

I Am... a *Child* of God
Youth Sunday, May 30, 2021, 11:15 a.m., All Saints Church, Pasadena
Rory Lowdermilk

I think I lost God. I don't know when it happened, somewhere between the months of 15 and 16 and the hairpin turn of 17. The more I reached for him, the further away he seemed, until I was searching in empty corners of memories for his face. Every prayer to him turned angry, sullen, and bitter and I kept thinking, give him *love*, Rory, love. But I could not find it in me. Church, became a business. Between Vestry meetings, committee meetings, planning budgets and CYF events, church felt like a non-profit, like a part-time job. And I'll be honest, when we would pray I'd think to myself, "what are we praying for, this is a professional meeting" before I'd remember I was in church and we were here for worship.

Somewhere between the emails and the memos, I lost God. He slipped away from me, like a child from his mother at the grocery store. I was left standing alone wondering when I took my eyes off him, wondering when he slipped out the back door and away from me.

For a while I attended those zoom meetings like I was bound by a curse. Half of them, I couldn't tell you what they were about- Mike, I'm sorry, but its the truth. I sat in front of that computer, eyes glazed over, back aching and hating every minute of it.

And I don't know how it happened, but one day, I sent a joke in chat. Just some silly little thing, I can't even remember what it was, but it was like.... It was like surfacing from deep underwater, it was like, ohmygosh it was like finally being able to hear what the adults were saying in Charlie Brown.

And after that I started seeing God, again. I started seeing God in Monique Thomas' face, and in Kelly Erin's messages in the chat box. I saw him in those run on sentence texts from MaryAnne Ahart, and Nina's gaptooth smile.

I started feeling like a kid again. I remembered that I was 17, yes, on the verge of adulthood, but also at the peak of childhood. One day I am going to forget what it was like to be a kid. One day, I am going to be desperately looking through scrap books and photo albums, old writings and text messages, trying to sift through the memories and find the essence of childhood.

I don't have much time left. I am straddling the edge of 17. And I spent so much of my time pretending I was an adult and it made me lose god. I was so obsessed, you guys, with impressing all of these adults, that I was trying to become one of them. And I lost touch with all of you, it feels like, and I lost touch with God. I've only got two months until I'm 18 and a legal adult and I am really really scared. These past couple of weeks I have been holding on with a *death grip* to my youth. I have been desperately searching through my memories like finding artifacts for a museum. I only have two months to go before I am an adult, but until then, I am going to act like the most childish, immature, crazy ansty teenager there ever was. I am sick of pretending and distancing myself from what I am: a *child* of God.