# Perfect dark

It was 4 a.m. one Sunday morning, and the power went out. No big deal. Everyone's asleep. Except that my kids sleep with night lights, and there are white-noise machines running, and everyone has a fan oscillating in their room. So the silence and the darkness woke us like a gunshot.

I know my house pretty well in the dark. But I was surprised at how much I rely on sounds to tell me where I am. I could hear the kids calling for us, one of them pretty distressed. By the time I reached our oldest, he'd made it to the hallway. I Marco Polo-ed him to our bedroom as I pivoted to retrieve his sister. Five years old, she was in the middle of her bedroom floor sobbing, drowning in the darkness. I stashed both kids on the bed with my wife as I went in search of candles, flashlights and/or that battery-powered unicorn light my daughter got for her birthday.

When I came back with candles, all four of us talked about the dark. How scary it can be, yes. But also how easily it can be disrupted and broken. Stumbling at first, we had improvised half a dozen methods to drive out the darkness.

In that in-between time — when it was too dark and too quiet for us to go back to sleep — we talked. We told stories. We prayed. We laughed. My wife and I told about other power outages we had been through. Snowstorms that snapped power lines. Brownouts that made our apartment in Silver Spring, Md., feel even smaller and more cramped than it already was.

We decided that we would get dressed and, in the pre-dawn, go see if our favorite breakfast place had power. I was just explaining to my kids about how I would get the garage door open without electricity when the power came back on.

Just like that our bout with utter darkness and deafening silence was over. It elicited an "Aw, that was fun" from my

daughter. When I offered to turn off all the lights again and pretend the power was still out, she said: “No. It wouldn’t be the same.”

And so we endured our little First World, no-stress, consequence-free power outage. But my kids learned something that morning. They faced darkness in a way that they never had before. In their fear and uncertainty, they called out, and someone came for them. Through family, prayer, love, shared history, faith, imagination and connection they came through it. It turned out to be not as bad as they first thought it might be.

And so it is with God. In our darkest times, we can call out, get creative about driving out the dark, and take comfort in our faith. And he’s even good for breakfast on a Sunday morning.