





The Life and Deeds of Saint Nicholas

Follower of Christ, Giver, Wonderworker

Most of what we know about Saint Nicholas is based on legends that have been passed down for hundreds of years. These are some of the main facts and his most notable deeds and attributed miracles.

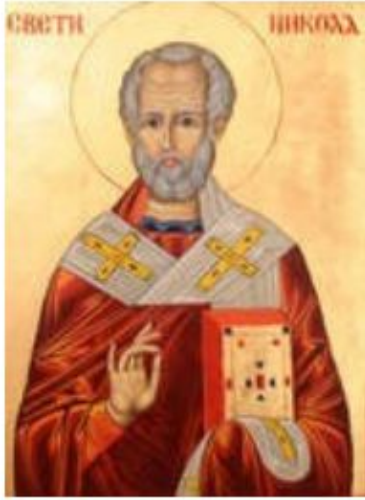
- Nicholas was born in around AD 280 to Johanna and Epiphanes in Patara, Lucia, what is now the country of Turkey, off of the Mediterranean Sea. Nicholas' mother and father were older and his mother had been praying to God for a child for a long time.
- When Nicholas was a young boy, he lost both of his parents to a plague that swept through Patara.
- Because Nicholas' parents were devout Christians and had raised him to always rely on God, he decided he wanted to do God's work with the inheritance (a large sum of money or goods) that had been left to him by his parents.
- Nicholas began training for priesthood alongside his uncle, who was a priest. He also followed his uncle's example and traveled to the Holy Land around AD 300.
- Nicholas finished his training and became a priest. When he began his priesthood he worked tirelessly for the good of others and the furthering of God's kingdom.
- Nicholas was made a bishop in Myra, about 50 miles east of Patara on the coast.
- The Great Persecution began in AD 303 and Nicholas was imprisoned, much like the Apostle Paul, and suffered for many years before his release.
- In AD 313 the new Emperor Constantine issues the Edict of Milan, which granted freedom of worship to all religions and allowed Christianity to become a popular faith.
- In AD 325, Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea. Legend says Nicholas was one of the important bishops attending. This council drew up the Nicene Creed, which affirms faith in the Holy Trinity and declares that Jesus is "of one substance with the Father".
- In about AD 340 Nicholas became ill and knew it was time for him to go to Heaven. According to tradition, Nicholas prayed "Lord, into thine hands I commend my spirit" and passed away on December 6th, the day now observed as Saint Nicholas' Feast Day.



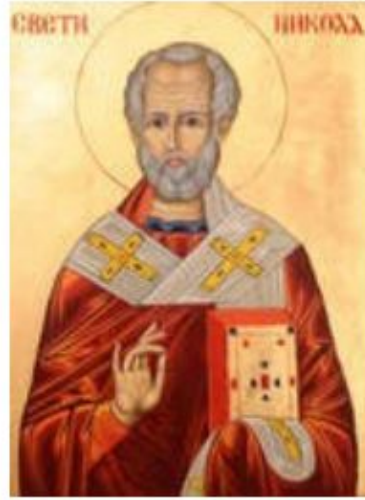
Many miracles and good deeds are attributed to Saint Nicholas. These are the most well known:

- A merchant and his family fell on hard times and his 3 daughters were going to have to be sold into servitude because they had no dowry. Nicholas took a bag of gold and secretly tossed it into a window of the merchant's house. Some people say it landed in a shoe or a stocking that had been hung to dry, which is how stockings with gifts came to be. Nicholas did the same thing 2 more times for both remaining daughters. He tried to remain a secret giver (Matthew 6:3-4) but his good deed was found out and his reputation as a generous man became legendary.
- One night at sea, the weather had become terrible and there was a big storm. The sailors cried out to Nicholas to save them and an apparition of Nicholas appeared and calmed the seas. The sailors were passing by Nicholas' church a short time later and recognized him and went in to pray. From then on he has been the patron saint of seafarers.
- Nicholas appeared in a dream to Emperor Constantine telling him to release 3 men who had been wrongly accused. When he woke, the Emperor released the men. Nicholas then became the patron saint of prisoners and captives.
- Another legend from Russia tells of a young boy who fell in the river and was pronounced dead. His family was mourning the loss of their loved one, but the next morning the boy was found playing on the steps of Nicholas's cathedral in Myra.
- Legend says Nicholas performed no less than 29 miracles during his lifetime.





Saint Nicholas



Saint Nicholas



Sinter Klaas
and
Zwarte Piet



Sinter Klaas
and
Zwarte Piet



Père Noel



Père Noel



Christkindel



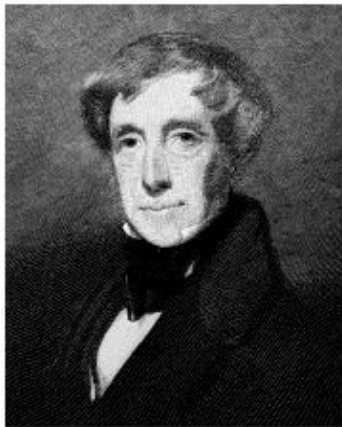
Christkindel



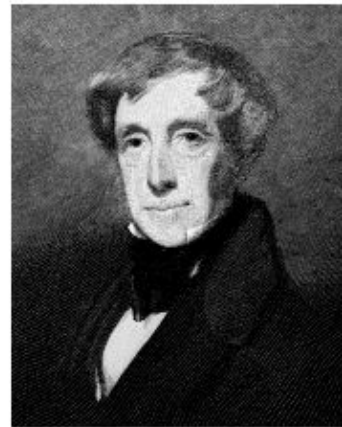
Santa



Santa



Clement Moore



Clement Moore

Saint Nicholas Day

Fun For Toddlers and Pre-K Kids

Saint Nicholas Eve, have your little one put out a shoe with hay or carrots in it for Saint Nicholas's donkey. Fill their shoe with chocolate coins (like Saint Nicholas did for the three maidens), candy canes to represent Saint Nicholas' Bishops's Crozier, Clementine's, and a Saint Nicholas story or a card with a Saint Nicholas project for the day.

A beautiful book for your little ones to enjoy is [The Legend of Saint Nicholas by Demi](#). The illustrations are stunning. It does contain mostly the legends of Saint Nicholas' works, but the facts are there, too. If you'd like to read more, [The True Saint Nicholas by William Bennett](#) is a great resource.

There is also [Saint Nicholas Center online](#). They have printables, games, history and more.



For breakfast, try making a German Dutch Baby Pancake.

Here's our recipe for a gluten-free version.

Preheat your oven and cast iron skillet to 450 degrees.

Mix 6 eggs, 1 cup of heavy cream or whole milk, 1 tsp vanilla, 1/2 tsp cinnamon, 1/2 cup gluten free flour, 2 tsp xanthan gum, and 1/4 teaspoon of salt in a blender on high until it is frothy.

Put 2 TBS butter in your hot cast iron skillet and make sure it coats the sides well. Pour in the batter and bake 15-20 minutes until it is puffy and golden. Dust with powdered sugar or cinnamon and honey. Enjoy!

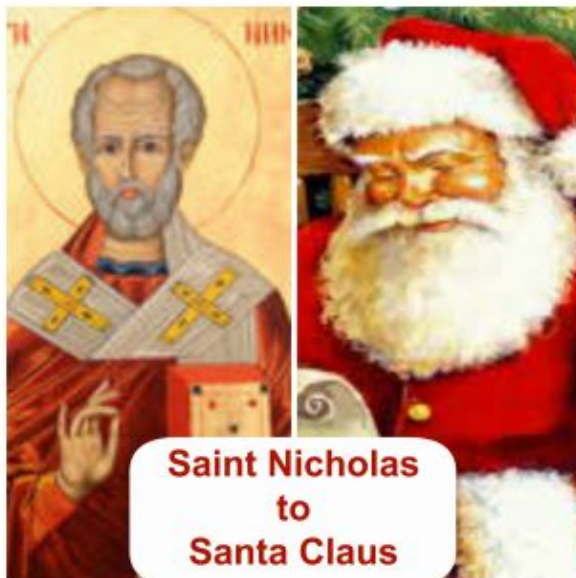


To help your little one understand the serving part of Saint Nicholas, pick something fun to do to help someone else. Pay for the person behind you in the drive through, put cookies in your neighbors mailbox but don't tell them who they are from, make special ornaments or cards for people who might need cheering up. Be creative! It doesn't have to be expensive. Just make sure you keep it a secret!

Read lots of fun Christmas Stories.

Make cookies and cut them out in the shape of Bishop's Miters (hats).

Talk about how "random acts of kindness" become part of who we are when we let Jesus live inside our hearts.



Saint Nicholas to Santa Claus

Saint Nicholas, Christkindel, Father Christmas, Pere Noel, and all the other gift bringers from various cultures came to America with every boat full of new immigrants.

In New Amsterdam, what is now New York, the Dutch kept the tradition of Sinter Klaas alive. By 1809, Jon Pintard had begun to establish Saint Nicholas as a proud reminder of New York's Dutch heritage. Saint Nicholas would take on many forms over the years, but he is now most well known from the verses penned by Clement Moore on Christmas Eve, 1822. Originally "A Visit from Saint Nicholas", 'Twas the Night

Before Christmas is now a much loved poem almost every child knows. It also served to make Christmas more family oriented, helping to end rowdy parties that had been part of the holidays previous celebrations.

The jolly old elf, as Saint Nicholas now is known, came around just after the Civil War from an illustrator by the name of Thomas Nast. During this time, Americans were trying to get to the North Pole, so Nast decided that is where Santa Claus should live. From there we have Norman Rockwell's beloved Santa's on the Saturday Evening Post all the way to the Coca-Cola Santa's of now.

'Twas the Night Before Christmas

Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse. The stockings were hung by the chimney with care, in hopes that St Nicholas soon would be there.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of sugar-plums danced in their heads. And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap, Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter, I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter. Away to the window I flew like a flash, Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash. The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below. When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, But a miniature sleigh, and eight tinny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St Nick. More rapid than eagles his coursers they came, And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name! "Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen! On, Comet! On, Cupid! on, on Donner and Blitzen! To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall! Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly, When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky. So up to the house-top the coursers they flew, With the sleigh full of Toys, and St Nicholas too. And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof The prancing and pawing of each little hoof. As I drew in my head, and was turning around, Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot. A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back, And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack. His eyes-how they twinkled! his dimples how merry! His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the beard of his chin was as white as the snow.

The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And the smoke it encircled his head like a wreath. He had a broad face and a little round belly, That shook when he laughed, like a bowlful of jelly! He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf, And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself! A wink of his eye and a twist of his head, Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.

He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work, And filled all the stockings, then turned with a jerk. And laying his finger aside of his nose, And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose! He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle, And away they all flew like the down of a thistle. But I heard him exclaim, 'ere he drove out of sight, "Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!"



Cut out Saint Nicholas and help him make his journey. See how many things you can remember about where he traveled and why.