

Grade 3 2026

There were many times that I felt Christ was with me. One of them had my heart racing. It was the day of my First Communion last year. I felt very close to God then. On my First Communion Day, I was so nervous that I thought my heart would beat out of my chest. We opened the doors to the church and walked down. I had Mass with my family.

When it was time to receive communion, I was very, very nervous. When I got to the priest, he said, "Body of Christ." I said, "Amen" and as soon as the host touched my mouth, I just knew God was with me in a special way. God was there wrapping me in His wonderful love. As I walked back to my seat, I felt God walking alongside of me. It was the best day of my life!

God Is With Me Always

Learning to ride my bike was one of the scariest things I ever did. I was still practicing, and every time I wobbled, my heart would beat really fast. One afternoon, I was riding down the street, when my bike suddenly tipped sideways. My stomach jumped! A car was coming, and it was about only two meters away. I felt so scared and I almost froze.

I did not know what to do so I quickly said a little prayer. Right away, I felt God in my heart, giving me courage. I held on tight and turned my bike just in time. I did not crash! I kept riding, but soon it happened again. My bike wobbled and shook. I whispered another prayer, and God helped me stay safe.

That day, I fell two times, but I did not give up. Each time I got back on, I felt braver. When I finally got home, I thanked God for helping me. I learned something very important that God is always with me, especially when I am scared or trying something new.

Now, whenever I ride my bike or face something scary, I remember that God is by my side. He gives me courage, strength, and confidence. I know I am never alone, and that makes me feel happy and strong every day.

Grade 4 2026

When I was 5 years old, it didn't feel like my family was complete. It was just my mom, and my younger twin sisters and I. Sometimes, I felt sad because I felt like something was missing. I was missing having a dad. Mom was working a lot, and we didn't have a lot of time together. Then, mom met the man who would become my dad.

Dad started taking us to Mass with him every Sunday. I made my first Reconciliation and Holy Communion. I also started to learn more about who God is and the love he has for us. I learned that God really does listen to our prayers.

After a while Mom and Dad got married. I was really happy, but something was still missing. I really wanted my last name changed because my little sisters and I felt left out of the family. We asked Mom and Dad to change our last names to be the same as theirs. They said they had to ask a judge for permission. I prayed about it a lot.

One day, Mom and Dad sat down with me and my sisters and told us it was almost our turn to ask the judge to change our last names. Dad said he wanted to ask the judge for more than just changing our names. He said he loved us and wanted to adopt us. It made me feel very secure and loved.

In July of 2025, we went to see the judge. My sisters and I showed the judge pictures we had drawn of our family having fun. I drew a picture of our family playing soccer and my sisters drew pictures of us hiking and watching movies together. The judge was happy for our family and agreed that dad should adopt us. Then we were adopted by our dad, and the judge changed our last names. Now my sisters and I feel like we are an official family.

Since being adopted, I started altar serving at our church. I really enjoy altar serving because I feel like I am doing something important for God. It is important to do things for God because he loves us so much. I know God works through people, like when he put the love in my dad's heart to adopt us.

God wants us to talk to him because it brings us closer to him. I know Christ is alive because he listened to my prayers of being adopted and becoming a family. God is my heavenly Father, and he gave me the father on earth that I needed. God answered my prayers.

Grade 4 2026

A moment in the last year when I felt close to God was when I learned to trust Him with my fears. I have always been afraid of storms, especially loud thunder and heavy rain. Storms used to make me feel scared and nervous, and sometimes I would worry that something bad might happen.

One day, while reading the Book of Genesis, I learned a new word called dominion. I learned that God gives us strength through faith and that when we trust Him, He is always with us. My dad also read Bible stories to me about the prophet Elijah, and how Elijah prayed and God made the rain stop, and how God could calm the wind. Hearing those stories helped me believe that God has power over nature and that He listens when we pray.

Because of those stories, I learned that I could talk to God about my fears and ask Him for help and protection, especially when my fears felt loud.

One day at school, it started raining very hard. I felt scared, but I did not want to be afraid in front of my friends, and I really wanted to go on a field trip that day. I prayed to God and asked Him to help me feel brave and safe. I even asked God to stop the rain so we could still go on our trip. After a few minutes, the rain stopped.

In that moment, I truly believed that God heard my prayer. I felt calm and safe, and my fear went away. That experience helped my faith grow stronger. It showed me that God is always listening and that I can trust Him when I am afraid. That day made me feel very close to God.

Grade 5 2026

I felt God's presence when He healed me from my asthma. Last year, I had bad asthma, so whenever I was sick, I coughed a lot. It felt like 20 needles jabbing in my throat and lungs with every cough. Asthma also affected my health because I coughed so much that I couldn't fall asleep. It was dreadful. Also, the cough woke me up in the middle of the night. I was so tired. Even though I was prayed over multiple times, none of it seemed to work.

One day, that all changed. A man visited our house asking for support because he wanted to be a missionary. He worked in a Catholic healing program called Encounter Ministries. Before he left, he asked us if we needed any prayers, and we told him that we needed his help. We asked him if he could pray over me for my asthma to be healed. As he petitioned God to heal me, he asked if I felt a burning sensation in my lungs. I answered, "Yes", and at that moment, I felt dizzy and overwhelmed. I wasn't scared, though.

He continued praying over me, and when he stopped, my mom asked, "How did you know that his lungs felt like they were burning?"

He answered, "Because I felt it too."

At that moment, I thought, "WOW, how did he do that?" I knew I was healed. I didn't feel the needles poking me in my lungs and throat anymore. Then, I felt a connection to God and that He did have a plan for me. Right then, I felt so much love for God and knew that He loved me too, and so much!

Now, when I play basketball and soccer, it is so much easier to run, and I don't get out of breath like I used to. After the games, I can talk and breathe normally. The best part of all is that whenever I get sick, I don't cough like I used to. I sleep so much better now, and my school attendance has improved after being healed.

After that day, my mom would not stop talking about it. Next time we went to my grandma and grampa's house, my mom shared my story with everyone. When we went to a family reunion, my mom told them. Whenever we went, my parents kept talking about it. And they told me it was a miracle. That day, Christ worked in my life through a man who brought me God's healing.

THE WORD OF GOD

A time this year when I felt close to God was when I was the lector at the school mass. It was the day I felt like I was being pulled closer to God by reading about all he had done for humanity. It was the day I found refuge in the Bible. It was the day I really, finally understood the importance of God's Word. It was a very special day...

In February, I would be reading the first reading at mass in front of the whole school. I love to read, but I usually read fiction, and this was something much, much more powerful. All the time leading up to the time I would have to go up in front of the entire church to read, I was terrified and honestly wasn't really listening to what the priest was saying. Then, everybody took their seats. That was my cue to go up to the front! I got out of my pew and started to walk toward the altar. As I nervously made my way to the front, I felt like Imposter Syndrome really started to kick in, and I felt like I shouldn't be there. I wondered if somebody would tell me to stop. All the same, I forced myself to keep walking. Then I was at the front of the church, the altar and the priest in front of me, the painting of Jesus on the wall towering above me, and quite suddenly I felt very, very small. The whole church was watching me. Me. The very small, and very scared me. Why was it me who had to do this? I looked up to Jesus and silently prayed, Lord, give me strength! I bowed to the altar and stepped up to the microphone...

And I spoke.

I read the entire reading. Funny enough, the more I read, the easier the words seemed to come. They almost flowed from me, like a river. The reading was about how the Lord gave strength to David and his kingdom, how he gave them hope, courage, and prosperity. I felt the strength that God gave David in me. I felt his strength, hope, and courage. I felt everything God gave David in me. But why me? And like a wave of understanding had unexpectedly washed over me, I knew that God had made me volunteer to lector for a reason. God had brought me here for a reason. He had wanted me to feel this trust in him, this hope in him, this undying faith right here and now as I spoke. I also suddenly realized that during my whole life God had been trying to reveal himself to me through his readings. And now I had opened my eyes. I could see it now. I could feel God's presence as I finished the reading and went back down to my seat.

Later I received Jesus through the Eucharist, but I knew that I had already received him. I received him through the Word of God!

A couple months ago, I walked into Adoration for the first time this year. My shoes squeaked on the cold, tiled floor. I was bored and exhausted; I just wanted the day to end. But I was glad to skip class and let my mind wander. My steps echoed as I walked into the church. I went to the holy water fountain, having the steps memorized like a routine I did because I was forced to, not because it meant anything to me. The church had barely any light. Just one light shining upon God and His presence. I genuflected on both knees and entered my pew, prepared to let my mind wander to what I would do when I got home.

My religion teacher's voice filled the silence and echoed off the walls. I was going to ignore what she was saying like always, being too tired to listen. But then it felt like I was called to listen to what she said and no matter how hard I tried to zone out, I couldn't. It felt like God was telling me to listen to what she was saying, knowing it would guide me to the right path. I listened to my religion teacher talk about God and what He does, but then she said something that caught my attention. She told us to talk to God and tell Him about our struggles. I knew she had said this every day and every time we went to Adoration, but this time I decided to actually try.

I tried to talk to God about my struggles, but I couldn't find the words to tell Him. Everything was stuck in my throat and I couldn't think straight. Right then and there she told us to ask God questions. I asked Him to make me vulnerable, to make the words in my mind and throat finally become something I can tell Him. Then, at that moment, He did.

I told Him about everything. My struggles, how my day was going, how I was feeling, and how much I missed being vulnerable to Him. Before I knew it, tears were streaming down my face uncontrollably. I asked God why. Why he made me struggle and why it felt like He was not there. In His silence I found my answers. It was not Him; it was me. I never reached out and never truly talked to God. I never asked Him to help me find the words and the vulnerability to talk to Him. In that pew it felt like God was right next to me. After months of feeling like God was so far, it felt nice to cry in His arms and tell Him everything. It made all my struggles feel like nothing, and it made me feel lighter. A weight was lifted off my shoulders because I asked God for help.

Now when it feels like God isn't with me, I think of the small things. How sometimes someone opens the door for themselves, and I slip in just in time, I call it God holding the door open for me. Or how sometimes in class the teacher asks a question I don't know so I ask God and I get the answer correct. I call that God helping me in class and making me smarter. Sometimes finding the little thing God does for you reminds you that He's always with you.

That day, the day I went to Adoration and talked to God again after so long, reminded me that God was always with me, not just during Adoration. Now I talk to God daily and I tell Him everything, knowing he won't judge me or tell anyone. It felt like God was holding the door to our relationship wide open, and I'm so glad I took the chance.

"Where, when my aching grows, where, when I languish, where, in my need to know, where can I run? Where is the quiet hand, to calm my anguish? Who can understand? He, only one."

This is one of my favorite verses from a hymn called, "Where Can I Turn for Peace?" by Emma Lou Thayne and Joleen G. Meredith. This is my favorite verse because it reminds me that Jesus Christ is alive, He is always with me, He understands how I am feeling, and He is with me even when I feel like I am alone. I can pray to Christ and He will answer my prayers.

Last year was my first year at a new school in a new state. I started the school year and didn't know anyone, and I was also really shy and didn't talk very much. My teacher helped me a lot, and so did Jesus Christ. My teacher, like Christ, could see and understand how alone and shy I was feeling. I prayed before school started every morning, and asked Christ to help me, and that I would be able to fit in and make good friends. Christ blessed me with my amazing teacher that year and I am so thankful for her.

Not many people admire their teachers, let alone give them a second thought. Christ had a different plan for me just like he has a plan for everyone. My teacher brought me lots of blessings! She helped me become closer with my friends by helping out with starting conversations. She saw me sitting quietly at lunch alone, reading a book by myself. She invited some girls to sit with me, and they thankfully did. She talked with us at the lunch table to help conversations start to flow and help the girls get to know me and find things in common. She also helped me and my family know about the school events so my parents could get to know other families from school. She also connected my mom with the other moms for play dates as well. We are eternally grateful for her Christlike support.

My teacher reminds me of the way Christ helped others because she was always there for me just like how Christ is always there for us and guides us through the bad times and the good times. I feel that Christ worked through my teacher and was a true answer to my prayers. It is in these examples that remind me that Jesus Christ is alive. You may be praying to Christ and struggling. We might not get an answer right away. But He is with us, always, even when we don't receive answers right away. "Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive! He is in you, he is with you and he never abandons you." said by Pope Francis. Christ is always with us. Christ shows himself to someone every day! Whether it's through a friend, a family member, or even a teacher! Christ is always with us through all our challenges and weaknesses. Forever. I am so grateful for my relationship with Christ, and so thankful to have the Gospel of Jesus Christ in my life!

Over the past year or so, I have grown in my relationship with Christ in truly so many ways. I have gone to Him in every situation, seen Him open doors I didn't know could be opened; and given my life to Him entirely. Above all of these, I can proudly say that I am a witness to those small, divine moments in everyday life, the ones where you pause and realize, "That had to be from God."

Around August of 2025, I decided to give my life to God. I chose to make a daily routine of opening my Bible app, praying, and spending time in God's word. To this day, I have kept my promise to speak with the Lord in every place, all the time. Not just in the moments when life seems to be going my way, not just when it's convenient to worship him, but even through my struggles.

As I continued down the narrow path less traveled (Matthew 7:13-14), I began to feel spiritually dry. I thought of prayer as a chore, a mere task to be done mindlessly throughout the day. I didn't want to feel that way, yet it seemed impossible to keep walking through the desert that I was in.

However, all of that ended when I received the gorgeous Christmas gift of a mustardseed bracelet from my aunt and uncle (Matthew 17:20). In that moment, I realized something lifechanging: that even though my aunt and uncle had been the ones to gift me that bracelet, I was, in fact, receiving a gift much more powerful from God. A gift that had the ability to pick me up from the desert I was in and transport me to a lush oasis where anything was possible with Christ, where I could be renewed.

From that day forward, I have tried to look at prayer and worship as not simply a necessary task I perform only to reach the end goal of heaven, but as something much more meaningful, a state of being where I can speak to the Creator, the one who knows me, loves me, and chose me. A state where I can simply be; where I can receive God's dream for my life; where I can be empowered to act based on His Word, and spread his loving, merciful light to the ends of the Earth.

My house felt empty, but full at the same time. My heart was broken. The silence was filled with my own thoughts and my dogs barking. I missed my friends, but I missed my family more. Just sitting there, wondering when my dad would come out of the hospital. I felt the urge to cry more than I ever had in my whole life. Knowing that tomorrow, I would have to go back to school and live my everyday life with this heavy burden was harder than words can describe, but crying would only make things worse. After all, my dad's heart was in a worse condition than mine.

Before my grandparents came over to spend time with us in the afternoon, I felt a rush of warmth I couldn't explain. My heart suddenly felt light, like something had lifted off my chest. Not knowing what to say but knowing that God was with me. I closed my eyes, laid back on my couch, and just let God have his time with me. I read a Bible verse in my head, and it was, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10).

My mom came back home from the hospital at night, which made me feel a lot better. "If only I could go see my dad," I thought to myself. I wanted to be there for him like he would be there for me. Turns out, I was going to be able to see my dad in the hospital, just not for a couple days. The wait was worth it and not at the same time. Seeing my dad laying in a hospital bed, bandages all over his body, and nurses tending to him made me have goosebumps. The moment was bittersweet. Finally, being able to see my dad after waking up early in the morning a couple days before saying goodbye to him, not knowing if that would be my last time talking to him was something I am truly grateful for. Living in a world without my dad would be a world not worth living in.

During one of the days when my dad was at the hospital and I was at home, my mom called me. I immediately picked up the phone, not knowing if what she was about to say to me would change my life for the better or for the worse. She told me that my dad was coming home from the hospital. My heart dropped. I was so excited. The wait was unbearable. I heard my mom's car pull in the garage, and so did my dogs. They wagged their tails more than they ever had in their whole life. He walked through the door, my mom's hand in his. The whole house lit up. My life was finally back to normal.

Having to man the house and live with the fact that I might never be able to see my dad again was something I feel prepared me for the struggles of life. Sitting here now reflecting back on this time in my life made me realize that you really have to find the good in the bad. When I walk downstairs and see my dad eating dinner with my mom, I imagine how sad it would be if my dad wasn't there and my mom would have to eat dinner by herself. I am forever grateful to all the people who helped me through this hard time in my life. I can't imagine where I'd be without God's intervention.

Over the past year, there was one moment when I felt closer to God than at any other time, and it happened during a season in my life when I felt overwhelmed and unsure of myself. It was not during a church service or retreat. It was not during a special event or celebration. It happened on an ordinary night that became unforgettable because of the peace God gave me.

For several weeks, I had been feeling the weight of school, friendships, responsibilities, and expectations. I tried to look calm on the outside, but inside I felt tired, stressed, and sometimes a little lost. I did not want to burden anyone with my problems, so I kept everything inside and told myself I could handle it. But the pressure kept building, and eventually I reached a point where I felt like I had nowhere else to turn.

One evening, after a long day that had felt especially difficult, I stepped outside to breathe for a moment. The air was cool, and the sky was clear enough for me to see the stars shining. I remember sitting quietly and staring up at the sky. For the first time in a long while, I allowed myself to slow down. I felt a mix of sadness, confusion, and exhaustion, and I realized how much I needed help. Instead of pretending I was fine, I finally allowed myself to be honest.

I folded my hands and whispered a simple prayer. I said, "God, I really need you right now. I do not know what to do, and I feel like I cannot carry all of this by myself. Please help me." The words were not planned, and they were not fancy. They came from a place of real need. As soon as I said them, I felt something change inside me. A calm, warm feeling settled over me, almost like someone had wrapped a soft blanket around my shoulders. It felt like God was gently telling me that He was with me, that He had not forgotten me, and that He understood every worry in my heart.

I stayed outside for a long time that night. I let myself cry a little, and instead of feeling embarrassed or weak, I felt lighter. It was the first time in weeks that I felt truly seen and heard. I did not receive a sudden answer or a huge sign, but I received something even better. I felt God's presence. It was quiet, peaceful, and comforting. It felt like love in its purest form.

In the days that followed, I noticed small things that reminded me of that moment. A friend reached out to check on me even though I had not told them anything. A teacher showed me unexpected kindness. A situation that I had been worried about worked out more smoothly than I imagined. None of these things were dramatic, but together they felt like gentle reminders from God that He had heard my prayer and that He was guiding me one step at a time.

Looking back, I realize that God was already with me before that night, even when I felt overwhelmed. I just had not been still enough to notice it. That evening under the stars helped me understand that God is close to us in the quiet moments, especially when our hearts feel heavy. He comforts us when we feel alone, and He gives us strength in small, steady ways.

Whenever I look at the night sky now, I remember that moment. I remember how God met me in the middle of my worries and filled my heart with peace. It taught me that I never face anything by myself and that God is always ready to help when I call on Him. That night changed me, and it is one of the clearest moments in my life when I felt the presence and love of God.

How I Experienced God

Before I had my front tooth, I suffered endless torments such as humiliation and mocking people around me. However, God helped me by letting my tooth grow in, and through this, I felt very close to God.

For a few years of my life, I did not have one of my front teeth on my top jaw. It was because my mouth was too small, and there was no room for it to come in. Even though I went to many appointments and had procedures like expanders, nothing seemed to help. Because of this, I was constantly mocked by many people, since I still did not have my front tooth. This always made me feel inferior to everyone else, and I felt like a low point in my life. However, my parents never lost hope and would constantly pray to God and attend many retreats. They would always pray for my tooth to come in, and it inspired me to pray more and not lose hope.

Eventually, after many appointments and prayers, my tooth finally began to come out. This was when I truly felt close to God. As my tooth became visible, I realized how this would never have been possible without God. Before my parents started praying for my tooth, none of the appointments or treatment had helped, letting me experience God, and realize how He was helping me in my life. A few months later, my tooth fully came out, and I started to see how God kept on helping me in my daytoday life.

This instance in my life relates to the Bible verse in the Gospel of John, chapter 9:23. In this Bible verse, Jesus states that a man was not born blind due to his sins or his parents' sins, but for the glory of God, which is similar to my situation, since I wasn't born with this issue because of my sins or my parents' sins, but so that we may believe in God and understand His power.

Because of all this, I firmly believe in God and pray to Him whenever I need help. I trust that He will help me when I need it, and I try to follow His path. God has taught me a lot through my tooth. Now, I serve in the altar and constantly experience God every Sunday. I also experience Him in my daytoday life. He always helps me with things like tests, quizzes, and other difficult things in my life, showing me how much I can encounter God and leading me to firmly believe in His power.