

## Stay Safe by Respecting Animals

Suggested Grade Level: Kindergarten-3

Character: Respect, Responsibility

Relative Subject(s): Language Arts

### Objective

To understand how to be safe around animals and to respect their feelings.

### Materials

- Dog puppet or stuffed animal

### Activity

#### *Preliminary Discussion*

- Do animals have some of the same feelings that people do? Give examples. Have you ever seen a dog or cat happy, sad, scared or excited? Give examples. Think of some times when you felt these feelings also.
- What if you see a dog or cat in your neighborhood without a person - is it okay to pet it? Discuss that you should never go near an animal that is running loose. What could happen? The animal could be lost or homeless, and may bite because it is scared or hurt. Is there a way to help this animal without going near it? Yes! Ask an adult to try to help this animal: your teacher, parent, neighbor, etc. Discuss that animal shelters like the Nebraska Humane Society can help animals that are lost or homeless.
- What if you see a stranger walking a dog - is it okay to pet it? If this person is a stranger, then it is not safe to approach them.
- What if you see a person that you know walking a dog - is it okay to pet it? If you know the person, then it is okay to approach them. Following are the steps to take:
  1. First, ask the person if you can pet the dog. Not every dog is friendly or feels comfortable around children or strangers. What if the person says you should not pet the dog? Then you should respect that and walk away.
  2. If the person says that you can pet the dog, then you should "introduce" yourself to the dog. Hang the top of your hand down by your side for the dog to sniff. This is called .the droopy hand... The top of your hand smells like you - the palm of your hand smells like what you have been touching (for example, if you ate an orange, it would smell like the orange).
  3. Once the dog has sniffed your hand, then you can pet it. You should pet the dog in a place where it can see your hand. Ask the students to take their hands and put them on their head. Can they see their hands? If the dog cannot see your hands, then it may get scared. Therefore, you should gently pet the dog under the chin or on the chest (not the mouth or throat).
  4. Have the students repeat the above three steps.

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- How should you act when you approach a dog? Whenever you are approaching a dog, you should be quiet and gentle. Loud voices and fast movements may scare a dog. Pet a dog very gently and speak to it softly.

### *Procedure*

Using the dog puppet or stuffed animal, have each student come up and practice the steps on how to meet a dog.

### *Post-Discussion*

- You should always treat pets gently, be quiet and move slowly around them, whether it is a dog, cat, rabbit, gerbil or bird. How would you feel if someone came up to you and started yelling and pulling your hair? It would probably scare you and make you mad. Animals have these same feelings.
- How can we be safe around our own pets? Can our own pets get scared or mad at things we do? Yes, we need to make sure that we treat our own pets with respect also. When our pets are eating or playing with their toys, we should not try to take their food or toys from them. Pets do not know how to share like we do. When our pets are sleeping, we should not make a lot of noise and wake them. They could get scared and growl or even bite. If your pet is sick or hurt you, should not touch it because it may think you're causing the pain and bite you. Tell your parents if you think your pet is sick or hurt.

### **Extension Activity**

Invite an educator from the Nebraska Humane Society to do an expanded animal safety program with your class. Call the Humane Education Department at 402.444.7800 Ext. 220 for more information and to schedule a program.

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