



SCHOOL VIOLENCE PREVENTION DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

## ZOOKEEPER RESPONSIBILITY PLAY

### Activity Description

This play was created for a grade two culminating activity, but can be used in other grades. Students in a class will present the play after they finish the book *The Zookeeper Learns About Responsibility* (*Foundations of Democracy*, primary level) as part of their class instruction. Students will present the play to an audience of students, parents, or mixed-age groups. When the student actors get to the end of an act, they should stop and discuss the situation with the audience. This works great when delivering the play to a group of students at younger grade levels. This could also be an activity for upper-elementary students to perform to younger grades. While it is not necessary, we encourage the use of props, costume, and a stage.

### Suggested Grade Level

Lower elementary

### Estimated Time to Complete

Varies depending on quality of performance

### Objectives

The students will

- present the play after they finish the *Responsibility* book as part of their class instruction;
- present the play to an audience and lead the audience in discussion.

### Materials Needed

1. Script
2. Props and costumes (optional)

# The Zookeeper Play

A play about responsibility

Adapted from the book

*The Zookeeper Learns About Responsibility*

*Foundations of Democracy*, primary level

Center for Civic Education

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# **CAST**

By order of appearance

**Ms. Cruz**

**Narrator**

**Lion**

**Martin**

**Mr. Jackson**

**Small girl child**

**Chango**

**Hathi**

**Leo**

**Mona**

**Elephants**

**Leona**

**Man**

**Mrs. Koh**

**Sally Ostrich**

**Stan Ostrich**

**Somebody**

**Mr. Hobbs**

**Mayor**

*The Zookeeper Learns About Responsibility*

**Ms. Cruz** (to Martin): I think you will like working here.

**Narrator**: Ms. Cruz was taking Martin on a tour. It was his first day working at the zoo.

**Lion**: Roar! (Martin jumped when they walked by the lion cage.)

**Ms. Cruz**: That's only Leo. He roars when he's hungry. Let's walk some more. I'll show you what to do. You start at eight o'clock every morning.

**Martin**: Oh, that's early.

**Ms. Cruz**: Yes, it is. But, the animals must be fed and cleaned before the visitors come.

**Narrator**: Suddenly, Martin flew into the air. He landed with a thump.

**Ms. Cruz**: Oh, I'm so sorry Martin. This is the monkey house. That's Chango, Mona, and Charo. They throw their banana peels on the ground. You have to clean their area every morning.

**Ms. Cruz**: Now I'd like you to meet Hari and Haiti. Our elephants drink a lot of water. You must fill their tub a few times each day.

**Mr. Jackson**: Excuse me. Where can we find the bears?

**Ms. Cruz**: Just around the corner. (She turns to Martin.) Please be polite when you speak to visitors.

**Narrator**: Ms. Cruz heard a small child crying.

**Small girl child:** Mommy, Mommy! My mommy is lost!

**Ms. Cruz:** Martin, go find Mr. and Mrs. Jackson. Tell them that Amy is with me.

**Martin:** Right away.

**Mr. Jackson:** We were watching the bears. The next thing we knew Amy was gone. Thank you for finding us.

**Ms. Cruz:** Uh, oh! Martin, look at those children.

**Narrator:** Ms. Cruz went to talk to them.

**Ms. Cruz:** Children, you know better. You can read the sign, DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS.

**Ms. Cruz (to Martin):** Zookeepers have to make sure that people follow the rules.

**Narrator:** Martin came to work on time every day. But, something was bothering him.

**Martin:** I don't feel safe being so close to some of the animals.

**Narrator:** The animals were not too happy with Martin, either.

**Chango (to Mona):** Martin has not cleaned our place today. I told you that he was a goof-off.

**Hathi (to Hari):** Martin never gives us enough water. I'm so thirsty.

**Leo:** Where is that zookeeper? I'm hungry. **(Leo roared.)** When I get hungry, I get angry!

**Narrator:** Ms. Cruz called Martin to her office.

**Ms. Cruz:** Martin, you do some parts of your job very well. What happens when you do a good job?

**Martin:** The zoo is clean. The visitors are happy, and I feel proud of myself.

**Ms. Cruz:** That's right. But, some parts of your job you are not doing well at all.

**Martin:** I know. I don't take good care of the animals. I guess it's because I'm scared of Leo and the others.

**Ms. Cruz:** Don't you know what might happen when you don't do your job?

**Martin:** The animals could get sick. They might not trust me. I don't feel good about myself.

**Narrator:** That night when Martin went to bed, he was restless. He dreamed about the zoo.

**Chango:** Our place is so shiny and clean.

**Mona:** It's like a dream.

**Elephants:** We have so much water! We have enough to share.

**Leo:** ROAR! ROAR! Look at all the food Martin has given us, Leona! I'm so happy. I will never be angry at Martin again.

**Narrator:** Martin heard Ms. Cruz.

**Ms. Cruz:** Martin! The animals want to be your friends. They want you to take good care of them.

**Narrator:** Roar. Growl. Screech. All the animals laughed and had a good time. Ha, ha. Martin and Ms. Cruz laughed and had a good time, too.

**Martin:** From now on I'm going to take better care of the animals.

**All animals:** We know you will.

**Narrator:** The animals clapped and cheered.

**Narrator:** Martin woke up! It's a beautiful day to go to the zoo, Martin thought.

**Pause to discuss the situation in this act with the audience.**

**Leona**: I think Martin is doing a much better job.

**Leo**: He's great.

**Martin**: You are getting fat, Leo. People might think you're a hippopotamus.

**Narrator**: Martin was teasing the lions.

**Martin**: Here you go.

**Narrator**: Martin said to the elephants as he filled their tub with water.

**Martin**: Cut it out, Hathi. Spray yourself, not me. I had my bath today.

**Narrator**: Martin laughed at the elephants.

**Ms. Cruz (to Martin)**: You are doing a good job. Come with me.

**Martin**: Where are we going?

**Ms. Cruz**: To the stables. I am going to show you how to brush the horses.

**Ms. Cruz**: Brush like this, nice and steady.

**Narrator**: Ms. Cruz gave the brush to Martin.

**Martin**: Is this right? The horses seem to like it.

**Ms. Cruz**: Martin, brush the other horses, too. Please, try and finish them all.

**Martin**: There are seven! That could take all afternoon. I might not have time to feed the other animals.

**Ms. Cruz:** I am sure that you can do both. In fact, when you are finished you may ride one of the horses.

**Narrator:** This is a good job, Martin thought. There are some problems in getting a new responsibility. But there are some good things, too.

**Ms. Cruz:** Martin, I have been working on a special project. I made some signs that tell about our animals. Will you take the responsibility of putting up my new signs?

**Martin:** Well, I don't know. I don't think that I have more time for more work.

**Narrator:** Martin felt a little angry. I have to do everything around here, he thought.

**Martin:** OK, Ms. Cruz. I'll do the signs after I feed Leo and Leona.

**Narrator:** Martin read all the signs. He learned some interesting things. Leo and Leona came from Africa. (**Martin places sign by lions' cage.**) Hari and Hathi are Indian elephants. You can tell by the shape of their ears. (**Martin places sign by the elephants' cage.**) Brown bears love to go fishing. They eat lots of berries and nuts to get fat. They sleep in caves all winter. (**Martin places sign by the bears' cage.**)

**Narrator:** Martin liked to share what he learned with the visitors.

**Man:** Thank you for telling us about the tigers. You seem to know a lot about animals. Maybe someday you will be a guide.

**Pause to discuss the situation in this act with the audience.**

**Charo**: Martin is the best zookeeper.

**Mona**: Mmmm, fresh bananas!

**Chango**: Hey, me too. **(as he was reaching for bananas)**

**Martin**: OK, OK, one at a time. I only have two hands.

**Narrator**: Martin saw a group of children entering the zoo. He knew their teacher, Mrs. Koh.

**Mrs. Koh**: Good morning, Martin.

**Martin**: Morning, Mrs. Koh.

**Mrs. Koh**: Martin, this is my first-grade class. Will you show us the animals and tell us about them?

**Martin**: Sure. Follow me. Children, meet Stan and Sally. Ostriches come from Africa. They can run as fast as 40 miles per hour but they cannot fly. Ostriches are the largest birds in the world.

**Narrator**: When the children left, Ms. Cruz called Martin to her office.

**Ms. Cruz**: Mr. Hobbs, the director of the zoo, asked me to talk to you. Our visitors say such nice things about you. We think you are ready for a new job.

**Martin**: Can you tell me more?

**Ms. Cruz**: We need a guide to drive people around the zoo. He or she will have to tell our visitors all about the zoo and the animals.

**Ms. Cruz:** You can keep your old job or you can be our new guide. If you want the job, you must start next week. You will work Saturdays and Sundays. But, it is a better job with more pay.

**Martin:** How soon does Mr. Hobbs have to know?

**Ms. Cruz:** We need to know in two days, Martin.

**Narrator:** Martin had so much to think about. If I take the new job, I will have more money. But, I will have to learn more about animals.

**Narrator:** I will not be able to visit with my friends on weekends. I will not be able to play baseball. I will miss feeding the animals. Maybe I should just keep my old job. I am very good at it now.

**Narrator:** The next day Martin went to the zoo. He was still thinking about what he should do.

**Chango (to Mona):** Martin seems to have a lot on his mind. He was the same way yesterday.

**Martin:** Today I have to decide. I have to tell Mr. Hobbs what I want to do. It is time I made up my mind. Oh, what should I do?

**Pause to discuss the situation in this act with the audience.**

**Sally Ostrich (to Stan Ostrich):** Martin is a good guide, isn't he?

**Stan:** He sure is.

**Martin:** I like being the new guide at the zoo. I'm glad Ms. Cruz was able to find a new zookeeper to take my place.

**Narrator:** Chango and Charo were chattering, too.

**Chango:** You know Martin planned the petting zoo so children could learn how to act around animals.

**Charo:** What a good idea! Martin is a good friend. I miss him.

**Narrator:** Leo missed Martin, too. One day he noticed something strange.

**Leo:** Look Leona! Somebody left our gate open! Let's go find Martin.

**Leona:** No, Leo. You'll scare the visitors.

**Leo:** I won't hurt anyone. I just want to see Martin.

**Leona:** Leo, you come back here this minute!

**Narrator:** Leo ran fast. He turned the corner by the monkey house.

**Leo (roared to Mona):** Where is Martin?

**Mona:** I think that he's driving the bus.

**Somebody:** Yow, look out. The lion is loose! Run!

**Narrator:** All the frightened people ran away.

**Martin**: Leo! You scared everyone half to death! Come with me. I'll take you home before you cause more problems.

**Leona**: I said that you would scare the visitors. You just don't listen to me.

**Narrator**: Martin thought about Leo's escape. He tried to figure out who was responsible.

**Martin**: Maybe I became too friendly with the animals. Maybe someone has to work with the new zookeeper until he learns his job better. Maybe he just is not responsible enough to keep the animals and the visitors safe.

**Martin**: How can I decide who is responsible for what happened?

**Narrator**: Just then Mr. Hobbs announced over the loudspeaker.

**Mr. Hobbs**: Attention everyone, I want you to know that we have reached our goal of raising one million dollars to pay for the new changes at the zoo.

**Narrator**: Mr. Hobbs had asked all the school children to help sell stickers and candy.

**Mr. Hobbs**: The new zoo is finished. Now all the animals can live like they would in their natural habitat.

**Narrator**: Soon the news spread to the animals.

**All Animals**: No more cages for us!

**Narrator**: The mayor called a meeting with Mr. Hobbs, Ms. Cruz, and Martin.

**Mayor:** Friends, this year the zoo had more visitors than ever before. The people of our city love the zoo. It is a wonderful success. I wonder who is responsible for making our zoo so great?

**Mayor:** Ms. Cruz started all the changes when she made those helpful signs. Now the visitors learn about where the animals come from and how they live.

**Mayor:** But, Martin is the best guide the zoo ever had. He also helped to get the petting zoo for the children.

**Mayor:** Then again, Mr. Hobbs started the program to raise money to fix the zoo. Now the animals don't have to live in cages.

**Mayor:** Whoever is responsible deserves an award.

**Mayor:** The zoo is a wonderful place for people to have fun and learn things, too. Who do you think should get the award?

**Pause to discuss the situation in this act with the audience.**

**Who do you think should get the award? Why?**

**----- THE END -----**