

## Loose Dog!

**Suggested Grade Levels:** K-3

**Subject:** Language Arts

**Character:** Respect – Safety with Pets

**Materials and technology to be used:**

- Realistic, stuffed dog (or large photo/projection of a dog) – **x1**
- “Five Safety Steps” pictures (can turn into magnets) – **x1 set**
- “Being Safe Around Dogs” coloring/activity sheet – **x1 per student**

**Objective(s):**

To familiarize students with the appropriate actions to take if approached by an unfamiliar dog.

**Anticipatory Set/Hook:**

Have a large, stuffed dog (or photo) standing on the floor in front of the students. Read the following scenario –

*“Imagine this dog was real. You were walking home from school one day when suddenly you see this dog crawl out of the bushes in front of you and begin to sniff around. He looks at you, and then back down at the ground. The dog appears friendly, but you have never met the dog before, you think you **might** have seen him in a neighbor’s yard, though. The dog continues to sniff around and explore his surroundings. He begins to walk closer...and closer...and closer to you. How would you feel? What do you do?”*

Allow a couple of students to share their thoughts – do not add teacher input. Have students ponder these questions to themselves and revisit this scenario at the end of the lesson.

**Lesson Beginning:**

1. Talk with students about unfamiliar animals they have encountered that frightened them. Due to fear, some children become prejudiced toward stray animals and want to inadvertently harm them or run from them. To prevent this, explain that when an animal is frightened, it may bite to protect itself. This does not mean the animal is bad or mean, just frightened. Stray animals are in a heightened sense of fear. Stray animals may be homeless, or could be lost, hurt or sick. They need our help.

*Ask students to think about how it would feel to be lost or alone with no family or friends. Remember that even if an animal needs help, that is a job for an adult. The first rule to pay special attention to is:*

**NEVER GO NEAR AN UNKNOWN OR LOOSE ANIMAL. STAY AWAY.** – You would not approach a person you do not know, and the same is true for animals.

2. If a dog is *with* an **adult** owner and is safely restrained with both a collar and leash, it *may* be safe to greet the dog. Review safe meet and greet rules with all students (see an [NHS Educator](#) for this lesson plan/presentation for your class).
3. Discuss the following: If a loose or unfamiliar dog comes up to you, follow these five steps to keep yourself safe (as you discuss each step, add a “Five Safety Steps” photo to your whiteboard).....
  1. **Do not run.** Freeze.
  2. **Do not scream.** Use friendly body language. Dogs have sensitive hearing and this could excite or scare them. Do not stare into the dog’s eyes. In dog language, staring is a challenge to fight.
  3. **Be a Tree.** Stand very still and quiet, arms at your side, feet together. Do not wave your arms around or try to hit or kick the dog. Stay calm and he probably will too. The dog may sniff you then leave when he realizes you do not want to hurt him.

*Have students demonstrate and practice these steps.*

4. If you fall or the dog knocks you down or begins to jump on you, **Be a Rock.** Duck and cover like you would for a tornado drill. Clasp your hands behind your neck and pull your elbows in to cover your ears. Go down on your knees, then all the way to the ground with your legs tucked under your body. Your face, ears, neck, and legs are protected. (It is similar to the tucked position for tornado drills.) Stay down and “play dead” until the dog leaves, then get up and back slowly out of the area.

*Have students demonstrate and practice.*

5. Go tell an adult. Describe what the dog looked like and in which direction he went. An adult can help the animal and keep others in the area safe.

**Middle of Lesson:**

1. Engage students in a role-play. One student can play the role of the loose dog and the other student will play the role of the human. Have the “dog” approach the human. Act out the safe things the human should do as well as the dog’s reactions.

\*Remind students that animals that are lost or alone are frightened and need help.

2. Share the below poem and act out hand motions with younger students...

*I’m just a lost little/big dog, as lonely as can be* (make a fist of left hand, thumb for head and little finger for tail).

*Won’t somebody be a friend to me?* (Right hand moves toward left with walking motion of index and middle fingers; when they meet, enclose the left fist that is the dog into the right hand, so as to bring the dog and person together).

**End of Lesson:**

1. Have students go back to their seats and complete the “Being Safe Around Dogs” coloring page. Have them read it to a neighbor before coloring.
2. Chant the sayings together – “Never Flee, Be a Tree.” “Stop, Drop, Be a Rock.”

**Closure (Questions to be asked/Metacognition):**

Provide students with 1 minute to reflect on what they learned. Revisit the scenario from the hook of the lesson. “What would you do now?”

## 5 Safety Steps Around Loose Dogs



**Do not run.**



**Do not scream or  
stare.**





**Be a Tree. Stand  
calm and still.**



**Be a Rock. Protect  
your body.**



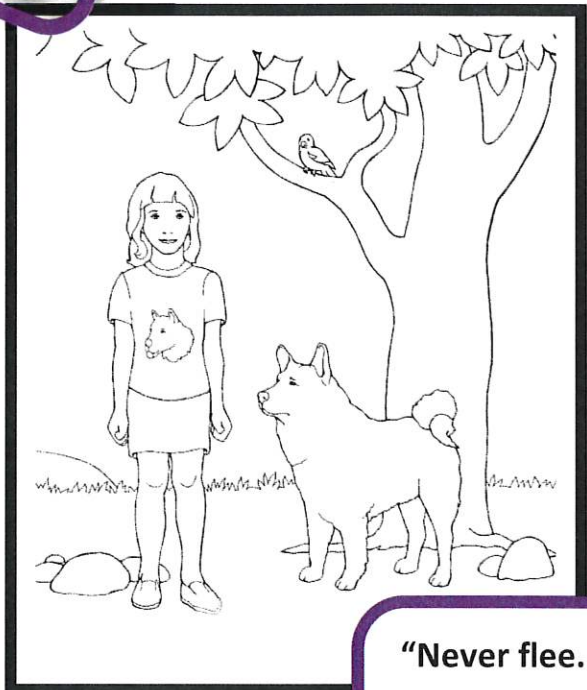
**Tell an adult.**

# BEING SAFE AROUND DOGS:



"If an angry dog is running toward you, remember to...."

If a dog comes near you and doesn't have **both** an owner and a leash, you want him or her to leave. Remember...

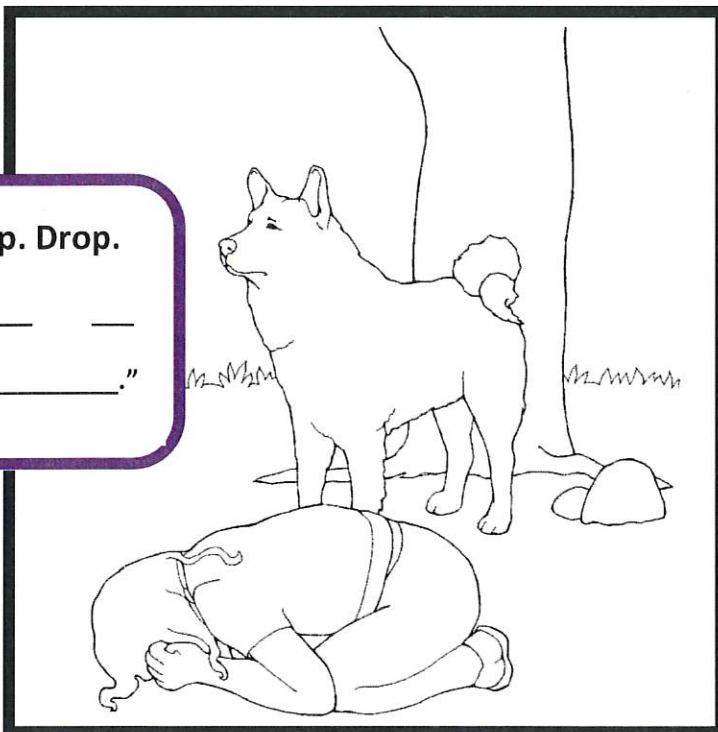


"Never flee.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."

"Stop. Drop.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_."



Stay like a rock until the angry dog is **very** far away. Then stand up slowly and walk slowly away from the dog. Report this event to an adult right away.