LEONARDO, THE TERRIBLE MONSTER
by Mo Willems
Ages: 4-7
Lexile®: AD670; Guided Reading Level: I
Themes: Feelings, Friendship, Humor, Problem Solving, Self-Confidence

SUMMARY
Leonardo is a terrible monster. He is terrible at scaring people. No matter how hard he tries, he just can’t seem to make anyone scream or run from him in fear. He isn’t big, he doesn’t have thousands of teeth, and he isn’t even weird. So, Leonardo begins his search for the biggest scaredy-cat kid he can find. That’s when he meets Sam. He tries every trick he knows to scare Sam until finally, Sam cries. And that’s when Leonardo finds out that scaring people maybe isn’t what he wants to do after all…

OBJECTIVES
• Students will identify qualities that make a good friend.
• Students will identify how Leonardo changed during the course of the story.
• Students will create artwork of scary monsters.
• Students will make text-to-text connections.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES
Elicit students’ ideas about friendship. On chart paper, compose a list of qualities that students believe make good friends. Then, have students illustrate a picture of a person who is a special friend to them. Encourage them to be detailed. Ask guiding questions:
• What does he/she look like? Hair color/style? Eye color? Unusual or beautiful features?
• What kind of clothing does he/she wear?
• How tall/short is he/she?
• What can you draw to show what activities this person likes?

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES
After students have finished their illustrations, have them write, or write for them, one sentence that describes their friend. Finally, tell students that they will hear a story in which one of the characters becomes a friend to another. Encourage them to be alert for qualities of the character that they listed that made him a good friend.

Lead a discussion on peer pressure. Define peer pressure as doing something that you may not do ordinarily because other people you know are doing it or they encourage you to do it. Help students brainstorm examples of things that people do because of peer pressure. Categorize the list into positive peer pressure and negative peer pressure. Discuss with students the benefits of encouraging their friends to make good choices. Also discuss how giving in to negative peer pressure often hurts many people and can carry serious consequences. Tell the students that in the program that they will see, a little monster believes that he has to be mean and scary because other monsters are mean and scary. Encourage students to watch and listen for Leonardo’s big decision and to think about how it changed him and his life.

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