

Lesson Plan: My Colorful Fall Tree

Topic: Exploring Autumn Through Tree-Themed Art

Ages: 3-Year-Olds

Duration: 30 minutes per day, over 5 days

Learning Objectives

By the end of this 5-day lesson, the learner will be able to:

- Identify and name at least three fall colors (red, yellow, orange).
 - Follow 2-step instructions to complete a simple art project.
 - Use fine motor skills to grasp tools like crayons, sponges, and brushes.
 - Describe their artwork using simple words (e.g., "my red leaf," "bumpy tree").
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Materials Needed for the Week

- **Paper:** White construction paper or cardstock
 - **Paint:** Washable tempera paint in red, yellow, orange, and brown
 - **Tools:** Paintbrushes, sponges (cut into small pieces), paper plates for paint
 - **Adhesives:** Kid-safe liquid glue or glue stick
 - **Drawing:** Brown and fall-colored crayons (with paper peeled off for rubbing)
 - **Collage Materials:** Tissue paper (red, yellow, orange), real leaves collected from outside, wax paper, brown marker
 - **Optional:** Smock or old t-shirt to protect clothing, tray to contain mess
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Daily Lesson Breakdown

Day 1: The Bumpy Leaf Mystery

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Hook:** Start with a "Hello Song" like "The Leaves on the Tree" (to the tune of "The Wheels on the Bus"): *"The leaves on the tree turn orange and red... all through the town."*
- **Explore:** Give the child a real leaf. "Look at this leaf! Let's touch it. How does it feel? It feels bumpy! These bumps are called veins. They are like tiny roads on the leaf."
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to use our crayons to find the secret bumpy lines inside our leaves!"

Body: I do, We do, You do (15 minutes)

- **I Do (Model):** "Watch me first. I put the leaf under my paper. Now I take my crayon and lay it on
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its side. I rub, rub, rub. Wow! Look! The bumpy lines from the leaf are showing up on my paper! It's like magic."

- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's do one together. You hold the paper still. I will help you rub the crayon. See the leaf appear?"
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Now it's your turn! Pick a leaf and put it under your paper. Choose a fall color crayon. Can you rub and find the leaf's secret lines?" Offer help positioning the leaf and paper. Encourage trying different colors and leaves.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Clean-up:** Sing a simple clean-up song while putting crayons and leaves away.
 - **Recap & Share:** Hold up their artwork. "Wow! You made a beautiful picture. Can you show me a red leaf? Can you point to the bumpy lines?"
 - **Formative Assessment:** Observe if the child can hold the crayon and make rubbing motions. Ask, "What color did you use here?"
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Day 2: The Dabby Dot Tree

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Hook:** Start with the "The Leaves on the Tree" song again for consistency.
- **Connect:** Show a picture of a fall tree with lots of leaves. "Look at all the colors on this tree! I see red, and yellow, and orange. The leaves look like little dots of color all bunched together."
- **Objective:** "Today, we are going to make our own fall tree using paint and a soft sponge to make dabby dots!"

Body: I do, We do, You do (15 minutes)

- **Prep:** Draw a simple tree trunk and branches with a brown marker on a piece of paper for the child. Pour small puddles of red, yellow, and orange paint onto a paper plate.
- **I Do (Model):** "First, I'll draw a brown trunk. Now watch. I take my sponge, dip it in the yellow paint... just a little bit... and dab, dab, dab it on my tree to make leaves." Dab a few times. "Now I'll use red. Dab, dab, dab."
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's do it together. Hold the sponge with me. Dip... and dab on the paper. Good job!"
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Your turn! You can make your own leafy tree. Dip your sponge and dab lots of colorful leaves on the branches." Encourage them to use all the colors and even mix them on the paper.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Clean-up:** Place the wet painting in a safe place to dry. Wash hands and the sponge.
 - **Recap & Share:** "Look at your beautiful dabby dot tree! Tell me about the colors you used. You worked so hard making all those leaves!"
 - **Formative Assessment:** Note the child's ability to grasp the sponge and make dabbing motions. Can they name a color they used when prompted?
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Day 3: Leaf Footprints

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Hook:** Start with the "The Leaves on the Tree" song.
- **Explore:** Look at the bottom of a few different leaves. "Leaves have different shapes! This one is pointy, and this one is round. Today, we're going to let our leaves make footprints!"
- **Objective:** "We will paint our leaves and press them on paper to see what shape they make!"

Body: I do, We do, You do (15 minutes)

- **I Do (Model):** "I'm going to choose a leaf. Now I will paint the bumpy side with orange paint. See? I cover it all up. Now, I flip it over... and PRESS it down on my paper. Pat, pat, pat. Now I lift it up... Wow! It left a leaf footprint!"
- **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's do one together. You choose a leaf. I'll help you paint it. Now, let's press it down together. Ready... lift!"
- **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Okay, your turn to make some leaf footprints! Pick a leaf, paint it a fall color, and press it on your paper. You can make lots of them!"

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Clean-up:** Place artwork to dry. Wash hands, brushes, and the table.
 - **Recap & Share:** "You made so many leaf shapes! Can you show me your favorite one? What color is it?"
 - **Formative Assessment:** Observe if the child can hold the brush to paint the leaf and press it down with purpose.
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Day 4: Shiny Window Leaf

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Hook:** Start with the "The Leaves on the Tree" song.
- **Observe:** Hold a real leaf up to a window or light. "Look! When we hold the leaf up to the light, the light shines through it! It's so pretty and bright."
- **Objective:** "Today, we're going to make our own shiny leaf that we can hang in the window to catch the sun!"

Body: I do, We do, You do (15 minutes)

- **Prep:** Draw a big, simple leaf shape on a piece of wax paper with a marker. Give the child small, torn pieces of red, yellow, and orange tissue paper.
 - **I Do (Model):** "Watch me. I'm going to put some glue inside my leaf shape. Now I take a little piece of paper... and I stick it on the glue. I'll add another one, and another one, until I fill my whole leaf with shiny colors."
 - **We Do (Guided Practice):** "Let's do a few together. You put some glue on the leaf. Now let's pick up a yellow piece and stick it down. Perfect!"
 - **You Do (Independent Practice):** "Now you can fill your whole leaf! Pick your favorite colors and stick them on the glue. Cover all the sticky spots." (For a 3-year-old, tearing the paper can be part of the activity for extra fine-motor practice).
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Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Clean-up:** Put glue and paper scraps away. Let the project dry completely.
 - **Recap & Share:** "Your shiny leaf is so colorful! Later, when it's dry, we can hang it in the window and watch the sun shine through it."
 - **Formative Assessment:** Can the child use a pincer grasp to pick up small pieces of tissue paper? Do they understand the concept of sticking the paper to the glue?
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Day 5: My Favorite Fall Tree

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Hook:** Sing "The Leaves on the Tree" one last time.
- **Review:** Quickly look at all the art made during the week. "We made bumpy leaves, dotted leaves, and footprint leaves! We learned about red, yellow, and orange."
- **Objective:** "Today, you get to be the artist and make your own special fall tree using all our favorite things!"

Body: I do, We do, You do (15 minutes)

- **Prep:** Draw a large tree trunk on paper. Set out a tray with various materials: leftover tissue paper, real leaves from Day 1, sponges, and paint from Day 2.
- **I Do (Model):** "I am going to make my tree. I think I'll use some glue to stick on a real leaf... and then I will use the sponge to dab some red dots next to it. There are no rules, you can make it however you want!"
- **We Do/You Do (Open-Ended Creation):** This day is primarily "You Do." "It's your turn to make your masterpiece! You can use glue, or paint, or both. What do you want to put on your tree first?" Let the child lead the creation. Offer help with glue or paint as needed but encourage their own choices.

Conclusion (10 minutes)

- **Clean-up:** Put away all the art supplies.
 - **Recap & "Art Show":** Display all five projects. "Let's have an art show! Tell me about this picture. What was your favorite thing to make this week?"
 - **Summative Assessment:** Review the week's work. Did the child participate each day? Can they point to red, yellow, and orange? Do they describe their art with simple words? This final project demonstrates their cumulative skills and creativity.
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Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Younger Learners or More Support:** Provide hand-over-hand assistance for holding tools. Use larger, chunkier crayons and sponges. Focus on the sensory experience rather than the final product. Pre-apply glue for collage activities.
 - **For Advanced Learners or Extension:** Encourage color mixing (e.g., "What happens when you dab yellow on top of red?"). Introduce new vocabulary like "texture," "trunk," and "branches." Let them draw their own tree trunk. Ask more open-ended questions like, "What else do you see in the fall?"
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- **Classroom/Group Adaptation:** Each activity can be done at small group tables. Start with a whole-group circle time for the song and hook. The "Art Show" on Day 5 can be a gallery walk where children see each other's work.