



SAFARI INTO GOD'S MIRACLES AND THE ANIMALS HE USED

13-WEEK SERIES LEADER'S GUIDE

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To My Fellow Children's Pastors and Church Workers,

Welcome to Kidco Labs and the Wild Animal Adventures 13-week Series. This exciting new series is designed with one key goal in mind—to teach children that God will go to any extent to deliver His message and His love to people.

Like every Kidco series, we use a theme-based form of story telling to share Biblical truth with children. Each lesson focuses on a central topic, which is then expanded upon through the use of object lessons, games, music, visuals, friendly competition, social interaction, and above all, solid teaching. Each class time becomes a living parable that allows children to do more than just listen—they begin to live the message.

The best part is that each lesson in this series has already been used and tested in a classroom setting, so the suggestions we offer are from actual experience. Our desire is to help you be more successful in your endeavors to make your ministry stronger and more effective.

ABOUT WILD ANIMAL ADVENTURES

If you hadn't guessed by now, the theme or 'parable' of this series is African safari. Each weekly lesson will focus on an actual Bible story where an animal or animals played an important role. As we share the story, we will also learn something special about God's character and the extent that He will go to help people understand His plan for their lives.

If you are new to Kidco Labs, let us introduce you to "Headquarters" and your Director of Secret Operations, Horatio Witherspoon. Although it is actually a fictitious place, Headquarters and the Director play an important role in each weekly lesson. You will find a letter from the Director supplied each week that summarizes the classroom exploration (the classroom lesson) and challenges the children to get involved and use what they have learned through their Field Guides.

Each weekly letter also commends the children for the great job that they are doing and challenges them to keep trying new things. The goal is to engage the children in basic ministry to people around them through targeted tasks and suggestions. If the children can learn to venture into these 'unknown territories' now while they are young, they will become more confident and bolder as they continue growing in their faith.

IT'S HARD TO FIT IT ALL IN!

The most significant thing that you will find with each lesson is that we have provided more information than will fit into your class time. This was intentional. Every ministry is as different as the children that make it up. We want you to have the power to choose what will be the most effective in your specific situation or time constraint. Throughout each lesson, you will see "Leader's Notes" that offer suggestions of how you can personalize each lesson element to best meet your needs and "Additional Resources" if you want to spend more time on a particular aspect of the lesson.

You will also find a Leader's Resource CD enclosed with the Binder. This CD is filled with all of the printable resources and lesson elements you need each week. As you plan for your class time, it will be up to you to choose how much or little you need. You even have editable files that allow you to add new things if you'd like. It is all up to you!

Once again, thank you for choosing Kidco Labs. Our prayer is that God's blessing and the power of His Spirit will guide you to do even greater things. Have a great time!

God's blessings to you and your ministry,

David Gebelbeck

SERIES OVERVIEW

God loves people so much that He will go to any extreme to help them understand His plan, His will and the extent of His love. Throughout time, God has tried to speak to people using different methods. One of the most interesting is through the animals that at times were more obedient than the humans that God was trying to reach.

In this series, we will travel through the different times and places in the Bible where it seemed that when people were being too stubborn, God had to use animals to help convey His message. From the floating zoo that Noah built to the Pharaohs of Egypt, there have been times that only a few could hear God's voice and obeyed.

As we journey through the stories of the Bible, we will learn more about God's love, His plan for people's lives and about the animals that He created. We will also find that as we open our hearts and our lives to obey God's voice that the most exciting adventures begin!

LESSON SUMMARY

WEEK 1: ANIMALS & MIRACLES—How do they go together?

The journey begins by setting the foundation of what miracles are and why God resorts to using them to communicate His message. There are times that God uses miracles to help people when there is no other way, but most often He uses them to show people that He is God and is capable of doing anything.

THEME: God Can Do Anything

ANIMAL: A Collection of animals from the series

WEEK 2: CALLING ALL ANIMALS—Building of the Ark – Noah Pt.1

As we look at the beginning of Noah's story, we focus on the reason that this miracle was necessary. The people of the earth had turned their back on God and did all sorts of bad things. God's desired to restart the earth with only those that would recognize Him. He chose Noah and, of course the animals to accomplish His mighty task.

THEME: The Penalty for Disobedience

ANIMAL: Elephant

WEEK 3: A NEW WAY OF LIVING—God's New Covenant – Noah Pt. 2

After a year in the confines of the ark, the time had come to go back on dry land. God used Noah and the animals to once again set the rules that we all will live by and the plan He has for all of His creation. The gift of the rainbow is the seal of His promise. Now it's up to mankind to keep up the other side of the relationship.

THEME: A New Covenant (Relationship) with God

ANIMAL: Chimpanzee

WEEK 4: THE SLITHERING STICK—Moses, His Staff & The Power of God

In this lesson, we learn that God can take ordinary people and things to accomplish extraordinary things. God chose Moses to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt, but Moses wasn't so sure. God was patient and showed Moses through each miracle that he was the one for the job as He performed mighty miracles through each plague.

THEME: God Is Always With Us

ANIMAL: Cobra

WEEK 5: FROGS, FLIES & GNATS, OH MY!—Egypt's Plagues

The children will see that God is powerful and mighty. He proved Himself in Egypt when He used animals as part of the plagues upon Egypt. Each animal God used proved that He was more powerful than anything that the Egyptians believed. He also showed His protection by only allowing the plagues to affect Egyptians while all of Israel remained safe.

THEME: God Is Supreme

ANIMAL: Frogs



WEEK 6: I'M HUNGRY! WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?—Manna & Quail

We all experience good times and bad times, but God is there with us through it all. There are times that we find ourselves needing things we can't get ourselves. God's promise is to provide everything we need, even if it is through a miracle. We just need to trust Him in every circumstance.

THEME: God Provides

ANIMAL: Quail

WEEK 7: OUT OF A DONKEY'S MOUTH—Balaam's Important Lesson

It is impossible to hide sin from God. He sees every action and knows every heart. God gave Balaam specific instructions. Balaam, however, decided not to follow them and tries to resist against the will of God. It took a talking donkey to finally put Balaam back on the right path.

THEME: God Demands Obedience

ANIMAL: Donkey

WEEK 8: IN THE BELLY OF A WHALE—Jonah's Stubbornness

God loves people and He wants others to know His love and His plan for their lives. When the people he loves won't listen, God often will choose a special servant to help explain what God has to say. But what happens when God's chosen messenger won't listen? God shows His power and love as he delivers a message to both the lost people and His messenger.

THEME: God Loves People

ANIMAL: Whale/Fish

WEEK 9: GOD'S FAST FOOD—Elijah & The Ravens

There are times that God may need us to serve Him in a special way. We learn from the story of Elijah that no matter what God asks us to do, He will make sure that we are protected and taken care of throughout the mission. Elijah was called to challenge a king and cause a drought in the land. God made sure that as He was proving His point to the king, He protected Elijah, His faithful servant.

THEME: God Protects His Servants

ANIMAL: Ravens

WEEK 10: LIONS ARE MY FRIEND—Daniel and the Lions' Den

Doing the right thing has its rewards, even if you have to go through a den of lions to get it. Daniel was a man that was faithful to God. He prayed for the nation and for God's will in his own life. As a result, God gave Daniel favor with the king, but not everyone was happy about it. Daniel may have had enemies, but He trusted in God and the enemies were taken care of by God's hand.

THEME: God's Favor

ANIMAL: Lions

WEEK 11: GOD'S MESSENGER—A Sign of Peace to Come

The Bible uses animals as symbols of God's power. One animal that is used in both the Old and New Testaments is the dove. On the ark, the dove brought the olive branch back that signaled dry land. The dove also made an appearance to signal the start of Jesus' ministry on earth at the time of His baptism.

THEME: A Sign of God's Peace

ANIMAL: Dove

WEEK 12: WRITTEN IN BLACK & WHITE – The Bible

The Bible records many stories about God's power being shown to people. In the New Testament, God still uses animals to convey His message and show His power—the miraculous catch of fish, the feeding of the multitudes, Peter's vision for the Church and Paul's encounter with a poisonous snake. In each of these stories, the animals illustrate God's message of love for His children.

THEME: A Record of God's Power in the Bible

ANIMAL: Zebra

WEEK 13: WHAT IS THAT THING ANYWAY?—Heavenly Creatures

God created everything with a purpose and as part of His plan. We have looked at how God has used the animals we see around us to help us understand His plan and purpose, but there are many creatures that He created that we do not see. These are creatures that minister around the throne and have only been seen by a few, but one day, we will see them too!

THEME: Heavenly Creatures

ANIMAL: Platypus



STANDARD LESSON ELEMENTS

At Kidco Labs, we believe that teaching should be tailored to fit the strengths of the ministry team and arranged to suit the needs of the children. This means planning, thought and care should go into each week's lesson preparation to make sure that every class time is special. It should be as unique as each child in the class, and allow each one to walk out with a lasting memory.

Every Kidco series has been written and used in a classroom setting. It is not something that we think works, but we KNOW it works. It has been written in the same order that it was originally taught that worked for us. As you read through the lessons, it is important to realize the various elements that make up the core of the lesson.

There is no perfect order or sequence to make them effective. This is a decision that you will need to make with your leaders. Remember, sometimes trying something new can have a dynamic effect on the overall outcome of the class. It is also important that you use as many of the leaders as possible to share in the teaching. Trading out speakers helps give variety to the message, it helps take the burden out of ministry and helps prevent burnout.

There are other reasons as well. The children will realize that all the leaders do work together as a team and each is knowledgeable in what they are sharing. For some children, there may be a leader that they have a special admiration for and hearing a portion of the message from that person may become the lasting memory that changes a child's life forever. This is what ministry is all about.

THE LESSON ELEMENTS

In each lesson, the following core components are used. These can be arranged in any order that you feel will be most effective to meet the needs of your children.

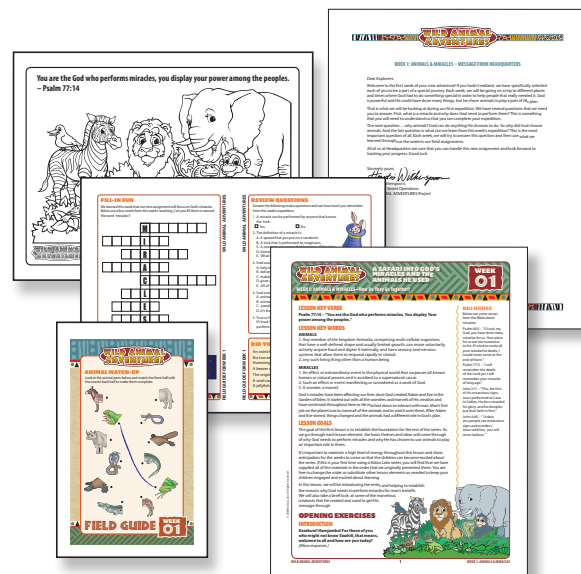
LESSON GOALS* – This is a summary of the overall lesson and should be considered when planning the class time. Your goal should be to make sure that by the end of the time together, the message was clear, understood and received in a way that the children could share with others if asked.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES* – There are times that we make references to passages in the Bible rather than reading the entire text. In these cases, it is helpful for the leaders to read the entire passage ahead of time so that they can answer any questions the children might have correctly when asked. We also believe that reading these Scripture passages ahead of time allows God to minister to the leaders and help us learn and grow in new ways too.

LESSON KEY VERSE – Each week, there is a key verse or memory verse that is part of the lesson. Although the verse will be covered during the class time, it is also the verse that they will need to memorize to gain points next week to complete their exploration mission.

OPENING EXERCISES – This section is comprised of all the normal details that need to be covered at the beginning of class—welcoming visitors, greeting children, giving updates on what happened last week, and encouraging children to keep up the good work. This is also the time to cover the classroom rules, announcements, the message from headquarters and any other updates children need to know about.

MESSAGE FROM HEADQUARTERS – The overall concept of Kidco Labs is about learning through exploration and discovery. Each week, a letter or message from the director at Headquarters is received encouraging the children in the mission and outlining the tasks for the day. The sole purpose of this letter is let the children know what to expect in the class. It doesn't tell them everything; it's just enough for them to know what the focus of the day is all about.



PRAISE AND WORSHIP - We believe that it is critical for children to learn how to praise God when they are young. Each lesson offers suggestions of either music from a DVD or a musical theme to arrange a worship set around. Each set should include high-energy praise, a moderate energy praise/worship song and an intimate worship selection that allows children to enter into God's presence.

PRAYER TIMES – We usually place our opening prayer time directly after praise and worship. The children will have the right hearts and attitudes to focus on prayer needs. We also recommend recording prayer needs from week to week so that leaders can continue to lift them up in prayer throughout the week. It also gives leaders something to check in with the kids later about. The closing prayer time allows the children a chance to make sure that their hearts are clean before God.

NOTE: If your children are not used to praying, we recommend allowing the children to pray for each other's needs. Once they have all given their requests and praise reports, select several of your children to pray for specific needs. It will help give them confidence to pray aloud in a group setting and will build their faith as these prayers are answered.

OFFERING OBJECT LESSON – God commands that we bring our tithes and offerings to the storehouse where we are fed. Each week, there is a portion of the lesson that is dedicated to helping the children understand the importance of giving to the church and to God.

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITIES – Many children have a hard time memorizing things. Each of these activities is designed as a game that helps the children review the key verse several times. By the end of the activities, most of them will have the key verse committed to memory.

GROUP ACTIVITY – This game or activity is designed to be a high-energy segment of the class time. It is strategically placed just before the message to do 2 things. First, it helps burn off extra energy so that the children will be more attentive to the teaching. Second, the activities and games are designed to help the children begin to experience a portion of the message. These activities also serve as intros into the teaching portion of the lesson. In short, the children are doing more than having fun; they are starting to live the message.

EXPLORATION TIME – This is the core of the class time. It is recommended that the children be back in their seats and remain attentive during this portion of the class. During this time, the actual message will be shared.

NOTE: Although we love to use some rather wild props for games, skits and activities, we make it a point to show God all my respect during this time. It doesn't mean that we are somber or overly serious, but it does mean that what we say is to be taken as truth, not for fun! (We have told the children this on numerous occasions if one gets one of line.) Props and gimmicks should only be used to emphasize a point, not purely for entertainment value.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES – For kids, timing is everything. Once the message is over and the closing prayer is done, they are ready to go, even if the parents are not. We have all experienced the awkward times when we have completed our lesson, but no parents have arrived. This is what these games and activities are for—to fill that time productively with additional activities to keep the children's focus, allow them to have fun and further reinforce the message that they have heard.

WEEKLY ACTIVITY SHEETS – On the Resource CD, there are weekly activity sheets that can be printed and given to the children for extra points. Each sheet comes with games, puzzles, a coded message, the weekly memory verse, and a short mission to complete.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – As this series was being developed, we often found some very helpful information on various Web sites, in books or other sources. At the end of some of the lessons, we have tried to share any resources and links that we feel would be helpful for you.

NOTE: Since most information given is through the Internet, which is subject to change or removal, please let us know via e-mail at content@kidcolabs.com if you find anything we supplied to be inaccurate or unavailable.

...to select one judge (or use one of your leaders).

- 2-4 pieces of clay or play dough (same color)
- A stop watch or dock
- High-energy music


Place a chair on the stage with the back to the audience and have the judge sit down. Now, the judge will call out an animal without looking at the teams. The sculptors need to make that animal from clay within the allotted time (to be set beforehand – i.e. 1 minute, 2 minutes, 30 seconds, etc.) When the time is up, have the judge look at the sculptures. The more sculptors the better, but there can be only one winner each time! The team that won received a point for the round. 10 points wins the game.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
Children often have a lot of questions about creation and the Bible because of what they see on TV or hear in school. Here are a few Web site resources that can help you answer some of their questions when asked.

ANSWERS IN GENESIS www.answersingenesis.org
CREATION SCIENCE emporium.turnpike.net/C/cs
CHRISTIAN ANSWERS christiananswers.net

NOTE: These sites and other resources are also available at www.kidcolabs.com.

WORSHIP RESOURCE
Hillsong's Kids Music DVD's cost between \$12-18 depending on where you purchase them. Currently they offer *Supernatural*, *Jesus You're My Superhero* and *Super Strong God*. We found ordering them online was simple and convenient since local bookstores do not always stock them.



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WEEK 01: AN OCEAN OF POSSIBILITIES 8 GO FISH!

USING THE LEADER'S RESOURCE CD

Unlike other series that you may have used in the past, Wild Animal Adventures, and all Kidco Labs Series are created to work for you. On the Resource CD, you will find a wealth of digital materials that you can print from your own computer or take to a local office supply store and have produced for you.

There is no additional software to install, however, you will need a version of Adobe Acrobat Reader in order to open and print any files that have a ".pdf" file tag. If it is not already installed on your computer, it is a free download from www.adobe.com and has become a common application for Internet documents.

There are also editable files that have supplied so you can personalize the message using Microsoft Word or PowerPoint. These files will end with ".doc" for Microsoft Word, and ".ppt" for PowerPoint. We have also supplied the text files in Rich Text Format ".rtf" which is a common format used by other word processing applications. So you should be able to get the most out of these files even if you don't have Microsoft Office.

Most of the electronic support you need to launch the series is located inside the folder named "AA_SUPPORT FILES". There, you will find a number of sub-folders that contain the artwork and printable support files. For instructions using the editable files, please go to Section 14 of this binder. Electronic versions of the instructions are also located inside the "Support" folder in PDF format.

Please read the instructions carefully BEFORE you start so that you know how they work. All files are compatible on both Mac and PC operating systems. Printed copies are also provided for making photo copies directly if you desire.

LEGAL NOTICE FOR THE LEADER'S RESOURCE CD: *Use of this disk is fully at the discretion of the end-user. Kidco Labs assumes no responsibility for any damage to the end-user's computer or any of the software on the computer as a direct result from the use of any of the contents of this disk. These files have been provided as a courtesy to the purchaser to help facilitate ministry. We are not software producers; we are ministers trying to assist others by providing helpful resources.*

No portion of this disk may be copied, duplicated or shared—either electronic or as physical copies—with anyone that is not directly involved with your ministry without written permission from Kidco Labs. If you have any questions, please contact us at your convenience. Remember that illegal copying of any information is stealing, and that is a sin. It is also a federal offense under the copyright laws. If you enjoy the contents of this series, tell others about it and what a great value it is. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation.

DIRECTORY STRUCTURE

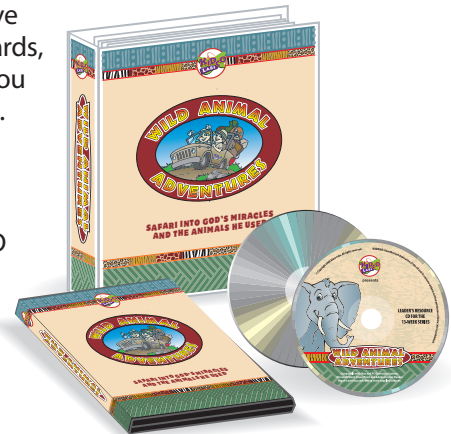
As you look at the directory for the Leader's Resource CD, you will notice that there is a lot of information inside a series of sub-folders. Each of these has been organized in one of two ways. The folders that are preceded with a number—for example "01_Lesson"—relate to the weekly lessons. You will also find printed copies of lesson materials and content located in this binder under the corresponding tab. (See the *Table of Contents* to view weekly lesson topics.)

The remaining content is located inside the folder named "AA_Support_Files" and is organized into sub-folders. This content includes administrative files like attendance sheets and service orders to promotional postcards, flyers and PowerPoint templates. All of these have been created so you can customize them as you go through the series and look your best.

AA_SUPPORT_FILE DIRECTORY

In order to make locating files easier, here is an overview of the sub-folder names and content. There is also a content sheet inside the CD Case as well, for your convenience.

Announce_ServOrder – Inside is an electronic copy of the Announcement-Service Order form. A printed copy of this form is available in Section 14 with the master copies.



GF_Logos – We have provided you with logos in different formats so that you can create additional materials as needed.

Attendance – This contains an electronic copy of the attendance sheet used for individual point tracking and binder cover art to hold the sheets. A printed copy of this form is available in Section 14 with the master copies.

Banners – This artwork has been designed to be output of large plotters to create large promotional banners. You will need to find an outside resource that has the capacity to print them for you. You will want to call around for the best prices, unless you know someone that will donate them for you.

Binder Cover Art – If you want to make additional binders for your leaders, there are PDF's that can be printed from your printer. *(For additional leader's binders, use the Leaders Support binder art.)*

Certificate – Each child can receive this certificate at the close of the series. This is an electronic copy of the "Adventurer's Club Membership" is found in Lesson 13 and in the AA_SUPPORT FILES folder.

Child Info – If you want to collect all the information about your children, like birthdays, schools, and contact info, these sheets are very helpful to fill out. These are also very helpful in getting information about visitors when they show up. It can be added back into your church system later.

Inside this folder is an electronic copy of the form and binder cover art. A printed copy of this form is available in Section 14 with the master copies. You may also choose to keep this information with the attendance sheets.

Flyer – Inside are the electronic files for the editable back portion and non-editable full color front, along with instructions on how to use them and some additional copy suggestions.

Hat Art - PDF version of the hat-sized logos. Instructions are found in this folder and in Section 14.

Invitation – This folder contains the electronic art to create the mini invitations for children to give to their friends. Both editable and non-editable versions are found here.

Miss_You – These cards can be sent to anyone who has not attended class for more than 2 weeks. The editable back allows you to customize the message.

Postcard – Both editable and non-editable files needed to create the promotional postcards for the series are found in this folder.

Poster_LG – This large version of the poster is in PDF format and requires tabloid-size (11x17) paper to print.

Poster_SM – This letter-size version of the poster can be printed from any printer. It also comes with an editable version that allows you to customize the content.

PowerPoint - Inside this folder are PowerPoint templates, announcement slides for adult services and title art for each of the lesson elements in the series.

Prayer_Sheet – Keep track of prayer requests and answered prayer with these printable forms. A printed copy is also found with the master copies in Section 14.

T-shirt_Art – The logos and instructions for making your own T-shirt transfers are located inside this folder. T-shirts are great prizes for top winners and special games.

Word_Blanks– We have supplied you with a Microsoft Word template and border art so that you can dress up any additional materials that you may need to create for the series. Use them if you need to create letters to the parent, memos, or any other internal communication.

