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A method into using benzenesulfonates and imidazylates as leaving groups at the secondary C3 galactopyranose carbon, instead of the commonly used less stable triflate leaving group, in order to facilitate scale up and improve reproducibility is disclosed. The benzenesulfonates and imidazylates were proven to be significantly more stable than the corresponding triflates and the method was used to device an improved route towards 3-azido-3-deoxy-β-D-galactopyranosides.