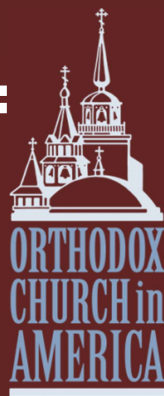


# Blessed is the Kingdom: An Orthodox Church School Curriculum



**Lesson 11**      **3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades**

## The Holy Trinity

Objective: Through the Trisagion Hymn students will understand God as one God with three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### Lesson Introduction

**5 min**

Start by **saying**:

*Here we have an apple. Let's examine it. What is on the outside of it? (The peel or skin)*

Using the knife, **peel** off the skin of the apple, and then hold up the peeled apple and **ask**:

*What is this? (Flesh or meat of the apple)*

**Cut** the apple into four parts, and **remove** the seeds. Hold up a seed, and **ask**:

*What is this? (Seed)*

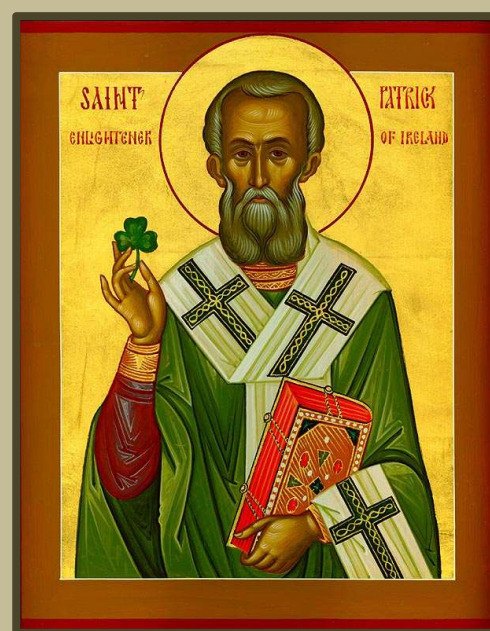
**Holding** up all three parts, **ask** the following:

*Is the skin or peel still an apple? (Yes)*

*Is the center flesh or meat of the apple still an apple? (Yes)*

*Are the seeds still an apple? (Yes)*

*Each part is still an apple. It's all an apple, but it has three parts.*



### Opening Prayer

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth who art everywhere and fillest all things. Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good one.

### Liturgy Links

<https://www.oca.org/media/video/20th-aac-thursday-morning-divine-liturgy>

### Trisagion Hymn

Skip to 41:23-44:49 for this portion

### Supplies Needed

- Apples—one to demonstrate and extras to eat
- Knife
- Plate

# Lesson—25 min

## Supplies Needed

- Apples from before
- Paper or board to write on
- Lesson Printable
- Three Candles
- Lighter
- Divine Liturgy Service books (one per student)

## Teacher Resources

### OCA Essential Orthodox Christian Beliefs: A Manual for Adult Instruction

<https://www.oca.org/cdn/PDFs/2023-0609-EOCB.pdf>

Chapter 6 The Holy Trinity

### Life of Saint Patrick

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/1949/03/17/100821-saint-patrick-bishop-of-armagh-enlightener-of-ireland>

### The Sign of the Cross

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-church-building/sign-of-the-cross>

### God, The Father Almighty

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/god>

### The Son of God

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/son-of-god>

### The Holy Spirit

<https://www.oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/doctrine-scripture/the-symbol-of-faith/holy-spirit>

**Hand** out pieces of the apple for the class to **eat** while they listen. **Play** the hymn Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal from the Liturgy link, and then **say**:

*This hymn from the Liturgy is called the Trisagion which is Greek and means "thrice holy". It reminds us that God has three parts. Can you name them?*

The Father (God)

The Son (Christ)

The Holy Spirit

**Write** down each part as they name them, and then **continue**:

*Just like the apple, God has three parts that are still each God. There is only one God, just like there is just one apple, but like the apple has a peel, the flesh, and the seed, God is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

**Hold up** the Lesson Printable, and explain.

*There is only one God—pictured in the center.*

*We have God the Father who is considered the principle of unity within the Trinity.*

*The Son is divine because He is eternally begotten by God. Begotten means born or generated by. However, He was born "before all ages", so there was never a time that the Son did not exist. Another way to say this is the Son is "born and not created". He was generated by the very being and nature of the Father. The Son is the image of the invisible God, as we see in Christ.*

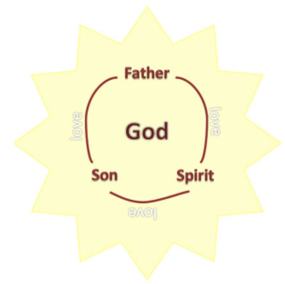
*The Spirit is divine because He is eternally proceeding from the Father and resting in the Father's Son. The Spirit is described as the "breath of life" and acts with power to create and strengthen the world.*

*Another way to look at it is God the Father is above us in heaven, ruling the cosmos or universe and receiving our prayers.*

*God the Son is in our midst offering mankind union with Himself through Baptism.*

*God the Spirit is in our hearts.*

Lesson Printable



# Lesson Continued

## 5 Minute Bonus

### As Many As Have Been Baptized Hymn

Listen to the hymn "As Many as Have Been Baptized" that is sometimes used in place of Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal during feast days, such as Lazarus Saturday, Palm Sunday, and the Feast of Theophany. Practice crossing yourselves at the appropriate times.

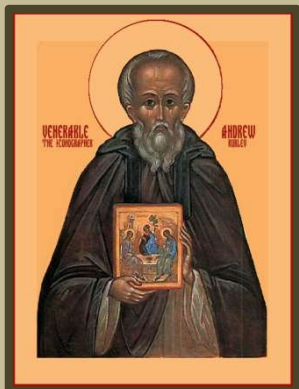
## Supplemental Ideas

### Leaf Spotting

Head outside to look for plants that have three leaves attached to one stem.

### The Hospitality of Abraham Icon

If your church has an icon of The Hospitality of Abraham, also known as The Holy Trinity, have students look at it. Discuss how Abraham was visited by three angels that represented God's three persons. Read the story in Genesis 18:1-8.



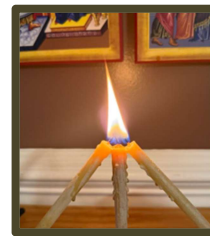
**Choose** three students to help you. **Hand** each a candle. Have them hold them upright. **Light** each candle, and **ask**:

*How many candles do we have? (Three) How many flames do you see? (Three) What do you think will happen when we bring the flames together?*

**Take** answers, and then have the center student keep their candle upright, while the other two **tilt** their candles to have all three wicks touching. **Ask**:

*How many flames do you see? (One) There are three candles, but one flame. Just like God has three parts, but is one God.*

**Repeat** this process with each student having a chance to hold a candle.



**Blow** out the candles. **Hand out** Divine Liturgy service books, and **ask**:

*When we pray, we frequently talk about God as three persons. When do we do that? Let's look through our Divine Liturgy service books for examples of when we do this.*

**Have** students search through their service books for examples of times the service talks about God as three persons. As they find examples, have them call them out, and **list** them on a large piece of paper or board to display. Then **continue**:

*What have you learned to do when we say any of the phrases that reference God as three persons? (Cross ourselves)*

**Review** how we cross ourselves putting our thumb and first two fingers together. **Ask**:

*Why do we put those three fingers together? (Because God has three parts—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.)*

*What do the other two fingers stand for? (The two natures of Christ—He is fully God and fully man.)*

**Stand** in front of the class icon corner, and **listen** to the Trisagion Hymn again having students cross themselves each time they hear "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal" or "Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit".

# Lesson Activities

## Pastel Shamrock—10 min

**Supplies needed:** table cloth, black construction paper, shamrock printable cut out, tape, chalk pastels, Q tips, hair spray, wipes, St. Patrick icon printable

Prior to class print the shamrock printable, one per student. Cover the tables as this can get a bit messy, and have wipes available to clean hands afterwards.

**Show** the icon of St. Patrick, and **ask** students if they know who he is. Then **explain**:

*St. Patrick was the Bishop of Armagh and is called the Enlightener of Ireland. He helped explain God's three parts by using a shamrock. Do you see what St. Patrick is holding? (A shamrock) How many stems does the shamrock have? (One) How many leaves does the shamrock have? (Three) It has three leaves growing out of a single stem. If the stem represents one God, what do the leaves represent? (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit)*

Have students cut out the shamrock, and tape it onto the center of the black construction paper. Have students make a thick pastel line around the shamrock's edge. Using a Q tip smudge the pastel line and pull it away from the shamrock. Once done, remove the shamrock printable, tap paper gently to remove extra pastel dust, and spray the black construction paper with hair spray to set the pastels and prevent them from running.



## Closing Thoughts— 5 min

**Ask:** Name something that has three parts, but is one thing.

Examples: egg, apple, orange, shamrock, God, pumpkin, zucchini...

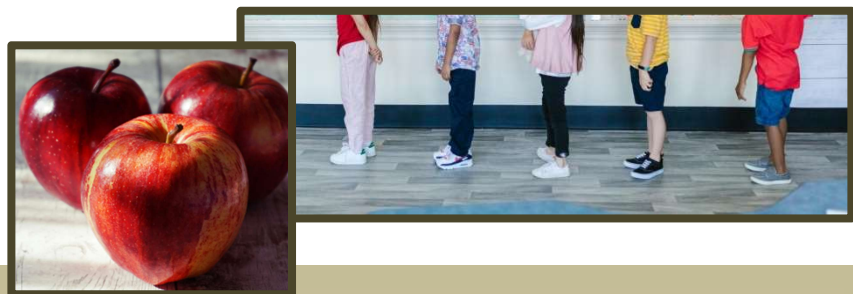
## Over/Under Apple Relay—10 min

**Supplies needed:** 2-3 apples

Students stand one behind the other in a line facing forward. The front person gets an apple. They pass it to the person behind them by reaching over their head. The person behind them grabs the apple and then passes to the person behind them by reaching between their legs. They continue this relay of over/under until it reaches the last person in line. This person then runs to the front of the line and restarts the relay by passing the apple over their head to the person behind them. This can continue until the person who started in the front is now at the end of the line.

If your class is large, you could split into two or three groups and race each other. You could also time them to see how fast they can go and see if they can beat their last time. Or see if you can do it without dropping an apple. You could also have them do all over their head for one round, and then do only under their legs for one round.

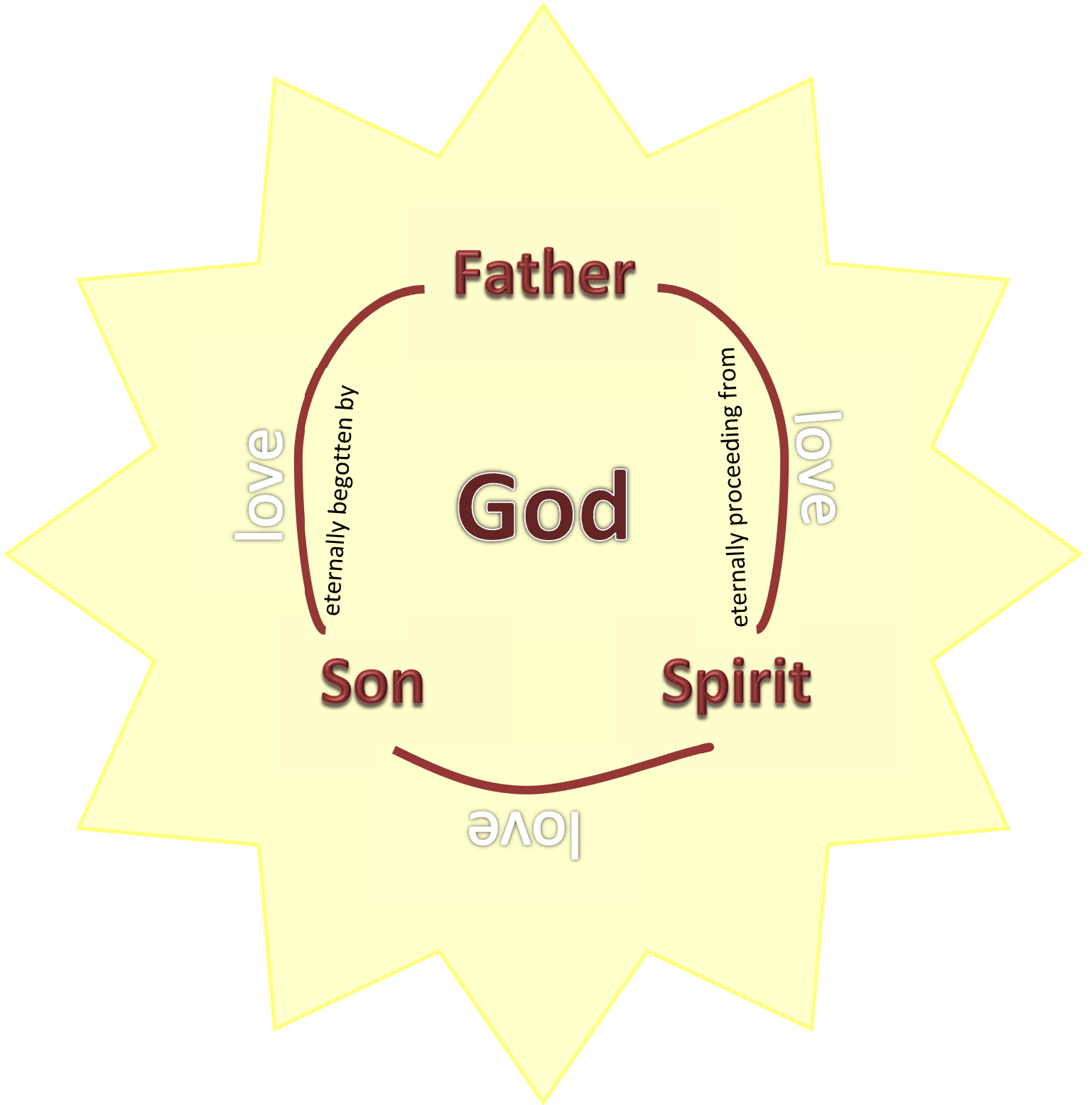
The goal is to get them moving. And be sure to ask them to explain why you would be using an apple for this game. Remind them of the "one apple; 3 parts"; "one God; 3 persons" connection.



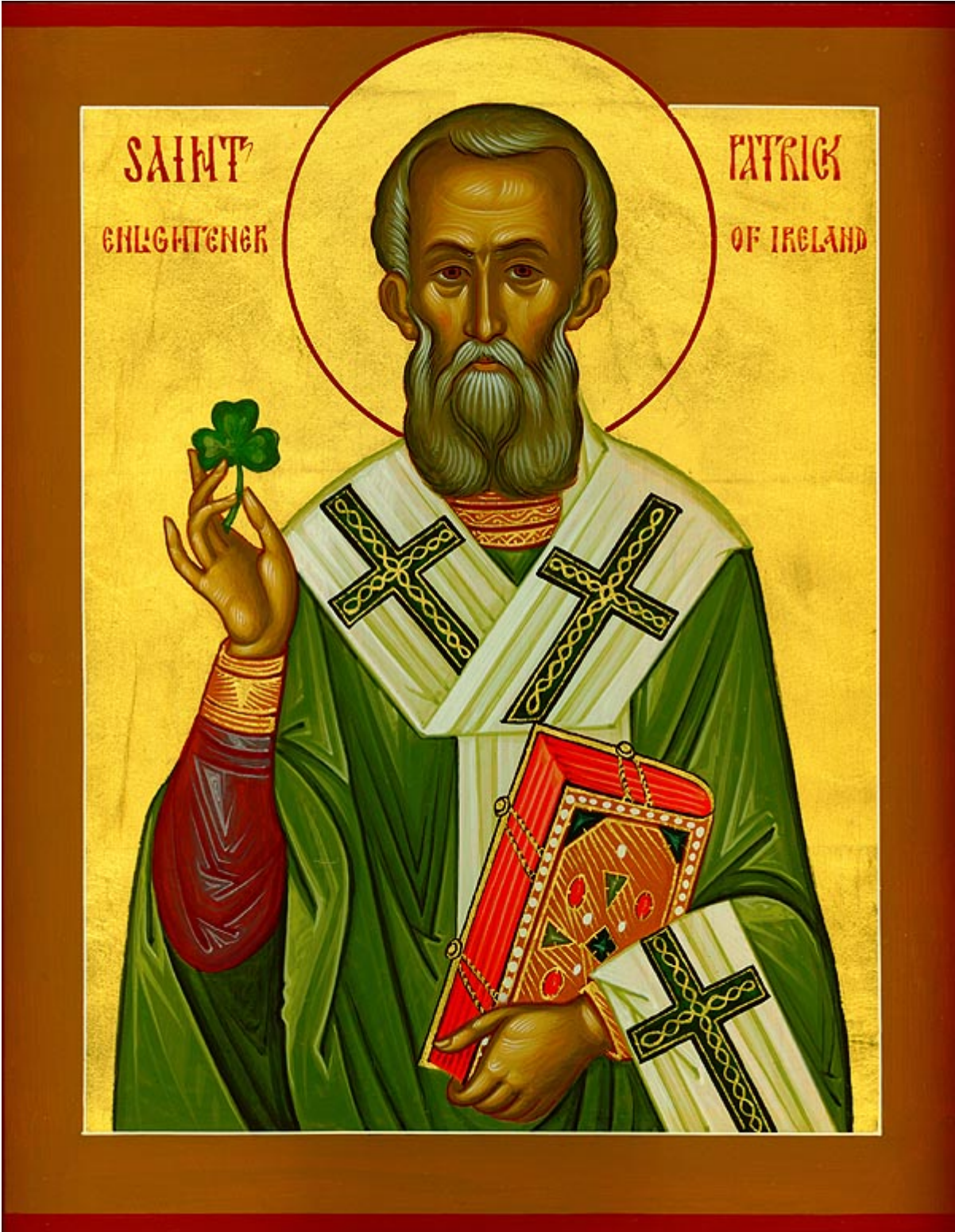
## Closing Prayer

It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, without defilement you gave birth to God the Word. True Theotokos we magnify you!

# Lesson Printable



Lesson Printable



**Lesson Printable—Shamrock**

