

# **Leprechaun Lessons**

## **A Behavior Modification Idea For March**



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### Leprechaun Lessons As A Behavior Management Idea

As a fun writing-geography extension for March write a class letter to the leprechauns in Ireland. The last few days of February as I'm tearing a paper chain off our [calendar chain](#), I ask my Y5's if anyone knows what a **leprechaun** is?

Sometimes one or two do and I let them explain to the class about this mischievous creature and then show them a map of [Ireland](#), their flag, a picture a house in Ireland and of course what a leprechaun might look like. Click on the link to view/print these things.

We discuss "real and pretend" and I ask them if they'd like to write a class letter and send it to the leprechauns, inviting a few of them to our state. We tell them a little bit about our state and ask them if they'd like to come visit our classroom and stay to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us.

It's always a unanimous yes. Click on the link to read my [letter](#) and activity sheet to see if you'd like to follow that format, or guide your students and compose your own.

If you're a [subscription member](#) and would like to follow up with a cut and glue **activity sheet** like this, e-mail me what state you're from, and I'll send you the clipart rectangles for your state so your students can do this too. Because I'm from Michigan, this is already done.

## The Leprechauns Write Back!

I let a day or 2 pass by and then I announce to the children that we've received a [letter](#) from the leprechauns! Click to view/print. My students all know that we are just playing a game, but it's amazing how excited and involved they get with the imaginative play!

On the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, or their first day of school in March, (This year it falls on a Tuesday) my students arrive to find each of their chairs tipped over! Could this be the work of those mischievous leprechauns? Hmmm we look around the room and someone spies a little pile of gold glitter and a leprechaun card.

Buy a large jar of gold glitter to add to the fun. I use this like Tinker Bell's pixie dust and sprinkle a little bit where the leprechaun's have left a mess, sort of as a signature of them being here. I also leave their "calling card" like visitors did during the Victorian times. My students think this is great fun. Click on the link to view/print some [leprechaun calling cards](#). I laminate these so that I can use them every year. You can write whatever message you'd like on them.

There is no leprechaun on the first day, but on the second day there is a challenge note on the board or you could put this in your morning message, daring the children to find him. I use the leprechaun much like the ***Elf On The Shelf*** for Christmas. He's in a different hiding place each day, or moving around during the day, if you want to fuss with it more often; keeping an eye on your students to see that they're behaving.



### Where's The Leprechaun?

We have 12 days of school this year, before St. Patrick's Day on the 17<sup>th</sup>, so I write: **Leprechaun's G** (12 letters) on the board after I read the leprechaun's challenge note to us. This is the "secret message" that he's talking about. (The G stands for gold. If I have more days than 12 I'll spell out gold.) He challenges

us to work as a team to earn the letters. Decide with your class how this can be accomplished. i.e. great behavior, completing work, lining up quietly, etc.

If your class can earn all of the letters above, he will share his pot of gold at the end of the rainbow! We of course accept his challenge. You can have your students sign a contract, write back, or answer his challenge in their own letter. Click on the link for [samples](#).

Each day the leprechaun is sitting somewhere new. My students are excited to look for him. They must quietly tip toe into the room so they do not scare him away and sit and look for him as they sit on our Circle of Friends carpet and wait for the announcements.

The first one to see the crafty little man gets a shamrock sticker, and tells us, using spatial direction words, if he's above, behind, on, inside, beside etc. something. They also look around the room to see what mischief the leprechaun has gotten into. Sometimes this is obvious, sometimes less so; they really have to use their spying skills to figure out the nonsense.



## Mischievous Leprechaun Ideas:

In case you need some ideas here's a list of some of the things I have done in the past:

- The computer is covered with a green pillowcase
- All of the books on the shelf are piled in a huge tower.
- Several posters are upside down.
- I have a piece of clipart that I put in the center of my clock each month. For March it is a shamrock. One day the leprechaun takes the shamrock, replaces it with a leprechaun and puts a ridiculous time on the clock, like 5 O'clock!

- He left us a message in green crayon on the bathroom mirror and took away the toilet paper.
- He took all of the green crayons out of the crayon tubs on the desks and sprinkled them on the windowsill.
- He took all of the dry erase markers and erasers out of the chalk sill, put them in a basket and left them on the reading rocker.
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- He took our laundry basket that holds our lunches and put it on our lunch table in the cafeteria.
- He took our library book basket to the library on library day. (He was trying to be helpful!)
- He left us a morning message in green marker.
- He put a shamrock sticker on everyone's name cards on their desks.
- He left everyone a green M&M or Skittle on their desk.
- He put all of their locker name tags upside down.
- I have a shamrock number line that I put up on a thin rope with mini clothespins. He has the numbers all mixed up each day. I use it as a learning moment to have the children tell me using spatial direction words before and after, as well as ordinal numbers, first-second-third etc. to fix it.
- He often steals a letter from our ABC border.
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- He took all the nametags out of the basket and replaced them with new shamrock nametags. (Not everything he does is naughty.)
- One day I pretended that I couldn't get the lights to go on. I pretended to flip the switch. I asked the children to please ask the leprechaun to behave himself and the lights went on.
- One morning all of the garbage cans were upside down.
- When the children came back from lunch we had green tissue paper covering the light squares on the ceiling. This made for a cool lighting effect and nice decoration.
- The children came in from recess when we have calendar time, and all of the numbers were upside down.
- Their kitchen play area was moved to the opposite side of the room.
- My rocker was behind my desk, and my desk chair was in the place of my rocker.
- I have a lot of fun with this each night before I go home, or when my students are at exploratory, recess or lunch. I simply look around the room and think like a leprechaun!



St.

## Patrick's Day:

On St. Patrick's Day nothing is out of order. There is a green envelope taped to our white board with a shamrock sticker sealing it shut. Inside is a note from the leprechaun congratulating us for our great behavior. [Congratulations note](#). He lets us know that he'll be leaving a rainbow trail that will lead us to his pot of gold.

While my students are at lunch-recess I attach one end of my variegated rainbow colored yarn to the entrance door that my students will walk in, and then unwind my big ball of yarn down the hall to my classroom. The other end is attached to the pot of gold that I place in the cafeteria.

My students tip toe behind me as we follow the rainbow yarn trail. I wind the yarn back onto my ball. We by pass our room; go to our lockers and take off our coats and then follow the yarn to the cafeteria where we find two leprechauns sitting by their pot of gold. Each student receives a gold coin. Sometimes this is a plastic gold coin, sometimes it's a bubble gum or chocolate gold coin.

I take it a step farther for a bit more fun. There is a St. Patrick's Day card by the pot that we open. A note inside explains that since they've been such good students they can continue to follow the trail to the end and collect some golden nuggets! I pass out a large Styrofoam cup to the children and tell them that they must wait 'til each child is in our classroom before they fill their cup with stones.



## **Follow the Rainbow Trail to find**

### **golden nuggets:**

In my classroom I sprinkle small rocks that you can buy at a Dollar, pet, craft or hobby store. I sprinkle these on either side of the yarn. I have spray painted 2 bags of pebbles gold and 2 bags I've left as regular stones.

To spray paint your rocks, put them in the lid of a large box and spray with gold spray paint. Let dry in the sun and then flip them over to spray the opposite side. Do this outside, as the fumes are toxic. I also put the lid on some newspapers because the spray sometimes shoots past the box lid, especially if it's a windy day.

I buy the 14K gold leaf spray paint as it covers well and really makes the rocks look like gold nuggets. One can lasts a long time. I use it for other projects as well.

Once everyone is assembled I say: *"Ready-set-gold!"* and the students go fill their cups. Once they have filled their cup I have them sit on the carpet and sort their stones into two piles; one pile has golden nuggets in it, the other has plain stones. Once they have done that, I let them choose 10 stones that they want to keep. I give them a Snack Baggie to put them in and they write their name on the Baggie.

They help dump the stones into my Ziploc Baggies, we check to see that the room is cleaned up and they help me pack up the leprechaun, pot and the rest of the Rainbow Day Hunt materials. As a counting review we count our 10 stones in English, Spanish, by 10's to 100, and then backwards from 10-0 blasting off to take them to our backpacks in our lockers. When they come back we discuss what their favorite thing about this activity was.

## **Miscellaneous:**

I bought the caldron pot 75% off after Halloween. The coins can be purchased at a party store and usually go on sale after Mardi gras. The green shred and leprechauns I bought after St. Patrick's Day. You can also substitute Easter grass. Oriental Trading also sells a lot of these items.

Even if you don't choose to do all of the above, you may want to spray paint some rocks and use them for math extensions and games. It's one of my students' favorite "memories" of the year. They often talk about this day. The gold nuggets are a big hit with them and worth the extra effort. It's also a very inexpensive manipulative to make to have at hand for sorting and counting.

***Whatever you do to add a bit o' fun to your March activities  
may Irish eyes be smiling!***





Dear Shawn,

You're on! We accept your challenge!

We will be on our best behavior and work as a team to earn the letters to spell the secret message so that we can follow the Rainbow Trail and find your pot of gold!

Sincerely,



We the undersigned accept Shawn the leprechaun's challenge!  
We promise to try and be on our best behavior, and work as a  
team to earn the letters to spell the secret message, so that we  
can follow the Rainbow Trail and find his pot of gold!

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day, on a \_\_\_\_\_ in  
March of the year \_\_\_\_\_.



Dear Shawn,

You're on!

I accept your challenge!

Sincerely,



Date:

Dear Leprechauns of Ireland,

We are the students in

\_\_\_\_\_ class.

We live in \_\_\_\_\_.

We would like you to come and visit our class and  
celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us. We like to play on the  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

during recess. We like to study \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_. Right now we are  
studying about \_\_\_\_\_. We like to  
read books about \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_. We hope you will

come visit us soon.

Sincerely,



Date:

Dear Leprechauns of Ireland,

Here is a sheet that tells you a little bit about our state of Michigan. It shows a picture of our state, where it's located among the other states, our state flag, state flower, and our state bird. We hope you'll want to see more of our great state!

Sincerely,

A little bit about our state of Michigan.

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1

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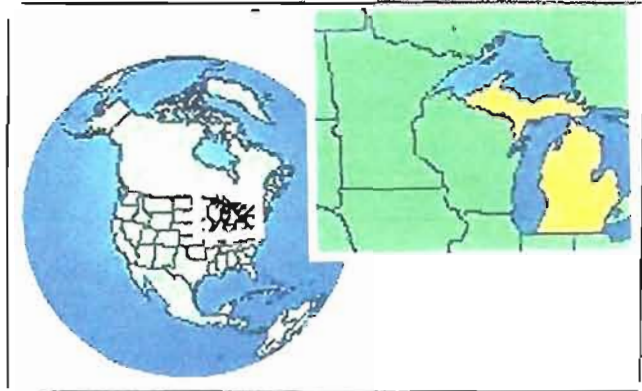
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4



Cut out the pieces and GLUE them to them matching numbered boxes.

# HAPPY ST. PATTY'S DAY



Dear \_\_\_\_\_

You've made it! You've done it!

Today we celebrate St. Patrick's Day in your classroom.

You've successfully earned all of the letters needed to spell the secret message!

You have earned the right to follow my rainbow trail to see if you can find my pot of gold at the end! I have a gold coin waiting for you.

Enjoy your trip.

Again, congratulations on working as a team to achieve this goal!

Best o' luck and top o' the mornin' to ya!

Shawn the Leprechaun

*Shawn*





Date:

Dear Leprechauns of Ireland,

We are the students in

\_\_\_\_\_class.

We live in \_\_\_\_\_.

We would like you to come and visit our class and celebrate St. Patrick's Day with us. We like to play on the

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

during recess. We like to study \_\_\_\_\_ and

\_\_\_\_\_. Right now we are

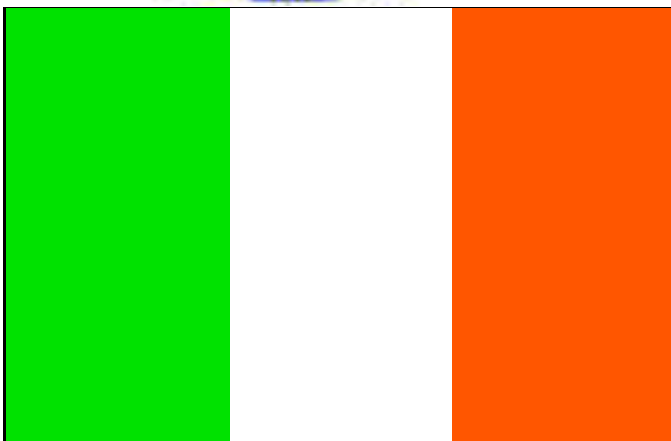
studying about \_\_\_\_\_.

We like to read books about \_\_\_\_\_and

\_\_\_\_\_. We hope you will

come visit us soon.

Sincerely,



My name is Shawn  
and I'm a leprechaun.  
I live in Ireland!



Challenge word flashcards for Leprechaun Calling Cards







Dear

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We received your letter and would love to come for a visit!

Thanks for invitin' us.

We've never been to your great state and look forward to learnin' a wee bit o' bout it.

Sincerely,

Shawn

*Shawn*

The secretary and biggest of the smallest leprechauns



- Hello students!
- I've arrived.
- My name is Shawn.
- I've had a bit of fun in your classroom this morning.
- I hope you don't mind.
- I dare you to try and find me.
- I may be here, I may be there, I could be almost anywhere!
- One thing's sure I'll be watching you and the things you do!
- Your teacher will put a secret message on the board involving the leprechauns and their gold.
- It's up to you to work as a team to earn all of the letters to spell it out.
- Then and only then, can you earn the right to follow the rainbow path to our pot of gold.
- Are you up to the task?
- I hope so.
- I wouldn't have wanted to fly all this way for nothing.
- In the mean time, I'll be watching to see that you do and playing a few leprechaun tricks, because that's what leprechauns do best.
- Good luck!

Shawn