

Sophie Meinhardt Memorial Scholarship 2017

Kayla Egnew
St. Jude

Not What It Seems

Most would think a gift is a talent, a special skill, or even a cool ability no one else has but in my case I can't relate. I really never had something special about me, I got average grades, I had average looks, and even an average amount of friends. I was well, average. Then one day in third grade religion class we were working in our books and I had come across a question, "What gift has God given you". I was stumped. I had no absolute answer. So for the next couple days I thought about what is God calling me to do, what is my purpose. I would look around and see something special about everyone; good writers, amazing singers, or athletes of all sorts, all inspiring or encouraging others to follow their lead.

But I had no one to impress. But God had of course knew my purpose, and he wasn't going to leave me thinking I had none. So in the summer of 2012 I had been informed I had to go through an open heart surgery. I saw nothing good about this at all. I was scared and nervous for what was coming my way. So when the day finally came I headed into the operating room holding my little rosary and balling my eyes out. It wasn't my kind of ideal summer.

But after 8 hours of being unconscious I finally woke up. I immediately felt pounds of pressure on my chest I started to tear up but was knocked out by all the medicine. The second time I became conscious I was fully aware of my surroundings and was told the operation was extremely successful and at that moment I felt God by my side. I continued to heal and was soon out of the hospital. For a while after that all I did was sleep. The entire summer I couldn't play in water or participate in any sport activities. I would always hear people making plans and the entire time I had to stay home.

I felt like I was in isolation and I did not like it one bit. But in August I was finally healed and could go swimming. I tried on my bathing suit and was embarrassed to even go out in public. I was so self-conscious all because of my new scar starting from below my shoulders down to above my stomach. For three years straight I was so scared to be made fun of or be looked at differently. Then in the summer of 2016 I went to camp joyful hearts a summer camp for kids with heart conditions. There my eyes opened for the first time.

All the kids there had scars and they didn't care one bit. I was inspired so I began to wear v-neck shirts and bathing suits that weren't up to my shoulder bones. I felt great to be myself. So at that moment I realized what God has been calling me to do and what my purpose was. My purpose was to inspire others to be themselves.

So from that summer on I spread my gift God has given me to others, and hope to continue doing that. Going back I had said in the beginning my gift from god is not a talent, is not a special skill, and I definitely don't have any cool abilities. I had an experience, and God had given it to me. I now can spread it to others and now I can be able to inspire and encourage those who I see are struggling like I had been. I realized for those three years of hiding myself I wasn't living God's will because we are all children of God no matter what we look like. That is why I will continue to encourage others to be the person God had intended them to be. God's gift had made me look at things differently in this world and I am blessed.