

Animal Compassion

Grades: 4 - 5

Objectives:

Affective:

- Students will give examples of how animals are capable of helping each other and humans in need.

Academic:

- Students will read and comprehend non-fiction stories.
- Students will draw and write about a personal situation related to the stories read.

Materials:

- Story: *Animals Save Lives! Priscilla, a 2-month-old piglet, saves a young boy from drowning*
- *True & Amazing Animal Tales* sheets
- Construction paper for drawing
- Lined paper for writing

New Vocabulary:

empathy – being sensitive to the feelings and experience of another person or animal

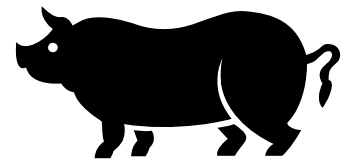
Motivation:

- 1) Ask students if they have companion animals at home.
- 2) Ask students to share if they have ever observed their companion animal exhibiting acts of kindness toward animals or humans (i.e., “When I am feeling sad my dog comes over to me and licks my face.”)

Procedure:

Mini-Lesson:

- 1) Read aloud *Animals Save Lives! Priscilla, a 2-month-old piglet, saves a young boy from drowning*
- 2) Have students discuss how they think Priscilla must have been feeling and why she acted the way she did.
- 3) Have students describe situations where they have seen an injured person or animal. Ask them how this made them feel and how they acted.
- 4) Discuss the word “empathy.”



Small-Group Activity:

- 1) Divide class into 4 groups.
- 2) Assign each group a different animal story and distribute *True & Amazing Animal Tales* sheets.
- 3) Have each group read the story with their group and respond to the Discussion Questions following their story.
- 4) Have each group briefly explain their group's story and share their responses with the whole class.

Summary:

- 1) Have students draw a picture to illustrate a situation when they felt the way an animal in one of the stories felt.
- 2) Then write a paragraph describing the situation and explain how their behavior was similar or different to the animals'.

-OR-

Have students write about a situation when they felt the way an animal in one of the stories felt. Have them include an explanation of how their behavior was similar or different to the animals'.

Follow-Up Activities:

- Students' pictures and writing can be compiled into a class book.
- Students can keep an observation journal of a companion animal or wildlife (i.e. pigeons, squirrels, etc). Students will observe the animals for several days making sure not to disturb his/her normal habitat or routine and note changes in the animals' behavior (see note below). Students will note what may have influenced these changes (i.e. going for a walk, getting a treat, oncoming car).


***Note: Explain to students that a feeling or emotion will generally cause a behavior. For example, a dog receiving a treat is feeling happy and will wag his/her tail. An animal who is frightened may react in various ways (such as cowering, bearing teeth, shivering, growling, whimpering).*

- Read Aloud a book about animal compassion or empathy.
- Watch the Share the World Video and complete accompanying lessons and/or activity sheets.

References and Literature for Teachers:

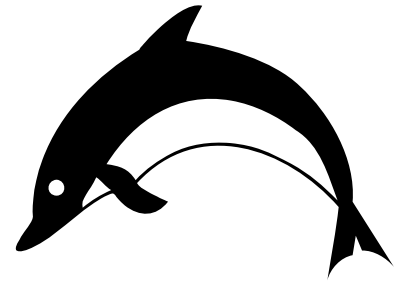
- *Share the World* Activity Program (FREE video & lesson plans)
www.sharetheworld.com

Literature Connections



- ★ *Black Beauty* by Anna Sewell
- ★ *Real Animal Heroes* by Paul Drew Stevens
- ★ *Cousin Charlie the Crow* by Marshall Houts
- ★ *Redruff, the Partridge of Don Valley* by Ernest Thompson Seton
- ★ *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White

- *Animal Angels: Amazing Acts of Love and Compassion*
by Stephanie LaLand
- *Peaceful Kingdom: Random Acts of Kindness*
by Stephanie LaLand
- *The Compassion of Animals: True Stories of Animal Courage and Kindness*
by Kristin von Kreisler
- *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional World of Farm Animals*
by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson



New York State Standards Addressed:

ELA Standard 3 - Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for critical analysis and evaluation.

Listening and Reading

1. Listening and reading to analyze and evaluate experiences, ideas, information, and issues requires using evaluative criteria from a variety of perspectives and recognizing the difference in evaluations based on different sets of criteria.

ELA Standard 4 - Language for Social Interaction – Students will read, write, listen, and speak for social interaction.

Listening and Speaking

1. Oral Communication in formal and informal settings require the ability to talk with people of different ages, genders, and cultures, to adapt presentations to different audiences, and to reflect on how talk varies in different situations.

MST Standard 4 – Science – Students will understand and apply scientific concepts, principles, and theories pertaining to the physical setting and living environment and recognize the historical development of ideas in science.

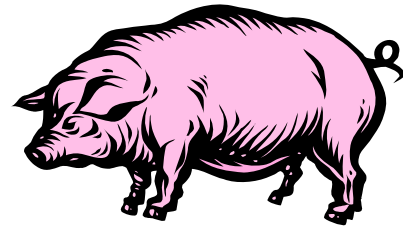
The Living Environment

1. Living things are both similar to and different from each other and nonliving things.

Animals Save Lives!

Priscilla, a 2-month-old piglet, saves a young boy from drowning.

One hot July day in 1984, Carol Burk and her 11-year-old son, Anthony, went swimming in Texas' Lake Somerville. They were joined by Priscilla, a 22-pound, 2-month-old piglet they had raised. Priscilla loved the water and was a great swimmer, but Anthony, a mentally handicapped child, was not.



For hours, Anthony, his mother, and Priscilla played hide-and-seek in the shallow waters. Finally, Anthony was tired and his mom turned to get ready to leave. When she turned back, Anthony was far out in the water, struggling. She started swimming toward him, and so did Priscilla. Despite being very tired from swimming all day, the little pig reached Anthony first. He grabbed for her halter and leash. In his panic he pulled too hard and went under, this time taking Priscilla with him!

Now both Anthony and Priscilla were drowning and he weighed almost four times more than she did. Priscilla struggled to get to the surface of the water. Finally, with enormous effort, she succeeded. With Anthony clinging to her small body, Priscilla swam back to shore.

Priscilla, like all pigs, has a very long memory. Years after the rescue, she still became upset whenever she saw young children playing near the water. For her heroism, Priscilla was honored with a "Priscilla the Pig" day in Houston, Texas.

Adapted from Real Animal Heroes, by Paul Drew Stevens.

Chico, Calif.: Sharp & Dunnigan, 1989.

ANIMAL TALES

Directions: Read the story and discuss the questions with your group.

Doctor Ants!



A Russian entomologist named Dr. Marekovsky discovered something unusual. He had been filming insects for a long time and finally noticed an odd behavior he had not seen before: a scene in which three Amazonian ants were removing a splinter from the side of another ant. Other ants formed a circle around them to protect the ants who worked to remove the splinter.

New Words

entomologist (en-tu-mâ-lu-jist) – scientist who studies insects

amazonian– (am-a-zōn-ē-en) - from the Amazon region in South America

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How did the ants help each other?
- 2) Why do you think the ants behaved this way?
- 3) How do you think the ants feel about each other?
- 4) Did your feelings about ants change after reading this story? Explain your answer.

* Excerpted from PEACEFUL KINGDOM by Stephanie Laland with permission of Conrari Press, an imprint of Red Wheel/Weiser (1-800-423-7087).

ANIMAL TALES

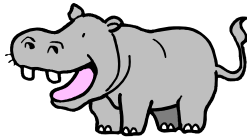
Directions: Read the story and discuss the questions with your group.

Two-Ton Help!

One day, a young impala was drinking by a river when he was grabbed by a crocodile hiding beneath the muddy surface. The crocodile started to pull his victim underwater.

A nearby hippopotamus witnessed the attack and chose to defend the victim. The furious hippo (capable of biting a crocodile in two) charged; the crocodile released the impala and swam away.

Then the hippo gently nudged the impala to the shore with his nose and onto higher ground. Not content to simply rescue the impala, the hippo stood guard against other predators for fifteen minutes. Then the two-ton animal began sniffing the impala and gently licking his wounds. Twice the hippo took the impala's head into his mouth in what seemed to be an attempt to get him to stand. But the impala was mortally wounded. Since hippos are strictly vegetarian, his interest in the dying impala was purely altruistic.



New Words

impala (im-pâ-lâ) – a graceful African antelope

mortally wounded (mōr-tel-ē wūn-ded) – injuries so severe that death is about to happen

altruistic (al-troo-is-tik) – when a person or animal behaves in a way that is not beneficial to his or herself, but that benefits others

vegetarian (ve-je-ter-ē-en) – someone who eats only vegetables, grains, fruits, and nuts and does not eat animals

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How did the hippo help the impala?
- 2) Why do you think the hippo behaved this way?
- 3) How do you think the hippo felt about the impala?
- 4) How do you think the impala felt about the hippo?
- 5) How do you feel about what the hippo did? Explain your answer.

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ANIMAL TALES

Directions: Read the story and discuss the questions with your group.

Mother Duck?

One day a scientist gave a chicken hen some duck eggs to nurture. The hen sat on them anyway and the scientist thought that she was too dumb to notice that they were duck eggs. Eventually, the eggs hatched and baby ducks came out, but the mother hen was unperturbed. Again the scientist thought that she didn't have the intelligence to understand that these were not baby chickens.

Then she did what no chicken in the world would ever do with her own chicks. She led them to water and cajoled them to swim.



New Words

unperturbed (un-per-terb-d) – not thrown into confusion

nurture (ner-cher) – to care for

cajole (ke-jōl) – to persuade or gently urge someone to do something

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How did the hen help the baby ducks?
- 2) Why do you think the hen behaved this way?
- 3) How do you think the hen felt about the baby ducks?
- 4) How do you think the baby ducks felt about the hen?
- 5) Do you think the scientist was surprised by what the hen did? Why?
- 6) What did the scientist learn about the chicken?

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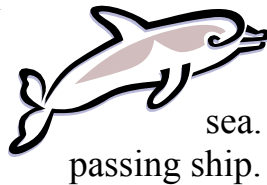
Directions: Read the story and discuss the questions with your group.

Rescue Dolphins

In June 1971, Yvonne Vladislavich was sailing on a yacht in the middle of the Indian Ocean when suddenly it exploded. She was thrown clear, but the yacht sank and she was left completely stranded.

Terrified, she floated in the water awaiting certain death. Then she saw three dolphins approach her. To her surprise, one of them swam underneath her and lifted her up with his large body. Gratefully, she held on to the dolphin's body. The other two dolphins swam in circles around her to protect her from sharks.

The dolphins carried and arrived at a buoy floating at was soon picked up by a



protected her for many hours until they sea. They left her on the buoy from which she passing ship.

It was estimated that from the position of the buoy and the position of her yacht when it exploded, that the dolphins had carried her and kept her alive through two hundred miles of dangerous seas.

New Words

yacht (yât) – a large boat

strand (strand) – to leave in a strange or unfavorable place without means to depart

buoy (boo- ē) – floating object anchored to the bottom to mark something lying under the water

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How did the dolphins help Yvonne Vladislavich?
- 2) Why do you think the dolphins behaved this way?
- 3) How do you think the dolphins felt about Yvonne Vladislavich?
- 4) How do you think Yvonne Vladislavich felt about the dolphins?
- 5) Did your feelings about dolphins change after reading this story? Explain.
- 5) What did you learn about dolphins?

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