

Rita | Testimony



I never thought I would teach in China. When I returned to school in 2009 to become a teacher, I knew I wanted to teach ESL and at some point, teach overseas for 1 or 2 years, but that all depends on our Father.

I moved to North Carolina in 2012 to become an ESL teacher. In the spring of 2014, I was accepted into the Masters of Education Program at UNCC and took my first course online. I relocated to Charlotte last summer to find a teaching job and continue pursuing my master's degree. I think I applied to every school and some in surrounding counties, but it was not the Father's will. He closed every door I knocked on. Finally, a friend told me about an organization that sends teachers overseas. I talked to them and applied to many jobs. I was beyond myself when I found out I had been hired to teach in China.

I met Abraham on a Sunday afternoon in Charlotte. Two days later he called me to say I had the job and wanted to know for how long I would be willing to teach there. I signed for one year.

On January 9, I arrived in Beijing. I did not know what to expect. I had never been to China, neither had I been so far away from my family. I was greeted by an associate of a co-worker at the airport and helped onto the train. Complete strangers also assisted me with my luggage as I got off the train. When I arrived in Shijiazhuang, another stranger, who spoke English, also assisted me with my luggage while I was walking through the train station looking for the person I was to meet. People will notice you are a foreigner by looking at your eyes, so don't be surprised by this, they might even stare at you a little.

I was only in China for four days before I began teaching, by choice. I could have waited a little time, but I was excited and ready to meet my students. I had heard that the class sizes were much larger than the U.S. and that I would be changing rooms each time, not the students. I was so scared and nervous walking into my first class. How would I see them, monitor them, etc.? I don't remember how many classes I taught that day, but by the second day, I was not as nervous. Some classes even applauded when I walked in. I felt so welcomed

and appreciated. I did not sense that as much in the U.S. The students also answer simultaneously, which is surprising at first.

Chinese students are much better disciplined than American students. I have taken away a few notes, needed to tell them to stop talking and such, but they do not talk back to the teacher in a rude and disrespectful way. I have never seen students fighting, using drugs, kissing, etc. Girls do hold hands here with their best friend. The students follow an honor system. They know they are to be in class 10 minutes before the bell rings or they get in trouble by the monitor. Many times throughout the day, they self-study. That means they are left in the room without a teacher to study – although another student monitors the class. It amazed me that although there is a monitor, they are not disruptive, running around, talking, etc., like many American students would probably do.

The students at this school work extremely hard. They are focused on their education. Teaching here has been a wonderful experience. It has been hard at times, not just because of my teaching schedule, but emotionally. Last term, I taught 19 classes, of 40 minutes each, throughout the week. The classes ranged in size from 30 to 70 students, but don't let that scare you. As a Foreign English teacher, you are not required to give grades, tests, quizzes, or homework. In fact, you don't even have to write/follow a lesson plan. You have the freedom to teach what you want, what the students need; and they need to improve their oral English.

Some things I did the last term were: teach/discuss songs, talk about who I am and where I am from, some differences between schools in America and China (including the holidays that occur during the school year), play interactive English games on the computer, watched movies, pronunciation exercises. Next term I will implement some new ideas that I have learned this summer, and I will do some of the old things, too.

Chinese students are quite shy, so give them time to get used to you. It took a while, but they began asking me questions and talking to me. They will be curious about why you came to China. This gave me an opportunity to share the truth with them. They want to know what your life was like in your hometown/country. Once the students get to know you, they will love you, and you will love them. I love each one of the 1,200 students I had the last term. I received so much love from them at the end of the year. Although you may never realize what

influence you have on these students, you will make a difference in their lives. Not to brag, but here are some comments I received from them at the end of the year:

"Thank you for your teaching."

"You are the first foreign teacher I met. Thank you for your interesting classes. You really brought us a lot of happiness and many things in the outside world."

"I love you."

"I love you forever."

"You are just like an angel!"

Many of the students do not have a belief and I pray that burdens you. Some are curious but afraid to speak up and they know where I stand. I do not force the issue but have presented the truth more than once and they know they can talk to me. I have met with students to discuss such matters and at least one expressed an interest in being adopted. I am also in contact with them through social media and use that when appropriate. A door opened just the other day. A student posted a very disturbing picture and I commented about how special they are to our Father. I am in contact not only with the students I taught last term but from the English Camp I participated in, as well as other students in this school. So there is much potential here for sharing, but you must be discreet and gain the students trust first.

As I said, being here is hard, but it is rewarding too. You will have the experience of a lifetime that many others only dream about. I signed my contract for a year, but now I am thinking of extending at least 5 more months. This is the best school I have taught in. I loved my students in the U.S., and they loved me back, but I never felt appreciated by the administration. Here, you will know that appreciation, from the administration and the students. The staff here is wonderful to work with and will help you as much as they can.

So, if you are looking to teach in China, have a love for high school students, and are looking for a rewarding experience, then Zhengding High School is the place. I hope you will join me this fall.