

Once there was a young boy who wanted to meet God.

He knew it was a long trip to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with Twinkies and root beer and started on his journey. His dad always told him that he spent time with God whenever he went fishing, so the boy figured he should walk along the shoreline to find God's home.

After a while he met an old woman who was sitting on the beach watching the seagulls. He sat down next to her and opened his suitcase. He was about to take a drink of his root beer when noticed that she looked hungry, so he offered her a Twinkie. ☺ She smiled at him and accepted.

Her smile was so pretty that he wanted to see it again, so he offered her a root beer. Again she smiled and accepted. The boy was delighted!

They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but neither said a word. As it grew dark, the boy became tired and got up to leave. But before he left, he gave the old woman a long hug. She gave him another giant smile!

When the boy returned home his mother was surprised by the look of pure joy on his face. She asked him, "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he said, "You know what? She's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!!"

Meanwhile, the old woman, also radiant with joy, returned to her home. Her daughter was stunned by the look of peace on her face and asked her: "Mom, what did you do today that made you so happy?" She replied, "I ate Twinkies at the beach with God." Before her daughter could respond, she added, "You know, He is much younger than I expected." (*Author unknown*)

What's your takeaway from this short story? Maybe something along the lines of "God is everywhere; when we are kind to others, they get to see Him!" Another lesson from this story could be that a touch of kindness can go a very long way in helping to heal the world. A warm smile, a kind word, a simple gesture — all it takes to be kind is the desire to make this world a better place. As we show kindness to others, we heal not only their lives on some level, but our own as well and collectively, those random acts of kindness are an incredible source for light and goodness. In fact, Jesus encourages us to be salt and light in the world in order to point people to the realness of our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:12-16).

So why aren't people kinder? That's a great question! It could be because being kind takes a bit of effort. To be kind to others, we often need to put ourselves out — we usually have to pause our busy lives to do or say something kind. And let's face it, in today's world, so many of us are on the manic whirling merry-go-round we call "life" that it's just easier to be aloof. Why say or do something nice, when we can just put on societal blinders and go about our own lives?

Barbara De Angelis reminds us, "Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver." So, let's all do some good today; maybe start it off with a random act of kindness — even if it's just a warm smile. Grace & peace, love you. PK