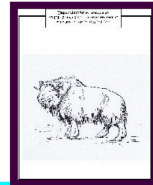


Just for Kids!



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Nature Story

Musk Ox



The musk ox is a herd animal that lives in the Arctic areas of Canada, Greenland, and the United States. As herd animals, they depend on each other for safety. Young musk oxen can't protect themselves against dangerous predators and depend on the adult oxen for survival. When danger comes, musk oxen never run or hide; they stay together and stand their ground. If the musk ox senses danger, he will snort to alert the other oxen.

When the signal is given, the young calves huddle together in the center of the herd, and the adults form a circle with their horns pointing outward. They squeeze their backs together to make an impenetrable ring around their young.

Dependable people stand their ground too. When things get tough, dependability means staying instead of running. When someone is dependable, they keep their word and do what they say they will do. It means keeping a promise even when it is hard, because other people are counting on you.

With all the oxen standing their ground, a herd of musk oxen can easily defend itself against a pack of wolves. When attacked, one of the adults steps forward to challenge the intruder. The rest of the oxen close in tighter to fill the hole. When the first musk ox is tired, the others open a hole for it and another steps forward. Stepping out of the ring is dangerous. It places the ox right in the middle of its attackers. But the musk ox is willing to do its part, whatever the sacrifice.

Dependability is a willingness to step out on behalf of family or friends. A dependable person endures ridicule and laughter from those who may criticize.

Musk oxen just won't run. When others would flee, they are faithful. When troubles surround, they will stay. It doesn't matter how difficult things become—you can count on a musk ox to always stand its ground.

Adapted by Kelly Sorge

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