

## 2025 Grade 5

I woke up and looked around. Everything was not normal. As I went downstairs, both of my parents were not there. Instead, my aunt and my nanny were there. My aunt lives 2 hours away, and I only see her once a month. I asked where my parents were and what had happened. My aunt replied, "Your mom had her baby this morning." It was Wednesday, March 8, 2023 at 6 a.m. My mom was not supposed to have her baby until April 14<sup>th</sup>. I got ready and started to head to school. I prayed over and over that day, for I knew that my little sister was in the NICU.

After school choir practice, my aunt picked me up. We then drove to my tennis lessons and then to the hospital, with a little stop for some food. Once we got there, we asked the lady which room my mom was in. As we headed upstairs, all excited and a little nervous, we passed my grandpa. He told us to wash our hands, for we were about to go in. My aunt told me not to be scared. She thought the room would make us freak out about the baby. I pushed the curtains and opened the door. As we walked in, there were tubes and medications everywhere. I then heard a familiar voice, and I turned around. There my mom was, with a beautiful baby in her arms. I had asked her why Josie was born so early. She then replied: "I was at work, when all of a sudden I could not feel the baby moving around. I knew that was a sign that your little sister was not OK. I got to the hospital as soon as I could. Once I arrived, the doctor said I had to have an emergency C-section. They said the cause was that the umbilical cord was wrapped around your sister's neck. I believe your little sister was so smart that she stopped moving around so she could get help." Upon hearing this, I knew that it was not just my sister, but God, who saved her. Later that day, miracles were encountered. My little sister came out perfectly fine, with no disabilities or any problem, even though the doctors thought she would have many. I have thanked God ever since. When I first arrived at the hospital that day, I kind of lost hope. Now seeing what had happened, my hope was restored by someone way greater than me: Jesus.

Today we have a beautiful baby named Josie. She is safe, happy, and healthy. She loves praying with us every night. She is two years old, and I realize how grateful I am for her, and all my other younger siblings too. I realized God saved Josie for a reason. And when He did, I encountered Him so deeply. I received a sign of Jesus, my little sister. On that day, all of my family lost hope. But, we can encounter Jesus, even when we feel like He is gone. Even when hope seems so little, it can be found in the most unexpected places, especially through Jesus.

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My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I have been extremely close to God ever since 2023 when my aunt Caitlyn passed way from breast cancer. She was a huge part of my life and losing her hurt me and my family in a huge way. After she passed, it took me a long time to realize how precious everyone around me is, and that they are all children of God. At first, I was angry at God for taking such an important person out of my life. I hated going to mass and I never prayed. I didn't want to keep in touch with God. But all of that changed when my cousin bought me a Bible for my birthday. It looked pretty nice and it had a pack of highlighters with it. It stayed in my closet for a long time. About two weeks later, he asked me if I had been reading it. I told him, "No. I hadn't." He asked me if I would try it out. I told him yes, and that night, I read eight pages. I used my highlighters and journaled and did Bible study with my sister. I started paying attention in Mass and religion. I got way close to God because of that.

The whole thing taught me that of course, it's totally okay to miss a loved one that you've lost. It's okay and everyone does. But it's not going to help you heal if you are angry at God. It makes things worse. It is part of his plan, and it was hard to see her struggling and she wasn't going to *get better*. It was his plan to help me be closer to him. Before, I didn't care for mass. I didn't even own a Bible and all I was worried about was school and friends and sports. It also helped me be more grateful because tomorrow is not promised. Looking back on it, I always say this: "Her death felt like a tornado, one of my biggest fears. It came in and destroyed the little home that was my relationship with God. Even though it may feel like the worst is over, you still have your house to rebuild. I didn't even attempt to rebuild it. But then I realized I needed that house to have a happy life in. So with the help of some family members, I rebuilt my house, stronger and healthier than before." I say that to people who ask me who the most important person I had lost in my life was. But now I realize that the most important person I had lost in my life was God. But I found him. And my life is so much better.