

Educational Worksheets
for Primary Schools



the story



Adventure, action and danger await 12 year old Brendan who must fight Vikings and a serpent god to find a crystal and complete the legendary Book of Kells.

Brendan is hard at work with his uncle, Abbott Cellach and the other monks, helping to strengthen the abbey walls as protection against the Viking raids. But a new life of adventure begins with the arrival of Brother Aidan, a celebrated master illuminator who initiates Brendan into the art of illumination, awakening his hidden, but extraordinary talents.

In order to finish the magnificent book, Brendan has to overcome his deepest fears on a secret quest that will take him for the first time ever, beyond the abbey's walls into the enchanted forest where dangerous mythical creatures hide. It is here that he meets the fairy Aisling, a mysterious young white wolf/girl, who will become his closest friend and helper.

BUT with the terrifying Viking Hordes closing in, will Brendan succeed in his quest to illuminate the darkness and prove that enlightenment is the best fortification against barbarians?

Brendan's Secrets

When the Book of Kells was written, the printing press was not yet invented so books had to be written and decorated by hand.



irish history

In THE SECRET OF KELLS Brendan lives with his Uncle, Abbott Cellach and other monks in monastery. The monastery is a group of people whose lives are spent worshipping God. Monks are men who choose to live removed from secular life. In the days when the Book of Kells was being written, young men joined the monastery when they were between fifteen or sixteen years old. People knew that these men belonged to the monastery because the fronts of their heads were shaved. This was called a tonsure. Along with prayer, monks fasted. This means they would not eat food for long periods of time while they prayed. The monks also farmed. Many did missionary work - telling others outside of the monastery about the gospel. These monks carried pocket Gospel books when they travelled. These were Gospel books small enough to carry in a satchel. A satchel is a bag that the monks carried over their shoulders - it is similar to the school bag you carry today.

Pretend you are a monk travelling as a missionary to far-off lands.

What would you take with you in your satchel?

List the things you would put into it.

Can you list as many of the animals from the film THE SECRET OF KELLS as you can remember?



Brendan's Secrets

The Book of Kells was written in 800AD and is actually the gospel according to Mathew, Mark, Luke and John.

In one scene from THE SECRET OF KELLS, Brendan and the monks are playing Hurling. Legend has it that a hurling game between the Fianna and the Tuatha De Danann took place in the countryside between Fossa and Glenflesk over 2000 years ago.

Apart from the Fianna, there are many other Irish Legends. Write what you know about:

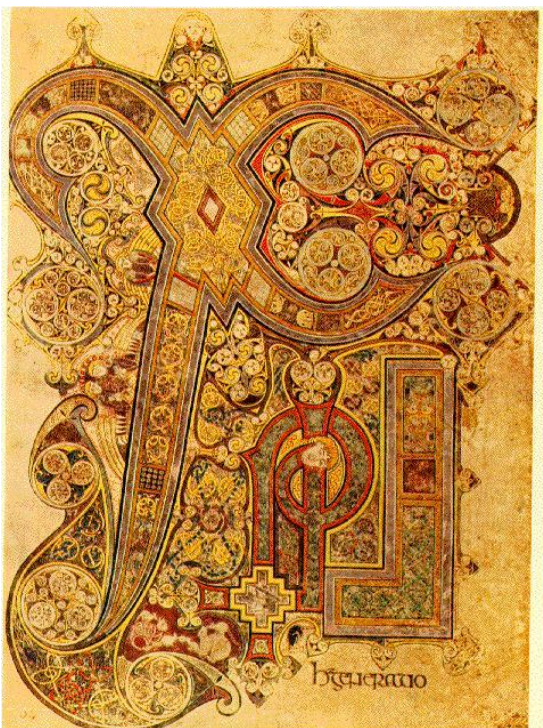
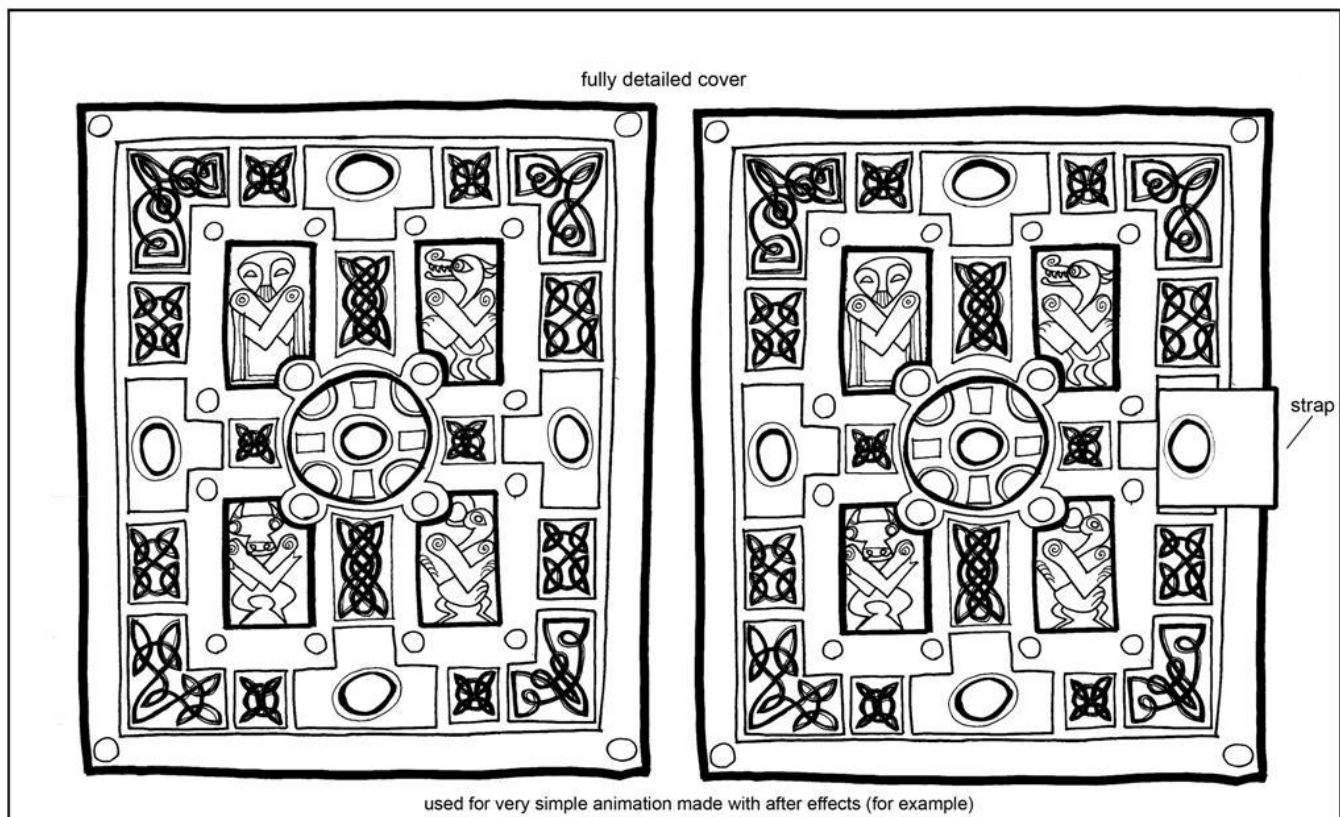
- The Salmon of Knowledge
- Cuchulainn
- The Children of Lir
- The Three Sons



animation

In THE SECRET OF KELLS Brendan is an illuminator, one of the illustrators of the Book of Kells. The term Illuminator, comes from the latin word Illuminare, which means to illuminate. The bright colours used in the creation of the Book of Kells make the pages seem like they are glowing.

This is a picture of The Book of Kells which the filmmakers have forgotten to colour in. Can you help them out?



The image on the left in the Chi Rho page from the Book of Kells.

The image on the left in the Chi Rho page from the Book of Kells.

This is a very important page from the book and is called Chi Rho because the Chi and Rho are letters of the Greek alphabet meaning Christ.

The page is decorated with lots of animals including mice, butterflies, ants and an otter.

Can you list as many of the animals from the film THE SECRET OF KELLS as you can remember?

music

As in many films, music plays a very important role in THE SECRET OF KELLS. The music in THE SECRET OF KELLS is provided by acclaimed French composer Bruno Coulais (Microcosmos, Les Choristes) and Irish traditional band Kila. Many traditional Irish instruments were used in creating the music for the film, including, Uilleann pipes, Harp, Bodhran and Fiddle. The music for the film was actually inspired by Sean-nos (old style) Irish singing as well as the monophonic chanting commonly practised by Monks. Music in film is used to enhance the visual images and create atmosphere and provoke emotional responses.

Watch the trailer at www.theseecretokells.com and listen to the music. Can you list all the instruments you can hear?

