



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: Revelation 4: 6-11

Theme: All creatures praise God

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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.

Welcome to our final week of looking at 'Fantastic Beasts'. Today we will be exploring some of the beasts mentioned in the book of Revelation.

The book of Revelation is the final book of the Bible. It was written by John while he was in exile on the island of Patmos, at a time when Christians were facing persecution and uncertainty.

Rather than being a book designed to frighten us with predictions of the future, Revelation is a book of hope. Through vivid pictures, symbols and visions, it reminds us that, whatever happens in the world, God is on the throne and will ultimately bring about his purposes.

Our reading today, Revelation 4: 6–11, takes us into John's vision of heaven. There he sees God's throne surrounded by four extraordinary living creatures – each unlike anything we normally encounter. They are full of eyes and have the appearance of a lion, an ox, a human being and an eagle. These fantastic creatures remind us that God's creation is far more wonderful and mysterious than our everyday experience. John is trying to describe something beyond ordinary human language, so he uses rich, visual symbols to communicate what he has seen.

The creatures never stop praising God, declaring, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty." Their worship is joined by twenty-four elders, who bow before God and proclaim that God is worthy because he created all things. Everything that exists – from the smallest insect to the vast galaxies – owes its life to God. All creation belongs to God, and all creation is invited to praise God.

We will also be inviting your group to explore the passage using *Lectio Visio*, meaning "visual reading". *Lectio Visio* encourages us not simply to analyse a Bible passage but to enter into it with our imagination. We notice the colours, sounds, movement and emotions of the scene. We allow the images to speak to our hearts as well as our minds, asking what God might be revealing through the vision.

Today, as we listen to John's extraordinary description of heaven, we are invited to picture the scene, join the song of creation, and remember that the God who made all things is worthy of all praise.

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 – Build a creature

You will need:

- building blocks such as Lego

What you do:

Ask those gathered to build an animal with the resources provided. If you think your group will cope, at a certain point relevant to the progress being made on the creatures being built, ask that everyone moves to the left and take over building what was being created by the person before.

Draw a creature

You will need:

- sheets of paper A5
- pencils or felt tip pens

What you do:

Hand everyone a sheet of paper, ask them to fold it into three widthways. Then ask everyone to draw a head onto the top section of the paper. When this has been completed ask them to fold the head image backwards and hand to the person on their right, for them to add the body. Repeat so that the legs can be drawn, then pass on one final time to reveal the fantastic creature you have co-created together.

Quieter game – i-SPY

The passage today speaks of a creature with many eyes; this is a perfect opportunity to play i-SPY.

Play i-SPY – try to impress upon younger children that the item they choose needs to be seen by everyone in the room and they might need help selecting the right starting letter.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

For this story we recommend using the New Living Translation

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=revelation%204%3A%206%20-%2011&version=NLT>

Where can I find the story online?

Under-fives: Revelation 4: 1,1 by CBC Henderson Kidmin

<https://youtu.be/pv1kw-T1ywU?si=HxAZqcBc0K7eg1SH>

Five-to-elevens: Revelation 4 – a visual representation by @tryminimalife

<https://youtube.com/shorts/2skN03XbUNk?si=JWCwGxDj2xpce0CC>

Songs to support the story

Under-fives: Open the Eyes of My Heart, by Shout Praises Kids

<https://youtu.be/KmpmwStmsWA?si=mtqVQ-TQrqVNoguw>

Five-to-elevens: Santo, Santo, Santo, by Chorus pro Musica

<https://youtu.be/GjwuSPtuVng?si=5E7y9qUYiGcOsT0c>

Explore – ways into the theme

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

A new way to explore the theme

Lectio Visio method

This is an ancient method that is useful for visual or creative, imaginative learners. It combines the practices of *Lectio Divina* (divine reading) and *Visio Divina* (divine seeing) to deepen our spiritual reflection through both scripture and visual imagery.

Basically, it's using images alongside Bible passages to enable people to explore God and the Bible.

Children can respond well to the method and we encourage you to give it a go.

You will need some printed images of this passage in Revelation. Here are a few links to some you can use.

https://bible.art/gallery/revelation-4#google_vignette

<https://readingacts.com/2018/04/13/who-are-the-24-elders-in-revelation-4/>

Explain that God showed John glimpses of what heaven could be like and John wrote them down in the book we call Revelation. The word "revelation" means to show or tell someone an unknown or surprising fact that no one else knows.

In this passage, John tells us about four fabulous creatures that are stood around the throne in heaven and they are praising God all day and all night.

The description is quite detailed. I wonder what it would actually look like.

Some artists have tried to bring the descriptions to life.

Read the passage out slowly as the children look at the images provided.

You might want to do this a few times. After each telling you could ask what the children noticed or what stood out for them.

Have a chat about which images the group think most reflect the description in the passages and why.

Encourage the children to wonder about these fabulous creatures, using the wondering questions in this session.

Create your own

Provide as many different materials as possible: junk modelling, Lego, drawing and painting materials, clay, Play-Doh etc. Ask the children to have a go at creating either their own versions of the creatures in the passage, or their own fabulous creature praising God in heaven.

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).



Lily Takes a Walk by Satoshi Kitamura (2023: Scallywag Press)

You can find a reading of this book online by searching for the title of the book and the author.

In the story, Lily goes for a walk with her dog, Nicky. Lily enjoys going shopping and pointing out all the things she usually sees on their walk together. Nicky, Lily's dog, has a different perspective about their walk. Nicky uses her imagination to look and see things differently. Some things Nicky sees she looks surprised about or maybe scared.

- I wonder if you think the things Lily encounters on her walk are scary or funny

In Revelation, John describes fantastical animals when he writes about his vision of heaven. This story encourages us to use our eyes and imagination to notice things afresh in our everyday lives. Encourage the children to see and dream bigger and differently, just as John did.

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

- Were the animals originally meant to look like those in the reading?
- Is this what heaven is like, or just a dream?
- I wonder which creature you would want to be

Wondering: ways to reflect on the theme

- I wonder if animals go to heaven
- I wonder why the creatures have so many eyes
- I wonder how each creature praises God

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:

- Googly eyes and/or eyes drawn on sticky labels.
- Toys such as a teddy bear, dinosaur, bird etc.
In the Revelation passage, John describes creatures that have many eyes. Give out googly or sticky eyes to the children and encourage them to stick multiple eyes on to the toys in the box, or on to other toys available in your church space. Have fun.
- Shiny, sparkly material. At the start of the passage, John describes that in front of the throne there "was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal". Encourage the group to hold the fabric together and move it up and down to make it wobble like waves on the sea. Imagine what it might have been like to have been there in the story. Ask the children if they have ever been near water, perhaps the sea or a lake; did they notice it sparkling?
- Card or paper crowns. Have enough crowns in the box for everyone to wear one. Alternatively, pass the crown round for everyone to try it on.
- Instruments, such as shakers, tambourines. Ask the children to take off their crowns and put them together in the middle. Then pass round musical instruments, such as shakers and tambourines, and sing a simple song of praise to God.
- 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!)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc.)

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Prayerful activity – Laying down your crowns

Create some crowns

Fold a piece of paper or card in half lengthwise. Along the folded edge, cut triangles to make crown points.

On the inside to the card, you could write some prayers which can be written down before you tape or staple the ends together to make a crown.

Or you could simply tape or staple the ends together to make a crown.



Encourage each child to say this prayer as they lay down their prayer:

"Lord God, you are worthy of glory, honour, and power."

Have a cross in the centre, and as the children lay down around the cross, play a song like King of Kings – Hillsong Kids

Spoken prayer

This prayer encourages the group to use their bodies – and their voices – to worship God, like the humans and animals in the Bible passage. Once everyone is in their position, the leader will lead the prayer, and the group will join in with their chosen words. During each section the leader should model the correct volume for the section.

- *Kneel down or stretch flat*
- *Think of a word to whisper that describes how special God is*

Dear God,

We love you!

You are...

Amen

- *Sit up*
- *Think of a beautiful creature to thank God for making*

Dear God,

We love you!

Thank you for making...

Amen!

- *Stand up and stretch – or jump up and down!*
- *Think of a word to describe God's creation – to shout loudly*

Dear God,

We love you!

Your creation is...

Amen!

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 them 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.

Blow Monsters <https://youtube.com/shorts/6grdFYDQAhg?si=mak35OpqSVp3WgL6>

You will need:

- white cardstock or thick paper
- watered-down washable paint
- droppers or pipettes
- drinking straws
- googly eyes
- paper towels

What you do:

Place three to five drops of watered-down paint near the center of the paper. You can use more than one colour.

Hold a straw just above the paint and blow through it to spread the paint in different directions.

If you need to, add more drops, and continue blowing until an even more fantastic monster appears.

Allow the artwork to dry completely. Then add some googly eyes (or you could draw in the eyes). Maybe add lots of eyes to reflect the creatures in the story today.

With a black marker, draw a mouth and any other features.

I wonder what name you will give to your creature.



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 how they praise God
- Could you stick some googly eyes to things in your house and on your items?



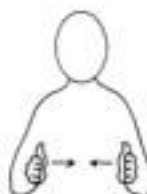
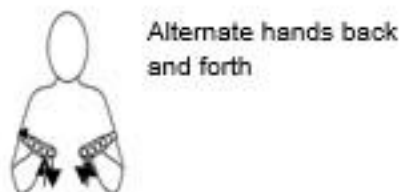
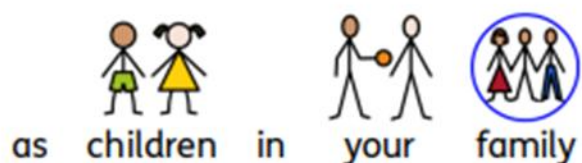
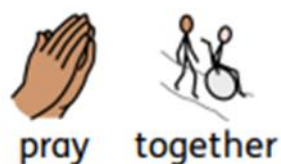
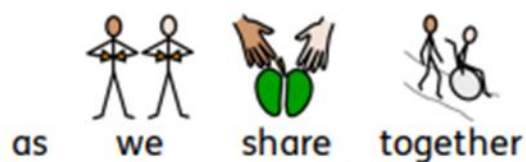
We hope you enjoyed exploring the story of **Revelation** with us.

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 **God provides**





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.

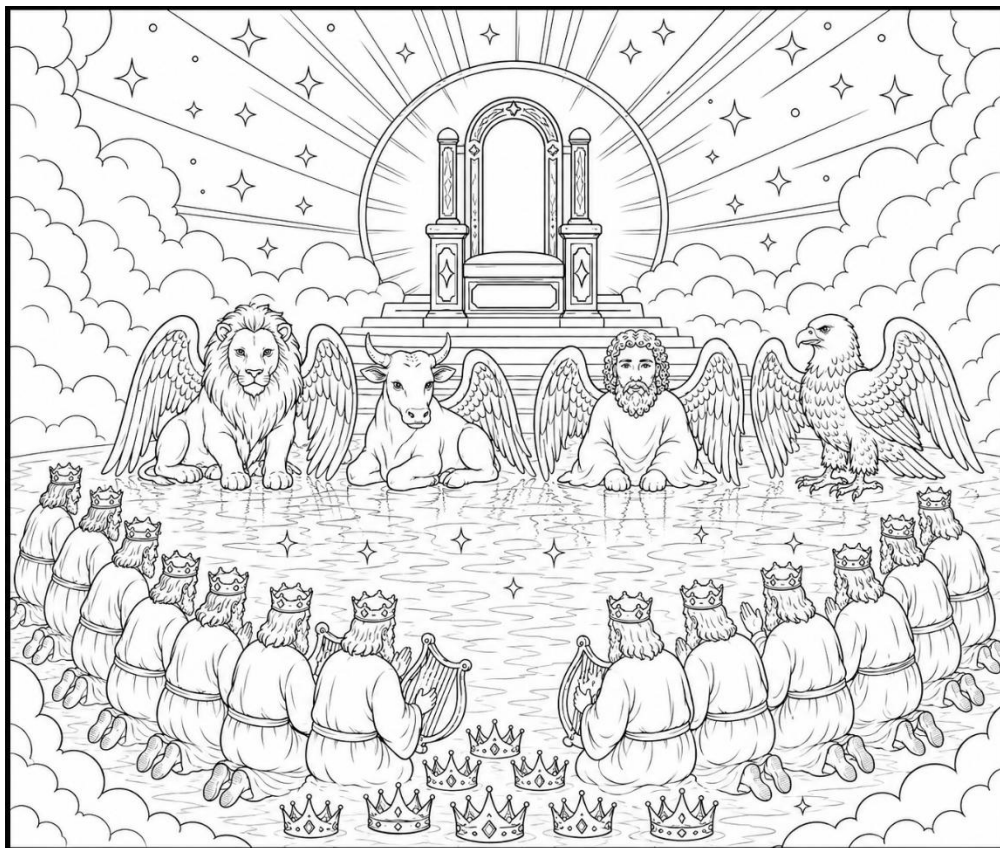
Give us this day our daily bread

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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