

New Pets for the Holidays

Learn how to go about introducing a kitten or other small animal into your family.

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Giving a pet as a Christmas gift is an innovative and wonderful idea, but Petland says you must plan ahead if you intend to give someone a kitten or other small animal over the holidays.

“Christmas Day is not the best day to introduce a new pet into the family. Young pets are like babies, and they need some time and extra attention to adjust to the family routine,” said Julie Washburn, Petland, Inc., spokeswoman.

Generally, Christmas Day involves numerous visitors and activities at home and little time to spend caring for a new pet or setting up a new aquarium. So Petland recommends introducing a new pet into the household a little before or after Christmas.

“If a pet is brought into the home a week or so before the holiday, it has time to adjust to the family,” Washburn said, noting that housebreaking, exercising and feeding routines will be easier to initiate in a less hectic environment.

Anyone wanting to surprise someone with a pet over the holidays should make sure the intended recipient really wants a pet.

“Surprising someone with a pet they may not want is not recommended,” Washburn said. “Making the right lifelong match between pet and owner is very, very important to the success of their long-term relationship.”

However, parents and others who have taken the time to decide upon the right pet for the person or for the family household might enjoy surprising their children over the holidays with a kitten. Petland says planned introductions are best for the pets.

There are alternatives for gift-givers who want to give someone a pet on Christmas morning. Petland suggests picking out a new pet a few days before Christmas, but waiting a day or so after the holiday to pick up the pet.

Then what can be placed under the Christmas tree?

“A gift-wrapped photograph of your new pet will satisfy curious family members and even create some anticipation and excitement,” Washburn said.