

# Leonardo the Terrible Monster

By Mo Willems



Check out the Learning and Literacy Profile of the Ready Kindergartner

## The Lesson

**Lesson plan by:** Mia Hartley Phillips

**Length of Lesson:** 45 minutes  
(can be adjusted by eliminating \* items to 15-30 minutes, depending on student's needs)

**Objective/Brief Description:**

Explore ways to express yourself in a positive manner and become a good friend.

## Materials

**Materials Provided:** paper, crayons, "monster tails" (these can be made from paper, fabric, with a scarf, etc.)

**Materials From Home:** tape for tails, music for "Freeze Dance"

## INTRODUCTION:

**At a location where the students come to you instead of traveling to their classroom:**

Begin outside the room and give each student a "Magic Key" (a crayon). This is their key to their imagination. At the door, each student is asked the question, "What is something you are good at doing?" Then they show it as they travel into the room and join our group circle. (i.e., "helping" - they pretend to carry something or "being a superhero" - they act like a superhero).

**Offsite where student(s) are already in the classroom or at home:**

Have them sit in a circle in their regular "group space." Ask the question, "What are you good at doing?" Then go around the circle as each child stands and acts out something they are good at doing.

*\*Each student can also be given a piece of paper and additional crayons to draw a picture of something they are good at doing.*

*\*Each student can also take turns going behind a curtain, shelving unit, or whatever is available to create an entrance and exit stage area. They then enter, cross to center, say their name, and share their picture. Afterwards, the audience applauds and the child takes a bow and exits.*



## **LET'S GET MOVING:**

Tell the students you have been learning your ABC's. Ask if they know their ABC's. Have the students sing the Alphabet song, but mess up on "L, M, N, O, P." Sing "Elmo in a tree" instead. When they correct you, try again. Keep messing up singing the alphabet. After three times, tell them you are "terrible" at singing ABC's.

*\*Ask to try counting instead. Get students to try counting to 10. Mess up on "4." Tell them "Four is hard." Try three times and mess up each time. Now say, "I am terrible at counting too."*

*"Maybe we can try Freeze Dance." Ask a student or teacher to explain how to play (we freeze when the music stops). Play music (you or your assistant, librarian, etc. can play the music of your choice). Play three rounds and don't stop dancing when the music stops. Let the students tell you that you are messing up and are supposed to freeze. On the third time, repeat the phrase "I am terrible at this."*

## **TRANSITION/ACT IT OUT:**

"I may be terrible at these other things, but I like to pretend. Do you? Could we take turns pretending to be a monster?"

"Let's make a monster tail" - pass out paper and crayons and make monster tails. Then help children get their tails attached to their backs with a piece of tape. If you are using a class kit, students can use the scarves provided.

Taking turns, each actor goes behind whatever you are using to make an entrance area (*bookshelf, table, doorway, etc.*). They then jump out making a loud monster noise. We clap for each actor. (*Don't force them if they are feeling shy, tell them they can still help by being a good audience member by clapping*).

When it is your (*the teacher/leader of activity*) turn, jump out and act like an animal: cat, dog, elephant, etc. When the children tell you that isn't a monster, tell them you want to try again. Try two more times and get it wrong each time. Decide you need help.

"Where do we go find help?" (*Listen to answers*). Then ask, "What about a book? They can help us solve problems, too!" "Let's drive to the library and find a book." Pretend to get in cars, buckle up and have fun driving to the library.



## **READ THE STORY:**

Read the book *Leonardo the Terrible Monster* by Mo Willems. Some stories have a repeated line that student will want to say with you! Encourage them to say or repeat those lines with you and point to the words in the book. Our word for this lesson is "Terrible." Point to it anytime it shows up in the story.

## **DRAMATIC PLAY/IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM AND HOW TO SOLVE IT:**

**This is a great opportunity to discuss if there are other ways to solve the problem.**

"Leonardo was terrible at being a monster, but he was good at being a friend. Could you help me by being my friend?" Ask them how they could help you play freeze dance and remember to stop when the music stops. Play it several times, allowing the students to yell "Freeze" when the music stops. YAY! With the help of your friend(s), you've finally figured it out! If you have time, you could have the student help you practice your alphabet or counting to 10.

## **END OF CLASS:**

Tell your friends that it is time for you to go, but first you would like to say, "Thank you for playing with me today." Practice audience/actor expectations: clapping, bowing, or other ways of saying "thank you." After you and the students bow to each other and clap for each other, remind them that they can always "be a good friend."



Thank you for taking a few minutes to fill out this survey.