



History & Geography

For this session's History & Geography, we have included a biography of Saint Nicholas for you and your family to study and learn more about the background and traditions behind the figure that has become such a beloved part of the Christmas season.

"The giver of every good and perfect gift has called upon us to mimic Gods giving, by grace, through faith, and this is not of ourselves."

~ St. Nicholas of Myra

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Saint Nicholas



Saint Nicholas, often associated with Santa Claus, was a real person who lived a long time ago. Born around 270 AD in a place called Patara, which is in modern-day Turkey, Nicholas grew up in a wealthy Christian family.

Through his actions, Nicholas became known for his compassion and willingness to help others. After his parents passed away, he inherited their fortune but decided to use it to help the needy. He gave away his wealth to those in need, often doing so in secret.

One famous story tells of how he helped three poor sisters. They didn't have enough money to get married, so Nicholas secretly threw bags of gold into their house at night. This helped them to get good marriages, which saved them from a life of poverty.

Nicholas became a priest and then a bishop, a leader in the church, of a city called Myra, also in modern-day Turkey. As a bishop, he continued his acts of kindness. He was known for protecting children, sailors, and the poor. People began to tell stories of his miracles and generosity, and he became widely loved and respected.

Saint Nicholas lived in the Roman Empire during a time when Christians were often persecuted for their beliefs. Despite this, he stood firm in his faith and is even believed to have possibly been in attendance at the famous Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which helped shape Christian doctrine and beliefs.

After his death around the year 343 AD, his legacy of generosity continued to grow. He was declared a saint and December 6 (which is believed to be the day he died) became known as Saint Nicholas Day, a day to celebrate his life and acts of kindness. Over time, his story spread across Europe, and different cultures adopted their own traditions to honor him.

In some countries, children would leave their shoes out on the night of December 5, hoping to find them filled with treats and small gifts by Saint Nicholas in the morning. This tradition eventually merged with other cultural customs and evolved into the modern-day figure of Santa Claus, who brings gifts to children around the world on Christmas Eve.

Saint Nicholas' life teaches us about the importance of generosity, kindness, and helping those in need. His story has inspired countless acts of charity and continues to remind us of the joy that comes from giving.