

Early Christian Ireland

Headings	Notes
EARLY CHRISTIAN IRELAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christianity first came to Ireland during the time of the Celts who were pagans. Their “priests” or spiritual figures were the Druids. The earliest official source of Christianity in Ireland is AD 431 with the arrival of Palladius. Between AD 432-461, St. Patrick worked in Ireland, converting the Pagan Celts to Christianity. Monasteries were built, creating religious communities of monks, (men who dedicated their lives to God as well as a life of prayer and work) which often became centres of learning. Inis Mór founded by St. Enda on the Aran Islands around AD 500 is the earliest known Irish monastery. These monks slept in small stone huts shaped like beehives (“beehive huts”). Other monasteries include Clonmacnoise, Skellig Michael and Glendalough.
LIFE IN AN IRISH MONASTERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An oratory: a building made of wood/stone where monks attended Mass or prayed. A scriptorium: where manuscripts were copied by hand and illustrated. A refectory: where monks ate their meals. A round tower: a bell tower and safe place for people and treasures if there was an attack. A guest house: accommodation for travellers or visiting tradesmen. A cemetery for the monks’ simple graves. An external circular wall for protection.
THE ART OF EARLY CHRISTIAN IRELAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early Irish monasteries created works of art to honour God and show off the monastery’s importance. Manuscripts (e.g Book of Kells) were books written on parchment or vellium using quills. They contained the gospels, psalms and stories of the lives of saints (and myths) written in Latin. They were decorated in Celtic patterns and bright colours, reflecting this “Golden Age”. Metalwork included crosses, bells, broaches, belts, cups and chalices such as the Ardagh Chalice. High Crosses were free-standing stone crosses covered in detailed carvings from the Bible as people of this time could not read or write so relied on the carvings to learn the bible. The Cross of the Scriptures in Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly.

Keywords	Summary
Pagans	<p>Christianity arrived in Ireland at the end of the Iron Age. Bishops such as Palladius and St. Patrick are responsible for converting the pagan Celts to Christianity. Monks established monasteries on the island which became centres of learning for much of Europe. Inis Mór was founded on the Aran Islands by St. Enda as the first monastery in Ireland. It had beehive huts for the monks to sleep in. It was followed by monasteries such as Clonmacnoise and Skellig Michael. Early Irish monasteries had several common features such as: an oratory, a scriptorium, a refectory, round towers, a guesthouse, a cemetery and walls. Early Irish monasteries created many works of art to honour God and show off the monastery’s importance. Manuscripts such as the Book of Kells, metalwork such as the Ardagh Chalice and high crosses such The Cross of the Scriptures were used to teach non-reading pagans about Christianity. .</p>
Guesthouse	
Druids	
Cemetery	
Palladius	
Manuscripts	
St Patrick	
Metalwork	
Monasteries	
High Crosses	
Oratory	
Clonmacnoise	
Scriptorium	
Inis Mór	
Refectory	
Beehive Huts	
Round Tower	
Book of Kells	

Early Christian Ireland

Headings	Notes
THE IMPACT OF IRISH MONKS ABROAD	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• AD 500-1000 was a period of war and instability known as the Dark Ages.• Irish monks travelled abroad, founding new monasteries and centres of learning throughout Europe.• This period was known as the Golden Age of Irish monasteries.• St Colmcille founded monasteries in Ireland at Durrow and Derry before later travelling to an island off the coast of Scotland where he founded the monastery on Iona (where the Book of Kells was written).
THE VIKINGS COME TO IRELAND	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Vikings were Scandinavian farmers and fishermen who had superb shipbuilding and navigation skills.• The Vikings built longships which could withstand the cold northern storms of Norway, Sweden and Denmark but also small enough to sail up rivers.• AD 795 saw the arrival of the Vikings in Ireland as they carried out raids on the monasteries at Lambay Island (Dublin) and Rathlin Island (Armagh).• These Viking raiders burned settlements, stole food and treasures and took captives as their slaves.• The Vikings established longphorts (camps established beside waterways which were used as bases for raids) as time continued which eventually grew into towns such as Wexford, Waterford and Limerick.• The best source for Viking life in Ireland has been found at Wood Quay, Dublin where evidence of a Viking settlement was found beside the River Liffey.
Keywords	Summary
The Dark Ages	Once Irish monasteries were thriving, many of their founders then travelled abroad to mainland Europe during the Dark Ages where they continued to spread the teachings of Christianity to the pagans on the mainland. While mainland Europe suffered war and instability, the Irish monasteries thrived in a period
The Golden Age	Known as the Golden Age of Irish monasteries. St. Colmcille was responsible for the founding of the monasteries in Durrow and Derry in Ireland as well as the monastery on the island of Iona . This period
St. Colmcille	was followed by the arrival of the Vikings in AD 795 which brought with them violence and brutality on the Early Irish monasteries. The Vikings used their longships to travel up the rivers of Ireland, allowing
Iona	them to attack monasteries and steal their treasures and food. Raid bases (longphorts) eventually grew
Vikings	into towns such as Wexford, Waterford and Limerick. The most famous archaeological evidence we have
Longships	of Viking settlements in Ireland was found at Wood Quay in Dublin.
Raids	
Longphorts	
Wexford	
Wood Quay	

Early Christian Ireland

Keywords	Definitions
Abbess	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The head nun in a convent.
Abbot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The head monk in a monastery.
Annals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A yearly record of events, written in manuscript in Early Christian Ireland
Ardagh Chalice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The most famous metal artefact from Early Christian Ireland.
Chalice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A large cup or goblet used in Christian ceremonies.
Beehive huts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stone buildings with a curved shape often used by monks in Early Christian Ireland• The most famous manuscript from Early Christian Ireland; it is an illustrated copy of the four gospels.
Book of Kells	
Cell	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A one-person building or hut in which a monk would sleep.
Convent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A complex of buildings where nuns live, work and devote their lives to God.
Diocese	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The area controlled by a Christian bishop.
Druid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A pagan or Celtic priest. Druids believed in many gods and had great influence over Gaelic Chieftains.
Filigree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fine gold or silver wire formed into patterns on chalices and other objects
High Cross	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stone structure shaped like a cross, usually marking the centre of a monastery or an important grave. Decorated with images from the bible.
Irish diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All the Irish people and descendants of Irish people who live outside Ireland.
Longphort	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Viking camp by the water, used as a base for raids.
Longship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Viking ship designed to navigate rough seas and inland rivers.
Manuscript	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A book written by hand.
Missionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Someone sent to spread Christianity in a foreign place.
Monastery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A complex of buildings where monks live, work and devote their lives to God.
Nun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A woman dedicated to a religious order and to life in a convent.
Monk	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A man dedicated to a religious order and to life in a monastery.
Oratory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small church.
Pagan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Christians used this term to refer to non-Christians who worshipped many Gods.
Round Tower	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stone tower used by monks as a belfry or place to hide during attacks.
Scribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A monk who works in a scriptorium.
Tonsure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circular haircut on monk's head
Scriptorium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A room where manuscripts were copied by hand and illustrated by scribes.