

Lesson plan

I support others

Caring for animals

1. **Theme:** I support others: Caring for animals
2. **Grade:** 5th
3. **Lesson type:** for acquiring new knowledge
4. **Duration:** 45 min.
5. **Basic terms:** support, care, animals, nature, ecosystem, habitat, species, pollination, empathy, kindness, pets, wild animals, farm animals
6. **Pedagogical methods:** storytelling, presentation, discussion, dialog, reflection, group work, project
7. **Means:** board (interactive or otherwise), markers, laptop/computer, multimedia (screen/projector), ppt presentation, flipchart (optional), sheets of paper, writing/drawing materials

8. Goals:

○ Educational:

The students

- ✓ Define what it means to care for animals
- ✓ Discuss examples of kindness toward animals
- ✓ Relate the importance of caring for animals with all kinds of animals: pets, wild species, domestic ones.
- ✓ Compare and contrast how different religions view the care of animals
- ✓ Justify why caring for animals is important for both nature and humans
- ✓ Design an “animal care project” for stray animals

○ Formational:

The students

- ✓ Show willingness to listen to information about animal welfare
- ✓ Ask questions or express curiosity about how to help animals in their community
- ✓ Demonstrate a positive attitude toward kindness and responsible behaviour around animals
- ✓ Formulate personal guidelines or rules for treating animals with care and fairness
- ✓ Consistently show compassion for animals in discussions and behaviour during activities and in their daily lives

9. Cross-curricular connections: Social studies, Religious studies, Zoology

10. Intra-subject connections: with the lesson plans on the themes: Me and the others, Me and nature, and the other modules from the theme I support others

11. Expected results:

- ✓ Students are able to explain, using correct vocabulary, why animals are an important part of nature and describe at least two basic needs that all animals share
- ✓ Students are able to identify and evaluate examples of responsible and irresponsible behaviour toward animals in given scenarios and can justify their choices
- ✓ Students create a short project that clearly communicates ways to care for animals
- ✓ Students will demonstrate empathy by explaining why animals deserve kindness and by responding respectfully during discussions on animal welfare
- ✓ Students will show willingness to participate in class activities related to caring for animals, including sharing ideas, asking questions, or helping peers during tasks
- ✓ Students will recognize caring for animals as a value and will express it through their behaviour

12. Preparation

○ For the teacher: Reading the theoretical base, downloading the presentation, preparing sheets of paper and writing/drawing materials for the students

13. Structure of the lesson:

I support others: Caring for animals

1. Animals as a part of nature
2. How can we care for the animals
 - Ways to be kind towards animals
 - Why is it important to care for the animals?
 - Notions of animal care in different religions
3. Activity: Animal care project
4. Reflection and discussion
 - The students are prompted to answer several questions on the subject, reflecting on their thoughts and feelings and engaging in a discussion.

14. Structure, content and timeline

1. Introduction (5 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Actualization of prior knowledge on the subject: Do you have a pet?; Do you think that animals are an important part of nature?; Why caring for animals is important?; How can we show kindness to animals? (3 min.)

- Introduction of new information and terms: (2 min.)

Animals are an important part of the natural world. They live in forests, oceans, deserts, rivers, and even in our homes as pets. Every animal has a role in its ecosystem. For example, bees help plants grow by spreading pollen, worms help make the soil healthy, and larger animals help keep nature in balance by hunting or grazing. When one kind of animal disappears, the whole ecosystem can be affected.

Scientists estimate there are millions of different animal species on Earth, and many haven't even been discovered yet! From tiny insects smaller than a grain of rice to enormous blue whales longer than a school bus, animals come in incredible shapes and sizes. Each species has adapted special features to survive in its habitat. Polar bears have thick fur to stay warm in freezing Arctic weather, while camels can go for days without water in hot deserts. Some animals, like owls, hunt at night with excellent hearing and eyesight, while others, like dolphins, use special sounds to find their way underwater. The more we learn about these amazing adaptations, the more we realize how important it is to protect all animals and their homes.

- Student activity:

- Participation in the dialog, asking questions, active listening

- Methods and tools:

- Methods: dialog, storytelling

- Tools: board, marker or an interactive whiteboard (for outlining the theme and the terms; optional, for writing down student's ideas, thoughts)

2. Stating the theme of the lesson: I support others: Caring for animals (35 min.)

- Teacher activity:

- Short presentation, outlining the importance of caring for animals, the importance of animals for nature and society, the notions of different religions towards animals (8 min.)

- Theoretical overview, performed with the presentation:

Caring for animals means helping them stay safe, healthy, and comfortable. For pets, this includes giving them enough food and clean water, taking them to the vet, keeping their living space clean, and spending time with them so they feel loved. For animals that are not pets, such

as birds, squirrels, or stray animals, we can care for them by protecting their habitats, not disturbing them, and keeping the environment clean. We can also support animal shelters, nature reserves, or organizations that protect wild animals. Specifically for stray animals, we can provide them food sometimes and make them warm shelters for the winter. We should also remember to be kind to farm animals like cows, goats, chickens, pigs, and horses. These domestic animals provide us with food, milk, eggs, and help with farm work, so they deserve our respect and good treatment. Being caring toward farm animals means making sure they have enough space to move around, clean shelters to rest in, fresh food and water every day, and protection from extreme weather. Whether an animal is wild, a pet, or lives on a farm, every creature deserves compassion and respect. Even small actions, like helping an injured animal by asking an adult or a professional for help, show that we care.

Being kind to animals means treating them with respect and understanding that they can feel pain, fear, and happiness. We can show kindness by not shouting at or hitting animals, by handling them gently, and by giving them space when they are scared or tired. Kindness also means not teasing animals, not keeping wild animals as pets, and never harming them for entertainment. Instead, we can observe them quietly, learn about them, and appreciate their beauty. Simple acts, like putting out bird feeders in winter or building small shelters for insects, are ways to show kindness and help animals survive.

Caring for animals is important because they are living beings that rely on us, especially when humans affect their environment. Animals help keep nature balanced, and many of them provide benefits to humans – such as food, pollination, companionship, or assistance. When we care for animals, we also learn to be responsible, compassionate, and respectful. These are values that help us become better people. Protecting animals also protects the environment, which is essential for our own health and future.

Caring for animals is also an important part of many religions, which teach people to treat all living creatures with kindness and respect.

Christianity often teaches compassion for all living creatures, and many stories encourage kindness toward animals. In the story of Noah's Ark, God instructed Noah to save animals from the flood, showing that animals are valuable and worth protecting. Many Christians believe that since God created all animals, humans have a responsibility to be good stewards of creation.

Islam teaches that animals must be treated gently and not harmed without reason; caring for animals is considered a good deed. The Prophet Muhammad taught his followers to be merciful to all creatures, and there are many stories (called Hadith) about his kindness to animals. One famous story tells how a woman was forgiven for her sins because she gave water to a thirsty dog. Another story describes how the Prophet prevented someone from disturbing baby birds in a nest. Islamic teachings include detailed rules about treating animals humanely, including that animals should not be overworked, must be given enough food and water, and should be treated with gentleness.

Hinduism views many animals as sacred and teaches that all living beings are connected, encouraging people to avoid harming them. Cows are especially sacred in Hinduism and are protected and honoured throughout India. Many Hindus are vegetarian because they believe in ahimsa, which means non-violence toward all living things. Hindu scriptures teach that the same divine spirit exists in all creatures, so harming an animal is like harming a part of the divine. Many Hindu gods are associated with animals: Lord Ganesha has an elephant head, the goddess Durga rides a tiger, and Lord Vishnu is often shown with an eagle. These connections remind Hindus that animals are holy and deserve protection.

Buddhism teaches non-violence and respect for all living creatures because they, like humans, can suffer and feel pain. The first precept (or rule) of Buddhism is to not harm any living being. Many Buddhists choose to be vegetarian to avoid causing suffering to animals. The Buddha himself taught that showing compassion to animals creates good karma and helps people on their path to enlightenment.

Judaism includes teachings that animals must be fed and cared for and must not suffer unnecessarily. Jewish law contains a principle called “tza’ar ba’alei chayim”, which means “the suffering of living creatures” and forbids causing animals unnecessary pain. According to Jewish tradition, people must feed their animals before feeding themselves. The Torah includes many laws about treating animals well, such as allowing them to rest on the Sabbath just like people. Before eating meat, observant Jews follow kosher laws that require animals to be treated respectfully and in the most humane way possible.

The fact that so many religions teach about caring for animals shows how important it is to treat them with kindness. When people all around the world agree that animals deserve our respect and protection, it reminds us that caring for animals is a value that brings everyone together.

Activity: Animal care project (27 min.)

- ✓ The teacher divides the students into small groups
- ✓ The teacher gives instructions to the students:
 - Each group should compose a project for helping the stray animals in the community (focus on cats and dogs)
 - The project should consist of the following main elements: how can we collect all stray animals from the streets; what should we build (e.g. a zoo, a shelter, a park) for the animals to live in; how will this building (park, shelter, etc.) look like; who will take care of the animals and how; how can we make sure that there won't be stray animals from now on (they will live in the designed shelter/park/zoo, there will be fines for throwing an animal on the street, etc.)
 - The students should make a drawing/sketch of the zoo/shelter/park (or something else) they decided to build and explain in details how it would look like, how the animals will live there (together, separated, outside, inside, etc.), who will care for them
- ✓ The teacher provides examples and basic ideas for the projects:

- “You can design a zoo, or a shelter, or some kind of a large park”; “Maybe it would be a good idea for people to be able to go to this place and meet/walk/pet the animals”; “It would be great for people to have the option to adopt an animal from this place”; “Think about how would you encourage people to be more responsible towards animals”
 - ✓ Each group presents their projects and comments on the work of the other groups
 - ✓ The teacher initiates a discussion about the importance of caring for animals
- Student activity:
 - Participation in the dialog, taking notice of the presentation, asking questions, active listening, sharing ideas, working on the project, reflecting on the activity
- Methods and tools:
 - Methods: dialog, presentation, storytelling, group work, project, discussion, reflection
 - Tools: interactive board or a screen, laptop/computer, board, marker, flipchart (optional, for writing down students’ ideas), sheets of paper, writing/drawing materials

3. Reflection and discussion (5 min.)

- Teacher activity:
 - Posing questions for a discussion:
 - ✓ Why do you think pets depend on humans so much?
 - ✓ How can we show kindness to animals even when they are not our pets?
 - ✓ What are some simple things we can do to help animals that live in the wild?
 - ✓ How do human actions (like pollution or littering) affect animals, and how can we change that?
 - ✓ Why do you think harming animals is considered wrong in many cultures and religions?
 - Engaging the students with prompts:
 - ✓ “They depend on humans for food, for example, but for what else?”
 - ✓ “What do you think an animal would ‘say’ if it could tell us what it needs from humans?”
 - ✓ “Can we help them feel safer? How?”

- ✓ “Look outside – what animals in our environment depend on us making good choices? How?”
- ✓ “How do you think caring for animals helps us become better people?”
- Answering questions and clarifying information
- Student activity:
 - Engaging in the discussion
 - Reflection on their ideas and emotions on the subject
- Methods:
 - Methods: reflection, discussion, active listening

15. Variations:

- The “Be kind poster” activity: The teacher divides the students into small groups; Each group creates a poster with ways to be kind towards animals (pets, farm and wild animals); Each group includes a drawing and short rules for caring for animals, also brief messages of the importance of animal care; Each group presents their poster and the class discusses the ideas; The teacher hangs the poster in the classroom.

- The “Build a habitat” activity:

The teacher divides the students into pairs; The teacher gives each pair (or the students were told to bring themselves) materials like cardboard, small sticks, paper, leaves, etc.; Each pair creates a model habitat for an animal of their choice; Each pair then presents their models and explains what the animal needs to survive and how humans can help protect its environment; The teacher initiates a discussion about responsibility and animal care.

-The “Interview” activity: The teacher instructs the students beforehand – to interview a family member or neighbour (or to answer the questions themselves, if they have a pet) who owns a pet; The students prepare approx. 5 simple questions (“What does your pet need every day?” “How do you keep it healthy?”, etc.); Each student presents the results of their interview to the class; The students share what they learned; The teacher organises a discussion about the common responsibilities of pet care.

-The “How to help animals” activity: The teacher prepares cards with simple situation in which an animal might need help (a bird with an injured wing, a dog that looks hungry, a cat that needs to drink water, etc.); The teacher present the situation to the students, one at a time; The students brainstorm ways to help the animals in the given situation; After the students share ideas about each situation, they discuss the correct and safe actions for the relevant case.

- The “Research project” activity:

The teacher divides the students into groups; The teacher assigns a religion for research to each group; The teacher provides each group with fact cards that contain brief information about how each of the religions teaches people to be kind to animals; Based on that information, each group creates a small poster or short presentation about how their assigned religion teaches people to treat animals.

1. 16. Interesting facts (from <https://factanimal.com/animal-facts/>; Northrup, J., 2023: <https://www.animalhearted.com/blogs/animal-blog/26385539-15-amazing-animal-facts>; Graham, D., 2025: <https://www.discoverwildlife.com/animal-facts/facts-about-animals>; <https://www.emdonenilodge.com/50-best-fun-random-facts-animals/>; <https://www.petmd.com/dog/general-health/puppy-teething>; <https://cvillecatcare.com/veterinary-topics/101-amazing-cat-facts-fun-trivia-about-your-feline-friend/>; <https://vcahospitals.com/know-your-pet/how-dogs-use-smell-to-perceive-the-world>)

- ✓ Rhinoceros horns are made of keratin, the same protein as hair and fingernails. Some rhinos have one horn, others have two.
- ✓ Sheep can recognize faces and even miss other sheep after long separations.
- ✓ The Arctic ground squirrel can survive freezing below zero by supercooling its body, so water doesn't crystallize inside it.
- ✓ For every human in the world there are one million ants.
- ✓ Most bats can't walk because their leg bones are too thin, but vampire bats can walk, run, and jump.
- ✓ Hedgehogs have about 5,000 quills that they raise in a crisscross pattern when threatened.
- ✓ Polar bears have black skin underneath their transparent fur, which helps absorb heat.
- ✓ Butterflies taste using receptors on their feet, which are 200 times more sensitive than humans' taste buds.
- ✓ Cows can dream only when lying down but can sleep standing up.
- ✓ Elephants are the only animals that cannot jump.
- ✓ Rats laugh when tickled, showing they can express positive emotions.
- ✓ A sea lion is the first non-human mammal known to keep a beat to music.
- ✓ Cats show affection by rubbing their heads on people, a behaviour called "bunting", which releases pheromones to mark their territory and show ownership.
- ✓ Cats groom other cats and sometimes humans in social bonding rituals called allogrooming.
- ✓ Puppies have baby teeth that fall out as their adult teeth grow in, similar to humans, usually between 3 to 6 months of age.
- ✓ Dogs have an extraordinary sense of smell, about 40 times better than humans.
- ✓ Cats are being wrongly accused of being indifferent to their owners. Cats actually love their humans and are very attached to them.