



What do blind children, soldiers, birds, and Scotland have to do with each other? Read on to discover some interesting facts about our sweet celebration of Valentine's Day. XOXO ~ Bitty

## Who was St. Valentine?

There are many different stories surrounding the origin of Valentine's Day.

Valentine is most commonly believed to be a third century Roman saint who was martyred for his faith and was commemorated on February 14th by the Roman Catholic Church. Some legends say that a priest was killed for refusing to recant (take back) his belief in Christianity by Emperor Claudius in the year 280. Other legends say that a priest named Valentine was imprisoned for helping and marrying Christian couples during a time when Christians were being persecuted under the reign of Claudius II. Claudius took a liking to him, but when Valentine tried to convert him to Christianity, he was beheaded. Another legend tells of Valentine, defying Claudius's order, secretly marrying couples so the men wouldn't have to go to war as soldiers. Yet another variation tells of Valentine being imprisoned for refusing to sacrifice to pagan gods. While in prison he preached to the jailor and healed the jailor's daughter of blindness. Before his execution he left her a note that was signed "Your Valentine." Some stories describe Valentine as a physician who was especially kind to children. During the Middle Ages the story of Valentine secretly marrying couples became associated with the medieval belief that birds paired couples in the middle of February. Perhaps that is where the expression "a couple of lovebirds" came from.

During the month of February ancient Romans would hold the festival Lupercalia in honor of Lupercus, a Roman god of fertility and farming, and also for Juno Februata, goddess of love, women, and marriage. Young men and women would draw names and pair up as a couple to play games and perform rituals during the celebration. Later, after Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, church officials did away with the pagan festival and renamed February 14th as St. Valentine's Day in honor of the martyr.

Today there are several different locations around the world that claim to have relics of St. Valentine such as Ireland, Prague, France, Vienna, Malta, and Scotland. In 1868 Franciscan friars at St. Francis Church in Glasgow, Scotland were asked to look after some religious relics, owned by a French family, which included some bones from St. Valentine. Ireland claims to have some of his bones in a casket at Whitefriar Street Church in Dublin. While there is some confusion on exactly who Valentine was or where his remains are, we are left with some interesting possibilities and a fun holiday to celebrate loving others.



## Book Nook~

***Saint Valentine*** by Robert Sabuda (32 pages, ages 4-7)

Beautiful paper mosaics illustrate the story of a kind physician who healed a blind girl. Before his execution he sent her a secret message. Readers will enjoy this telling of the origin of one of our most popular holidays.

***Cupid and Psyche*** by Charlotte Craft (48 pages, ages 4-8)

A lively and suspenseful retelling of the classic Greek myth. Breathtakingly beautiful illustrations will delight readers of all ages.

***Hearts, Cupids, and Red Roses: The Story of the Valentine Symbols*** by Edna Barth (96 pages, ages 8-12)

Pen and ink illustrations complement this interesting read about the origin of the holiday. This informative book also includes facts about Valentine candy, cupids, hearts, flowers, and so much more!



## Love Struck!

Greek mythology tells of Cupid, a winged boy that was son of Venus, the goddess of love. He was said to shoot people with either a gold tipped arrow to make them fall in love with the first person they saw or with a lead arrow to make them run away from that person.

In a 15th century poem collection, *The Kingis Quair*, King James I of Scotland (1394-1437) wrote a little poem describing Cupid with a third arrow of silver:

*"gold, for a gentle smiting that is easily cured; the more compelling silver; and steel, for a love-wound that never heals."*



Heart Shaped  
VALENTINES DAY  
animals



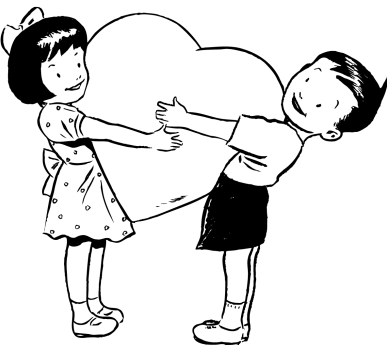
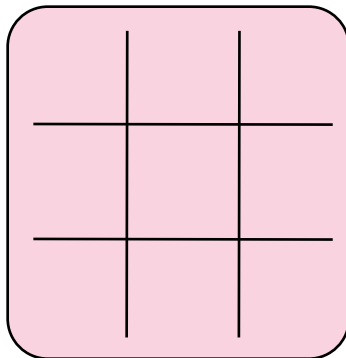
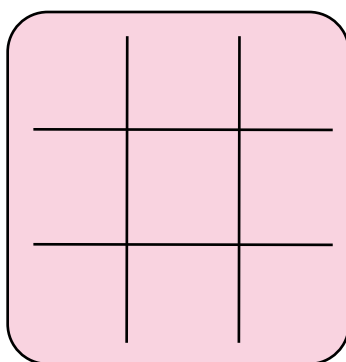
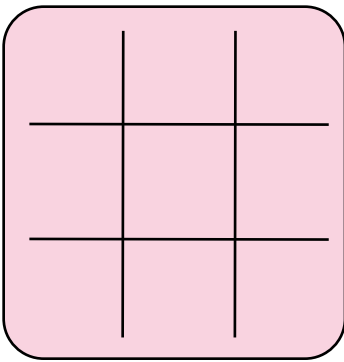
Surprise your family and friends by making these cute animal valentines. Simply cut out hearts of any size and color and glue together to make the creature of your choice.

For an added bit of fun you can write some clever messages on the back such as:

Owl be your valentine!  
Hey there, love bug!  
Will you be my tweetheart?  
I am doggone crazy for you!  
You are a catch, valentine!  
I am hooked on you!  
I am wild about you!  
I go bananas for you!

What other creatures can you create? If you would like to share your creations, send a photo and your name to [bittybulls@turnbullclan.com](mailto:bittybulls@turnbullclan.com) and they will be included in the next issue.

# X and O Tic-Tac-Toe



## What did one lightbulb say to the other?

I love you a whole watt!

What do you call a very small valentine?

A valentinny!

XO

