



Teacher's Resource Guide
Loose at the Zoo
by
Dawn Renee Young

Synopsis

Sam sneaks his pet mouse, Gus, into the zoo, but Gus escapes and causes chaos among the animals. As Sam chases Gus through the exhibits, he learns why pets shouldn't go to the zoo and the importance of being responsible. In the end, Sam is relieved to find Gus safe and promises to leave him at home next time.

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of taking care of pets and following rules.
2. Practice listening and recalling story events.
3. Identify and name zoo animals.
4. Express feelings about responsibility and making choices



Note: Look for the hidden heart on each page it reminds children to always be kind to others.

Lesson Plan



Pre-Reading Activities

- Have you ever visited a zoo?
- What animals did you see?"
- "Do you have a pet at home? How do you take care of your pet?"
- Show the cover and ask, "What do you think will happen in this story?"

During Reading

Active Engagement:

- Pause to ask, "Where do you think Gus will go next?"
- Encourage children to look for the hidden heart on each page.
- Act out animal movements (e.g., pretend to be a lion or a giraffe).

After Reading Discussion Questions

- Why did Sam bring Gus to the zoo?
- What happened when Gus got loose?
- How did Sam feel when he couldn't find Gus?
- What did Sam learn by the end of the story?
- Why is it important to follow rules about pets?

Social-Emotional Focus

- Discuss feelings: "How did Sam feel when Gus was lost? How do we feel when we lose something important?"
- Emphasize responsibility: "Why do we have rules for our pets? How can we show that we care?"

ACTIVITIES



1. Draw Your Favorite Scene

- Children draw their favorite part of the story or their favorite zoo animal.

2. Pet Care Chart

- Create a simple chart listing ways to take care of pets (feed, water, love, keep safe).
- Let children add drawings or stickers for each responsibility.

3. Zoo Animal Parade

- Assign each child a zoo animal from the story.
- Have a pretend “parade” where each child moves like their animal and makes its sound.

4. Retell with Puppets

- Use simple puppets (or finger puppets) to retell the story of Sam and Gus at the zoo.

Connect with the Author

Author's Website: <https://www.mrsgoodchoice.com>

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Dear Families,

This week, our class is reading a fun and important story called *Loose at the Zoo* by Dawn Renee Young. In this book, a boy named Sam brings his pet mouse, Gus, to the zoo—and Gus gets loose! As Sam tries to find his pet, he learns why it's important to follow rules and take good care of our animals.

We're using this story to talk about responsibility, caring for pets, and making good choices. The children will have opportunities to share about their own pets, discuss what animals need to be healthy and safe, and participate in activities about zoo animals.

Here's how you can join in at home:

- Ask your child to tell you about Sam and Gus's adventure at the zoo.
- Talk about your own family pets or favorite animals, and how you care for them.
- Discuss why we have rules for pets and why it's important to follow them.
- Visit a local zoo or read more books about animals together.

Thank you for helping your child build responsibility and a love for animals! If you have any questions or would like to share a story about your family pet with our class, please let me know.

Warmly,