



## Lazareth 348682: What to Expect

Lazareth is a graduate of the Behavior Modification Program and needs a specific home. Lazareth is an affectionate and goofy guy who is ready to find his forever home. Lazareth can be a bit timid and frustrated in new or busy environments, but with a little patience and time to adjust, he blossoms into an incredibly sweet and affectionate companion. Once comfortable, he's happiest following his people around and making himself part of everything they do.

Lazareth was brought into another shelter due to his caretaker no longer being able to care for him, and we do not have much history on him. When he first arrived at his previous shelter, the stress of the busy, loud environment and confined kennel space caused him to display anxious and frustrated behaviors. He would rub against the kennel bars, pace back and forth, and roll onto his back to expose his belly when staff approached. While these behaviors could appear as an invitation for affection, when staff would begin to pet him he would respond by growling, hissing, swatting, and attempting to bite. Due to his fearful and frustrated behavior, the decision was made to transfer him to OHS and place him in our Behavior Modification program. The environment in the BMOD program is better suited at helping cats feel comfortable in a shelter environment. With the larger kennel space, access to windows, increased enrichment, and one on one time with the team we set out to learn more about him.

Lazareth acclimated very quickly to the BMOD program. After just a few days he was curious and social with people, lounging on his window-side cat tower watching wildlife outside, eating crunchy treats, rolling around in catnip, and requesting to be let out of his kennel to explore the larger space of our cattery. Lazareth is always the first kitty to greet us each morning, welcoming us with a soft meow and an adorable little paw wave. He is a goofy, affectionate boy who loves being close to his people. He enjoys following them around like a shadow, curling up in their lap for snuggles, and being involved in whatever they are doing. If you are looking for an affectionate sidekick that will probably jump on your counters, assist you as you type on your computer, snuggle up in bed with you, and possibly follow you into the shower, Lazareth may be the companion for you!

Although Lazareth has not shown signs of overstimulation since arriving in the BMOD program, he did display this behavior in his previous shelter in confined spaces and while adjusting to new environments. His overstimulation is typically linked to feelings of anxiety or stress. When overwhelmed, he may scratch or bite—especially if he is petted for too long. It is important to read his body language and recognize when he's had enough. Signs that he is becoming overstimulated include tail twitching, dilated pupils, fur standing on end, and rolling onto his back to expose his belly while being petted. When you notice these cues, it's important to stop petting him and either give him space to walk away or calmly remove yourself from the area.

Because we knew Lazareth had previously lived with other cats, we introduced him to the other kitties in the program through supervised playdates. While he is initially cautious with new cats, he interacts appropriately and does well with

them. He may enjoy having a friendly feline companion in his new home, but he would also be perfectly happy as the center of attention and the only kitty in the household.

Lazareth will do best in a calm environment with a family that has the patience and time to help him acclimate. While he loves being the center of attention and staying involved in whatever his people are doing, he's also a laid-back, easygoing guy who enjoys relaxing throughout the day and soaking up the sun from his window-side cat tower while watching the wildlife outside. He can often be found awkwardly perched in the oddest little spots, clumsily chasing feather wand toys, rubbing against everything in sight, investigating and exploring scouting out crunchy treats- his absolute favorite!- and following his favorite humans wherever they go.

His new family should expect that he will hide for a few weeks, possibly longer. You'll need to introduce him to new things slowly. Lazareth typically flees, hisses and swats when overwhelmed or scared. It's important to provide him with a small room with appropriate hiding spots for him to relax in, such as his own hidey bed. Hiding spots that are confined to a tight spot and out of reach from you will make it difficult to build a bond with him. The room you set him up in will be the catalyst for how quickly he acclimates. Start thinking now which room in your home would be best for Lazareth to settle into. If it's a bedroom, can he get under the bed or dresser making it difficult to spend time with him? If it's a laundry room or bathroom will the constant in and out of people and noises associated with these rooms be too much for him? By having a room without a lot of foot traffic and with appropriate hiding spots, it will allow you to work on building a relationship. While in his hiding spot, use calm voices and offer tasty treats to show you are not a threat. Place a small amount of wet food or a treat on a spoon and offer it to Lazareth while in his hidey spot. Over time, by continuing to do this, Lazareth will become more comfortable and recognize that yummy food = people, therefore creating a positive association between the two.

### **Here's how to help Lazareth during your first months together:**

**This step is crucial in helping Lazareth acclimate to his new home.** Confine Lazareth to one cat-proof room in your house. Provide Lazareth with a litter box, food, water, and a bed. Ensure he cannot get to inappropriate hiding spots (under the bed, in a closet, on top of a cabinet, etc.). Instead, provide him with a safe, comfortable hiding place like his cat carrier, a hidey-bed, or a large dog crate covered with a blanket.

Spend time with Lazareth in his room. Don't force him out of his hiding spot. Instead, encourage him to come out on his own using happy talk, offering a toy or treats. Once he is using the litter box, eating regularly, and coming out of hiding to interact with you, you can start introducing him to the rest of your home. Start by propping the door open and allowing him to come out on his own. Don't force it! If you come across something that you can tell Lazareth is worried about, allow him to hang back or hide if he chooses to do so.

Continue to provide a safe space. Even when Lazareth has started exploring the rest of the house, give him a safe space that he can retreat to. When he is in his safe space, insist that guests leave him alone and try to ignore him yourself. That way, when he comes out, you can reward his bravery with your attention.

**No visitors (at first).** Allow Lazareth time to adjust to your house, routine, and lifestyle before introducing him to new people. When you have visitors over, give Lazareth the freedom to make the decision to interact (or not!). Ask new

people to ignore him – or if Lazareth seems curious or interested, have the new person toss him treats or offer a favorite toy. We want exciting, good things to come from new people.

**Practice crate training.** Leave his carrier out all the time, so it's just a part of his normal environment. Add a bed and keep the door securely propped open so he can go in and out on his own, making sure the door won't swing shut and frighten him. You can also clicker train him to run into the carrier on cue. Helping Lazareth get comfortable with his carrier will make it easier when it's time to visit the vet.

**Visiting the vet:** Unless it's an emergency, give Lazareth time to bond to you before taking him to the vet. Vet visits will more than likely be scary, but if he already trusts you, your presence may help him feel more comfortable.

Patience will come in handy for you. Lazareth is a cat that needs an understanding owner who has the time and desire to allow him to adapt in his own time. He may never be a social butterfly, and that's okay! Getting to know him and watching him come out of his shell will be extremely rewarding. Celebrate those small victories.

### **We're here to help!**

We want Lazareth to be successful in his new home. We're available to answer questions via phone and email. Call the Behavior Helpline at (503)416-2983 or email the BMOD cat trainers at [bmodcat@oregonhumane.org](mailto:bmodcat@oregonhumane.org) to connect with the Feline Behavior Modification department.

Please keep in touch so we can continue to help you and Lazareth now and in the future. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns – or just to give an update. We love to see photos and hear how our friends are doing!

Thank you for adopting from the Oregon Humane Society. Congratulations on your new cat!