

Jane G. Meyer's new book, *When God Made You* invites readers of all ages to look at each person in the world and consider what God was thinking when He made them. Every spread of this gleefully-worded book introduces a child from a different part of the world, and suggests what God had in mind when He created that child. Each "person recipe" in the book, just as in real life, is completely unique and brimming with the love and enthusiasm of our Creator.

When God Made You celebrates each person's extraordinary qualities, looks, talents, and interests, recognizing each facet as a gift that has been poured into that person's life by God Himself. The book also demonstrates to the reader that God does not just give those qualities to us to enjoy, but because He wants them to be used and shared. Every child in the book, upon being created, is issued a command: to plant, to sing, to paint, to lead... The book brings to life the reality that from the moment we are created, God has in His mind the work that He has set for us to do.

Throughout the book, Megan Elizabeth Gilbert's whimsical illustrations bring to life the individual being described. Readers can see Makani, Hikaru, Bridgid, Carmelo, and all the others in their home environment, savoring their surroundings and beginning to act on the command that God has given for them to fulfill. The illustrator has carefully captured cultural details (down to the very fabric of the traditional clothing), and uses these characteristics to effectively embellish each spread. The reader can sense the joy God has in creating each person through the charming illustrations in this book.

The book both begins and ends with this important question: "What beautiful things was God thinking when He made you?" This question - actually, the book as a whole - naturally lends itself to a family discussion on individual uniqueness. God's plan for each person, His delight in each of us, and His love for each person are clearly demonstrated in the pages of this book. This book will be an invaluable addition to any Orthodox Christian family's library.

Here is more about the book itself:

Take a sneak peek into the book by taking a look at the trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5F5hoXb8-mM&feature=youtu.be> or by flipping through a few digital pages here: https://issuu.com/ancientfaith/docs/when_god_made_you/13?e=0

Check out the "When God Made You" facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WhenGodMadeMe/>

To add this book to your family's collection, purchase a copy here: <http://store.ancientfaith.com/when-god-made-you/>

Here are a few activities that you and your family can do together after reading “When God Made You:”

Have each member of your family draw a self-portrait and write (or describe) what God was thinking about when He made them. Hang the self-portraits up where you can all see them and enjoy them. Find ideas of unique ways to display them here:

<http://www.helpyouwell.com/blog/2015/9/30/12-ways-to-display-kids-artwork>

Encourage each family member to celebrate the other members of the family. Allow each person to write their version of God’s recipe for every other member of the family. What did God think of when He made the other members? Write the “recipes” on recipe cards such as this (print on cardstock): http://www.antiochian.org/sites/default/files/when_god_made_you_recipe_card.pdf. After you’re finished, read the recipes together and talk about what you’ve written, celebrating the great things God has created in each member of the family. Display the recipe cards near your self-portraits.

Work together to make lists of words that describe each member of the family. These lists can have some similarities to each other, but should largely unique, just as the person they describe is unique from the rest of the family. Order (or create your own) a canvas art piece for each family member, featuring their name and descriptive words, as suggested here:

<http://www.iheartcraftythings.com/2013/07/god-made-you-subway-art-canvas.html?m=1>

Challenge each member of the family to take this idea one step further: Ask each person to think of someone they don’t get along with very well. Instead of thinking of how much they don’t like the person, have them make a list of the good things that God has put into that person. What was God thinking when He made them? (This is an excellent way to realize that God has created EVERYONE, and to look for the positive even in those whom we struggle to love.) Take some time to pray for the people who you have a hard time getting along with. After making the list of great things God put into the person/people you struggle to love, tuck the list(s) away somewhere that can be re-visited when the going gets tough with the individual(s) again. Re-visit the list to add more great things, as you think of them! And, as Fr. Andrew Harmon says in <http://www.antiochian.org/love-your-enemies>, keep focusing on the GOOD thing(s)!

Look at what the Scriptures have to say about God creating us uniquely. For example, read Genesis 1: 27-28, Psalm 118:73-74, Psalm 138:13-16, Job 33:4, Isaiah 64:7, Jeremiah 1:4-5, Jeremiah 36:11, Romans 8:28-30, Romans 12:6-8, and Ephesians 2:10. Select one to focus on as a family and create a piece of wall art together featuring that Scripture. Find Scripture wall art ideas here: <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/scripture-wall-art/>

This song called “Fearfully and Wonderfully Made” combines many Scriptures as a sort of lullaby from God to each of the people He has created:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igYWlzc9Ko>

Older children and adults will be encouraged to read this blog post called "What God Says About Me." The blog tells about the author (who has Down Syndrome)'s search through the scriptures and how learning what God says about His people brought her comfort. Read the blog at <http://www1.cbn.com/devotions/what-god-says-about-me>.

Consider taking this challenge from *When God Made You* author Jane G. Meyer herself: "...If your kids are interested in either writing a profile about themselves, or drawing their own portrait, with your permission we'll be collecting these images to post on the *When God Made You* facebook page, and maybe on a page here on my own website. And it doesn't just have to be kids! Feel free to send me your own writing or illustration as well!!!" She posted that challenge in this blog about her book: <http://www.janegmeyer.com/blog/when-god-made-you/>