

Critter Crew: Meerkat needs Manners – A tale of good behavior

- 1,2. It is a beautiful day, and all of the critter friends are playing together in the Friendship Forest. (show acorn toss, jump rope, berry bowl)
- 3,4. A new friend is visiting the forest and comes over to join the crew. The Crew is excited that Meerkat is looking for friends to play with. (show Meerkat, slide in the background)
5. Meerkat sees Chipmunk jumping rope. It looks like lots of fun. She snatches the rope and yells out, “Everyone, watch me!” Fun Fact: Jumping rope is not only fun, but also a great exercise that improves your heart health.
6. Meerkat tries to teach herself to do double jumps. (Chipmunk looks sad)
7. Meerkat sees Beaver and a group at a big wooden slide. It looks so cool. Meerkat cuts in front of the others and goes first.
8. She yells, “Goodbye, time to fly!” and she zooms down the slide.
9. Meerkat sees Rabbit and Hedgehog playing catch with an acorn. It looks like a lot of fun. She snatches the acorn while yelling, “I want that!” Fun Fact: Acorns are fruit produced by oak trees and have seeds on the inside.
10. She takes the acorn and plays by herself, bouncing it against a tree.
11. Meerkat notices Squirrel is walking with a bowl of tasty strawberries. They look so yummy! She scoops out the last few berries with her paw. Fun Fact: Strawberries are the only fruit that wear their seeds on the outside.
12. “Yummy in my tummy!” she laughs as she eats them all. (Squirrel looks at an empty bowl)
13. Meerkat sees Skunk has collected a bouquet of flowers, and she absolutely must smell them. But they tickle her nose, and she says, “Achoo!” Fun fact: You cannot sneeze without closing your eyes.
14. After sneezing, Meerkat races away. (Skunk standing shocked)
15. All of this has made Meerkat ready for a nap. Sloth is slowly moving toward hammocks hung in the trees. She runs past Sloth, bumping him aside. Fun fact: Astronauts use hammocks to sleep in space.
16. “Too slow” she shouts as she jumps into a hammock.
- 17,18. Meerkat wakes up and sees that the Crew has left. She realizes that she has not acted in a way to make them want to be with her.
The gentle voice of the wise old tree whispers, “Good manners are a way to show other people we have respect for them.” Meerkat realizes she doesn’t know what manners are.
19. She finds the Critter Crew, who were discussing this very issue. She bows her head and asks, “Can you teach me what I did wrong?”
20. The Critter Crew decides to help Meerkat learn the magic of manners.
21. Skunk holds the jump rope. She explains that the best way to show good manners is to ask to borrow. Chipmunk squeaks, “Don’t forget to return it when you are done!”
Lesson: Ask to borrow.
22. Flamingo stands at the top of the slide in line. She explains that the best way to show good manners is to take turns. Beaver says, “Don’t forget, no cutting in line!” Lesson: Take turns.
23. Rabbit holds a pinecone. She explains that the best way to show manners is to share with others. Hedgehog adds, “Don’t forget, no grabbing!”
24. (all three are playing toss together in a circle) Lesson: Share with others.

25. Beaver holds a bowl of nuts. He explains that the best way to show good manners is to ask please, and then to say thank you. Squirrel adds, "Don't forget, you shouldn't take the last one!" Lesson: Ask please and say thank you.
26. Hedgehog holds a big flower. She explains that the best way to show manners is to cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Skunk says, "Don't forget you can also use your cough pocket – the inside of your elbow." Lesson: Cover your mouth.
27. Flamingo suggests the best way to show manners is to say excuse me. Sloth adds, "Don't forget to not push." Lesson: Say excuse me.
28. He still needed reminders now and then, but Meerkat's manners improved every day.
29. One day, as the Critter Crew played, Meerkat paused and said, "I want to say thank you. Showing good manners makes playing together even more fun!"
30. With Meerkat's new manners, the Friendship Forest was even more magical and fun.
31. Rules of Good Behavior: Ask to borrow. Take turns. Share with others. Ask please and say thank you. Cover your mouth. Say excuse me.
32. Politeness Jar: Use a clear jar and a bag of cotton balls. Every time someone follows a rule of good manners, set a cotton ball in the jar. When the jar is full, the reward is a special activity.

Activity Kits: Available on website for free.

Option: Count the poison dart frogs which are hidden among the pages. Can you find one yellow frog, two red frogs, three blue frogs, and four green frogs?