

Saint Nicholas



This Christmas... discover the power of a simple gift

—just as Nicholas did so many years ago! Saint Nicholas will add a new dimension to your holiday season with the story of a little boy's journey in Bethlehem that changed Christmas forever. We are delighted that you have teamed up with Big Idea to host this Family Fun Event that will help families and friends discover the real joy of giving. Be creative and imaginative as you plan this festive event using any or all of the ideas offered to make your early Christmas gathering a meaningful occasion with a HO-HO-wHOLE lot of fun included!

PREPARING FOR THE EVENT

- **Preview Saint Nicholas.** Being familiar with the story line will help in the details of your event planning. Invite helpers and volunteers to view the show with you and encourage their creative input for ideas and suggestions.
- **Synopsis:** Laura Carrot's Christmas stocking might be empty this year because her dad is in danger of losing his job. While Larry thinks a letter to the North Pole should fix the problem, Bob knows what will really help... and tells the story of a little boy named Nicholas who made a discovery in Bethlehem that changed Christmas forever. But what did Nick learn and how can it possibly help Laura and her family? Find out as the Veggies discover the true joy of giving to others—at Christmas time and throughout the year.
- **Running Time:** Approximately 45 minutes
- **Key Verse:** "But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret." Matthew 6:3-4
- **Silly Song:** "Donuts for Benny"
- **Select a date** for your event. DVD in stores October 3rd, but often Christmas events occur in late fall
- **Recruit volunteers** to help with the planning, preparation, and implementation of your gathering.
- **Publicize** the Saint Nicholas event 3-4 weeks in advance.
 - Utilize the posters included in this kit for hanging in the church or various other community locations.
 - Invite local Christian schools, daycares, and other churches to your event.
 - Send announcements to local newspapers, community/school newsletters, and church bulletins.
 - Assist the children of your church in making invitations to mail or deliver to family and friends with details of the event. *PERSONAL INVITATION* is the best form of publicity. Call or visit your neighbors and friends to invite them personally.
 - Consider collecting **Operation Christmas Child** shoe box gifts at your event. Invite families to bring a completed shoe box gift or have shoe boxes on hand and encourage families to bring items to fill them as and activity. Complete details on all you'll need can be found at www.SamaritansPurse.org/OCC. Also see the OCC brochure inside your event kit. Be sure to note this on the publicity and invitations.

DECORATING

Use available traditional Christmas decorations for this family event. Sprinkle in a few of the Veggie characters (stuffed and otherwise) if available.

- Make the welcoming area festive with lights and trees.
- Place a holiday table cover on a large table to be used for registration, nametags, etc.
- Hang the Saint Nicholas event poster included in this kit and outline with white lights for your premier showing.
- Have Christmas music playing as background music.
- Create a “Christmas Photo Area” for family and friends to have pictures taken.
- Include a Nativity scene somewhere in the welcoming area.
- Enhance other areas of activity or the entrances to other areas with festive Christmas decorations.
- If guests will be bringing food pantry items, have a large, decorated box available to hold these food donations.
- Prepare a large (6 ft.) green Christmas tree from poster board or a paper roll. Mount the tree on the wall to be decorated with paper ornaments described in the WELCOME section.
- Encourage greeters and volunteers to wear stocking hats, ear muffs, Santa hats, and/or Christmas apparel. If appropriate (check with church leaders), have someone dressed as Saint Nicholas to mingle among the attendees.

WELCOME

- Designate greeters to welcome guests as they arrive.
- Create circle ornaments from colored construction paper. Give each guest two ornaments...one for a nametag and one for games/door prize drawings. (Be sure to include name, address, email, and phone number on the door prize ornament to be used for follow-up contact information.) Assist each person in taping the door prize ornament to the green paper Christmas tree mentioned in the DECORATING section of this guide
- If guests bring food donations, direct them to the box designated for such items.

- Encourage guests to have a photograph taken of their family or group.

WATCH SAINT NICHOLAS.

- Ring a large string of jingle bells to gather everyone together for an opening prayer.
- Extend a jolly welcome for an event filled with a HO-HO-wHOLE lot of fun!
- Encourage the children to discover why we give to others as they watch the show.
- When the show is finished, pose these general questions to the group:
 - *Do we give to make ourselves feel happy? (We give gifts to others because we ARE happy. God's love is a gift to us.)*
 - *Why is Laura upset? (Her dad may lose his job and they may not be getting anything for Christmas.)*
 - *What does Bob do to teach the kids a lesson about Christmas? (He tells the story of Saint Nicholas...from Greece.)*
 - *Young Nicholas had parents who were always _____.* (Helping others...in secret.)
 - *After Nicholas's parents died, who helped Nicholas understand why they gave so much to others? (Sister Claire from Bethlehem who told him about God's love.)*
 - *Nicholas returned to Greece to continue his father's work of helping others. Since Mayor Gustav—who loved only money—refused to let anyone give gifts, how did Nicholas manage to give coins to the three sisters? (He went in disguise.)*
 - *What did Annie decide to do with her gold coin? (Give it to Gustav to fix Laura's father's truck. The word spread and everyone in church decided to help.)*
 - *How do you know Laura's friends learned why Nicholas gave in secret? (Everyone SECRETLY joined in—even Gus, the grumpy mechanic—to help Laura's family have a wonderful Christmas.)*

CHRISTMAS CAPERS

Choose from the following games and activities that will meet the time and space allotments of your event. Divide the participants into groups and offer several activities at the same time at various locations in a rotation-type experience. Have extra helpers available to assist with younger children and those with special needs. Inexpensive Christmas candy may be used for prizes.

Stocking Stuffer Scavengers (Large Group Game)

You will need:

- 6 or 7 folding chairs (or appropriate number for the size of your gathering)
- One stocking for each game participant
- Talk briefly about the three sisters from Greece who hung their stockings in the window to dry. Mention that Nicholas put a gold coin in these stockings...just like our tradition of hanging stockings at Christmas.

Randomly select ornaments (names) from the paper Christmas tree created in the WELCOME section—one participant for each folding chair. Give each player a stocking, and instruct each one to be seated on a folding chair. Tell the group that you will be looking for certain items that the participants are to find among the audience observers—children and adults. (Think Let's Make A Deal.) All items will be returned, and the items must belong to someone other than themselves. When you announce an item, all of the players go into the audience to find the particular article, bring it back to place in their stocking, and be seated. One chair will be removed each time an item is mentioned...so the person who returns to his seat last will be without a chair and thus eliminated from the game. (Similar to musical chairs.) Continue play until only one participant is left and announced to be the winner. Suggestions for scavenger items: shoe lace, piece of jewelry, penny, key, piece of candy or gum, ink pen, hat or cap, cell phone, lip gloss, water bottle.

Shoe Box Shuffle

You will need:

- Shoe boxes of various sizes (wrapped or unwrapped)

Talk about the importance of giving to children in need and remind them of **Operation Christmas Child** video featuring Larry the Cucumber.

Divide the group into equal teams, and instruct each team to form a straight line. Place a designated number of shoe boxes at the front of each team's line. (All teams will have the same number of shoe boxes. Young children may only be able to use one or two shoe boxes.) At a given signal, the first person on the team stacks the boxes, one on top of another, picks up the stack of boxes and races to a designated point and returns to pass off the boxes to the next team member. Play continues until all team members have carried the stack of boxes. The first team to complete the rotation is declared the winner. Note: If any of the boxes should fall, that player must begin his run again.

Ho-Ho-Ho...Make Me Happy! (Small Group Activity)

You will need:

- A large, wrapped box (with lid) containing an assortment of silly items (rubber ducky, crazy hat, bubbles, wig, hula skirt, Groucho Marx glasses, fake spider, masking tape)

Reflect on the portion of the show where the friends are looking in the store window and “oohing” and “ahhing” over the toy display and what they want for Christmas. Ask the children about gifts they have received for Christmas and why those gifts made them happy. Talk about the happiness that comes from getting a gift as well as the happiness that comes from giving a gift.

Select two persons for this activity (adult or child). One person will be commanded to look unhappy and “not to laugh.” The other person will select one item from the wrapped box to entice a laugh from the “not to laugh” person. He may use the item in any way to get a laugh...except for touching the other individual. When a laugh, chuckle, or even a smile is detected, the mission is accomplished, and two different persons are chosen to play this game. This is a fun activity to observe...and the audience may join in the fun of trying to get an individual to laugh.

Fish-Fish-GUSTAV!

Gustav was unhappy with Nicholas's father because he was always giving away fish to the needy. He was equally unhappy with Nicholas when he placed gold coins in the sisters' stockings. And finally, near the end of the show, the great chase was on. Children will have fun chasing each other in this rendition of Duck-Duck-Goose.

Place the children in one large circle or form a couple of smaller circles. One person from each circle is selected to be Nicholas. He sneaks around the outside of the circle, tapping each person gently on the head while repeating the words “fish,” “fish,”... At one point he taps someone on the head and shouts “Gustav!” That person gets up and begins chasing Nicholas around the outside of the circle. If Nicholas reaches the open spot before Gustav catches him, Gustav becomes the new Nicholas and repeats the process. If Gustav is able to tag Nicholas, Nicholas must repeat the process. Make sure that every child has a chance to participate in the chase.



Saint Nick Saga

This is a good review of the *Saint Nicholas* show.

You will need:

- One Santa hat
- CD player and Christmas music

Direct the children to be seated in a circle with a leader (wearing the Santa hat) in the middle of the group. The leader begins telling the story of Saint Nicholas...“a long time ago in Greece there lived a mother, a father, and a son named Nicholas. The father was a fisherman and was always giving away fish to needy people.” The leader stops telling the story, takes off the Santa hat and gives it to someone in the circle as another helper begins playing the Christmas music. The Santa hat is passed around the circle until the music stops. When the music stops, the person holding the Santa hat puts it on and adds a couple more sentences to the story of Saint Nicholas. (Younger children may need help recalling the story.) The music continues and the hat is passed until the entire story has been completed. If the music stops when someone is holding the hat that has already had a turn, the hat is passed to the next person who has not participated. Note: If time allows, the story line of Laura and her family may be reviewed.

Secret Santa Sack (Art Activity)

Read the quote that Nicholas’s father loved from Matthew 6:3-4. “But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.” After the children have completed the sack project, encourage them to think of someone that they can SECRETLY bless by giving them a gift in the bag.

You will need:

- A lunch sack for each person (brown or white)
- Assortment of old Christmas cards
- Ribbon
- Paper punch
- Scissors and glue or tape
- Markers/crayons

Give each person one sack and one Christmas card. Instruct them to cut the front of the card to fit one side of the bag. Help children glue or tape the card in place. Assist with the punching of holes at the

top of the bag and inserting ribbon to form handles. Use markers/crayons to decorate as desired.

Have clipboards, crayons and/or markers and coloring pages from the event kit for children to color.

SUGARPLUM SNACKS

Select from these snack options that best fit your group size and budget:

- “Nickerdoodles” (Snickerdoodle cookies)
- Assorted Christmas cookies and candy
- Red and green finger gelatin cut in Christmas cookie cutter shapes
- Snow Pops (Marshmallows on popsicle sticks, dipped in white chocolate and topped with white sprinkles)
- Edible necklaces (green “o-shaped”cereal strung on red licorice strands)
- Hot Cocoa
- Punch with peppermint sprinkles on top

CLOSING

- Ring jingle bells again for a time of closing.
- Randomly select Christmas ornaments from the paper Christmas tree and distribute door prizes.
- Thank all who attended and invite everyone to future events and activities at your church.
- Close with a prayer.
- As guests leave, distribute stickers, coloring sheets, activity posters, balloons and photos that were taken earlier in the event.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- A \$3 coupon is attached to the activity poster. Be sure and show this to parents.
- Contact in person, by mail, or with telephone calls, event guests who do not attend your church. Thank them for attending and invite them to future events and/or church services.
- Hold a post-event meeting with key planning people to evaluate the gathering.
- Send a note of thanks to all persons who helped in any way with your Family Fun Event.
- Place a “thank you” to volunteers in the church bulletin or newsletter.

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