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## A PLAN AND A PURPOSE

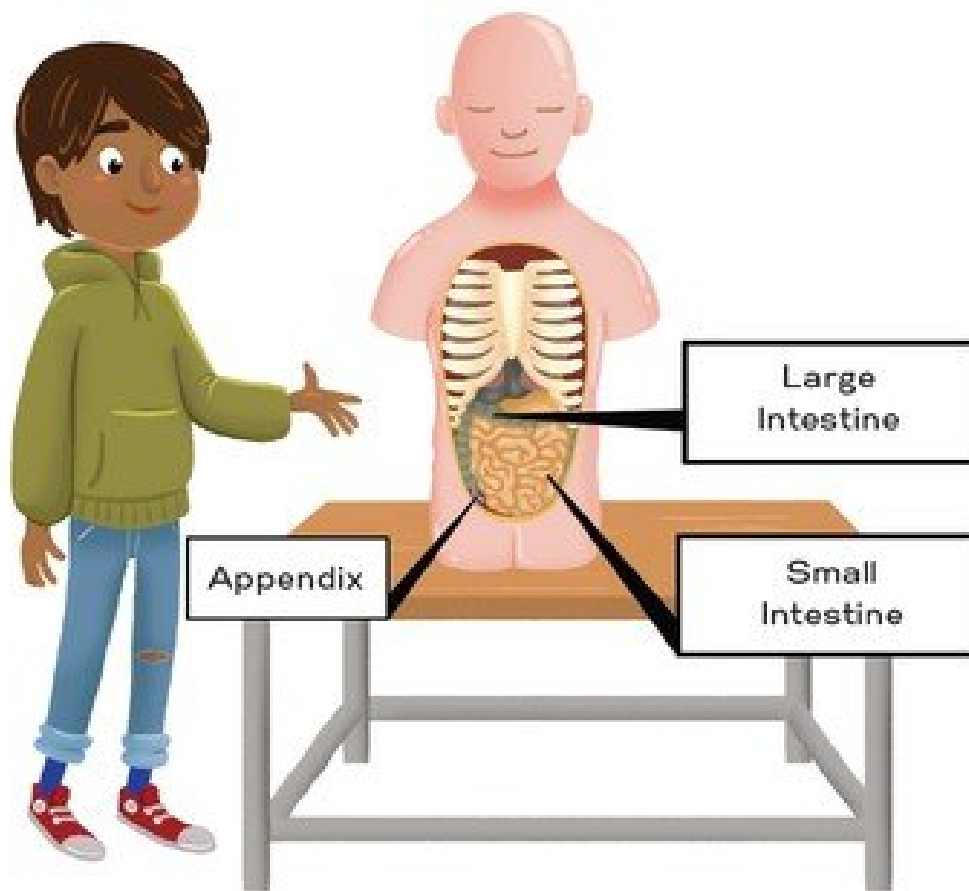
The LORD will work out his plans for my life.

PSALM 138:8 NLT

**T**his might sound gross, but did you know that there's this little worm-like pouch inside your body? It's about two to four inches long, and scientists had no idea why it's there—until recently. That little pouch is called the appendix (uh-PEN-diks). It's attached to your large intestine, which is attached to your small intestine (which is 22 feet long and not all that small), which is attached to your stomach. *Whew!*

Those organs all work together to digest your food—except the appendix. For years, scientists believed the appendix had no real purpose. But now they believe it's actually pretty important. It stores good bacteria (not the bad kind that makes you sick), which is important because your digestive system needs good bacteria to break down your food. But when you get sick, especially with a stomachache, the good bacteria can get flushed out of your system. That's when the appendix comes to the rescue! It releases the stored up good bacteria and gets your digestive system back on track!

Okay, let's think about this. If God has an important purpose for even that tiny, worm-like pouch in your belly, just imagine what He's got planned for your whole body! God created you and put you in this time and place for a reason. And He's going to use everything that happens in your life—yes, even the things that don't seem to have a purpose right now—to help you grow and learn and be able to carry out His plan for you. Some days, it might be hard to see, but never doubt that God's got a plan and a purpose created just for you!



*Lord, I know You have good plans for me—plans that will show off just how awesome You are. Please direct me in the next step to take. Amen.*

## EXPLORE THE WONDER

Ever wonder how food gets through your digestive system? Muscle power! Waves of muscle movement—kind of like the waves in the ocean—push food down your esophagus, into the stomach, and then through the intestines. It's called peristalsis (per-uh-STAL-sis). Since it uses muscle power instead of gravity, you could digest your food standing on your head!



## LOST AND FOUND

God is being patient with you. He does not want anyone to be lost. He wants everyone to change his heart and life.

2 PETER 3:9 icb

**N**o one had seen a **Somali sengi** since **1973**. What's a *Somali sengi*? you ask. It's a species of elephant shrew. Yeah, it's mouse-sized, but it really is related to the elephant—just check out its extra-long nose!

For almost 50 years, scientists believed the Somali sengi was extinct. But they kept hearing rumors about sengis being spotted in the rocky lands of

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Djibouti in Africa. So, in 2019, scientists set out over 1,200 traps to find them. For bait, they used a mixture of peanut butter, oatmeal, and yeast. Turns out, sengis love peanut butter! Scientists caught—and safely released—12 Somali sengis. The animal everyone thought was lost had been found.

Scientists didn't want the Somali sengi to be lost, and God doesn't want you or anyone else to be lost either. This isn't "lost" like being lost in a city. This "lost" means a person hasn't trusted God to be the Lord of their life. That's why God never stops searching for us and chasing after us with His love. Sometimes it's in big ways, like sending Jesus to save us from sin. And other times it's in smaller ways, like sending a friend to remind us how much God loves us.

God never gives up on anyone—not the nosy neighbor, the pizza delivery guy, or that mean kid on the bus, and definitely not you. He's always working, searching, and chasing because He wants absolutely everyone to be found and to follow Him!

***God, I want to be more like You. Help me to never stop showing the world how much You love everyone in it. Amen.***

### EXPLORE THE WONDER

What is it about teeny-tiny animals that makes them impossible to resist? Like the Baluchistan pygmy jerboa (also known as the dwarf three-toed jerboa). These little guys hop around the deserts of Pakistan like little kangaroos. It's the world's smallest rodent, with a less-than-two-inch-long body and a three-inch-long tail. And it weighs barely more than a penny!

