

## Attending a Blessing of the Animals

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I love being a pet sitter for many reasons. It's great to be able to earn some extra money doing what I love – taking care of pets. Another benefit is that I get to be around people who feel the same way I feel about dogs and cats. The pet community is special.

Shortly before the holidays, I was able to attend a blessing of the animals ceremony in Laguna Beach, Calif. It was a beautiful day and I was really looking forward to the ceremony since I had never attended one before.

About an hour before the blessing, owners and their dogs started arriving at the church. The owners were all in good spirits, as were the dogs. The people were friendly and happy to tell me about their dogs and how they came to share their homes with them. Many of the dogs were rescues and some were special-needs pets.

The dogs ranged in size from a small Shih Tzu to two Bernese Mountain Dogs. There were probably around 30 to 40 dogs there in total. I had a great time getting licked by many of them, holding them, and observing them. My favorite was a Bulldog with tons of personality.

The blessing was done by the pastor at the church and was beautiful. Then the attendees and their pets were able to come up and meet with the pastor and his assistant and receive a personal blessing. The dogs were so well-behaved during the entire ceremony.

The pastor opened up the ceremony to the attendees to talk about a special pet in their lives or to share information about their dogs who were in attendance. It was beautiful to hear the heart-warming rescue stories and how these animals had touched the lives of their owners and really made a difference in them. One elderly man said his dog had helped him regain his health after an illness.

Everyone took food or other items to the gathering to donate to local animal shelters and welfare organizations. It was great to see how much food was donated to help out these groups. At the end of the event, the rescue organizations' vehicles were packed with food, beds, and toys.

If you get an opportunity to attend a blessing of the animals ceremony, go for it. I know you'll enjoy it as much as I did – and so will your dog.

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