

caring for pets

Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 20

Title: Caring for Pets
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Church: Home Street Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB
Text: Luke 16:1-13
Theme: We show we can be trusted by doing small jobs well.

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder how Allison liked taking care of her fish.
- I wonder how Allison felt when she got her puppy.
- I wonder what kind of things God trusts us with and wants us to take care of now.

Gathering Activity:

Good morning, children, it is so good to see you. I hope you are well. I have some questions for you that will help us get ready for our story. How many of you have pets at home? How do you take care of them? If you know how to take care of a pet it will help you understand today's story. Learning how to take care of things is what God's Word is about for us today. (*Show them the Scripture selection in Luke.*) But now, let's get ourselves ready to listen. Do you remember how we do that? That's right, we settle into a comfortable position and connect with that quiet spot inside where we know that God is near. (*Pause.*) Are you ready? Here is the story.

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Story:

Allison wanted a dog for her birthday more than anything else. She asked her parents for a dog every day, although her birthday was still months away. One day, her mother took her to the pet shop. Allison got very excited. But, when they entered the pet store she took Allison to the fish tanks, instead of heading towards the dogs. "But Mom, I want a dog, not a fish!" Allison exclaimed. Her mom replied, "If you want a dog, you need to prove that you can take care of a smaller pet, like a fish, first."

After a week of taking good care of her fish, Allison thought that she would feed her fish some people food. Her big brother stopped her, and told her that fish only eat fish food. "Well, that's boring," thought Allison. But after that, she only gave fish food to her fish.

On Allison's birthday, her family gave her a box that kept wiggling. It wiggled because there was a brand new puppy inside of it. They told Allison how proud they were of the good care she had taken of her fish. Since she had proved she could take care of a small pet, they thought that, with her family's help, she could now handle a bigger pet. Together, they trained Mr. Wiggles (that is what Allison named the dog) to do all sorts of tricks.

Allison noticed that at first her mom often gave Mr. Wiggles doggy treats to teach him new tricks, but after a while she did not use them anymore. "Mom, why don't you use those treats to teach Mr. Wiggles tricks like you used to?" "Well Allison, doggy treats are what Mr. Wiggles likes, so I used what he likes to teach him how I would like him to behave. After a while I did not need the treats anymore, because pleasing me rewards Mr. Wiggles more than treats. At first, he loved the treats more, but now he loves you and me more than treats. He knows that we will always take good care of him, and love him."

Prayer:

Thank you God, for trusting us and teaching us to care for things like fish and puppies. Please help us share and take good care of our pets and each other, as one way of letting your love shine through us. Amen.