

## Dog Doesn't Greet Guests Calmly

**A planned “training party” can help you teach your dog to greet guests calmly.**

*By September Morn*

**Q.** I have an Old English Sheepdog who is a love, except when company comes, she goes crazy barking all over the place. I have tried everything I know of to stop her, but no luck. Can you help me?

**A.** If she is allowed to run around freely while visitors are arriving, she'll excite herself more, and that will make her bark even more frantically. To change this noisy habit, you'll need to restrict her to a smaller area, away from the direct path of arriving guests. It's best if that place is where she can't see the visitors until after you've had a chance to welcome them. Keep a leash by your door, so it will be handy when you need to control her.

A good way to start teaching her better greeting manners would be to enlist the help of four or five dog-loving friends. Invite them to come over for a snack or meal that's really a dog training party, and be sure to brief them on the plan when you invite them, so they'll know what's up.

Have your guests time their arrivals about fifteen minutes apart. If you can't find enough helpers, you could have fewer guests, but have them arrive, leave, and re-arrive a few times. While guests are arriving, keep your dog in another room where she can't see them. A pen or crate would be handy for this phase.

As guests arrive, welcome them, wait a few minutes until your dog quiets, go to her, and give her a treat. If she resumes barking, walk out of the room and close the door behind you. If she stays quiet, invite her to join the party on leash so you can control her movement. If she starts barking again and won't hush, calmly take her back to her private space until she settles down again.

The more often you practice this when visitors arrive, the sooner your dog will learn the new rule. But don't let her run around barking on her own when guests come, as she'll be practicing the wrong kind of behavior.