

Lesson Three – Life Skills

Middle and High School Curriculum

Leadership - Making *decisions and effective communication

*doing what is right for the team

What we will explore with equines: Effective teamwork including; qualities of good leadership, effective communication, team planning, consideration for all team members.

Why Horses? Horses have survived for millions of years because of their highly evolved social system that incorporates designated leadership, clear communication systems, prioritization of needs and group buy-in that provides for the needs of all. The herd's consistent set of roles, responsibilities, rules, and consequences are consistent and universal across breeds and continents. Any equine can approach a new herd, understand immediately the relationships, and begin the orderly process of integration.

Learning Objectives:

Each team of 3 students will:

1. *Identify 3 aspects of herd behaviors that they believe people need to include in their "herds" and explain why.*
2. *Identify and explain one time their team:*
 - a. *Used communication to achieve their goals*
 - b. *Stopped to re-think when things were not going well for everyone on the team.*
 - c. *Made good use of leadership*
3. *Provide one example of how good teamwork skills could improve situations in school.*

12:30 Meet Students in Lobby – Introduce volunteers and fit helmets

- **Educate:** Students will learn about equine herds (teams).
 - What is the purpose/benefits of a herd? Why do horses want to be part of a herd?
 - Do they develop a plan? What does the herd need to accomplish (food & safety)? What decisions do the herds need to make and why? How do they divide up the responsibilities?
 - How do they decide who is the leader? What is their responsibility? What happens when the rules aren't followed?
 - How do they communicate the plan? Do they ever "re-think" the plan?
- **Discuss:** Discuss why people need "herds". Where do we see them (i.e. teams, towns, businesses, clubs, countries, schools, work places, families)? Do they all include leadership, goals, rules/expectations, communication? How does leadership meet the needs of a club, team, town, family... of people?
- **Discuss:** Teamwork. What does a team need to be successful and to get things done?
 - At the Thanksgiving meal, the turkey is placed on the table. What happens next?

Break into 2 groups and then:

- **Learning Objectives Assessment:** Work on the first part of the Learning Objectives Assessment. Volunteers will record the comment's the teammates share throughout discussions.

12:45 Head out to the arena.

Exploring Teamwork Activities: Explore what helps in team work

A. On the practice (wooden) ponies:

Each group of 3 will choose 2 tasks to tackle. To complete the task they will need to work together and communicate well. The team members will stand side by side and then either link arms/hands to form a line or connect by holding a short rope with the middle person holding with both hands. One student will have a free left hand to use, one a free right hand. The student in the middle will act as the leader directing the others.

Tasks choices:

- Put on a halter and then clipping on reins.
- Put on the 'under' pad, saddle pad, and saddle. (A model will be available to view as students have not tacked before)
- Attach one side of an English girth to the billets.

Discuss:

What worked well for your team? What did the leader need to do? What did each person on the team need to do? Fun note: *There is no "I" in TEAM.*

B. Setting up the arena:

Each group will be given 2 tasks to tackle. They will first decide on a leader. Only the leader will be told the task the group must perform. The leader will direct the others in the task, but may not manually help. The team members must follow the instructions that the leader passes on and are allowed to ask questions if they do not understand the directions.

Possible Tasks:

- Set up a square made from ground poles.
- Set up an obstacle course/or circle of cones and balls.
- Maneuvering through an obstacle course.

Discuss:

What worked for each team activity? What made it hard for the team? What was it like to be the leader and not be able to help or tell the members what the task was? What would the team members change next time they do an activity?

Brainstorm: As a team, come up with 3 things that every group needs to have to accomplish a task. Do horses living in their herds do this? Share with the whole group.

1:00 Equine Interaction Team Work in the Barn

******Throughout these activities each horse will be assigned a volunteer. The volunteers are responsible for representing the horse in group discussion and in pointing out to the team working with them when the horses are communicating with them. ********

Barn Activity: Planning helps

Each group will need to choose 2 horses to partner with, brainstorm strategies to get the task done, decide who should perform each task, pro-actively consider what might "go wrong" and create a plan for it, discuss impact on everyone on the team (i.e. is everyone safe, comfortable).

Task One: Halter their equine teammates in their stalls and lead them to the cross-ties

Task Two: Cross tie their equines and then either; get their blanket off or groom them.

***Volunteers will let the horses loose in the arena as students reflect on the above tasks.

Whole Group Discussion: What worked for each team? What if anything would they try next time? Did everyone have a chance to share their ideas? Was there a leader? What was the leader responsible for? Was everyone on the team comfortable? Did they have to change the plan along the way? Why?

Learning Objectives Assessment: Volunteers will record the comment's teammates share.

1:30 Equine Interaction Team Work in the Arena (with loose horses)

**** If arena is being share with another class, equines must be on lead. See last page for activity modifications.**

Arena Activities: Brainstorming to get the task done; Effective Communication; "Stop and Re-Think"

The below goal oriented activities will provide lots of opportunities for working on leadership skills, effective communication, making decisions that is right for the whole team. The arena will be set up with props for the different activities at opposite ends to give each team plenty of room. But, the horses have the freedom to go where they want. This may provide brainstorming opportunities as the teams may learn from others or even decide they can combine teams to get both goals done.

Each group will attempt a tasks with their horses. If time allows the teams can do 3 tasks with each teammate being the leader for one task. If an activity is taking a long time, the team mates may take turns being the leader. Note: the leader is the communicator and may only direct the others.

- The team chooses their equine team mates, brainstorms strategies to get the task done, and decides what each person is supposed to do including the equines. To help insure that each team member gets the opportunity to voice their suggestions, a grooming brush will be passed around the team. The person holding the brush gives their ideas and then passes it to the next person.
- Once they make their plan, the leader directs the process (they can't physically help)
- The leader is responsible for everyone on the team and making sure they are safe, comfortable. The leader may also call for a "stop and re-think" at any time if the plan is not going as expected.
- **Note:** *This last part may happen often. Students will be encouraged to consider these sometimes frustrating events, as opportunities to practice an important skill. Life often does not go as we plan or expect. "Stop and Re-think" is something we can do often. Eventually, the teams may even begin to pro-actively considers what might "go wrong" and create a plans for it!*
- *** At any time, anyone on the team can call for a "stop and re-think" pause, if they feel someone (including the equine) is not safe or uncomfortable.

Before each activity:

- Review rules (safety and comfort of all)
- Review what teamwork and leadership needs to work well
- Review how to establish leadership with horses (moving feet) and how to move a horse (pressure and release)

After each activity:

- The team leaders will first share what worked well with their team.
- Then the team will share what leadership techniques worked well for them.
- One volunteer will represent the equines.
- Another volunteer will record the team's insights on the Learning Objective Assessment.

Arena Equine Interaction Activities:

- Get two horses to stand in a square/circle and stay in for 10 seconds.
- Get the horses to knock down 3 of the 6 cones or move 2 balls.
- Get two horses to walk through 2 cones.
- Get two horses to walk through a zig-zag course of ground poles.

Notes to volunteers: The students have the freedom to interpret the goals and ways to achieve them. For example; the first activity does not say two horses “at the same time”. The second activity does not say the horses have to kick the cones. The third activity does not say the students cannot move or adjust the poles. There is no rule that teams cannot join to accomplish goals. There are no rules except that everyone must be safe and comfortable.

This activity is about the process of teamwork and not the correct way to do something. It is important to ask questions of the students instead of telling them what to do or not do.

If time allows the students will do team leading through obstacle courses with all four horses.

2:00 Team Stall Cleaning ** (if time allows)

Volunteers will blanket and turn horse out and the student will practice their new team work skills as they clean their stalls.

2:15 Group Discussions

- Transfer/Bridging of Skills Learned:

Note: Why we do this.

It is extremely important to incorporate activities to make sure the students understand how they can take these new skills that they learned and practiced with the equines, and use them in their daily life.

- Generalization of Skills Learned to School Setting. This part of the lesson objective assessment is explored as a group.

*****Volunteer scribes will continue to fill out the team’s learning objectives assessment as the team of students share their insights.***

2:30 Class Ends

*******After the class the volunteers and staff will have a **De-briefing** on the class in general, including the students, horses, and activities, and suggestions for changes to the curriculum.

Modifications to activities with loose horses

1:30 Equine Interaction Team Work in the Arena (with horses on leads)

- Before beginning the below activity have students role-play the horses as their teammate team lead them. This will help them understand how confusing it will be for the equine if the 2 students leading them don’t have a plan, are not communicating, and therefore give mixed messages to the horses.

- The equines will be team led. Only the leader will know what the activity is. The teammates (non-leaders) will each have a lead and lead from opposite sides of the equine. The leader will direct from afar. Depending on the abilities of the team, different parameters can be used. For example:
- The leader cannot refer to any prop in the activity. If the activity is weaving a ring of cones, the student can only say take 3 steps to the left. Take 5 steps to the right.....
- The teammates leading the horse have to have their eyes closed, but the team leader can stand in front of them giving directions.

Note to volunteers: *As with the loose horse activities, the equines have a volunteer acting as the advocate/voice for the horse and chimes in with horse comments such as “My teammates aren’t going in the same direction and I’m confused.” Or “I’m trying to be listen, but the leads are too tight and I’m am uncomfortable.”*

*As with the loose horse activities, **accomplishing the goal is not the objective here. It simply provides the opportunity.***

The emphasis is on the leadership and team work process and the many skills the students can explore and practice along the way.

1/9/15 - Due to the frigid temps today, we will take an inside break before working with the horses. The below questions will be discussed by each team with volunteers facilitating.

TEAM DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What have we learn so far?

In the “connected by a lead rope” activities:

What worked well for your team? What did the leaders need to do? What did each person on the team need to do?

In the arena set-up activities: What worked for each team? What made it hard for the team? What was it like to be the leader and not be able to help or tell the members what the task was? What would the team members change next time they do an activity?

As a class review what we know about herd behaviors and why they help horses, and if they would help people teams, too.

As a team, come up with 3 things that every group needs to have to accomplish a task.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Fill out the first part of the Team Learning Objective Assessment. Share with the whole group.

