



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, Lycia, 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.





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