Interview with Barkley the Beaver (Eager Beavers)

A puppet interview for Eager Beavers (age 5). **Barkley** is a brown paper-bag beaver puppet. One leader is the **Interviewer**; the puppeteer voices Barkley. Runs about 8–10 minutes with the kid activities.

Props: paper-bag beaver puppet, a stick or twig, a cup of water (optional), a small blanket or towel (for the lodge).

Part 1: Say Hello

INTERVIEWER: Good morning, Eager Beavers! Today we have a very special guest. He came all the way from his pond just to meet you. Let's call him out. Ready? One… two… three… "Barkley!"

(Kids call "Barkley!" Puppet pops up.)

BARKLEY: Hi, hi, HI! Wow, look at all these Eager Beavers! I'm an eager beaver too! I'm Barkley. Sorry I'm a little crinkly. I'm made of paper bag today. Real beavers are furry!

INTERVIEWER: Barkley, how big is a real beaver?

BARKLEY: A grown-up beaver is about as heavy as YOU! Some of us are as big as a medium-size dog. We're one of the biggest rodents in the whole world. Rodents are animals like mice and squirrels. We're like a giant squirrel that loves to swim!

Part 2: Where Do Beavers Live?

INTERVIEWER: Where do you live, Barkley?

BARKLEY: I live in a pond! But here's the secret: I MADE the pond myself. Well, me and my family.

INTERVIEWER: How do you make a pond?

BARKLEY: We find a little stream. Then we pile up sticks, rocks, and mud right across it. That's called a **dam**. The water gets stuck behind it and gets deeper and deeper. Then, ta-da! A pond!

INTERVIEWER: And do you live in the dam?

BARKLEY: Nope! We build a house in the pond called a **lodge**. It looks like a big pile of sticks with mud on it. And guess where the front door is?

INTERVIEWER: Where?

BARKLEY: UNDER the water! *(whispers)* So bears and coyotes can't get in. We swim in, then climb up to a dry room inside where we sleep.

Activity: *Kids crouch under a blanket "lodge." The Interviewer counts to three, and they "swim" out the secret underwater door.*

Part 3: What Do Beavers Eat?

INTERVIEWER: Barkley, do you eat fish?

BARKLEY: *(gasps)* Fish? No way! Fish are my swimming buddies. I eat **plants**. My favorite food is... **tree bark!**

INTERVIEWER: Bark? Like from a tree?

BARKLEY: Yep! The soft, juicy layer right under the bark is the yummiest part. I like willow trees, aspen trees, and birch trees. In summer I also munch leaves, grass, and water plants.

INTERVIEWER: How do you get bark off a whole tree?

BARKLEY: With my super teeth! Look, they're **orange**! *(puppet shows "teeth")* They have iron in them that makes them extra strong. And my teeth never stop growing, not ever! So I have to chew, chew, chew to keep them from getting too long.

Activity: *Everyone shows their "beaver teeth" and pretends to chew a tree: "Chomp, chomp, chomp... TIMBER!" Kids fall over gently like a tree.*

Part 4: How Does the Tail Work?

INTERVIEWER: Barkley, everyone wants to know about your tail!

BARKLEY: Oh, my tail is AMAZING. It's big and flat like a paddle, and it feels kind of bumpy and scaly, not furry. My tail has lots of jobs:

1. **Steering.** When I swim, my tail helps me turn, like the rudder on a boat. My big webbed back feet do the kicking.
2. **Sitting.** When I chew a tree, I lean back on my tail like a little chair so I don't tip over.
3. **Warning.** If I see danger, I slap my tail on the water: **SPLASH!** That tells my family, "Hide! Dive, dive, dive!"
4. **Saving snacks.** My tail stores extra fat, so I have energy when food is hard to find.

Activity: *Practice the warning slap: everyone slaps their knees as loud as they can when Barkley shouts "Danger!" Then Barkley says "All clear!" and everyone stops.*

Part 5: Swimming Superpowers

INTERVIEWER: Are you a good swimmer?

BARKLEY: The best! I can hold my breath for about **15 minutes**. That's longer than this whole interview! When I go underwater, my ears and nose close up tight. And I have see-through eyelids that work like swimming goggles!

INTERVIEWER: Don't you get cold and wet?

BARKLEY: Nope! My fur is so thick and oily that the water can't get to my skin. I comb it every day with a special split claw on my back foot. It's my built-in comb!

Part 6: What Do Beavers Do in Winter?

INTERVIEWER: Barkley, in winter the pond freezes. What do you do? Do you sleep all winter like a bear?

BARKLEY: Nope! Beavers don't hibernate. We stay awake all winter. But we get ready in the fall, which is right NOW!

INTERVIEWER: How do you get ready?

BARKLEY: First, we put extra mud on our lodge. When it freezes, it gets hard as a rock, so no one can break in. Then we cut lots and lots of branches and stick them in the mud at the bottom of the pond, right next to our door. That's our **underwater pantry**!

INTERVIEWER: Then what happens when the ice comes?

BARKLEY: The ice is like a roof on top of the pond. When I'm hungry, I swim out my underwater door, grab a branch from the pantry, and bring it back inside to eat. Then my whole family

snuggles together in the lodge to stay warm. It's cozy in there!

Part 7: Beaver Families

INTERVIEWER: Who lives in your lodge with you?

BARKLEY: My whole family! A mom beaver, a dad beaver, and the kids. Baby beavers are called **kits**. They're born in the spring, and they can swim right away! The big brothers and sisters help take care of the babies and help fix the dam.

INTERVIEWER: That's like an Adventurer Club! Everyone helping out.

BARKLEY: Exactly! Beavers are the hardest workers in the forest. That's why people call busy helpers "eager beavers." Like YOU!

Part 8: Kids' Turn

INTERVIEWER: Now our Eager Beavers get to ask Barkley a question!

(Let each kid ask one question. Some easy answers for the puppeteer:)

- **Do beavers bite people?** Only if they're scared. Never try to touch a wild beaver. Just watch from far away.
- **Do beavers sleep at night?** No! Beavers mostly work at night and sleep during the day.
- **How do beavers cut down big trees?** One little bite at a time, all the way around, until it falls.
- **Can a beaver live on land?** We walk on land to find trees, but we feel safest in the water.
- **How long do beavers live?** About 10 years in the wild.

Part 9: Quick Beaver Quiz

BARKLEY: Before I go, let's see if you were listening! Shout out the answer:

1. What do beavers build across a stream? *(A dam!)*
2. What is a beaver house called? *(A lodge!)*
3. Where is the lodge door? *(Underwater!)*
4. What color are beaver teeth? *(Orange!)*
5. What does a beaver do with its tail when there's danger? *(SLAP the water!)*

6. Where do beavers keep their winter food? *(At the bottom of the pond!)*

BARKLEY: Wow, you're beaver experts! Okay, I hear my family slapping their tails. I have to go fix the dam. Bye, Eager Beavers!

(Everyone slaps knees goodbye. Barkley dives away.)

Bonus: Leader Notes

- **Memory verse idea:** "*Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise.*" (Proverbs 6:6). Talk about how God made beavers to be hard workers who build and plan ahead.
- **Talk about it:** God gave beavers everything they need: teeth for chewing, a tail for swimming, and warm fur for winter. What did God give *you*?
- **Craft follow-up:** Build a mini dam and lodge from twigs and play dough in a baking pan, then add water.

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