

Moms And Dogs

by: Sophie D. Preston

My kids begged me for years to get them a dog. They asked for a dog for Christmas, birthdays, all through the year. My daughter started asking for a sister and then changed it to a dog in hopes that I would give in out of thankfulness that the pressure was off to provide her with a new sibling. I explained to my kids that three children, whom I homeschool, was all that I could handle and that we just could not get a dog.

I felt sympathy for my friends when they wandered around the neighborhood in search of their runaway dogs and when they lost sleep because of whining puppies. During conversations with these friends, they would inevitably compare “doggy” complaints and stories while I sat silent, secretly thankful that I had nothing to talk about. Why would I want to subject myself to chaos, lost sleep, messes in the floor, fur everywhere, and financial drain? No, I said to my friends, I will never give in. This past December, I had a couple of calls to make. I phoned my friends to inform them that my kids were getting a dog for Christmas. Why they were surprised I have no idea, but after they recovered from shock, they told me how proud they were of me. I can't say I felt very proud of myself - I hadn't stuck with my final word on the dog subject.

The night before the puppy was to arrive, I remember thinking that I was enjoying the last night of a no-dog family. Then, finally, to the delight of my children, the day came for the puppy of their dreams to become a reality. He arrived in a crate at the airport, flown in from another state. He was bigger than I expected. I always heard that you could tell how big a dog would get by looking at the puppy's paws. I started to worry. That puppy had some mighty big feet. He was kind of cute, though. My first fear happened pretty quickly - a mess in the floor. I tried to stay calm. Fortunately, my husband was ready with the cleaner. The puppy has had a few messes but actually this has not been as bad as I had envisioned. He was already crate trained, which was helpful. Right away he was trained to “ring the bell” to go outside. He learned quickly. He was kind of smart. I tried to prepare myself for my first few sleepless nights listening to a lonely puppy whine for his mother. I wondered if I would be able to conjure up some sympathy for him while in a sleep-deprived state. To my surprise, the puppy slept quite well in his crate from the first night. He was kind of a good little puppy. My kids and husband have had a lot of fun teaching our dog new tricks. He has learned a lot over the past two months. He understands several commands so far, and still more is planned for him to learn. I'm actually quite impressed with him, most of the time. I still have moments when I long for the “dogless” days. But, at least my daughter is not asking for a sister.