**WONDERFULLY WILD UNIT**

**LESSON 5: Grades 4-6**

**WALKING IN SOMEONE ELSE’S PAWS, HOOVES OR CLAWS**

**Curriculum Connections, Standards addressed:**

**Academic Goals:** 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.5, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6

**Knowledge Goals:** Communication Arts: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6; Science: 3, 4, 8; Fine Arts: 1, 2, 4

**Objective:** To help foster compassion and empathy in students by encouraging them to imagine what it might be like to be a wild animal. Students will utilize persuasive writing and speaking to make others aware of the plight of wild animals in their communities and encourage them to act on behalf of the animals.

**Common Core-Aligned Activities:**

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

Encourage students to ‘walk’ in the body of another animal. Create a scenario and ask students to discuss their feelings, for example, how does it feel to be a deer during hunting season or a dog chained outside during a thunderstorm? List the animals around you…in your home, neighborhood, parks, community. How does it ‘feel’---really feel!---to be these animals? How do our actions, or lack of action, affect their lives? Would you classify your actions as ‘humane?’

**Character Concepts:** Responsibility, Citizenship

**Responsibility:** Think before you act, considering the consequences. The trickle-down effect of our actions on the environment can make or break the habitat and welfare of all living creatures.

**Citizenship:** Do your share to make your school and community better. This includes being a good neighbor, protecting the environment and being aware of our actions and their impact on all of nature.

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

**MS-PS2-3, MS-PS2-5—**Cause and effect relationships may be used to predict phenomena in natural or designed systems. A chain reaction can occur within the environment by our action or lack of action. Every individual can have an effect on the ecosystem, affecting the welfare of all living creatures.

Reflecting on your work above, create scenarios that place animals in different circumstances. Chart the responses you might expect. What can you do to make a better life for these animals, circumventing that which cause them harm?

**Materials Needed:**

* Paper
* Pencils
* Resource materials (wildlife magazines, newspaper articles, encyclopedias, internet, science books, various non-fiction books about animals, etc.)
* Socks, fabric, glue, googly eyes, other craft items
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Story of My Life”
* DOWNLOAD Handout: “Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be”

**Method:**

1. Give students 60 seconds to make a list of their favorite things to do and eat. Once their lists are comprised, have each student share one of their favorites with the class.

2. Ask students to close their eyes and imagine that they are trapped in a cage. Imagine what it would feel like not to be able to do or eat any of the things they enjoy. With their eyes still closed, read the poem “*Where the Wild Things Shouldn’t Be”.* When finished, ask students to open their eyes and share how they are feeling using one or two words only. Discuss these feelings and draw the conclusion that this is what it feels like to a wild animal that has been captured. Ask the students if it is fair for us to take an animal from his family to keep as our pet to look at and play with when we feel like it.

3. Put the students in groups of 2-4 and have them select an animal that is often captured as a pet and held in captivity. Explain to the students that they are now going to try not to think about themselves right now. They are going to put themselves in another creature's paws, hooves or claws and really imagine what it feels like to be that animal, who has been trapped and is being kept as a pet.

4. Using the available resources, they will research and make a list of the things that their animal does on a daily basis in the wild. Describe their habitat and role. Have them describe what they know about this animal's care if he/she was a pet (kept in an aquarium, fed dead crickets, etc.).

5. Once this background research has been done, the students will create a short puppet play/script about this animal and his/her feelings about being captured. Obviously, the animal would be the main character. Other characters could be the animal's family, the person who captures the animal, etc. The moral of the story should be that the human has good intentions to care for the animal but then realizes that the animal is unhappy and sets him free. The book titled *Lightening Bugs* is an excellent story to read right before they create their scripts.

6. Give the students time to create puppets that represent the characters in their play and time to practice their puppet plays.

7. Have the students present their puppet plays to the class. Celebrate their performances and discuss the plays.

**Call to Action:** Arrange for your students to perform their puppet shows for the younger students in the school to help spread the message about leaving wildlife alone. Shows could also be performed at an open house or a special performance for parents. Explain that they are helping animals by spreading the word!

**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 Sites*** for animal-related web sites.