

saint mary's press

# I MET *God* TODAY

Ordinary Events Seen  
with New Eyes

Danny Brock, General Editor



# I MET *God* TODAY

## **Ordinary Events Seen with New Eyes**

Danny Brock, General Editor

Reflections written by the students of Saint Andrew's  
Regional High School, Victoria, Canada

Saint Mary's Press®

The reflections in this book were written over several years by eighth-grade students attending Saint Andrew's Regional High School in Victoria, Canada.

The reflections were collected and collated by their teacher, Mr. Danny Brock. Brock is a religious educator and retreat director and author of *Teaching Teens Religion* and *Catholicity Ain't What It Used to Be* (dcbrock.com).

The art in this book was created by four students from Saint Andrew's Regional High School and Pacific Christian School: Alexandra Delos Reyes, Paula Cota, Gloria Wong, and Chanel Mandap.

The content in this resource was acquired, developed, and reviewed by the content engagement team at Saint Mary's Press. Content design and manufacturing were coordinated by the passionate team of creatives at Saint Mary's Press.

Cover images from Shutterstock.

Copyright © 2017 by Saint Mary's Press, Christian Brothers Publications, 702 Terrace Heights, Winona, MN 55987-1320, [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org). All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced by any means without the written permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

5043

ISBN 978-1-59982-918-0

# Contents

Introduction . . . . .	4
Chapter 1: I Met God in My Family . . . . .	7
Chapter 2: I Met God in People . . . . .	33
Chapter 3: I Met God in Creation . . . . .	55
Chapter 4: I Met God in My Faith . . . . .	65
Chapter 5: I Met God in “. . .” . . . . .	93
Acknowledgments . . . . .	106

# Introduction

Eighth graders are a delight to teach. I teach them Religion.

Eighth-grade students have one foot in elementary school and one foot in high school. They are the best of both worlds. They are not “middle” anything.

Fresh, open, and uninhibited like little kids, yet equipped with a new ability to think metaphorically, allegorically, and analogically. Their spirit hovers between childhood and adolescence, giving them a rare view of both. It is a view worth noting.

I'll admit I wasn't expecting too much when I first announced my Religion assignment.

“I want you to write a booklet of stories entitled *I Met God Today*.”

They looked at me.

“This will be the hardest assignment I will give you this year,” I said.

They agreed.

I had done my best, over the preceding weeks, to prepare them. I had shown the claymation film *Martin the Cobbler*, based on the book *Where Love Is, There God Is Also*, by Leo Tolstoy.

Martin is not a friend of God, having lost his wife and then his only son. A holy man comes to his shop looking for a new leather binding for his Bible, but Martin is reluctant to take the job.

“God and I are not getting along,” laments Martin.

“Read the book,” exhorts the holy man as he departs.

Martin reads, and in the midst of reading hears God speak.

“Martin! Martin! Look out your window in the morning, for I am coming to you.”

Not sure if the voice is revelation or delusion, Martin nonetheless looks out the small window in his lonely shop. He sees a cold street sweeper whom he welcomes in for a cup of tea. He sees a shivering mother and her baby whom he ushers inside to get warm. He sees “Granny” scolding a young boy for stealing an apple from her basket, and he rushes outside to mediate a peaceful resolve.

Still, as the sun descends, God has not come to a despondent Martin.

Then, all of a sudden, God speaks again.

“Martin, do you not know me?”

“Who are you?” Martin calls out.

Then, in a vision, Martin sees the street sweeper, the mother and baby, the boy and the grandmother and God says:

“It is I!”

“It is I!”

“It is I!”

Ron Rolheiser, OMI, in his marvelous book *The Holy Longing*, reminds us: “The most important things God wants to say to us are not given in extraordinary mystical visions. The God of the incarnation has real flesh on earth and speaks to us in the bread and butter of our lives through things that have skin—historical circumstances, our families, our neighbors, our churches” (page 95).

As God challenged Martin, I challenged my students to “look out” the window of their lives and see in a new way. Instead of expecting God’s Revelation to happen in extraordinary events, start seeing ordinary events with new eyes. I gave a few examples and a motivational pep talk. Then I sent them on a mission to “meet God today.”

The result is this book.

All the words are the students’. I simply added a comma, corrected a misspelled word, broke a long paragraph in two, or made a few other small grammatical alterations.

When they handed in their work, I was surprised, inspired, and uplifted.

Eschewing an overload of adjectives and redundant information, my students wrote with refreshing brevity and heartfelt candor. Some entries seem more poetry than prose—and prayerful.

This is a book of young teenage glimpses of transcendence. But it is also about transcendence itself. This is a book about God. I consider myself exceedingly fortunate to assist youth in seeing the more, the beyond, and the reality beneath the appearance of things. “The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched,” wrote the mystic Helen Keller, “they must be felt within the heart.” How delightful is the heart of the thirteen-year-old.

Having assigned this project for nearly two decades, I can say, as I read these entries, “I met God today.”

I hope you do too.

—Danny Brock, general editor



# I Met God in *My Family*

**“The God who has become incarnate in human flesh is found, first and foremost, not in meditation and monasteries, albeit God is found there, but in our homes.”**

—Ronald Rolheiser, priest, speaker, and spiritual author

Artist for this chapter

*Alexandra  
Delos Reyes*



I met God  
today in my  
parents.



My mom was making dinner and my dad went up to her and hugged her from behind and he said, “I love you.”

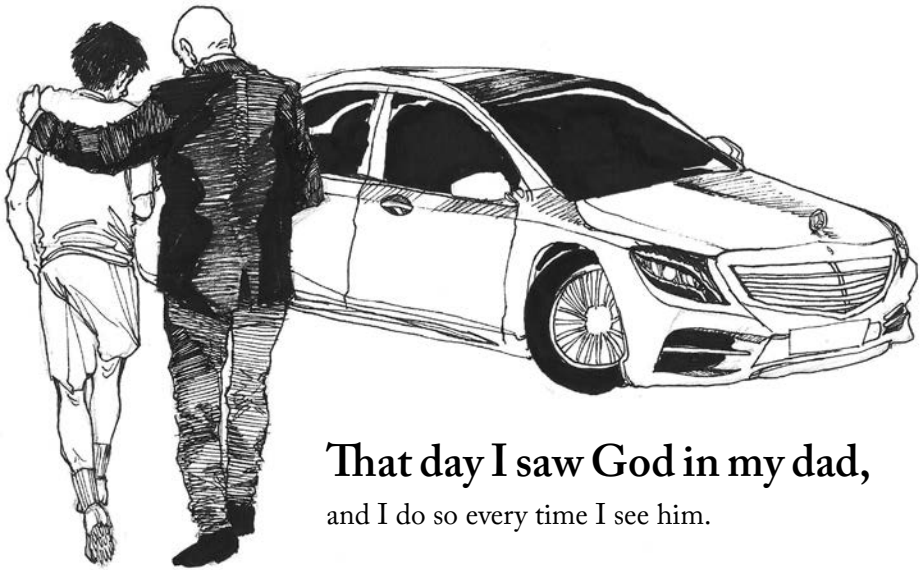
That day I saw all the love that keeps their marriage strong and full of the life God blessed them with.

—Paige Scholes

**M**y dad was always a little more religious than the average Joe. He also had great values that I believe everybody should have.

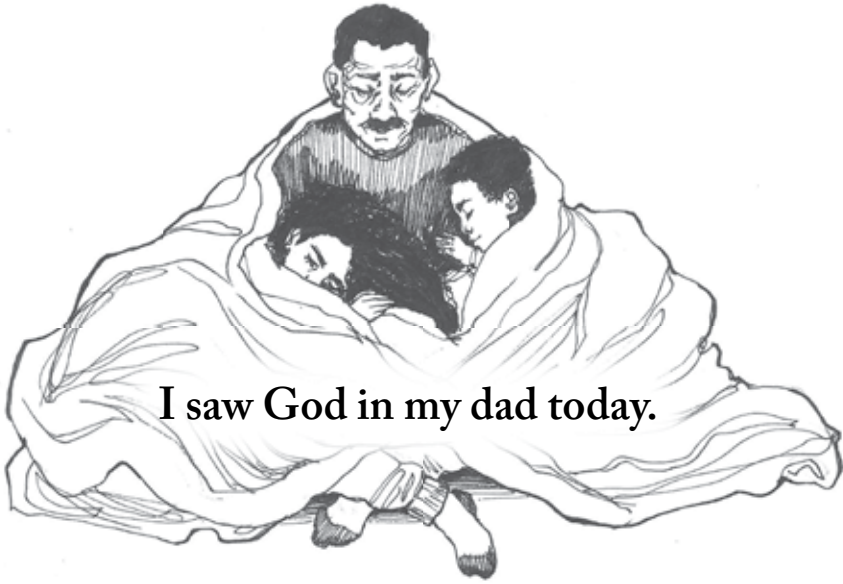
One day, after a muddy soccer game, Dad came to pick me up in his Mercedes. I said, “Do you have a towel or something to put over the seat so it doesn’t get muddy?”

Dad replied, “Gaurav, I can replace the seat, and even the car, but I cannot replace you, so you are more important.”



**That day I saw God in my dad,**  
and I do so every time I see him.

—Gaurav Sekhon



## **I saw God in my dad today.**

My parents are divorced, so we see him on the weekends usually. I know it's hard for him to be alone all the time, so whenever he gets the chance to see us he really gets excited.

One weekend me and my brother were really sick and we told our dad we couldn't come over. He said that he didn't care and that we had to get ready in 15 minutes. So we did and came over to his apartment.

We both took a nap when we arrived. When I woke up I asked my dad what the purpose was of our coming over if we were sleeping the whole time. He said just seeing our beautiful faces made him happy.

—E. Reda



**I met God  
when my grandmother died.**

Her favorite season was fall. She loved the autumn colors. The reds and oranges and yellows.

On the first day of fall, she died. Whenever I see the autumn colors or the leaves falling, I think of her.

—Cassidy A. McDonald

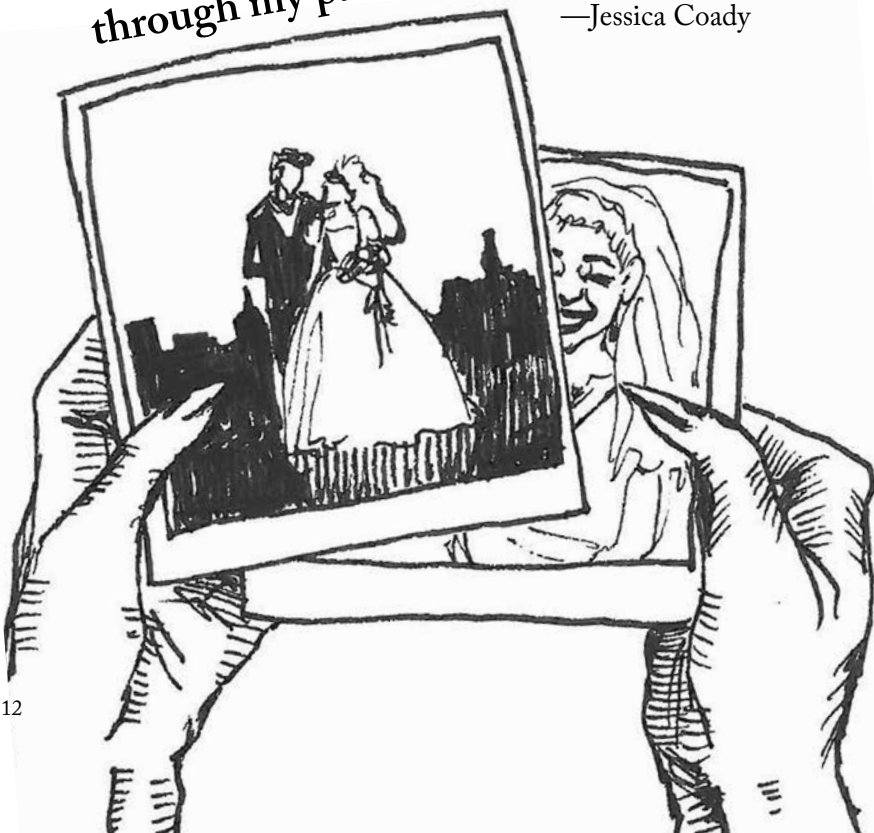
One night before bed, my mom and I were having a conversation about weddings and all that they involve. We were talking about wedding dresses, when out of nowhere my mom took a dusty old box out of the closet and opened it. Inside was a large black and gold book full of my parents' wedding pictures.

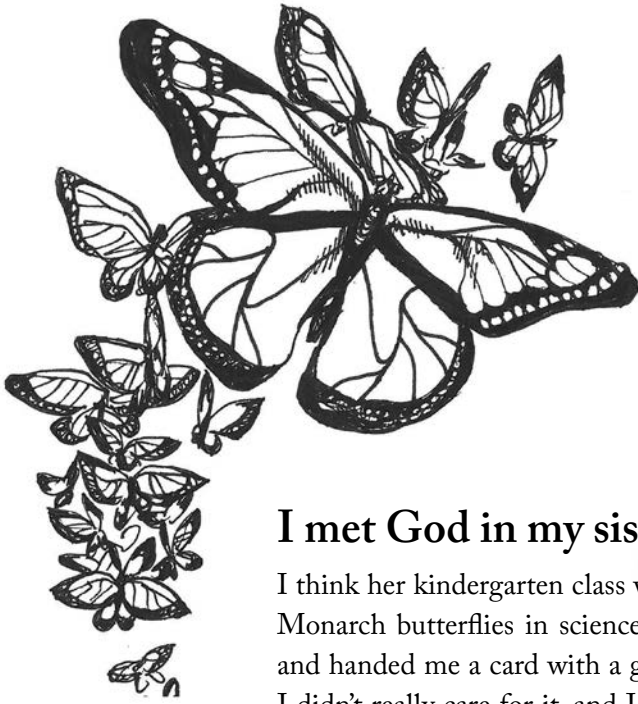
We looked through all of these pictures that I had never seen before, and it made me feel happy about how much they love each other.

The box is now just sitting in my room, which is unlike my mom because she usually puts things away after she pulls them out of the closet. This makes me feel like it has been handed off to me so I can always cherish it.

**I meet God every day  
through my parents!**

—Jessica Coady





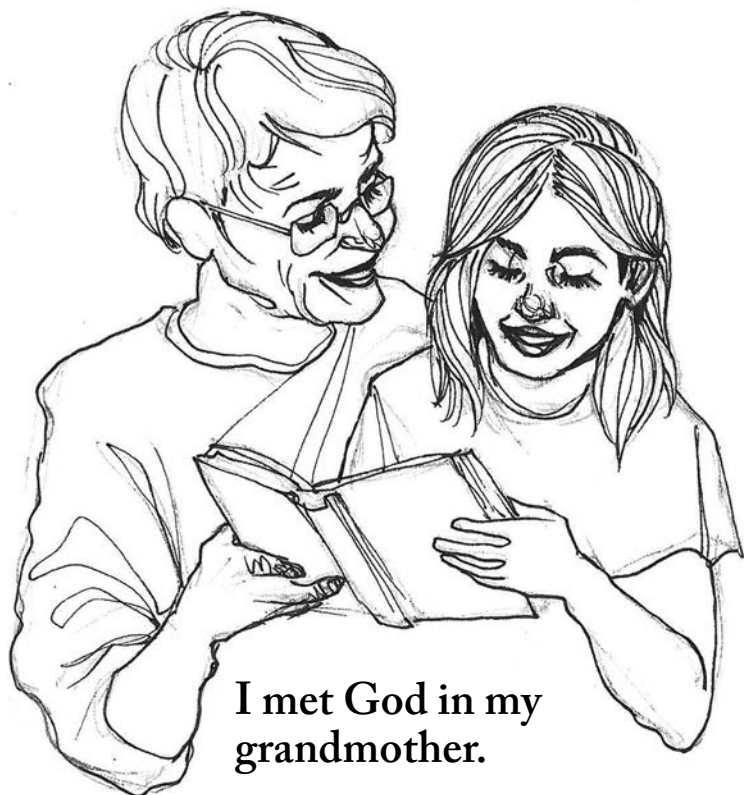
## I met God in my sister Grace.

I think her kindergarten class was doing a unit on Monarch butterflies in science. She came to me and handed me a card with a giant butterfly on it. I didn't really care for it, and I didn't even open it up until a week later. It had the cutest poem in it about never hurting any living thing. On the back it said, "I love you Meghan. You are one of the best sisters ever."

Out of all four sisters I have, Grace is the one who looks up to me the most and wants to do exactly everything I do. From things like doin make-up, going to the mall, having her own cell phone, and going to Starbucks. She can always be the sweetest—yet most annoying too.

But, I love my sister and I hope she stays the caring, affectionate sweetheart she currently is now.

—Meghan McQuay



## **I met God in my grandmother.**

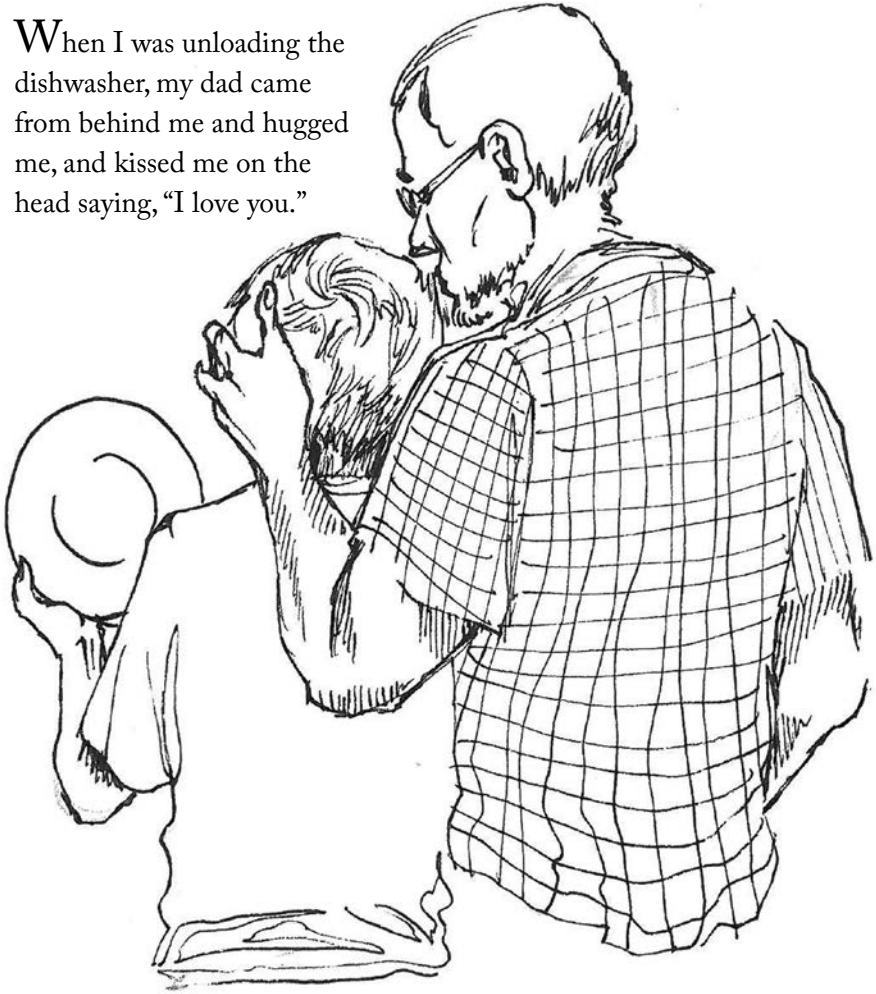
My grandmother's name was Elizabeth Farrell. She has got to be the holiest person that I have ever met. She was the mother of seven children, all of whom she dedicated her life to.

From all of the stories my mother has told me, and from meeting her and talking to her, I know for sure that she is a very holy person. She said the Rosary every day, and went to church every Sunday until she wasn't able to anymore. She called each one of her children every day to ask how they were doing.

Since we live in Victoria and she lived in Newfoundland we weren't with her very often, but I know she prayed for us very often. As if she wasn't holy enough, she passed away on Easter Sunday.

—Jessica Coady

When I was unloading the dishwasher, my dad came from behind me and hugged me, and kissed me on the head saying, "I love you."



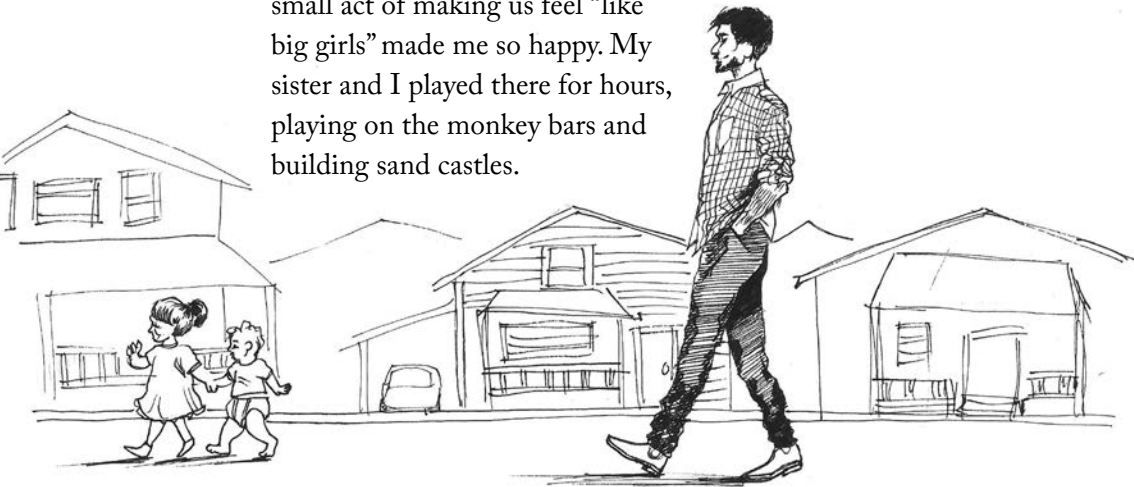
**I saw God in my dad that day.**

—Daniel K.



The first time I met God was when I was four years old. My little sister, two at the time, and I walked to a park about two or three blocks away from our house. At the time I thought I had total independence, just Kate and I going to Beckwith Park. But actually my Dad was following us the entire time. Giving us independence but keeping us safe.

I didn't know he did that until a few weeks ago, but that small act of making us feel "like big girls" made me so happy. My sister and I played there for hours, playing on the monkey bars and building sand castles.



**That day I met God in my father.**

—Kelly

## I met God in my brother, which is really weird and abnormal.

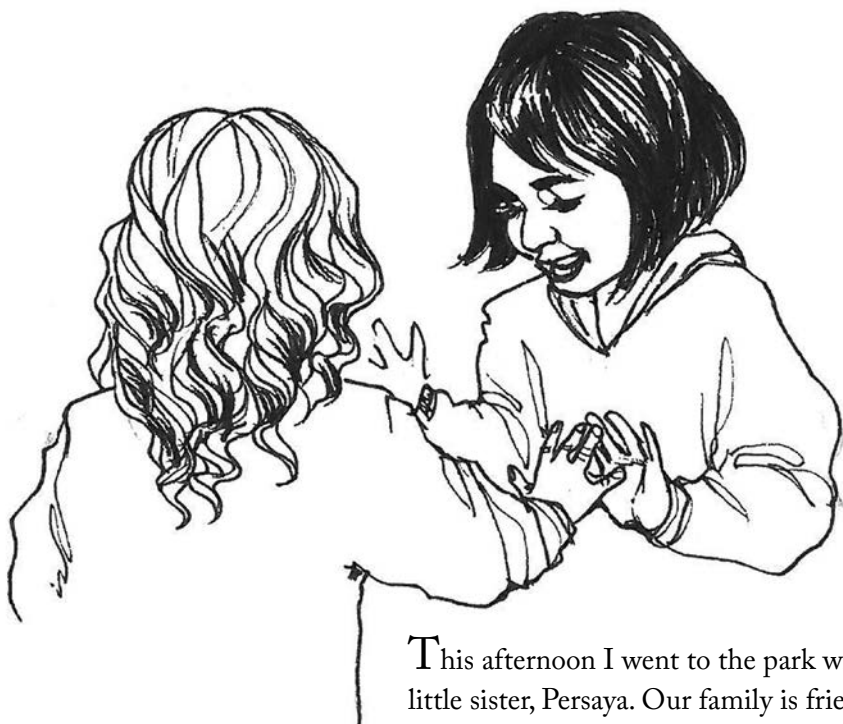
My little brother does prayers every night. I decided to take part in it for the sake of it.

We fight non-stop every day. I try to stop fighting but he gets really annoying. Anyways, while we were praying, he prayed for everyone—even me! Then I remembered that God forgave people even though they didn't believe in him or hurt him. He gave his life for us. He prayed for people and helped everyone.

So, in a way, my brother was God for a night!

—Brianna Teixeira





This afternoon I went to the park with my little sister, Persaya. Our family is friends with the family that lives across from the park, and they have two children that like to play with Persaya.

When I went with Persaya to ask the children of the family to play, I saw the excitement and hopeful look on her face when we knocked on the door. I realized how much children care about the little things that most adults just take for granted—same with teens.

Later on, when Persaya and her friend were playing, I just sat and observed her happiness from afar. It warmed me and made me smile.

**I met God through my  
sister's happiness.**

—Kinaydah R.



## I met God in my grandpa.

Since I was little my grandpa always took me to Sunday Mass and would teach me about our religion and history. I always looked up to him—he never made mistakes it seemed. He would take me fishing and halfway through we would stop and say a prayer for fish if we didn't have any or to thank God for the fish we had caught.

My grandpa always tells me stories about the saints and keeps me up-to-date with church politics. I've always thought of him as a role model.

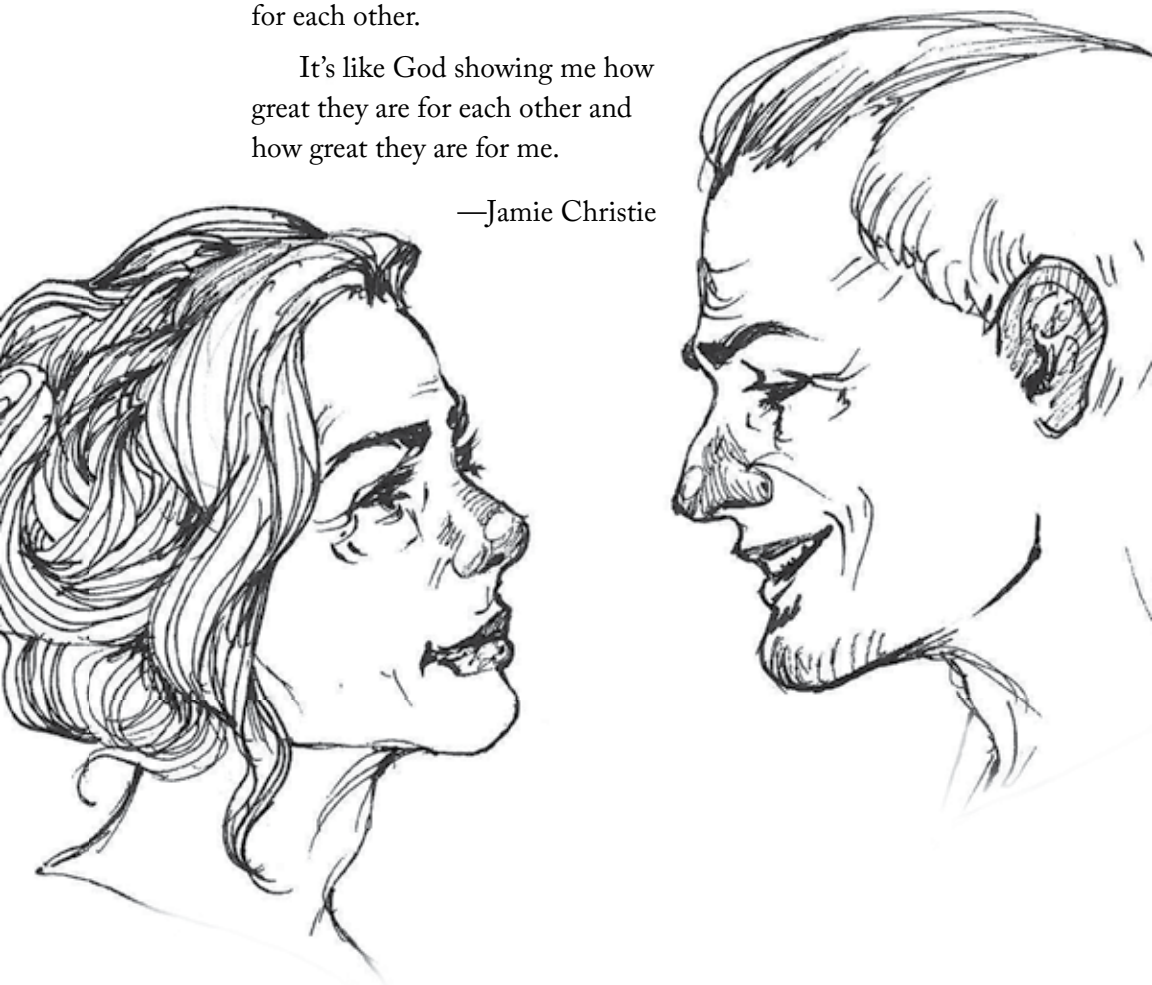
Most of his free time he spends helping the poor or in our church. He once told me that God asked him to give half his time and half his money to the less fortunate and to charity.

—Connor O'N.

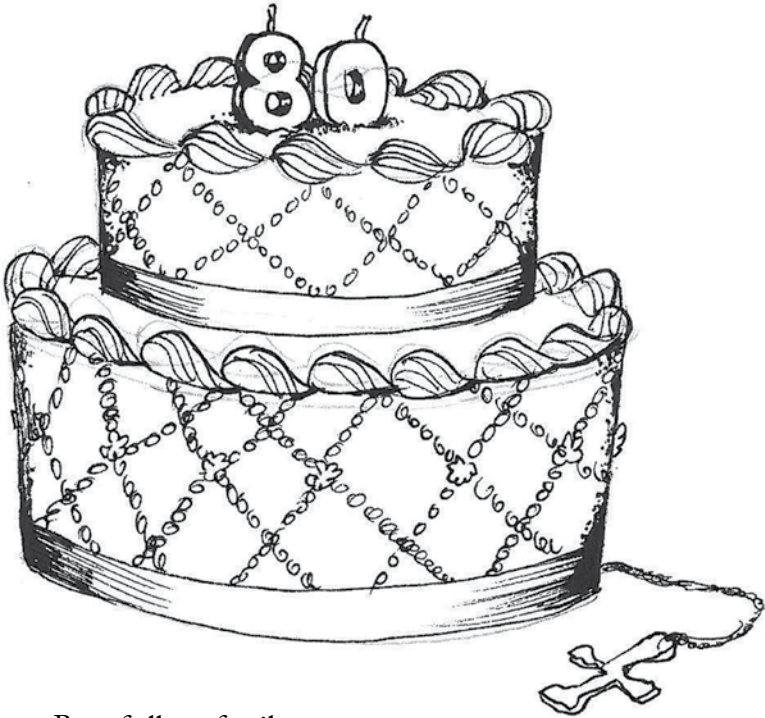
**I met God today,** and every time my mom and dad look into each other's eyes. When they do you can feel the love they have for each other.

It's like God showing me how great they are for each other and how great they are for me.

—Jamie Christie



My past experience of God was when I celebrated my grandmother's eightieth birthday with my whole family. My family is so kind and caring, I saw God in all of them.

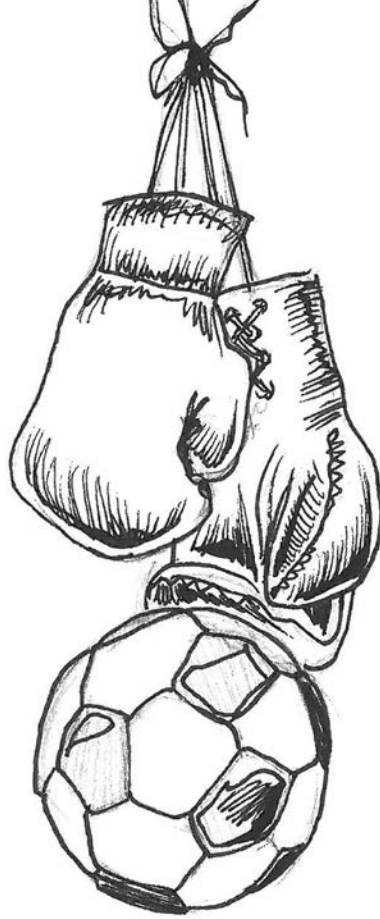


But of all my family,

**I saw God the most in my grandma.**

My grandmother is very kind and is strong in her faith. She is very thoughtful of all her children and grandchildren. She has a very close connection with God and is at peace with the world.

—Mahisha C.



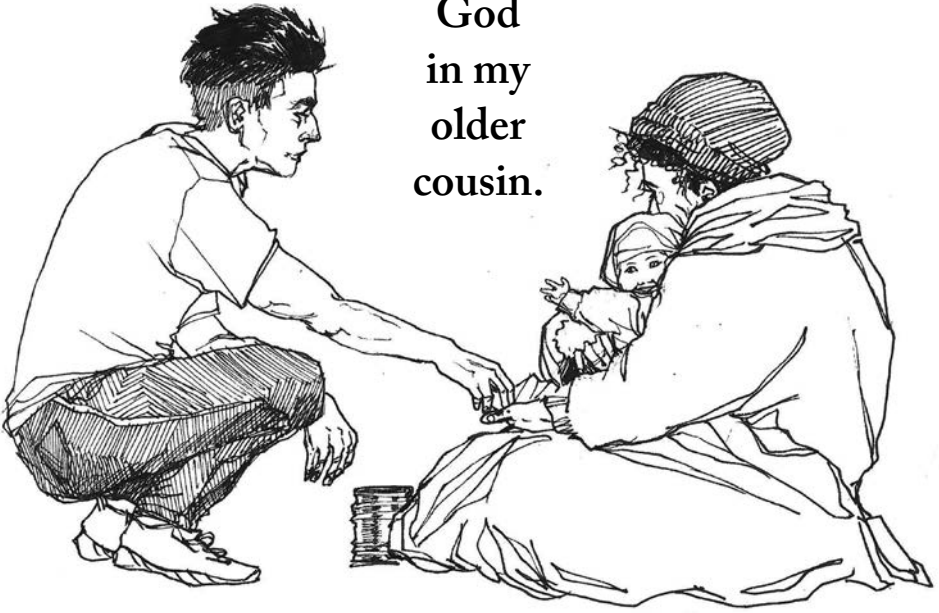
## **I met God today in my grandpa.**

He is seventy-eight years old, and yet he is always up for taking care of me, and driving me wherever. This is what God would do. He is probably one of my favorite people in the world, and I love him.

Also, he is one of the most accomplished people that I have met. He was a runner (the fastest in Ireland), a bouncer, a boxer, a soccer player, a soccer coach, and the nicest person in the world.

—Dan Polson

Today  
I met  
God  
in my  
older  
cousin.



My cousin is a very self-centered kind of guy that only cares about himself and nobody else.

One afternoon he and I decided to go to the Bay Centre downtown. Before entering the Bay Centre on the corner of the street was this homeless woman and her baby. Both were crying. In my experience of him he would always make fun of homeless people. Instead of making fun of her, he crouched down and wiped her tears and the baby's tears. Then he gave them a twenty-dollar bill. He got up and kept on walking but I stood there with my mouth wide open. I could not believe that I just saw the self-centered guy do something that was not self-centered at all.

I met God in him because he inspired me to be a better person and I believe that God inspires me to be a better person as well.

—Panect A.



Today I met God  
in my memories of my Opa  
(Grandfather).



My Opa was a hard working gardener who had a passion for dahlias and was always willing to give a helping hand. He was always friendly and cheerful and always wore a smile on his face.

On February 24th, God needed a gardener in Heaven and called for the best!

Unfortunately, I lost my Opa after his courageous battle with lymphoma. I will always admire my Opa, as he was a great role model and someone I looked up to.

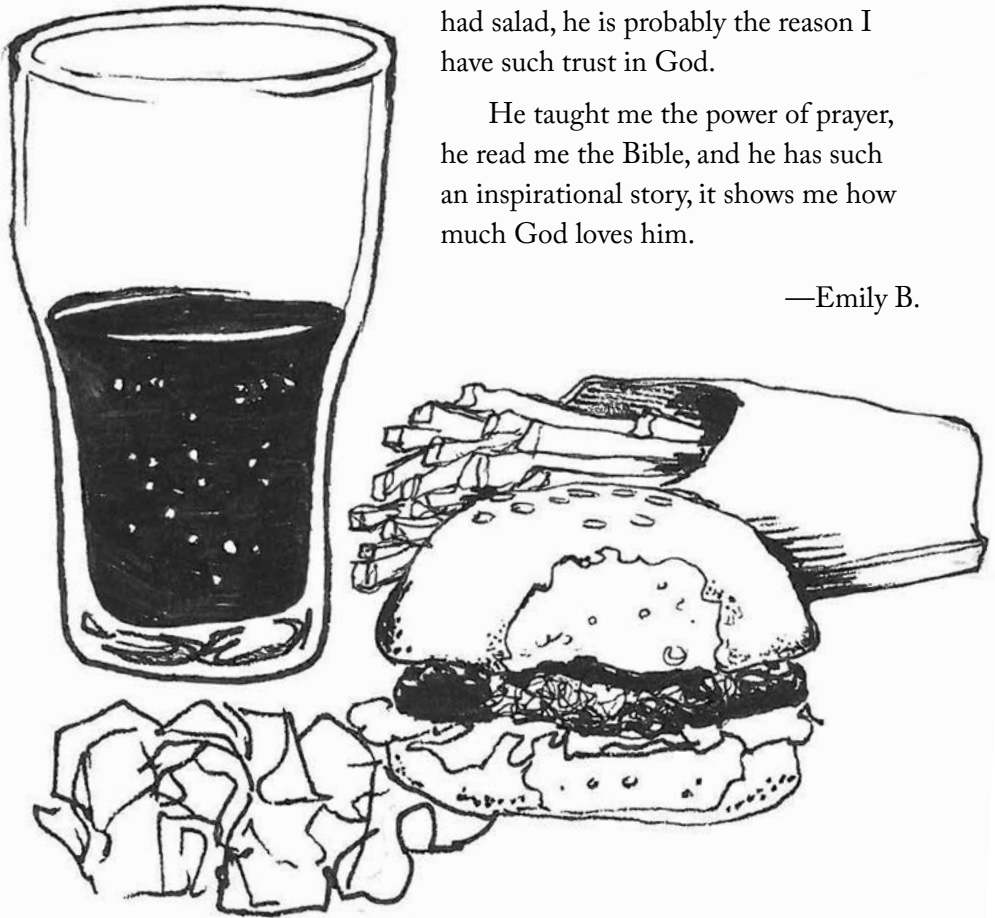
—Greg Van Dyk

## I met God in a holy person, my dad.

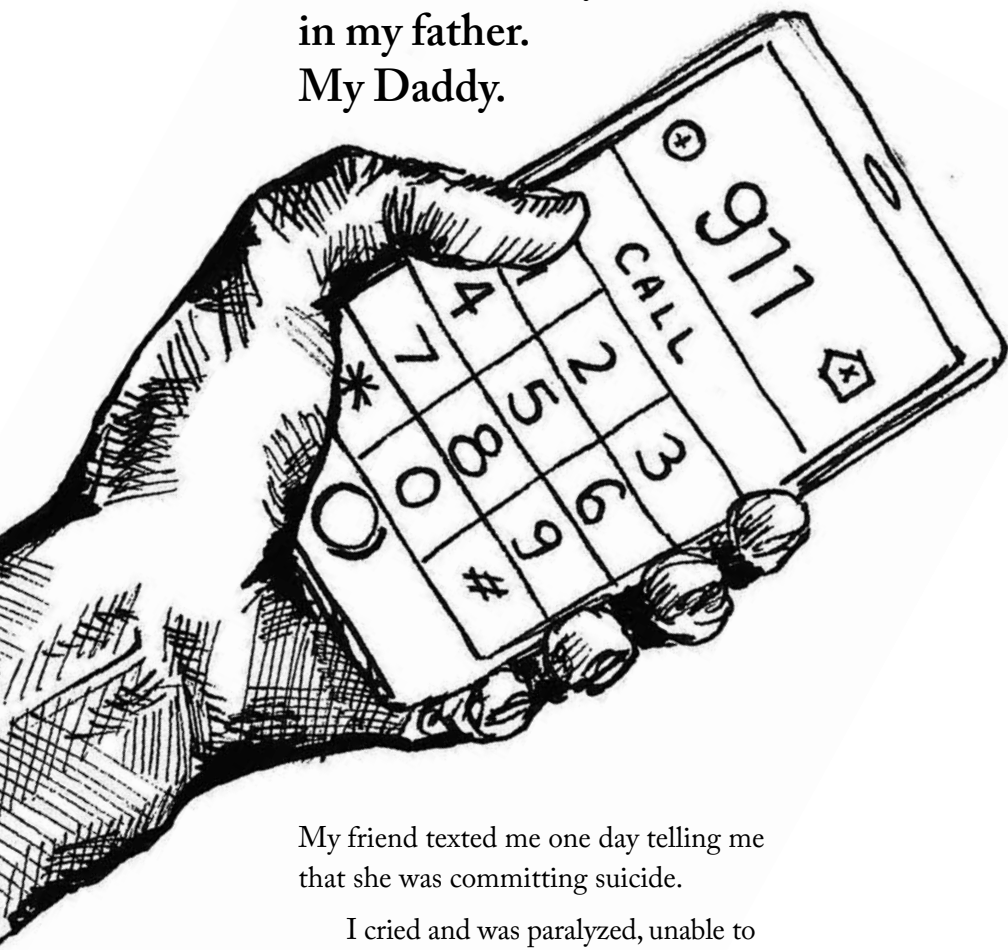
My dad is one of the greatest people I know. Besides the fact of him taking me to a PG-13 movie when I was seven, teaching me how to fish, putting on the best puppet shows ever, and taking me to McDonalds but telling my mom we had salad, he is probably the reason I have such trust in God.

He taught me the power of prayer, he read me the Bible, and he has such an inspirational story, it shows me how much God loves him.

—Emily B.



I met God today  
in my father.  
My Daddy.



My friend texted me one day telling me that she was committing suicide.

I cried and was paralyzed, unable to move. Somehow, my dad came home just in time to see the text, and call an ambulance to her house.

I saw God in him that day, and I continue to see a savior in him.

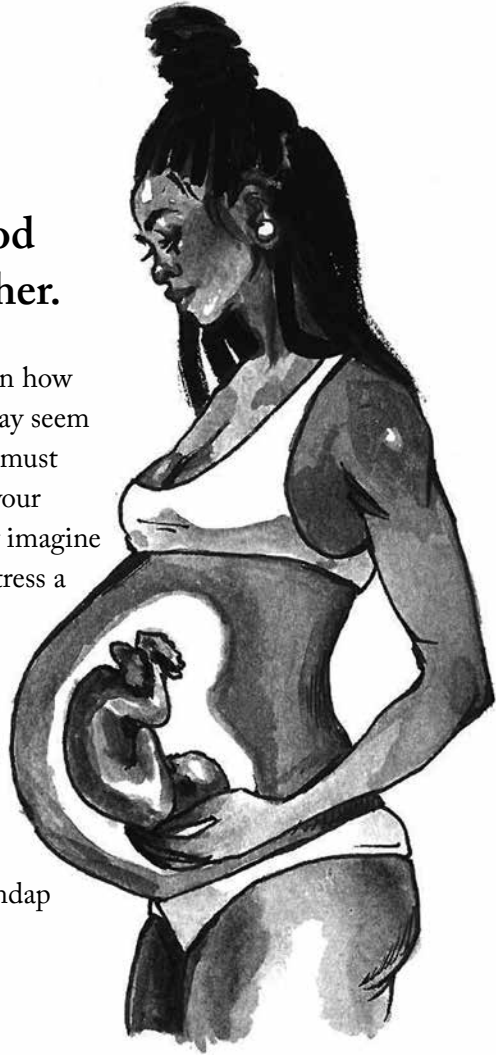
—Alexandrea DR

## Today I met God through my mother.

I have been fully enlightened on how deep a mother's love goes. It may seem hard to be an adolescent but it must be even harder to take care of your "precious, little one." I can only imagine how much responsibility and stress a mother has.

To be a mom you'd have to be filled with so much love, you'd almost burst. Thank you for making me realize how much my mother loves me.

—Chanel Mandap





## **I met God today when my dad told me that he loved me.**

I can't even remember the last time I heard him say those words to anyone, so hearing him say them to me meant a lot. It was like God talked to me through my dad and wanted to tell me that no matter what, he still loves me.

After I heard my dad say that, I started to tear up because he's never said it to me and I was starting to wish he would tell me, and then he did.

—Felicity Goodfellow

## I met God today through my family.

My family and I went out to eat lunch. Later, we went to the beach and talked. I felt good and loved, especially since my mom took time off work to spend time with me and the family. I felt really happy and grateful to have such a loving family!

We spent the rest of the day at my aunt's house and I saw how happy my mom and dad were. They didn't look as stressed out as they usually were and it was good to see that they were happy.

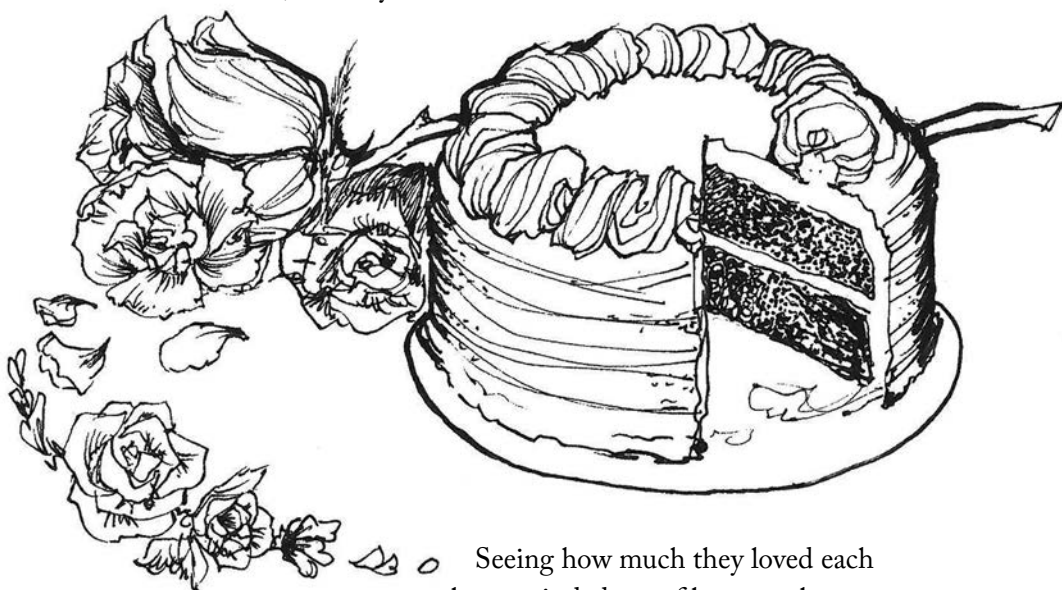
It was good knowing that God gave us a day for leisure time. I find that Sundays are the most joyous times of the week.

—Amanda Do



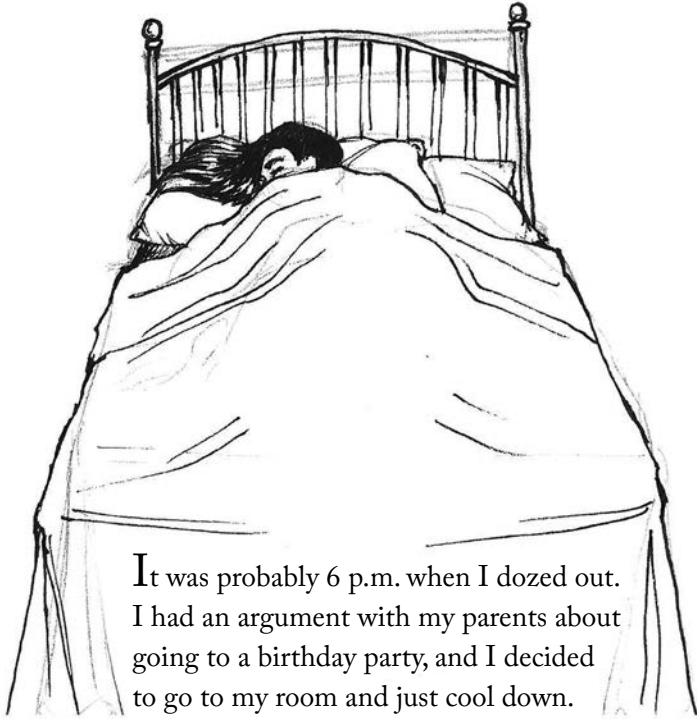
It was Valentine's Day and my dad wasn't home yet. My mom, sister, and I sat in the living room waiting for him.

A couple of minutes later my dad came through the side door. He walked into the living room holding a bouquet of roses and a small cake. He set the cake onto the table and walked over to my mom and gave her the roses. Then he said, "I love you."



Seeing how much they loved each other reminded me of how much  
**God loves us too.**

—Alyssa Mariano



It was probably 6 p.m. when I dozed out. I had an argument with my parents about going to a birthday party, and I decided to go to my room and just cool down.

I had a dream that I was at home but I couldn't find anybody. So I went outside to see if they were there but they weren't. So I called their cells and it said no one had those numbers. I ran to every house to see if anyone knew where my family was, but every house was empty.

I woke up frightened and needed to find out if it was reality. I ran upstairs and found my parents and my siblings. I gave them a big hug and apologized. **I think God was trying to tell me** that I needed my family and that they just do things because they care about me.

—Alyssa Mariano



