

Lucky Dog Humane Education Lesson 3 – Letter from a Shelter Pet

Aligns to the following Common Core Standards for K-5

(ELA = English Language Arts)

! **ELA Re Literature** - Standards 1, 2 & 9

! **ELA Speaking and Listening** - Standards 1, 2, 4, 5 & 6

! **ELA Writing** – Standards 3 & 4

Aligns to Social Emotional Learning Outcomes

! **Self Awareness:** Identifying emotions, thoughts and values

! **Self Management:** Self-discipline - Impulse control

! **Social Awareness:** Perspective-talking - Empathy - Respect for others - Diversity

! **Relationship Skills:** Communication - Relationship building

! **Responsible Decision-making:** Identifying problems - Analyzing situations - Solving Problems - Ethical responsibility - Reflecting

OBJECTIVE: To inspire children to feel compassion and empathy by asking them to look into the heart and mind of a shelter pet and write a letter from that pet's perspective.

PREPARATION: Teacher or Presenter will lead a prepared PowerPoint discussion that includes reading the Book *Before You Were Mine* By Maribeth Boelts. This will give students basic knowledge about a companion animal's need for a loving home and shelter.

METHOD:

- Lucky Dog H.E. presenters (or classroom teacher) will use a combined PowerPoint and Storybook presentation, accompanied by posters, puppets, and props – The children will be introduced things that make an animal feel safe and happy vs. things that make an animal feel scared and sad.

- Presenters will leave expansion activities for the classroom. These activities will help teachers promote compassion for animals and compassion in the classroom. They will also inspire children to understand that they, too, can participate in positive change for shelter animals, stray animals, and pet overpopulation.

IMPLEMENTATION:

After participating in the Empathy for Animals lesson and story, the classroom teacher will read the book The Forgotten Rabbit by Nancy Furstinger, then facilitate a class discussion on ways to help an animal feel safe, happy and loved. The teacher will ask open-ended questions about how an animal feels if forgotten/neglected or when a stray or in the shelter. The class can also discuss what animals wish for and dream of and compare their own wishes and dreams. The children will then be given the task of writing a letter from a forgotten or stray animal or a shelter pet's perspective. They can write it as a hopeful letter to a future family, a wish list to an animal rescuer, or a plea to other families to not let their pets end up as a stray or in the shelter. (See example letter and adapted letter in resource packet)

Materials:

Paper, pens, and real pictures of shelter pets (Download photos from your local shelter's website)

Concepts: Teaching empathy and compassion. Teaching the importance of keeping your pets for life, giving your pets the love and care they need, and keeping pets safe and in your home. Promoting the concept of adopting from an animal shelter as opposed to purchasing from a pet store or breeder.

CONCLUSION: Have children take turns reading their letters aloud while displaying a photo of the shelter pet they are writing for. Save letters and photos to display at "Kindnessfest" at the conclusion of the Lucky Dog Humane Education Program