick, there are legends and miracles associated with St Brigid, including the power of her cross, the spreading of her cloak and the changing of her face.

The legacy, how and why is St Brigid celebrated today. Looking at the new national holiday in Ireland.

Before visiting the web below created by Scoilnet, The Irish Educational Systems' flagship digital resource for teachers, ask the class the following questions:

Has anyone been to Ireland?

Do you know any Irish people?



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Has anyone heard of St Patrick? What do we know about him? When is his saint's day?

Has anyone heard of St Brigid? What do we know about her? When is her saint's day?

We expect that many learners will have heard of St Patrick but very few will know about St Brigid, this is a topic to discuss.

The link below tells the story of St Brigid in an accessible way, please browse before sharing with the class.

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/go-to-primary/theme-pages/religion/st-brigids-day/>

Show the video which asks the question 'why is St Patrick so much more famous than St Brigid?'

Can the class think of other examples where important female characters from the past have not been recognized until now?

Complete the questions suggested in the resource pack

Follow the link to extra resources, divide the class into teams and set the task to each team to read up on certain stories around St Brigid. This will connect with activities in Workshop Two.

Workshop Two (45 minutes)

Drama based pedagogy: we propose a series of activities with St Brigid as the focus of drama games leading to including reenactments by the class of a variety of scenes from the three areas of content identified in workshop one.

Cross Cloak Fox

This first activity is a warm up team game which will embed key concepts to the life and story of St Brigid.

- Players in teams, make two lines and face each other.
- Teacher makes sure everyone is familiar with the classic game of paper, scissor and rock. In this version the 3 elements are substituted by a cross, a cloak and a fox.
- Each element has its very own accompanying action; the cross is crossing legs and arms and saying 'take that!' the cloak is a magical and is shaken out with the sound effect, 'whoosh', the fox does a circus dog trick of doing a pirouette and saying 'and now for my next trick!'
- Teams huddle together and choose which of the three elements to represent, all members of a team must do the same mime. Teacher calls them back to the line and on a count of three both teams show what they have chosen.
- The rules are that the cross beats the cloak, the cloak beats the fox and quite naturally the fox beats the cross
- Play in teams with the winner getting to the best of three



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Digits

This second activity introduces and consolidates key aspects of St Brigid's life and legacy and with a simple structure ask learners to consider why she is important today. Teacher asks the class to list ten words they associate with St Brigid. Write the words on the board. Negotiate an order of importance for the chosen words with the class.

Arrange the class in teams of 6-10, model the game with one team before playing with the whole class. Ask each team to count from one to ten without any pre-determined order of speaking. If two or more people speak at the same time we go back to zero.

Write the words from the chosen order of importance to St Brigid and stand in a circle around the words. Play the game in the same way with St Brigid's words taking place of the numbers from one to ten.

What are you Doing?

Here we adapt a classic training game for improvisers and use content from the stories we have discovered about St Brigid's life. Depending on the class you may want to begin the activity by asking each member of the class to contribute ideas on actions relevant to her life before playing the game. For example, making a cross, shaking out a cloak, training a fox, taking out an eye, giving away food etc. The actions should be taken from St Brigid's life and from the miracles she is associated with.

Players stand in a circle with arm swinging space between them. They are given the instruction that this is an activity where you do as I say and not what I do.

Teacher models the activity by beginning to mime making a cross, Player one to the immediate right of the teacher must ask 'What are you doing?' teacher answers with anything other than making a cross for example I'm building a convent. Player one must immediately mime building a convent. Player two repeats the sequence asking Player one 'what are you doing?' and doing what they are told. This is repeated until all players have asked and been asked 'what are you doing?' and all of the circle are active with their mimes.

Once you have gone around the circle or even sometimes on your first way round you introduce the rules that there can be no hesitation, no repetition and that you have to keep miming what you were told to do. Players breaking rules can be eliminated speeding up the game until you have two to three players left challenging each other into ever more elaborate and hilarious mimes.

It's important to keep the rhythm brisk particularly if you have a large group, sometimes you may need to split into two circles to start.

Freeze Frames

This is the 'star' activity of the workshop, the one you are working towards and should give most time to. In Freeze Frames we ask the students to return to their teams from workshop one, where they discovered aspects of St Brigid's life and legacy.



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Explain that the task is to represent one of the events or legacies of St Brigid in a limited number of connecting freeze frames.

Teams are not to reveal the subject of their task.

From the event or story they have chosen they must select four of the most emblematic scenes. In their group they must recreate these scenes as freeze frames.

Everyone must be in every scene. Players can play objects, chairs, tables, trees, etc. They do not talk.

When the four freeze frames have been rehearsed the group is asked to present the frames in front of the wider group.

The wider group watches in silence and after the fourth scene are invited to say if they know the story or event.

Once the sequence has been completed go back to the first frame and ask the audience to describe what they see and hypothesise about the story/event represented by the players. In this phase, the audience becomes active having to explain their observations and draw conclusions. It is important that the performing group does not respond to the audience's guesses but waits for the correct interpretation.

You may wish to use a camera to take a photograph of each frame, this can be used for future exhibitions on your work on St Brigid and if you have permissions can be shared with the Embassy or with Connected Learning.

Time necessary for the activity is 30 minutes

Performance space required

Workshop Three (30 minutes)

Arts and crafts: making the St Brigid cross.

The following link from Scoilnet gives detailed instruction on how to make your own St Brigid Cross.

Please watch and decide how you'd like to do this with your class.

Make sure you have the necessary materials.

When you don't have access to resources used in the videos, please consider other artistic representations from St Brigid's life and times, drawing, painting etc

If you do this workshop before workshop two you may be able to use your crosses in the various reenactments of the Freeze Frame activity.

<https://www.scoilnet.ie/index.php?id=834>

Total duration with activities: minimum 2 hours



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Reenactments and art work can be shared on the Connected learning Padlet or directly with the Irish Embassy Madrid for dissemination through future newsletters or on the Embassy web.