

The Five Freedoms



Character Concepts Taught: Responsibility and Caring

Grade Level: 3-8

Prerequisite: None

Time: 40-60 minutes

Number of Participants: Full Group

Number of Educators/Assistants: 1-2

Prep: 20 minutes

Materials:

- Poster board or print Five Freedom worksheets
- Writing/coloring utensils

Objectives:

- ♥ Students will learn about the 5 Freedoms that every animal is entitled to under human care

Procedure:

Introduction:

- ♥ Ask students to give you examples of things they need to be happy and healthy. After students have covered everything (food, water, shelter, love, medical care, exercise, etc.) ask them what it means to be responsible for a pet. When you have a pet, is that animal able to get itself everything it needs to be happy and healthy or do they need our help?

Body:

- ♥ Explain to students that there are 5 things every animal deserves to be happy and healthy, these 5 things are called the 5 Freedoms. Review the 5 Freedoms with students.

The Five Freedoms

The 5 freedoms are a set of internationally recognized animal welfare standards. They outline what we as responsible pet owners must provide. They are not just things we want to do for our animals, but also things we must do in order to keep our animals healthy and happy.

1. **Freedom from hunger and thirst:** by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor. Every animal must always have

access to clean, fresh water. A sufficient amount of food must be provided to your pet to help keep it in good health and also at a healthy weight.

2. **Freedom from discomfort:** by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area. Having an appropriate shelter for your pet is very important. If you are caring for an animal that lives outdoors, the shelter you provide must be weather proof, free from drafts, wind, rain and excessive heat from the sun. Dogs must be able to stand up and comfortably be able to turn around in their kennel. Make sure your pet has a warm, comfortable place to live.
3. **Freedom from pain, injury or disease:** by prevention through rapid diagnosis and treatment. It is very important to know signs of illness in your pet. The number one sign of illness in animals is acting lethargic, tired or sluggish. Another way to help your pet is by keeping their environment clean and free from any hazards that might cause injury.
4. **Freedom to express normal behavior:** by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and company of the animal's own kind. Knowing your pet's normal behavior comes easy when you give it a lot of attention and spend lots of quality time with it. Just like people, animals can get bored and lonely. Providing things like a cat tree for your cat to climb or access to a window to watch the birds would be a great example of this. Toys are also a great way to keep your pet mentally stimulated!
5. **Freedom from fear and distress:** by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering. All animals deserve to be happy so give them lots of love. Ensuring conditions that avoid unnecessary anxiety and stress will help to provide freedom from mental suffering. Remember, you mean the world to your pet, always strive to make them feel as special as they make you feel!

Activity

1. Split kids into small groups.
2. Assign each group an animal (dog, cat, guinea pig, etc.)
3. Ask students to research the animal on their worksheet (or of your choice) and come up with ways to meet it for different animals.
4. When complete, students should share and discuss what they came up with.

Closure

Explain that a lot of research needs to go into getting a pet. We always want to meet the 5 Freedoms of any animal in our care. In order to do that, we need to know what makes them happy, healthy and comfortable in their environment. Tell the children that they are playing a crucial role in getting this pet adopted. Explain that sometimes, when an animal's freedoms are not met, it can cause them to develop behavior issues which can make them less adoptable.