

Theme: Leaves

Gross Motor (Indoor & Outdoor):

- Rake a pile of leaves and jump into them! Throw them into the air. Chase them around the yard.
- Bubble play
- Can we climb a leaf? Stomp on a leaf? Throw a leaf? Catch a leaf? Run on a leaf? Wave a leaf? Do each of these activities in-place or acting silly out in the yard. Have fun! Let children's imaginations run wild!
- Go on a nature walk and try to identify leaves; collect a few for an art activity.

Math Activities:

- Use leaves for addition and subtraction activities
- Compare leaf sizes and colors
- Measure leaves with a ruler
- Count the red leaves, count the green leaves
- Try counting the veins in the leaves
- Use a flannel board with a variety of felt leaves, tree trunks—let children compose a tree with its trunk, leaves, fruit/flowers
- Count the branches on your tree

Science Activities:

- ✓ Compare and contrast different colors found in leaves—note the subtle differences in shades of green, red, orange, and brown.
- ✓ How does a leaf change colors?
- ✓ Let children float some leaves in the water table and create "faces" from the leaves.
- ✓ Soak the stems of leaves in colored water and monitor the changes in the leaf colors throughout the week

Small Motor/Manipulatives:

- Using your finger, trace leaf shapes in the dirt or sand; trace over the back of leaves with your finger to feel the texture
- Make a Lego ladder to climb into a Lego tree-house! Use people figures to expand on this activity
- Set out 3 baskets and let children sort the leaves by color, size, type
- Lacing activity – cut large leaf shapes from cardboard and let children lace them with a vine, if possible, or yarn

Snacks:

- ❖ Use a cookie cutter in the shape of a leaf to make cookies, cut sandwiches and cheese shapes for snacks.
- ❖ Salad – use different types of lettuces and spinach leaves; let children compare them while they eat their salads.

Special Visual Aids/Room Set-Up/Field Trips:

Go on a nature walk to collect leaves for a collage activity, identify leaves/trees on your walk, compare leaf colors and shapes.

Songs & Fingerplays:

<http://www.teachingheart.net/afallunit.html>

Books:

Leaves! Leaves! Leaves! by N. E. Wallace

Fall Leaf Project, by M. McNamara

Leaves, by D. E. Stein

Extraordinary Leaves, by D. Schrader

Leaves, Trees & Bark, by D. Burns

Why Do Leaves Change Color? by B. Maestro

Fletcher and the Falling Leaves, by J. Rawlinson

Leaves and Pods, by J. Iselin

Leaf Man, by L. Ehler

Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf, by L. Ehler

I Am A Leaf, by J. Marzollo

It's Fall, by L. Glaser

Ruby's Falling Leaves, by R. Wells

Fall Leaves, by D. L. Curry

In the Leaves, by H. V. Lee

Look What I Did with a Leaf! by M. E. Sohi

Mouse's First Fall, by L. Thompson

Zero Is the Leaves On the Tree, by B. Franco

Leaf Jumpers, by C. Gerber & L. Evans

We're Going on a Leaf Hunt, by St. Metzger

Dramatic Play:

- ✓ Toy rake
- ✓ Silk leaves
- ✓ Bucket
- ✓ Flannel shirt
- ✓ Gardening boots

Art:

- Make a collage from the leaves gathered on your nature walk.
- Leaf rubbings – place a sheet of paper over a leaf and color over it to get the leaf imprint. Children can do these with a variety of leaf colors. Display their rubbings around the room.
- Make a mobile out of leaf shapes; older children can cut out the leaf shapes themselves; for younger children, you can cut these out ahead of time. Children can tape the leaves to the string; strings can be tied onto a clothes hanger and hung up around the room, on the edge of the porch, etc.
- Spatter paint over a leaf to reveal the shape underneath.
- Fingerprint with crushed leaves added to the paint
- You can find a variety of free leaf coloring pages on the internet. Try this website for a huge variety of options:
<http://www.preschoolcoloringbook.com/color/cpfall.shtml>

Circle Time Activities:

- Make a garland of leaves to hang across the front porch, the mantle, or whatever works best in your child care home/classroom.
- Put a paper tree trunk on your classroom door and let the children add leaves to it. You can also do this on a flannel board. Talk about colors and how leaves change their color as you do this activity.
- Sing lots of songs! Put the title of a song on the back of a leaf (real or paper). Let children take turns pulling a leaf from the bucket; the group sings the song identified on the back. Keep singing until each child has had a turn.
- Play some music and let the children dance around the room pretending to be leaves swirling in the air.
- Discuss the difference between evergreen trees and seasonal trees. Do you have evergreens in your neighborhood? Point them out on your nature walk, or display some photos taken in your neighborhood.
- Make up a story! Start a story and let each child add something to it. The story should be about a leaf—perhaps his adventures in the life cycle of a leaf, or a story about a leaf who does something like going to school, etc. Imaginations can run wild!
- What would happen if....?
- Which leaves can we eat? Celery, spinach, lettuce, cilantro, parsley, etc. Let children taste samples and describe what they are tasting.
- Discuss the letter “L” in the word “leaf”. What sound does it make? What other letters are in the word “leaf”? What sounds do they make? Put the sounds together to form the word “leaf”. Use visual aides while you do this so children can identify the sounds with the letters and see how the letters make the word.