

# Saint David

Saint David is the patron saint of Wales and he is known for spreading Christianity in Europe as well as performing miracles. His birth date is thought to be between 462 and 512.

He was born on a cliff top near Capel Non, on the south-west Wales coast during a fierce storm. Both his parents were descendants of Welsh royalty. His father was Sandde, Prince of Powys. His mother was Non, daughter of a chieftain of Menevia (now the cathedral city of St David's).



Dewi was brought up in Aberaeron by his mother. Together, they founded a nunnery at Llanon, a nearby town. He was educated at the monastery of Hen Fynyw and his teacher was Saint Paulinis. Non was a saint and she opened many monasteries, including one in Brittany where she later settled.

Legend has it that he performed many miracles. His most famous miracle took place when he was preaching in the middle of a large crowd in the village of Llanddewi Brefi. The spot of ground where he stood is said to have risen so that he was standing on a hill and everyone had a better chance of seeing and hearing him. A white dove, which became his emblem, was seen sitting on his shoulder. Another miracle for which he is famous is restoring the sight of Paulinis.

## Did You Know...?

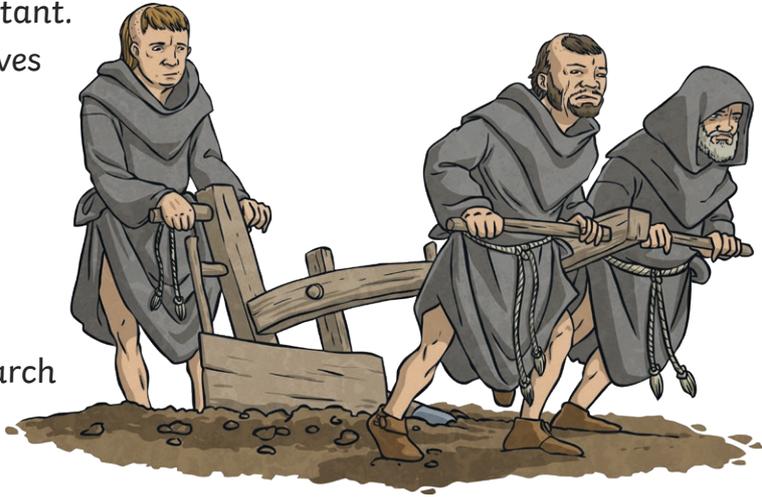
During a battle against the Saxons, he told the soldiers to wear leeks on their helmets to distinguish themselves from the enemy. Therefore, the leek is one of the emblems of Wales!

## Interesting Facts about His Life

- He is said to have helped stop Pelagianism – a group which disagreed with the Church of Wales.
- He travelled to Jerusalem where he became a bishop.
- He was ordained Archbishop of Wales in Llanddewi Brefi in 550.
- He opened 12 monasteries. The largest monastery was in Mynwy, West Wales.
- He was a strict vegetarian who ate only vegetables, bread and herbs. He drank only water.

### What Did Monks Do?

- Monks had to farm the land to provide for themselves and to share with the poor. Some used an ox to pull the plough; however, David preferred pulling the plough himself.
- Monks spent their evenings in prayer, reading or writing scripture.
- Beekeeping was very important.
- Monks had to keep themselves fed as well as looking after the poor.
- No personal possessions were allowed.



### Saint David's Death

Saint David died on 1<sup>st</sup> March 589, at Mynwy. It is believed that he was over one hundred years old when he died! He was buried in a shrine in the sixth-century cathedral in Mynwy, which is in ruins nowadays.

During his last sermon to his followers, his final words were: 'Gwnewch y pethau bychain mewn bywyd' or 'Do the little things in life'. This phrase is still popular in Wales up to this day.

In 1120, the Pope announced that David was a saint and soon after, he was named the patron saint of Wales. March 1st is an important festival in Wales and is also celebrated in many other places across the world.



# Questions

1. 'His birth date is thought to be between 462 and 512'.

Why do you think nobody knows his exact birth date?

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2. Find and write three facts about his mother.

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3. Explain why the leek is a national emblem in Wales.

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4. Being a monk was hard work. Write three sentences about the life of a monk.

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5. Use your dictionary to find the meanings of these words:

bishop \_\_\_\_\_

denounced \_\_\_\_\_

ordained \_\_\_\_\_

6. Why do you think Saint David travelled to Jerusalem to become a bishop and not somewhere closer?

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7. Who decided that David was to become a saint, and when did it happen?

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8. How was Saint David associated with Welsh royalty?

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9. Add three important events from the life of Saint David so that this table lists events in the order that they happened.

Saint David was born on a cliff top during a storm.
Saint David was named patron saint of Wales.

10. How do you celebrate St. David's Day?

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# Answers

1. 'His birth date is thought to be between 462 and 512'.  
Why do you think nobody knows his exact birth date?  
**His birth date had not been officially recorded. Not much is known about his life as history and events were not being recorded at this time.**
2. Find and write three facts about his mother.
  - **Her name was Non.**
  - **She was the daughter of a chieftain of Menevia (now the cathedral city of St David's).**
  - **She was a saint.**
  - **Together with Saint David, she founded a nunnery in Llanon.**
  - **She opened many monasteries.**
  - **She settled in Brittany where she had opened a monastery.**
3. Explain why the leek is a national emblem in Wales.  
**During a battle against the Saxons, Saint David told the soldiers to wear leeks on their helmets to distinguish themselves from the enemy.**
4. Being a monk was hard work. Write three sentences about the life of a monk.  
**Children's own responses, with reference to any three of the following: Monks had to farm the land to provide for themselves and to share with the poor; Monks normally used an ox to pull the plough; Monks spent their evenings in prayer, reading or writing scripture; Beekeeping was very important; Monks had to keep themselves fed as well as looking after the poor; No personal possessions were allowed.**
5. Use your dictionary to find the meanings of these words:  
**Pupils' answers will vary depending on the dictionary used.**
6. Why do you think Saint David travelled to Jerusalem to become a bishop and not somewhere closer?  
**Children's own responses, such as: Jerusalem is a holy city for Christians and Saint David may have wanted to see where Jesus was crucified.**
7. Who decided that David was to become a saint, and when did it happen?  
**In 1120, the Pope announced that David was a saint.**
8. How was Saint David associated with Welsh royalty?  
**Both of Saint David's parents were descendants of Welsh royalty.**

1. Add three important events from the life of Saint David so that this table lists events in the order that they happened.

Saint David was born on a cliff top during a storm.
<b>Children's own responses, such as: Saint David founded a nunnery with his mother.</b>
<b>Children's own responses, such as: Saint David was made Archbishop of Wales.</b>
<b>Children's own responses, such as: Saint David died on 1<sup>st</sup> March 589.</b>
Saint David was named patron saint of Wales.

2. How do you celebrate St. David's Day?  
**Children's own responses.**