Appreciating Black Cats

Introduction
There are numerous myths about black cats. Some people think that crossing a black cat will bring bad luck, while others associate black cats with witches, or think they are witches themselves. Unfortunately, black cats are sometimes considered a Halloween decoration or prop, or—even worse—they might be used for a prank or harmed because of the misconceptions that people have about them. To counter these dangerous superstitions, we can foster care and appreciation for black cats.

Defining Superstitions
1. A superstition is a belief that has been passed down from one person to another for many years. It is usually seen as a warning, but it is not true and not based on fact.

2. Discuss these examples of superstitions with a friend or family member and ask if they can fill in the blanks:

   “Step on a crack and you will ________.” (Answer: break your mother’s back)

   “It is bad luck to walk under a __________.” (Answer: ladder)

   “If you break a ____________ you will have bad luck for 7 years.” (Answer: mirror)

   “It is bad luck to open __________________indoors.” (Answer: an umbrella)

Superstitions about Black Cats
1. Have you ever heard any superstitions about black cats? Here are some examples: Black cats are bad luck, witches turn into black cats, black cats are a witch’s best friend, and it is bad luck if a black cat crosses your path.

2. While some cultures have superstitions about black cats being bad luck, there are other cultures with myths about black cats being good luck. Some examples:

   - England - It is good luck if a bride sees a black cat on her way to the wedding.
   - Japan - Black cats are said to help bring you love.
   - Scotland - A black cat on your porch is a sign of riches and happiness to come.
   - Italy - If a black cat sneezes, good luck will be brought to all who heard the sneeze.
   - Germany - When a black cat crosses you from left to right, the cat is bringing you luck.
3. While some people might believe these superstitions, the truth is that black cats are no different than any other color of cat, and each one is an individual with his or her own personality. However, when we provide any cat with a loving home, he or she is sure to bring love, joy, and companionship back to us.

4. Negative superstitions attached to black cats sometimes cause people to be afraid of black cats or think it is fun to purchase them just for Halloween displays. This activity will help to challenge myths about black cats, promote the kind treatment of black cats, and encourage people to adopt black cats.

**Black Cats Project**

**Materials**
- Cat cut-outs
- Black construction paper
- White crayons
- Scissors

**STEP 1:** Choose a message that challenges superstitions about black cats, promotes fostering care and adoption of black cats, or encourages compassionate treatment of black cats.

Example messages include:
- Don't judge a cat by the color of her fur.
- Black cats are purrfect friends!
- Love black cats and they will love you back.
- All cats are cool!
- Black cats are special too.
- Treat all cats with kindness.
- Adopt a black cat today!
- Black cats don't bring bad luck, they bring love.
- Black cats are beautiful.

**STEP 2:** Cat Outlines - Cut out one of the black cat outlines or draw a cat outline on black construction paper.

**STEP 3:** Write Messages - Using white crayons, write your chosen message on the black cat outline.

**STEP 4:** Display Your Cat - Hang up your cat picture or share your cat picture with a friend or family member. If it is okay with your parent or guardian, take a picture of your cat and post your picture on social media with hashtags related to the kind treatment of black cats, and breaking black cat superstitions.
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