

St Boniface

Boniface, baptised Winfrith, was born c.680 in Devon, the eldest son of Anglo-Saxon land owners. He was educated at monasteries near Exeter and at Winchester before becoming a monk and teacher, writing the first Latin grammar for Anglo-Saxon pupils.

He left England and a promising career in the English Church in 718 to become a missionary amongst the German peoples. He founded several monasteries before being made Bishop of all Germany. He was then asked by pope and king to reform the French Church. He later returned to the north, in what is now the Netherlands, where he was martyred in 754. His brand of monasticism was very strict and austere, and not many novices or monks could live up to his ideals in the long term. He is remembered more in mainland Europe than in England, although this date was decided as his feast day by a synod of English bishops and abbots soon after the news of his death reached this country.



- 1 Sit down with the children and show them the series of pictures overleaf. You may wish to lay the sheets out either on a table or the floor, and then read the story.
- 2 Ask the children the following questions and discuss them:-
What part of the story did you like, and why?
Do you decorate your home with a Christmas tree?
What do we put on trees?
What other things do you do at Christmas? Do you know why we do them?
- 3 You will find additional resources within the Christmas section on iChild.

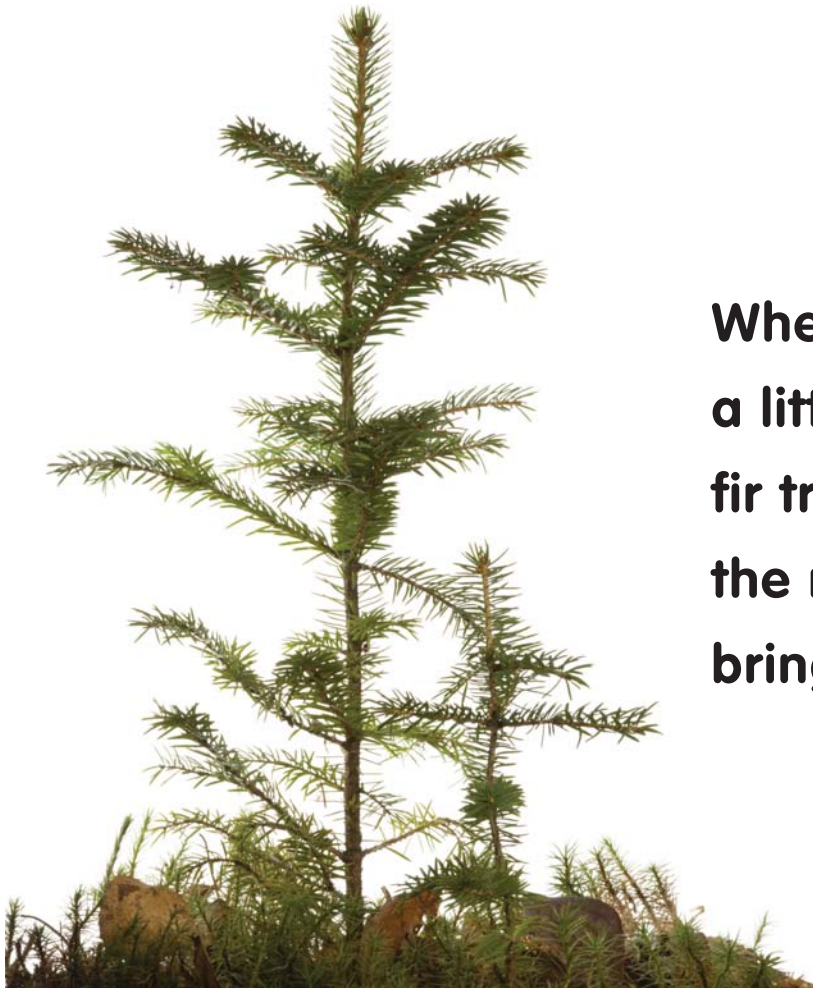
St Boniface



Once upon a time Boniface
was travelling in Germany.



**He came across a group
of people worshiping
around an Oak tree.
He prevented a sacrifice
by breaking the tree.**



**Where he had taken the tree from,
a little fir tree began to grow. The
fir tree symbolised new life and
the new faith that Boniface was
bringing to the German people.**



It has been traditional for Germans to decorate their home with a fir tree at Christmas to symbolise the new life in the birth of Christ.



The German custom to bring a fir tree in doors at Christmas was introduced by Queen Victoria's husband Prince Albert, and since Victorian times it has been traditional to have a decorated Christmas tree in our homes.