



Q & A



Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver

October 12, 2021 | \$18, 32 pages, hardcover | 978-1-5140-0180-6

At Christmastime, we think a lot about presents, but have you ever wondered why we give gifts? Learn about the life of Saint Nicholas and why he became known as one of the greatest giftgivers of all time. Told in a fun rhyme, this colorfully illustrated book will be enjoyed by children and the adults who read with them. Also included is a letter to parents and caregivers—a tool to help engage children in conversation about the content. Discover IVP Kids and share with children the things that matter to God.

Saint Nicholas and the Story Behind Christmas Gifts

What inspired you to write *Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver*?

Ned Bustard: Growing up I was always enchanted by Santa Claus. In fact, I held firmly on to my belief in him at least a year longer than my younger sister. I remember dressing up as Santa to distribute gifts at my cousin's home and can picture to this day me drawing the castle of Saint Nick at the North Pole as I sat by the fireplace.

Over twenty-five years ago I created a faux woodcut illustration of Santa Claus for one of my clients that somehow tapped into the deep myths I had cherished in my heart over the years in a way that the Coca-Cola and Rankin/Bass Productions' Santas could not. But my illustration by itself wouldn't have started me—or kept me—working on this book for over two decades. This book was birthed out of the combination of fatherhood and a question: How does Santa Claus give out all those gifts around the world in only one night?

When my wife and I began raising our children, I wanted to have a way to focus on Christ during the Christmas season while still having fun celebrating the arrival of Saint Nicholas. I wanted a way to teach the truth and enjoy the legends—while not confusing which was which. But how could I make Advent both magical and meaningful?

The Santa at the mall with his elves and reindeer often distract us all too much for us to focus on the birth of a poor boy long ago on a silent night. For me the path lay beyond Kris Kringle to the early history of the church. By focusing on the life of Saint Nicholas of Myra, I could encourage my children to love Saint Nick for his goodness and desire to share the love of Christ with the world rather than fixating on the jolly old elf who gives us stuff.

What is at the heart of this book?

Ned: My book embraces both the truth and the legends swirling around Bishop Nicholas to form a fresh story that is historical, theological, and magical. My illustrations are all hand-carved block prints to give the book a rooted, historic feeling. Fantastic yet grounded in reality, *Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver* is a brand new-old story that features a jolly old man with a sack of gifts he carries on his back, but it centers on the greatest giftgiver . . . and his amazing gift of his Son, Jesus Christ.

What do you hope readers take away from *Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver*?

Ned: Christmas is about Jesus. Saint Nicholas was a real person who loved Jesus, served the church, and was generous. We can have fun with the magic and legends about Saint Nick without sacrificing the truths of his life and the centrality of Christ. All the people around the world can get presents all in one night because time has stopped for Saint Nick, and he just walks/flyes around giving generously out of his wondrous bag.



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BIO



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“I am thrilled that IVP is launching IVP Kids and honored that my work is one of the first stories to grace the line. Additionally, it is a joy to have this particular story of mine chosen. I have been working on it on and off for over two decades—writing and rewriting it to try and get the balance right. I love church history, and I love stories of enchantment, and in this book I have sought to combine them both together. My hope is that *Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver* will stir together history and legends in such a way as to provide wonder.”

IVP Kids Introduces Author and Illustrator Ned Bustard and *Saint Nicholas the Giftgiver*

Ned Bustard is a graphic designer, children’s book illustrator, author, and printmaker. Some of the books he has written, illustrated, or edited include *It Was Good: Making Art to the Glory of God*, the Veritas Press Legends & Leagues series, *Squalls Before War: His Majesty’s Schooner Sultana*, *The Chronicles of Narnia Comprehension Guide*, *Bede’s History of ME*, *History of Art: Creation to Contemporary*, *Reformation ABCs*, *Bigger on the Inside: Christianity and Doctor Who*, and *Revealed: A Storybook Bible for Grown-Ups*.

Ned is an elder at Wheatland Presbyterian Church, creative director for Square Halo Books, Inc., curator of the Square Halo Gallery, designer for Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), and serves on the boards of the Association of Scholars of Christianity in the History of Art (ASCHA) and The Row House, Inc. He has lectured at colleges, schools, churches, conferences, and bars.

Ned grew up in the Philadelphia area and spent summers on the Chesapeake Bay but now lives in the West End of Lancaster, Pennsylvania—much too far inland for him to get to go sailing. He and his wife, Leslie, have three daughters, one dog, and own an unreasonable amount of books.



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