ARE YOU AN ANIMAL SAFETY SLEUTH?
LESSON 4: Grades 4-6
ARE YOU A MASTER OF DISASTER PLANS?

Show-Me Standards: Academic Goals: 1.6, 1.8, 1.10, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 4.1, 4.3, 4.6, 4.7; Communication Arts: 1, 4 & 6; Mathematics: 2; Science: 5; Social Studies: 5 & 7; Health & Phys Ed: 7

Objectives: Students will demonstrate an understanding of natural disasters and their effects on people and animals. They will create a disaster plan for animals in their home in the event that a disaster occurs and their pet has to be evacuated. Students will demonstrate compassion for animals’ feelings and an understanding of animals’ needs.

Materials:
- Map of your school building and grounds and your school evacuation procedures
- Emergency evacuation stickers/labels
- “Pet Alert” Cards
- “Be Prepared” handout
- Paper
- Pencils
- Markers or colored pencils

Note: Please note that although the students are developing animal evacuation plans, they will be reinforcing the plans of safety designated for themselves and their classmates as well.

Method: If possible, speak with your school principal in advance and ask if he/she could schedule a practice fire drill on this day. Schools are required to conduct these on a regular basis and it never hurts for children and teachers to practice. Or you could find out at the beginning of the year when the practice evacuations will take place and plan your unit around this time.

The actual fire drill would serve as the introduction to your lesson. Once the drill has been conducted and your students have returned to class ask them why they think it is important to conduct these drills. If staging a fire drill is out of the question, you can ask your students to recall the events that took place the last time you did have one. Reinforce the idea that it is important to have a plan prepared to ensure everyone’s safety and everyone knows what to do. If you know there are teachers in your building who have classroom pets ask the students if they noticed whether or not “Harry”, the hamster in Mrs. Jones’s class was brought out of the building during the drill. Or if you have a classroom pet, did anyone grab “Larry” the hedgehog? Reinforce the idea that animals should be considered in a disaster plan because they depend on us for their safety and we should take the pets to safety with us. The teacher should be in charge of this responsibility.

Ask students to join their detective groups. Distribute a map of your school building/grounds that contain the exit routes and flow of traffic in the event of a fire or natural disaster. Discuss the reasons that certain exits are used and talk about the significance of the traffic flow.

Explain to students they are going to use their detective skills to create a disaster plan for Larry the hedgehog or Mrs. Jones’s hamster “Harry”, but first the students must uncover the dangers that exist. Ask the students, “besides fire, what types of disasters occur in our area?” Write the correct answers on the board in big headings. In the Midwest we encounter fires, tornadoes, floods and possibly earthquakes.

Explain that each group is going to become an expert on one of these disasters and will explain the dangers associated with each. During a flood water rises, during a fire the flames are extremely hot and the smoke rises, during a tornado the wind is very strong and moving quickly and during an earthquake the ground moves and items are shifted around.
Finding the safest place in the room for the pet is the first step. Have each group of detectives determine the safest place in the classroom for Harry or Larry in the event of their particular disaster. For example, during an earthquake the ground shifts and classroom furniture moves around so we wouldn’t want to put Harry or Larry’s glass aquarium on a high surface because it might fall off and break. So we could suggest that his aquarium be placed closer to the ground with thick blankets beneath. The flood group will probably say that the ground is not the safest place during a flash flood due to the rising water. Their answers may conflict when the expert groups report back to the class with their suggestions and this is okay. They must establish the best place for the pet by taking all disasters into account. The safest place for the classroom pet in the Midwest due to our disasters is near the exit door, off the floor but on something that is not too high (coffee table height).

**Call to Action:** Have each student write a persuasive letter to the other classroom teachers encouraging them to move any classroom pets to the area that your class has determined is the safest. Have them explain why it is the safest place and remind them to remember to take their pet with them whenever possible during a drill or disaster.

Give the students a homework assignment that requires them to draw a map of the rooms in their home including all windows and doors. Have them determine the safest place for their pet and mark this on the map as well. Have them include a brief explanation of their reasoning. Students without pets can develop a plan for their friend’s, neighbor’s or relative’s pets.

Distribute the Be Prepared handout, pet alert cards and emergency alert stickers/labels and require them to fill these out. Students without pets can fill them out for friends, relatives or neighbors.

**Attention Teacher:** See the following activity sheets “A Classy Pet” and “Weekend Blues”

**Web sites:** For recommended animal-related web sites visit [www.apamo.org](http://www.apamo.org) and choose “Animal Issues” from the left-side menu, then choose “Links” from the top of the page. Or [click here](http://click.here) to launch your browser and link directly to the list.
IN CASE OF EMERGENCY
Please save our pet(s)

Dog(s) __________  Cat(s) __________
how many?        how many?
Bunny(ies) ________  Bird(s) ________
how many?        how many?
Other             __________
Emergency # ____________________________

operation pet partners  A community effort helping St. Louis pets.
Humane Society of Missouri

Credit: Humane Society of Missouri
PET ALERT CARD

HUMANE SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

If something happened to you what would become of your pets?

Accidents, hospitalization, even death can happen to all of us. What happens then to our pets? Lack of planning can leave our pets in the hands of strangers and expose them to fates we would not want.

BE PREPARED...
- Carry the card below in your wallet.
- Choose a reliable caretaker to care of your pets in your absence.
- See that the caretaker has a key to your home and is aware of the Information Card on each of your pets.
- Appoint a second caretaker in the event that the first is not available.
- Fill out the Information Card on the reverse side for each pet and post in your home.
- Consult an attorney to determine the best type of document regarding long term care of your pets.

HUMANE SOCIETY OF MISSOURI
Helping animals and people through:
- Adoption Centers
- Veterinary Medical Centers
- Rescue & Investigation
- Community Outreach
- Education Programs
- Large Animal Rehabilitation Center

EMERGENCY PET ALERT!

My pets are at home alone.

My Name: ____________________________
My Address: ____________________________
Phone: ____________________________

In case of accident or illness, please contact a person listed on the reverse side of this card who will care for my pet who is home alone.

HUMANE SOCIETY OF MISSOURI

operation pet partners A community effort helping St. Louis pets.

Credit: Humane Society of Missouri
Be Prepared

Emergencies can happen. Being prepared helps. Find the emergency and community service telephone numbers that help people and animals where you live. Write them in the blanks below.

Fire __________________________

Ambulance ______________________

Police __________________________

Animal Protective Association of Missouri  314-645-4610

Humane Society of Missouri  314-647-8800

Animal Emergency Clinic

Animal Control ____________________

Doctor __________________________

Dentist __________________________

Veterinarian ______________________

School __________________________

Work ____________________________

Cell phone ________________________

Baby-sitter ________________________

Pet-sitter __________________________

Neighbor __________________________

Recycling Information

operation pet partners  A community effort helping St. Louis pets.

Credit: Humane Society of Missouri
A Classy Pet

Wouldn’t a classroom pet be fun? Maybe! Before you and your classmates ask to add a pet to your classroom, use this checklist. First, write down what kind of pet you have in mind. Then answer the rest of the questions yes or no.

What kind of pet do you have in mind?

___ 1. Might some children be allergic to this animal?
___ 2. Can this animal bite?
___ 3. Might this animal be scared by sudden, loud noises?
___ 4. Is this animal noisy?
___ 5. Does this animal need quiet during the day?
___ 6. Might being around people make this animal nervous or upset?
___ 7. Could this animal escape if a cage door (or a classroom door) was left open?
___ 8. Could this animal get sick without proper care?
___ 9. Does this animal need a lot of attention?
___ 10. Will this animal’s classroom home be very different from the home he or she needs or is used to?
___ 11. Does it cost a lot of money to care for this pet?

In your own words, write five problems that could occur with a classroom pet. Use the back of this paper.
Weekend Blues

Caring for a classroom pet is a 24-hour responsibility every day. It is a yearlong responsibility too, year after year. Are you thinking about asking for a classroom pet? Before you do, use this checklist. First, write down what kind of pet you are thinking of getting. Then answer the questions yes or no.

What kind of pet do you have in mind?

If the pet will stay at school at night, answer these questions yes or no.

1. Electricity sometimes goes off. Does this pet need electricity to stay warm or cool or to get air?
2. Will this animal be trapped if there is a fire while school is out?
3. A bad storm can keep everyone away from school. Might this animal run out of food or water?
4. Will someone care for this animal when school is out for the summer?
5. Will this animal get lonely at night or on weekends?
6. If this animal gets sick or hurt at night or on a weekend, will someone be there to help?
7. If the heat is turned down on the weekends, might that hurt this animal?

If the pet will be taken home at night, answer these questions yes or no.

1. Will this animal go home with different people to different homes?
2. Might some of the people in these homes not know how this animal acts (or what the animal needs)?
3. Will it be hard to find someone to give good care to this animal during the summer?
4. Can this animal get carsick while traveling?
5. Might this animal get scared or injured while traveling?

For every yes answer, write what problem(s) can occur. Use the back of this paper.