



CRITTER CARE



RATIONALE FOR ADVENTURE

Bear Scouts will learn how caring for a pet fosters responsibility and offers a sense of companionship that they can nurture and cherish throughout their lives. This adventure also gives them an opportunity to learn about the many ways animals return the favor and assist people in need.

TAKEAWAYS FOR CUB SCOUTS

- Following directions
- Learning the benefits of having loyal pets and being loyal to them in return
- Showing respect and kindness for animals
- Developing patience and perseverance as they train their pets
- A Scout is kind. 

ADVENTURE REQUIREMENTS

Bear Handbook, page 164

Complete all of the following:

1. Do one of the following:
 - A. If you have a pet, make a list of tasks that you did to take care of the pet for two weeks.
 - B. If you do not have a pet, research one that you would like to have and prepare a report about the care it needs.
2. Complete one of the following:
 - A. Make a poster or a PowerPoint presentation about your pet or a pet that you would like to own. Share the poster or presentation with your den, pack, or family.
 - B. Make a poster or PowerPoint presentation explaining three ways that animals can help people. Share the poster or presentation with your den, pack, or family.
3. Complete at least one of the following and share with your den, pack, or family:
 - A. Visit with a local veterinarian or an animal shelter caretaker. Find out what types of animals he or she might see on a regular basis and the types of care he or she gives to them.
 - B. Learn about careers that involve the care of animals. What education, training, and experience are required?

NOTES TO DEN LEADER

Much of this elective will need to be completed at home with the Scout's family. Tell the Scouts they will need to let you know when they have completed requirements 1 and 2.

Also, you will need to be sensitive to any pet allergy issues within the den.

Meeting 3 will be a den outing to a veterinarian's office or an animal shelter. In advance of the outing, the leader will need to make arrangements with the outing location and confirm the outing plan with families, including transportation and any additional items they need to bring. Make sure activity consent forms are distributed, signed, and collected.

See the appendix for optional den meeting activities, including openings, gatherings, and closings.

MEETING 1 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Materials for the Who Am I? game (see Gathering)
- Invite a guest who trains animals to assist others, and ask if they can bring one of the animals for a demonstration. Some examples: K-9 trainers in the police department, people who train animals for special services (e.g., seeing eye dogs, search and rescue), or experts in pet therapy (visiting hospitals and retirement homes).
- Request a demonstration from someone who has an unusual pet (e.g., a snake or other reptile) or someone who trains animals for obedience, agility, tricks, etc.

GATHERING

Materials for Who Am I? game:

Pictures of different types of pets; safety pins, badge clips, or tape

Instructions:

As each Scout arrives at the meeting, attach one of the pictures to the Scout's back without showing it to them. Then the Scout will go to the other members of the den and ask questions about the animal in their picture to try to figure out which animal it is. Continue until everyone has guessed correctly.

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Have each Scout answer the roll call with a sound made by their animal from the Who Am I? game. If the pet is quiet (e.g., a fish or hermit crab), the Scout can make hand gestures or facial expressions.

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Allow time for sharing among Cub Scouts.
- Tell the Scouts to name some ways animals can help people (requirement 2B). Make sure each of these topics is covered:
 - Animals can be trained to assist police and emergency crews. K-9 dogs help police officers with their patrols and arrests, bomb-sniffing dogs search for explosives, drug-sniffing dogs locate illegal drugs hidden in vehicles or elsewhere, search-and-rescue animals can find someone who is lost or trapped.
 - Pets can be trained to serve special purposes in the lives of their owners. Just a few examples: They can assist people who are blind, experience seizures, or have diabetes. Have you ever noticed a sign on the door of a public building that says service animals are allowed? This makes it possible for special-purpose pets to accompany their owners and keep them safe.
 - Pets offer loving companionship. Caring for a pet can lift our spirits and reduce our stress and anxiety. They also make "good listeners" when we need to talk to someone. Emotionally, pets play a valuable role in their owners' well-being.
 - Pets can keep us physically active. Just caring for our pets each day gets us off the couch and moving around. They can even double as "workout partners," providing us with opportunities for exercise through activities like walking, jogging, or simply playing a game of fetch.
 - Care must be taken around stray, unfamiliar, or wild animals. Remember that animals can bite and, if infected with rabies, they can spread the disease to people.

ACTIVITIES

Three optional activities, depending on whom you have invited as a guest:

◆ Activity 1: Working Animals (Optional)

If your guest trains animals for special services, ask if they can explain the training process to the Scouts and what job the animals do. Invite the Scouts to ask questions.

◆ Activity 2: Dog Training (Optional)

If your guest is a dog trainer, ask them to demonstrate how a dog is trained. Allow time for everyone to ask questions and, if possible, assist the dog with some tricks.

◆ Activity 3: Unusual Pets (Optional)

If your guest has an unusual pet, ask them to introduce the pet to the den. Give the Scouts some time for questions and safe interaction with the pet.

CLOSING

Have the Scouts stand at attention and repeat the 12 points of the Scout Law. Ask each Scout to name which of the points they might use in this adventure.



Do-at-Home Project Reminder:

They will also need to do requirements 2A or 2B and share their poster or PowerPoint presentation with the den.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Work together to clean up the meeting place.
- Prepare thank-you notes for the Bears to sign at the next meeting. The notes should be given to anyone who helps with the outing. Remember to mail one to the guest who helped at Meeting 1.

MEETING 2 PLAN

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- U.S. and den flags
- Items to serve as obstacles in the gathering activity (e.g., chairs, cardboard boxes, small cones)
- Poster paper
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- A story to share with the Scouts about a pet hero (see Closing)

GATHERING

Set up an agility course for the Scouts to run through when they arrive, using items you have brought or items available at the meeting site. Explain to them that some pets, including dogs and cats, can be terrific “athletes,” and a common activity for athletes is to run an agility course. Have them take turns going through, around, over, and under the obstacles to see who can make the best time. After the Scouts finish the course, you can make things more challenging by having them go through it backward, with one eye closed, hopping on one foot, etc. Make sure at least one adult is on hand to ensure safety.

OPENING

- Conduct a flag ceremony of your choosing that includes the Pledge of Allegiance and the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- Have Bears answer the den roll call by finishing this statement: "If I could own any pet in the world, it would be a _____."

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.
- Have each Scout share with the group their poster or PowerPoint presentation for requirement 2A or 2B.
- Share the story of Balto the Sled Dog.
- Review plans for the next den meeting, an outing to a veterinarian's office or an animal shelter.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1: Pet Posters (Requirement 2A)

Have each Bear Scout create a poster about their pet based on the information they learned in their research or just things they have observed—their pet's favorite food, favorite activities, the pet's age and breed, etc.

CLOSING

Akela's Minute: Reflect with the Scouts that just as they come in all shapes and sizes, our pets do as well. And sometimes our pets love us so much that they perform heroic feats to help us. People have been helped by dogs, cats, horses, and other animals. Tell them the story of Balto (see Meeting 2 Resources) or another pet hero you select.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Serve refreshments, if desired.
- Record completion of requirement 2A or requirement 2B.
- Work together to clean up the meeting place.
- Pass out activity consent forms for Scouts to have signed by a parent or guardian before Meeting 3, the den outing to a veterinarian's office or animal shelter. Confirm the location and transportation plans.
- Have the Scouts sign thank-you notes for the guest at last week's meeting and anyone helping with the outing.

MEETING 2 RESOURCES

◆ The Story of Balto the Sled Dog

In the year 1925 in Nome, Alaska, there was a terrible diphtheria outbreak that made many, many people sick. Not enough medicine was available to treat all the sick people because no vehicles could make the trip in the terrible snowstorm that had developed. Then teams of mushers with their sled dogs stepped up and decided they would battle the blinding blizzard and make the trip of 674 miles to deliver the medicine.

Balto was one of the heroic lead dogs who helped the people of Nome. He proved himself on the tough Iditarod Trail, and also by saving his team in the Topkok River when they almost lost the sled. Balto was able to stay on the trail in near whiteout conditions; the man who drove the sled team said he could hardly see his hand in front of his face. Many others helped that night, but Balto, who led the final leg of the trip, was chosen to be honored for his dedication.



Statue of Balto in Central Park, New York City

MEETING **3** PLAN (Den Outing)

PREPARATION AND MATERIALS NEEDED

- Be sure all arrangements are made for the den to visit a local veterinarian's office or animal shelter. Contact the location well in advance and confirm all plans with the office manager.
- Confirm that transportation to and from the site is in place. Secure signed activity consent forms.
- Have thank-you notes prepared for staff members at the location and anyone who helps with the outing.

GATHERING

- Remind Scouts to be courteous during the outing.
- Remind everyone of the importance of staying together and being on their best behavior.
- Use the buddy system.
- Review any questions the Scouts want to ask to make certain all are appropriate.

OPENING

- Assemble the group, and review any conduct rules and the buddy system.
- Say the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Ask Scouts to name points of the Scout Law they will demonstrate during the outing (friendly, courteous, etc.)

TALK TIME

- Carry out business items for the den.

ACTIVITIES

◆ Activity 1 (Requirements 3A and 3B)

- During the visit to the veterinarian's office or animal shelter, find out what types of animals the staff usually sees. Have the Scouts ask the questions they prepared for the veterinarian or shelter caretaker. Some possibilities:
 - How many years did you go to school?
 - Do you have to work on nights or weekends?
 - What classes should I take in school if I choose this career for myself?
 - What is your favorite part of taking care of animals?
 - Do pets have allergies just like people?

CLOSING

Assemble all the Scouts and have them thank any staff members at the facility or parents who helped with the outing. Be sure to give them the thank-you notes.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Record completion of requirements 1 and 3.

Upon completion of the Critter Care adventure, your Bears will have earned the adventure loop shown here. Make sure they are recognized for their completion by presenting the adventure loops, to be worn on their belts, as soon as possible according to your pack's tradition.



NOTES