THE AYE-AYE
by Lanny and Marilyn Johnson

Billy, Mary and their father, were looking through a book with pictures of animals from Madagascar, an island off the coast of Africa. As Mary turned a page, Billy became very excited and squealed out, “Whoa! Look at that big-eared, ugly rat!”

Chuckling, Mr. Jones answered, “I admit that is a strange looking animal, probably one of the weirdest animals you have ever seen. However, it is not a rat.”

“Notice the large, rounded, spoon-like ears. The aye-aye is able to turn them towards the source of a sound and help it ‘see’ in the dark. When the aye-aye makes a noise, special ridges on the inner surfaces of its ears that are very sensitive, help it determine where the sound is coming from. The process of locating something by making sounds and then listening to their echoes is called echolocation.”

“Don’t dolphins, whales and bats use echolocation too?” Mary asked.

“Yes they do, Mary. However, the aye-aye is the only primate known to use it. Using its bony, middle finger, the aye-aye rapidly taps (up to eight times per second) a tree trunk or branch. By listening to these vibrations it can tell not only whether there is a hole underneath the wood, but if there is a grub (insect larvae) in the hole! This amazing way of finding food is called percussive foraging.”

“The aye-aye eats fruits, nuts, nectar, seeds, and mushrooms, but its main diet is wood-boring grubs. If the aye-aye detects grubs in the tree, it chews a hole into the wood with its sharp teeth. Chewing tough wood eventually wears down the aye-aye’s teeth. However, their teeth are designed to grow back continuously their entire life – just just like the teeth of rodents. After the aye-aye chews into the hole, it uses its specially designed middle finger to scoop the grub out.

“The middle finger is much thinner and three times longer than the other fingers on the aye-aye’s hands. It is also more flexible than the others because of special ball-and-socket joints."

“So, Mary and Billy, what did you learn from studying the aye-aye?” asked Mr. Jones.

“It’s really weird and kinda ugly, but really cool!”

“That’s true Billy,” Mary smilingly replied, “but I think most of all, it shows me that Our God created His creatures with special designs to help them survive in this world.”

“I totally agree kids. Now let’s find your mother for prayer time. Then it’s off to brush your teeth and bed.”

Giggling and saluting, Billy piped out, “Aye-aye, Dad!” and scampered off to find his mother.
CHALLENGING
Help the adult Aye-Aye find the path through the maze to get to the juicy grub.

WORD SEARCH
Look for the words from the WORD LIST below. The hidden word might be up, down, sideways or slanted, but not backwards.

WORD LIST
AYEAYE CHEW CLAWS DESIGN ECHolocation FINGER GRUB LARVAE LEMUR MADAGASCAR NOCTURNAL TAP TEETH

EASY
Help the baby Aye-Aye find the path through the maze to get to the juicy grub.

FOR ANSWERS GO TO: http://www.discovercreation.org/kids/NewsletterAnswers.htm

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