

Chapel

Bless the Animals

ORDER AND PRAYER

Get ready

- pre – recorded music and list of when to play
- wheel barrow
- lectern
- hand free radio mic and hand held radio mic
- candle and lighter
- clock
- picture of Psalm 49

1. All seated.
2. Candle – name of Father Creator, Son the walking image and personality of God, and Holy Spirit the breath of the living God, the power of wonder, and life within all things.
3. Introduction of theme.

Welcome

What in the world is 'blessing the animals?'

- Has the school gone all fuzzy wuzzy and now wants to have animals wandering around instead of teachers?
 - Perhaps they have, and maybe a gorilla will one day wear a Tatachilla name tag and be teaching maths.
 - Or you maybe PE will be run by a meerkat.
 - Or a giraffe might eventually rise to become the principal of the school.
 - But not today.

No, this morning isn't just about looking at animals, but acknowledging that for many people, their pets and animals reveal something of God to them.

- Some people see God most clearly in the words of Jesus.
- Others like the words of Jesus but sense the presence of God in their feelings, in their heart, and in people.
- And others again have a strong Christian faith, but see God most clearly in nature, and particularly in animals.

The Bible mentions over 120 different animals. Often they are used to illustrate something about God or God's power – like Isaiah 49 talking about being strengthened by God and rising like an eagle with great wings.

So lets hear something of God from the Bible. I would like to invite forward 3 students to read brief passages from the bible which refer to animals.



Reader 1

God gives human beings the honour of naming the animals. In return human beings were to have responsibility for the animals. An ancient story written in Genesis chapter 2

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the domestic creatures, the livestock, the birds in the sky, and all the wild animals.

Reader 2

About 2 ½ thousand years ago King David wrote a song about how all of creation reveals and reflects the wonder of God. This is an Australian version of King David's song, called Psalm 148

All dogs and cats, large and small, loud and quiet:

Praise the Lord!

All rabbits, mice, rats, and guinea pigs:

Praise the Lord!

All goldfish, axolotls, terrapins, sea snails and swimming creatures:

Praise the Lord!

All kookaburras, magpies, sparrows, cockatoos, and singing birds:

Praise the Lord!

All wombats, possums, and sugar gliders:

Praise the Lord!

All potoroos, kangaroos, wallabies and every hopping creature

Praise the Lord!

All horses, cows, and sheep and all domestic livestock:

Praise the Lord!

All lizards, snakes, crocs and creeping things:

Praise the Lord!

All micro animals, insects, spiders and all creatures mostly hidden from human eyes

Praise the Lord!

Every animal in the sky, the sea, the forest, the rivers, the jungles, in dams, in the mud, in our fish tanks, up trees, sitting outside howling at the moon, or curled up in our laps... let's everyone say it all together:

Praise the Lord!

Reader 3

Jesus often mentioned animals as he spoke to people. He had sayings that featured camels and foxes, and told stories that featured sheep and chooks. Jesus was said to have had a little bed made for him as a baby in the feed trough of an animal. He was known to have ridden a donkey. Jesus's cousin John used to call him the 'Lamb of God' and another person referred to Jesus as the Lion of Judah.

In the bible text I am about to read Jesus uses the beauty and wonder of birds to illustrate why it is important not to worry. This text is from the book of Matthew.

Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body and what sort of clothes you will wear. Life is much more than just worrying about what we eat. And our looks are more than just what sort of clothes we might buy. Look at the birds of the air; they don't even try to plant seeds in the ground or harvest crops or worry about storing everything away in barns. Yet your heavenly Father looks after them! Aren't you much more important in the scheme of things than the birds? Can worry about all this other stuff add anything significant to your lives?"

MESSAGE (see sheet)

Ask animal owners something about their pet.

- *Eg therapy animals, odd animals,*
- *Rescued animal?*

Do circle walk for animals. Pastor call name of animal as it goes, to 'All things bright and beautiful'

Explain what a blessing is.

In the Scriptures, the act of blessing means 'the imparting of power or life.' The person performing the blessing is mediating that power from God to the person or the animal involved. To bless is more than an expression of goodwill and caring. To bless is to impart God's power or energy!

The blessing of each animal, by name, means that health, healing, and life are being mediated from God for the benefit of the animal in its relationship with its human partners.

All owners with animals now form another circle, each person placing a hand on the animal being held. The leader then moves to each animal, saying its name, holding a hand over the animal, and blessing it in the name of the Living God who fills and heals creation.

Blessing: '[Pet's name], may the power of this blessing from our God fill you with life, bind you to your human friends, and lead you to praise your Creator. Amen.'

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Prayer