



Faith Adventures for Children Together



Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/FACT-how-to-sheet

Title: Proverbs 30: 24-28

Theme: Small but wise

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning? Please use this section as a reference and information guide for leaders only – we don't expect it to be read out to the children.

Fantastic Beasts Introduction

The Bible is full of a fascinating variety of stories: family dramas and heroes overcoming unlikely odds; songs and poetry; historical sagas... Not to mention some surprisingly ordinary situations described in Jesus' parables! But not all of these fabulous tales are about humans and their relationship with the God who created them – sometimes humans don't get a look in! The Bible is full of stories and songs which delight in the created world and the animals that are a part of it. We are often reminded not to underestimate animals or the wonderful world that we share with them.

Small but Wise! Introduction

This week's passage is from Proverbs, which gathers together nuggets of shared knowledge and is part of the Bible's Wisdom literature. The verses from chapter 30 encourage us to consider four very small animals that we might easily choose to overlook – and think about their unexpected skills. These animals are amazing – they are all small but surprisingly wise! There's lots to be impressed by, and lots we can learn.

While considering the rock badger – and its ability to find safe places to hide – be aware that this may be difficult for some group members. It may lead to conversations that need ongoing pastoral support or the support of your safeguarding lead.

Together – prayer and games

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend,

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family.

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN.

(two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

**Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,
adventuring together with you wherever we may go.**

Amen

Active game – Ant, Badger, Locust, Lizard.

This game reinforces the creatures mentioned in the passage from Proverbs. It is based on the game 'North, South, East, West'.

You will need:

- a large indoor area or an outdoor space where you can mark four corners or edges
- animal labels: assign each corner or wall as either 'Ant', 'rock Badger', 'Locust' or 'Lizard'.
- place a centre spot where all players begin each round

What you do:

A leader stands in the centre and calls out a creature, e.g. "Lizard!"

Players run to the corresponding corner or edge.

Continue calling creatures in random order until players are familiar with the various spaces. When everybody is used to the instructions, play the game – you could include the following variations:

- Players choose a corner while the leader's eyes are closed. The leader then calls a creature; anyone not in that area is out. Continue until one winner remains.
- Add actions like jumping, skipping, or crab-walking to the called direction.

Quieter game – Locust Drive (but you can use any of the animals from the passage – just assign dice numbers as appropriate)

You will need:

- dice (one per player or per table)
- pencils
- locust templates or score sheets
- timer or whistle (optional)

What you do:

Start with the body: Players must roll a 1 to draw the locust's body. No other parts can be drawn until the body is completed.

Draw in order: After the body, roll a 2 for the head, 6x3 for legs, 2x4 for wings, 2x5 for eyes, and 2x6 for antennae (or follow your chosen template). Each part requires the correct dice roll before it can be drawn.

Taking turns: Players roll the dice in turn, attempting to complete their locust.

Shout "Locust!": The first player to finish their ant shouts "Locust!" to end the round, or the organiser can use a fixed time limit.

Scoring: Each player scores points equal to the number of locust parts they completed. The player with the highest score at a table is considered the winner for that round.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using The Living Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Proverbs%2030%3A24-28&version=TLB>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Small and Wise Animals, by Go Go Fun Learning

https://youtu.be/hFqC3FYo4_s?si=bzle3FnsVzgKHLhF

Five-to-elevens: Proverbs 30: 24-28 - Lessons from 4 small animals, by Karen G.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/w1s00BdpDDE?si=BWhf0TFbNBIANzFs>

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: If I were a butterfly by Brian M. Howard, sung by Allstars Kids Club

<https://youtu.be/A9M5zIX5h58?si=0ZDHJubUw-xAvUN0>

Five-to-elevens: All Things Bright and Beautiful, by Clovercroft Kids

<https://youtu.be/BgEa46iTZXm?si=M3sNWBDnqvo6-b8N>

Explore – ways into the theme

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme**Eco theology – where in nature do we learn?****Interactive idea**

Re-read the verses from Proverbs.

Just as Proverbs used ants and locusts, God can use the creatures in our gardens and parks to remind us how to live wisely. What creatures can we think about?

Below are some which can get you started. Encourage the children to think of some on their own and then think about each creature's character and what it can teach us.

Bees all have a job and work together – we all have gifts and everyone matters in the community.

A **woodlouse** likes to stay in damp, sheltered places; they curl up into a little ball to protect themselves – everyone has a safe place with God.

A **mouse** is tiny and quick. They are always alert to what is happening around them – pay attention to God's world.

A **hedgehog** curls into a ball and uses its spikes for protection – trust in God's protection.

If we were to re-write the proverb it might look like this:

- Bees teach us to work together.
- Woodlice teach us that God is my safe place.
- Mice teach us to pay attention and listen.
- Hedgehogs teach us to protect what matters.

Now create one for yourselves.



Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may

think of others too. If you are to use the modern parable, consider buying a copy or borrowing it from the library so children see the actual book and can explore the illustrations more (and support the author).



What the Ladybird Heard by Julia Donaldson and Lydia Monks (2009: Pan MacMillan) ISBN: 1529072530

Video clip by BBC Scotland: Authors Live Videos – Julia Donaldson
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/events/e58mxj/play/ah538g/p0085bl9>

"Oink!" said the cats ... With all the MOOing and HISSing and BAAAing and CLUCKing, the farmyard is full of noise. But when Hefty Hugh and Lanky Len hatch a plot to steal the fine prize cow, it's the quietest animal of all who saves the day!

- The ladybird has the quietest voice but is brilliant at coming up with a cunning plan! What other things do you think she might have heard at the farm?
- Which of your friends makes the best plans and games?
- Which tiny animal do you think is the cleverest? Why?

Talking together: How might we talk about the Bible story together?

- Why does God seem to like small, weak things?
- Can you be big and wise, instead of small and wise?
- What do you think Creation can tell us about God?

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- If you could be one of these creatures from the Bible passage, which would it be?
- Why do you think rock badgers live in the rocks?
- Where's the tallest place you've ever been?
- What would be your best hiding place?

What's in the box? (for under-fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing, "What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag?" (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- Play people or natural objects – re-tell the story from today's Bible reading, moving the pieces around to help you tell the story.
- A magnifying glass – look at different objects using the magnifying glass. How does it help you to see the object more clearly? Does the object look different?
- A book of bugs – look at a book about insects together. It could be a rhyming book, a lift-the-flap book or a story about bugs.
- Plastic cup and bug game – use a plastic bug (or picture of a bug) and hide it under one plastic cup. Place two other plastic cups (of the same shape and colour) next to it, then shuffle the cups. Can you guess which cup has the bug underneath?

- Selection of small world animals and insects – ask the group members to choose their favourite – why do they like it? Take turns hiding the animals around the room so that the rest of the group can find them.
- A tactile cross of wood or fabric (a cross shape reminds us of Jesus. Jesus/God loves us and it's always in the box because Jesus/God always loves us!)

Express – prayer and creative activities

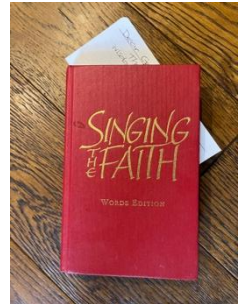
Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity

Hidden prayers

Write some prayers which will be hidden around the church for other people to find. You could put them around the church; in the Bibles; in the hymn book; under the seats or cushions; in the pulpit.

Just like the rock badgers, who hide in the rocks, sometimes our prayers can be hidden and found later to bring a blessing to others.



Spoken prayer

Zero-to-four-years

Dear God,

Thank you for the tiny creatures you made,
the ants, rock badgers, the lizards, and locusts too.
They may be small but they show us how wise you are.

Help us to learn, to work together,
and to trust you every day.

Amen.

Five-to-eleven-years

Dear God,

Thank you for all the creatures you have made.
[Spread arms wide.]

Thank you for the tiny ants,
who work hard and get ready for the future.
[Pretend to carry something heavy.]

Help us to be responsible
and do our best each day.
[Give a thumbs up.]

Thank you for the rock badgers,
who know where to find safety.
[Make a roof shape over your head with your hands.]

Help us to remember that you are our safe place
when we are worried or afraid.
[Cross arms over chest.]

Thank you for the locusts,
who work together even without a leader.
[Link arms with the people next to you or hold hands out to the sides.]

Help us to be kind friends
and good team players.
[Give a smile to someone nearby.]

Thank you for the lizard,
who can go places that seem impossible.
[Stretch hands up high.]

Help us to be brave,
to keep trying,
and to trust you when things are difficult.
[Clench fists and then open hands.]

Thank you, God,
that even the smallest creatures can teach us big lessons.
[Hold finger and thumb close together.]

Help us to be wise,
to work together,
and to trust you every day.

Amen.
[Bring hands together.]

Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond.

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage the children to use what they've got to hand in their response. However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.

Bug Hotel

You will need:

- a small wooden pallet or a terracotta pot, or ask someone to make a small simple frame for your hotel
- dead wood and loose bark
- pinecones
- bamboo
- stones
- corrugated cardboard

What you do:

Design and build a bug hotel for your local bugs. This can take any shape you like.

Fill the frame with different items. If you have more than one space put in different things.

Place it outside for the bugs to move into. We can learn so much from the minibeasts in our area. I wonder what they are teaching us today?



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

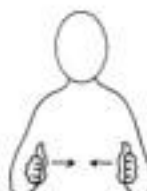
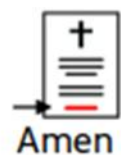
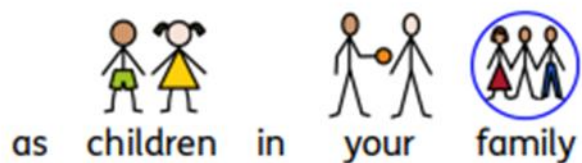
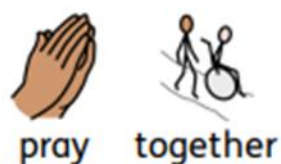
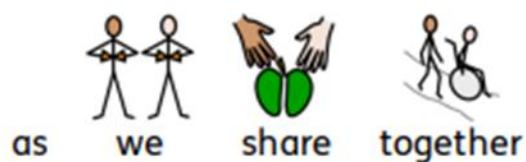
- Talk to someone older or younger than you and ask them to tell you when they have been around someone wise.
- Look around where you live and do a small bug count. I wonder how many different ones you will find? If you are fortunate, you may find some new ones.

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of the **rock badgers** with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing **sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk**

Please join the Faith Adventures Facebook Group **bit.ly/FACT_FB**

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **more fantastic beasts of the Bible**



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever . Amen

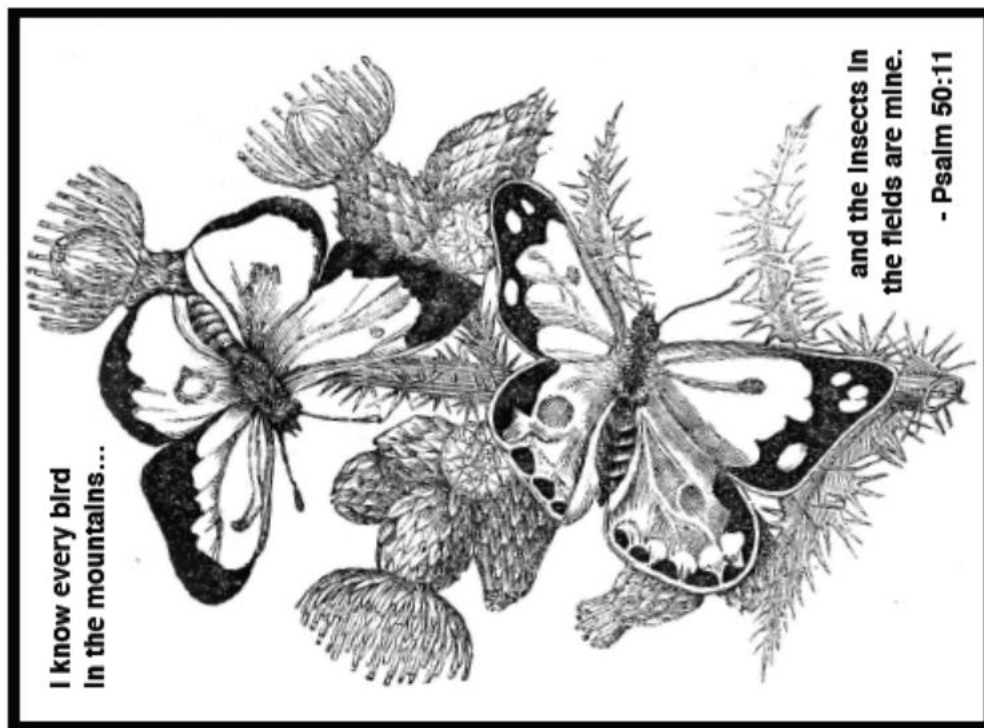


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