

# Mission Together

## St Nicholas



### Teacher's introduction

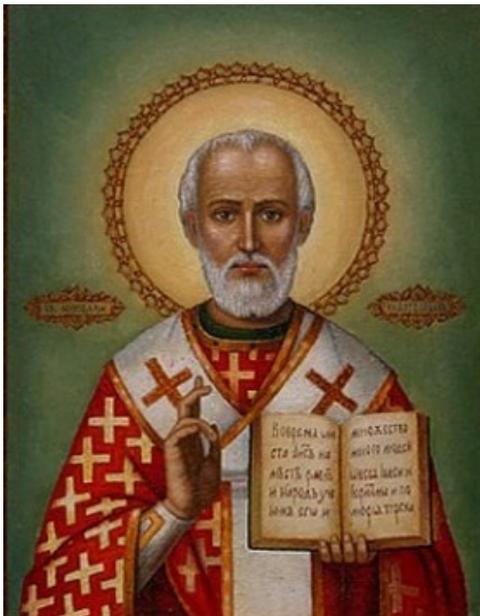
This resource aims to teach children about Saint Nicholas. It comprises a story, a reflection and an activity. This resource is best used in the lead up to St Nicolas' Day on 6 December, a feast celebrated joyfully in many countries. The figure of Father Christmas is rooted in the story of Saint Nicholas, who was famous for his kindness and generosity.

### Objectives

- To find out about Saint Nicholas
- To follow in Saint Nicholas' footsteps of loving others



### The story of St Nicholas



This is the true story of Saint Nicholas. Nicholas was born over 1700 years ago, in a small village in Turkey. He had loving parents who raised him to follow the example of Jesus by caring for others, being kind, and saying his prayers. Sadly, Nicholas' parents died when he was still young, leaving him a very large sum of money. Nicholas remembered what his parents had taught him and decided to use his money for the good of others, rather than keep it all for himself.

As well as sharing what he had with those in need, Nicholas wanted to follow Jesus in other ways too, so when he grew up he became a priest. Fr Nicholas made such a special effort to take care of people and show them God's love that after a few years he

was made a Bishop. A Bishop's role is very important. They have to look after thousands of people. Bishop Nicholas became known and loved throughout the land for his generosity to those in need and his concern for children.

There are many stories of St Nicholas helping children and the poor. One legend tells of a poor man with three grown up daughters. In those days, when a girl married, the bride's father was expected to pay the new husband's family a large sum of money, called a dowry. But the poor man simply couldn't afford it. Because of this, his daughters were unable to marry and faced a life of poverty and hardship. Nicholas heard of the family's troubles and so, late at night, he passed by their house and threw a bag of gold coins in through the window.

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# Mission Together



## St Nicholas' story continued



The coins landed in the shoes of one of the daughters. Nicholas did this three times, once for each daughter, and every time the gold coins fell into the shoes of one of the girls. His help meant that all three daughters could be married and taken care of.

By his humble love and service, St Nicholas had changed the lives of the girls and their father no longer worried about what was going to happen to them.

To this day many countries around the world celebrate St Nicolas' Day on 6 December. Children leave out their shoes or slippers the night before, and when they wake in the morning they find that St Nicolas has visited, leaving gifts and treats in their shoes or slippers, just like he did for the three daughters all those years ago.

## Reflection

Ask the children what we can learn from the story of St Nicholas. Look for answers such as '**sharing**', '**caring for others**' and '**helping those in need**'.

Highlight that St Nicholas loved much because he kept Jesus close to his heart through his prayers and by listening to what God wanted him to do. Nicholas spent his life following Jesus' example; using what he had to help those in need and sharing God's love with everyone.

Let the children know that although we may not have the riches that St Nicholas did, we can still use what we have to help others. Ask the class for examples of good deeds they can do this Advent. This might include helping with chores at home, being kind to siblings, forgiving friends, sharing some of their pocket money with Mission Together, praying for children around the world who are in need.

During the excitement of Advent it can be tricky to remember the true meaning of Christmas. This year, let's **keep Jesus close in our hearts**, just as St Nicholas did.

## Accompanying Activities

Accompanying activities are available on the Mission Together website [missiontogether.org.uk](http://missiontogether.org.uk). These activities focus on following the example of Saint Nicholas and putting Christ at the centre of Christmas. They include *A Gift for the World* and *St Nicholas' Christmas Stocking*.

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