



STANLEY AND THE CLASS PET

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Illustrator: Barney Saltzberg

Jewish Value:

Protect Animals—*Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim* צַעַר בְּעַלְי חַיִּים

Enduring Understandings

- The care and protection of animals has always been an important part of Judaism.
- Protect animals; they are G-d's creations.
- Trust yourself. Do what you believe is right, rather than what others may tell you to do.
- Take responsibility for your choices and actions; admit when you have made a mistake.

Book Summary

Finally, the time has come for Stanley to take home Figgy, the class pet bird. Stanley takes his job very seriously and reads to Figgy, plays with Figgy, and even lets Figgy (cage and all) sleep in his bed! When Larry, his friend, comes over to visit, Larry persuades Stanley that Figgy needs exercise, and against his better judgment, Stanley opens the cage door. Figgy flies off, never to return—but who is to blame?

Be Inspired: Consider the ideas included as starting points, as you and your students explore, discover, and live the values. Be sure to elicit and encourage student and parent participation, consistently reinforcing the value being addressed. Allow lessons to authentically develop and change based on engagement and interests.



For the Educator Jewish Thought, Text, and Traditions

(For more information on Jewish values, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com.)

Tza'ar ba'alei chayim can be literally translated as “the suffering of living beings,” which in Judaism specifically refers to that of the treatment of animals. This is a *mitzvah* that must be upheld by doing what is necessary to prevent or minimize the suffering of animals as well as encouraging humane treatment.

The Bible makes numerous references to the treatment of animals. For example, the Torah prohibits plowing with an ox and ass yoked together (Deuteronomy 22:10). In addition, Deuteronomy 5:14 states that animals, like humans, have Shabbat and are commanded to rest. Furthermore, Balaam is reprimanded for striking his ass (Numbers 23:32).

This value also emphasizes that owners of animals must feed, water, and otherwise care for their animals' basic needs. In some cases, the owner may be required to take precautions to alleviate the suffering of their animals.

A commonly cited *mitzvah* mandates relieving an animal that is suffering from carrying too heavy a load. “If one encounters one’s friend on the road and sees that that person’s animal is suffering from its burden, whether the burden is appropriate for the animal or is excessive, it is a *mitzvah* to remove this burden” (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah*).

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Does the way someone treats animals indicate how he or she treats people?
2. What can you do to improve the quality of life of the animals that live outside your home or school?
3. What can you do to better take care of your pet (if you have one) and other animals?
4. How can you incorporate the value of *tza'ar ba'alei chayim* in the classroom?



Jewish Every Day Incorporate Jewish Values

A classroom pet gives students the opportunity to protect and care for an animal. Assign various responsibilities to students in taking care of their class pet.



Materials and Resources

MATERIALS

- Copy of *Stanley and the Class Pet*

TECHNOLOGY

- “Teaching Kids to Care for Pets with Martha Stewart”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiNSTxuHnh4>
- “Let’s Take Care of Our Pets”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tc8_u9Waiec



Sharing the Story

INTRODUCING THE STORY

For strategies for teaching vocabulary, see Appendix, Vocabulary Strategies.

During meeting time, ask students who have pets to tell the others their pets' names, the type of animal each is, and one thing special that they love about their pets.

Discuss what people with pets need to do to keep their pets safe, cared for, and protected.

Show students the cover of the book *Stanley and the Class Pet*. Ask them to imagine what Stanley might be thinking as he looks at the bird? What do they think the bird might be thinking as it looks at Stanley?

READING THE STORY

*Read the story aloud, stopping when appropriate to explore illustrations, address comments, clarify, predict, and guide students' understanding of the story and the value to **protect animals**—tza'ar ba'alei chayim.*

Ask the following questions:

- Why do the students take Figgy home on weekends?
- Is Stanley taking good care of Figgy before his friend Larry came over to visit? What is he doing to make you say this?
- Larry said many things to try to persuade Stanley to open the cage. Pause on the page in which Larry finally says, "You worry too much." Do you think Stanley will open Figgy's cage door? Why or why not?
- Pause at the part of the story where Stanley is about to open the door. What might Stanley be thinking and feeling?
- At first Stanley blamed Larry and Larry blamed Stanley for Figgy's flying away. Whose fault was it?

The children in the story discussed what they would like in a new class pet. Ask students to list and mime all of the types of animals that do the following:

- swim
- have a shell
- slither
- hop



Sharing the Story

continued

AFTER THE STORY

Adopt a “class pet.” Read the story *Oh, the Pets You Can Get*, by Tish Rabe, to help select a class pet.

- Discuss with the class what it means to have a class pet and the types of animals that would be most appropriate for a class pet. Let the class choose from types of pets that are easily taken care of in the classroom and can easily be transported to homes during weekends or vacations, for example, a goldfish, a hamster, etc. (Be mindful of class allergies.)
- Have the class select the pet’s name, in English and Hebrew.
- Discuss the animal’s needs.
- Create a set of rules for caring for the animal, and allow students to share the responsibility. Create an area in the classroom for the pet to live, and decorate the area with a special “nameplate” that students design along with the rules for its care. Explain that being allowed to protect and take care of a pet is not only an obligation, it is also a privilege. (See Jewish Every Day.)

View the following videos to reinforce the ways in which students can care for and protect their animals:

- Play “Teaching Kids to Care for Pets” with Martha Stewart: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiNSTxuHnh4>. After watching the video, involve students in listing all the things they can remember about pets and what they need.
- Play the short video, “Let’s Take Care of Our Pets”: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tc8_u9Waiec. Guide students in understanding that it is the responsibility of humans to make sure animals are happy and healthy.

Talk about peer pressure. The concept of peer pressure is introduced in the story *Stanley and the Class Pet*. Involve students in a dramatic-play activity to reinforce this concept and the importance of being responsible for the choices they make.

- Revisit the part of the story that deals with the conversation between Stanley and Larry in terms of opening Figgy’s cage. Ask, “Did Stanley think it was a good idea to open Figgy’s cage? Why do you think he opened it?”
- Ask, “What would you have done if you were Stanley?”
- Ask, “Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong or you didn’t want to do, but did it anyway because someone told you to do it? What happened?”
- Role-play various scenarios, using a puppet or stuffed animal to pose “What if ...?” questions to students, based on real-world situations in which one person tries to influence another. Encourage individuals, pairs, or the entire group to respond.
- Use students’ responses to the above to underscore the importance of being responsible and doing what we believe is right, no matter what friends or classmates might tell us to do.



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

CREATE A PET

CREATIVITY CORNER

Involve students in creating a new pet never heard of before by combining two other pets.

- Provide pictures of various types of pets. Have a sufficient number of pictures so that each student or pair of students can select two of them. (You may have more than one copy of the same animal.)
- Explain that each student or pair can select any two of these pictures and combine them to create a new animal. Students can either cut out, draw, sculpt, or use craft items, yarn, etc., to combine different parts of each animal in order to create a new type of pet. (For example, they may select a snake and a cat to create a reptile-like creature that has whiskers and pointed ears—a “snat”!)
- As they are making their animals, have them think of a name for it, the type of habitat each animal would live in, and the type of food it needs to stay healthy.
- Create a class display to introduce the new class menagerie with signs that reflect each animal’s name, where it likes to live, what it eats, etc.

VETERINARIAN VISIT

GUEST SPEAKER

Invite a veterinarian to speak with the class.

- Prior to the vet’s visit introduce the following brief video: “Veterinarians Have One Thing in Common—A Love for Animals”: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhXDM8j8Cc4>.
- Explain to students that a veterinarian is coming to their class to visit. What questions would students like to ask?
- During the visit, provide time for the veterinarian to address questions posed by students as well as explain some of the reasons animals need to visit him or her, how to correctly handle specific pets, what students can do to keep their pets safe and healthy, etc.
- Students can create thank-you notes to show appreciation to the veterinarian and draw their favorite animals on the card.

A VISIT TO THE VET

DRAMATIC PLAY

Review what a veterinarian does. (See above activity.) Create a learning center that will allow students to role-play the practice of veterinary medicine. Include items such as a variety of stuffed animals (the “patients”), toy stethoscopes, lab coats, bandages, a small animal carrier, etc. Display pictures of veterinarians caring for animals.



Explore, Discover, and More

Extension and Reinforcement Activities

continued

MATCHING GAME

SCIENCE

Discuss with students that just as people have babies, so do animals. Using index cards, create a set of cards for a matching game. On one card, place a picture of a baby animal and its name, and on a second card, include a picture of its parent and its name (for example, pony-horse; lamb-sheep; calf-cow / bull; kitten-cat; puppy-dog; chick-hen / rooster; cub-lion, etc.). Involve students in playing a matching game. Students can keep those cards in which they can match baby and parent, or to make it more challenging, they can keep the cards that match if they can name both the baby and parent.

IT'S ALL HAPPENING AT THE ZOO

FIELD TRIP

Prior to a zoo visit, discuss with students that a zoo is where all kinds of animals are kept, protected, and taken care of. After visiting the zoo, elicit from the children how the zoo has created habitats so the animals feel at home.

- All students can visit the zoo, whether in person or virtually. If an actual zoo visit is not possible, share the following video of the San Diego Zoo, and encourage student observations and reactions: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4DdsyQV08A>.

“MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB”

LITERACY

Remind students of the nursery rhyme “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” and provide the opportunity for them to recite the rhyme together. Ask students, “Why do you think Mary’s lamb liked to be with her?”

“TEN LITTLE FISHES”

LITERACY AND MOVEMENT

Teach the finger-play song “Ten Little Fishes.” Say, “Ten little fishes were swimming in a school.” Students hold up ten fingers and then make swimming motions with their hands. Then say, “This one said, ‘I’m as hungry as can be.’” As the rest of the lines are recited, have students wiggle each finger in turn:

This one said, “Let’s swim where it is cool.”

This one said, “It’s a very warm day.”

This one said, “Come on, let’s play.”

This one said, “There’s a worm for me.”

This one said, “Wait, we’d better look.”

This one said, “Yes, it’s on a hook.”

This one said, “Can’t we get it anyway?”

This one said, “Perhaps we may.”

This one, so very brave, grabbed a bite and swam away.

Select another animal that students generally have as a pet. Determine what things this animal would like to do and create their own version of “Ten Little ____.”



Music

(Access all songs at www.jewishlearningmatters.com/music.)

“All the World’s Animals” Track # 7 from *Good Choices, Volume 2*

INSPIRATION TEXT

“A righteous man has regard for the life of his beast.” -Proverbs 12:10

“ALL THE WORLD’S ANIMALS” ACTIVITY

Discuss the word *protect* with students and make sure that they understand the concept, providing simple and meaningful examples. (For example, ask, “Who protects you? What does a seatbelt do? What does a bandage on a scrape or cut do? What does sunscreen do?”)

Ask students to brainstorm examples of animals that are big, small, short, and tall. Stretch your arms to demonstrate big, small, short, and tall, each time you sing the words.

LYRICS

CHORUS

All the world’s animals, big and small
All the world’s animals, short and tall
Living in the wild or living in a zoo, all the world’s animals, we’ll protect you

To all the animals swimming in the sea, we’ll try to keep the ocean litter free (x 2)

CHORUS

To all the animals that like to fly, we’ll try to keep pollution out of the sky (x 2)

CHORUS

To the pets, dogs, and cats we love so much, we’ll show that we care with a gentle touch (x 2)

CHORUS

To all the world’s animals that work a lot, we hope you rest on Shabbat! (x2)

CHORUS



Music

continued

MUSIC CONNECTIONS

To access additional Jewish and secular songs from a variety of traditional and contemporary artists that reinforce and teach this value, visit www.jewishlearningmatters.com/music.



Evidence of Learning

- Students create a portfolio or poster of collected pictures to reflect the ways in which they cared for and protected the class pet when it visited their homes for the weekend. (See Home and Community Connections.)
- Students are observed fulfilling their responsibilities in class to take care of and protect the class pet.
- Students are observed taking responsibility for their own actions when they do and do not make good choices.



Home and Community Connections

Give students the opportunity to take home the class pet. Ask parents to encourage their children to tell what they learned in school about taking care of the pet and protecting it—*tzaar ba'alei chayim*, and then guide them to put this learning into action.

- Ask parents to take a picture of their child playing with the class pet or taking care of the pet. (Alternatively, their child may draw a picture.)
- Have them help their child write a caption to accompany the picture, for example: _____ (student's name) and _____ (name of class pet).
- On a poster board in the classroom, write the heading “We Protect Animals-*Tzaar Ba'alei Chayim*.” Each Monday, place the picture(s) of another student's adventures with the class pet taken during his or her weekend with the animal. As students place their pictures on the poster board, have them share with the class what responsibilities they undertook during their weekend with the pet and what they did together.



Literature Connections

Title	Author(s) and Illustrator(s)	Summary
<i>Nico & Lola: Kindness Shared Between a Boy and a Dog</i>	Meggen Hill photography by Susan M. Graunke	Examples of kindness are highlighted as a young boy cares for a pet dog.
<i>What Pet to Get</i>	Emma Dodd	Jack is deciding on a pet. His first choice is an elephant, then a tiger, etc. His mother then explains why each of these animals is inappropriate. She asks him to find a less exotic pet.
<i>Arthur's Pet Business</i>	Marc Brown	Arthur starts his own pet-sitting business to show Mom and Dad that he can be responsible. But between a boa constrictor, an ant farm, and a group of frogs, he's got his hands full! Can Arthur still prove he can handle a dog of his own?
<i>The Shabbat Puppy*</i>	Leslie Kimmelman Jaime Zollars	Every Saturday Noah and his grandfather go for a walk together, looking for "Shabbat Shalom" – Sabbath Peace. For what seems like the longest time to the little boy, Grandpa won't allow Mazel, Noah's puppy, to join them. Eventually, though, the dog is permitted to join in, with sweet results.
<i>I Wanna Iguana</i>	Karen Orloff David Catrow	Alex writes a letter to his mother to persuade her to allow him to have an iguana. She envisioned a six-foot long iguana that would eat them out of house and home. Alex reassures her that it takes fifteen years for an iguana to get that big. The discussion continues.
<i>Just Me and My Puppy</i>	Mercer Mayer	This simple book teaches young children about responsibility and is told from a boy's point of view after he brings a puppy home.

*PJ Library Book



Thematic Connections

Animals

Pets

Nutrition: why humans and animals need a proper diet

Peer pressure

LESSON CONTRIBUTOR

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