

The history of Father Christmas or Santa Claus

A long time ago, a bishop named Nicholas lived in what is now the country of Turkey. According to legend, he often helped children in need. Years later, Nicholas became the patron saint of children. Today, the date of his death, December 6, is an important date in some European countries. On the night before, children put out their shoes and hang up their stockings and Saint Nicholas leaves them gifts.

According to legend, Saint Nicholas visits towns and cities, leads parades, talks to children, and often hands out small gifts. He is dressed as a bishop, wearing a red or white robe and a tall, pointed hat. Saint Nicholas always has a helper. In the Netherlands, this helper is called Black Peter, in Germany, Knecht Ruprecht, in France, Pere Fouettard, and in Luxembourg, Hoesecker. All the children love Saint Nicholas, but they're afraid of his helper, who keeps track of who was good and who was naughty.

The old name Saint Nicholas evolved into Santa Claus or Father Christmas. He is depicted as fat and jolly, with white hair and beard and dressed in red. He comes from the North Pole and his helpers are elves dressed in green. Children believe that he visits their houses on the night of the 24th December with his magic sleigh filled with presents, which is pulled by flying reindeer. He comes down the chimney or through a window to fill the children's stockings with presents or leave them under the Christmas Tree.

Activities

This is a text about the history of Father Christmas or Santa Claus. The lesson starts with a basic presentation of this topic.

Unknown words are explained at the blackboard with the help of drawings or with the help of images presented in the computer room.

Children start to ask questions related to this topic. (smart questions as: 'Why do most of people think that Christmas festivities comes from America?', 'How is possible that Santa can enter such a small chimney being 'fat' as it is known?')

The children are involved in a debate, they are so interested in this subject so that they put questions and talk about their Christmas and the symbolism of this magic winter holiday.

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