The Loch Ness Monster
Colm Cille is not content with this saintly existence on Iona. He has summoned back-up monks from Ireland, chased away a few pesky druids from the island, and founded a monastery. But he is bored. He needs a purpose in life. Colm Cille decides to follow in the wake of the druids he chased away - where there are druids there are always pagans to convert. A recruitment drive in the Pictish territories would do wonders for his morale.

Off the group sets, east onto the mainland north into the unknown - pious, jaunty, with a noble mission, and with God on their side.
The group soon faces its first test in this unknown territory: the deep, dark waters of Loch Ness.

Standing on the southern bank, Colm Cille ponders the situation, then declares cheerily: “The water’s too deep for us to wade through, and it’ll take us too long to walk around the Loch. Who fancies a swim?”
“Come along, now. No slacking at the back there. Who needs to walk on water when you can have a refreshing dip, eh? Ha ha ha!”

Colm Cille loves challenges like this. The rest of the monks do not. They are nervous. They cannot argue with their leader, or disobey him, but they wish he wasn’t always quite so enthusiastic.

“Ooh!”, shrieks one as he enters the water, waist deep, “it’s cold!”
Two Picts who have been snoozing in the mid-day sun see the band of strangers slowly submerge into the icy waters on the other side of the Loch.

“Would you look at those fools over there, Hamish. Are they mad, or what?” says one to the other. “Mmmm. Must be Christians, Jock.”

“And would you look at the podgy one at the front. What is he babbling on about? You’d think at least he’d try to be quiet when he’s doing that.”

“Mmmm. Madness, Jock, madness.”
“Watch those manuscripts. I don’t want one splash of water on them.”

Colm Cille is paddling his way forcefully to the other side of the Loch.

“Nearly there. Come on. Keep your chins up and arms out. Kick with your feet.”
The two Picts are now very alarmed at the scene unfolding in front of them. They have seen what lurks in the water of Loch Ness and they do not want a gaggle of interlopers disturbing it and causing mayhem. They are only just recovering from the nightmares they had the last time they saw it - that was when there were three of them who used to hang around together. Poor MacDougal couldn’t get out of the water in time – he didn’t stand a chance.

“Get out of the water.”

“GET OUT OF THE WATER.”

Willable has not been listening to what Colm Cille has been saying. Always a bit of a daydreamer, he is bringing up the rear of the group and falling a bit behind. He notices two odd-looking fellows jumping up and down on the bank ahead.

“Excuse me, sir,” shouts Willable to Colm Cille, “those two men don’t look very pleased to see us. Either that, or they are mad. Either way, I think we should turn back.”

“Oh, hush. It’s just the local welcoming party. It’s their custom.” reassures Colm Cille. He raises a hand to the demented pair on the shore.

“WE COME IN PEACE!”
WHOOSH!

Something terrible is erupting from the depths of Loch Ness. A thunderous noise and an ominous parting of the water make everyone freeze.
“Glug.”

“Aaaaargh! We’re done for!”

A scaly green tail smashes its way to the surface of the foaming water and thrashes in front of Willable.

It flays about like an out-of-control hosepipe. He turns away from it, terrified.
“It’s grown.”

“It must have had some very big meals to get to that size.”
“R-O-A-R.”

The monster, or waterbeast, or whatever it is, has a murderous look in its eyes. The water churns as it bears down on poor Willable, its huge gaping jaw skimming the water, ready to scoop the helpless monk up into its mouth, past its razor-sharp teeth, down its humongous throat and into its hungry stomach.

“H...h...h...help!” squawks Willable, “please help me.”
“OI! YOU UGLY BIG GREEN THING!”

“What? Me?” The monster looks around confused.
“Yes, I’m talking to you. Who do you think you are, swimming around like that, scaring my monks half to death? Do you know who I am? Why, I ought to thrash you to kingdom come for that. I can, you know.”
The monster is devastated. No-one has ever shouted at it before. Its bottom lip begins to quiver. “I’m not ugly.” Its eyes fill with tears. “And I’m actually quite small for my age. You should see my brother.”

But there is no stopping Colm Cille now. “You big bully. Get back to where you came from. And don’t let me see your face around here again. Ever.”
The monster skulks back beneath the water, never again to show its face above the water when there are humans around.
The two Picts are amazed. They have never in their lives, never, ever, seen anything like that before.

“How did he do that?”

“Dunno.”

“It’s a miracle.”
Onward the saintly group goes, with two additions walking jauntily behind.

“Praise the Lord, Hamish.”

“Amen to that, Jock.”