



# PAW VERBS ~ for Kids ~

30 Heartwarming Stories about Boys, Girls, and Their Pets

JENNIFER MARSHALL BLEAKLEY

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*Pawverbs for Kids: 30 Heartwarming Stories about Boys, Girls, and Their Pets*

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*For Andrew and Ella:  
I love you forever times infinity.*



## A Note from the Author

**HI! MY NAME IS JEN**, and I like animals—a lot. I like watching animals, playing with them, and learning about them. I think they are funny and cute and interesting. But what I love most about animals is how they help me think about and learn about God.

Did you know that animals can do that?

It's true!

If you slow down, pay attention, and ask God for help—you can learn things about *him* from the animals he created.

One of the most important things I've learned from animals is that I can talk to God as easily as I can talk to an animal.

You see, I was what you would call a shy kid. Talking to people, sometimes even to my friends, felt scary. Talking to teachers and doctors and other grown-ups was especially hard. My hands would get sweaty, and my stomach would hurt. I wanted to talk to people. I wished I could just open my mouth and talk as easily as my friends did, but it was hard, and I often felt lonely.

One day when I was sitting outside, my cat, Sugar, walked over to me and climbed onto my lap. She started purring.

"You make me feel happy and safe, Sugar," I said,



rubbing my hand back and forth on her gray-and-black fur.

I started talking to Sugar while I petted her. I told her about a hard test I had taken at school, about a friend who'd hurt my feelings, and how I wished I could try out for the school play—but that I was too scared. Sugar kept purring. She was so easy to talk to that all the words I had been holding in for a long time came out.

The next day, I went to find Sugar as soon as I got home from school. I told her that I got an okay grade on the test, made up with my friend, and signed up to be in the chorus for the school play—so I could be in the play but didn't have to try out for a speaking part. Sugar listened and purred.

The next Sunday at church, our pastor talked about the ways God cares for us. He read a verse from 1 Peter that says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you" (5:7). When he read that verse, I thought about Sugar and how she listened to all my worries and the things I cared about.

Later that day, while Sugar purred on my lap, I started talking to God—telling him how much I wanted to be able to talk to other people, thanking him for bringing Sugar into my life, and asking him to help me not feel so scared all the time.

That day, I realized that God was with me, like Sugar was with me—but that God was even better because he

is *always* with me. Sugar couldn't go to school or to the doctor's office with me, but God could. And he did.

Sugar helped me learn that I can talk to God, and God helped me not feel as scared all the time. Sometimes I still get a little scared when I have to talk to someone new, but now I know I can talk to God about that—and he will help me.

And that's why I wrote this book. I wrote it so I would remember all the things I've learned, and I wrote it so that *you* can learn things from animals too—things about yourself, about other people, and about God.

Each story in this book is based on something that actually happened with a real animal. There is a Paws and Ponder section after each story with questions to answer so you can learn your own lessons from the animals. And there is a Paws and Pray section with a short prayer too.

You can read one story at a time or read lots of stories at once. You can read the book at bedtime or in the morning or in the afternoon. You can read the stories with your family, with a friend, by yourself, or to your pet. However you decide to read this book, I hope you will enjoy the stories and get to know God a little better through them.

Most of all, I hope you will come to know that God made you and loves you, and he thinks that you are very, very special—just the way you are.

And I think you're pretty PAWsome too!

Love, Jen





# Little Autumn

Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

PROVERBS 3:5-6

**IT WAS A PERFECT DAY** to be outside. The air was cool, the sun was bright, and autumn leaves fell like giant orange, red, and yellow raindrops.

Lizzie's dad was cleaning out the garage, and she was raking leaves into a pile big enough for them both to jump in. Her dad had just pulled a big box out to the driveway when he bent down to look at something. Lizzie ran over to see what it was.

A baby squirrel!

It was the smallest and cutest little squirrel Lizzie had ever seen. And it was trying to climb up her dad's pant leg!



“Maybe she thinks your leg is a tree trunk,” Lizzie giggled.

The little squirrel stopped moving and looked up at Lizzie’s dad.

“She must have fallen out of her nest,” he said.

“What do we do?” Lizzie asked, bending down to look at the squirrel.

Her dad did a search on his phone.

“It says to leave the little squirrel near the tree where we found her, and the mother squirrel should come back soon to get her baby.”

Lizzie and her dad made a temporary nest for the squirrel out of a shallow box, an old towel, and some leaves, and set it under the trees by the driveway. But hours later, the baby squirrel was still there and the air was getting cold. Lizzie’s dad called the wildlife rescue phone number. They said to keep the squirrel warm overnight and then drop her off with one of their volunteers in the morning.

Lizzie looked at the little squirrel. She was so cute.

“Why don’t we keep her?” Lizzie asked. “She could be our pet! We could name her Autumn since we found her in the fall!”

But her dad shook his head. “She belongs in the wild. She wouldn’t be happy as a pet, and we don’t know how to take care of her. As hard as it is, we need to do what is best for her—not what feels good for us.”







Lizzie knew her dad was right, but she still wished she could keep the baby squirrel. That night, Lizzie peeked into the box. Little Autumn was curled up in a ball, sound asleep.

“You were smart to go to my dad for help. He’s going to make sure you get to climb all the tallest trees and eat all the acorns and nuts you can. But I still wish I could keep you.”

Several months later, Lizzie’s dad got a text from the wildlife rescue volunteer with a picture of a much bigger Autumn being released into a nearby park. Seeing Autumn again—and seeing her so big and healthy looking—made Lizzie happy.

“Thanks for knowing how to take care of Autumn,” she said to her dad, giving him a hug. “She was smart to trust you.”

## PAWS AND PONDER

Would you have wanted to keep little Autumn? Why or why not?

Why did Lizzie's dad want to take Autumn to a wildlife rescue volunteer?



Can you think of a time when doing the right thing was hard?

Proverbs 3:5 tells us to trust God. What do you need to trust God with today?



## Paws and Pray

*Dear God, please help me to trust you with my whole heart. There is so much I don't understand and so much I don't know. But you know everything—and you know me and love me. Help me to trust you more and more each day.*





## Amelia's Gift

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the  
best part of everything you produce.

PROVERBS 3:9

**AMELIA LOVES BUYING TOYS** for her yellow Lab, Ollie. Any time she gets money for her birthday or Christmas, she uses some of it to buy Ollie a stuffed animal or a chew toy.

She likes how Ollie jumps up and down while he waits for his present. She likes how he wags his tail super fast when she hands him his new toy. And she loves all the happy little noises he makes when he plays with it.

But most of all, Amelia likes how Ollie tries to share his new toys with her. After playing with a new toy for a few minutes, Ollie will bring it back to Amelia so they can play catch.





When Amelia gets home from school, Ollie always runs to her with his newest toy in his mouth so they can play together. And when Amelia snuggles into bed at night, Ollie drops his toy on her bed.

“That toy is for you, Ollie,” Amelia says, handing the toy back to him. “But thank you for sharing it with me.”

A few days before Christmas, Amelia wrapped three toys for Ollie—a hedgehog stuffed animal, a giant tennis ball, and a chew bone. She couldn’t wait to watch Ollie tear into the wrapping paper to get his toys.

But during the Christmas Eve service at church, Amelia listened to people talk about the gift God gave to the world when he sent his son, Jesus. She started to wonder if there was a gift she could give *God*.

Amelia loved giving gifts to Ollie—and her family—but she had never thought about giving a gift to God. And since Christmas is the day we celebrate Jesus’ birthday, it seemed like a good day to give him a gift.

But what could she give Jesus?

What kind of present would he want? She thought about it that night and the next morning. But she still couldn’t think of anything.

As soon as she went downstairs and saw all the presents under the tree, Amelia forgot about her question. She started opening her gifts and helping Ollie open his.





Later that day, after Amelia played fetch with Ollie, she sat down with the new paint set she had gotten from her parents. She couldn't wait to paint a picture on her new easel.

But what should she paint first?

Suddenly, Amelia knew just what to give Jesus. She would give him the first painting from her new easel.

Amelia painted a picture of a Christmas tree with lots of presents under it. And on the biggest present she wrote,

To Jesus,  
Thank you.  
Love, Amelia





## PAWS AND PONDER

What is a favorite gift you've received? Why was that gift so special?

What are some of the gifts God has given you?

Why is Jesus the greatest gift God has given us?

What kind of gift could you give to Jesus today?



## Paws and Pray

*Dear God, thank you for all the gifts you have given me. Thank you for the sunshine and the raindrops. Thank you for people who care about me. Thank you for loving me. And thank you for Jesus. Please show me what I can give you today to say thank you for all you have done for me.*