

## FRIENDSHIP WITH ANIMALS

**Objective:** To stimulate thinking and action about friendly behaviour towards animals

**Key Words:** friendship, century, gentle, prisoners, foxes, weasels, rabbits, badgers, hedgehogs, hares, Powys (Wales), protection, safety

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### QUOTATION/THEME FOR THE WEEK



Discuss what this means.

### SILENT SITTING

Steps 1, 2, 4 (See page 40)

Step 5: Imagine you are with an animal of your choice - it may be a bird, a fish or an insect ...

You are enjoying being with your friend and you talk to it ...

Maybe you can stroke it or cuddle it ...

You realise all animals have feelings and they like to feel happy, like you ...

Wish happiness for your friend and for all the animals ...

birds ...

fish ...

and insects ...

Step 6.

# STORY TELLING

## MONACELLA AND HER LITTLE LAMBS

*by Sara John (adapted from a traditional story)*

**L**ong ago, in the sixth century, was a Welsh princess called Melangell or Monacella. She was kind and gentle. Whenever anyone was ill, she would nurse them. If a child was crying, she would comfort it. She fed and tended the wounded, whether human or animal.

As she grew up, the inner beauty of her love and kindness to all shone in her eyes and face and she became a very beautiful young woman. Many young princes came to her father to ask for her hand in marriage. One of them was a prince with great wealth and soldiers, who if she married, would help her father capture more land and gain even more power and wealth. But Monacella was not happy about this arrangement. She did not want to marry a prince who would fight and burn people's homes and carry off prisoners, just as her father did. She believed there was a better way to live. She wanted to live in peace. So she packed up a few belongings and a basket of food and left the palace forever.

She wandered about for a long time, up hills and through forests, until eventually she came to a beautiful spot in a green valley through which ran a little stream. Some overhanging rocks formed a cave. Filled with contentment and gratitude, she knelt down on the grass and thanked God for guiding her to such a pleasant place to live.

Monacella lived there in that quiet peaceful place, eating berries and drinking stream water, for a long time. Eventually the people of the village found her and it was not long before she was once again caring for the sick who would afterwards return her kindness by bringing her food. She was loved for her gentleness and pure heart, not only by the people, but also by the animals and birds of the surrounding woodlands and fields. When she sang her morning prayers, the thrushes and blackbirds sang with her. The little brown wrens, robins and sparrows were not afraid when she peeped into their nests to look at their speckled eggs. The foxes, weasels, rabbits, badgers, hedgehogs and hares popped out of the bracken as she went past. They enjoyed the love she showered on them as she asked for God's blessing to be with them all.

One morning, a little brown hare was happily feeding, when suddenly he heard a sound which filled him with fear. It was a hunting horn. He turned this way and that, sniffing the air and heard the distant sound of dogs barking. Prince Brochwel of Powys was hunting and the hounds had picked up his scent.

"I must run to Monacella!" thought the hare. "If I can reach her, I know she will keep me safe."

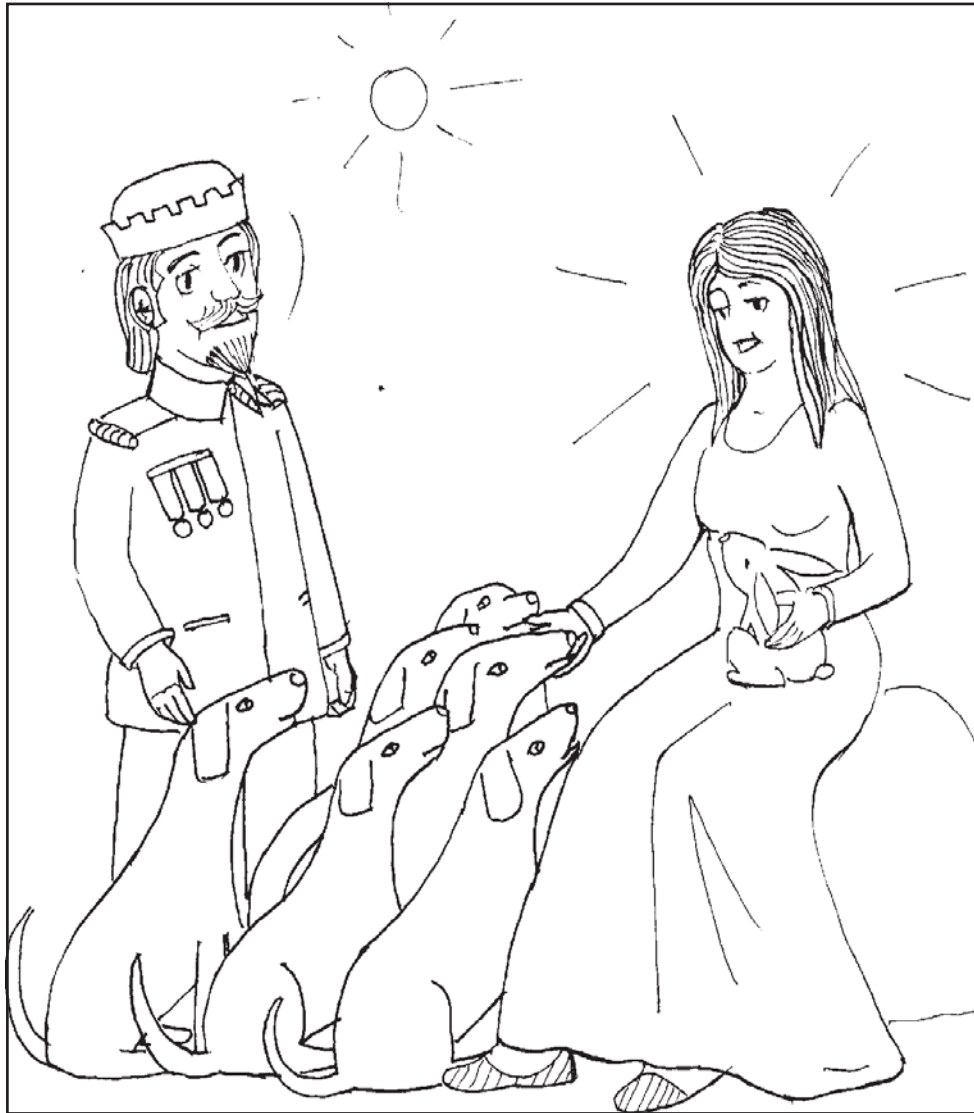
The hounds got nearer and Hare ran like the wind. He darted through the undergrowth into Monacella's little wood and all the creatures cried out for him,

“Monacella, Hare is in trouble. Where are you?”

Then a voice sounded throughout the wood, “God bless all creatures,” and suddenly everything was peaceful.

The Prince came riding up after his hounds, wondering where they had gone. All was so quiet! He pushed his way through the bracken and called, “Here dogs!”.

Then he stopped in astonishment. There on a rock, surrounded by his hounds and with a little brown hare sitting peacefully in her lap, sat a beautiful young woman in a grey robe.



The dogs saw him and wagged their tails. The Prince feeling the peaceful atmosphere was suddenly glad the little hare was safe.

When Monacella opened her eyes, the Prince said, “My lady, I don’t know who you are, but you are obviously so gentle and kind that this hare has come to you for protection. I will give you this valley so that all your animals can live safely. No one will ever hunt here again.”

He called his dogs and they licked Monacella’s hand and departed,

while the little hare continued to sit on her lap, not a bit frightened. All the hares in those parts came to live with Monacella and wherever she went, they scampered around her.

The shepherds in the valley often saw her and would smile and say, “There goes the shepherdess with her little lambs.”

### QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Monacella leave home?
2. Why was Monacella loved so much?
3. How did Monacella save the hare?
4. Why did the prince change his mind about hunting in the valley?
5. Can you tell us about a time when you were kind and caring towards an animal?
6. How did you feel as you listened to the story?
7. Did it remind you of anything in your own life?
8. What does the story mean to you?

### GROUP SINGING

#### I AM A LITTLE ANT

*by Susan Caffery*

I am a little ant,  
So please don't tread on me.  
I only sting when I am scared,  
I squash so easily.  
You are so very large  
And I'm so very small  
That even if I stepped on you  
It would not hurt at all.

*Chorus: If you don't hurt me, I won't hurt you.*

*If you respect me, I'll respect you too.*

*You know I'll blow away  
If you only sneeze. Achoo!  
So even if you can't love me  
Just don't hurt me please.*

I am a little ant,  
So please don't step on me.  
I only sting when I am scared  
I squash so easily.  
You are so very large  
And I'm so very small,  
Why even if I pushed you hard  
You would not even fall.

*Chorus: If you don't hurt me, I won't hurt you....*

*So even if you can't love me  
Just don't hurt me please. (repeat)*

## GROUP ACTIVITY

### 1. Collage.

Using materials available (coloured papers, textiles, wool, buttons, etc.) make a collage picture of your favourite animal.

### 2. Make up a play based on the story.

Discuss how it feels to be the various people and animals.  
What different qualities do the different characters have?

**Close the lesson:** If the teacher wishes, the lesson can be closed by asking the children to form a circle and say together, “Let us care for our pets and for all animals.”

### Extension Exercise / Links to Other Subjects:

Modelling: using clay and other materials the children are invited to make their own woodland with animals and other creatures.

