

How Humane are We?

OBJECTIVE

To understand what it means to be "humane." Students will gain an understanding of the history of the Humane Movement and how it has affected animals and people alike.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Students will learn about the Humane Movement by researching an event they feel has been a significant part of this movement. They'll then create their own timeline of events and humane organizations.

MATERIALS

- 🐾 Book: *Out of the Darkness, The Story of Mary Ellen Wilson*, by Eric A. Shelman & Stephen Lazowitz
- 🐾 Copies of the "Growth of the Humane Movement" outline
- 🐾 Poster paper for new timeline

ACTIVITY

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 Define the word "humane." In Webster's Dictionary it is defined as "marked by compassion, sympathy or consideration for other human beings or animals."
- 🐾 Give an example of how to treat animals humanely. Give an example of how to treat people humanely.
- 🐾 Describe a time when you treated an animal and a person humanely. How did you feel? How do you think the animal and person felt when you treated them in this manner?

Procedure

Each student should receive a copy of the "Growth of the Humane Movement" outline.

Discuss the following points:

- 🐾 What sparked the beginning of this movement?
- 🐾 What's the connection between animal abuse and child abuse? Why were preventative organizations for each issue formed around the same general time?
- 🐾 What was the MaryEllen case and how did its outcome affect the future of child welfare?
- 🐾 Who was Henry Bergh and how did his work affect animals and people?
- 🐾 What's the history of the Dumb Friends League? What services and programs does the League offer to benefit animals and people?
- 🐾 What does the Humane Society of the United States do?
- 🐾 What's the difference in philosophy between organizations like People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals and the American Humane Association?
- 🐾 Regardless of philosophy and methods of action, how do all of the organizations that dedicate themselves to helping animals fit into the Humane Movement?
- 🐾 What do you believe are the main goals of the Humane Movement?

Each student should choose one event on the timeline to research. This should be an event that the student feels was significant in the history of the Humane Movement. The internet would be a good resource for researching the history of the event, who the key players were, how the event has impacted animals and/or people, and why the event is considered part of the Humane Movement. If there's more than one student studying a particular event, students can work togeth-

er to do their research. Each student or group will then present their information to the rest of the class.

As a class, work together to develop a new timeline. Students should "dream up" events and humane organizations they would like to see created that will help animals and people live happier, healthier, and safer lives. Have the students create their own timeline with these ideas.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 Why do you feel that the event you chose to research was significant?
- 🐾 Choose one or two events that you feel were the most critical to the overall Humane Movement.
- 🐾 What role do you see yourself playing in your new timeline? How do you feel you can contribute to this movement in your daily life?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Arrange to take a tour of the Dumb Friends League to learn about the history of the organization, how it has contributed to the Humane Movement and what services and programs it provides to help animals and people.