

A Perfectly Pumpkin Day!

Materials Needed:

- **For Investigation & Science:**

- 1 medium-sized pumpkin (for investigating and opening)
- 1 small pumpkin or gourd
- A large tub or bucket of water
- A large tray or plastic tablecloth for messy activities
- A child-safe knife (for adult use only) and a large spoon or scoop
- A large bowl for pumpkin seeds and pulp

- **For Arts & Crafts:**

- 1 small, clean "decorating" pumpkin
- Washable paint (orange, black, etc.), chunky paintbrushes, or dot markers
- Stickers (faces, shapes, fall themes)
- Googly eyes, glue stick
- Dark-colored construction paper (black or brown)
- Clean, dried pumpkin seeds
- White school glue

- **For Other Activities:**

- A pumpkin-themed storybook (e.g., "The Roll-Away Pumpkin" by Junia Wonders or "It's Pumpkin Day, Mouse!" by Laura Numeroff)
- A pumpkin-themed snack (e.g., pumpkin bread, roasted pumpkin seeds, or just orange slices)
- A speaker for music (optional)
- Pumpkin-themed coloring page or simple puzzle (for wind-down)

Lesson Plan (Approx. 2 Hours)

Part 1: Welcome & Pumpkin Discovery (30 minutes)

1. Warm-Up: Pumpkin Greeting & Observation (15 minutes)

Goal: Introduce the topic and encourage use of descriptive language.

- Sit with your child and the medium-sized pumpkin. Talk about its features.
- **Ask guiding questions:** "What does the pumpkin feel like?" (bumpy, smooth), "What color is it?" (orange, green), "Is it heavy or light?" Let the child try to lift it.
- Roll the pumpkin back and forth with your child. Notice how it moves. Tap on it and ask, "What sound does it make?"
- Introduce vocabulary words naturally: *stem, skin, round, heavy, bumpy*.

2. Story Time: The Life of a Pumpkin (15 minutes)

Goal: Build vocabulary and listening skills through a narrative.

- Snuggle up and read a pumpkin-themed book.
- As you read, point to the pictures of pumpkins and connect them to the real pumpkin in

front of you. "Look, that pumpkin has a curly stem just like ours!"

- Encourage the child to turn the pages or point to things they see in the illustrations.

Part 2: Messy Science & Sensory Play (45 minutes)

**Place the large tray or tablecloth on the floor or a low table for this part.*

1. The Great Pumpkin Opening (10 minutes)

Goal: Safely observe the inside of a pumpkin and explore cause and effect.

- Explain that you are going to open the pumpkin to see what's inside. Build anticipation!
- **Adult step:** Carefully cut a lid around the stem.
- Let the child be the first to lift the lid and peek inside. React with excitement: "Wow! What do you see? What does it smell like?"

2. Pumpkin Guts Sensory Bin (20 minutes)

Goal: Engage the senses of touch and smell in a hands-on, exploratory way.

- Encourage your child to reach inside and pull out the pulp ("guts") and seeds. Let them use their hands, a big spoon, or a scoop.
- Place all the pulp and seeds onto the tray. This is now a sensory bin!
- Let them squish, squeeze, and separate the seeds from the stringy pulp. There is no right or wrong way to play. Talk about the textures: "Is it slimy? Is it stringy? The seeds feel smooth!"
- (*Tip: Keep a bowl of water and a towel nearby for easy hand-washing breaks if needed.*)

3. Science Experiment: Sink or Float? (15 minutes)

Goal: Introduce basic scientific prediction and observation.

- Bring out the tub of water.
- Hold the small pumpkin or gourd. Ask, "What do you think will happen if we put this in the water? Will it sink to the bottom or float on top?"
- Let the child place it in the water to see what happens. (It will float!)
- Next, take a handful of pumpkin seeds. Ask the same question. Let them drop the seeds in.
- Talk about the results in simple terms: "Look! The big pumpkin floats on the water, but the little seeds sink down!"
- **Clean-up together:** Put the pumpkin parts in a bowl and wash hands. This is a great time for a pumpkin-themed snack!

Part 3: Pumpkin Art & Movement (30 minutes)

1. No-Carve Pumpkin Decorating (15 minutes)

Goal: Foster creativity and practice fine motor skills.

- Bring out the clean, small "decorating" pumpkin.
- Offer a choice of materials: "Would you like to use paint, dot markers, or stickers to decorate your pumpkin?"
- Let the child lead the creative process. They can make a face, create patterns, or just enjoy

the process of applying color. There is no need for a perfect outcome; the focus is on the fun of creating.

2. Pumpkin Seed Art (15 minutes)

Goal: Develop fine motor control (pincer grasp) and create a piece of art.

- Take some of the clean, dried seeds you separated earlier.
- Give the child a piece of dark construction paper. Squeeze some glue onto the paper in a fun shape (like a circle for a pumpkin, or just a fun swirl).
- Show them how to pick up one seed at a time (using their thumb and pointer finger) and place it onto the glue.
- Let them create their own design. They can sprinkle them on or place them carefully.

Part 4: Wind-Down & Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

1. The Pumpkin Patch Wiggle (5 minutes)

Goal: Release energy through gross motor movement and imaginative play.

- Play some fun music or just sing this simple song with actions:
- *(Tune: Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star)*
- "First you are a tiny seed, *(curl up in a small ball)*
In the ground, a plant to feed. *(stay curled)*
Then a vine begins to grow, *(slowly stretch arms out)*
Watch your pumpkin start to show! *(make a round shape with arms)*
Round and orange, in the sun, *(stand up and spin in a circle)*
Being a pumpkin is such fun!" *(jump up and down!)*

2. Our Pumpkin Day Review & Quiet Time (10 minutes)

Goal: Reinforce learning and transition to a calmer state.

- Look at all the things you did: the messy tray, the decorated pumpkin, the seed art.
- Ask, "What was your favorite part of our pumpkin day? I liked when we saw the pumpkin float!"
- Transition to a quiet activity, like a pumpkin coloring page or a simple puzzle, to wind down the lesson.