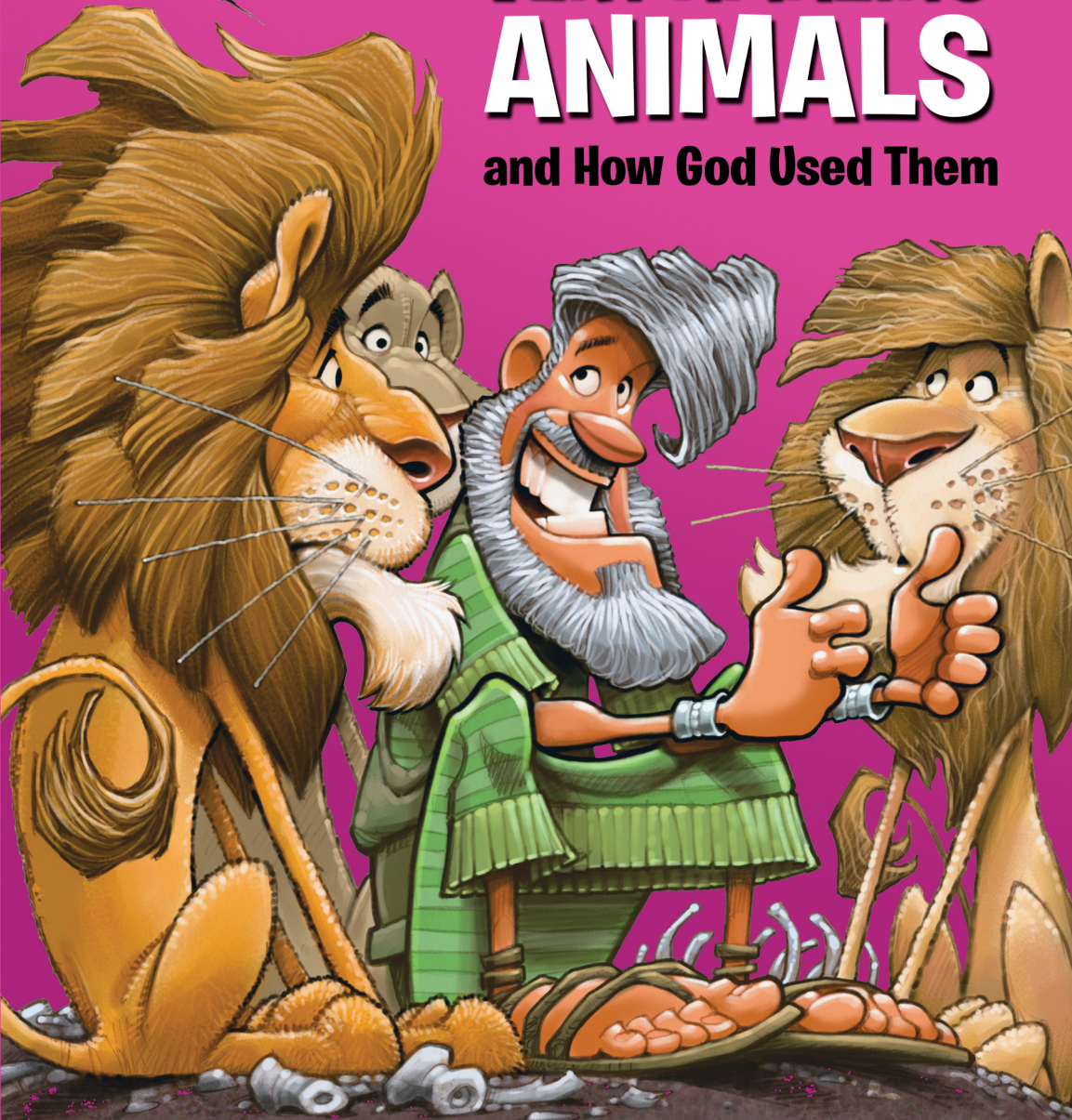


13

VERY AMAZING ANIMALS

and How God Used Them



13

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ANIMALS**
and How God Used Them

13 VERY AMAZING ANIMALS AND HOW GOD USED THEM

Published by David C Cook
4050 Lee Vance Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80918 U.S.A.

David C Cook U.K., Kingsway Communications
Eastbourne, East Sussex BN23 6NT, England

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LCCN 2017952572
ISBN 978-1-4347-1254-7
eISBN 978-0-8307-7295-7

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Cover Design/Illustration: Dennis Jones

Printed in the United States of America

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

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“And then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea. They sang: ‘Blessing and honor and glory and power belong to the one sitting on the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever.’”

Revelation 5:13

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How to Use These Sessions

About These Sessions

First, thanks. Thanks for caring about children and for helping them explore how God has used animals to make himself and his purposes known. Because God *has* done some remarkable things through his furry, fuzzy, and funny creations. A talking donkey? A fish carrying around a tax payment in its mouth? A rooster reminder that brought a grown man to his knees?

You'll help your kids explore all those events and experience powerful transformation as they link Bible truths they need with the animals they love. It's learning and delight—all rolled into one fun session.

So get ready to have some fun! You'll help change young lives and turn tender hearts toward Jesus. Soak in the laughter and see kids transformed.

What could be more fun than that?

Welcome to Easy

These sessions for elementary kids are carefully designed to make your life easy. They're light on supplies, quick to prepare, and long on fun. You'll find most supplies in the church's supply closet or kitchen or at home in your garage, pantry, or junk drawer—no need to spend time ordering materials online.

Because these sessions are created so beginning teachers or mature teenagers can lead them confidently, you won't need highly trained teachers. And the variety of options in each session will snag—and hold—the attention of first-grade through sixth-grade children, including the boys!

Best of all, you'll see kids grow in their faith as they open their hearts to what God shares with them through these 13 sessions.

Welcome to Simple Learning

Preparation is easy too. Each session, you'll focus on one key Bible truth, which children will explore and apply. You'll drive that point home through Bible exploration, fun discussions, giggle-worthy games, and "Oh, wow!" activities that engage kids in multiple ways through multiple learning styles.

Welcome to Deep Bible Discovery

Each session, your children actually *experience* a Bible truth. They'll discover it, ponder it, talk about it, pray about it, and apply what they learn. If that's what you're looking for—for your children to *do* God's Word instead of just hear it—you're in exactly the right place. And here's a tip: supersize the learning by using a kid-friendly version of the Bible to make sure the stories are understood by children.

Welcome to Flexibility

We get it: sometimes you have to punt. A sermon goes long ... or short. Kids are quick to dive into a lesson or need some time to warm up to being together. Older kids might zip through an activity while their younger friends take a little longer.

Relax. We've got you covered.

You can use these sessions with kids in practically any setting: in Sunday school, children's church, evening programs, or while kids' parents are attending an adult class or small group. There's maximum flexibility because each session is written to last 45 minutes and then provides enough extras to fill a full hour. These sessions stretch to fit exactly what you need, when you need it. They're ...

- **multi-aged**—suitable for mixed ages of elementary children;
- **easily adapted**—sessions work for just a couple kids or a packed classroom;
- **relational**—children grow close to Jesus *and* one another;
- **flexible**—brimming with options to fit varying time frames; and
- **fun**—even easily distracted kids will engage, learn, and grow.

So are you ready for some fun? Let's dive in!

How God Used

Lions

The Point: God is faithful.

Scripture Connect: Daniel 6:1–23

Supplies for all session 5 activities and options: blindfolds (1 per every 2 children), plastic cups (1 per child), marshmallows (1 per pair), Bible, stopwatch

The Basics for Leaders

Faithful. Trustworthy. Loyal. Steadfast. Dependable.

For some of your kids, there's not much of that happening.

Grown-ups in their lives make promises that aren't—or can't be—kept. They offer assurances that turn out to be meaningless.

Kids wonder who they can really trust, who won't let them down, who's really faithful.

In this session you'll help your kids discover that God is always on that list. That no matter what's happening in their lives, he's faithful to walk through it with them. To stand beside them. To lead them.

Trustworthy. That's God.

OPENING ACTIVITY—OPTION 1

TELL ME THUMBTHING

Time: about 5 minutes, depending on attendance

Supplies: none

After kids arrive, say: **When people like a movie, they sometimes give it a thumbs-up. Demonstrate. Really like the movie? Two thumbs-up. If they dislike or really dislike the movie, they give it one or two thumbs-down. Demonstrate.**

Please rate how this past week has gone for you. Was it a one or two thumbs-up week? A one or two thumbs-down week? Or maybe you'd give it one thumbs-up and one thumbs-down—it was a good *and* bad week.

Rate your week now.

After kids rate their weeks, give kids 30 seconds each to explain why they rated their weeks as they did. You'll go first, sharing a story that models the sort of brief, personal stories you hope kids will share too.

Children will express themselves more over time, and hearing their stories will help you adapt this session to make it even more relevant to your kids' lives.

OPENING ACTIVITY-OPTION 2

TUGBOAT

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: blindfolds (1 per every 2 children)

Have kids form pairs, and while one child in each pair is blindfolding the other, create an obstacle course in the room by moving chairs and other objects.

Explain that the sighted child in each pair is a tugboat—guiding his or her partner to safely navigate the obstacle course by using these signals: a tap on the right shoulder for turning right; a tap on the left shoulder for a left turn; and a tap between the shoulders for a full, immediate stop.

Say: **There's no talking, but because tugboats blow whistles, feel free to whistle. Tugboats, stand behind your friends and let's see how you do.**

After all pairs have completed the course, have kids switch roles, and while blindfolds are being applied, rearrange the course. Then have pairs make their ways back to the starting line.

After this experience have kids discuss:

- **How hard or easy was it for you not to peek? Why?**
- **How much did you trust your tugboat? Why?**

Say: It's sometimes hard to trust people. You don't believe they'll really do what they say they'll do. But you can always trust God. God is faithful—he keeps all his promises. And you can trust him to guide your steps in life because he sees things you don't see.

We'll look at how God was faithful to someone who was in a lot of trouble, but first let's play a game of Faithful Cup Catch!

Amazing Animals Game

FAITHFUL CUP CATCH

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: plastic cups (1 per child), marshmallows (1 per pair)

Ask children to form pairs. Give each child a cup and each pair a marshmallow.

Ask the oldest person in each pair to line up against the wall. Partners will face one another, standing about a foot apart.

Explain that partners will toss their marshmallow back and forth, always catching it in a cup. After the first successful catch, partners will shout, "One!" And the partner not standing against the wall will take a giant step backward. When the marshmallow is caught again, the partners will shout, "Two!" Then another step backward.

You get the idea.

When partners get to "Twelve!" they'll be far apart, and a successful catch is worthy of a victory dance.

Dropped marshmallows can be picked up and the game resumed. Perfection isn't required; faithfulness to the task is!

When most pairs have finished, ask kids to join you sitting.

Say: **Who got it right every time? You never missed a catch?**

If a pair was perfect, lead a round of applause. But point out that at 50, 100, or 1,000 steps, there would have been a fail. No one's always perfect, but we can all be faithful.

Say: **Something was faithful all through this game: gravity. Missed marshmallows all fell down—every time. We can trust gravity. It's faithful.**

There's something else—someone else—we can always trust too. Someone who's faithful, no matter what. That's what our friend Daniel discovered.

Let's join him now.

Amazing Animals Bible Story

LION LUNCH INSTANT DRAMA

Time: about 20 minutes

Supplies: Bible

In this drama there won't be any audience—only participants! Assign these roles: King, Daniel, and Lions. Clear a space in the room to be your stage.

Say: **As I read this Bible account, act out your parts with flair. Maybe a Hollywood agent is watching!**

Some background: wicked advisers of King Darius got a law passed that nobody could pray to God. But Daniel faithfully prayed, so the king—who was even a friend of Daniel's!—tossed Daniel into a den of hungry lions.

Actors, take your places!

Read aloud Daniel 6:16–23. Pause often to give actors time to act out their roles. Add details as you go, telling the lions to roar with their mouths shut, or circle left or right. Have the king toss and turn on his bed. Be creative!

When the play has ended, applaud wildly and then, together, discuss:

- **Daniel was faithful—he kept talking with God. In what ways do you show that you're faithful to God?**
- **God was faithful to Daniel, but what if God hadn't saved Daniel from the lions? Would God still be faithful?**
- **The rule said Daniel couldn't pray. He had to obey the rule or obey God. What's a rule that might make you choose between obeying God and the rule?**

Say: **God never promised to protect Daniel from the lions ... or from sickness or from breaking a tooth. God doesn't promise us those things either.**

He promises to walk with us through whatever happens, and he promises eternal life to those who love and follow Jesus.

God always keeps his promises!

CLOSING PRAYER

PAUSE PRAYER

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Ask kids to sit in different places in the room, with plenty of space between them, and to get into a non-fidgety posture. Explain that you'll lead them in a prayer that has pauses in it so they can quietly or silently talk to God about the things you bring up.

We suggest 20-second pauses, but you can adjust the timing for the age and wiring of your kids.

Pray: **God, thank you for being faithful. For always keeping your promises.**

What's a promise God has made to you in the Bible? Tell him what that promise is, and how you feel about it. (pause)

God, thank you that you help us be faithful too. Ask God how you could be more faithful to him. (pause)

God, thank you for people in our lives we can trust. Name someone you trust, and thank God for that person. (pause)

God, help us know you better and love you more deeply. If you love God, tell him why. If you don't yet love God, tell him why. (pause)

God, open our hearts to you. Amen.

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY-OPTION 1

COUNT ON ME

Time: about 10 minutes

Supplies: none

Help your kids get to know one another—and you—by taking turns filling in these blanks:

- I always ____.
- I never ____.

- I'll always say yes to ____.
- I'll always say no to ____.
- I'm always scared when I see ____.
- Something that always makes me sad is ____.
- I'm always happy when I see ____.

Share your own answers too, and ask follow-up questions when your kids share theirs.

Say: **You may think you'll never change your answers, but that might happen as you grow older. You're always happy to see kittens now; but if you develop an allergy to them, you'll be less happy around kittens.**

We do lots of changing—but God doesn't. He's the same now as he was in the past and will be in the future. That's one reason he's always faithful.

Another reason is that he loves you!

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY-OPTION 2

LION FACTS

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: none

Tell kids you'll share 10 facts about lions.

Say: **If you think what I say is true, roar. If you think I'm a lyin' lion, stay quiet.**

FACT 1: In dry places lions don't have to find water. They get enough water from eating plants and other animals. (T)

FACT 2: A group of lions is called a pack. (F—It's called a pride.)

FACT 3: Lions are bigger than tigers. (F)

FACT 4: Lions often live up to 50 years. (F—In the wild they average 12 years, in captivity up to 25 years.)

FACT 5: Lions are great swimmers. (T)

FACT 6: Lions seldom sleep. (F—They can sleep up to 22 hours per day.)

FACT 7: A lion is often called the King of the Jungle. (T)

FACT 8: King of the Jungle is an accurate name. (F—Most lions live in grasslands, not jungle.)

FACT 9: Female lions do most of the hunting. (T)

FACT 10: A male lion's roar can be heard a mile away (T and F: It can be heard up to five miles away).

Say: I'm not always trustworthy when it comes to telling you about lions. But God's always faithful when he tells us about himself—and us.

Discuss:

- What's something God has said about himself that you're glad is true?
- What's something he's said about you that you're glad is true?

EXTRA-TIME ACTIVITY-OPTION 3

SLEEPING LIONS

Time: about 5 minutes

Supplies: stopwatch

Before kids arrive, remove or cover all wall clocks.

Ask kids to sit in a circle and to stick any cell phones or watches in their pockets.

Explain that kids are now all sleeping lions who'll only be able to munch a gazelle for lunch if they leap into action at precisely the right time. You'll tell them how many seconds to let go by before they leap to their feet. Whoever is closest to the exact time gets the gazelle.

Play three rounds: 18 seconds, 41 seconds, and 77 seconds. Ask kids to sit in a circle and discuss:

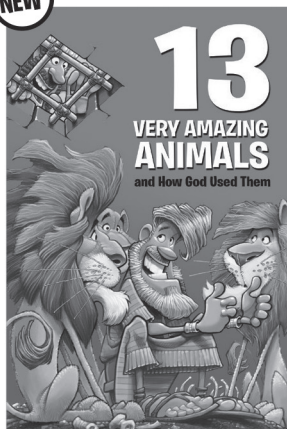
- A good watch is faithful—it always shows the right time. Some of you weren't faithful time-tellers. What got in the way?
- How is that like or unlike what gets in the way of our being faithful in other ways?

WE SERVE A BIG GOD. Show kids how big!

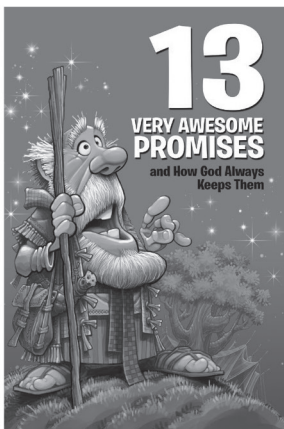
Kids will discover, think about, talk about, pray about, and apply what they learn.

Each book in this series includes 13 easy-to-lead, undated sessions to help elementary kids discover the faith-building, life-changing truths tucked into God's Word. So be sure to get them all 13 weeks of fun for \$12.99.

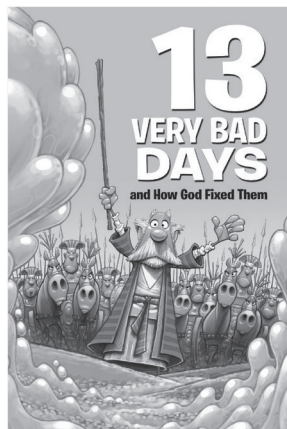
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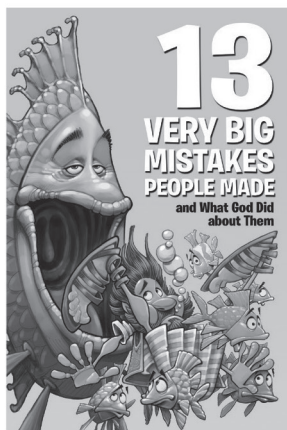
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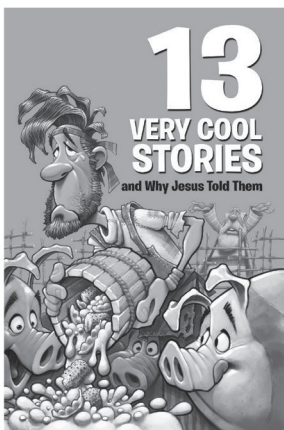
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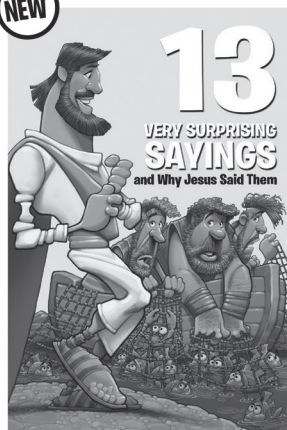


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