

St. Nicholas Chosen as Archbishop

Cast:

Individuals: Narrator (read or memorize)
5-year old Nicholas (no lines)
Man in White (memorize)
Presiding Bishop (memorize)
St. Nicholas (memorize)
Voice (memorize)

Groups: Synod
Young children

Props & Costumes:

1. table, chair & Bible for 5-year old Nicholas
2. 'gold coins', chocolate or otherwise
3. table for Synod
4. white robe
5. crown and robe for Presiding Bishop
6. crown and robe for Bp. Nicholas

Music to be learned:

'O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly?'
(can make copies for audience to sing along)

Settings:

1. in one area, young children are seated on the floor with '5 year old' boy sitting at a small table reading the Bible
2. in opposite area, older children are seated around a table as the Synod
3. area designated for church

Narrator: Born in 270 AD, St. Nicholas was the only son of his well-known and wealthy parents. Recognizing him as a gift given to them by God, in gratitude they dedicated him back to God. [**Narrator holds out his hand in boy's direction.**] He was a very clever child, and when he was five years old he was already studying the Bible. St. Nicholas learned of the spiritual life from his uncle Nicholas, who was bishop of their city, Patara in Lycia, and eventually he was tonsured a monk. [**Boy joins group of children seated on the floor.**]

When Nicholas was sixteen, his parents died in an epidemic and left him a lot of money. [**Nicholas moves among children, handing out gold coins.**] He distributed all this money to the poor, not keeping anything for himself. He tried very hard to hide his good works, in obedience to Jesus Christ who said, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

When all his money was gone, he trusted himself to the will of God and went away to live and pray alone. He intended to spend the rest of his life this way, but one day he heard a voice from on high that said:

Voice [loudly]: Nicholas, go among the people for asceticism if you desire to be crowned by Me.

Narrator: With no way of supporting himself, he went to the city of Myra in Lycia where he knew no one and no one knew him. A rather average man, about five and a half feet tall, he went about the city unnoticed. Very early each day he went to the church to pray, waiting for God to direct his footsteps.

At that time, John, the archbishop of the city, died and the Synod (church council) that was assembled to elect a new archbishop could not agree on who it should be. [**Narrator holds out his hand in direction of Synod. Synod members argue among themselves.**] Finally the members of the Synod decided to fast and pray that God would show them who was the most worthy of this position.

*[They all stand and bow their heads in prayer. **Presiding Bishop** goes off a little ways by himself to pray.]* God heard the prayers of His servants, and disclosed to them who was the most worthy. While the presiding bishop was standing at prayer, a man appeared to him, clothed in white.

Man in White: You will find whom you seek if you go out early and stand in front of the church, and wait for the first man to arrive for the morning prayer. Make him archbishop. He is called Nicholas.

Presiding Bishop: My people, God has answered our prayer. I have been told that we will find a suitable candidate if I go out early tomorrow morning and wait for the first man to come to the church. *[Presiding Bishop moves to designated church area.]*

Narrator: As usual, St. Nicholas arose very early and went to the church.

Presiding Bishop: What is your name, my son?

St. Nicholas: I am called Nicholas, and I am your lordship's servant.

Presiding Bishop *[leading him to the Synod]:* Receive, my brothers, your pastor, whom the Holy Spirit has anointed and who has been elected not by a human Synod, but by divine Providence.

[Synod shouts Axios! Axios! and starts enthusiastically singing O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly, first verse. This should be done almost simultaneously to give the impression of spontaneity.]

Narrator: Though Nicholas had thought of living a life of solitude, he decided it would be wrong to ignore what had just happened. So he accepted the will of God and the people and on the day of his consecration, the whole city joined in the festivities.

*[As St. Nicholas is vested and crowned by **Presiding Bishop**, the **Synod, Children and Audience** sing O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly, second verse.]*

Narrator: Merciful, wise and fearless, Nicholas was a true shepherd to his flock for many years.

[Synod, Children and Audience sing O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly, third verse.]

Narrator: There are many stories about St. Nicholas. Perhaps next year on St. Nicholas Day, we will present another vignette from his life.

Entire Cast stands to sing:

O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly?

O who loves Nicholas the saintly?
O who serves Nicholas the saintly?
Him will Nicholas receive,
And give help in time of need:
Holy Father Nicholas!

He who dwells in God's holy mansions,
Is our help on the land and oceans,
He will guard us from all ills,
Keep us pure and free from sins:
Holy Father Nicholas!

Holy Saint, hearken to our prayer,
Let not life drive us to despair,
All our efforts shall not wane,
Singing praises to your name:
Holy Father Nicholas!

*St. Nicholas Chosen as Archbishop adapted by Linda Funk from:
Stories of Saints from the Prologue p.45 (compiled and adapted by Johanna Manley)
The Life of St. Nicholas by Verena Smith found on <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/life-of-saint-nicholas/>
The Prologue
Wikipedia*

O Who Loves Nicholas the Saintly
 Text: Traditional Slavic Greek Catholic (Byzantine)
 Tune: Traditional Slavic

O who loves Nich-o - las the saint-ly?
 O who serves Nich-o - las the saint-ly?
 Him will Nich-o - las re - ceive,
 And give help in time of need,
 Ho - ly Fa - ther Nich - o - las!

O who loves Nicholas the saintly?
 O who serves Nicholas the saintly?
 Him will Nicholas receive,
 And give help in time of need:
 Holy Father Nicholas!

He who dwells in God's holy mansions,
 Is our help on the land and oceans,
 He will guard us from all ills,
 Keep us pure and free from sins:
 Holy Father Nicholas!

Holy Saint, hearken to our prayer,
 Let not life drive us to despair,
 All our efforts shall not wane,
 Singing praises to your name:
 Holy Father Nicholas!

To practise with online music, go to <http://www.stnicholascenter.org/pages/o-who-loves-nicholas/>