



The Empathy Pawject

Lesson #2: Adoptable Dogs and Preliminary Sketches

Lesson Overview

Today, the students will meet their adoptable dogs! This is such an important part of the project as each student “meets” and begins to form a bond with the dog they will paint and raise awareness for. This lesson will guide students to understand that:

- dog personalities are unique, with differing likes, dislikes, fears, and energy levels
- dogs can have special needs – physical, medical, or emotional
- Dogs may have special home requirements – some may not be able to live in attached town homes, some may be excellent with children, some may need to be in adult only homes or homes where they will be the only pet.

Before handing out the profiles you will also do a quick review of empathy. A link to a child friendly video that could be watched during the lesson, as well as one to a Brené Brown video that could be watched before the lesson, are included in the materials list beside this overview. It is important to review with the students that although we have role played and discussed what empathy would look like between people, it is also possible to feel empathy for an animal.

Lesson Materials

- 1) one adoptable dog profile for each student
- 2) a smartboard or screen of some sort to show a video
- 3) video to review empathy. This is a short song and animation using two panda bears to review empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9A-Hpwp3IU>
- 4) Chart paper, a white board or a smart board
- 5) *Can I be Your Dog?* by Troy Cummings. Here is the read-aloud version that includes helpful ways people can raise awareness for shelter animals such as volunteering or fostering! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=an4jAjfJKe4>
- 6) Another great book suggestion for this lesson is *Ginger Finds a Home* by Charlotte Voake. Here is the Read-Aloud version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXt2iNbh4kw>
- 7) student materials: paper, pencils, erasers, colouring tools (pencil crayons, crayons, or markers)

Recommended:

- Create a power point presentation using the provided information in this lesson to help guide your lesson.
- Similar to lesson #1 - If you have a guidance counselor or youth development counselor at your school, I recommend inviting them to participate in discussion and exercises that take place in this second lesson.



A note about creating the adoptable dog profiles:

To create these profiles, reach out to a shelter(s) in your area, and obtain permission from the shelter and also from the shelter's volunteer photographers to use their write-ups, and photos of rescue dogs. You can also ask the shelter to provide some additional information to help build the profile stories. It is important that each profile highlights the positive information about the dog. Underscore what makes them special as well as giving important information that will help that dog find the perfect suitable home! Check to see if the dog needs to be in an adult only home, do they have medical needs, will they do best with a dog sibling to help guide the way in their new lives. For great information to help you outline how to put together the perfect profile for an adoptable dog, see this PDF by Rachael Rodgers Called Instagram for adoptable dogs. The write up in this PDF works for both Instagram posts, should you choose to highlight the dogs on that social media platform, as well as the write ups that you will give your students. <https://tinyurl.com/y7b9f8ug>

Curriculum Outcomes: (from the Alberta Education Program of Studies for Grade 4 Art)

- Evaluate whether or not a choice is respectful (CHC 1c)
- Understand how certain issues (societal, global, natural disasters, etc.) impact people (CHC 6e)
- Understand that operating from a position of trust sets the stage for building relationships (CHC 9e)
- Explore drawing media (AC: 10iii a) (CHC 10h)

Curriculum Outcomes: (from the Alberta Education Program of Studies for Grade 4 Health and Wellness)

- recognize that individuals can have a positive and negative influence on the feelings of others
- identify and describe ways to provide support to others
- describe and accept roles and responsibilities within a group

Learning Activity

Review:

- 1) Review of Empathy: Do a quick review of empathy. You can watch the video provided in the materials list, or simply have a class discussion about what empathy means to them.
- 2) Group Discussion:
Can we have empathy for beings other than humans? We know what it means to walk in someone else's shoes, so what does it mean to walk in a dog's paw prints? We can feel empathy



for someone even if we have never experienced exactly what they are going through. Even though we might not be able to fully understand what a dog has experienced, we can try to imagine their situation through their eyes and understand their feelings.

Read:

- 3) Read *Can I be Your Dog?* by Troy Cummings, or *Ginger Finds a Home* by Charlotte Voake: Though there are a variety of books that are perfect for this lesson, I seem to always come back to these two. Read these books and talk about how each dog has a story and a reason, of no fault of their own, as to why they are in a shelter. Each dog deserves a loving home that is the perfect fit for them! Although we cannot hear their stories or change their past, we can dream up a new future for them. Who will talk more about this in one of the later painting lessons.

Group Discussion:

- 4) Senior dogs and Puppies:
- Do puppies have a difficult time or an easy time being adopted?
 - Do Senior dogs may have an easy or difficult time being adopted?
 - Do senior dogs and puppies make wonderful furry family members with lots of love to give?
 - Is it important that we raise awareness for all the animals that are looking for forever families?

Group Brainstorm:

- 5) Using chart paper, or a smart board, draw a line down the center of the page. On one side brainstorm with the students all of the things that a person adopting a puppy would need to know.
- What would make a good home for a puppy?
 - What toys, bedding, foods might they need?
 - What kind of exercise might they need?
 - Will they need to be housetrained?
 - Do they have lots of love to give (yes!).

Repeat this process on the other side for senior dogs:

- Senior dogs are likely already housetrained.
- They may like a fluffy comfortable bed to lay in.
- Will they need the same exercise as a puppy?
- Do they have lots of love to give (yes!).

- 6) Hand out the adoptable dog profiles! This is the moment students have been waiting for! It is heartwarming to see and hear the students' reactions to each of the dogs that they receive. It's



worth listening and taking note of the conversations you hear at each table/desk as they read over their profiles and discuss their dogs with their classmates! For this part of the lesson I had our school's Youth Development Counselor help hand out the profiles. While all the dog profiles, remind the children that all the dogs need a forever home and family to call their own. Hand out at random.

Upon receiving their adoptable dog, I hear lots of wonderful things in my classes such as "I just know I was meant to get Mama D!" or "I think I was supposed to learn about Eclipse!"

Students Share:

7) Introduce their dog to their class: Give the class about 10 minutes to read over their profiles and a couple of minutes to discuss their dog with their classmates. Then, ask for a couple of volunteers who would like to present some information about their dog to their class. In my experience, lots of students will want to share and it is a nice thing to pause and carry forward to other classes if there is not enough time for everyone to share during this class.

Drawing:

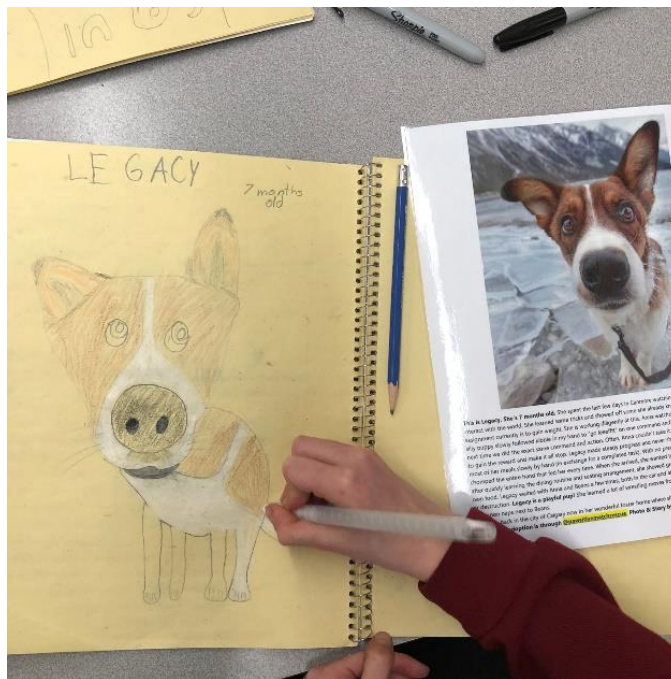
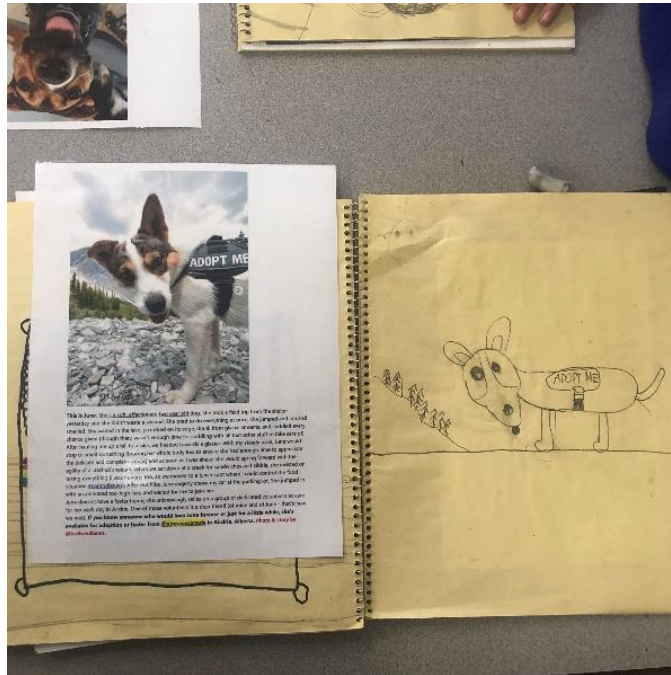
8) Preliminary Sketches: This is an important part of the artistic process. Before giving any sort of lesson that teaches the students how to draw a dog, give them some time to draw what they see on the image. Tell them not to worry about making a perfect drawing. They may have never drawn a dog from a photo (or even a dog from their imaginations) before, and that is ok!

End of Class Activity

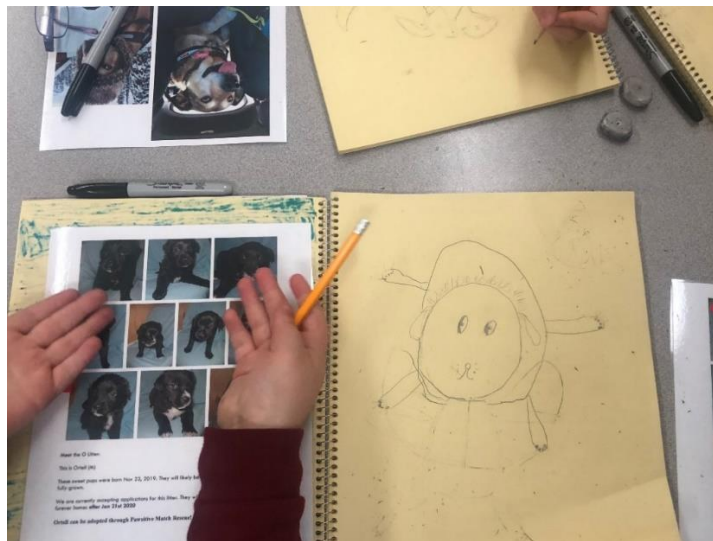
- Do a simple formative feedback piece to help guide your next lesson: Ask students how they felt about today's lesson. They can offer some information about the dog there are learning about or what they know about empathy so far.
- Give them a couple of minutes at the end of class to answer any questions they may have.



Student Examples:



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