



# St. Nicholas Day

December 6th, the day to celebrate the life of the real man who inspired the legend of Santa Claus.

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He was born in the 3rd century in what is now the southern coast of Turkey. His wealthy parents died in an epidemic, leaving him heir to their fortune.

Nicholas was made Bishop of Myra while only a young man and suffered imprisonment and exile for his faith under the Roman Emperor Diocletian. After his release he attended the Council of Nicaea in AD 325.

December 6th is the anniversary of his death and a day to remember a man who gave his life in service of Jesus Christ. St. Nicholas Day has been celebrated for hundreds of years in varying traditions all over the world.



Nicholas dedicated his life to serving God. Following Jesus' command to "sell what you own and give to the poor," he used his entire inheritance to help those in need.

During the time that Nicholas lived, there was famine and much poverty. One of the things he is remembered for doing is secretly placing baskets with grain and food on people's doorsteps so they wouldn't go hungry.

Eventually the stories and legends of St. Nick transformed into the Santa Claus story that we see today. However, we can still remember the real man and the stories of the great things he did.

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## A St. Nicholas Story

At this time fathers were required to offer a dowry to the prospective husbands of their daughters. One father could not afford the dowry for his three daughters and because of this they were destined to be sold into slavery. Three separate times gold appeared in their home, providing dowries for the daughters. It was said that the gold had been thrown by Nicholas through an open window, landing in the stockings drying by the fire, thus beginning the legend and tradition of Christmas stockings. Three oranges are often used to represent the three pieces of gold Nicholas gave. These oranges are often given in stocking gifts.

