



Danny's Celtic Kids

"Ireland is where strange tales begin and happy endings are possible"

Newsletter Issue 9 December 2005



Danny's Corner

Hello again to all my friends. The last few weeks have been a little rough for my family and me. We live in New Orleans, so Hurricane Katrina forced us to move to Jasper, Texas. Then Hurricane Rita forced us out of Jasper for awhile. But we were lucky. We are safe and okay. I want to thank all my friends who have offered their prayers and their love.

Family and friends are the most important possessions you can have. And that reminds me of something. Christmas will be here before we know it.

You know, when I think of Christmas, I remember the joy of a gathering of family and friends in someone's house. No one had many material possessions and very little money. There weren't a lot of presents or gift giving as we know it today. Back then, instead of things like toys or clothes, people gave something of themselves. By that, I mean that they gave from their hearts. It could be a wonderful old story, a lively tune on a fiddle, whistle, accordion, or harmonica, or a traditional dance. The house was full of warmth and the sounds of laughter and music.

For all the people who were forced away from their homes by the hurricanes, this may be a very different sort of Christmas. Keep them in your thoughts and prayers. And remember, try giving something of yourself this Christmas. I promise you'll enjoy it.

Danny



A Traditional Irish Blessing

Walls for the wind,
And a roof for the rain,
And drinks beside the fire.
Laughter to cheer you
And those you love near you.
And all that your heart may desire.



The Irish Alphabet

The Irish alphabet and Irish manuscript lettering is different from the English alphabet. There are **8 letters missing!**

The Irish alphabet is: **a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, l, m, n, o, p, r, s, t, and u.**

Irish manuscript lettering looks like this:



Now see if you can write your name in Irish manuscript. If you place a piece of paper over the letters, you can trace them or try to copy them without tracing.

If your name has a j, k, q, v, w, x, y, or z in it, you can use the letters below that we made up for you.

j k q v w x y z

You can use the Irish Manuscript lettering to make your own Celtic Christmas Cards. Print "Merry Christmas" or "Happy Holidays" on your cards and then decorate them with drawings of a Christmas tree, Christmas wreath, stocking, or anything else you would like.

Have fun!!!



The Origins of Beliefs About Mistletoe

When you decorate for Christmas, do you hang a piece of mistletoe somewhere in your house?

Beginning in Victorian times, kissing under the mistletoe has become a Christmas tradition. Young men and women who ordinarily would be very shy about asking for a kiss, find their courage under the mistletoe because it is a tradition. But where did this tradition really start?

What is mistletoe? It is a plant, but it doesn't grow in the soil. It grows on trees, using the tree to get its food. It cannot exist without a tree. This relationship makes mistletoe a parasite. It is completely dependent on its host (the tree) for its survival.

In ancient times, mistletoe was thought of as a healing plant. Through superstition and myth the little plant took on miraculous healing powers. In the Celtic language, "mistletoe" means "all heal". The ancient Celts believed that the little plant had magical healing power and that it held the soul of the tree it lived on. Mistletoe could ward off evil spirits, cure sickness, bring good luck. They even believed that mortal enemies who happened to meet each other in the forest under mistletoe would lay down their weapons and be friendly to one another. This is where the custom of hanging a sprig of mistletoe over a doorway or in a room started. It was a token of good will and peace to all who entered the house.

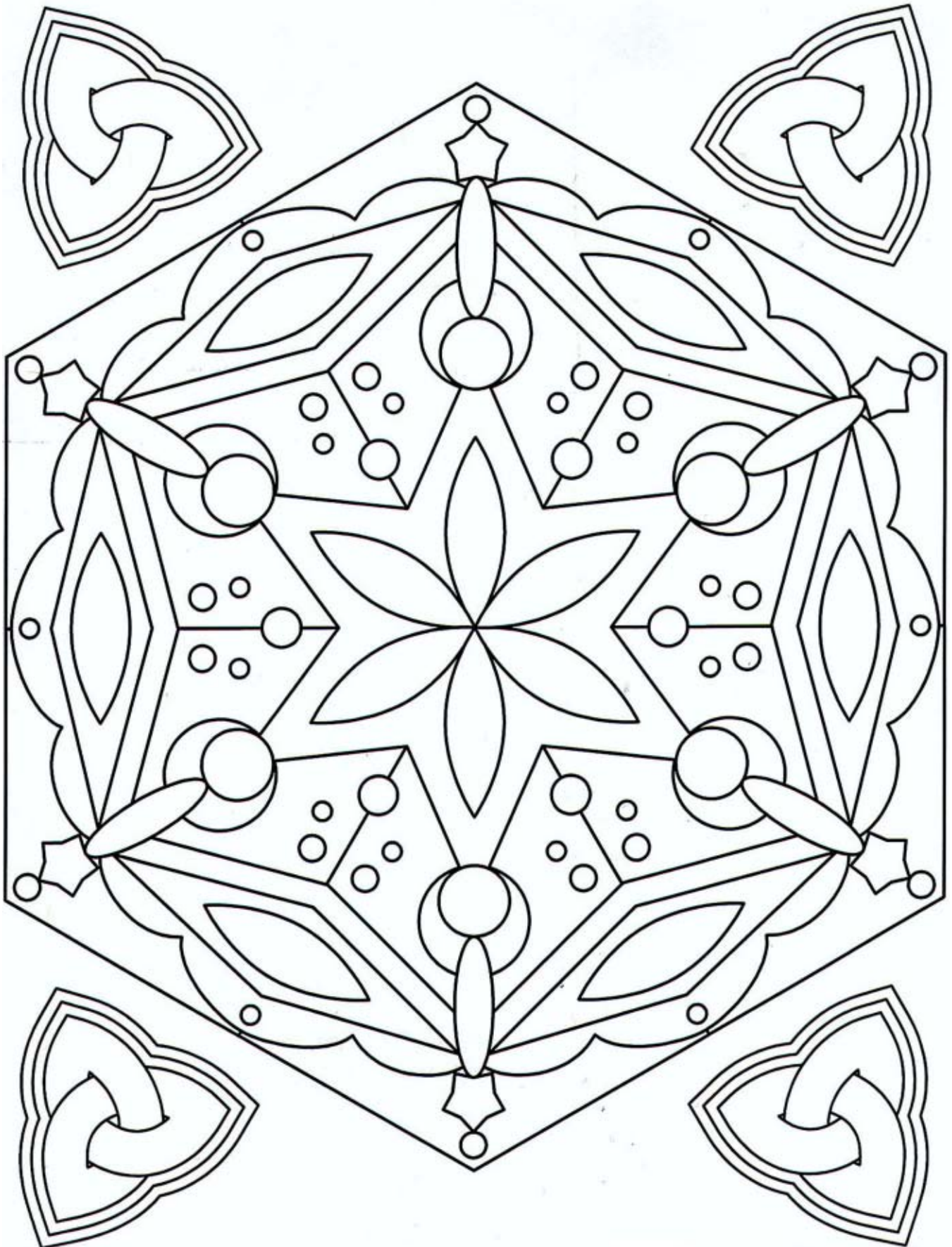
The Vikings had their own beliefs regarding mistletoe. They believed that the power of mistletoe came from the god of the summer sun whose name was Balder. The story says that Balder had a bad dream in which he died. When he told his mother who was the goddess of love and beauty about his dream, she became very frightened, because if Balder died all life on earth would die. So, Balder's mother went to all the elements air, earth, water, and fire, and she went to all the animals and plants on earth and asked them not to hurt her son. But she forgot about the mistletoe. Since it doesn't grow in the soil, but only in the trees, she didn't see it.

A bad and jealous god made a poison from the mistletoe, put it on an arrow and shot it into Balder. Balder died. For three days the earth grew dark and it poured rain. All the elements, plants and animals tried to bring Balder back to life, but they couldn't do it. However, when his mother's tears fell on the mistletoe, they turned into the white berries on the plant. When that happened, Balder began to live again.

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Is this a Celtic snowflake or a Celtic star?
You decide and then color the picture.





His mother was so happy that she took away the mistletoe's poison and kissed everyone who passed beneath the tree where it grew. And from that time on she said that anyone who passed beneath the mistletoe should have a token kiss and be lucky for the rest of their lives.

Now, when Christianity took over Europe, the leaders decided that the Celtic and Viking ways were bad. People abandoned the practice of using mistletoe for good luck. It wasn't until the Victorian times, that the little plant found its way back into acceptance and became part of Christmas celebrations.

So remember, if you get a kiss under the mistletoe this Christmas, the tradition of that kiss goes back for a thousand years to the ancient Celts and the Vikings.



Get your copy of Danny's book and music CD for kids.

You can purchase them at [www.Celtic NationsWorld.com](http://www.CelticNationsWorld.com) in the Celtic Shop



***The Monster Picnic* CD \$15.00 plus shipping and handling
Thirteen songs to delight children of all ages.**



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A story of the Loch Ness Monster family and their adventures.**

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We invite everyone to print a copy for themselves or for a friend. We also invite teachers to give copies to their students.

Be sure to check www.dannyoflaherty.com to see about having Danny bring his wonderful program of music and fun to your school.