WHY A PET LOVER’S CLUB

Most people don’t think animals play an important role in their lives. One only has to remember that at birth we give rabbits, teddy bears, ducks, etc. for gifts and at death we use doves as a symbol. In between, childhood reading and learning uses many types of animals like Arthur, Martha Speaks, Pete the Cat, Froggy, & Mr. Putter & Tabby. Then there are the classics: Black Beauty, Lassie, Old Yeller, White Fang, Where the Red Fern Grows, and Shiloh. There are television programs with cats, dogs, horses, elephants including Curious George, Dog with a Blog, and Tom & Jerry. Movies with Miss Piggy, Babe, Flicka, Jaws, Ratatouille, Beethoven, Saddle Club, and Happy Feet have been successful. Even adult television programs such as Animal Planet, Nature, Wild American are all hits. Animals are a safe and interesting topic. These are programs that parents and caregivers like for their children.

Your “club” could meet once a week after school in the library for 45-60 minutes. It can be for 6-8 weeks or once or twice a month. It can fit your time and staffing. I would keep the “talking” to 15-20 minutes as that is about all the children can absorb in that time while still making it a fun event. Your club could be just about dogs, cats, or horses. Whatever animals that holds an interest for the children.

We have had a fall, winter and spring session. Summers are too busy. After each discussion or presentation have a craft or game. “Animal Bingo”, using the words from the weekly topic, is a big hit. It is a great educational game that is entertaining and fun for the children. For summer you could do something like I did which was also educational and lots of fun. It was “Dogs on Vacation”. I picked a breed of dog and make the ‘fun’ around that country. i.e. Hounds and their hunting skills. Have ice tea with biscuits/cookie and a craft such as constructing a “hound” planter or painting a bobble-head dog.

We have painted birdhouses from the dollar store; colored cut-out birds to put on a ‘tree’ for all to see. We learned about Chinese New Year Zodiac animals and then made them in origami. I have shown educational DVDs. Guest Speakers are welcome. Your local animal shelters, veterinary technicians, breeders, rescue organizations, wildlife rehabilitators, law enforcement personnel are very happy to accommodate your club. Local authors who have written on animal topics make an excellent program, combining animals and journalism.

Be creative and enjoy!

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