

Happy Birthday, Sparky®!



Maggie



Brutus



Spot

Once upon a time there was a dog family that lived in a town very near to here. The mother, Maggie, loved to cook. Her two sons, Brutus and Spot loved to play outside, read books and they especially liked helping their mother.

Brutus was the older brother and was always very cautious. He liked to play and have fun, but he would always think before he did anything. Spot was the little brother. He wanted to do everything just like his big brother. His problem was that he would do things before he thought about them and it would often get him in trouble.

The puppies were so excited because they were having a birthday party at their house today! They spent all morning cleaning their rooms and decorating for the party. They wanted everything to be perfect for their cousin, Sparky the Fire Dog®. Sparky is a very famous dog that knows all about safety. The dog family wanted to be sure to make him happy!

Maggie was busy in the kitchen preparing all of the wonderful treats for the party. She planned to make a birthday cake, some doggy donuts and some delicious doggy dip.

The puppies were almost finished decorating when they smelled something wonderful. "Ooh, what do you think that smell is?" said Brutus. He was thinking about all the things that it could be. "I'm going to find out!" said Spot as he ran to the kitchen. Luckily Maggie was there when Spot ran into the kitchen. Spot almost knocked over the beautiful present that they made for Sparky. Maggie reminded Spot that he must start doing a better job of thinking about his actions!

The puppies were so excited to see their mother cooking in the kitchen. "Mama, I'm hungry!" said Brutus. "I know you are, but you must wait a little while longer. The cake is almost finished, and your cousin Sparky will be here any minute!" said Maggie.

"Hooray!" shouted Spot as he tried to open the door of the stove to see the birthday cake.

Luckily, Sparky was walking into the kitchen at that exact moment. Sparky howled, "Freeze!" Spot was frightened when he heard his cousin's loud voice. He stopped and listened to what his cousin had to say.

Sparky said "I know that you want to help your mother, Spot, but you must stay out of the "kid-free zone". "What's that?" asked Brutus. "The kid-free zone is an imaginary space in front of the stove that you must stay out of whenever a grown-up is cooking." explained Sparky.

"In order to be safe kids and pets must stay at least 3 feet away from the stove, or they could be burned." said Sparky. He then took a measuring tape out of his pocket and showed the puppies exactly how far they would need to stay away from the stove while their mother was cooking.

The puppies understood and promised to stay out of the "kid free zone" whenever their mother was cooking. "Thank you very much, Sparky and Happy Birthday!" said Maggie. The family thought that they knew all about being safe, until Spot tried to help again!

"Mama, I'm hungry!" said Brutus. "Mama, I will get the delicious dip out of the microwave for you." said Spot. Sparky said "Freeze!" again. Spot looked puzzled. "Cousin Sparky, don't worry, I am just getting the dip out of the microwave. I can't get hurt. Look it isn't even hot." said Spot as he touched the front of the microwave. "That is NOT true!" said Sparky as he picked up two oven mitts from the counter.

"Watch this." exclaimed Sparky. Sparky put on the oven mitts, and carefully took the bowl out of the microwave and took off the lid as steam escaped from the bowl. "Do you see that?" asked Sparky. "WOW, what is that?" wondered Brutus. "Cool!" exclaimed Spot. "Well, it is anything BUT cool." said Sparky "That is steam and it is extremely hot. It could burn your skin just like fire could." "YIKES!" said the puppies.

"I never knew that food could get hot in the microwave that fast." said Brutus. "I didn't either; I could have really been hurt. Thank you for your help, cousin Sparky!" said Spot.

"Sure, you must only use a microwave if a grown-up says it is okay. You should also let food cooked in the microwave cool before you eat it" explained Sparky. "Remember, the kitchen can be a risky place. Be sure to keep matches up high and if someone would get burned put cool water on the burn for 3 to 5 minutes."

"Thank you, again, Sparky!" said Maggie. "You really helped teach the puppies some valuable lessons. I know that the next time that we get ready for a party we will all know just what to do. Is that correct, puppies?" "Yes, Mama." said the puppies.

"Let's make a poster to hang up in the kitchen so we never forget the safety rules we learned today." said Brutus. "Great idea!" said Sparky.

The dog family enjoyed the rest of Sparky's birthday party and was very happy to have learned how to stay safe in the kitchen.

The End