



Trees & Leaves Theme

Language & Literacy

Books

Trees, Leaves & Bark (Take Along Guides)

by Diane L. Burns

The Tree Lady: The True Story of How...

by Jill McElmurry

Tree For All Seasons

by Robin Bernard

Who Will Plant a Tree?

by Jerry Pallotta

A Leaf Can Be . . .

by Laura Purdie Salas

Where Once There Was a Wood

by Denise Fleming

Fall Leaves Fall

by Zoe Hall

Leaf Man

by Lois Ehlert



Read the story *Fall Leaves Fall* by Zoe Hall. Invite the children to collect a bunch of leaves from a nature walk. The children can then choose a couple of leaves to glue on their papers and make them into Leaf People/Creatures, just like in the end of the story.

Another great story to read along with this activity is *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert.

Songs, Poems, & Finger plays:

Rake the Leaves

(Act out as you say it)

I like to rake the leaves

Into a great big hump

Take two steps back

Bend my knees and JUMP!

Autumn Leaves

Autumn leaves are
falling down, falling down
Autumn leaves are
falling down, all through the town.
Rake them up into a pile
into a pile, into a pile
Rake them up into a pile
Before they blow around.
Leave off the words "town", "around" etc. see if the children can come up with a rhyming word to end each line.

I am a Tall Tree

I am a tall tree,
I reach toward the sky,
Where bright stars twinkle
And clouds float by.
My branches toss this way
As the wild winds blow,
Then they bend forward,
Laden with snow.
When they sway gently,
I like it best.
Then I rock the little birds
To sleep in their nest.

Adapted Traditional

Have this poem printed out on chart paper and ask a volunteer to point to the words as you read through them and act them out as a group.

Five Little Leaves

Five little leaves so bright and gay,
Were dancing about on a tree one day
The wind came blowing through the town
(cup hands at mouth and make a big sing song whoosh sound)
Wooosh! (have the kids say it with you)
One little leaf came tumbling down (remove one leaf from the tree)
Four little leaves so bright and gay.... (repeat poem)
One little leaf so bright and gay
Was dancing around on the tree one day,
That one little leaf came tumbling down,
All goooooone! (Shrug shoulders)

Five Little Leaves Felt Board Activity- Cut five leaf shapes and a tree trunk shape from felt. Invite the children to come up and remove a leaf after each verse.

Activities

Tree Talk- During a group time ask the children what makes tree's so special? Talk about how they give us food, air (oxygen) to breath, they are homes for many animals, we use them for building our homes and for wood to build other things, to make paper products, and they are pretty and fun to climb. Tell them we will be talking all about trees this week. Ask them if all the trees look the same? Compare and contrast them. Have some pictures of different trees to show them.

Tree Poem and Picture

Supplies: Brown and green construction paper, glue, a piece of tag board or a large piece of construction paper.

Directions: Give the kids a bunch of green and brown construction paper, show them how to tear pieces and make a picture using the torn pieces. Tear a large rectangular piece for the trunk, and longer skinny pieces for branches, and round irregular shape pieces for leaves, have them glue them to the paper to form a tree. Ask them why they like trees and copy it down and attach it to their tree picture.

Leaf Learning- Ask the kids to tell you what color leaves are. Are they always green? When do they change color? What colors do they change to? Do all the trees have leaves that change? (no evergreens are always green) Have a variety of leaves for the kids to look at point out how all the trees are alike because they have roots, bark, branches, trunks, leaves, yet they are all different, different sizes, different colors of bark, leaves, different shapes, kind of like people... and isn't it wonderful how we are all the same but different!

Math & Number Concepts

Sort leaves- Use real leaves or make some different colored leaves out of construction paper. You could also make up a few leafless trees each labeled a different color for the kids to sort the leaves and place on the correctly labeled tree.

Leaf Counting- Download and print a copy of the tree counting page for each child. Provide them with leaf stickers or die cuts. Encourage them to place the correct number of leaves on each tree.

Art

Leaf Creatures- Have a bunch of leaves out for kids to make leaf creature pictures if they want by gluing them to construction paper.

Sponge Painted Trees- Give the kids small square sponges clipped to a clothes pin and let them sponge paint leaves all over a tree trunk that is already drawn on a piece of paper.



Leaf Print Pictures

Supplies: A variety of leaves, brown, red, orange, yellow, green paint, construction paper.

Directions: Let the kids dip leaves in the paint and press them on the construction paper to make different leaf prints.

**This could also be done using sponges cut into leaf shapes! We had some really pretty gold paint that made these turn out extra neat. (It is kind of hard to see the gold leaf in the picture it is the one next to the green one.)

Wax Paper Leaves

Supplies: Old crayons a pencil sharpener or a cheese grater, wax paper, iron and ironing board again! (once again great care should be used when using the iron around the children)

Directions: Have kids make crayon shavings with pencil sharpeners or a cheese grater, let them sprinkle them out over the wax paper, iron the paper together and help the kids cut out leaf shapes from them... draw simple leaves for the younger kids right on the wax paper with a crayon for them to cut out, for older kids draw more complex leaves. (this is a really good small motor exercise)



*Another idea is to paint them on the easel with small sponges clipped in a clothespin. We added the tag so that the children had a place to write their name. I reinforced the hole with a clear hole-reinforcement sticker. **These are pretty hanging in a window.**

Family Trees

Supplies: Large sheet of white tag board, small paint rollers (made for kids), or use a fat paintbrush, brown and green paint, black marker.

Directions: Have the kids roll brown paint on the tag board to make a tree trunk with branches, you may need to demonstrate first, have them roll from the bottom of the trunk first and then turn the roller out to form the different branches. Then have them dip their hands in green paint and press them on the branches in different places. When dry on the trunk print "(child's name) family tree" then print the names of the family members on all the leaves.

Dramatic Play

Add small rakes, garden gloves, baskets, and fake leaves to the dramatic play area.

Music & Movement

(Act out Tall Tree Poem)

Leaf Dancing- Play some classical music and invite the children to pretend to be falling leaves and move to the music. Give each child a fake leaf to hold and move as they dance.

Science & Sensory

Tree Parts Experiment- Discuss with the children the parts of a tree. If possible have a seedling available to look at the trunk, branches, roots, and leaves. Explain to the children that the roots have the job of taking in water for the tree; the trunk carries the water to the branches, which carry the water to the leaves, so that the leaves can make food for the tree. Using a piece of celery or a carnation flower you can demonstrate this phenomenon by placing them in a glass of colored water. The water will move up through them and the color change will become apparent.

Leaf Identification- Trace a variety of leaves on black construction paper, cut them out and mount them on a piece of tag board. The kids can practice matching the leaves to their shadows. Encourage the children to notice the details in the different leaves. Label shadows with leaf names to promote reading.

Leaf Sorting- Encourage the kids to sort leaves into categories based on size, shape, color, or types of leaf edges (pointy, rounded, etc.)

Blocks & Building

Cover your blocks in fall colored paper to promote more color matching and sorting!

Add a play tree house to the area.

Technology

Lets Learn About Trees, a video

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/adventures-in-learning/2013/10/lets-learn-trees-video/>

Cooking & Snacks

Little Trees- broccoli florets with ranch

Bulletin Boards

Our Class Family Tree- Create a bulletin board with a large tree trunk in the middle. Invite students to bring in a picture of their family. Attach the pictures to a leaf and post them on the tree.

Write your own ideas here...