

Hello from Noah's ark! I say that tongue in cheek. Our area of Oklahoma is receiving up to 7 inches of rain over the next few days. Not only is it raining, but there is quite a bit of lightning and thunder. I now know which puppies are a bit more sound sensitive. I can't really blame the puppies. The thunder storm Saturday morning started at 4 am and lasted 3 hours. That is a ton of noise!

As the puppies are being prepared for their new homes, I am working on repetitive commands. Although not absolutely necessary, using these commands will help the puppies adjust to their new homes, and continue on the good training behavior I started with them.

1. Quiet Puppy- I only allow my puppies to wildly bark when they are outside. If puppies are allowed to wail, bark and make lots of noise in the house, I am unable to distinguish when they actually need something, versus when they are being bratty. I use the "Quiet Puppy" command when I put them in their crates. I also use "Quiet Puppy" when the doorbell rings, and the dogs alert me.

2. Nap time/Bed time- Just like small children, puppies need a time to rest. I am a big proponent of crate time. Crate time can be used in a variety of ways. I use this time to run errands. Puppies, like children, must be supervised. A puppy that is out of sight, is doing something wrong. When the puppies are placed in a crate, I say "nap time" and walk away. If there is complaining, "quiet puppy" is the command, followed by "nap time".

"Bedtime" is used in much the same manner, except for the time. It is very important that a command is given. Puppies need to understand what is expected of them. The "Bedtime" command is very important because it gives the puppies an idea that they will be in the crate for an extended period of time.

3. Go potty- This command is self explanatory, but it is probably the most important to reinforce. There needs to be a consistent command given to the puppies to keep them focused on the task at hand. Puppies easily become distracted when they go outside. There are sights and smells which are constantly competing for the puppies' attention. Although there are multiple commands you may use (i.e. Go for a run, wee wee, Hurry up... to name a few) the key is to find one you like and consistently use it.

These commands are the ones I use, and have been using since the puppies were a couple weeks old.

The field trip this week was at another friend's house. The puppies were held and loved by the kids and the adults. It was interesting to see how all the puppies would respond to a teenage boy. Chase was so quiet and gentle. It took a bit for the puppies to warm up to him, but soon they were jumping all over him as much as his sister and mother. I did see that the puppies are prone to like women more. That can be easily rectified by taking them out to meet more men. My husband handles the puppies, but I am their primary handler, so they are more comfortable with me. This is why the puppies have field trips. I am able to observe them outside of their comfort zone and see what is necessary for the training.

Zsa Zsa is becoming my velcro dog. She loves to be held. She would rather be carried everywhere than walk. She gets her strength from her person. She is going to be attached to the hip. She is a very sensitive dog and watches me for cues as to what is the thing to do. When she is comfortable in her environment, she is happy, outgoing and playful. When placed in a new environment, she prefers to be held and close by. Once she warms up, she is so gentle and sweet. She loves to sit on everyone's lap.

Audrey is my fire cracker. She has no fear in her body. When I round everyone up to go into their crates, she runs the other direction. If there is a loud noise, she is the one running towards it. She is okay with being picked up, but she would rather investigate it on her own. The reason she still has runny eyes is that she keeps finding things in the yard to pick up and eat. Nothing upsets her, except for bedtime. She thinks she is missing out if she has to go to bed.

Ava is right behind her sister Audrey in terms of in your face boldness. She actually will wait and see if Audrey is okay, and then go up and take over whatever Audrey is doing. It frustrates Audrey. She does the work, and Ava reaps the rewards. Ava will look you right in the eye. Where Audrey will look you in the eye, and then go the other direction, Ava will do whatever you ask of her.

Lana is still my sweet girl. She and Zsa are my lap sitters. Lana is a bit more outgoing than Zsa Zsa is. While Zsa is quite content to sit quietly on your lap or next to your feet, Lana eventually gets bored and wants to see what her sisters are doing. She isn't quite as mischievous as Audrey and Ava, but she will help dig that hole if someone has started it.

Phantom is rapidly becoming everyone's favorite pup. Because he looks different from his sisters, people's first impression is that he isn't as nice looking. Yet, within minutes he is always the one people gravitate towards as being the cutest. He is very smart and confident. He is often getting into trouble with Audrey and Ava; however he is more snuggly than they are. When Audrey is digging a hole and I catch her, she looks at me, smiles and runs away. When Phantom digs a hole with Audrey, he just rolls over for a belly rub. He loves to have his belly rub. The only one who likes it more is Zsa Zsa. It is Phantom's way of getting out of trouble.