

THEME 4:

God Sustains the World

Overview: In this last theme, children will learn the answer to this universal question. Even though God doesn't need us, he wants to be in relationship with us and enjoy us. When this truth is firm in our minds and hearts, it brings confidence and joy to our lives and praise to our lips. Even children were made to glorify and reflect God and exhibit these characteristics in their lives. This theme gives children concrete, biblical purpose for life and ideas for putting that purpose into motion. The goal is that children would enjoy, glorify and praise God while doing his will.

For Reflection: Before leading this theme's activities, ponder these verses and questions. Ask God to help you enjoy, glorify, and praise him in your daily life as you seek to do his will.

Psalm 37:3-7

Psalm 100

Isaiah 43:1-7

How do you enjoy interacting with God?

Have you ever questioned why you were created? Do you believe God enjoys you? Talk to God about your answers.

What messages do you want to lay the foundation in your children's hearts regarding why they were created?

Topics and activities covered in this theme include:

Foundational Activities

- Key Phrase: God made me to glorify and enjoy him forever.
- Key Verse: Ephesians 2:10a
- Mystery Makers Verse Game
- Song Suggestions
- Discussion Starters
- Doing Good Together

God Does Not Need Me

- Memory Match
- Shopping List
- The Mother of Invention

I Can Enjoy God

- "I Enjoy" Egg Carton Game
- Would You Enjoy? Game

I Can Glorify God

- Out of This World Trivia
- Consider the Heavens
- Receiving Compliments

I Can Praise God

- Praise Word Scramble
- Praise Around the World

I Can Do God's Will

- "Do This, Do That" Game
- Equipped by the Creator

Pick and choose whatever number of activities help you cover the topics you desire in the time you have available. You could teach one topic per week, or highlight several topics all at once. Use one activity at a time, or put several together to create a longer teaching time.



Key Phrase | **Topic:** Foundational | **Time:** 5 min

Phrase: God made me to glorify and enjoy him forever.

Prepare: Key Phrase Visual (*printable*)

Do: Introduce the phrase for this week with motions.

God made me (*move hands as if forming something*)

to glorify (*wave hands in the air*)

and enjoy him (*hug yourself*)

forever (*rotate hands in a turning motion around each other over and over*)

Say: Ask questions to help children think about what each aspect of the phrase means.

Glorify: How can you show others what God is like? What can you say to tell God how amazing he is?

Enjoy: When is God with you? What are ways you can talk to God during your day? How do you enjoy spending time with God?

Forever: What are some things that only last a little while? How is that different from God? How does it feel to know you can enjoy a friendship with God that never ends?

Do: Repeat this phrase several times. You could say it together between questions, assign a motion to each child and say it, or see who can say it by themselves. Post the phrase where children can see it.



Key Verse | **Topic:** Foundational | **Time:** 10 min

Prepare: Bible, Ephesians 2:10a Verse Visual (*printable*) , “God’s Handiwork” song

Do: Talk about things people make (*cakes, houses, roads, computers, medicine, etc.*) and discuss reasons people make these things. Ask the children if they know why God made people. Show the printed verse visual for Ephesians 2:10a and read the complete verse from the Bible.

Say: God made you to do good work that he planned before you were even born! He didn’t just make your body—he also makes you new inside by saving you from sin when you believe in Jesus as your Savior. God wants to help you discover and enjoy the good work he has planned for you. God will show you the kinds of good work he wants you to do as you read the Bible, pray, and live life. He will give you ways to do these kinds of good work in your life, and He will help you do it!

Respond: Sing “God’s Handiwork” and then, with the song playing softly in the background, encourage children to talk with God about the good work he has planned for them this week.



Mystery Makers Verse Game | Topic: Foundational | Time: 10 min

Prepare: Bible, Mystery Makers cards (*printable*) , Ephesians 2:10a Verse Visual (*printable*) 

Do: Let children take turns looking at a picture of something people make (*pizza, ice cream sundae, painting, scrambled eggs, birdhouse, music*) and pretending to make that item while everyone else tries to guess what they are making.

Say: People make things in lots of different ways, but God makes the very best things. God made your body in your mother's womb and when you believe in Jesus as your Savior, he makes you new by giving you new life with him! Now you can glorify God and enjoy him by doing the good works he has prepared for you to do. (*Read Ephesians 2:10a.*) We're going to pretend to make things while we learn this verse together.

Do: Turn the pictures facedown and mix them up. Let children have turns choosing a card and leading the group in pretending to make the item pictured on it while you say the verse together.



Song Suggestions | Topic: Foundational | Time: 5 min

Prepare: musical instruments (*homemade, wooden, etc.*), songs (*see list below*)

Say: Singing songs to God is one of many ways to praise God—to make much of how great and wonderful he is! These songs will help us “make much of God” and remember how wonderful and good he is.

Do: As the children sing and worship God, have them play instruments, sit quietly, or march around the room.

Song Suggestions: (*available on YouTube*)

- ▶ “God’s Handiwork” (*Ephesians 2:10*) by Lantern Music
- ▶ “Sing for Joy” (*Psalms 95:1-4*) by Seeds Family Worship
- ▶ “Why Did God Make You?” by Dana Dirksen
- ▶ “Million Reasons” by Group Publishing

Note: Specific songs are suggested alongside relevant activities throughout this guide.



Image by Matthias Böckel from Pixabay



Idea: Discussion can help children think through and consider ideas in a different way. It can help you discern their perspective and hearts. Use these questions after another activity or as a stand-alone activity. Choose the questions that are appropriate to your group and the time you have. You don't have to have all the answers. Simply point children to the God who does!

When holding a discussion, it is often best to find a way to engage children in quiet activity (*especially little ones*). Let children eat a snack, color a picture, or build with blocks to keep their hands busy. Or go on a walk together as you discuss these ideas!

Discussion #1: **Glorifying God When It's Hard**

Prepare: whiteboard and marker or paper and pen

Say: When is it hard to glorify God? (*Glorify means to show honor to God by showing others what God is like or by telling him how amazing he is.*) When is it hard to glorify God with your words? How about with your attitude?

Do: Write down answers and then discuss practical ways to glorify God in each situation.

Ideas: (*use these to jumpstart the conversation if needed*)

Challenge	Practical Idea
When someone is sick	List things to be thankful for
When a friend is mean	Show kindness to that friend
When you have to move	Count the ways God is caring for you
When you're angry	Find something good to thank God for

Discussion #2: **Obedying God**

Prepare: Bible

Say: Imagine you had to cut down a tree. Would you choose an ax or a chain saw? Why? Which one would require the most effort and work? Why?

You have this same kind of choice when it comes to doing God's will. How do you find it hard to obey God? What kinds of things are the hardest for you to obey?

You can try really hard to obey God. You can try to always be kind, never lie, and read your Bible. But you know what? It's like trying to chop down a tree with an ax. You can make some progress but it will be slow and painful and easy to mess up along the way.

Have you ever found it easy to obey God? What was different about those times?

(*Read Philippians 2:13.*) God lives inside those who believe in him. The Holy Spirit gives the power to want what is good and right AND to do it! This doesn't happen because you try harder. It only happens when you trust God to change you inside and then to actually obey!

Idea: Share a personal story of a time you tried to obey God out of effort as well as a time you allowed God to do the work in you.



Doing Good Together | Topic: Foundational | Time: 20 min+

Prepare: Bible, needed supplies to accomplish the chosen project

Say: Doing good works and helping others do good works is one way we can do God's will. (*Read Proverbs 3:27.*) God wants us to look around and help when it is in our power to help. When we see others doing God's will by serving and helping others, we can encourage them. (*Read Hebrews 10:24.*) We can help those close to us, or those far away. Let's talk about some ideas of what we could do and choose one to do together.

Do: Work together as a family or class to choose a project you can do together to help others and / or further the Gospel message. Pray for your project.

Idea: Create a prayer reminder for everyone to put where they will see it and remember to pray for the missionaries or people you are going to help.

Ideas for projects:

- ▶ Contact a missionary your church supports and ask them for prayer requests. Pray for the missionary and requests regularly.
- ▶ Write a letter or record a video to a missionary to encourage them (*for ideas, watch "How to Teach Kids about Missions by Encouraging Missionaries" on the Kids Enjoying Jesus YouTube channel*).
- ▶ Find a creative way to raise money for a missionary project your church is connected with, such as a bake sale, car wash, garage sale, etc.
- ▶ Use a Doing Good Together Coin Offering to collect money to send to a missionary or to give to a family in need in your community. (*See the "Christmas Tree Offering Activity for Kids" video on the Kids Enjoying Jesus YouTube channel for the basic idea.*)
- ▶ Help in your community by volunteering at the food pantry, shopping for Christmas presents for a family in need, visiting the residents at a nursing home, etc.



Memory Match | Topic: God Does Not Need Me | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Memory Match Cards (*printable*)  arranged face-down on a table or floor, "Why Did God Make You?" song

Say: People throughout history have made things because they needed them. Sometimes that's as simple as making a blanket because of the cold, or as hard as discovering which medicines can cure certain diseases. In this game we're going to match the need people had with what was made to meet that need.

Do: Play as one big group or divide children into teams. Have children/ teams take turns uncovering two cards at a time. When a match is uncovered, that child or team gets to keep the match. As you play, talk about why those things are a match and how that met a need. Explain that while people make things to meet needs, God didn't make us because he needed us—he made us to enjoy us and for us to enjoy him.

Respond: Listen to or sing "Why Did God Make You?" Encourage children to remember how much God enjoys them every time they use a modern convenience that meets a need.



Shopping List | Topic: God Does Not Need Me | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Bible, weekly paper ads or catalogs from local stores, whiteboard and marker or paper and pen

Do: Imagine you're making a shopping list. Look through some paper store ads or catalogs and take turns pointing at items the children want to add to the list. Ask questions like, "Why would you like to have that?" or "Why do you need that?"

Say: If God was making a shopping list, what would be on it? Here is a clue. (Read Acts 17:24-25.) God already has everything he needs. He doesn't need sunshine, air, water, people, or anything else in the universe. You need many things to stay alive and be happy, but God doesn't need anything. He created everything for his own pleasure and enjoyment, but he doesn't need any of it. He made you so he could enjoy you and you could enjoy him. Ask "What do you think God enjoys about you?" and "What do you enjoy about God?" List answers on a whiteboard or paper.

Respond: Use the list to take turns praying brief prayers of praise and worship to God. Encourage them to make a similar list of their own and spend time talking with God about it this week.



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The Mother of Invention | Topic: God Does Not Need Me | Time: 10 min

Prepare: Bible, The Mother of Invention pictures ([printable](#)) , "Why Did God Make You?" song

Say: There is a famous saying that goes like this: "Necessity is the mother of invention." What do you think that means? This means people invent new things because they need them.

Do: Show pictures of inventions (*cars, light bulbs, refrigerators, microscope, phones, computers, x-ray machine, shoes, wheelchair, etc.*) and discuss the needs met by each one.

Say: People make many things because we need them, but did you know God has never made anything that he needs? He created everything for his glory. (Read Isaiah 6:3 and 1 Corinthians 10:31.) God's glory is his perfect and powerful awesomeness. Making you is his way of saying, "Look what I can do! There is no one as perfect or powerful as me. I enjoy you and want you to enjoy me."

Respond: Encourage children to choose an invention they see/use daily (*phone, car, microwave, etc.*) and pause every time they see it to think about their own "inventor" and consider how their life is showing how perfect, powerful, and awesome God is. Sing "Why Did God Make You?"



"I Enjoy" Egg Carton Game | Topic: I Can Enjoy God | Time: 10 min

Prepare: Bible, egg carton, penny or marble, Key Phrase Visual, "I Enjoy" Verse Cards (*printable*) 

Do: Write something most children enjoy in each segment of an egg carton and put a penny or marble in the carton ahead of time. (*Ideas: movie, candy, ice cream, animal, superhero, game, toy, smell, drink, sound, fruit, color.*) Take turns shaking the carton then open it to see which segment the penny or marble landed in. Let the child who shook it share something they enjoy that matches the category written in that segment.

Say: God created us with the ability to enjoy many wonderful things. The biggest reason he gave us this ability is so we can enjoy him most of all. (*Read Psalm 37:4a.*) God is way better than anything or anyone else you could ever enjoy. What are some ways you enjoy God?

Do: Continue playing the egg carton game. Pause every few turns to repeat the key phrase, discuss things you enjoy about God, and read a Bible verse to emphasize our God-given purpose of delighting in him. (*Ideas: Psalm 32:11, Psalm 33:1, Psalm 100:1-2, Philippians 4:4*)

Respond: Remind children the ability to enjoy things is a gift from God. Encourage them to enjoy God by thinking of him and thanking him whenever they enjoy their favorite things.

Egg carton by Imogen Oh from the Noun Project



Would You Enjoy...? Game | Topic: I Can Enjoy God | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Bible, Would You Enjoy...? Cards (*printable*)  cut apart and put in a bag or container, "Why Did God Make You?" song

Do: Draw a card (*or have a child do it*) and have children show which activity they would enjoy most by rushing to the right side of the room if they prefer the first activity or the left side of the room if they prefer the second. For example, you may say, "Would you enjoy shopping (*point to the right*) or talking on the phone (*point to the left*)?" Continue drawing cards as children rush back and forth to choose which activity they would enjoy most.

Ideas: Would you enjoy...

- ▶ eating pizza or drinking a milkshake?
- ▶ visiting a zoo or a science museum?
- ▶ swimming or playing sports?
- ▶ building a snowman or sledding?
- ▶ baking cookies or playing with a puppy?
- ▶ fishing or reading a book?
- ▶ painting a picture or watching a movie?
- ▶ camping in a tent or acting in a play?
- ▶ eating your favorite fruit or your favorite candy?
- ▶ riding a bike or decorating a cake?

Say: We choose to enjoy many things every day. Choosing to enjoy God is the most important choice of all. (*Read Psalm 16:11.*) Pleasure and delight are gifts from God. It's not wrong for us to enjoy other things. But none of the other things you enjoy are as wonderful as God. The best joy and delight come from being with God and knowing him. How can you enjoy God this week?

Respond: Discuss ways children can enjoy God and encourage them to implement some of their ideas this week. Sing or listen to "Sing for Joy" (*Psalm 95:1-4*).

Ideas to Enjoy God: draw God a picture, sing him a song, go on a walk and tell God how wonderful his creation is, tell God about something exciting in your life.



Prepare: Bible, Out of This World Trivia list (*printable*) 

Do: Read facts about outer space and have the children guess whether each statement is true or false. (*You could even have them “blast off” by jumping up like a rocket if they think it’s true or remain seated if they think it’s false.*)

Ideas:

- ▶ The sun is the largest star in the universe. (*False. Many stars are larger than the sun.*)
- ▶ There is a volcano on Mars 100 times bigger than earth’s largest volcano. (*True.*)
- ▶ Venus is the coldest planet. (*False. Venus is the hottest planet in our solar system with surface temperatures that could melt lead.*)
- ▶ The moon travels all the way around the earth every 27 days. (*True.*)
- ▶ “Shooting stars” and “falling stars” are not actually stars. (*True. Shooting stars are small pieces of dust or rock burning up as they enter our atmosphere.*)
- ▶ The red spot on Jupiter is an enormous storm larger than the entire earth. (*True.*)
- ▶ Scientists have discovered living creatures on Mars. (*False. Earth is the only planet where life is known to exist.*)
- ▶ One million earth-sized planets could fit inside the sun. (*True.*)
- ▶ Explosions are twice as loud in space! (*False. Space is silent because there isn’t enough air for sound waves to travel on.*)
- ▶ The stars (*besides the sun*) are so far away the fastest spaceship in the world would take 100 years to reach them. (*False. It would take the fastest spaceship more than ten thousand years to reach the nearest stars.*)

Say: Do you know why God made amazing things in outer space? (*Read Psalm 19:1.*) The sky and outer space show how wonderful, awesome, great, and wise God is. God created you to show his glory too. This same chapter in Psalms tells a special way you can show God’s glory. (*Read Psalm 19:14.*) The thoughts you think and the words you say should show how perfect, powerful, awesome, and great God is. When you use kind words, it shows people God is kind. When you have a right heart attitude and think pure thoughts, it gives people a hint of God’s perfection. You are much smaller than a star, planet, or moon, but God can use you to show his glory in big ways.

Idea: Extend this activity with Discussion Starter #1.

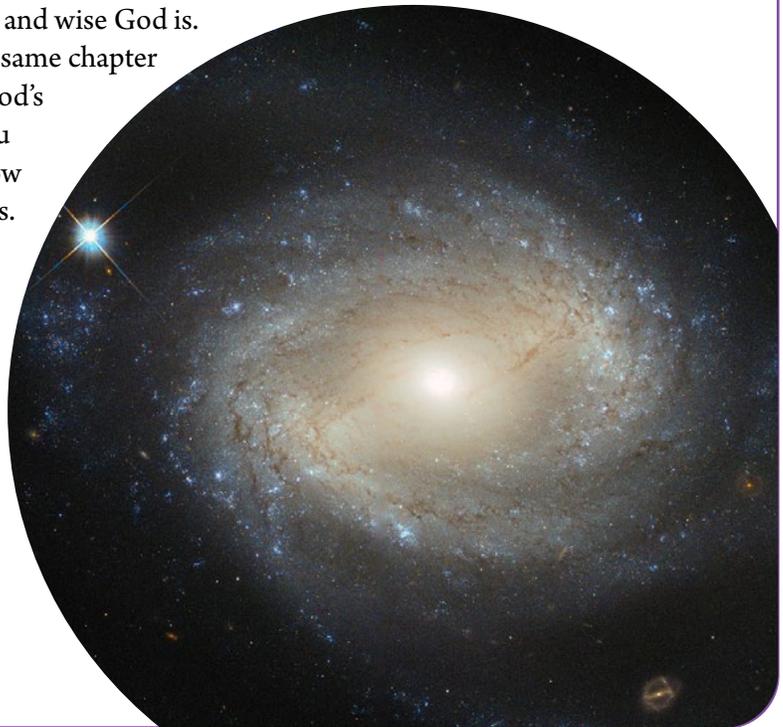


Image by NASA



Consider the Heavens | Topic: I Can Glorify God | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Bible, Consider the Heavens pictures (*printable*)  or a picture book about outer space

Do: Show pictures of amazing things in outer space. Have the children guess what each one is then share an interesting fact about it. Or read a picture book about outer space together.

Ideas:

- ▶ Jupiter—Jupiter is much larger than the earth so it has a much stronger force of gravity. This powerful gravity pulls comets and asteroids toward Jupiter so they don't crash into the earth.
- ▶ Spiral Galaxy—A galaxy is huge group of billions of stars. God filled the universe with billions of galaxies made of billions of stars. Earth is in a galaxy named the Milky Way.
- ▶ Saturn—Saturn has hundreds of rings made mostly of ice and dust. These rings are about 200,000 miles wide!
- ▶ Crab Nebula—A nebula is an enormous cloud of gas and dust in space. The crab nebula is so big it would take ten years to travel across it at lightspeed.
- ▶ Neptune—Neptune is about 17 times larger than Earth and is the windiest planet in our solar system with winds over 1,200 mph!
- ▶ Betelgeuse—Betelgeuse is a star that's 1,000 times bigger and thousands of times brighter than the enormous sun! Other stars are even bigger and brighter!

Say: Space is huge and is full of billions and billions of huge things! God created them to show his glory. (*Read Genesis 1:14-17.*) God used a man named David to write a song in the Bible that reminds us why God made these incredible things. (*Read Psalm 8:3-4.*) The mind-blowing things God created in space help us see how big and awesome God is and how small we are.

Respond: Take turns telling God how amazing he is—glorify him! Encourage children to pause and tell God how awesome he is when they see his handiwork in sky and space.



Receiving Compliments | Topic: I Can Glorify God | Time: 10 min

Prepare: Receiving Compliments Cards (*printable*)  cut apart and put in a bag or container

Ideas:

- ▶ You have such a beautiful voice.
- ▶ You're a really smart kid.
- ▶ Wow! You run super fast!
- ▶ You play the piano so well.
- ▶ You are a talented athlete.
- ▶ I appreciate how kind you are to others.

Say: Sometimes people notice when we're good at something, and they tell us so! Those are called "compliments" and they're really fun to receive. One way you can glorify God instead of yourself is to give God the credit when someone compliments you. It's always good to say, "Thank you!" when someone praises you for something you do well. But then you can add to it by saying something like, "God is the one who helps me do that."

Do: Have children take turns drawing the compliments cards out of the bag or container and read it to the group. Work together to come up with a response to each one that gives God the glory for the talent or achievement. See how much variety you can come up with!

Respond: Challenge children to verbally give glory to God when someone gives them a compliment.



Praise Word Scramble | Topic: I Can Praise God | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Praise Word Scramble cards (*printable*) , Bible or printout of Bible passage with praise words

Ideas:

(*front of card*) **ANHOSAN** (*back of card*) **HOSANNA**—Hooray! The Lord saves! (*Matthew 21:9*)

(*front of card*) **RIPASE** (*back of card*) **PRAISE**—to make much of God (*Psalms 119:171*)

(*front of card*) **JALLUHELAH** (*back of card*) **HALLELUJAH**—a shout of joy, praise, or gratitude (*Revelation 19:1*)

(*front of card*) **SOWEEMA** (*back of card*) **AWESOME**—an overwhelming feeling of reverence, admiration, and fear (*Psalms 66:5*)

Do: Scramble praise words from the Bible and have children try to unscramble them. Then have one child look up the Scripture reference for each word (*for younger children, have a bookmark in your Bible they can open to so you can read the verse*). Using the definitions, explain what each praise word means. This will help kids develop a language of praise and also recognize praise when they see these words in the Bible or in worship songs.

Respond: Encourage the children to underline or highlight praise words when they see them in their Bibles and then pause to praise God. If possible, show an example of this using your Bible or a printout of a Bible passage.



Praise Around the World | Topic: I Can Praise God | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Bible, Praise Around the World Cards (*printable*) , songs in other languages (*see playlist on the Kids Enjoying Jesus YouTube channel*), “Sing for Joy” song

Do: Print out verses about praise and hide them throughout your teaching area ahead of time.

Say: What does it mean to praise God? Part of praise is showing your excitement about who God is and what he has done! (*Read 1 Chronicles 16:23-25.*) You can sing, clap, dance, or pray to praise God. People around the world praise God in different ways with different words. But no one else on earth can praise God exactly like you can. Your clapping hands, dancing feet, and singing voice are one of a kind. We’re going to listen to people around the world praising God while we learn about ways you can praise God.

Do: Have children take turns searching for one of the hidden verses while you use YouTube or another music player to play praise songs in different languages. When a child finds a praise verse, help them read it out loud. Ask questions like, “Does this verse tell you anything about who should praise God?” “Does this verse tell you anything about how you can praise God?” “Does this verse tell you anything about why you should praise God?” Emphasize that God hears and enjoys each person’s unique praise.

Suggested Verses:

Psalm 66:1-2, Psalm 66:4, Psalm 139:14, Psalm 148:12, Psalm 150:2, Psalm 150:6

Respond: Challenge children to choose a favorite praise song and sing it to God in their own unique way every day this week. Sing or listen to “Sing for Joy” (*Psalms 95:1-4*).



"Do This, Do That" Game | Topic: I Can Do God's Will | Time: 10 min

Prepare: Bible, "God's Handiwork" song

Do: Tell the children to copy your action when you say "Do this." They should not copy an action when you say "Do that." (*They should just continue doing the previous action.*) If they copy you when you say "Do that," they are out and need to sit down. Use a variety of actions like hopping, clapping, waving, nodding, etc. Continue play until only a few children remain. You may want to do a practice round first.

Say: Some people think obeying God is just working hard to follow directions like "Do this" and "Don't do that." But obeying him is so much more. (*Read Philippians 2:13.*) Can you use this verse to answer three questions about doing God's will?

Q: Who helps you do God's will?

A: God lives inside those who believe in him. You can rely on him to help you do what he wants.

Q: Where does God work to help you do his will?

A: God works in your heart to give you a desire to obey him. It's more than just following rules on the outside. It begins with loving and enjoying God in your heart.

Q: Why should you do God's will?

A: Doing God's will pleases God. He helps you do what brings him joy!

Respond: Sing "God's Handiwork." Pray, asking God to help everyone love, enjoy, and obey him.



Equipped by the Creator | Topic: I Can Do God's Will | Time: 15 min

Prepare: Bible, Equipped by the Creator beaver cards and pictures (*printable*)  with fact cards taped to sticks (*optional*), Verse Reference Cards (*printable*) , "God's Handiwork" song

Do: Show pictures of a beaver and its lodge. Share how God equipped beavers for their life. (*Idea: Tape each fact to a stick and hide them. Have children find and read them.*)

Ideas:

- ▶ Valves inside a beaver's ears and nose close automatically when it dives underwater.
- ▶ A beaver's strong teeth automatically sharpen themselves for cutting wood.
- ▶ Transparent eyelids allow a beaver to see underwater with its eyes closed.
- ▶ Flaps of skin inside a beaver's mouth keep water out of its throat when it chews underwater.

Say: God is the wise and powerful Creator who equips his creation. You matter way more to God than a beaver and he wants to equip you for good work. Your works are far more important than a beaver's. (*Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.*) If you have believed in Jesus, God gives you the good gift of his Word to teach and equip you to do God's will. Let's take a look inside. (*Read and briefly discuss 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesians 6:1, Philippians 4:6, and Matthew 22:37-39.*) Not every Bible verse will say, "This is God's will," but all of the Bible shows you what God's will looks like. As you learn what God's will is, he will help you want to do it and be able to do it. Will you let God teach you and equip you to do his will?

Respond: Sing "God's Handiwork." Spend time in quiet prayer. Encourage the children to ask God to help them do good works for him this week.