SAFETY WITH ANIMALS

**LESSON 3: Grades K-3**

**WHY DID MY DOG BITE?**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.5, 1.6, 1.10, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.6, 4.7

**Knowledge Goals:** Science: 3; Health & Phys Ed: 5

**Objective:** To increase students’ awareness regarding when a dog is most likely to bite.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

**SL.K-2.1—Participate in collaborative conversations with peers and adults.**

**SL.K-2.1—Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions.**

On the board, list the traits most recognized in dogs (ex. friendly, playful, fun) List the reasons you might want a dog as a pet and companion. Finally, list the ways we need to behave around dogs to garner these traits. Encourage students to contribute traits, desires and behaviors.

**Character Concepts:** Respect, Fairness

**Respect:** Be aware of the behaviors your dog is exhibiting and what he is trying to ‘say’ to you. Give him the opportunity to succeed in good behavior by respecting his space and needs, i.e. when eating, sleeping, etc.

**Fairness:** Sharing your home, time and life with a dog is a little like living with a person from a different country. We need to be patient and understanding as we blend together. Be open-minded and patient. Be fair.

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

**2-LS4-1--** Who are dogs descendants of in the wild? Make a list of the natural traits of dogs. How do dogs share their lives with us? What traits or characteristics were dogs bred for and how did they use these skills? How would those skills translate to life in your home? (ex.; Dachshunds were bred to go into holes to hunt badgers. Would they enjoy tunneling into a blanket or sleeping with a blanket over them?) What traits do your students see in their own dogs and how can they help them ‘answer the call of the wild’ by satisfying these behaviors in domestic life?

**Materials Needed:**

* Writing utensils
* Stuffed dogs
* Food bowl
* Dog treat
* Dog bed, bandage
* Tug toy
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Why Dogs Bite: A Guideline for Children”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “ASPCA, Reading Canine Body Postures”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Dog Bites Dos and Don’ts”

**Method:** Introduce this lesson by telling students that most people are bitten by a dog they already know. That includes their own pets and those of neighbors, friends, and family. Most dog bites happen at home.

Children ages 5 to 9 are bitten more often than anyone else. So it’s important to learn when dogs are most likely to bite. You can live safely with dogs by remembering to be more careful during those times. Discuss the handout “Why Dogs Bite: A Guideline to Children” with the class.

Distribute a copy of the handout “ASPCA, Reading Canine Body Postures” to each student.

After discussing this handout, review the information. Do this by using stuffed dogs and props to pretend that the dog is engaged in different behaviors that make it an unsafe time to approach him. For each behavior, have students tell you if it is safe or unsafe to approach him. Pretend he is:

Eating - dogs may bite when surprised or scared. So don’t ever sneak up on pets or bother pets when they are eating.

Sleeping – again, dogs may bite when surprised or scared. Don’t sneak up on pets when they are sleeping.

Guarding something – dogs may bite when they are protecting their things like toys, food, puppies, home, owner, or even an owner’s car. Avoid teasing dogs behind fences or in cars. Never try to take food, toys, or treats out of a dog’s mouth. Get an adult to help if your dog has something he shouldn’t.

Sick or hurt - when dogs are sick or hurt, they may bite if you come too close. Stay away from pets that aren’t feeling well. Get an adult if you think a dog needs help.

Fighting - dogs may bite people who try to break up a dogfight. Never try to break up a dogfight. Ask an adult for help!

Playing rough - dogs may bite when they’re playing rough. Don’t play rough with your dog. Try a walk or a game of fetch instead.

**Call to Action:** Create a bulletin board as a class using pictures from magazines that show when a dog is most likely to bite. You may wish to choose a prominent bulletin board somewhere in the school so that other students may learn from it. Or each student may wish to create a collage poster to take home and share with their family.

Send the handout “Dog Bites Do’s and Don’ts home with the children. Ask them to share it with their families and friends.

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

**Web sites:** Visit our section entitled ***Recommended Web Links*** for animal-related web sites.