



Pumpkin Theme

Pumpkins are great to explore in the fall when they are plentiful. They offer messy hands-on learning. Kids love the ooey-gooey fun that comes from cracking one open and scooping out the insides. It's truly integrated learning at its best. Just check out all the different things you can do with pumpkins...

Language & Literacy

Books

Apples and Pumpkins by Anne Rockwell

The Biggest Pumpkin Ever by Steven Kroll

Clifford's First Autumn by Norman Bridwell

Five Little Pumpkins by Iris Van Rynbach

It's Pumpkin Time! by Zoe Hall

Patty's Pumpkin Patch by Teri Sloat

The Pumpkin Book by Gail Gibbons

Pumpkin Circle: The Story of a Garden by George Levenson

Pumpkin Pumpkin by Jeanne Titherington

Songs, Poems, & Finger plays:

Five Little Pumpkins

Five Little Pumpkins,
Sitting on the gate.
The first one said,
"Oh my it's getting late."
The second one said,
"There are witches in the air."
The third one said,
"But we don't care."
The fourth one said,
"Let's run and run!"
The fifth one said,
"I'm ready for some fun."
Oooooo went the wind
And out went the light.

And the five little pumpkins rolled out of sight.
(you can substitute stars for witches)

Print the lines of this song on sentence strips leaving off the last word of each line. Print the last word of each line on separate pieces of sentence strip paper. Have the kids take turns placing the correct rhyming word at the end of each sentence in a pocket chart.

Activities

Make a Pumpkin Faces Book

Supplies: Use a half sheet of paper to make pumpkin pages. Draw a pumpkin shape on each page and label them with feelings words such as happy, sad, scared, etc.

Directions: Have kids draw corresponding faces on the pumpkin shapes. Staple pages together and read through it with the kids until they can read it on their own.

Read: *It's Pumpkin Time*

Draw a big pumpkin shape on a piece of tag board or chart paper. Have the children list all kinds of descriptive words about pumpkin. Write them on the pumpkin shape.

Math & Number Concepts

Read: *How Many Seeds In a Pumpkin*

After reading the story have the children guess how many seeds are in a pumpkin. I like to group the kids with about three kids to a pumpkin. We write down their predictions and as a group predict which pumpkin we think will have the MOST seeds and the LEAST seeds. Then they work in their groups to clean them out and count the seeds, just like in the book!

Pumpkin Face Matching Cards: Create a set of pumpkin face matching cards. Program pumpkin shapes with different expressions such as happy, sad, and angry. Make two sets for the children to use as matching cards. Talk about feelings with the children and ask them to recall things that have made them feel different emotions.

Pumpkin Seed Counting Cards: Create a set of pumpkin cards to program with numbers and pumpkin seeds. Program one set with the numbers 0-12, and on another set glue corresponding numbers of real pumpkin seeds to the cards. Kids can use them to count and match numbers with sets.

Pumpkin Seed Counting Game: Download and print the **Pumpkin Seed Counting Activity Page** from the **Theme Enhancement Page**. Let the children place the correct number of seeds in each pumpkin shape. (Save seeds from cleaning out pumpkins)

Art

Pumpkin Faces:

Supplies: Orange finger paint, large pumpkin shape drawn on white finger paint paper, black squirt bottle paint, glue, scissors.

Directions: Have kids paint orange finger paint all over in the pumpkin shape (opt. Have them paint with the squirt bottle paint eyes, nose and mouth for a jack-o-lantern).

Have kids tell you a story about their pumpkin, write it out for them and attach it to their pumpkin and display the pumpkin stories on a bulletin board.

Pumpkin Paper Plates:

Supplies: Large paper plates, long orange tissue paper scraps. Green construction paper to tear a leaf shapes and a brown construction to tear a stem.

Directions: Let children glue tissue paper scraps to the paper plate, demonstrate to them how the tissue paper can be glued on overlapping each other to create the illusion of the ridges in the pumpkins. Glue on a stem and leaf to finish it off.

Pumpkin Painting: Provide each child with a small pumpkin, and a variety of paint markers or tempera paints. Let them paint and decorate their pumpkin any way they wish.

Pumpkin Sponge Art: Pumpkin shaped sponges and orange paint are great for a pumpkin patch picture.

Dramatic Play

A Farm Market: In your dramatic play area add farmer clothes like denim overall and shirts, work gloves, straw hats, and what ever else you can find. Set out wooden crates and child sized wheel barrels. Have a variety of play (or maybe real) fruits and vegetables, a scale, aprons, and what ever else will make this a realistic dramatic play experience.

Hang posters of fruits and vegetables or invite children to create their own with "price lists" for their market. Be sure they have a cash register, play money, and paper and pencils for taking orders and making lists.

Music & Movement

Pumpkin, Pumpkin, Who's Got the Pumpkin: Hide the pumpkin in the room somewhere and let the kids try to find it... give them "color" clues like it's next to something green, etc. Give out pumpkin stickers as a reward for finding it.

Cooperative Pumpkin Music March: Set out a number of large pumpkin shapes on your floor around your circle area. Have the children march around the room in a circle playing music. (You could also use really pumpkins and have children touch them with their hands.) When the music stops have them all try to put their foot or part of their foot on the pumpkin shape they are near. Start the music again, and take away one pumpkin every time so the children have to work together to try to get everyone to fit in to reach the pumpkin.

Science & Sensory

Carving Pumpkins:

Supplies: A pumpkin, carving tools, spoons, a black crayon.

Directions: Let the kids scoop out as much of the pumpkins as they can, take a look at the seeds (save them and bake them for a tasty treat) (Opt. Let them mark on their pumpkins what you should cut with the carving tools for the face of the pumpkin with the black crayon, then you can cut the face out for them.)



Pumpkin Weights & Measures:

Supplies: Food scales, balances, and a variety of mini pumpkins or gourds.

Directions: Let the children make predictions about the weights of the pumpkin. Encourage them to compare the pumpkins and predict which will be heavier and lighter. Include other fall items to add to the comparisons.

Make a chart to record the predictions, observations and findings! Cut out a pumpkin shaped chart!

Pumpkin Guts: Place the extra pumpkin insides (pulp) in the discovery table for the children to mush and gush for a while.

Pumpkin Colored Play Dough: Have pumpkin shaped cookie cutters and mini pie tins, for kids to pretend to make pumpkin cookies and pretend pies.

Blocks & Building

Pumpkin Blocks: Fill the block area with orange colored blocks... cover you wooden blocks with orange colored paper.

Farm Fun: Fill the block area with farm related materials like tractors, wagons, and fences. Provide the children with a bunch of miniature plastic pumpkins, (You can find these very cheap at Wal-Mart or Oriental Trader.)

Technology

Carve A Pumpkin: on-line game

<http://www.primarygames.com/holidays/halloween/carving/start.htm>

Halloween Pumpkin Catch: on-line game

http://www.thekidzpage.com/freekidsgames/games/halloween_games/halloween_game.html

Cooking & Snacks

Pumpkin Seeds: Use the seeds from the pumpkins you carve, sprinkle them with salt and bake them in the oven on about 300 until they look browned.

Individual Pumpkin Pies: Make some vanilla pudding and add a little pumpkin pie spice to it. Fill small plastic cups with a layer of crushed graham crackers, the pudding mixture, and top with some whipped cream.

Bulletin Boards

"Stories from the Pumpkin Patch"

Cover a bulletin board with brown paper and add some grass accents with green paper. Hang the kid's stories about their pumpkin they have created with finger or puffy paint. Tack up the sentence "Stories from the Pumpkin Patch" and use a fence border print to finish it off. You may want to include a little scarecrow picture or an actually little novelty scarecrow next to each story with the child's name printed on it to identify each story.

Write your ideas here....