



St Nicholas the original Father Christmas

On the 6th December we remember the feast day of St Nicholas. St Nicholas was a Bishop who lived a long time ago in what is now Turkey. He was a very rich and kind man. His parents died when he was young and left him a lot of riches. St Nicholas was incredibly generous and used this money to help the poor.

His most famous story tells of how the tradition of hanging stockings for Christmas started.

There once was a man who was very poor. He had three daughters, who were too poor to get married, in those days a father would have to pay a dowry for his daughter to get married. This man was worried as if he died his daughters would become slaves as they did not have enough money to marry.

Gifts of gold started appearing in the man's house, thrown from an open window and landing in the shoes and stocking that were left at night by the fire to dry. Each time the gold appeared the father would have enough money so that one of his daughters could marry.

The father wanted to know who was giving him this money so he waited every night until he caught bishop Nicholas dropping in a bag of gold. Bishop Nicholas begged the man not to tell anyone, but the father was so happy that news soon spread. Soon enough whenever anybody received a gift they thought it was from St Nicholas.

This is where the tradition of hanging stockings for presents comes from as people hoped for a gift from St Nicholas.

