

THAT NEW ANIMAL

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by Emily Jenkins, ill. by Pierre Pratt

Themes: Family, Animals, New babies, Feelings, Conflict Resolution, Pets

Ages: 3-7

Running time: 8 minutes

SUMMARY

A new animal – a baby - has come to live with FudgeFudge and Marshmallow. It has a new smell, it can't speak or bark, and it cries a lot. FudgeFudge and Marshmallow's parents don't seem to have time to throw a stick or rub a belly anymore. All they do is sit and look at the new animal. The two dogs devise various ways to distract the people's attention from the new animal. But when a new person called Grandpa comes to visit, FudgeFudge and Marshmallow decide that no matter how much they hate it, the new animal is theirs, and there is no way that Grandpa will be allowed to touch their animal. In this sweet and delightful movie, viewers will explore the changing dynamics of a growing family from a dog's eye view.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Teach students how to do a survey about how many siblings their classmates have. Since most students will be pre-literate, create a chart that students can use easily. Draw four columns. In the first column, list every student's name. In the second column, put the number zero or draw a picture of just one child. In the third column, draw a picture of a child with an older sibling. In the fourth column, draw a picture of a child with a younger sibling. Have students ask each child in the class how many siblings they have and if they are older or younger. For each sibling, the students should make a check mark in the appropriate column. Then, teach the students how to compile the data by counting the check marks in each column. Create a class graph entitled, "Brothers and Sisters in Our Class," using either a bar or line graph. A bar graph is convenient because you can add to it throughout the year if more siblings are born.

Discuss communication with students. Guiding questions:

- How do humans communicate with each other?
- How do humans communicate with animals?
- How do animals communicate with each other?
- How do animals communicate with humans?
- How do babies communicate?

Write students' answers on chart paper. Use pictures or sketches to augment their answers. Then, supply students with old magazines. Ask them to find and cut out pictures of humans, babies, and animals communicating. Make a chart of different emotions, such as, happiness, loneliness, sadness, hunger, anger, and fear. Have students paste their cut-out photographs in the appropriate sections of the chart. Tell students to watch the movie and look for hints from the animals' and humans' behavior about what they are trying to communicate to each other.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Organize a dress-up, play-house section in the classroom. Provide clothing, household items, and animal costumes, if possible. Otherwise, provide stuffed animals and dolls for students to use. Allow students to engage in free play, based on the relationship dynamics that they saw in the movie. Encourage them to imagine different ways that the humans and animals might react to a new person or persons in their lives. Prompt or guide students with questions such as:

- What do you think the animals will do as the baby grows up?
- How would a young child treat the dogs?
- How would the people react if the dogs DID end up biting the baby?

Share a wordless picture book with the students. If you cannot find a wordless picture book, tape paper over the words in a picture book that they may not be familiar with. Tell the students that since there are no words, you and they will have to look at the pictures and make the story up yourselves. Do this with several books. Help students create a story that makes sense and fits with the images in the book.

Then, have students create a wordless picture book to give to a baby in their life. Tell students to think of a story that is either true or made up. Have them illustrate 5-7 pages that will show the events of the story. When the pages are complete, tell students to give their book a title, and then bind it together like a book. Allow students to practice "reading" their wordless picture books to their friends. Encourage the students to give the book as a gift to a baby or younger child in their life. Alternatively, have students visit younger students in the school and let them present their books to them.

Roleplay with students different ways to deal with jealousy. First, define the emotion and ask students to share experiences of jealousy that they have had. Then, invite different students to act out different situations.

Some ideas are:

- A new baby in the home
- Sharing toys or other possessions
- A sibling or friend receiving a gift that you really wanted
- A friend playing with another person more than with you

Model a role-play of one of these situations with a few of the students. Suggest ways for them to be realistic and make strong decisions when dealing with these emotions. When the role-play is over, ask the other students for feedback. What responses did students give that were positive? How could the students have improved their responses? Allow three or four students to comment before moving on to the next role-play.

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