

Character Education –CITIZENSHIP



Lesson: Animal Neglect

Initiating Questions:

What constitutes a good citizen? What are some things a good citizen might do? What are some things a good citizen can do for animals?

Description:

Students will learn about some animal laws in our community. Specifically, they will learn about the plight of dogs on chains, and the absence of law in this area. Students will learn what they can do to make their voice heard and to make a difference in their own community on behalf of animals.

Procedure:

1. Begin the lesson with the initiating questions above or choose some questions of your own. You're looking for the response that a good citizen is somebody that follows the law and helps the community in which they live.
2. Ask the students what laws they follow regarding their own pets at home (See "for your information" regarding laws). Share with them some of the laws in Broward County to protect animals. Explain to them that laws are ultimately for the protection of both animals and people.
3. Tell the students that the law against the "**Confinement of animals without sufficient food, water or exercise; abandonment of animals**" (write on the board) is a law that needs to be improved and enforced. Explain that every day thousands of dogs are kept on four to six foot chains for their entire lives.
4. Explain to students that currently the law in Florida states that dogs only need to be provided with food, water and proper shelter. The law does not forbid dogs to be kept on chains. Ask the students if they think it's fair that dogs stay on chains for prolonged periods of time. Ask how many think it is wrong and give reasons why, list on the board.
5. Ask them what a good citizen might do to help dogs on chains or what could be done to prevent other dogs from becoming a victim of this cruelty. Suggestions might be:

●**Educate others:** Tell friends, neighbors and family about the miserable life of chained dogs. Call the Humane Society of Broward County to get information to pass onto others about chained dogs (954) 989-3977.

- Write a letter to your Governor / Senator: Let your voice be heard! Each person can make a difference. Tell them you think it is wrong and would like to see a law to protect dogs from this abuse.

Senator Bill Nelson: Fax: 202 228-2862

Senator@billnelson.senate.gov

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

- Report Cruelty/ Neglect - You can be a voice for the animals, since they can't speak for themselves. If you see an animal being abused or neglected it report it to the Humane Society at (954) 266-6823 or the Sheriff's Animal Abuse Unit at (954) 765-4321.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

Regarding animal laws:

There are many laws in Broward County to protect animals. Here are just a few.

1. **Leash law:** Your dog must be kept on a leash if it is outside your fenced yard. This law is to protect your dog from being hurt, injured or lost. The law is also made to protect people and other animals from being hurt or bitten by a loose dog.
2. **Rabies:** Every dog or cat four months of age or older in the State of Florida must be vaccinated and licensed against rabies. The reason for this law is to protect people and other animals from catching this fatal viral disease.
3. **Abandonment of animals:** It is against the law for any person to willfully abandon any animal for a period in excess of 24 hours without providing food, water, proper shelter, protection from the weather and necessary veterinary care for the animal.
4. **Fighting animals prohibited:** It is a felony for any person to cause, instigate or encourage any dog or animal to fight another of its own species or another of a different species, or to maintain a place where any dog or animal is permitted to fight for exhibition, for wager or for sport.

Regarding dogs on chains:

Dogs are very social animals. They are used to living in packs, today in our society their pack is their human family. Humans domesticated dogs over 10,000 years ago to live as companions and family pets. Since then they have learned to live with us and depend on us. Dogs are not solitary animals without us they suffer horribly from loneliness. Dogs kept on chains for long periods, begin to suffer from boredom and loneliness. As a result these dogs sometimes get very depressed and give up. Other dogs become aggressive from lack of mental stimulation and socialization with human beings. All dogs left on chains will end up with a variety of behavior problems such as digging, biting, barking and chewing. It is simply cruel and inhumane to have any dog spend long periods of time on a chain.

Follow-up Activity: Have student investigate an animal law and give an oral report to the class.

*This lesson was provided by the Humane Society of Broward County, 2070 Griffin Road
Call (954) 266-6848 to find out more about our education programs available to you!*

“SELF CONTROL”
Lesson: Training your pet positively!

Initiating Questions:

How many of you have pets at home? How many of you have ever had a behavior problem with your pet? If so what have you done to remedy the problem? Have you ever gotten angry at your pet, because they didn't listen? Have you ever yelled at them or hit them out of frustration?

Description:

Students will learn about positive training methods to teach their pets (mainly dogs & cats) how to behave properly. Students will learn about options to control their pet's behavior.

Materials:

Clicker or other device to make noise like a bell
Human Treats – candy
Dog Obedience forms

Procedure:

1. Begin lesson with initiating questions above or choose some questions of your own. Emphasize the importance of being patient with your pets. Explain that is upsetting to people when someone isn't patient with us. Your pet will only become frustrated if you don't exercise patience with them.
2. State that it isn't fair to get angry at your pet if it does something wrong and you haven't trained it to do the proper thing. Tell the students that today they will learn three concepts to teach their pet in a positive and healthy way.
3. The first concept (write on the board): **All living things repeat behaviors that are rewarding and avoid behaviors that are not.** (See For Your Information) Explain to students that many times we only want to correct our pets for what they do wrong and we ignore what they do right.
4. Give an example by complimenting a student in the room. Make them feel really good about themselves. Points out humans too, are more likely to perform better if they are reinforced in a positive way.
5. The second concept (write on the board): **Your pet already knows just about everything you are going to teach him.** Ask students, does your dog know how to sit, lie down, walk by your side etc? Explain that with training you are simply associating a word in English to something they already now how to do.
6. The third concept (write on the board): **Learning should be fun, not painful!** Ask the students if they would rather learn their spelling words by writing them until they had cramps in their fingers or would they rather make a game of it. Learning is always better if you're making it fun! Your pet is going to shut down if training is harsh or boring so it's up to you to make it fun!

7. Tell the kids you're going to play a little game to demonstrate "positive reinforcement" using the concepts above. The only thing is we have to pretend that one of us cannot speak English—just like your pet. This exercise will help to show you how frustrating it can be to the animal if they don't understand you! This will help the students to understand how an animal might feel.
8. Select two students to come to the front of the room. One of them will be the trainer and the other the "person" being trained. Tell them that you are going to give the trainer an index card with a "command." Tell the class that the trainer cannot talk to the person being trained but only reinforce what they are doing right.
9. Give the trainer a clicker or a bell, and small candy rewards. On an index card indicate the behavior you want performed by the person. Mark index card "

Character Education Lesson Ideas

Responsibility:

How to properly take care of your pet

Can I afford to own a pet?

About the Animal Shelter / Making a lifetime commitment to your pet

Kindness:

Training with Kindness (Self-Control)

Helping the less fortunate – community service projects

Respect:

The pyramid of life – respecting all living creatures

Recognizing Animal Abuse – how to help

Self Control: (tolerance & kindness)

Training with kindness