SAFETY WITH ANIMALS

**Lesson 2: Grades 4-6**

**Using Detective Work to Pet-Proof your Home and Locate Lost Pets**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.5, 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 4.1 & 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts:1, 4 & 6; Fine Arts: 4; Health & Phys Ed: 5 & 7

**Objectives:** The students will identify ways to “pet proof” their homes to make them safe for their pets. They will identify ways to prevent their pets from becoming lost and will familiarize themselves with appropriate steps of action to retrieve lost pets.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.5.1c—Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.**

**SL.5.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.**

Life can be dangerous for our animal friends. They can’t read warning labels or signs and often don’t understand what is not safe. List the dangers they might face in our day-to-day, normal lives and homes. Think about things right outside of your yard and front door as well as in your home. What dangers might our pets encounter?

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility

Plan ahead, think about your pets and what you need to do to keep them safe. Think before you place them in a dangerous circumstance; for instance, leaving the gate of your yard open so they can get out or leaving a toxic substance within their reach.

**STEM initiatives: Thinking critically in the connections to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math**

**5-PSI-3; 5-PSI-4:** Cause and effect relationships are routinely identified, test and used to explain change. What dangers can an animal face in our everyday environment? What actions can you take to prevent harm in these situations? Chart the results.

**Materials Needed:**

* Markers
* Poster board or 11 x 17 paper
* Tape
* Current pictures of students’ pets or favorite pet
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Hidden Hazards” (one per student or scan for use in a power point slide)
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Microchip”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Lost Pets” bookmark

**Method:**

**Part 1:** Pass out the Hidden Hazards handouts to each student or use the transparency for all to see. Explain to students that it is very important to pet-proof your home in order to keep it safe for your pets. Tell the students that don’t have pets that they can use their sleuthing skills to help neighbors, relatives and friends pet-proof their homes. Ask your students with younger brothers and sisters to identify things their parents have done to make their house safer for their siblings (electrical socket covers, cabinet locks, moved candles out of reach, keep small items off the floor and out of reach, etc.). Explain that these same household items and others are dangerous to animals as well. Tell them you are about to send them on a mission.

They are going to go “undercover” in groups and have three minutes to inspect the classroom, which has many of the same hazards as the home. Cooperative learning is important so encourage them to stay in their groups and explore together. Tell them to remember what they find because they are going to share what they uncover. Begin playing the Mission Impossible music, ask the students to have their spyglasses ready for some action.

Announce when the time is up and have each group report their discoveries. Write these on the board as you go, being careful not to exclude any suggestions. Write down all the rooms of a house on the chalkboard and have the class list potential hazards beneath each room. Encourage them to close their eyes and think of instances in each room in their house where potential hazards could be found (include yard, basement, bedrooms, bathrooms, kitchens, laundry room etc.). Type these up and distribute a copy to each student in a checklist format so they can use it to pet-proof their homes or the homes of neighbors and relatives. Make it official-looking, easy to read and put the name of your class somewhere on the form.

**Part 2:** Explain to students that besides Pet-Proofing their home, they need to escape-proof it! Discuss what could happen if their pets escape, become lost or left outdoors unsupervised:

1. They might be stolen
2. Hit by a car
3. Attacked by another animal
4. Harmed by a mean person
5. Starve without adequate food or water

Ask the class what actions can be taken to prevent a pet from becoming lost and list them on the chalkboard. They should include:

1. Always keep your cats indoors.
2. Never leave pets outside unsupervised.
3. Always walk your pets on a leash.
4. Have your pet micro-chipped!

Explain that a microchip is a little metal bar the size of a grain of rice that is injected between the pet’s shoulder blades just beneath the skin with a needle (like a shot or vaccination). If their lost pet is found and taken to a veterinary clinic or animal shelter their pet will be scanned and the microchip information will be found on a computer database where the owner’s name, address and phone number is stored and they can be called and notified that their pet has been found. Explain that thousands of animals each year are reunited with their families and find their way back home because they have a microchip. The microchip is relatively painless to insert, is injected by a veterinarian and costs around $25.00. This is a small price to pay for your pet’s ticket home! Tell your young detectives that no two microchips have the same number so each animal can be identified. *Quick Quiz:* Ask them what identification they have on their bodies that is not the same as anyone else’s in the world. (answer: fingerprints of course!)

Hand out a Lost Pet bookmark to each student and discuss each plan of action on the bookmark. Stress the importance of following all of the steps to increase their chances of finding their lost pet. Explain why it is important to keep recent photographs of each pet in case he/she becomes lost. You can use this photo to ask neighbors if they’ve seen your pet and to make posters and flyers to hang up around your neighborhood. Encourage students not to give up looking if their pets become lost! Tell them to put their detective skills to use to help friends and family find lost pets too!

**Call to Action:** You can speak with your principal or other teachers and invite their classes to attend an assembly where your students can explain and distribute the “pet-proof” checklists they’ve created.

Have students create Lost Pet Posters in advance just in case their pets become lost. Ask students with multiple pets to bring in current pictures of **all** of their pets so those students without pets can use some of their photos to make posters that their classmates can use. Students without pets may also bring in recent photos of relatives’, neighbors’ or friends’ pets. Instruct students to tape the photo to their poster and include the following:

-Pet’s name

-Description of pet

-Description of collar/tags

-Location and date he/she was last seen

-Your phone number including area code

-Offer a reward

-DO NOT put your name or address on the flyer

If they tape the picture instead of gluing it, they can easily remove and update the picture. Hopefully you won’t need the poster but you will have it ready to go at a moment’s notice if he/she does disappear. Hang your poster(s) in grocery stores, community centers, churches, parks, gas stations and other public places in your area.

**HEY TEACHERS! If your students want more fun, here are some additional hand-outs to download:**

“Mixed-up Nouns”

**Reading:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Children’s Literature*** for a comprehensive listing of animal-related books.

**Web sites:**

[www.forpetsake.com](http://www.forpetsake.com)

[www.cyberpet.com](http://www.cyberpet.com)