Sentient Sanctuary

Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans

written by Carissa Latona, MS Ed.
with feedback and insight from Peter Morville of Sentient Sanctuary

DRAFT 1

Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans

Purpose

The goal of these lessons is to increase students' understanding of animals in terms of their traits and socio-emotional capabilities. Students are typically taught to treat their fellow humans with kindness, but by realizing that animals and humans share a wide variety of traits and capabilities, students will move forward with a mindset of respect towards animals as well.

The topics of these plans are *Personality Traits*, *Point of View*, *Compassion*, and *Resilience*. The final topic combines students' understanding of these topics through creative reflection.

Target Age Group

The plans are currently written for a younger elementary age group. The target age group could be anywhere from elementary to middle school, based on relevant changes to phrasing and activities to make them age-appropriate.

Questions & Feedback

We would love <u>feedback</u> (via Google Forms) on these draft lesson plans (even just to let us know with which age group you are using them), and we are happy to answer <u>questions</u>.

You can also reach Carissa and Peter via email to <u>being@sentientsanctuary.org</u>. Thanks!

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Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans: Character Development for Young Thinkers

| Topic 1: Personality Traits | Date(s): |
|-----------------------------|----------|
|-----------------------------|----------|

Objective(s):

I will be able to compare and contrast humans with other living beings.

I will be able to select personality traits that describe myself.

I will be able to compare my personality traits to those of other animals.

Materials: Attached photos and worksheets, chart paper or smartboard to create and save Venn Diagram, markers if using chart paper, pencils

Note: Please cut today's worksheet into two parts - the top will be handed out after the students complete the survey-style activity, so the results are a surprise. "Personality Test" was downloaded from https://www.attitude.org.nz/personality-test, with personality types concept used from the book Tree by John Trent, Gary Smalley and Judy Love

Hook: (Show the class the attached pictures of bees.) If I asked you to describe bees, what would you say? (Write some responses on the board. If students identify personality traits already, such as teamwork, put a star next to those as we will revisit them later.)

These are great ways to describe a bee's appearance. But how about their personality traits? (Revisit the traits with stars if there are any on the board.)

Remember, personality traits - sometimes called character traits when we're reading stories - have to do with what's on the inside. Did you know that insects and animals can have personality traits? Like humans, each bee has their own personality. In general, bees are hard-working and great at communicating in their own ways, with fellow bees. Not every bee is the same, but as a species, this is how they are often described.

Introduction/Opening Discussion: This week we will be talking about animals - wild animals, animals at shelters and sanctuaries, and even pets. We will see that there are things that make them different from humans and things humans have in common with them.

Isn't it interesting that we can describe bees as hard-working and great communicators, and we can describe humans that way as well?

Let's make a Venn Diagram to show what humans have in common with other animals - and even insects - and what makes each of us unique. (I say 'other animals' because humans are a

type of animal too!)

(Fill in a Venn Diagram with the group. This diagram will be revisited during future lessons.)

Activity: Let's go back to our personality traits. We talked about how insects and animals can have personality traits like humans can. What's one way you would describe your own personality? Raise your hand if you would say you are talkative. How about fun-loving? Would you say you are a helper?

Before we move on to our activity, it's important to remember that a species can have general traits, but each individual has their own traits due to their own experiences - just like humans! For example, dogs are generally friendly - but of course, we can't assume *all* dogs are *always* friendly, particularly if they were mistreated in the past. In today's activity we are talking about the general traits of a species. *Outside* of our activity, if you meet an animal in person, remember that they are all individuals with their own backgrounds.

Students will read the attached list of personality traits and circle the ones that best describe themselves. Afterwards, please hand out the sheet with animals and their general, species-level traits so students can discover which animal they are most like.

First, have the students read and check off the traits that describe themselves. Then, have students add up the traits they checked off in each column and write their totals in the space provided on the sheet. Lastly, have them match up the column/color with the highest total to the corresponding animal.

Closing Question/Discussion: Which animal had the most traits in common with you? How did you react when you saw that you had personality traits in common with this animal?

(Revisit the Venn Diagram. Students can provide a few of the traits they found in common, to add to the middle of the diagram.)

Even though other animals may have wings, or tails, or don't communicate using words, this week, we will look at other qualities that show more ways in which we are not so different from other animals.

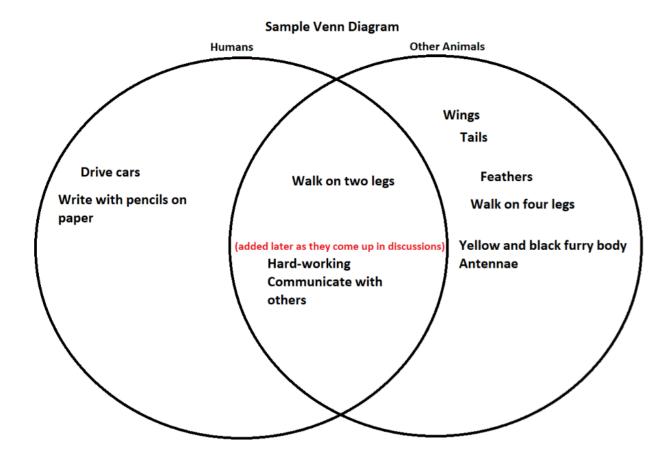
Accommodations/Modifications: Struggling readers can work with a buddy who will help them read the personality traits and check them off as they go along. Feel free to color-code the three parts of the Venn Diagram to further show the distinction in these categories.







(Photos downloaded from Unsplash.com)



Here are four animals that describe four different personality types.



If I call you a Lion, I'm not talking about your meaty breath. I mean you're a leader and you're brave.



Some of you are more like Otters, you like hanging out in big groups and are full of energy.



Beavers

If you're hard-working and great at getting tasks done, you might be a Beaver.



Golden Retrievers are very caring and love helping people.



Tick the boxes that you think describe your personality in the lists below. Keep in mind that:

- · You are unique so you might not fit neatly into one type.
- All personality types can have fantastic lives, careers and relationships.
- You are not stuck with your personality it's ultimately decided by your choices.

| O takes charge | O passionate | oreads all instructions | O sensitive |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| O determined | O "no worries bro!" | O reliable | O loyal |
| ○ confident | O bright ideas | ocontrolled | O calm |
| O strong | O gets people going | o serious | O relaxed |
| omakes things happen | O talk talk talk | O practical | avoids arguments |
| O competitive | O can sell an idea | o makes lists | O generous |
| o enjoys challenges | O friendly | oneat and tidy | O sticks up for people |
| O productive | O people like you | O likes facts | O warm |
| Obold | O fun loving | O "I'll do the best I can" | O tolerant |
| O go for goals! | O spur-of-the-moment | "let's get it perfect" | O flexible |
| O decision-maker | O enjoys change | O "let me think about that" | O kind |
| Obrave | O creative | ○ "I'll work it out" | O thoughtful |
| O independent | O "where's the party?" | O "how does that work?" | O helper |
| ostands up for yourself | O cheerful | O careful | O patient |
| O the leader | O the starter of things | O determined | O peacemaker |
| O keeps at it | O funny | O organised | O good listener |
| O hard worker | O people person | O doesn't give up | oputs others first |
| O "let's do it my way!" | O "let's do it the fun way!" | O "let's do it the right way!" | O "let's keep the peace!" |
| TOTAL | TOTAL | TOTAL | TOTAL |

The personality types concept used here is from the book *The Treasure Tree* by John Trent, Gary Smalley and Judy Love

Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans: Character Development for Young Thinkers

| Topic 2: Point of View | Date(s): |
|------------------------|----------|
|------------------------|----------|

Objective(s):

I will answer questions about animal experiences through how they sense the outside world. I will be able to infer an animal's thoughts and feelings based on their surroundings. I will be able to put myself in an animal's "shoes" in order to understand their point of view.

Materials: Before the lesson, write the five senses on chart paper along with 'Feelings and Thoughts' as the sixth item. Use the picture of the cow attached here - either put it in the middle of the page and fill in the items around it, or hold it up for the class to see.

Other materials include markers, additional animal photos (attached), point of view handout, and pencils.

Hook: Today we're going to talk about the term 'point of view'. Your point of view is how you experience and think about the world around you. Animals can have points of view, too.

On a basic level, humans experience the world with their five senses, and many animals do the same. But humans and animals also think and have feelings, too.

So, for example - right now, in our classroom, what sorts of things do you see? Hear? How do you feel today? (Take some quick responses to each question.)

Introduction/Opening Discussion:

We talked about how you're experiencing our classroom today with your senses, thoughts, and feelings. Let's do the same for the cow(s) in this photo.

Ask the class what they think the cow sees. (Cows, grass, sky, flowers, etc.) Write their observations down next to 'sight'. Do the same for the other senses.

What do you think she can hear? (Other cows, other animals, wind)

What do you think she smells? (The grass and flowers, the other cows, other nearby animals) What do you think she tastes? (The grass and flowers, water)

What do you think she touches/feels? (Try to get more complex responses here - maybe some mud if it rains, her babies if they need help, warm or cold air)

What might she be afraid of? (Bad weather, not having enough food, predators, people who

may be unkind)

What do you think makes her happy or comfortable? (Having enough food, feeling safe, feeling protected, being together with their babies, their babies being healthy) - write answers to these last two questions under next to 'feelings'.

Even though humans are not exactly the same as other animals, we all experience the world around us in our own ways. When we try to understand someone else's point of view, it helps us to understand them more, and treat them the way we'd want them to treat us.

Activity:

Now it's your turn to try and understand a different animal's point of view. The easiest way to do this is to pretend you are experiencing what they are experiencing.

Imagine you wake up and, suddenly, you've turned into either the dog or the cat in these photos (attached). Let us know more about your point of view (handout also attached).

If time allows: Write a story from your "new" point of view. Consider questions like: When is this taking place; where are you (are you a stray, are you in a home, are you at a sanctuary, or are you somewhere else?) What is happening around you? What makes you (as this animal) happy/comfortable? What might you want or need? What might you be afraid of?

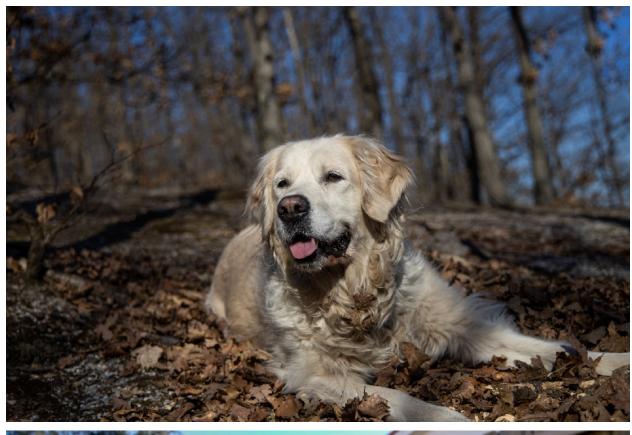
Closing Question/Discussion: How did it feel to see the world through an animal's point of view? Why do you say so?

How can trying to understand someone else's point of view, whether they're a human or any other animal, help us to treat each other better? (We can pretend we are in their situation - how would we want to be treated? Wouldn't we want others to show us respect and kindness? Why?)

Accommodations/Modifications: If time does not allow students to turn their handouts into a story, early finishers can do this part of the activity.

Struggling learners can have a goal of 1-2 responses for each sense rather than 3-4. The main idea is to have some sense of what the animal is experiencing.







(Photos downloaded from Unsplash.com)

| Name | | | |
|------|--|--|--|
| | | | |

Date _____

Animal Points of View

Imagine you woke up and you are now this type of animal:

| Smelling |
|---------------------------------|
| |
| Tasting |
| |
| Feelings, Thoughts, and "Wants" |
| |
| |

Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans: Character Development for Young Thinkers

Topic 3: Compassion

Date(s):

Objective(s):

I will be able to understand that people and animals can show compassion. I will be able to analyze situations involving compassion.

Materials: Printed 'Compassion' definition; markers; picture prompts; worksheets/blank paper; pencils

Hook: Show the students this picture and read it aloud together. If they struggle to read the word 'compassion', you can show them how to pronounce it and read it again together, now reading this new word more confidently.



Introduction/Opening Discussion:

The goal of today's lesson is to talk about compassion, or to 'be compassionate'. Have you ever heard the word 'Compassion' before?

The person in the picture we looked at says 'If you see that someone needs help' and it seems like he's talking about humans. We will also extend this to animals that need help or are hurt.

Caring about others and treating them with kindness are all ways of being compassionate.

One way I have seen students show compassion is by sitting with a new student during lunchtime. If I think from the new student's point of view, they may be feeling shy since they

do not know people at our school yet - and compassionate students who notice this would introduce themselves and ask to sit together. I'll bet they all feel grateful for new friends, and the new student can now feel more comfortable around their classmates.

What's one way in which you have been compassionate towards other people?

Did you know that animals can show compassion too? <u>For example</u>, elephants help out members of their groups who are injured; and bonobos share food with other apes they've never met before (photo below).

Animals can even show compassion toward people, like when <u>dolphins</u> see that a human is struggling in the water and they help scare off sharks or get lifeboats to see their group and ultimately find someone who is lost in the water.

So - people can be compassionate toward other people, animals can be compassionate towards animals, and animals can even be compassionate towards people! Today we're going to talk more about how people can show compassion towards animals. Think about animals that can be kept as pets, and those who you see outside.

Do you feel compassion towards animals? How have you shown this before?

Activity: Each student or each group of students (depending on what works best for your class) will receive a picture prompt and answer questions on the handout about that picture.

Students can share their responses to close the lesson, or if time allows, you may open up a larger discussion with the questions below.

Closing Question/Discussion: Is there a difference between showing compassion for another human and showing compassion for a dog, cat, or koala? Why do you say so?

Is it ever difficult or uncomfortable to show compassion? Why might it be important anyway?

How does compassion go hand in hand with understanding another point of view?

Accommodations/Modifications: For any moments of sharing ideas, students can participate in a way that makes sense for themselves and the class dynamic. 'Turn and talk' with a classmate, sharing answers verbally, and writing down answers before sharing are all appropriate.

Early finishers or higher level learners can write a story from the illustration instead of simply answering the questions above.

Struggling learners may circle important beings or items in the pictures and write key words to form their answers.

Koala photo downloaded from The Guardian article: <u>That's me in the picture: David Tree gives</u> water to a koala, February 2009, Victoria, Australia

Saving Puppies photo downloaded from GlobalGiving.org: https://www.globalgiving.org/projects/rescue-dogs-in-flood-areas-save-childrens-lives

Final two illustrations for activity downloaded from freepik.com

For Lesson Hook (From Corine Long's video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEl1GKitx4E&t=4s)



Sharing food example (from https://factanimal.com/bonobo)



| Name | Date |
|---|-------|
| Compassion Activity: Picture Pro | ompts |
| 1. Who or what do you see in the picture? | |
| | |
| 2. What is happening in the picture? | |
| | |
| 3. Why do you think they are doing this? | |
| | |
| 4. Why are their actions important? | |
| | |
| 5. How might the animal(s) feel afterwards, and why? | |
| | |
| 6. How might the person or people feel afterwards, and why? | |
| | |

Picture prompts for activity:









Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans: Character Development for Young Thinkers

| Topic 3: Resilience | Date(s): |
|---------------------|----------|
| Topic 3. Resilience | Date(s). |

Objective(s):

I will be able to define 'Resilience' in my own words.

I will be able to describe a time when I showed resilience.

I will be able to compare my own experience to an animal's experience in showing resilience.

Materials: Photos of Calvin and Hobbes from Sentient Sanctuary, resilience handouts, pencils

Hook: Imagine you just walked up and down a steep hill, and then realized you left your lunch at the top. Describe your point of view. (What are you thinking about? How are you feeling right now?) (You can draw a simple picture of this on the board if need be.)

You have to figure out a way to get to the top somehow! How can you do this? (Walk or run with breaks along the way, do a little at a time, pretend I have a walking stick with me - feel free to get creative here)

What should you think about along the way? (I can do this, I can almost see the top, the hard part's almost over)

One phrase that I would keep in mind is: **This is difficult, but I am strong.** That's how we're going to remember today's keyword: Resilience.

Introduction/Opening Discussion:

Someone can show resilience when something difficult is happening and they try to solve a problem, get better from an illness, feel better after being sad, or even get better grades in school. You can think about the bottom of the hill we talked about as the situation someone needs to overcome, in order for things to get better at the top. Their resilience happens throughout their journey up the hill to better times.

Tell the story of Calvin and Hobbes, two rescue donkeys who went to live at a place called Sentient Sanctuary. A sanctuary is a place where animals can live forever, and be safe and cared for. They welcomed two donkeys to their sanctuary last year and their names are Calvin and Hobbes.

Calvin loved to eat the acorns that were on the sanctuary property - but acorns can make donkeys very sick. Calvin's stomach started to hurt very badly from the acorns - and *it was difficult, but he was strong*! His caretakers at the sanctuary nursed him back to health. They gave Calvin all the right foods, and gave him the medicine he needed. Slowly but surely, Calvin's stomach started to feel better. Now, he stays away from acorns, and he and Hobbes even meet the visitors who come to the sanctuary.

Fill in the attached handout with the class, from Calvin's point of view. Start at the bottom and work your way to the top, answering each prompt "as if you were Calvin".

Activity: Think of a time when you had to show resilience. Fill in the handout from your own point of view.

Closing Question/Discussion: Students can share their examples either with a partner or you can take some examples aloud if students feel comfortable sharing with the class.

Discussion Questions (time allowing):

- 1. Why is it important for humans and other animals to show resilience when life gets difficult? (Situations will arise for anyone, at any age, no matter their species it's important to find ways to keep moving forward)
- 2. Is it easier to be resilient when someone shows compassion towards you and helps you? Explain your answer.

Accommodations/Modifications: The purpose of the handout is to show a visual depiction of resilience from the beginning discussion of your journey up a hill. If the handout is too complicated for the class, you can use the different aspects of it as prompts and students can write them one at a time.

Early finishers can try to turn their experience into a poem, song, or story about showing resilience.



Calvin photo downloaded from <u>Sentient Sanctuary</u> Instagram



Calvin (left) and Hobbes (right) - photo downloaded from <u>Sentient Sanctuary</u> website

| Name | | |
|--|--------------------------------|--|
| This was difficult, but you were strong! 2. How did you show resilience? | | B. What was the outcome? |
| Actions | | How did you feel after showing resilience? |
| Thoughts, Feelings | | |
| 1. Describe your point of view when you had to face a difficult situation. | | |
| What was happening? | What were you thinking and fee | ling? |
| | | - |

Sentient Sanctuary Lesson Plans: Character Development for Young Thinkers

| Topic 5: Apply and Reflect | Date(s): |
|----------------------------|----------|
|----------------------------|----------|

Objective(s):

I will be able to compare and contrast humans with other animals.

I will apply my knowledge of personality traits, compassion, point of view, and resilience to make a creative piece of work about an animal of my choice.

Materials: Venn Diagram from Day 1, handout (attached), pencils, paper, whatever creative materials you have (construction paper, markers, colored pencils, etc.).

Hook: Revisit the Venn Diagram from Day 1 and remake it if it's become too cluttered.

Is anything missing? What have you learned this week about how humans and other animals are the same, and are different? (Be sure you have items like point of view, compassion, resilience, and personality traits on the diagram.)

Introduction/Opening Discussion:

Let's review what we learned this week. We learned that humans and other animals can have personality traits in common; we learned about the value of compassion between humans, and also toward animals; we learned about different points of view, both our own and those of other animals; and we learned about showing resilience, and how animals can do that as well.

Now, it's time for you to choose an animal and tell us about that animal's personality traits; how we can be compassionate towards that animal; show us their point of view; or tell us about how they show resilience. You'll have the opportunity to answer in your own creative way.

Activity: Students will select an animal of their choice and apply this week's topics in both a concrete and a creative way. If they have trouble choosing an animal or need a starting point, and have access to a tablet or computer, they can look at different animals here:

https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals https://kids.britannica.com/kids/browse/animals

Students will answer the attached questions about their animal to get started. Then, they will

choose at least one of their answers and turn it into a creative piece. This can be a persuasive text, a piece of art, a song, a poem, a video, or another item of their choice.

Closing Question/Discussion: Students can either present their projects to the class, or do a gallery walk with post-its to leave comments on others' work - whichever option makes the most sense for the class dynamic.

Accommodations/Modifications: This is a creative assignment and will not be graded for things like grammar and punctuation. The goal is to convey a situation, a feeling, a commonality, or some other factor that reflects what the student has learned about animal qualities this week.

| Name | Date |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| The animal I chose for my project is a | |
| 1. What are some of this animal's personality traits? (| You can make inferences based on how |
| the animal acts, if you are not sure.) | |
| | |
| 2. How can people be compassionate towards this an | |
| | |
| | |
| 3. Describe this animal's point of view. | |
| | |
| | |
| 4. How can this animal show resilience? | |
| | |
| | |