



News from Sparrow Nest **Puppy training first trips to town.**

By Sumac Grant-Johnson

It is important to begin as early as possible molding the behavior we will expect from our dogs through out or dogs adult live Sparrow is now almost four months old and has accomplished a great deal. We have a few skills to take on the road now. This months priority has been to build my young puppies focus on me reduce her interest in exciting things on the street, in stores and about our daily world. This in turn will prevent the development of pulling, jumping and picking things up that may pose a hazard to her.

Location farmers market in Camden:

Step 1. Teaching puppy that when she gets out of the car she focuses on me. Now remember this is a whole new world to her so the first thing she is likely to do is look around. If I do not build up her focus on me at this point it can lead to jumping out of the car, pulling and jumping to get to what she sees when I open the car.

I have my cheese ready to deliver. I opened her crate and treated her well back in the crate. I closed her crate, opened it and repeated this. (See Susan Garrett's great Crate Games DVD) I placed Sparrow on the ground and delivered cheese as she touched the ground. She looked around and then back at me I immediately responded with her marker word "Yes" and I rewarded her with a treat. We played this by the car for a few minutes. I then asked for sits, downs and stands marking and rewarding each one. Then we played a bit of her favorite tug/release game.

At this point Sparrow is performing several of the behaviors that she can perform at home in a new location. She is all about me now and really does not care about the new location.

Step 2:

We moved towards the market and a musician. Sparrow was intrigued and a bit nervous. I backed up a bit till she just watched. Soon she relaxed and looked to me. We repeated the work and play we did after she got out of the car until she was all about working/playing with mom and did not care about the location again.

We repeated this near several vendor booths. Especially intriguing ones with food smells, parked carriages, children etc.

Step 3: Since Sparrow no longer cared that we were at the market and was focused on me we began some work on loose leash walking. Now up until this point I had tons of focus between vendors but I did not really care where Sparrow was walking. (One thing at a time.) I now showed her a treat just over her head luring Sparrow to my left side. I took several steps and marked/rewarded her. I repeated this about four times. As soon as I knew she would walk along with focus I added her start command for casual walks which is "lets go". Since she is understanding to walk with me now I can remove the cheese from my hand. "Lets go" and step off for several steps got an enthusiastic response which I marked and rewarded. I gradually spaced out the "Yes"/reward. Sparrow was enjoying this game immensely. We built up to walking half the length of the market before I marked and rewarded her.

Visitors:

During all this we had observers and visitors. Anyone that wanted to pat her was asked to only do so if she was sitting. If Sparrow was excited about someone I asked them to wait a minute while I rewarded a sit and then they began again. Sparrow was learning to work with me while she was being patted and thus their was less drive to get to the strangers. I marked and rewarded her several times while each visitor patted her.

We have gone through this program on the town landing, at the park, on the streets of town and in stores. Sparrow now offers me her primary focus and casual interest in things around her when we are out and about. We will keep practicing this as I know puppy behaviors come and go through developmental stages. Each session is molding her future behavior and skills and building our relationship.



Copy Right Wag It Inc.