Topic: Obedience, Agility and the Canine Good Citizen® Test

OBJECTIVE: TEACH CHILDREN THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF A WELL-TRAINED DOG AND ENCOURAGE DOG OWNERS TO EARN CGC CERTIFICATION.

PREPARATION:

1. Set up a ring with small cones and rope or fencing material before the children arrive. Make sure the children can see through the fencing materials, especially if you plan to have them sit on the ground at eye level. If your demonstration takes place inside, consider laying a mat down to protect the floor.
2. Ask club members to participate with their obedience-trained dogs. If possible, recruit different types of dogs of different skill levels.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE:

1. When the children are settled, ask them if they know what obedience training is. Discuss why obedience training is so important. Compare the reasons children learn manners to the reasons responsible owners train their dogs.
2. Talk about the AKC’s Canine Good Citizen® test and how it certifies a dog’s knowledge of basic commands and polite behavior.
3. Demonstrate the methods your club uses to begin training (i.e., clicker, positive reinforcement). Explain the five basic commands, sit, stay, down, heel and come. Ask a club member to demonstrate these commands.
4. Talk about the higher levels of obedience training such as open and utility. Mention the competitions and the titles dogs can earn through AKC-regulated trials. Explain the dedication involved with training dogs at this level.
5. Show the 2014 AKC Agility Championship video.
6. Ask club members and their dogs to demonstrate the different commands and actions dogs know at the higher levels of obedience training.
7. Begin to set up the obstacles for agility. As the course is set up, explain the history of agility and how this fun sport is based in training.
8. Explain the different obstacles and why they are challenging.
9. Ask a club member to run through the agility course with her dog. Explain the requirements for each obstacle.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

1. Why is basic obedience training so important?
2. What are the five basic commands?
3. Do you think any dog can pass the Canine Good Citizen® test?
SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

1. Basic obedience training is important so all dogs can learn good manners and proper behavior. A trained dog can be a happy and well-behaved member of society. Many AKC-affiliated kennel clubs sponsor obedience classes for beginners as well as experienced handlers.

2. The five commands are sit, stay, come, down and heel.

3. Any dog can be trained, provided the owner begins training at an early age. With training and practice, most dogs can pass the Canine Good Citizen test. The CGC test is open to any dog, purebred or mixed breed. The test proves a dog’s ability to successfully interact with society.

HAVE EACH CHILD…

- Rearrange the obstacles of the agility course. Try to arrange the most complex course for the dogs. Remind children that in competition, the obstacles must stay in a certain order.

- Give the five basic verbal commands to one dog. Point out how the dog should listen to someone other than its owner and obey the commands.

- Have the students complete the Agility activities and AKC Events word search.

NOTES: