

Use “The Scene” to introduce “Relationships of Purity,” the High School Sunday school lesson for March 17, 2019. The lesson is found on page 17 of *High School Teacher* by Standard Publishing.

the SCENE

Viewing the latest news through the lens of Scripture

St. Patrick’s Day will be celebrated all over the world this week, but often it seems those celebrations have much less to do with the saint of that name and much more to do with some cartoonish version of Irish culture. People will be drinking green beer, wearing green clothes, pinning on green shamrock buttons, waving green flags, and walking beside rivers dyed green. And did I mention the green beer? St. Patrick’s Day has become a holiday (like New Year’s Eve) known for people consuming vast amounts of alcohol and having wild parties that spill out into the streets.

But at this time, it may be best to think about some of the heartfelt thoughts of Patrick himself. Read these two quotations from his writings and think about what this fifth-century Christian missionary (who was, by the way, kidnapped as a teenager by pirates and sold into slavery—what a story!) was really all about.

So I hope that I did as I ought, but I do not trust myself as long as I am in this mortal body, for he is strong who strives daily to turn me away from the faith and true holiness to which I aspire until the end of my life for Christ my Lord, but the hostile flesh is always dragging one down to death, that is, to unlawful attractions. And I know in part why I did not lead a perfect life like other believers, but I confess to my Lord and do not blush in his sight, because I am not lying; from the time when I came to know him in my youth, the love of God and fear of him increased in me, and right up until now, by God’s favour, I have kept the faith.

—from *The Confessio*

Read from this prayer attributed also to Patrick:

*I arise today
Through God’s strength to pilot me:
God’s might to uphold me,
God’s wisdom to guide me,
God’s eye to look before me,
God’s ear to hear me,
God’s word to speak for me,
God’s hand to guard me,
God’s way to lie before me,
God’s host to secure me
against snares of devils
against temptations of vices
against inclinations of nature
against everyone who shall wish me ill,
afar and anear,
alone and in a crowd.*

As students arrive, give each of them a copy of the above to read. After all teens have had the opportunity to read it, discuss it in this way:

What do you know about St. Patrick?

What do you learn about Patrick through reading his words?



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What role does faith have in helping people to stay away from vices (such as drinking)?

In today’s culture, purity is often not a concept that has a lot of value—unless a person is talking about the purity of what we eat and drink, perhaps. Patrick obviously prayed to help maintain his purity. We’re going to take a look at three things that Paul says about keeping our relationships morally pure.



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