

### **A BOY AND A DOG – Further discussion/Teaching notes:**

\*What do you think ‘being lonely’ means?

\*Why was the dog lonely? (*Because his owner didn’t play with him/spend time with him*)

\*Why was the boy lonely? (*Because the kids at school wouldn’t play with him*)

\*Why are the boy and the dog a bit scared when they first meet? (*The boy thinks that because the kids in his class don’t like him, the dog might not like him either, and might even bite him. The dog thinks that because his owner yells at him a lot, the boy might yell at him too*)

\*The boy’s mother says they can only keep the dog until they find his owner. Why should you try to find the owner of a lost pet? (*Because the owner is probably missing their pet very much, they are probably worried and sad because they love their pet. If your pet went missing, how would you feel if someone found it and kept your pet for themselves? Would you want that person to give your pet back to you?*)

\*Have you ever camped indoors in a tent made of sheets? Or snuck a piece of cake from the fridge? (*Be honest!*)

\*Have you ever been scared of lightning or thunder? Are any of your pets scared of lightning or thunder? What is lightning and thunder? (*Science*)

\*How can you tell the dog is not happy to be back at his owner’s place? (*His tail stops its happy-wagging, his head drops, he whimpers*)

\*Why do you think the man agreed to let the boy and his mother keep the dog? (*Possible reasons: Because the mother had offered to pay and he wanted the money. Because he doesn’t care about the dog and doesn’t really want the dog anyway. Because he cared about the dog enough to do the best thing for it, by letting the dog go to a happy home with people who would spend time with him and play with him*)

\*What should you do if you see someone treating an animal badly? (*Tell an adult you trust, they will help*)

\*Do you think the boy’s mother would have been worried when he didn’t come straight home from school?

\*Do animals have feelings? Animals don't talk to us with words but we can look at their body language. Ask the children to act happy, then sad, then angry, then scared. Explain that you could tell how they were feeling even though they didn't speak. Eg. Sad = your mouths were turned downwards and your shoulders were slumped. (Answer: *Yes, so they deserve to be treated with kindness*) Further learning (*social skills*): There are many resources online showing the human body language associated with each emotion.

\*Dog safety for children: In this story, when the boy and dog meet, the boy smiles because he is happy. Body language experts have done research that shows humans sometimes smile for other reasons too, eg. nervousness, embarrassment. The dog in the story wags his tail because he is happy and friendly and feeling playful, but just like a smile doesn't always mean happiness, there are other reasons why a dog might wag its tail. People who study the body language of dogs also look at the dog's ears, eyes, mouth and stance, among other signs, to tell if a dog is feeling playful, fearful, relaxed, stressed, etc. to determine if the dog is approachable or potentially aggressive.

For further learning, there are many guides on the internet that teach:

What a dog's body language means.

Safety tips for interacting with dogs: Dogs you know (eg. Not pulling ears or fur or tail. Never approach a dog when he/she is eating) And dogs you don't know (eg. ask your parents permission first and then the dog owner before approaching or interacting with the dog)

What you can do if a strange dog comes near you (eg. be a tree, avoid eye contact with an aggressive dog)

\*(*Creative writing/Art*) Can you continue the story? Write a story or draw a picture about what you think might happen after the book ends (it could be the next day, week, month, or a year later)