



Gentle Hands, Happy Tails! — Lesson Plan

Grade: Pre-K–2 | Duration: 40–50 minutes | CASEL Domain: Responsible Decision-Making

Objective: Students will learn the 3-step dog greeting, read basic dog body language, and know what to do when approached by an unfamiliar dog.

Essential Question: *"How do you safely greet a dog — and understand what it's saying back?"*

Materials: The personalized story, Stuffed dog for practice, Dog body language picture cards, Paper and crayons

Vocabulary: Gentle, Ask permission, Sniff, Body language, Wagging, Stiff, Growl, Approach, BECOME A TREE, Respect

ANTICIPATORY SET (5 MIN)

Show two photos: a happy, relaxed dog and a stiff, tense dog. Ask: "Which would you approach? Why?" Discuss body language.

DIRECT INSTRUCTION (15 MIN)

Read aloud. Pause at each greeting step — PRACTICE with stuffed dog. Pause at body language. Emphasize: dogs TALK with their bodies. Learning their language keeps everyone safe.

GUIDED PRACTICE (10 MIN)

3-Step Greeting drill with stuffed dog. Dog Body Language card sort.

INDEPENDENT PRACTICE (10 MIN)

Draw and label the 3-step greeting. Write 3 dog body language signals and what they mean.

CLOSURE (5 MIN)

Practice BECOME A TREE one more time. Cheer: "I can read dogs!"

ASSESSMENT

Can children demonstrate the 3-step greeting? Can they identify safe vs. unsafe dog body language? Exit ticket: "What are the 3 steps to safely greet a dog?"

DIFFERENTIATION

Support: Use picture cards for body language. Practice greeting with hand-over-hand guidance.

Extend: Create a "Dog Body Language Dictionary" with illustrations. Present to another class.

HOME CONNECTION

Send home the dog safety card. Practice the 3-step greeting with a real dog this week (with adult supervision).
