



# Nicholas Celebration

We remember Nicholas of Myra on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December.

Please read this through first, assign people to be leader(s) and reader(s), and see the back for ideas about ways to prepare for this celebration of his life and witness.

Leader      My friends, our help is in the name of the eternal God,  
who is making the heavens and the earth. Will you repeat after me:

Holy, Holy Lord we thank you for all that is good.  
we praise you for the gifts of life, and of one another.  
we feel your love which never ends.  
Holy, Holy Lord: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
you are our companion and our guide;  
our bright evening star.

Reader      Jesus said, Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will  
we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all  
these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these  
things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all  
these things will be given to you as well. ‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for  
tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.’

*Matthew 6: 31-34*

## Visit of Nicholas, or Reading About Nicholas

Leader      Jesus our Lord, you are our light and our salvation. Through your servant  
Nicholas we see what joy sharing can bring. He gave from what he had; he  
shared good things with people in need. Whenever we eat an orange, we  
remember the example of Nicholas, a bright shining light in the night.  
**Amen.**

*If you have prepared orange slices, eat a slice, and then finish (or go find filled shoes, then bring everyone back and then finish).*

Reader     What has been done has been done, what has not, has not.  
 Let it be.  
 Holy, Holy Lord, let our energy be in you.

Leader     Holy, Holy Lord, you are our salvation.  
 Will you repeat after me:  
 Let us step out in peace  
 to love and serve the Lord.  
 Thanks be to God.

**The three most important foods in the traditions around Nicholas are:**

- Oranges (also like coins, but more importantly vitamin C for sailors). We recommend having orange slices for this celebration.
- Gold wrapped Candy (his tossing gold into socks),
- Candy canes (like a bishops crozier), and



**A European tradition**

is that children leave shoes by the door and in the morning, they are filled with treats. You might try leaving shoes by a door and have everyone be sock footed. You will also need an ‘angel’ to fill shoes during the prayers.

**Sing a Song**

Perhaps you want to sing a verse of a seasonal hymn or carol that is focused on love, giving, simplicity, or service. You could sing to begin and sing to end.

**Below is information about Nicholas and a script** for a person to dress up (simply rather like a pageant person, but perhaps wearing red and carrying a shepherds crook or stick) and come and ‘be Nicholas’ visiting from beyond time. Perhaps a child would like to try on this role. And remember - this Nicholas knows nothing about reindeer or ho-ho-ho!!!

**If you want to really dive in** you might want to try and find a Turkish food that your household would eat. Spend some time learning about ancient and modern Turkey. *What early churches were in that land? What are some famous religious places there?*

**Lastly, we encourage you to find a way to give to a charity** that he might have responded to. Perhaps begin by visiting Episcopal Relief and Development.

### **About Nicholas of Myra**

Saint Nicholas was born during the third century in the village of Patara, near Myra in modern-day Turkey. Nicholas' wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while he was still a young boy. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man.

Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children, and his concern for sailors and ships. St. Nicholas' feast day is celebrated on December 6, the anniversary of his death.

Nicholas' tomb in Myra became a popular place of pilgrimage. Following many wars and attacks in the region, some Christians were concerned that access to the tomb might become difficult. In the spring of 1087, sailors succeeded in transporting the bones to Bari, a seaport on the southeast coast of Italy.

A church was built over St. Nicholas' crypt where many faithful pilgrims journeyed to honor the saint who had rescued children, prisoners, sailors, famine victims, and many others through his compassion, generosity, and the countless miracles attributed to his intercession.

The Nicholas shrine in Bari was one of medieval Europe's great pilgrimage centers. Nicholas became known as "Saint in Bari." To this day, thousands of pilgrims and tourists visit Bari's great Basilica di San Nicola.

*-from the Episcopal News Service*

### **Nicholas Visit Script**

Do you ever wonder what it means to love God and love all God's people? I certainly did when I was your age. Even though I lived with my uncle, who was a bishop, I wondered what I could do to love God's people. My name is Nicholas and I lived in a place and time that must be far far from here. My home is called Myra. It is warm and sunny, and on the edge of a very large sea. They might call the place where I lived Turkey today. Are we far or close? Let me tell you about myself. I am a Christian bishop. When I was a new bishop, the church was the biggest secret that ever was. It was a secret because sometimes, men and women who followed Jesus, well we could get in trouble for being his disciples. Yet we grew and grew and grew because we loved as he loved, and served as he served.

One day a friend came to see me. She told me about her neighbor who was very sick and he could no longer work. He had three daughters, every day was a struggle, and even more, he had no money to help

his daughters get married. He knew he was ill and old and he worried for how his daughters would live when he died. My friend, she also told me how embarrassed the father was about not being able to take care of his daughters. We thought and prayed about how the church could help. My family and many of the families in the church had more than enough. We had clothes and fires and food to last. We knew that Jesus called us to care for the sick, the poor and anyone in need. How could we help this family when they didn't want anyone to know how hard things were?

Hmm. I notice that you have windows, but these are strange windows to me. In my home we didn't have this, um, what do you call it? We didn't have glass over windows. We needed a window to let air in and fire smoke out. How does this room stay so warm without a fire? Hmm...oh so in Myra, so far away from here...windows were open.

We decided that for three nights, one night for each daughter, we would walk by their home and throw a bag of gold in through the window. They would have the help they need and have no clue where the help came from. Someone told me that each time the bag of gold landed in a sock that was hanging by the window to dry. I don't know if that really happened, and I hope it didn't break their socks!

Can you imagine the joy these daughters felt? How amazed they were? How comforted the father was?

My friend told me that the father was quietly asking all his friends and neighbors about the wonderful gifts that appeared in their home. Somebody must have seen us; must have noticed us on one of those nights. Somehow someone told him that it was I, the Bishop of Myra who helped his family.

Eventually he came to me and asked why I would do such a thing. Do you know why?

I told him that Christ commanded all who follow him to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, offer clothes to those without, and to care for those who are sick or in prison. This is how we live for God's kingdom.' When he tried to thank me, I asked him not to thank me...but to give praise and thanks to God alone.

I am just God's servant, one of many in Myra who seek to love God and love God's people in our neighborhood. We show our love for God by caring for anyone in need. Do you know anyone who tries to do that? Can you help me do that?

It is time for me to go, so I leave you saying: May the peace and love of Jesus be with you forever!