“How To” @Home for Mom & Dad

Activity 10: My Elephant Life

In Brief: Get to know what it is like to be an elephant living in the circus.

Objectives: Investigate the daily life of circus elephant. How might it be different from elephant life in the wild?

Background: The circus has housed a family of elephants for about a month. We want to know what the life is like for an elephant. What is good? What could be better?

Materials: research and notes and visuals from activities 8 & 9.

With/for Your Child: Engage!

Get Ready. Read the letter from the circus owner of Dogs & Cats Spectacular (below). Review with your child the Brainstorming Packet for My Elephant Life.

Step 1. Investigate elephants and their daily lives in the circus.

Step 2. Imagine that you are an elephant in the circus and write about your daily life. “Dear Diary…” Write four entries, one for each week spent at Dogs & Cats Spectacular.

Step 3. As a circus elephant, imagine that you interview the circus workers about the elephants: how do they feel about them? Why?

Step 4. Finally, as a circus elephant, interview the circus audience (adults and children) about how they feel about the elephants’ performance: did they like the performance? What did they liked or disliked? Why?

Tip: use the question sheet that follows the letter if you need inspiration. You can 1. Ask members of your family to answer as members of the audience, elephants and circus people. 2. Imagine that you are those people and try and guess what they would think.

Step 5. Based on the information you gathered, write a letter back to the circus owner. Remember, he wants to learn about:
1. Are the elephants happy?
2. What did the audience and the circus people think about the elephants?
3. How can we improve the elephants’ lives at the circus?

Follow up and Extensions: Time to act! If you are fond of visual arts, drama, acting... this is your chance to make a video recording of your report on the life of a circus elephant. Here are
two options: 1. Record a reading of your letter.  
2. Try and memorize your letter and make a video for the circus owner.

**Letter from Dogs & Cats Spectacular Circus Owner**

Dear member of the rescued elephant family,

After a month in our circus, we want to know more about your experience with us. Are you and your family happy? Did the audience like your performance?

Please help us get answers to these questions by interviewing the other elephants in your family about their lives. Then, ask the circus staff and animal trainers how they feel about the elephants being there. Finally, talk with people in the audience after the circus performance to learn how they feel about the elephants and their acts.

Based on these facts, what do you suggest for the future of your family? What can be done to make your life better at the circus?

Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

The Owner, *Dogs and Cats Spectacular Circus*

**Questions for the elephant**

1- Imagine that you are one of the circus elephants. What is your daily life like? What act do you do? How does this make you feel?

2- How do the circus people feel about having elephants? Trainers?

**Questions for the audience**
1- Did you enjoy the elephant performance?
2- Would you like to see more or less elephants?