



Faith Adventures Youth Resource



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

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home 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/How-To-FAYR

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

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen.

Alternatively, you may join with the widgeit prayer found in Faith Adventures: Children Together, or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

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 – you could extend this game by asking those gathered if they can see other outlines in the things that they can see, e.g. the curtain hanging looks like a face or the shadow looks like a dog etc., so “i-SPY with my little eye, something that looks like...”

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Revelation 4: 6-11 in The Living Translation

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

⁶ In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal.

In the centre and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. ⁷ The first of these living beings was like a lion; the second was like an ox; the third had a human face; and the fourth was like an eagle in flight. ⁸ Each of these living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered all over with eyes, inside and out. Day after day and night after night they keep on saying,

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty –
the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come."

⁹ Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever), ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down and worship the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever). And they lay their crowns before the throne and say,

¹¹ "You are worthy, O Lord our God,
to receive glory and honor and power.
For you created all things,
and they exist because you created what you pleased."

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You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

Watch: God's Story – Books of the Bible – Revelation, by Crossroads Kids' Club
<https://youtu.be/zhcIJDwNXM?si=kM6cgdG2bPAZH4OV>

This video offers some context about the book of Revelation

Questions for discussion

- What did you find most surprising/interesting about Revelation?

Explore

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

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the Explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

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

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them (2016)

<https://youtu.be/XaWY4qQpgLE?si=jZIDeU099zVxCSBY>

As we reflect on the fantastic beasts described in this passage, it seems suitable to use a clip from *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, adapted from the book written by J K Rowling

Produced by: David Heyman, J. K. Rowling, Steve Kloves, Lionel

Wigram, Tim Lewis, filmed at Warner Brother Studios. Rated 12A

In this clip, Newt Scamander brings Jacob into his enchanted suitcase, where Jacob comes face to face with scary looking creatures, but are they all scary? The clip is 9 mins 25 seconds long but could be stopped after 3:51.

Group discussion

- Is this what heaven is like, or is it just a metaphorical idea?
- I wonder why the elders took off their crowns and placed them before the throne

Personal reflection

- Were all the elders old?
- What might we place down (like a crown) to praise God
- I wonder where Jesus and the Holy Spirit are

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

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

Prayers Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively, use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively, light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Spoken Prayer

Creator God,
Full of wisdom and mystery,
All creation sings to you!
From the smallest fish
Hidden in the depths,
To kings of the sky
As they soar and swoop.

Holy God,
Full of wisdom and mystery,
We praise you!
In all the words we say

And all the songs we sing,
In all the kindness we share,
And in our actions that are full of hope and peace.

Awesome God,
Full of wisdom and mystery,
You are Holy!
The whole of creation serenades you with songs of praise:
You are the one who was,
Who is,
And who is to come...
Amen.

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

The creatures described in the Revelation passage sound very fantastical don't they, but did you know that a snail has four noses, a spider eight eyes, Luna moths do not have a mouth, and that some sharks have 15 rows of teeth!

There are new species being discovered all the time. Could you each spend a few minutes finding out about one and then describing it back to your group. To make it fun you could describe the way it looks and invite everyone to draw what you describe – then compare people's drawings to the creatures. Whose was closest?

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/new-species.html>

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting, and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **I wonder how you praise God.**
- Research something suggested by JPIT Resources (jpit.uk) or *Commitment for Life* (cforl.co.uk)
- Have some fun sticking googly eyes in unexpected places – see how long it takes for people to notice! Be mindful of sticking them to things which belong to other people.

Thank you for exploring the **Revelation** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB

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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