



LESSON: Being Kind to Pets (for Young Learners)

GRADE: Pre-K

TIME: 30-45 minutes

DESCRIPTION: Using props and demonstrations, students are introduced to the components of being a responsible pet owner, the similarities between pet needs and human needs, and how to safely and respectfully interact with pets. This is a great introduction to responsible and compassionate pet care for young learners.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: N/A

OBJECTIVE: Introduce students to the concepts of being a responsible pet owner, the similarities between pet needs and human needs, and how to safely and compassionately interact with pets.

GOALS:

1. Identify items needed to responsibly take care of pets.
2. Compare pet needs with human needs.
3. Introduce how to safely and respectfully interact with pets.

MATERIALS:

- A stuffed animal dog and/or cat
- Large bag students cannot see through
- Responsible pet care items
 - Water bowl
 - pet food in baggie
 - Treat
 - Leash
 - Collar
 - Blanket
 - Medical supplies
 - Pet shampoo
 - Poop bags
 - Litter box scooper
 - Pet toys
 - Brush
 - Pet care book
 - Sample of pet food
 - Etc.
- A large red cardboard heart
- Informational/Educational materials

LESSON DETAILS:

1. Introduction

- a. *A very basic introduction to HOV:* “I work at Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter. We take care of cats and dogs who don’t have families. Raise your hand if you have a cat or dog or any other type of pet at home. All the cats and dogs at our animal shelter do not have homes to live in like yours. We have over a hundred cats and dogs at our shelter and we take care of them by giving them food, water, exercise and love. Then we help find them homes and families to love them forever.”

2. Pet needs activity

- a. Introduce the stuffed animal and bag of items: “I’m so excited, I just adopted this dog. Her name is Lucy. Taking care of a pet is a lot of work and I have a lot of things in this bag to help me out. Let’s find out what they are!”
- b. One-by-one, have a student pick something out of the bag and put it next to Lucy. They can put collars or leashes on Lucy, or pretend to dry off or brush the stuffed animal, etc.
 - i. Explain what each item is and why Lucy needs us to give her that item.
 - ii. Ask: Do humans also need ____?
 - iii. *Optional: include items in the bag that pets do not need. Ask: “Does Lucy need this?” If no, dramatically throw it behind you.
- c. When the bag is empty, quickly review items in and around Lucy.
- d. Introduce the Heart
 - i. “Wait! There is one very important things missing, and Lucy needs a lot of it! (*optional: take guesses). “It is love!” Pull out the heart.

3. Loving and Respecting Pets

- a. “I’m going to give Lucy so much love!” Demonstrate how not to give the pet love by running up to the stuffed animal, shouting, pulling the tail, and picking up, hugging and kissing the animal.
- b. Ask:
 - i. Is that how I should show my love to Lucy?
 - ii. How do you think Lucy feels when I hug and kiss her and pick her up?
 - iii. How do you think Lucy likes it when I pull her tail?
 - iv. Do you think I might scare Lucy if I come screaming and running towards her?
 - v. Do you think I might hurt Lucy if I touch her too hard?
 - vi. Would you like it if I pulled your hair or put my hands all over your face?
- c. “We need to be kind, gentle and respectful to pets. If we hurt or scare our pets, they might tell us to stop by scratching or biting us.” Demonstrate how to kindly and gently show love to the pet.
- d. Pets do not like hugs or kisses. Show your love by gently petting the head, ears or back.
- e. If you see a dog who is not yours—you need to ask the owner first. If you want to pet a dog, you need to ask “May I pet your dog?” Let’s say that together. “May I pet your dog?” If you want to pet a cat you don’t know, you need to ask “May I pet your cat?” first. Let’s say that together. “May I pet your cat?”
- f. *Optional:* Ask for volunteers to come show the class how to kindly show their love to the pet.

4. Conclusion:

- a. “Thank you for helping me figure out how to love and care for my new dog Lucy!”
- b. Invite students to visit Heart of the Valley to say hello to the cats and dogs at our shelter.

NOTES: