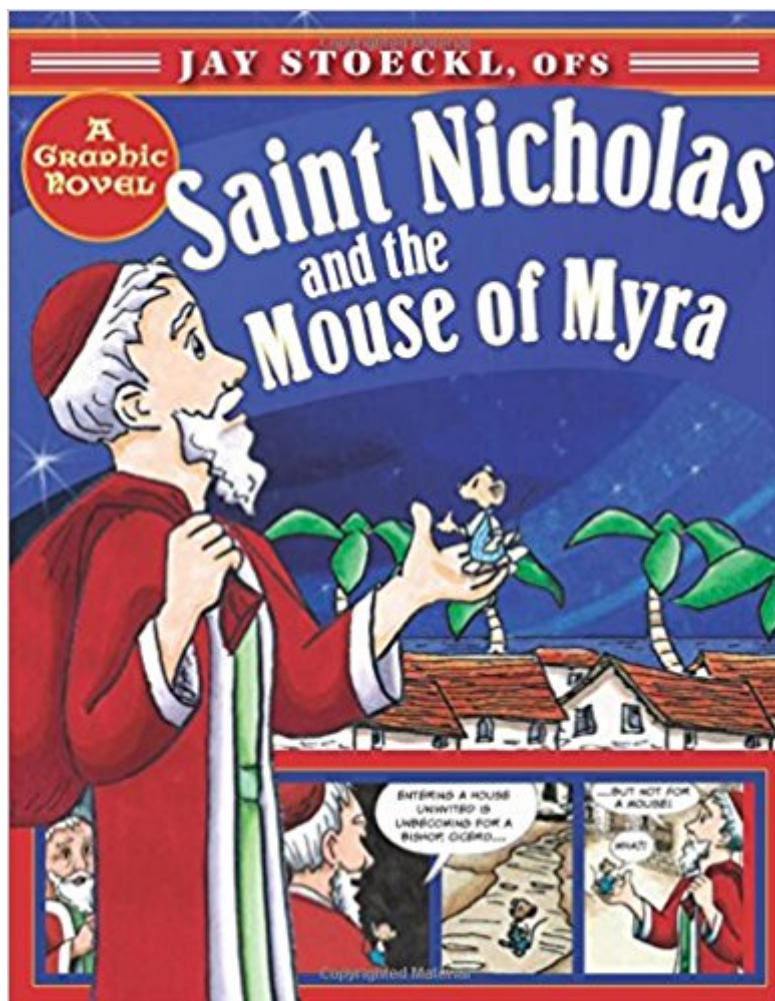


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# Saint Nicholas And The Mouse Of Myra



## Synopsis

This graphic novel illustrates the life of St Nicholas from his beginnings as a young priest in Asia Minor in the late 3rd century until just before his death in the mid 4th century. As with St Francis and Brother Duck this story needed a 'set up character' for which the wisdom and early Christian teachings as shown in Nicholas' life can be revealed through dialogue. This secondary protagonist is a Greek-attired mouse named Cicero who is dressed to look like a little philosopher. His personality follows this image as well as his name as this philosophical critter questions much of Nicholas' Christian acts until the mouse's conversion late in the story. Unlike the childlike personality of Br Duck, the non-Christian Cicero will have an educated intelligence and wit that will act in playful fashion when placed against Nicholas' gifted wisdom.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 6 - 12 years

Grade Level: 1 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Was there a real Saint Nicholas? Is he more than the character seen in malls during the Christmas season? Children in elementary and middle school will delight in discovering that the beloved figure was a real person who lived in the late third and early fourth centuries. He was a man of faith who learned that a spirit of generosity and caring is part of being a faithful Christian. Jay Stoeckl has skillfully written and illustrated his graphic novel in chapter-book form. He even gives Nicholas a friendly companion—Cicero, the philosopher-mouse. Cicero, dressed in a tiny Greek toga,

helps his friend through his journey from young lad to priest and defender of the faith. A scripture verse for each chapter focuses on the main lessons Nicholas learns along the way. Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra is an excellent graphic novel for Christian youth. Mary Lou Henneman, Congregational Libraries Today

A while back, my son and I thoroughly enjoyed the book Saint Francis and Brother Duck by Jay Stoeckl, OFS. This year, together we're reading his new book Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra. Like its predecessor, Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra is a graphic novel about the spiritual journey of a saint. Like its predecessor, it also features an adorably-drawn animal sidekick to help convey the story of the saint in question. The mouse in this book is full of personality, cheeky and smart and frequently challenging Nicholas to explain his life choices in a way that allows for the saint's beliefs to unfold easily throughout the story. The book moves along at a nice pace and is a very engaging and colorful introduction to the saint upon whom Santa Claus is based; I particularly like its message about generous giving to the poor. It's a great read for kids eight and up (and for their parents, too). I'm learning a lot about Saint Nicholas that I didn't know before). Both The Christmas Stick and Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra were review copies courtesy of Paraclete Press, which publishes all sorts of great spiritual books for kids and adults. Check them out. I promise you'll find something you like.

Ginny Kubitz Moyer, Random Acts of Momness

This playful book illustrates in vivid color and storytelling the life of St. Nicholas of Myra from his beginnings as a young priest in Asia Minor in the late 3rd century until just before his death. Kids will watch as he learns and practices the generosity that led to him becoming the father of Christmas giving (St. Nick). As with Saint Francis and Brother Duck, Jay Stoeckl's first foray into this genre, one fictional character is added to the mix through whom the wisdom and Christian teachings of Nicholas's life can be revealed through dialogue: a Greek-attired philosopher-mouse by the name of Cicero. He questions many of Nicholas's actions, often hilariously, until the mouse himself converts to Christianity late in the story. The result is an excellent introduction to the life of one of the least-understood and appreciated real characters in Christian history

Kids loved the book, so did dad. Excellent quality printing.

Great story telling. Good artist. I liked this one and his first book.

Great product and service. Thanks!

When Christmas rolls around Jolly Old St. Nick is ubiquitous. Malls and movies, storybooks and songs feature a rotund 'Claus with rosy cheeks. In our home, we do not pass on the Santa legend as fact to our children. Sadly, our kids have concluded that Santa goes to other people's house but not ours. We don't have a chimney. But Santa is no mere legend. His historic genesis is found in a very real saint of the Christian church: Nicholas of Myra, the Wonder Worker. Cartoonist Jay Stoeckl, author of the acclaimed graphic novel *Saint Francis and Brother Duck* ([link to my review](#)) returns with a new graphic novel telling St. Nicholas's story. As with Francis's friend the duck, Nicholas has his own animal companion. *Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra* tells the events of Nicholas's life through the eyes of a mouse. His name is Cicero and he is a self-proclaimed philosopher and lover of Socrates and Plato. He is out of step with Nicholas's faith, though he is often conscripted by Nicholas as an accomplice in clandestine acts of charity. This was a fun read and a great way for people of all ages to explore the real Saint Nicholas. Cicero makes numerous comments throughout the comic which poke at Nicholas's later association with Christmas (i.e. Reindeer, Christmas trees, gifting toys to all the children, etc). Nicholas always tells his rodent companion that he has an over-active imagination. Still Stoeckl plays with the legend. At the end of the book, we do not read of Nicholas's death in the mid-340's. Instead he and Cicero travel 'North.' This isn't a book bent on destroying kid's belief in Santa Claus. If anything Stoeckl gives strong hints at the Yuletide connection. The stories and legends of the real St. Nicholas are recorded here with the skeptical Cicero's commentary. We read of Nicholas paying the three dowries for a poor family so that the daughter's would not be sold off as slaves. We also read of Nicholas bringing bread and coins to the poor of Myra, his confrontation with Arius and the paganism of his day, and his miracles. The mystified mouse doesn't always know what to make of Nick, but he is won over by the saint's care for the poor, his unwavering commitment to Christ and his deep humility. Little is known of the 'real' St. Nicholas. Stoeckl is retelling some of the early stories we have about the saint. Some of the miracle stories sound more like legend than historical fact (i.e. Nicholas resting his coat on a sun beam). Other stories include Nicholas calming the sea, healing others, multiplying barrels of grain, and destroying a pagan temple through prayer. However Stoeckl does feel it necessary to explain how Nicholas could be present at the council of Nicea (325) to refute Arius, though his name does not appear on the historic list of bishops at that council (Nicholas confronts Arius with words

and not with a slap or punch as is sometimes claimed). This is Stoeckl's second 'saint' graphic novel, and therefore invites comparison with the first. I think Saint Francis and Brother Duck is funnier and a little deeper. Stoeckl is steeped in the Franciscan tradition (he is a secular Franciscan) and we know much more about Francis than we do about Nicholas. But there are parts of this story I found really touching. I liked it and I love the comic book format for making the life of the saints come to life. This was an enjoyable read which I am sharing with my kids. I give this four stars:

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Saint Nicholas and the Mouse of Myra, written and illustrated by Jay Stoeckl, a cartoonist and a Secular Franciscan, is a graphic novel, (think comic strip in book form), in which we find a delightful rendition of the true story of Saint Nicholas. Although it looks like a children's book, Saint Nicholas is a fun, informative, and moving story for all ages. My husband started reading the book before I even had the opportunity and he found it to be delightful. This compelling book clearly shows Saint Nicholas' deep relationship with God, his generosity, his willingness to be God's servant, and his obedience to his Father no matter the cost. Each chapter opens with beautiful Scripture references. The dialogue is often straight from Scripture and footnoted accordingly. The importance of relationship with Jesus is made clear. The fictitious side-character of Cicero the mouse makes for a fun tongue-in-cheek telling of the story. I would recommend this book for elementary aged children on up and I am glad to have it as a part of our library. Thank you to Paraclete Press [www.paracletepress.com](http://www.paracletepress.com) for providing me this book for my honest review.

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