



Beyond Leprechauns: Ireland, Interdisciplinary Activities for Grade 2-8

Mary Ellen Sweeney

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Students will study Ireland in an interdisciplinary way with the 18 plus differentiated lessons in "Beyond Leprechauns. . ." Through student choice and minimal teacher guidance students will deeply examine all things Irish: history, humor, dance, geography, architecture, language, literature. They will learn Gaelic, collect Irish words and write limericks. They will locate Ireland on a world map. They will examine study and appreciate the ancient sites and castles in Ireland. By building a timeline they will discover the beginnings of human life in Ireland. They will understand how Christians applied some of the Celtic tenants to garner the interest of Celtic women. Students will study how the failure of the potato crop over three years caused many to perish and millions to emigrate from Ireland. The Titanic, a topic of high interest to children will be experienced through secondary sources and virtual tours. On a more serious tone, students may examine the leading figures of the 1916 War of Independence and study the contributions of galant and passionate characters that lead to the separation of Ireland from England. Students may memorize a few lines from Yeats or study his writing and influence in literature. On a lighter note students will try Irish Step Dancing. They will also learn about the Irish culture through a guided film study with the 8 elements of culture delineated. Plans may be made for future Irish studies after encountering the activities in this book, "Beyond Leprechauns." The content of this book is both deep and lighthearted. The process of learning about the Irish people: the hardships, the challenges, the merriment and the resiliency will leave students with an appreciation that may lead them to identify other nationalities and ethnic groups to study in depth, as well!

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