

The Dog Pr

By Trisha Fine

(Based on a true story)


“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy”

(Exodus 20:8).

Melody scratched her puppy behind the ears. He wagged his tail. “Just wait, Buddy,” Melody said.

“Soon you’re going to know how to do tricks!”

“Time to go,” Mom said. Melody gave Buddy a quick hug goodbye and ran to their family’s van. With her favorite outfit on, Melody was ready for her second 4-H meeting. She couldn’t wait to learn all about growing a garden, painting ceramics, and sewing. But most of all, she was excited about the dog-training project.



Melody couldn't wait to teach Buddy every trick in the book.

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For as long as she could remember, Melody had loved animals. She imagined for the hundredth time how great it would be to take Buddy on the dog course and teach him all sorts of tricks.

They arrived at the fire station where the meeting would be held. Melody listened closely to the announcements.

“Sewing will be this Saturday at my house,” the group leader explained. “Ceramics will be next Monday after school, and the dog project is this Sunday at 2:00 at my house.”

Melody’s heart sank. Sunday! Sundays were special days for church and family. It wasn’t a day for shopping or going to the movies. But what about dog training?

All the way home she stared silently out the window. At home she went straight to the backyard and began brushing Buddy’s fur. She didn’t want to talk with anybody.

Later that night Melody sat on the couch with tears filling her eyes. Why did the dog project have to be on *Sunday*? It wasn’t fair!

Mom sat down next to Melody on the couch and held her hand. “What do you want to do about the dog project?” Mom asked. Her parents had talked it over and decided to let Melody make her own choice.

“Honor the Sabbath all day long and experience its spiritual blessings throughout the week.”

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles
“The Sabbath and the Sacrament,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 9.



Melody didn’t answer at first. She’d thought about the problem all day long. She kept trying to tell herself it would be OK to do the dog project. After all, it was scheduled after church. But every time she thought this, she felt kind of squirmy inside.

“I don’t know,” Melody said. “I know I want to train Buddy. But I also want to do what’s right.”

“Keep praying,” Mom said. “You’ll know what to decide.”

Mom gave her a kiss on the forehead and left the room.

Melody went to the backyard to brush Buddy’s fur some more. She said a silent prayer for help.

She looked into Buddy’s eyes. He would be so good at learning tricks—she just knew it! But she also knew that she didn’t feel happy inside about attending the project on Sunday. She knew how peaceful the Holy Ghost felt, and that wasn’t how she felt when she thought of doing the project.

Melody realized that was her answer. If she didn’t feel good about it, she wouldn’t do the dog project.

A warm feeling grew in Melody’s heart as she made her decision. Then she had an idea. She could probably find a book about dog training at the library! Probably a couple of books. Maybe they could even learn together as a family.

“Guess what, Buddy? You’re going to learn tricks after all!” Melody tossed a stick for him to fetch. He just looked at her with a goofy grin. He didn’t run after the stick even a little bit.

She grinned. “Don’t worry, Buddy. We’ll learn together.” ◆

The author lives in New Mexico, USA.



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