

Edmund Rice  
**ICON Activity Booklet**

## Blessed Edmund Rice

Edmund Rice, born in Ireland in 1762, was a well-educated, wealthy merchant.

At that time in Ireland Catholics were not well-treated, however Edmund did well and was successful.

After his young wife died and his daughter was born disabled his life took an unexpected turn. He sought comfort in God and thought about shutting himself away in a monastery but instead he was encouraged to 'look out of his window' and dedicate his efforts to educating the poor Catholic boys of Ireland.

His idea of helping people through education has spread now to more than 20 countries where 200,000 pupils are being taught in 'Edmund Rice' schools.

## The Icon

In all our 12 English Edmund Rice schools, you will find the 'Icon'.

It is a beautiful piece of art, like stained glass. It illustrates Edmund's life. It was designed by Irish artist Desmond Kyne.

**Would you like to find out what the colourful images mean?**



Contents:

- Jigsaw puzzle
- LED candle
- Information cards and quiz
- Edmund Rice Prayer cards
- Notebook – ‘The Icon Diary’
- Coloured pens/pencils

You will need:

- 20 minutes
- a flat surface
- a quiet room
- some family members

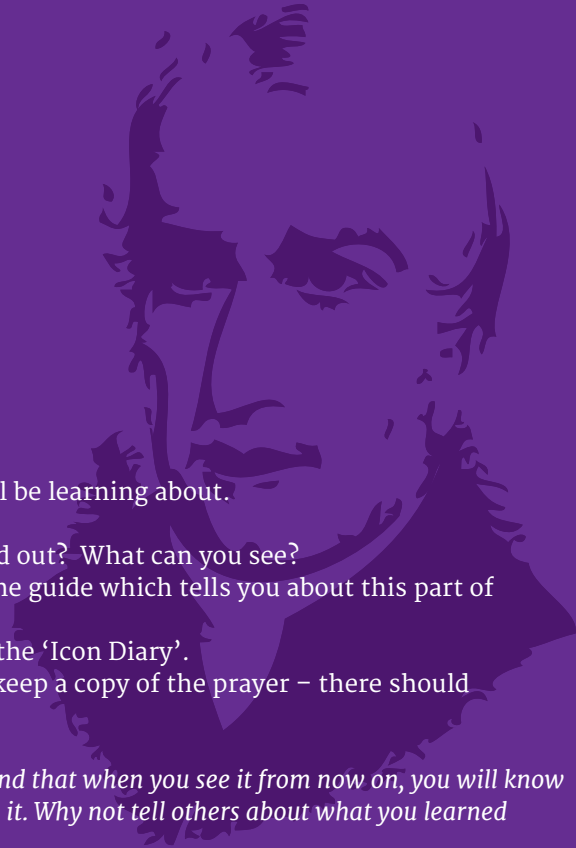
What to do?

Find a quiet place in the house – at the table or on the floor.

Switch on the LED candle.

- First try to complete the jigsaw puzzle of the Edmund Rice Icon you will be learning about.
- Read about the Life of Edmund and the Icon
- Have a really good look at the icon and talk about it – Which parts stand out? What can you see?
- Choose as many of the panes (pictures) as you like and have a look at the guide which tells you about this part of the image.
- Write or draw about what you found out& liked most about the Icon in the ‘Icon Diary’.
- You could finish by saying the Edmund Rice prayer together. You may keep a copy of the prayer – there should be plenty in the bag.

*We hope you enjoy learning about Edmund Rice and his life through the Icon and that when you see it from now on, you will know all about it. When you pass the pack back to school tell them what you got from it. Why not tell others about what you learned about Edmund Rice and the good things he did?*



[www.edmund-rice.wa.edu.au/edmundr/theicon/kidsdescription.html#holyspirit2](http://www.edmund-rice.wa.edu.au/edmundr/theicon/kidsdescription.html#holyspirit2)

The above website lets you learn about the Icon interactively.



You can choose to look at all the different parts of the Icon, or just a few. Which parts stand out most? Which pictures do you like best?

Let's have a look at what they mean...

### Here is Edmund Rice in the middle

Do you think he looks kind?

Why do you think the artist gave him big, kind eyes?



### What shape is this?

Yes, it is a spiral. This great, whirling spiral is a symbol for God the creator. This is a very ancient symbol for God.

There is a lot of colour and energy in this shape.

Can you spin and make a spiral? Can you draw a spiral?

It is fun to draw a very fast spiral. Edmund had lots of energy, like this spiral even when he was old.

Can you see fire? This is the Holy Spirit. It made Edmund into a 'warm' person who loved others.

Are you a warm and kind person? Do you like to help others? How can we help the poor as Edmund did?



### Who do you think these people are?

Did you guess they are Mary and Jesus?

Look at the words on Mary's halo. Are they English? No, they are written in Irish or 'Gaelic' as Edmund was Irish.

Edmund would pray to Mary with his mother.

Edmund needed Mary's help to be loving and caring with own his daughter and to the children in his schools.

**Project:** Find out more about the 'Gaelic' language. Have you ever been to Ireland?



### Holy Spirit

What do you think this shape looks like?

Maybe it is a bird or waves? It is another symbol for the Holy Spirit.

It shows Edmund was open to God and allowed God's love to flow through him.





## A dark shape

Can you see this dark shape? What animals does it remind you of?

It is quite scary!

It is a symbol of the evil which touched Edmund.

Do you remember what bad things happened to him in his life?



## Edmund as a little boy

This is a scene from Edmund's boyhood. You can see him talking with a wise man called Brother Patrick Grace. They are whispering together; you had to be quite secretive in those days because you weren't allowed to practise your religion in the open. This is how Edmund would have learnt about being a catholic.

In the background is the house where he was born in called 'Westcourt'. You can visit Westcourt now, it is a museum.

Can you see the farm land? There are four green fields behind the house representing the four main areas of Ireland. Edmund knew a lot about Ireland through its famous stories, he learnt Irish dances and played the Gaelic games of 'hurling' and 'Gaelic football'. Have a look on line at these games, they are still popular in Ireland.

The spiralling pool represents sacred wells which gave important life-giving water to the land.



### Edmund and his daughter

Edmund's daughter, Mary, was disabled and her mother was dead.

Edmund loved and cared for his daughter. How can we tell from the picture that he loved her?

With his other hand, Edmund reaches out beyond his own family to a sad, poor young boy – one of thousands of poor, illiterate and disadvantaged children of Waterford where Edmund lived.

Edmund helped these poor boys out of poverty.



### Edmund changes

How many stars can you see?

Correct, 7. These are the 7 friends who helped Edmund set up his schools for poor boys.

There are 3 buildings here, can you spot them? The tiny one was Edmund's first school – in an old stable and the big one with lots of windows is his second school. It is called Mount Sion and it is still there. Edmund gave the boys in his school clothes and food too.

Can you see a bolt of lightning passing through Mount Sion? When Edmund changed from a businessman to helping poor children to get an education this change was like a bolt of lightning from heaven.





## Lamb

This is ‘the Lamb of God’ – have you heard Jesus being called the Lamb of God? The Lamb of God was the sacrifice which took away the sins of the people. Edmund, like Jesus before him, sacrificed himself so that the people might live better lives too.



## Mary's Presentation

Can you see the spiral again? It is God, inspiring Mary. Mary was Jewish. The seven-branched candlestick is the Jewish symbol. Mary was a humble but powerful person who bore Jesus for us.





### Edmund in the Chapel

Edmund spent a lot of time in the chapel quietly praying for God's help in his work.

This panel represents the Holy Spirit as a bird shape inspiring and helping him with his struggles.

Can you see a white dot at the centre of the powerful spiral?  
The dot is the communion host.

Edmund went to communion every day.



### Edmund in the Classroom

Here is Edmund with some pupils.  
Like Jesus he was a good teacher – do you know any of the stories  
Jesus told which teach us how to live a good life?

Can you see the big hands stretching around the pupils?  
This is Jesus who protects and teaches all of us

### Feeding the hungry

Edmund is giving bread to a hungry boy.  
Edmund had a bakery built in Mount Sion schools and also a tailor's  
workshop: he was deeply sensitive to the wants and feelings of his  
pupils, and he did not wish them to experience either the pangs of  
hunger or the shame of being dressed in rags.



## Being kind to prisoners

In Edmund's day prisons were miserable and crowded and prisoners were put to death for small offences. Edmund and the other Christian Brothers visited and comforted the prisoners.

Edmund encourages us to reach out to those who are forgotten and need our help.



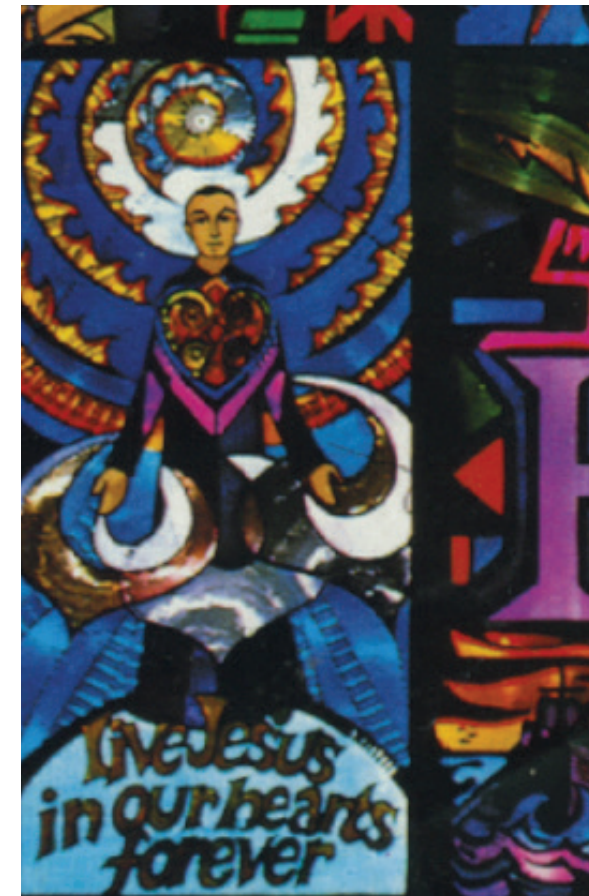
## 'Blessed' Edmund

This picture shows Edmund now in heaven. Behind him is God, the spiral.

Can you see four curls? This is the huge amount of love that Edmund had and gave to many people.

It is a share in the love Jesus showed when he was on earth. At his feet is the motto that the Christian Brothers have used ever since his time.

When we ask Jesus to 'live in our hearts' we show his love.





**Edmund and the Past**

Here, along the bottom of the icon are some images from History which inspired Edmund.



**The Boat**

Here is a boat taking the good news about Jesus across the seas.  
Do you know who missionaries are?  
They travel to faraway places to spread the word of God.

Edmund’s Christian Brothers have travelled around the world.  
There are Edmund Rice schools, just like yours in most parts of the world today.



**Colmcille**

Looks a bit like Superman doesn’t he?! Here is the father figure of the monk missionaries his name was Colmcille. He was a saint, a scholar, a poet and an artist, he was from the island of Iona, near Scotland.



**Celtic Cross**

This shape is a Celtic cross. It is an ancient cross. You can see it in old church yards. The round part is the sun behind the cross.



## Comcille the artist

Here is Colmcille again he was an artist and a master craftsman.  
Here he is bent in concentration on his work.  
He is the patron saint of Irish artists.



## Learning through poetry and music

Here is an ancient Celtic picture about an old way of learning.

This man ‘Carolan’ was a ‘bard’: he told stories and taught lessons with music and poetry, before people could read and write this is how they learnt and heard stories.  
What instrument is he playing?  
Edmund Rice was proud of Irish history.



## Joy of Community life

Here is Colmcille again.

He and his brother monks are relaxing together; drinking, eating and talking. They are all happy and peaceful.  
Edmund encourages us to live happily with others.

What is good about being part of your school community?





## A window

This is a window from a Temple called 'McDuagh'. It is on the island of Aran. This was a historical place of learning and many saints studied there.

Can you find the island of Aran on a map? Look between Ireland and Scotland.



## A Latin Motto 'AMDG'

AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM: this is Latin for (All My Work Done for God)

This is a motto for the Jesuit order and for the Presentation Brothers. Both were teaching orders of monks and priests.

See if you can copy this Latin motto. Do you know another one? What is the motto of your school? Is it on your badge (sweater or blazer?) Some football clubs have their motto in Latin. See if you can find one out.



## St. Teresa

This is St. Teresa of Avila. Avila is a city in Spain. Edmund read and loved St. Teresa's writings.

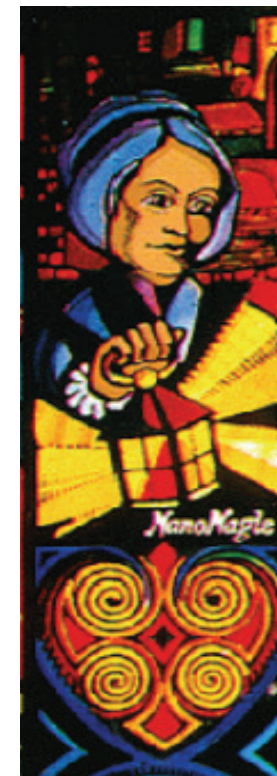
They were very similar as she too showed her love for God by helping those in need, she was very practical. Her face resembles Edmund's in the icon- don't you think?

St. Teresa taught that we are the 'eyes, hands and feet' of Jesus on earth and we need to act like him.



## Nano Nagle - a Light in the lanes of Cork city

This lady, called 'Nano Nagle looked' after the poor girls in the city of Cork. Edmund looked up to her and followed her example by helping the poor boys of Waterford.





## A heart overflowing with love and bursting into action!

Edmund Rice had a very kind heart. He showed his love through his actions. What does this mean? How can you show people you love them through your actions?

### Praying at Home

Here is Margaret, Edmund's mother. She is leading the family in saying the 'Rosary'. This was a very important Irish tradition.

The children are holding their rosary beads. Have you got rosary beads? Ask your teacher in school about the rosary. Maybe you could say the rosary in



## The Icon Quiz!

How many of these can you answer correctly?

1. Where was Edmund Rice from?
2. What was his job before he started opening schools?
3. What happened to his wife?
4. What was his daughter called?
5. What does the big spiral shape mean around Edmund's head?
6. What do the stars on the Icon mean?
7. Which kinds of people did Edmund help?
8. What was life like for Catholics at Edmund's time in Ireland?
9. Who was Nano Nagle?
10. As well as teaching the poor boys in his schools, what did Edmund give them?



## Answers:

1. Where was Edmund Rice from?

**From Waterford, in Ireland.**

2. What was his job before he started opening schools?

**He was a shipping Merchant.**

3. What happened to his wife?

**She died from a horse riding accident when she was young.**

4. What was his daughter called?

**Her name was Mary, like Edmund's wife.**

5. What does the big spiral shape mean around Edmund's head?

**It is the symbol for God the Creator.**

6. What do the stars on the Icon mean?

**They represent the 7 helpers who were important in setting up the Christian brothers with Edmund.**

7. Which kinds of people did Edmund help?

**The poor, the uneducated, Catholics, prisoners.**

8. What was life like for Catholics at Edmund's time in Ireland?

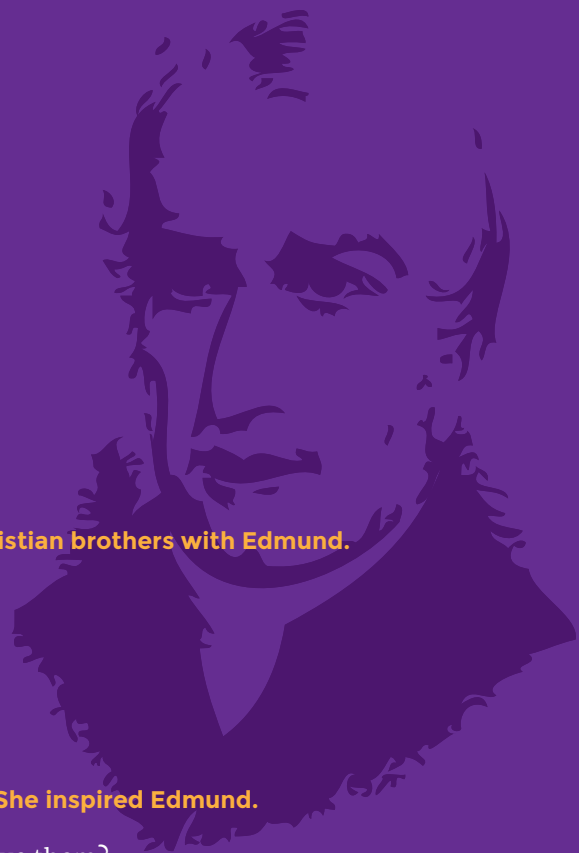
**It was very hard, they were persecuted and not given an education.**

9. Who was Nano Nagle?

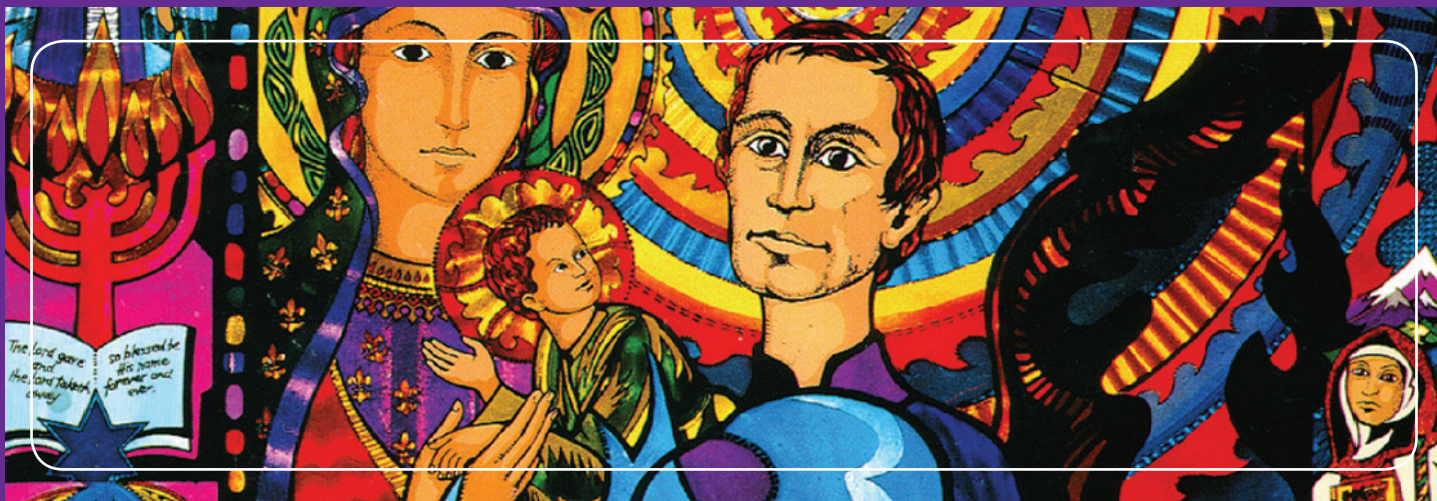
**She was like Edmund. She helped poor girls in another Irish city; Cork. She inspired Edmund.**

10. As well as teaching the poor boys in his schools, what did Edmund give them?

**He gave them food (bread) and clothes.**







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