

Mushroom Math Adventure: Counting in the Forest!

Materials Needed:

- Book: "Mushroom Rain" by Laura K. Zimmermann (optional, but recommended)
- 5-10 toy mushrooms, mushroom cutouts (cardstock or felt), or large buttons
- Paper or construction paper
- Crayons or markers
- Number cards (1-5)

Lesson Activities:

1. Introduction: Mushroom Magic (5-10 minutes)

Start by asking the student what they know about mushrooms. Where do they grow? What do they look like? If you have the book "Mushroom Rain," read it together. Talk about the different mushrooms seen in the book or that you know about. Get excited about finding some mushrooms for math!

2. Activity 1: Counting Mushroom Caps (10 minutes)

Spread out 3 mushroom toys/cutouts. Ask: "How many mushrooms do we have here? Let's count together!" Count slowly, pointing to each mushroom: "One, two, three!" Find the number card '3' and place it next to the group. Repeat with different quantities up to 5 mushrooms (e.g., 1 mushroom, 4 mushrooms, 2 mushrooms, 5 mushrooms), helping the student count and match the correct number card each time.

3. Activity 2: One More Mushroom! (5-7 minutes)

Place 2 mushrooms down. Count them together: "One, two!" Say, "Oh look, here comes one more mushroom! Plop!" Place another mushroom next to the group. Ask: "Now how many mushrooms do we have? Let's count!" Count together: "One, two, three!" You can say, "Two mushrooms and one more mushroom makes three mushrooms!" Repeat this process starting with 1, 3, and 4 mushrooms, always adding just one more.

4. Activity 3: Mushroom Garden Art (10 minutes)

Give the student paper and crayons/markers. Ask them to draw a mushroom garden! As they draw mushrooms, ask them to count how many they have drawn so far. "Wow, you drew one red mushroom! Now you added a brown one. How many is that? One... two!" Encourage them to draw different numbers of mushrooms (e.g., "Can you draw 3 small mushrooms near the big one?").

5. Wrap-up: Counting Fun Review (3-5 minutes)

Gather the mushroom toys/cutouts again. Quickly count a group of 5 together. Praise the student's great counting. "You are a super mushroom counter! We learned how to count mushrooms and even see what happens when we add one more!"

Differentiation & Notes:

- **Support:** If counting to 5 is tricky, focus only on 1-3. Use hand-over-hand counting if needed.
- **Challenge:** Introduce counting and number matching up to 10. Explore adding "two more."
- **Connection:** If you go for a walk outside later, look for real mushrooms (remind the student never to touch or eat wild mushrooms!) and count them.