

Teaching puppy to 'come' should be a game

Seventh in a series

It has been told that after God created Adam and all of the animals of the earth, a deep gulf opened in the ground which left Adam on one side of the world and the beasts on the other side. Among the beasts, the dog stood alone gazing at the ever widening gap.

Finally, in agony at the thought of being separated from his beloved friend, the dog jumped across the gap to stay by the side of man. He has remained there to this day.

I love this legend of the dog's devotion to man. I have always felt that the one way my dogs have shown their devotion to me was to stop whatever they were doing and come when I called.

In fact, it's a personal insult if my dogs refuse to come. Consequently, I have always started while my pups were very young to teach this lesson.

SINCE CANINE life is much shorter than human, a dog develops his muscular coordination rapidly. In fact, by the time he is six to eight weeks old, he has good muscular control and is ready to socialize with his human companions.

At this time, his brain is also ready to learn and his memory will retain his early lessons.

Dog is a creature of habit and learns through constant repetition. The younger you start the lessons of life, the easier it is for both you and the puppy.

Since the dog has a natural instinct to chase anything that moves, you can start teaching him to "come when called" by playing ball. Puppy will think ball chasing is great fun, and both you and your dog will enjoy this learning game.

How to RAISE A DOG when nobody's home!

By JERRY CLIMER



TO START your game, sit on the floor and play with your puppy. When you have his attention, roll the ball across the floor. As you roll the ball tell your dog to "fetch."

The pup will soon run after the ball from you. With coaxing and praise urge him to bring the ball to you. As he starts to return, say "Libra, come." (Use your own dog's name.)

Each time the puppy brings the ball to you, tell him to "give" and remove the ball from his mouth. Now praise him lavishly and let him know you're sure he's the smartest dog in the world. Before you know it, your pup will

bring his ball to you each time you roll it. Remember to call the dog each time he returns to you, and be sure to use the same word.

BEING A BABY, he may occasionally tease you by running away with the ball.

If he does this frequently, put a short rope on his collar and gently pull him toward you, as soon as he has the ball in his mouth. Call him by name and urge him to come. Praise him repeatedly, even if you have pulled him to you.

Since your puppy is young and has a very short attention span, limit your lessons to about five minutes, two or three times a day.

Remember to make sure your puppy wants to come to you. Use a pleasant,

happy voice when calling him, and occasionally give your pup a tidbit to eat as a reward for coming when you called.

Never call your dog to come to you if he needs discipline. If you call him and then let him, he will not be so anxious to come to you again. All his life he must associate coming to you with love and praise.

BY NOW you realize that you have already taught your dog three things. You have taught him four words: "come," "fetch," "ball," and "give." You've also taught him the beginning rules in the game of "come." Most important of all, you are teaching him that you are "top dog" in your home, by setting a few rules which he must follow.

If you started the game of "fetch the ball" very early in the pup's life, your puppy should be bringing the ball to you very well by the time he is 4 or 5 months old.

Now is the time to teach your dog that he must "come when called" with or without the ball.

HERE IS A SIMPLE fun lesson, to continue teaching the "come when called."

Place a 6- to 8-foot rope on the pup's collar and take him for a walk. Let him wander to the end of the rope, sniffing the ground and enjoying himself. When you see his attention is on something other than you, call him. He probably won't pay any attention to you and that's just what you want.

Call him again and gently pull him to you with the leash, being sure to praise him as he comes. You may even give

him an occasional tidbit when he comes.

Be insistent that he come to you, even if you have to pull him. When he comes, be sure to praise him with a happy "you're the best dog in the world" voice.

After your pup has returned to you a number of times while on the short leash, start using a longer rope. Twenty feet of lightweight rope or twine is just about the right length.

Follow the same rules with the longer rope and by the time your dog is 6 months old, you will have a happy dog running to you eagerly.

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