

Session 15

Ants, hyraxes, locusts and lizards

Text: Proverbs 30:24-28

Supplies:

- ⊗ Paper to write animal names on / Printed pictures of animals
- ⊗ Pens/pencils
- ⊗ A copy of the insect or animal puzzle per child or group (already cut in pieces)
- ⊗ Colouring pencils or crayons for the puzzle when complete
- ⊗ A plastic insect such as an ant or even a beetle to add to the sensory bottle
- ⊗ Sand box
- ⊗ Different plastic animals and insects or pictures of the animals and insects: ants, hyraxes, locusts and lizards
- ⊗ Sticks and leaves
- ⊗ Plastic spoons (2 per child)
- ⊗ Pipe cleaners (3 per child)
- ⊗ Eyes or beads (2 per child)
- ⊗ White paper
- ⊗ Pipe cleaners
- ⊗ Inkpad

WELCOME

Divide the children into 5 groups (if possible). Write down five names of animals, or have five printed images of animals, folded and placed in a hat or bag. Let a volunteer from each group come and take a piece of paper from the hat/bag, and then let each child try to describe their animal without using any words or speaking. Their group must try to guess the animal. (If you have a small group of children, let each child do it with the entire group.)

WORSHIP

Song: Nothing's too big, big, big – Doug Horley

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8bsEggn344> (song)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yobo6DvV9Z8> (movements)

Theme song:

The children sit with eyes closed and sing “Trust in the Lord”. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPZJtZzQBB0>).

Settle down ritual:

Pass the sensory bottle around while the children say Psalms 23:1-3: “The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name’s sake.”

WORD

(Beforehand, bury plastic toys of the 4 animals, or pictures of the 4 animals, in the sand box.)

We just played a fun game where you had to guess what animals your friends were acting like. I wonder what animal you would be if you could choose? *(Give the children a chance to react, and then ask them why they chose that animal. If you have a large*

group, ask just a few of the children.)

Mention some animals as examples:

Lion – biggest predator in Africa

Elephant – mightiest of all animals

Hippo – most dangerous mammal

The book of Proverbs in the Bible is a collection of many thoughts and sayings that help us to have wisdom for our lives. Does anyone know what wisdom is, or what it means to be wise? Yes, to be wise means to understand how things work, to make good decisions, or to see things for what they really are.

Here, in Proverbs 30, we see four wise animals, that help us to understand what wisdom is. They are four animals that we might not have seen otherwise. Maybe we would step on them by mistake, or think they are gross, but here we can see that we can learn something from them.

Which four animals do you think have the most wisdom? *(Give the children a chance to react.)* Well, all four these animals can be found among sand and stone. They are all buried in this sandbox, and you can all help to find them.

Call up 4 children to help find the animals in the sand box. *(If you can't have a sand box, simply show large images or toys of the animals to the group.)*

Read Proverbs 30:24-28 to the children:

“Four things on earth are small, yet they are extremely wise: ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer; hyraxes are creatures of little power, yet they make their home in the crags; locusts have no king, yet they advance together in ranks; a lizard can be caught with the hand, yet it is found in kings’ palaces.”

Here are more facts about these four animals:

Ants:

The Bible says that an ant isn't very strong, but it is still clever enough to store food away in the summer so that they have enough to eat in the winter when there is less food. They are incredibly ordered, they rely on each other completely and they are social. They act according to instinct. Females, specifically the queens, are very large, while males are very small. Some worker ants have a preference for a specific type of work and become specialists in that field, while others often change the work they do.

Hyrax (also called a Dassie in South Africa):

The Bible says that a hyrax is not very strong, and that it is a very small animal, but that it makes its home up in the mountains where it is actually dangerous. It is actually very clever, because it is safe there where few dangerous animals can get to it to catch or eat it. There are lots of places to hide away in the mountains and rocks. Dassies have short legs, a thick layer of fur, and are round with a very short tail. They are about the same size as a house cat. From far away, they can look like rabbits. They don't have very good internal temperature control, which is why they often sit in the sun and group together to stay warm

Locust:

The Bible says that the locust doesn't have a king. They don't have leaders to tell them what to do or where to go, but they still manage to stay together in a nice big group. They are small and weak alone, but if they stick together, they are strong and can do many things. Locusts that fly in swarms are called migratory locusts. Large swarms of locusts can destroy crops. Some have bright colours all over them to warn predators that they are poisonous. In many places all over the world, people eat locusts. They are a good source of protein. Soldiers are often told to catch and eat locusts if they ever get lost or if their food supplies run out.

Lizard:

The Bible says that you can catch a lizard with your hands. You may try to throw it out of your house, but it could find its way

back in. Lizards are even found in the palaces of kings. If you want to live in a palace, you have to be rich or a queen or king, but not a lizard. Lizards are so small, and seem so insignificant, but they can even live in palaces.

Geckos are the only lizards which make a noise. They can chirp or even bark, but the tropical gecko only makes a ticking sound. Geckos and lizards can see very well. Many are night animals that only get active when the sun goes down. They don't mind electric lights, because lights can attract mosquitos and flies, which they then can eat.

We have so much to learn from these small animals. I think the most important is what is written in Proverbs 1:7, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge," which means that wisdom begins by simply knowing who God is. God made these small animals so clever, because they all know they are small! We are also just small people, but God will give us wisdom, like he gave to these animals, if we just know Him and ask Him for wisdom!

That doesn't mean we don't have to learn for our tests or exams, but that we can know what the right thing to do is, like learning hard for a test.

Wisdom is to know what, how and when to do what God thinks is good and right. This could mean knowing when to share food with a friend at school, or talking to someone who seems sad so that they have a friend and can feel better.

We may be young or small, like these 4 animals, but God can use us in clever ways, just like the ants, the locusts, the hyraxes/dassies, or the lizards.

The children now get a chance to think about the story:

1. I wonder which of the four small animals you would want to be.
2. I wonder what you learnt from these small animals.
3. If you could choose between wisdom and lots of money and toys, I wonder what you would choose.
4. I wonder what you have done for someone else that God helped you to do.

WORKING AND PLAYING TIME

- ◆ **Animal puzzle:** This activity can happen in groups or individually. Give each group/child an animal or insect puzzle (preferably different pictures), which have already been cut into pieces. Each child/group can complete the puzzle and then say what animal is portrayed by their puzzle. Afterwards, the puzzles can be coloured in and decorated.
- ◆ **Give the children an opportunity to play in the sand box with different toy insects and animals.** Use the sticks and leaves to build houses (a habitat) for the insects and/or animals.
- ◆ **Plastic ants:** Give each child 2 plastic spoons. Turn the spoons top-to-toe to each other. Wind some pipe cleaners around the spoon handle. (Leave some room for the feet.) Stick 2 eyes to the "front" of the insect.
- ◆ **Cardboard ants:** Copy the pattern of the ant onto cardboard, cut them out and punch all the holes. Stick the pipe cleaners through the holes to make the legs. Add eyes to the head of the ant.
- ◆ **Give each child an opportunity to use the inkpad and make impressions on a piece of paper with their fingerprints, to form some ants or other insects.**

Finish off with the prayer of blessing.





