

## Pets

(Target Audience: Preschool)

Have a storytime with a pets theme. Include stories, songs, and rhymes about animals.

This program is very adaptable, since almost any animal could possibly be a pet. Let the children use their imagination. Ask them what kind of pets they have at home, and what animal they would choose for a pet if they could have any animal at all?

In ancient times, people had many exotic animals as pets. These included cats, dogs, monkeys, bears, lions and gazelles. Of course, not all of these animals would live side by side with people, but would be trained, or perform tasks for their owners. Wall paintings show some of these animals performing tasks, or playing and living in homes and gardens. Ancient Egyptians worshipped cats, and kept them as pets, and even had them mummified when they died.

There are many nursery rhymes, finger rhymes, songs and stories about animals. Use ones you know, or find some in your library collections.

### Crafts

1. Make paper bag pet puppets. Use small paper bags to fit over a child's hand. Draw faces, add pre-cut ears, tails, tongues, etc. Use yarn or feathers for fur or manes.
2. Make animal stick puppets. Use Popsicle sticks and have pre-printed animal shapes from the Internet or a book. The children can colour the animals, then glue them on to the end of a Popsicle stick.

### Circle Games

1. *Did you ever see a monkey* (or tiger, or doggy etc.)

Adaptation of "*Did you ever see a lassie.*" Join hands and form a circle with the children. One child will be in the middle – they can choose to be any animal such as a monkey. The children walk or skip around the child singing:

"Did you ever see a monkey, a monkey, a monkey, a monkey  
Did you ever see a monkey go this way and that?"

They stop singing, and the child in the middle does actions that the animal might make such as a monkey scratching under its arms. All the children sing the second stanza, and perform the same action...

"Go this way, and that way, and this way and that way  
Did you ever see a monkey go this way and that?"

At the end, the child in the middle chooses someone else to be the animal, and you play again.

## 2. *Doggie, doggie, who's got your bone?*

Have the children sit in a circle on the floor.

One child is chosen to be the 'doggie' and sits in the middle of the circle. Have a "bone" cut out of cardboard, that the child puts behind his back and shuts his eyes. No peeking!

A second child is chosen and takes the bone from behind the doggie's back, goes back to her place, and holds the bone behind her back. All the children put their hands behind their backs too. They shout out the verse:

"Doggie, doggie, who's got your bone?  
Somebody stole it from your home  
Guess who, maybe you,  
Maybe a monkey from the zoo."

The doggie opens his eyes and guesses who has the bone. If he guesses correctly, he gets to be the doggie again. If not, the child who has the bone becomes the doggie for the next time.

### **Chant**

Juba this and Juba that  
Juba had a yellow cat  
Juba up and Juba down  
Juba running all around

Chant the words in a sing-song rhythm. Start simply by clapping to the rhythm, then include other actions, e.g. tapping knees, slapping thighs etc. Get more complicated, faster, slower, louder or softer.