

# THE WATER HORSE

## LEGEND OF THE DEEP

### Discussion Guide

## Is the Loch Ness Monster real? Does he have any friends?

In a small Scottish town, a young couple are invited to relive an old man's inspirational tale from his youth. As a child, Angus MacMorrow is a lonely little boy. He misses his father who is away serving his country. He longs for a best friend, to smile and feel joy, and to conquer his fear of the water.

One day, wandering alone along the Scottish shore, he discovers an object the size of a rugby ball. Is it a rock? Or something else?

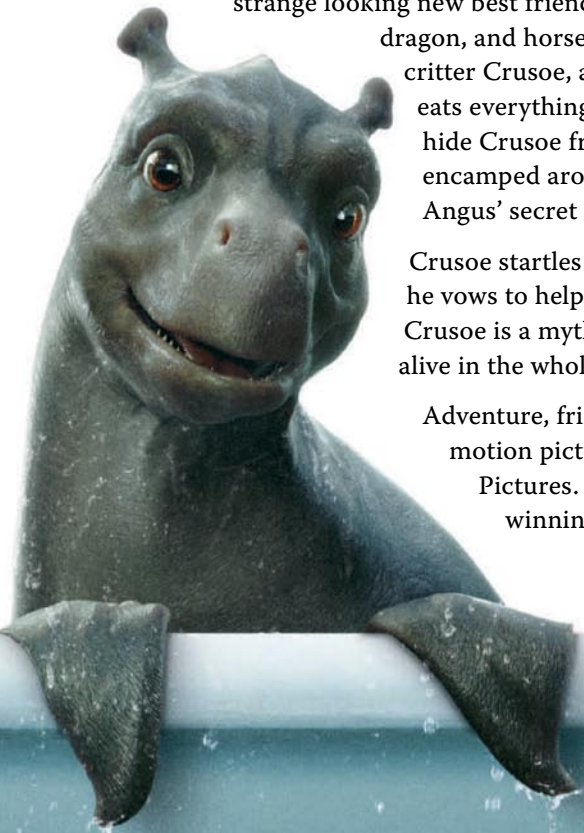
At home, alone in his father's workshop, he picks and prods until he uncovers the essence of his find—an egg.

Overnight, the egg hatches. Angus comes face-to-face with a strange looking new best friend. He looks like a mix of toad, dragon, and horse. Angus names the critter Crusoe, after the famous castaway. Crusoe eats everything in his path and soon outgrows his bucket. Angus tries to hide Crusoe from his mom, Anne, his sister, Kirstie, the Royal Army force encamped around his home, and the mysterious new handyman, Lewis. But Angus' secret soon escapes the workshop.

Crusoe startles Lewis. But Lewis doesn't expose Angus or his friend. Instead, he vows to help Angus care for the burgeoning beast. He tells Angus that Crusoe is a mythical creature called a Water Horse. And there is only one alive in the whole universe—Crusoe.

Adventure, friendship, self-discovery, and hope follow in this exciting motion picture from Revolution Studios, Walden Media, and Beacon Pictures. Crusoe, is brought to life by WETA, the Academy Award® winning visual effects team behind *Lord of the Rings* (2003).

Directed by Jay Russell (*My Dog Skip*). Screenplay by Robert Nelson Jacobs. Based on the book by Dick King-Smith.



# Are There Water Horses in the Bible?



Over the last 75 years hundreds of photos have been taken of a mythical creature along the shores of Loch Ness. Are they real? Or are they hoaxes?

Since the first sightings, some have wondered if the sea monsters mentioned in the Bible were referring to Nessie (or Crusoe as he was named in the movie). What do you think?

*God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves...*

Genesis 1:21 NASB

*"Am I the sea, or the sea monster, That You set a guard over me?"*

Job 7:12 NASB

1. To what sea monsters could the writers of the Bible be referring? Name as many as you can.
2. Do you think that the Bible is referring to the Loch Ness Monster? Why or why not?

There's another curious verse about sea monsters in the Bible.

*Praise the Lord from the earth, you great sea creatures and all ocean depths...*

Psalms 148:7 NIV

3. What is God instructing the sea creatures to do?

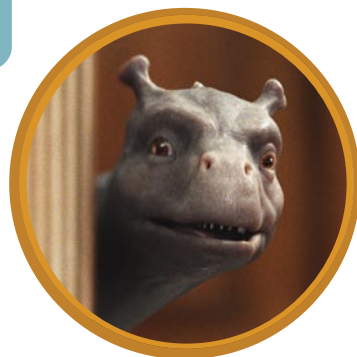
We're encouraged to do the same. Read the following passage in your Bible.

**Psalms 47 • Psalms 96 • 2 Chronicles 20:18**

God invites us to worship Him. He created the stars, the starfish, and the sea. And He created you. He holds the universe together while He cares about what you're doing today. He is worthy of our praise.

## Swimming Deeper

Praising God takes on many forms. We can praise Him when we sing, clap, and pray. We can also praise Him when we are silent and still or when we work hard on our chores or jobs. Over the next two hours, jot down all that you do. Then ask yourself, "How can I worship through what I'm doing?"



## Check Your Vocabulary

Do you take a foreign language in school?

The Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek, two ancient languages with their own unique alphabets. In the 16th century when the Bible was first being translated into English, did you know that the King James Version of Lamentations 4:3 uses *sea monsters*? However, the Hebrew word תנין can either mean *sea monster* or *jackal*. Upon further research over the years, the more precise translation is *jackals* which is reflected in other versions today.

In English, we also have words that may sound or look the same but have different meanings. For example, the word "sentence" can either mean "a full written thought" or "the punishment of a criminal." We call these words heteronyms.

Can you think of other heteronyms?

# Angus Faces His Fear



Angus McMurrow grows up before our eyes in *The Water Horse*. He's afraid of many things, including water. He can't swim and worries he will drown. Crusoe shows Angus the joys and wonders of the water. In the end, Angus faces his fears to wade out into the water to save Crusoe.

1. Other than water, what do you think Angus is afraid of?  
Check as many as you like.

- Losing his father to the war    His shadow    Sergeant Strunk  
 His mom    The Nazis    The Water Horse    The dark  
 Kirstie, his sister    Global Warming    The bulldog, Churchill  
 Losing Crusoe

2. Can you name three ways Angus overcomes his fears?

3. What are you afraid of? (circle as many as apply)

Water   Snakes   The dark   Insects   Public Speaking   Elevators   Dogs   Heights  
Flying in airplanes   Crowds   Other \_\_\_\_\_   Other \_\_\_\_\_  
Other \_\_\_\_\_   Other \_\_\_\_\_

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A recent Harris Interactive poll stated that the majority of us are afraid of snakes and looking down from great heights. Since 1992, more of us have become afraid of flying.

### America's top five fears:

- 63% Snakes
- 55% Looking down from a great height
- 41% Being alone in a forest
- 37% Spiders
- 35% Flying on an airplane

Why do you think more of us are afraid of flying?

[www.harrisinteractive.com/harris\\_poll/index.asp?PID=281](http://www.harrisinteractive.com/harris_poll/index.asp?PID=281)



4. How do you respond when you are afraid?

Take some time and think about your answers to the following questions.

What do you say?

Where do you go?

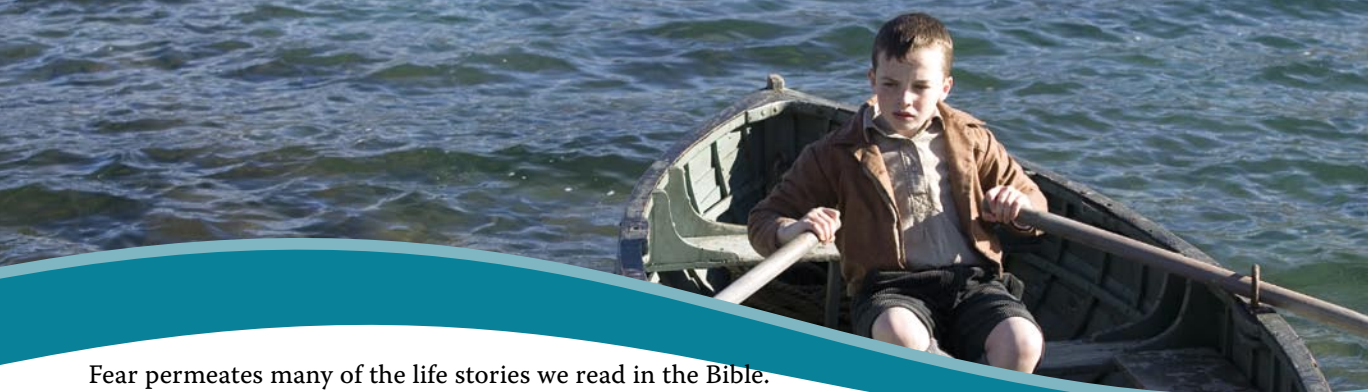
Who comforts you?

How long do your fears last?

## Swimming Deeper

Choose one of the following activities to help you face your fears.

- With the help of a parent or adult, blindfold yourself, spin around ten times, then try to find your way around your room. Once you know your way around your room, spend 15 minutes playing "in the dark."
- If you are afraid of dogs, with the help of a parent or adult, visit with a friend or family member who owns a dog. Spend time getting to know and playing with the dog.
- Create an activity of your own based on your own fears.



Fear permeates many of the life stories we read in the Bible. That's why "Do not be afraid!" is the most often repeated command in Scripture. Read the following passages and reflect on their meanings.

*"Do not be afraid of sudden fear  
Nor of the onslaught of the wicked when it comes;  
For the Lord will be your confidence and will keep  
your foot from being caught."*

Proverbs 3:25-26 NASB

*"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts  
out fear, because fear involves punishment, and  
the one who fears is not perfected in love."*

1 John 4:18 NASB

*"Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one  
of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.  
But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do  
not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows."*

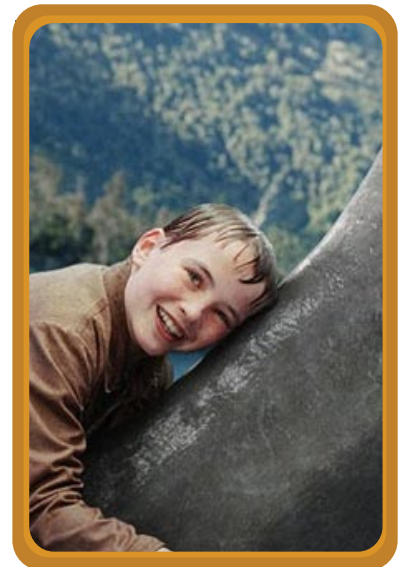
Matthew 10:29-31 NASB

5. What do these verses encourage us to do when we are afraid?

Like we've seen above, God wraps an arm around our shoulders and urges us not to be afraid. In one of the strangest paradoxes, we are also told to fear God. Consider the following verses.

**Proverbs 3:7 • 14:27 • 15:16 • 29:25 • Ecclesiastes 12:13**

6. Create a list of the benefits of fearing God mentioned in the verses above.



## Swimming Deeper

**Sunny Day:**

Go outside and lie down on the grass for 15 minutes. Watch the clouds go by. Count the birds. What surprises you? What gives you feelings of awe?

**Rainy Day:**

Sit beside a window and watch the storm for 15 minutes. Is there lightning and thunder? What is happening to the squirrels and birds? What is "awesome" about the experience?

**Clear Night:**

Find a place outside where there are the least man-made lights. Watch the sky for 15 minutes. Can you count the stars? Do you see any planets? Shooting stars? What is awe-inspiring?

## What is the fear of the Lord?

God is not a dictator that we should cower in fear or run away from Him. Instead, fearing the Lord means being with Him and feeling like we are in the presence of a famous athlete or the President of the United States. Theological scholars refer to the fear of God as "reverential awe."

Write in your journal about a time when you felt awe in the presence of someone.

# The Greatest Challenge of Angus' Life



Throughout the movie, *The Water Horse*, Angus flashes back to happy and poignant moments spent with his father. Angus decorated his father's workshop with nautical charts and a calendar counting down the days until his father would return home from the war. Later, Angus' mother explains to Lewis that her husband's ship sank and there has been no contact for two years. All evidence points to him being lost at sea. But Angus refuses to believe.

Angus, Kirstie, and their mom, Anne, are all grieving the loss differently. Grief is a part of life. We all must endure the process even though it is painful.

1. Lewis does not remove Angus' charts and calendar, even though instructed to do so. How do you think Angus would have reacted to their removal?
2. At the beginning of the movie, when Angus returns from collecting shells, Kirstie asks her mom, "Did Angus have any fun?" Is it difficult for you to have fun when you're sad? Why or why not?
3. What other examples of grief can you remember from the movie?
4. Has someone close to you died? Discuss how you grieved. What two or three things made the process the most difficult? Take a few minutes to share the stories.

Many consider King Solomon to be the wisest man who ever lived. The instructions and observations he wrote in the Proverbs and the book of Ecclesiastes are a part of the Bible because they offer daily, practical help.

5. If someone was giving out bad advice on responding to grief, what would it sound like?
  - Don't cry
  - Plan a funeral
  - Embrace it
  - Ignore it
  - Get angry
  - Spend time alone
  - Spend time crying
  - Plan a lawsuit

Listen to King Solomon's advice:

*Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down,  
But a good word makes him glad.*

Proverbs 12:25 ESV

*Gracious words are like a honeycomb,  
Sweetness to the soul and health to the body.*

Proverbs 12:25 ESV

6. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 and Galatians 6:2. When you think about the two verses from Proverbs and these two passages, how do you think we should respond to grief?

## Swimming Deeper

At this very minute, there is probably a family in your neighborhood, school, or church that is grieving from the death of a loved one. You can make a difference in their grief by visiting with them, sending a card, or another act of love. Ask your family or your teacher how you can help someone around you.



# The Benefits of Loyalty

Angus makes two new friends in the course of his story. He meets Crusoe in his father's workshop and Lewis around the house. Both become fast friends and loyal friends. Throughout *The Water Horse*, we see these friends pushing each other toward growth and deeper relationships. We also see the greatest quality of loyalty—sacrifice.



1. What is your favorite scene of friendship in *The Water Horse*? Why?
2. When you watch the movie, do you:
  - A. Think about similar times with your friends?
  - B. Wish you had experiences like these in your life?
  - C. Dream about what Angus, Crusoe, and Lewis did next?
  - D. Other \_\_\_\_\_
3. How does a loyal friend act or not act? Try to think of three examples of each.

There are several relationships explored in the Bible that demonstrate great loyalty. Abraham loved his cousin Lot almost to his own peril (Genesis 19). Samuel served Eli with great diligence (1 Samuel 3). Peter blundered his way through his relationship with Jesus (Luke 18–22). One of the most powerful examples of loyalty is the friendship between a son of the king and a son of a shepherd.

Jonathan was a son of king Saul, the people's chosen leader. David was the youngest son of Jesse and held a deep secret that would change Saul and Jonathan's lives: God had chosen David to be the next king of Israel. David started serving King Saul when he fought toe-to-toe with Goliath. Over the following years Jonathan and David became as close as brothers.

When the secret became public, Saul sought to kill David like a hound pursues a fox. On several occasions, Jonathan helped save David from his father. During one heart-pounding episode, David and Jonathan plotted a strategy to help David get away. Read about their strategy in 1 Samuel 20: 1-23.

4. What act of loyalty did Jonathan demonstrate that made this strategy complete?

Regretfully, Saul had not stopped his quest for David's neck. Read 1 Samuel 20: 24-42 to see what happened.

5. How do you think David felt about Jonathan in the days that followed his escape?
6. Do you think the strategy helped grow and deepen their friendship? Why or why not?
7. If you were Jonathan, what would you have done next?

## Swimming Deeper

Write down the names of three people you know and appreciate. Take a few minutes, like David and Jonathan, and think of ways you can be loyal to them this week.

Make a promise—or a vow—to finish your list.

VOW, n.

1. A solemn promise or oath to behave in a certain way, carry out a specific plan, or finish a task.