

What Would You Do If...

Suggested Grade Level: Middle school

OBJECTIVE

To be able to look at a situation, analyze it, and choose the appropriate action. To develop compassion and respect for all living things.

MATERIALS

- Poster Paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Sample situations copied for groups

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- We are all faced with situations when we have to make important decisions. We may see another living creature that needs help is neglected or is being treated cruelly and we must find the courage to do the right thing for that person or animal.
- When have you had to stand up for someone or help someone in need?
- Define "empathy" and "compassion."

Procedure

Students will divide into pairs. Each pair will be assigned to a specific situation and will work together to resolve it. They can then combine with the other pairs who have the same scenario and their different ideas on poster paper. They should choose one or two they feel are the best resolutions and present it to the rest of the class.

Post-Discussion

- How did each group reach their conclusions?
- What can we do to help prevent these types of situations from occurring?
- Instead of just looking out for ourselves, we also need to look out for each other. We all live in this world together, and when we help other living creatures to live happier lives, we are creating a better world for everyone.
- Every person and animal on this planet exists for a reason and we all have something positive to contribute.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Have each student interview an adult (parent, friend, neighbor, etc.) and ask them about a time in their lives when they had to face a situation similar to the ones in this activity, and how they handled the situation. Each student should share their story with the class.

Nebraska Humane Society
8929 Fort Street Omaha, NE 68134 402.444.7800 www.nehumanesociety.org

SAMPLE SITUATIONS

What Would You Do If?

You were walking home from school with friends and you saw a group of kids your age standing around a stray dog. The dog definitely looked like it had been living on the streets for a while because it had a matted coat, and was very thin and dirty. As you walked closer to the group, you could see that the kids were yelling at it, teasing it, kicking it and throwing rocks at it. The dog looked very scared, was backed into a corner and could not escape. What would you do in this situation?

What Would You Do If?

You were getting your books out of your locker and overheard two kids talking about your friend Susan. You heard them say that Susan was a liar and that she stole a cellular phone from a store. You knew that Susan had a new phone and had been wondering where she got it. As you walked through the school, you heard even more kids whispering about Susan and her new phone. You started feeling uncomfortable about all of these people talking about Susan and began to wonder if the story was true, or just a rumor. What would you do in this situation?

What Would You Do If?

You lived next door to a family with two young children, a dog and a cat. One night you were putting the garbage bin outside and heard screaming and yelling coming from their house. The next day, as you were walking to school, you saw the mother getting the newspaper and the dog ran out of the house. She caught the dog and kicked it several times. Later that day you saw her young son playing outside and noticed that he had a black eye. You asked him what happened and he said he fell on the playground. You wonder what is going on with this family. What would you do in this situation?

What Would You Do If?

You and a few friends were walking to the mall and you saw an old man in a wheelchair. It had snowed that morning and the sidewalk was icy and wet. As the man was trying to get off the curb and cross the street, his wheelchair skidded on the ice and he fell onto the street. Your friends started to laugh and make fun of the man as he was trying hard to get back up. Your friends began walking away. What would you do in this situation?