



Advent Devotional Series—***Welcome to the Stranger***

A Stranger Changed My Life by Andi Shifflett

When I set off for college, I had no idea of being a teacher. The thought had never crossed my mind. I was not a very strong student in high school (spent most of my time and energy on being social!) and I went to Radford not because it was a strong, well-regarded school for future educators, but because I was accepted!

The next part of this story is that in August of 1968, my mother took me to Radford and started my brother in kindergarten! I thought nothing of it at the time, but looking back, that had to be somewhat sobering for her. However, she never complained, but just kept moving forward.

After being at Radford for a bit more than a year as a Sociology major, I came to the realization that perhaps that was not the correct major for me. I was really pretty anxious over it and felt at very loose ends. Meanwhile, my brother had moved on to first grade and he absolutely loved his teacher and wanted me to meet her. When I came home on break, I decided to go and meet her and that meeting changed the direction of my professional life forever. She was just the right person at the right time, an angel placed by God for sure! I clicked with her right away and soon began to seek from her more information about being an

educator. She knew all of the right things to say and was truly an

inspiration. I don't really think I would have been a career teacher (32 years in the public schools of Virginia) without her influence. I did write and thank her many years later. She welcomed me, a stranger, into her classroom and into her heart and I am ever-grateful!

Dear God,

During this Advent season, as our thoughts turn to spending precious time with family and friends, help us to also see the stranger in our midst. Help us to reach out and brighten someone's day, possibly even someone's life, for we are your hands and feet in this world. Amen.