**The Story of St. Brigid**

St. Brigid was born around 450AD near Faughart, a few miles north of Dundalk in Co. Louth.

Her father was a pagan chieftain who lived on a big farm. Her mother was a Christian slave who was baptised by St. Patrick.

**Her kindness**

Brigid was a very generous, kind and caring person. When she was a teenager she helped to look after her father’s house and she often gave away much of their food and clothes to people who needed them. Brigid was known for her generosity to the poor, and one story tells how, as a child, she once gave away her mother’s whole store of butter. Knowing that this would get her into trouble she prayed to God that the butter would be replenished and her prayers were heard. She is given the credit of healing people and restoring speech to those who could not talk. There are lots of stories of how she loved and cared for animals.

Perhaps the best known story is of her visit to a dying pagan chieftain. While she prayed, she took rushes from the floor and wove them into a cross. While she was weaving she told the chieftain all about Jesus and how he had died on the cross. While she was weaving she told the chieftain all about Jesus and how he had died on the cross. The chieftain was baptised and became a Christian. Brigid’s crosses are made each St. Brigid’s Day. People like to hang the crosses in their homes and sheds to protect themselves and their animals from harm.

**Brigid becomes a nun**

She decided to give her life to God as a nun, and with seven other young women. She founded a convent in Kildare. *Solas Bride* still burns in Kildare

**Brigid’s Cloak**

She needed land to build a church, so that everyone would have a place to come to when they wanted to talk to God. She had no land to build a church. She went to the local chieftain asked for him for some land. Brigid explained she wanted to build a church.

The chieftain took her to the top of a high hill, and said, “All the land, as far as you can see, is mine.” He hold Brigid he would give her as much land as her cloak would cover. Brigid had great faith in God. So she placed her cloak on the ground. But when Brigid laid her cloak on the ground, the cloak began to grow bigger and bigger. It spread out wider and wider, further and further. The chieftain’s face grew pale. “Stop it!” shouted the chieftain. “Stop it, please!”

“Stop it, now!” She told the cloak to stop. The chieftain had to keep his promise to give her as much land as her cloak would cover. Now she had enough land to build her church. She went back to tell her friends what had happened. That night they thanked God for helping them with their church. The name Kildare means ‘*church of the* *oak’ -* Cill Daire.

St. Brigid is one of the three Patron Saints of Ireland, along with St. Patrick and St. Columcille. St. Brigid is much loved and remembered today.