

# Saint Kevin • Saint stories

St. Kevin is one of the glorious early saints of the Catholic Church. He was born in Ireland around the year 498. Since this was so long ago, it is hard to know what events from his life are fact, and which are legends. We do know he was raised Catholic and that many of his teachers later were declared saints. We also know that from the age of twelve he lived with monks and eventually was ordained a priest. After ordination, St. Kevin became a hermit, living far from town in a small cave.

He lived in this small cave for seven years. Even way back then, people gossiped about others. Word of a holy man living in a cave spread and many traveled the dangerous journey to reach his cave so they could talk to him. Eventually, Kevin had many followers who convinced him to leave his cave and start a monastery.

Beyond these facts, the rest of his story is unclear. Fact or legend? Read the legends about him below, and YOU decide!

## Legends of Saint Kevin:

- While living in the cave, Kevin wore animal skins and only ate nettles and herbs that grew nearby. Most of his time was spent in prayer. (Can you imagine just eating that? I don't know about you, but I am not a huge vegetable fan, even though I do eat them. Eating only nettles and herbs...YUCK!)
- To keep Kevin from being lonely in his cave, the trees, branches, and leaves would sometimes sing to him.
- An old pagan king had heard about the holy man living in a cave (St. Kevin). The king sent word for him to come see him because his pet goose was getting old and couldn't fly anymore! When Kevin arrived the king requested him to make the goose young again. "As payment

for making your goose young again," said Kevin, "I want to be given all the land that the goose will fly over." Thinking that Kevin would not be able to do it, he agreed. Kevin prayed and the goose became young and flew over a beautiful valley. This valley is where Kevin built his monastery.

- At the monastery Kevin started, he lived in a very small cell (room)...so small that he couldn't kneel with both arms outstretched like a cross. One day while praying, he outstretched both his arms, with one of his arms sticking out of the cell window. While praying, a blackbird landed on his palm, built a nest, and laid an egg. Not wanting to disturb the bird, Kevin kept his arm outstretched until the egg hatched and the baby bird was old enough to fly away. (Have you ever watched a bird build a nest, lay an egg, and wait for it to hatch? It takes a L0000NG time! Can you imagine keeping your arm outstretched for days and days?)
- Once there was a drought and food was scarce at the monastery. An otter brought salmon several times to feed the monks. One day, a monk commented about making gloves out of the otter's pelt. The otter never came back again. (I can't blame the poor otter!)
- A cow (I am guessing at the monastery, but I am not sure) had the habit of licking Kevin when he was nearby praying. This cow gave more milk than fifty cows altogether!
- A young man who suffered from severe epilepsy had a vision. In the vision, he was told that if he ate an apple he would be cured. However, no apple trees were anywhere around him. Kevin, hearing of the vision, commanded a nearby willow tree to produce apples for the man. Twenty yellow apples appeared on the tree!
- Saint Kevin died at the age of 120!

**Feast day: June 3**

**St. Kevin, pray for us!**

## **Activity: Competition Time! Let's Build a Nest!**

Time for some competition!!!

Pretend you and your sibling(s) and/or parent(s) are each Saint Kevin. Kneel down with your arms outstretched like a cross. Balance a plastic bowl on one hand. (Pretend the bowl is the nest he held.)

READY, SET, GO! Which of you can keep your arms out the longest without dropping the bowl (nest)?

Ready to build the nest now that will go on Saint Kevin's hand? (Actually, you will build it on a paper plate to keep the mess from getting all over the house.)

### **Materials:**

- Paper plate
- White liquid glue
- Old newspaper or shredded paper.

Tear the paper into strips or use paper already shredded from a paper shredder.

Take the pile of paper shreds and put a clump of them on the paper plate. Try to "burrow out" part of the center forming a nest. After you get your nest shape, dribble white glue (I use Elmer's washable glue) over the nest and let it dry. If you want, (and your parents say "OKAY") paint it.