

Adoption Matchmaking!



This lesson focuses on the importance and process of animal adoption. Students will learn the difference between adoption versus buying and that like humans; non-human animals all have different personalities and needs too. Through the matchmaking game students will learn about the difficulties and joys of adoption in their roles as the shelter “Adoption Matchmakers”.

Age Level: who’s it appropriate for? All ages

Prerequisite: None.

Time: 30-45 min

Number of Participants: 24

Number of Educators/Assistants: 1/2

Materials:

- 2 sets of: 9 Photos of adoptable animals.
- 2 Sets of 8 Photos of perspective adopters.

Instructional Objectives:

- Students will be able to define key words such as, “adoption” and “buying”.
- Students will be able to understand the varying needs of humans and animals when it comes to finding the perfect home. Additionally, students will be able to identify and match shelter animals to the adopter that best fits their needs.

Environmental Objectives:

- ♥ Students should use compassion, respect and kind words to their peers and when matchmaking.

Procedure:

Introduction: (5 minutes):

- ♥ While lots of exciting things happen at animal shelters, today we are going to be taking about the **best** and **most** exciting event that happens at animal shelters and rescues...this is the event that everyone *hopes* will happen for *each* and *every* homeless animal.
- ♥ **Ask:** *Any guesses on what this may be?* ADOPTIONS! (The animal finds a home)
 - Here at the SF SPCA and at other rescues and shelters when someone decides to take an animal into their home forever, we call it “adopting” or that they have just “adopted” that animal.

- ♥ **Ask:** *Why do you think it is that animal shelters and rescues do not call it “buying” or “selling” an animal? Take suggestions.*
 - It’s because **pet adoption** is the process of taking guardianship of and responsibility for a pet where their previous human abandoned or released them to a shelter or rescue organization.
 - The reason why “adoptions” are so exciting is because when you adopt a pet, you are not adding to the nation’s pet overpopulation problem and you’re saving **3 lives!**
 - **1.** The animal you adopt
 - **2.** Space is now available for that shelter to rescue another animal.
 - **3.** Your adoption fee goes to providing care and resources for other homeless animals). However, when you “buy” a pet from a pet store, from online, from Craigslist or from a breeder you not only deny a homeless pet a home, but you are supporting an industry that thrives on bringing more animals into this world. This is not the best idea because we already have too many animals and about 4 million animals will be euthanized each year simply because we could not find families to adopt them

- ♥ **Ask:** *Are all humans born exactly the same? (No, we are different ages, ethnicities, color hair/eyes, heights, weights etc.) Non-human animals, like dogs and cats are the same way! Do you think some animals may get adopted more slowly than others? Why?*
 - **Just a couple examples:** Senior animals, even though they are often playful, happy and trained, people usually want baby animals. Black animals, especially big black dogs spent more time waiting for their new home than their lighter-colored animals. Explain that in the sheltering world this is known as “Black Dog Syndrome”. Due to geographic location, fear stigma against certain breed types (like Pit Bulls or Black cats) and the fact that large, black dogs are often portrayed as aggressive in movies and on television; it often takes longer to find them a forever home.
 - **Ask:** *How do you think it may feel to be that senior or big black animal that gets overlooked? (I.e. ignored, lonely, sad, frustrated, confused etc.)*

Body: (10 -15 minutes)

- ♥ One of the best parts of adopting an animal from an animal shelter or rescue is that the staff and volunteers at shelters and rescues work **very** hard to find the animals the best

home possible for that particular animal. **Ask:** *How do you think they do this?* Take suggestions.

- Mostly by getting to know each and every animal and by asking lots of questions to the potential adopters.
- **Ask:** *What kinds of questions do you think we would ask to someone who wanted to adopt one of our animals?*
 - All kinds!! Including questions about how much time the family has to devote to an animal, if they are allowed a pet in their housing situation, if they have any pets and if they have ever given an animal away before.
 - **Ask:** *Why do you think we ask these?* We also make sure a potential adopter fills out the application before they get to meet any animals
 - **Ask:** *Why do you think we do this?* Because we wouldn't want to get the animals or adopter's "hopes" up by letting them play and bond together if we know it wouldn't be a good fit.
- ♥ **Ask:** *What do you think would happen if someone came in and they weren't a good fit for an animal? Can you think of any animals and adopters that may not be the best match?* (Ex. A couch potato and an energetic Australian Shepherd, a nervous dachshund and a family of 5 young kids etc.)
 - Sometimes, regardless of how much an animal needs a home or how long they have been at the shelter, we must redirect an adopter to a better fit or tell them "no" altogether. **Ask:** *Do think telling an adopter "no" is always easy?* Probably not.
- ♥ Read a couple of the animals' written bio's and prompt students with questions like:
 - What do you think this animal is like?
 - What can we tell this animal does and does not like?
 - What kind of home may be best for him/her? Why?
 - What type of home would not be the best for him/her? What makes you think this?

Matchmaking Game! (15 -30 minutes)

- ♥ Explain that the students are now going to have their very own chance to test out their matchmaking skills!
 - There are a total of 9 adoptable animals and 8 potential adopters.
 - Explain that it is his or her job to match each animal with the best family. Additionally, pictures aren't always what they seem and you must thoroughly read about each animal *and* family in order to match correctly. Also, tell the students to keep in mind that just like in the real world, there's a chance that not every adopter is ready for a pet.

- Number students “1, 2” so that you have 2 teams. Tell them they must collaborate with their group and decide on matches. Also, they must discuss quietly as the other team may hear their answers.
- Students have **10 minutes** to match make and then spend **5 minutes** going over the correct answers, but longer if you have more time!

Answer Key:

#1(Richard) – Penny

#2 (Cozy Couch Couple)- Katya & Lubja

#3 (Jerry) – Toby & Max

#4(John & Jennifer) – Xenia

#5 (Ellie) – Sky

#6 (Adventurous Hiking family) – Maximus

#7 (Evan) - Chloe

#8 (Video Game Family) – Sasha

Speak Up!

- ♥ What could you say to a friend that says, “I want to adopt a white dog, I just prefer lighter colored animals.”
- ♥ What could you say to a family member that says, “I love puppies so much that I’m going to buy a puppy from a breeder!”

Bibliography:

<https://www.aspca.org/adopt/meet-your-match>

<https://www.petfinder.com/pet-adoption/pet-adoption-information/>

<https://www.sfspca.org/adoptions/how-adopt>

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