

John 6:35-40). Please don't worry though—after the babies are satiated, Jesus causes her skin to quickly grow back.

Baby animals are incredibly sweet—even caecilian babies—because of their helpless dependence upon our Almighty God and the mothers He provides. And through these moms, Jesus also shows us just how sweet He is. In nature, Christ's sweetness is observed when His all-powerful wisdom gently touches the humblest things of the world. His sweetness shines in helpless creatures because in them Christ merges together His limitless strength and unbounded gentleness.

The precious life God instills within baby animals also reminds us of the eternal life He provides us through His Son. We all need Jesus as desperately as a baby animal needs its mother. Those of us who love Christ know that He's

sweet because He's stronger than everyone. His glory could easily crush the whole of creation (Revelation 19:15). Yet, because of His love, our Lord willingly became weak like us (Philippians 2:7) in order to save His people from their sins. Jesus—the most powerful person in the universe—humiliated Himself for our sake.
Oh, how sweet He is!

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"I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite." ISAIAH 57:15

HIS Nature

When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth (PSALM 104:30).

OUR SWEET JESUS!

Have you ever wondered why baby animals are so cute? Maybe it's because God gives them extremely soft skin, fur, or feathers—or that He often "paints" them in pretty colors and fine stripes. Most young creatures possess more delicate features—nose, ears, and legs—than their parents. And there's something about their helpless cries that softens our hearts, though we find them just as sweet when they play with boundless curiosity. It could be said, however, that it's a baby's complete trust in his or her mother that is the most precious thing about

them, and speaks loudly of our Creator's perfect love.

In this way, Jesus reveals His own sweetness through animals that we might not see as cute, such as the crocodile. Believe it or not, crocodiles are quite feeble as infants. When they are about to hatch, the unborn babies cry out to God for help from within their eggs. In one of the greatest displays of meekness (power under control) within the

Mother crocodile and her baby



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animal kingdom, Christ Jesus directs the mother crocodile to gently break open each egg using her bone-crushing teeth. Her bite is capable of producing pressure of *5,000 pounds* per square inch, yet she handles each egg with incredible tenderness. She then patiently waits for the baby crocodiles to climb into her mouth for a quick ride down to the river. Once in the water, the crèche of babies stays close to Mom. If danger appears suddenly, the infants rush back into her mouth for safety. What a symbol of the true Christian who is completely safe in the strong arms (or “jaws”) of our terrifying God (Psalm 91:9-10)!

Arguably, some of the homeliest babies in the world are newborn birds—we might call them “cute-ugly” or “ugly-cute.” Their sweetness derives not from physical appearance, but from their utter dependence

upon Mom and Dad when they “peep” or “chirp” for food. As with unhatched crocodiles, these cries become “prayers” to their Creator (Job 38:41). Could anything be more precious?

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the average citizen of the United States moves approximately 12 times during his or her life. But the female orangutan of Borneo and Sumatra has us beat. Using the branches and leaves of the rainforest trees in which she lives, a mother orangutan fashions a brand new nest for her young *every night*. Presumably she does this to keep her offspring clean and safe. (She truly radiates the heart of her Creator’s love—see John 14:1-3!) This means that an orangutan mom constructs approximately 30,000 homes in her lifetime. In addition, she rarely puts her baby down throughout the six or seven years that he or she is with her. This is the longest period of dependency

for any creature on Earth, save humans.

Some of the best moms in the world can be found under a rock. Centipedes live in moist places and prefer to move about at night. Unlike many invertebrates, they are among the most dedicated of mothers. A female centipede lays dozens of eggs and then coils herself tightly around her clutch. Over the next several weeks, the mother does not eat or drink. She guards the eggs and faithfully cleans them to remove bacteria and mold. God also gave her the desire to tend the newly-hatched centipedes until they are ready to go on their own. If any animal tries to hurt her young, she will defend them to the death.

Self-sacrifice among animal mothers is common throughout the world, but few moms are as devoted as the North Pacific giant octopus. Christ has given her a dedication second to none. When she’s ready to bear young, she lays from 20,000 to 100,000



Centipede mother guarding her eggs

eggs over the course of a few days. She then tenaciously guards her brood—not for days or weeks, but *many months*. During this time, the mother octopus cannot hunt for food and eventually starves to death. She will not, however, leave her young.

If we traveled to South America, we’d find there an animal mom whose story is a bit hard to swallow. She is the worm-like amphibian known as a caecilian (see - SIL - ee - an). This mother actually allows her newly-hatched and ravenous youngsters to peel back and eat the outer layer of her skin in order to obtain life-giving nourishment (a reflection of

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