

Let's Get Messy

Setting the Scene

The dynamic colours of autumn are a great stimulus for learners. This activity is a sensory experience, beginning with a messy creative art session which builds colour on colour. Learners then explore the natural resources gathered. This may take more than one session to finish; work at the learners' pace and feel free to build the experience over time.

What to Do

Mix a wide range of autumn colours in small trays or plastic containers (the wider the range, the more dynamic the final piece will be).

Use sponges, brushes, shower scrunchie, finger/hand prints or other items to form the base for each A3 page (allow to dry).

Explore each element of the natural materials, highlighting texture and size. From your observations, support the learner to select their preferred items. Add these pieces, using plenty of glue, as the final addition to the learners' collages.

Further Suggestions

Autumn tree

Where possible, support learners to use a paintbrush or a sponge roller to create a tree trunk on a large sheet of paper. Alternatively, gently paint each learner's hand and press it down and move it around on the paper. Next, paint the learner's finger tips in reds, oranges, greens and browns, and press all over the tree trunk to make the leaves.

Apple tree

Draw a large tree with branches and help the learners to paint it brown. Use an apple-shaped sponge to create apples on the tree or cut out red and green cardboard apples with the learners' names on them and hang them on the branches.

Leaf prints

Paint the backs of leaves using paints scented with oils or spices such as apple, clove and cinnamon, and make a leaf print canvas.

Leaf man

Stick leaves onto a piece of card to make a leaf print man and leaf print animals.

Fruit prints

Scent the paints with the juice of the fruits you are using and make scented fruit prints.

Hand print leaf shapes

Paint learners' hands in autumn colours. Press onto a white page and cut out. Use them as a border for a display board or use them to decorate an autumn tree.

Clay dough prints – autumn plaque (25 cm X 10 cm)

Show the learners how to make prints in clay using natural materials such as conkers, fir, cones, leaves, twigs, bark, seed heads and stems. Roll out and cut the clay to the appropriate size. Support the learners to press the natural material into the clay. Allow to dry. This can be a four seasons activity, with the completed plaques presented to parents at the end of the year.

Bird feeder

Use a cookie cutter to cut shapes out of stale bread and cover in egg white. Press in bird seeds and leave out to dry. Cut a hole in the top, thread string through, and hang out for the birds.

Areas of Learning

Primary

The Arts (Art and Design)
The World Around Us

Post-Primary

The Arts (Art and Design)
Environment and Society

What You Need

- Large range of dried leaves, varying in size, colour and texture
- Seed heads, dried grasses, dried corn, or wheat
- A3 paper
- Red, orange, brown, green, white and black paint
- PVA glue
- Trays and plastic containers
- Sponges, brushes, shower crunchy
- Autumnal oils and spices such as apple or clove
- Fruit
- Card
- Paintbrush or sponge roller
- Cookie cutter
- Stale bread and egg white
- String

