

LESSON PLAN EXERCISES

Introduction

This month's lesson plans revolve around the theme of appreciation.

T H E M E: APPRECIATION - Appreciating what we have, not only in terms of possessions but in a wider sense to include family, friends, neighbours, pets, our immediate environment and the world as a whole.

VALUES incorporated in the lesson plans:

LOVE: Appreciation, Affection, care, gentleness, kindness, patience, sacrifice, service, sharing, sympathy, thoughtfulness and unselfishness.

PEACE: Patience

TRUTH: Fairness, integrity and intuition.

RIGHT CONDUCT: Self-help Skills - Care of possessions. Ethical Skills - code of conduct, dependability, duty, determination, efficiency, initiative, perseverance, respect for all and responsibility.

NON-VIOLENCE: Psychological - Benevolence, compassion, concern for others, consideration, co-operation, forbearance, forgiveness and loyalty.

Social - Harmlessness.

Discussion Exercise: CEILING ON DESIRES/APPRECIATION

Hold a discussion exercise with children to look at their desires and to consider whether the things they want are really necessary or beneficial. This will also help children to appreciate the things they already have.

Comments and statements to use to encourage debate:

- "I buy things because my friends have them and I'll feel left out if I don't get one."
- "TV adverts make me buy things I don't really need."
- Do we use things we already have properly, or do we tend to use them a few times and then ignore, or throw them away?
- If we have a lot of possessions, do we appreciate each one less than if we only had a few? (Law of Diminishing Returns)
- How can learning to appreciate what we have help us to reduce our desires? Or to reduce desires do we need to believe in our self more?
- We are living on a planet with limited resources. Manufacturing processes usually demand great expenditures of energy, mostly from non-renewable sources and their use often pollutes in some way. If we put a 'ceiling on desires' can we help to conserve resources and reduce pollution?

(The teacher or parent conducting the discussion may add any other statements suitable to the topic.)

POEM: Value - Appreciation

I DON'T ENJOY by Zita Starkie

Don't like living in this spot
 I think the summer's just too hot.
 Hate winter's cold
 Don't want to do what I am told
 Don't like the clothes I wear
 Can't stay out late...it's not fair.
 My Dad's too quiet
 My Mum should diet
 My room's too small
 My friend's too tall.
 Don't like peas.
 Why should I say please!
 My teachers give me too much to do
 I wish I never got the flu.
 All my granny does is snore
 My cousin is such a bore
 I haven't got a digital T.V.
 There's only baked beans for my tea!

Don't enjoy what I have got
 Because you know I've got a lot.
 Nothing makes me feel that good
 But I've a feeling that it could.
 I don't value you. Do you value me?
 I don't understand why we're hardly happy
 The good times are so little for me
 But I ask myself ...

Is that how it should be?

Questions:

1. **What is this poem about?**
 2. **What value (or values) is it highlighting?**
 3. **What things could you value more in your life?**
 4. **What stops people valuing things they have?**
 5. **List the things you will spend more time valuing and how you will do this.**
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POEM: Value - Appreciation

This poem relates to appreciation of a pet, but it can be used to stimulate discussion of whether we really appreciate those around us e.g. family, friends, relations, animals in general, nature, our immediate environment and the world we live in.

G A R F I E L D by Zita Starkie

We never saw him again.
We used to pray it would not rain
So he wouldn't get wet
And we wouldn't fret
Because he wasn't back yet.

He always asked for much
He wanted our time and a gentle touch.
Often got in the way
When he wanted love and play.
We miss him today.

He woke us often from our sleep.
Now I wake myself to have a peep
Outside where he might be.
He can wake me up at three!
Is that him behind the tree?

He meowed so loud when he wanted to talk.
He loved to come with us for a walk.
It's not the same in the sun
Without him ...it's not much fun.
Can't see him roll and frisk and run.

We've walked and called all around
Hoping to hear his answering sound.
Empty rooms without him there
Sprawling on a chair.
Now we sit and stare.

Ten years the tiger golden fur
Ten years the warm and gentle purr.
His gentlemanly style
His visit for a while.
He made us smile!

He said " I am my own person
No one owns me...that's for certain!"
But my love lives on
I'm not really gone
Play on and be strong.

SCHOOL PROJECT: ANIMAL AWARENESS DAY

BENEFITS: Activities leading up to, and on the day would serve to promote positive interest in the welfare and treatment of animals. A speaker could be invited, from the R.S.P.C.A. (or other animal protection charity or group) to talk to children about their work and to encourage them to treat animals with kindness and compassion. This would not only be beneficial in terms of helping to promote better treatment of animals, but it also could provide a basis for other wider issues, such as the way children relate to each other, their teachers, family members, strangers and to people whom they consider to be different to themselves.

Each class could choose an activity or make their own presentation for Animal Awareness Day. The school council could approve choices. A suggestion box could be placed in a central location so that children and staff can be given the opportunity to suggest ideas for the Animal Awareness Day, which the school council could look at.

Competitions could be set up such as:

Design an Animal Caring GAME. A board game, for example could have penalty squares such as (use these to develop others):

- "you have scared the pigeons, go back to the start !"
- "pulled a cat by the tail, miss two goes ."
- Bonus squares could feature, for example, "helped an injured bird "; "saved a ladybird from drowning in a puddle " and "spent time stroking your dog ".

Design a POSTER to promote good treatment of animals.

A **DEBATE** could be organised, to be held on the day, on various topics that concern animal welfare e.g.:

- Should animals be used for scientific research
- Fox hunting
- Culling
- Vegetarianism

In the week leading up to the Animal Awareness Day teachers could be encouraged to incorporate the theme within the lessons that they are teaching. Here are some practical suggestions for different subjects:

MATHS

The lower forms could formulate graphs that can be displayed on the day. These could show information such as ...how many students exercise their pets regularly, groom and play with them etc. They could also show students' attitudes and treatment of wild animals, birds and insects.

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SCIENCE

At G.C.S.E. level students could investigate how pollution enters the food chain and its subsequent impact on animals, e.g. slug pellets are eaten by snails and slugs and these in turn can be eaten by birds, which can themselves be eaten by birds of prey. Lower years can go out round the school looking at animal habitats investigating which places are chosen by wildlife and can try to suggest possible reasons for their choices, e.g. woodlice are found under rotten wood because they can eat it and because it provides a safe and cool environment for them.

ENGLISH

At G.C.S.E. level students could write to various bodies that promote research into cancer, heart disease, meningitis, dementia and other illnesses without the use of animals. These bodies include:

- Dr Hadwen Trust, Freepost SG335, Hitchin, Herts SG5 2BR;
- Uncaged Campaigns, 2nd Floor, St Mathews House, 45, Carver St., Sheffield S1 4FT. Tel: 01142 722 220. E-mail : uncaged.anti.viv@dial.pipex.com.

Students at all levels can prepare for the school debate (see above).

Lower years can write essays on topics that will encourage the students to reflect on positive attitudes towards creatures. Titles can be given such as:

- The day I helped a ...
- Why I value my pet ...
- The hungry dog, etc.
- Poems can serve a similar function.

Comprehension exercises can be devised based on the above poems in a way that is designed to bring out awareness and appreciation of good values.

RELIGION

Lower years can discuss topics such as: do we treat animals well enough? If not, how can we improve our treatment of them; should animals have rights? If so what should they be? Etc.

Lower years could also research references to animals in the Bible and look at whether our treatment of creatures has improved in any way.

GEOGRAPHY

Lower years can look at animals in underdeveloped countries ...their role and status e.g. cows are regarded as sacred in India; Quetzal birds are venerated in Guatemala and Indians even try to imitate their high pitched sounds when they speak; in most other parts animals are not treated with such respect and compassion.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Lower years can type out work that has been written in English or other lessons and/or design layouts using graphic design software so that the work can be displayed in a prominent position in the school, during the Animal Awareness Day.

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DESIGN TECHNOLOGY

All years can design and construct or make objects which in some way is intended to be beneficial to animals, e.g. birds: nesting boxes, feeding tables, bird-baths; lacewings and ladybirds: boxes where they can survive extremes of temperature; pets: homes, beds, dishes, toys, grooming equipment etc.

LANGUAGES

Lower years can make posters with animal/bird /insect names in the required language.

ART

Students from all years can be asked to draw, paint or make a model to represent caring for creatures.