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10 Lessons Kids Can Learn from Peter and the Wolf

Written as an introduction to the orchestra for Russian children by the Ukrainian prodigy Sergei Prokofiev, *Peter and the Wolf* is a favorite of music teachers and children alike. Here are ten lessons that kids can learn from this beloved musical tale.

1. **Heroes Must Take Chances** – Declaring that “boys like me are not afraid of wolves,” Peter takes the necessary chances to capture the wolf and to save him from the hunters, choosing instead to turn him over to the zoo and teaching kids a valuable lesson about bravery and taking chances.
2. **Dreams Can come True** – In the 1946 Walt Disney film adaptation of *Peter and the Wolf*, the young Peter dreams of catching the wolf, even carrying his pop gun in hopes of finding the predator. Eventually, he is presented with the opportunity to see his dreams come true, showing kids the importance of believing in themselves and their dreams.
3. **Music is the Universal Language** – While there are passages spoken by a narrator, the bulk of Peter’s story is told through song. For kids with an interest in or a talent for music, this composition’s popularity and effectiveness is proof that music crosses all language barriers.
4. **Bullying Others is Wrong** – Though they’re busy picking apart each others’ differences and would have been eaten without Peter’s intervention, both the duck and the bird are the victims of bullying from the cat and the wolf.
5. **Come to the Rescue Whenever You Can** – Seeing that the bird is in danger of being eaten by the predatory cat, Peter quickly warns the bird to safety. He also rescues the wolf that is his quarry from a group of hunters, emphasizing the importance of protecting those who cannot protect themselves and helping wherever you can.
6. **Success Can Come Slowly** – While *Peter and the Wolf* has become one of the most beloved children’s compositions, attendance at the first performances was sparse. The production would not garner much attention initially, proving that success doesn’t always happen overnight.
7. **Differences Should be Celebrated** – While the duck and the bird are criticizing one another for their differences, neither stops to realize that they are both capable of impressive feats. Instead of making fun of their respective differences, these two should have embraced the things that made them who they are.
8. **Bravery is an Admirable Trait** – Refusing to be afraid of the wolf and determined to prove himself, Peter shows tremendous bravery both in the capture of the wolf and in standing up to the hunters later on. Peter is a great example of the power of bravery, and how far it can take us.

9. **Animals Must be Protected** – In today’s world, it’s easy to emphasize the elements of the story that pertain to the protection of animals and the importance of keeping all species alive and thriving.
10. **We All Have Our Own Voices** – The use of different instruments to portray different characters’ voices is a great way for kids to understand that we all have our own voices, and our own personalities. Prokofiev knew that we were all unique, and helped his young audiences to see this as well.

Over the years, *Peter and the Wolf* has been adapted several times, with some authors changing the moral of the story slightly or updating the music. Messages about the importance of protecting the environment, preventing cruelty to animals and promoting the celebration of individuality have all be emphasized in different versions.