

## Children's Message: Jesus, St. Patrick, and God's Presence Everywhere

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**Bible Reference:** Luke 13:34-35, Joel 3:16, Jeremiah 14:8

**Main Objective:** This specific Gospel lesson is slightly challenging, as Jesus is lamenting the abandonment and actions of Jerusalem, and being warned of His own persecution. However, it can be tied in with the season through a brief discussion of Saint Patrick. Saint Patrick was taken out of his home, and returned only to leave again. However, he realized that in all things, God was present, and that God wanted others to know of His presence, no matter who or where they were. Our role is to recognize Christ's power in our lives, and to share that with all people, wherever God might place us.

**Law/Gospel Theme:** Jesus came to save the lost, whoever and wherever they were. Although we make mistakes and sometimes even try to ignore God, He will always welcome us with arms of grace. God wants us to welcome and share with others, as well.

**Optional Materials:** St. Patrick's Day garb or decorations; small shamrocks or bent green pipe cleaners in shamrock shapes; sheep toy or puppet

### **Bible Verses to Reference (or for additional exploration):**

*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! <sup>35</sup> Behold, your house is forsaken. And I tell you, you will not see me until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!'" -Luke 13:34-35*

*The Lord roars from Zion,  
and utters his voice from Jerusalem,  
and the heavens and the earth quake.  
But the Lord is a refuge to his people,  
a stronghold to the people of Israel. -Joel 3:16*

*O you hope of Israel,  
its savior in time of trouble,  
why should you be like a stranger in the land,  
like a traveler who turns aside to tarry for a night? -Jeremiah 14:8*

## Children's Message for St. Patrick's Day

All elements are open to adjustment. If this message does not take place on or near St. Patrick's Day, additional alteration will obviously be necessary!

*Come to deliver the message with festive green garb, imitating an Irish lilting accent*

"Top o' the morning to ya, kids! Happy St. Patrick's Day! Have ye found any four-leaf clovers out there? Anyone bring some potatoes for lunch? How about corned beef? Have ye met my sheep here? She's just been doing some grazing. Shall we gather round for a bit o' harp music? Who's got a harp? *(pause. Drop the act)*

Well, obviously I am not from Ireland. But did you know that St. Patrick was not from Ireland either? He was actually British by birth. He was captured and taken to Ireland to work as a slave, basically a prisoner. While he was there, he worked as a shepherd (hence the sheep; Ireland has a lot of them), which gave him plenty of time to think and pray. He eventually managed to escape, and moved back home to England. However, once he got there, he felt that God was calling him back to Ireland, to serve the people there and tell them about Jesus.

So he again left his first home and went back to the land where he was in captivity, and he brought them God's message of forgiveness in Christ. He was responsible for bringing Christianity to Ireland, because he knew that God cared about those Celtic people just as much as He loved anyone. It's interesting, because in today's gospel reading, Jesus is expressing His sorrow over Jerusalem. Jerusalem was supposed to be a very special and very holy place for God's chosen people. But when Jesus came, they didn't want to recognize who He was. Jesus was upset that they rejected Him, but promised blessing for those who would accept Him. You see, Jesus came for everyone who would receive Him. He wasn't really at home on earth, but knew that God's presence was everywhere. Patrick also discovered that God could be present everywhere, whether or not he was "at home."

Have you ever had to move to a new place? It can be hard. We might not know as many friends, or we might have to adjust to how things are in a new place. But we can be comforted to know that God is with us no matter where we go. And because we know that, we can be ready to share the hope of Christ with other people, just like Patrick did. How do we do that?

Well, we can tell them with our words, but even more importantly we can demonstrate the love of God through our attitudes and actions. Simple gestures, smiles, and kindness go a long way to communicating that we care. Let's practice that this week, okay? Oh, and Happy St. Patrick's Day!"

**Optional take home:** give each child a small shamrock (or pipe cleaner in shamrock shape). Explain that Patrick would use these clovers, found all over Ireland, to explain the Trinity, which had three parts to it just like a clover had three leaves on one stem. He found practical lessons wherever he went!

**Prayer:** Offer thanks that God will be with us no matter where we go:  
(Have kids repeat each line, if desired)

Dear God,

Thank you for being present with us

Help us to remember you are near, no matter where we go

Help us be bold to share the love of Christ with one another

Thank you for your love, Lord

We love you!

In Jesus name we pray, Amen