



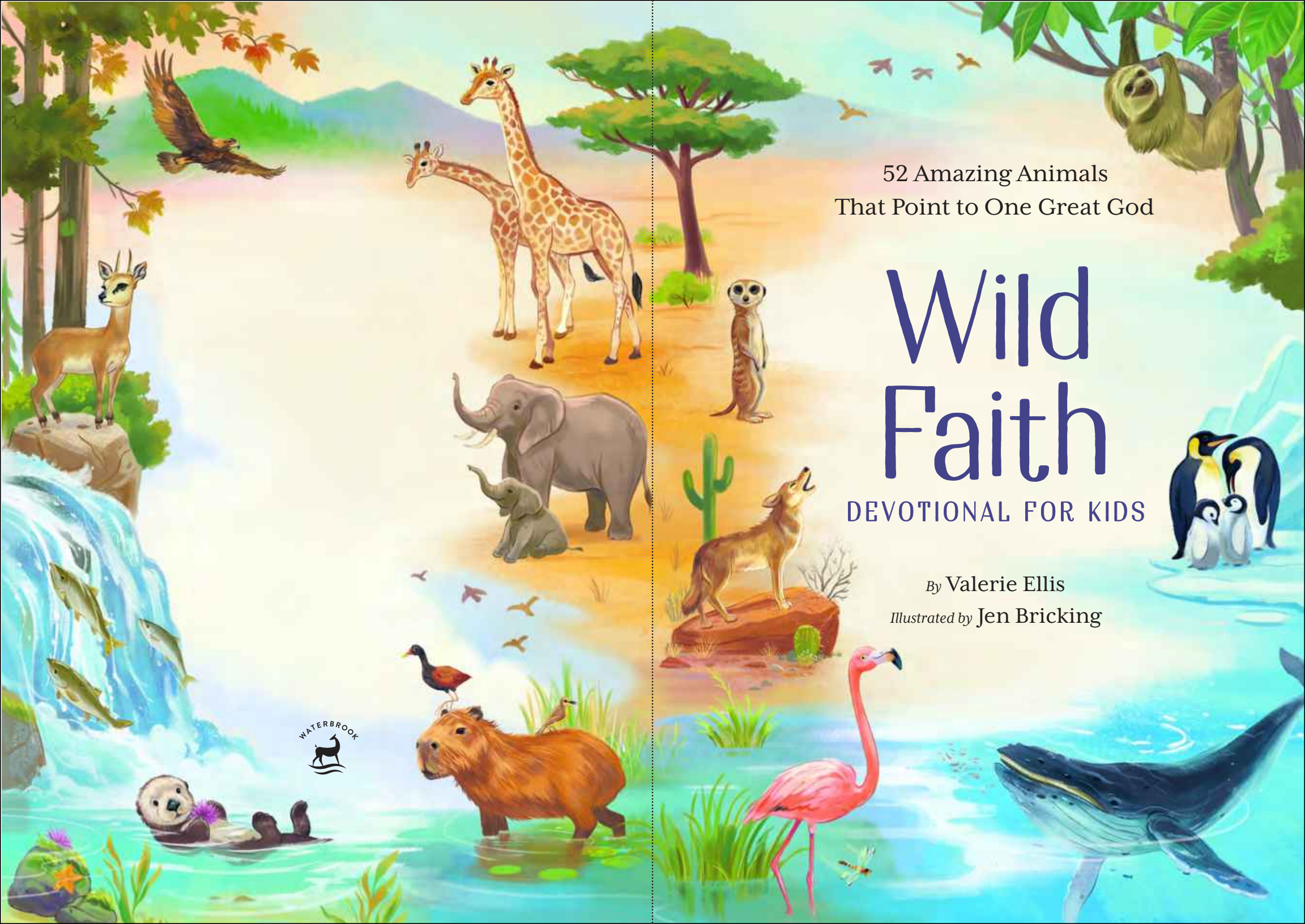
# Wild Faith

DEVOTIONAL FOR KIDS

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52 Amazing Animals That  
Point to One Great God



BY Valerie Ellis • ILLUSTRATED BY Jen Bricking



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# WELCOME TO Wild Faith



The heavens proclaim the glory of God.  
The skies display his craftsmanship.  
Day after day they continue to speak;  
night after night they make him known.  
They speak without a sound or word;  
their voice is never heard.  
Yet their message has gone throughout the earth,  
and their words to all the world.

—PSALM 19:1-4, NLT

God created the world. And though creation can never fully express the wonders of the Lord, sometimes examples from nature can make God's truth come alive to us.

This is why I've gathered fifty-two amazing animals for you to explore and learn from. I loved digging into the research, and I hope that with each animal, you'll not only marvel at how awesome God is but also discover more about the incredible life He invites you to! Saying "yes" to God is always comfortable and easy, but it's absolutely

In this devotional, each animal gives you a chance to understand God more and grow in your love for Him. You'll increase your knowledge of Scripture through key verses. You'll also be encouraged to "Make It Stick" and "Live It Out" through interactive reflections, questions, prayers, and more.

As you read, I want you to remember two important things. They may seem like opposites, but I promise they work together to help us grow.

1. As hard as we may try, we need God's help to live lives that please Him. He knows we can't be perfect, and He never meant for us to do it on our own. He wants us to rely on His grace and strength for every step.
2. God is always there to guide, and He won't want us to do anything. In fact, He has planned for us to follow His ways, follow His direction, and follow His lead.

It's not all of the time, but I want you to know that He is always with you, and He is always listening to you.

So whether you are blind or sighted, whether you are deaf or hearing, whenever you need some inspiration, I encourage you to call on our faithful God, who calls us to a good path and is with us every step of the way. As you encounter these fifty-two awesome animals, may you always see God's creativity, seek Him with all your heart, and experience His love for you.

Valerie



# Saying “Yes” to God’s Best Gift

It’s fascinating to see God’s creativity in everything He made: daisies, dirt, stars, snakes, honeybees, humpback whales, and you!

But one way God set humans apart is by making us in His own image. We are created to reflect His character.

God said, “Let us make human beings in our image,  
to be like us.”

—GENESIS 1:26, NLT

And one incredible part of being made in God’s image is that God wants us to have a special relationship with Him.

You see, humans are designed to experience God’s amazing love and follow His life-giving ways. But starting with the first two humans ever created, people decided to ignore His plan. They wanted to do things their own way instead of honoring and obeying Him. That choice is

called sin, and when sin came into the world, it caused all kinds of sadness and brokenness. Creation no longer worked perfectly. People stopped living peacefully. And most importantly, sin harmed the special relationship between people and God.

To this day, we see the effects of sin in the world around us and in our own hearts. We all think and act in ways that don’t please God.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

—ROMANS 3:23, CSB

But here’s the good news: Sin doesn’t mean God’s love. He still wants to be close to us.

We know we need to be rescued from the ways of sin. But He also knows that we can’t do enough good things to rescue the people from our sinfulness, so He came to earth as a man.

God sent His only Son, Jesus, to die for us and bring us back to life.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

—ROMANS 6:23, CSB

Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He grew up, lived a perfect life, and shared it with people just like us. He taught, healed, and lived for us. He died for us and



Then Jesus died on the cross.

But that wasn't the end. After three days, Jesus rose to life again! He died for our sins to bring us back to God. He rose again to give us new life and show that sin and death are defeated. His victory gives us hope that one day everything will be restored to God's perfect design. Nothing can stop God! Nothing can change His love for us!

God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

—JOHN 3:16, CSB

We are still waiting for the day when Jesus will return and everything will work perfectly again. But we don't have to wait to enjoy a special relationship with God.

Do you believe that God is the king of everything and that life works best when people love Him and follow His ways? Do you recognize that sometimes you don't choose to follow God's ways and that you need His forgiveness? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to provide the way back to a wonderful relationship with God? Do you want to trust Jesus and follow Him as the Lord of your life?

Then you can start this life-changing relationship now. Talk with God about your responses to the questions you just read. Thank Him for His love and for His free gift of forgiveness and rescue through Jesus. Tell God you want to know Him and live for Him.

If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

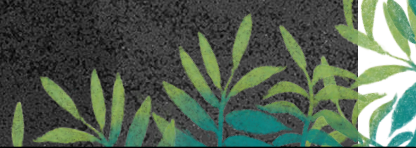
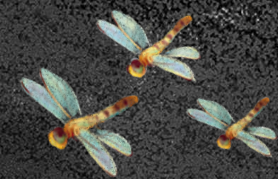
—ROMANS 10:9, CSB

Jesus promised that all who trust in Him have eternal life. And He is preparing a perfect home for us where we can live with Him forever. But eternal life starts now! With the help of God's Holy Spirit, we can find joy and purpose as we follow Jesus and try to live according to God's design. We won't be perfect, but we can always count on the Lord's grace and power to help us.

You are saved by grace through faith, and not from yourselves. It is God's gift—not from anything you can boast. For we are His workmanship in Christ Jesus, for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

—EPAULETTA

If you made the decision to follow Jesus, God will help you on your journey. He will send you a Holy Spirit, and He will help you on your journey.



# Huddling Heroes

## EMPEROR PENGUIN

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

—HEBREWS 10:24-25, NLT

Emperor penguins are well known for the icy conditions they face in Antarctica. By standing very close together, they share body heat. The longer they stay together, the warmer their group becomes. In fact, the air temperature inside an emperor-penguin huddle can reach up to 99 degrees Fahrenheit, which is 157 degrees warmer than the outside air! God gave them a great way to stay warm—being with one another!

No matter what climate we live in, God wants us believers in Jesus to practice the same principle: Stand together and care for one another.

The world we face doesn't operate like God's very good kingdom. It can be harsh, cold, and unkind. But when Christians gather to encourage, teach, and help one another, it can be like the warmth of a cozy blanket or the protection of a penguin huddle.

Emperor penguins do another fascinating thing when they huddle: They shift around and take turns. Sometimes they're closer to the center—the warmest place—and sometimes they're closer to the edge—the coldest place.



There will be times when we struggle. Like penguins in the center of the huddle, we can surround ourselves with supportive people. Other times, God may be equipping us with the strength to stand in a colder place so we can provide more help and warmth to those who need it.

That's the beauty of God's design. He enables us to care and be cared for.



### **Make It Stick**

*Clasp your hands so all your fingers are warming one another up. Since you're now also in a great prayer pose, thank God for the support of others.*

### **Live It Out**

*How can you provide warmth to others this week? Or do you need support right now? Look for ways to give and receive encouragement.*

### **Fun Fact**

Emperor penguins have sharp claws to grip the slippery ice. But sometimes they use their bellies to slide on it, like sleds on snow.

# Packed with Power

## PEACOCK MANTIS SHRIMP

Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.

—1 TIMOTHY 4:12



The colorful peacock mantis shrimp is small. But its powerful punch can bust open crab shells and even break an aquarium's glass—all at a speed that's fifty times faster than we can blink!

A mind-blowing punch isn't the only amazing talent of the peacock mantis shrimp. Its eyes can move in different directions, allowing it to take in two views at once. Plus, it can see a special type of light that spirals. And scientists believe it may be the only animal that can!

It's quite incredible that God put all these abilities in such a tiny package. Did you know that He did a similar thing when He made you?

That's right! God placed special gifts and talents inside you. He planned good ways you can make a difference. And you don't have to be grown-up to start!

Take Timothy from the Bible as an example. Some people thought he was too young to make a difference. But Paul said Timothy's age didn't matter. He could not only live for God but also be an example to other believers.



Maybe you love to draw, sing, garden, or make people laugh. Maybe you're good at noticing things in nature or sharing kind words. Each amazing attribute God gave you can become a way to help and encourage others. Just like He packed the tiny peacock mantis shrimp with some big abilities, He has placed wonderful gifts inside you. And He put you in just the right spot to start making a difference.



God can make you an inspiration to others and an example of His grace, whatever your age or size. Ask Him to help you live so that others see His power in you.

### Fun Fact

Peacock mantis shrimp are actually *not* shrimp. They're also not peacocks or mantises. They're stomatopods!

**Make It Stick** } Grab a sheet of paper (or use the blank space below) and draw a picture of yourself. Then around your drawing, write or draw some of the gifts and talents God has planted inside you.

**Live It Out** } Read our key verse (1 TIMOTHY 4:12) and circle one way you want to be an example this week: in how you talk, in how you act, in how you love others . . . There are so many ways to live for God!