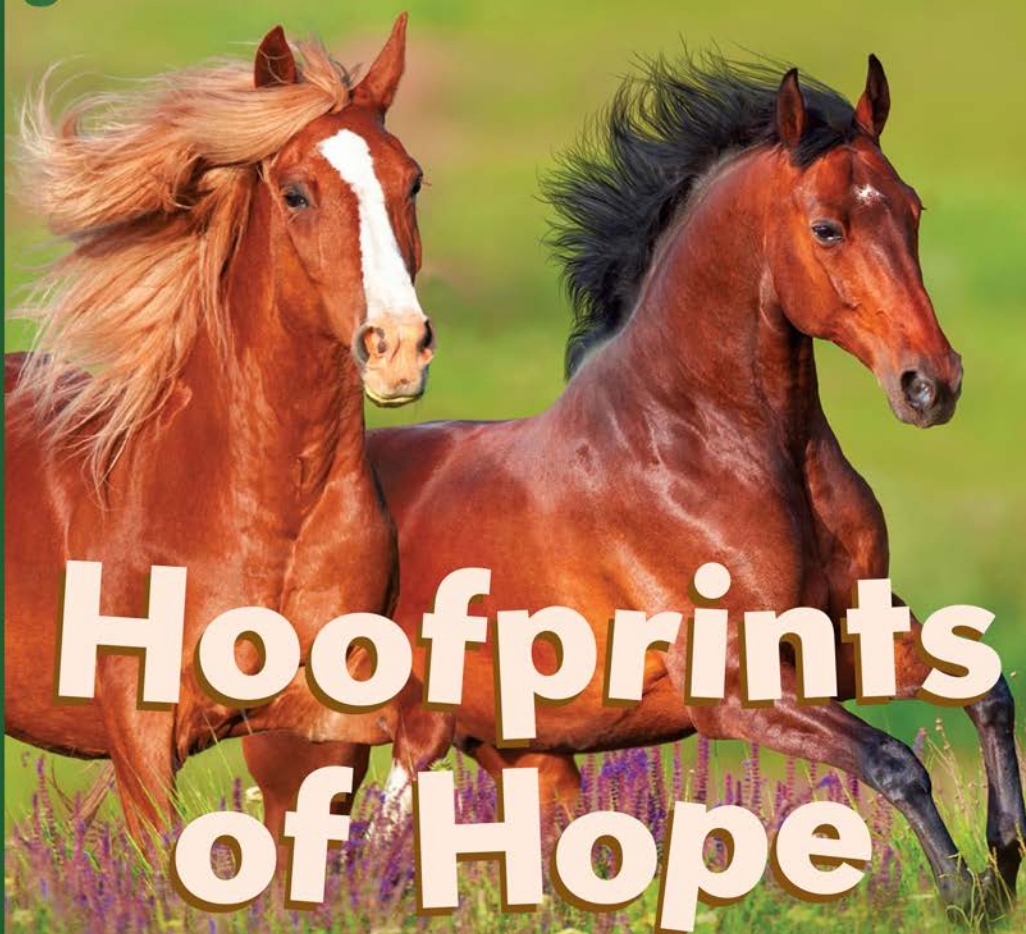


52 Wonders of
Faith & Science for
Horse-Loving Kids



Hoofprints of Hope

DEVOTIONAL



KATHRYN O'NEILL



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Tyndale House Publishers
Carol Stream, Illinois



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Designed by Eva M. Winters

Edited by Deborah King

Published in association with Steve Laube Agency, LLC

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ISBN 979-8-4005-0163-0

Printed in China

32	31	30	29	28	27	26
7	6	5	4	3	2	1



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Author's Note



I'VE ALWAYS LOVED HORSES. I was about ten when I decided a horse would fit in an abandoned shed in my yard. I clawed through clinging cobwebs to clean out that shed, sure I could convince my parents to get a horse. I couldn't, but I still dreamed of having a horse of my own someday.

I'd ride my green bicycle to the library every week. As the ocean breeze billowed the library curtains, I'd hunt for books about horses. *King of the Wind* by Marguerite Henry was my favorite, and I still have a copy. I'd pick out a Black Stallion book from Walter Farley's series and dream I was galloping the Black along the beach. His mane whipped around my face as we splashed through the shallows, sending seagulls screaming into the sky.

Though my dream of owning a horse has never

HOOFPRIENTS OF HOPE DEVOTIONAL

come true, the Lord has provided a special horse for me to ride wherever I've lived. Here are just a few I've loved: Webster, a big teddy bear of a Hanoverian who taught me basic dressage; Chico, a hardworking Quarter Horse and trail-riding partner; patient Mandy, who helped me learn the fine points of dressage; and Teddy, a Tennessee Walking horse, who carries me dependably now, when my eyes don't always focus well.

If you've picked up this book, you probably love horses too. Do you wonder, though, how horses can help you learn about God or deal with things like too much homework or relationships with friends? They can, because most horses are kind and gentle, intelligent and attuned to our moods. They hear our smallest whisper and respond to our lightest touch. They're patient and forgiving, encouraging us to be more like that too. Their temperament, as well as their beauty and talent, reflects the goodness and love of our Creator, helping us know God, others, and ourselves better.

I once watched a mare doing a dressage test with a foal at her side. When the rider urged the mare to canter a circle, the foal cantered close beside its mother. When the mare slowed to a trot or turned,

AUTHOR'S NOTE

so did her foal. It was so much fun to watch them. The beauty and talent of the mare was amazing, as was the close bond between her and her foal. This early bond protects the foal and helps it learn all the things young horses need to know.

As you read these devotions, have fun learning about horses. While you do, I pray you'll want to stay as close to Jesus as a foal does with its mother. He'll take you on amazing adventures each day, showing you how much he loves you and that the bond between you and him will never ever break. He'll always be beside you, protecting you and helping you become the loving and talented creation he desires you to be.

Kathryn O'Neill



Introduction



HOOFPRIITS OF HOPE is a collection of fifty-two devotions that will lead you on an adventurous trail ride with God. In part 1, “Breeds of Horses,” you’ll learn about fascinating breeds like the Appaloosa—a talented and colorful horse developed by the Nez Percé, a Native American tribe—and the Shire—a large draft breed now gaining popularity as a riding horse. In part 2, “Famous and Not-So-Famous Horses,” you’ll read about special horses like Sunny Jim, a bookmobile horse who brought stories to remote locations, and Seabiscuit, a racehorse who overcame failure with the help of a patient trainer. Part 3, “God Made Horses Special,” explains how God designed the details of horses’ bodies, such as their 360-degree range of vision and their ability to sleep while standing up. Lastly, in part 4, “Activities

with Horses,” you’ll find out all about gymkhana and other fun activities you can do with horses, as well as the tack and equipment needed to ride and care for them.

A good trail has signs along the way to help you discover important ideas and insights. Think of each *Hoofprints* devotion as a stop along the trail, complete with fun information about horses and important spiritual truths about God, other people, and yourself. Here are several “signs” (or special features) to guide you on your trail ride as you read your devotion for the day:

A Bible verse will help you begin thinking about what God wants you to learn in the devotion.



“CORRAL YOUR THOUGHTS” provides one or more journaling questions with lines for you to write on.



“GALLOP INTO ACTION” nudges you to put what you’ve learned into action in your daily life.



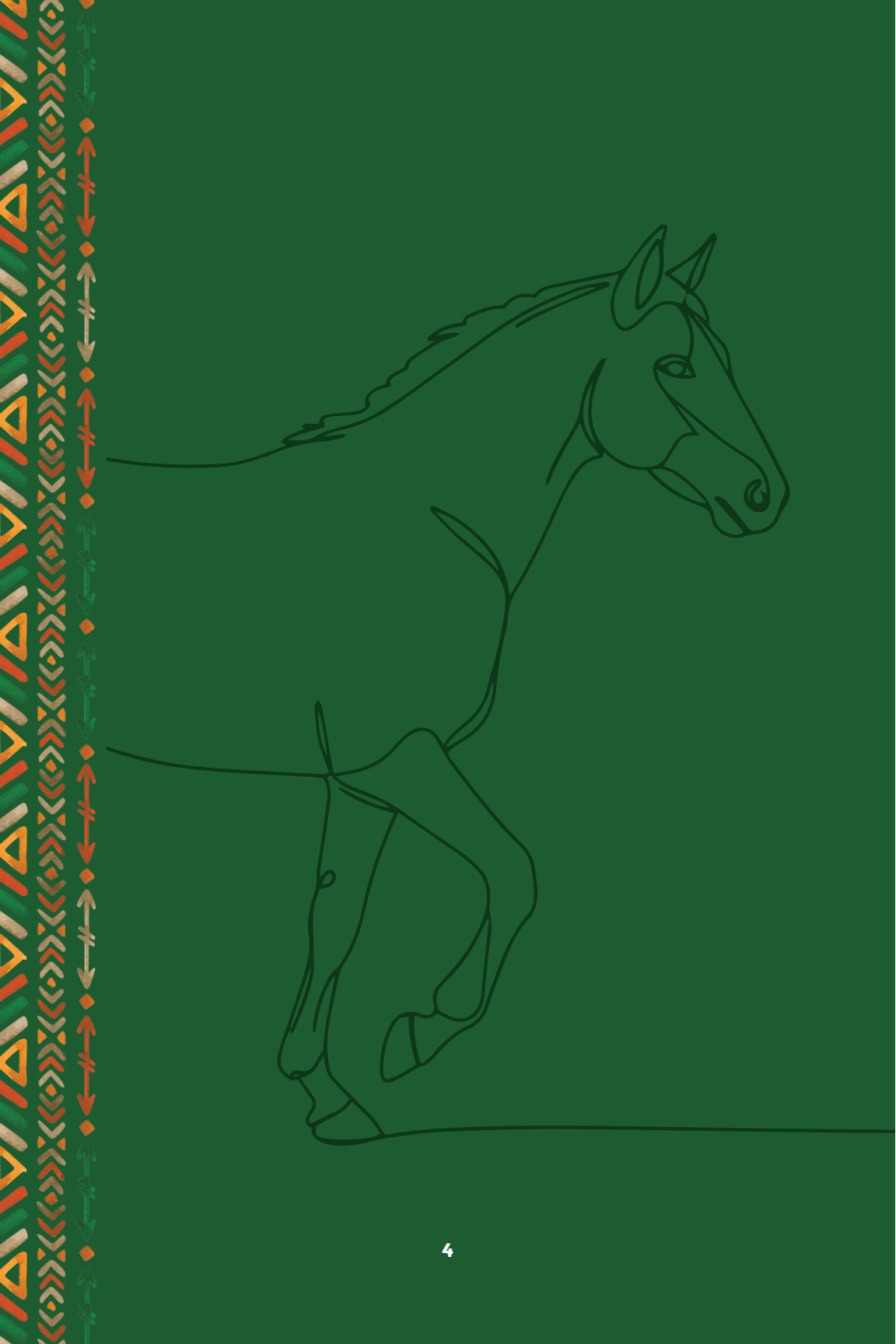
“FUN NOTES FROM THE BARN” offers interesting facts about horses to share with friends and family.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the trail, you'll find two more features to make your ride more enjoyable.

Glossary of Horse Terms: In each devotion, you'll find horse-related words in **bold letters**. Turn to the glossary for definitions of these terms (see page 221).

Learn More: Keep learning about horses with this page of recommended books and websites (see page 235).





PART 1

Breeds of Horses

.....

THROUGHOUT MOST OF HISTORY, horses carried people to settle new lands and then helped with whatever work needed to be done there. Plowing fields and hauling wagons called for big, strong horses, but riding horses needed to be lighter and faster. So people began breeding horses for different needs. Today there are about two hundred recognized horse and pony breeds. In this section, you'll discover the beauty and unique traits of twelve of those breeds—from ancient ones like the Caspian to modern breeds like the Gypsy Vanner.





1

APPALOOSAS

Seeing Spots



If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1 JOHN 1:8-9

.....

IN AUGUST OF 1805, when the Lewis and Clark expedition reached the foot of the Rocky Mountains in what is today called Montana, Captain Lewis hiked to the top of Lemhi Pass. The expedition had spent over a year struggling up the Missouri River by boat. They had met Native people and discovered new animals like prairie dogs and grizzly bears. Now at the top of the pass, Lewis saw mountains stretching to the horizon, and he knew they needed horses to get to the Pacific Ocean. They traded with the Shoshone¹ tribe for horses to ride over those almost-endless mountain ranges.

When Lewis and Clark finally made it over all the mountains, they met the Nez Percé² people of what is today eastern Oregon. Lewis made a special entry in his journal about the fine spotted horses

1. The Shoshone people call themselves Neme or Newe.

2. The name *Nez Percé* is French for "pierced nose." Historically, the Nez Percé tribe have called themselves the Nimiipuu.



BREEDS OF HORSES

of the Nez Percé. He realized these horses were different from horses he'd seen with other tribes. The Nez Percé crossed those rugged mountain ranges twice every year—spending winters in Oregon and summers on the plains. So they bred their horses to be hardy and sure-footed (to safely travel mountain trails) and speedy (to hunt buffalo on the plains).

In wars with the United States **cavalry** in the late 1800s, many Nez Percé spotted horses were lost or destroyed when the tribe was forced to settle on a reservation. But in the 1930s, people in Oregon gathered descendants of the spotted horses from wild **herds** and ranches and began to revive the breed. Today, **Appaloosas**—probably named for the Palouse region of Oregon—are popular riding horses in both Western and English activities.

Appaloosas come in beautiful patterns. Some look dusted with white, sporting what's called a snowflake pattern. Leopard Appaloosas have small spots all over. On others, it looks like a white blanket covers the horse's hindquarters, either solid white or spotted. Breeders never know which pattern will show up on **foals**.

Spots on Appaloosas are beautiful, but some spots, like dirt and stains, are not. The Bible sometimes compares our sins to the not-so-good kind of spots.

APPALOOSAS

We may not want to admit that we sin, but things like lying or unkind actions and words leave ugly spots on us that separate us from God. Thankfully, when you recognize you have sinned and confess it to God, he forgives you for Jesus' sake and washes away your spots.



CORRAL YOUR THOUGHTS: Think back over your week. Did you say anything unkind to anyone, such as a classmate, friend, or family member? Did you disobey a parent or caretaker? On the lines below, write about how you might speak differently if you could do it over.

Four horizontal dotted lines, intended for a student to write their response to the 'CORRAL YOUR THOUGHTS' prompt.

GALLOP INTO ACTION: If you've said something you regret, ask God to forgive you. Then go and ask forgiveness from the person you sinned against.



FUN NOTES FROM THE BARN: Many Appaloosas that have dark-colored legs without white markings such as **socks** or **stockings** have vertical stripes on their hooves.

