

WHISTLE FOR WILLIE

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By Ezra Jack Keats (Viking)

Themes: Growing Up/Pets

Grade Level: Pre-k-1

Running Time: 6 minutes, animated

SUMMARY

WHISTLE FOR WILLIE is about a boy named Peter who tries and tries to whistle. Peter wants to whistle so badly that he practices and practices until it finally happens. In fact, just as Peter suspected, when he whistles his dog Willie stops and looks around to see who is calling him. The end of the story finds Peter so happy with himself that, while on an errand for his mother, he whistles all the way to the store and all the way home!

OBJECTIVES

- Children will investigate the ways practice helps to develop abilities.
- Children will explore what it means to be able to what grownups can do.
- Children will examine relationships between people and pets.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Peter's mother is proud that he can whistle. She sends him on an errand to the grocery store. Ask:

- What grown up things does your mother or father ask you to do?

Have children take turns trying to whistle. Then give children the opportunity to demonstrate other special

things that they can do. Stress to children that each of them is capable of doing special things. Then explain that in the film children are about to see, a boy named Peter wants to learn how to whistle. Will he achieve his goal? Have children watch closely to discover the outcome of Peter's attempts!

Ask children to think about the kinds of things that they would like to be able to do. Then have child draw pictures of these things. As children share their pictures with one another, encourage them to discuss how they'll feel when they can do these things and why. Talk with children about their pets. Ask:

- How do you care for your pets?
- What kinds of things do you like to do with them?
- What things do your pets do to let you know that they understand you?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the way Peter feels when he puts on his father's hat. Then supply an assortment of adult hats that children can try on. As children wear each hat, encourage them to describe how the hat makes them feel. Ask questions such as:

- If you were the grownup who wore this hat, how would you spend your days?
- What would you do when you arrived home?
- What kinds of things would you do with your children?

Discuss with children various lessons they may be taking or skills they may be practicing. Ask:

- How do you feel about practicing?
- What do you think will happen if you keep practicing and working hard?

- What kinds of things help you to practice when you really don't want to?
- How do you think you'll feel when your practicing makes you very good at what you do?

Try a simple outdoor exercise in auditory discrimination. Have a child close his/her eyes and stand in front of the group of children. Ask another child in the group to blow a whistle rather loudly. Have the child with closed eyes move toward the sound of the whistle. As the child moves closer to the source of the whistle, have the child who is whistling whistle more softly. See if the child with closed eyes can touch the shoulder of the whistler. Continue the activity until each child in the group has had an opportunity to participate.

Explore the sounds of several different whistles: bird whistle, boat whistle, policeman's whistle, teakettle, and wind. Have the children think of others.

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