



*Why do children hang up a stocking on Christmas Eve?*

The first Saint Nicholas, a real person who was a bishop in Asia Minor in the fourth century, is probably the source of our present Saint Nick who fills the stockings of good children on Christmas Eve. The story is that the bishop heard of a poor man who was about to sell his three daughters into slavery because he could not provide a dowry for them. Saint Nicholas saved the daughters, one by one, with gifts of gold. Each time, because he wished to remain anonymous, he threw the gift into the house rather than present it. One version of the legend is that he tossed the gold down the chimney, where it fell into a stocking that was hung there to dry. And so it is that children still hang up their stockings, and often find — in the toe — a tangerine, to represent a lump of gold.