



Activity 4: Catnip Toy and Dog Kong

Overview: Students will be introduced to animal shelters and service learning. Students will create toys for both cats and dogs that can be either donated to a local animal shelter or given to the students' companion animals.

Procedure:

Introduction

Ask the students if they like to play with toys. Follow up by asking students if they think cats and dogs also like to play with toys. Reveal, if answered otherwise, that cats and dogs also love to play.

Animal Shelters

1. Explain to the students the role of an animal shelter.
2. Describe the adoption process to the students. Emphasize that dogs and cats need something to do while they are waiting to be adopted and that the students can help the animal shelters and the animals by donating, among other things, toys.

Happy Socks

1. Introduce the Catnip Toy activity to the students. Explain that they are going to make cat toys to either give their own cats at home or donate to a local animal shelter.
2. Model how to complete the Catnip Toy activity for the students.
3. Catnip Toy Steps:
 - Step 1: Place a piece of cardboard in the sock. This makes it easier to draw on the sock.
 - Step 2: Decorate the sock with markers.
 - Step 3: Pull the cardboard out of the sock.
 - Step 4: Crinkle up two pieces of cellophane (or cotton balls or craft stuffing) and put inside the sock.
 - Step 5: Pour two tablespoons of catnip into the sock. (Paper shaped as a cone and placed deep into the opening of the sock helps pour in the catnip.)
 - Step 6: Tie a knot at the top of the sock.
 - Step 7: Give to a cat and watch him/her play with it.
4. Give each student a sock and pass out the markers for the students to decorate their socks. Upon completion, instruct students to stuff their socks with the cellophane, cotton balls, or craft stuffing.
5. Instruct students to hold open their socks and pour in the catnip. Then have students re-tie their socks.

Objectives

Students will be able to...

- Identify and describe an animal shelter.
- Explain the importance of supporting local animal shelters as a way to help needy animals.

Time Needed

Catnip Toy

- 20–45 minutes

Dog Treat Kong

- 20 minutes
- Extra day to freeze

Materials

Catnip Toy

- Plain white crew sock
- Dried catnip (preferably organic)
- Non-toxic fabric markers
- Cellophane or cotton balls or craft stuffing
- Paper shaped as cone
- Cardboard squares

Dog Treat Kong

- Cardboard toilet paper rolls
- Dog biscuits
- Wet dog food
- Organic peanut butter*
- Large mixing bowls
- Old newspapers or plastic sheeting
- Latex or non-latex gloves
- Plastic sandwich bags
- Markers

Insider Tips

- **Warning:** Macadamia nuts and walnuts are dangerous for dogs so do not use any butter that contains these nuts.
- When students are decorating their Catnip Toys, make sure that they draw designs and write phrases. If a sock is completely covered in marker, it is more likely that some of the color will rub off on the cat playing with the toy.
- Kids pouring catnip could get messy and they may put in too much, so you can pour the catnip in their socks as they hold them open. They could also use paper cones or cardboard toilet paper rolls to prevent a mess.
- Always check with your local shelter before donating the Catnip Toys and especially any food items like the Homemade Dog Treat Kongs.

Classroom Teachers

- As an extension activity, set up a field trip to a local animal shelter where the students can personally deliver their Catnip Toys to the resident cats.
- This activity can also be tied into a lesson on companion animal needs. Have students brainstorm all the things that they need to be healthy and happy, followed by what companion animals need to be healthy and happy, and compare the two lists. Emphasize the importance of play and introduce these activities.

Outside Humane Educators

- If you are entering a school or other location without knowing if peanut butter is allowed, play it safe and do not include it in your materials.
- Bringing in a guest speaker with you, such as an animal shelter employee or volunteer who can share a specific adoption story, can be a great way to engage the students.

Activity 4: Catnip Toy and Dog Kong (continued)**Homemade Dog Treat Kong**

1. Introduce the Dog Treat Kong activity to the students. Explain that since the treat needs to be frozen, it will take an extra day before the treat can be given to a dog.
2. Divide students into groups giving each group a large mixing bowl and some newspapers or plastic sheeting to place under the bowl to avoid making a mess. Each student should be given a pair of gloves, a plastic sandwich bag and a cardboard toilet paper roll.
3. Place some wet food, broken up dog biscuits, and peanut butter* into each group's mixing bowl. Instruct the students to put on their gloves and mix the materials together.
 - * **Note:** Peanut butter should not be used unless you are certain that no student has a nut allergy.
 - Peanut butter can be left out of the mixture if a student has an allergy or the school/setting is a nut-free zone.
4. Once the groups have mixed the materials together, instruct the students to pack the toilet paper rolls with the dog food/peanut butter mixture. When completed, the students are then to place the filled toilet paper roll inside the plastic sandwich bags and write their names on the outside.
 - Collect all the bags and freeze overnight.



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