

Forest School For All

Forest Discoverers

12-Week Autumn Curriculum





Hello, forest friends!



We're thrilled you'll be incorporating our Forest Discoverers Autumn Curriculum as part of your family's fall days. To bring you this program, we at Forest School For All have partnered with Leah McDermott, Educator and Owner of Your Natural Learner. Her background and experience gives this program both an expanded scope and depth we hope your family will benefit from as you spend the fall season discovering the natural world around you.

In this comprehensive curriculum packet, you'll receive an introduction from Leah, a 12-week overview, guidance for each week's programming and a full list of supplies, complete with links for online purchasing.

You'll be in good company as you move through the curriculum. Families and groups of families will be using the same curriculum to discover the autumn season, same as you. We invite you, as we invite all of our families, to share your experiences with us. We'd love to hear about your discoveries - from all that makes you jump for joy, smile with contentment and squeal with surprise. You can share your stories, photographs, quotes, questions, and feedback with us via email (info@forestschoolorall.com) or with the hashtag #ForestDiscoverers on any social media platform.

We welcome you to the exciting autumn in nature ahead.
Happy Discoveries!

Claudine, Kerri + Sabrina
Your Forest School For All Team





Introduction



A note from curriculum creator, Leah

This program was designed specifically for Forest School For All to be used as a 12-week autumn program. It is not to be resold in part or in its entirety. Rights are reserved to the creator.

In keeping with the vision of FSFA, to allow children of all ages the freedom and flexibility to explore their natural world around them, I have designed this 12-week program to be as open-ended as possible - allowing the children to come and go into the various activities freely and participate in their own unique ways. This will allow them to explore the natural world, participate in family, individual and if applicable, group projects creating a sense of community and connection, as well as giving the leader various options that bring a somewhat “academic” feel to the meeting.

Each week will center around a particular theme. Each session offers resources for a themed reading (a book list with multiple options will be given each week), individual exploration and various activities, and a Q&A. These discussion prompts can help children put their ideas and thoughts from the day into words and feelings, which promotes healthy language development and builds personal connections with others. The Q&A, as well as the reading, may be done with parents at home as a followup to the session.

For the activities within each week, there will be different activities that can be set up like “stations” to allow the children to have various options to participate in, and allow older children the ability to use their unique interests and gifts to express themselves in a variety of ways. Each station will offer an activity in a different subject area - such as art, music, science, storytelling, mathematics, etc. Once again, this gives children the opportunity to explore what they are most interested in learning and investigating each week. By offering multiple options for activities, this also helps children with shorter attention spans, or children who may be new to the forest school exploration and aren’t quite sure how to explore and free play.

Above all, a child’s individual interests and autonomy should be respected. These activities are a structure to be used as a guideline, but open-ended free play should always be made available to the children when out in the forest. After all, play is a child’s greatest work!



Meet Leah



12-week overview



week 01	site exploration	○ art, nature exploration, engineering
week 02	environmental art	○ art, science, engineering
week 03	practical/survival skills	○ science, English, engineering, physical ed
week 04	teamwork	○ art, sensory exploration
week 05	flora and fauna	○ art, reading, writing, science
week 06	observing changes	○ science, art
week 07	senses in the forest	○ art, geography, science
week 08	geography	○ geography, math
week 09	imagination	○ art, literature
week 10	sounds of the forest	○ art, science, music
week 11	earth art	○ art, science
week 12	changing seasons	○ art, science, nature exploration



Week 8: Geography



This week, your children will be looking at natural features, discussing and learning about topography and local geography, and practicing directional/locational language. This is a fun way to learn some really useful skills, not only in the forest, but in everyday life. Encourage discussion about the various uses of the forest and these skills within it. Help children develop a connection to the natural world that makes it feel like more than just a playground, but an integral part of our community that we should care for and protect.

Activities

01. Locational/Directional Language (Geography)

Begin by having a discussion about the language used in geography, discussing an area, map-making, etc. Make sure the children understand right and left. Partner together or form a small group. Give each pair or group a compass, teach them how to find North, and then the other directions. Practice using directional language to explain how to get from one tree to another across the site.

02. Inventory and a Key (Geography)

If you have an example map to show, that would be great here, but it is not necessary. Explain what a map key is and how it is used. Have the partners or groups work to inventory the area around them - what is there that should be documented on a map? Multiple kinds of trees? Body of water? Identifiable stones or stumps? Manmade structures? Have the children write or draw all of these things down on their paper to use when they are creating their map and key.

03. Create a Natural (or regular) Map (Geography/Math)

This part can be left up to the children. They can create their map and key of the site on the piece of paper they have. Or, rather than creating a map on paper, the children could produce a ground map from natural found materials (especially great if the weather is wet, as the paper will most likely get destroyed). To create the natural map on the ground, choose an area that is fairly flat, and gently sweep to create a bare space. Collect four or more sticks to make a frame, then use twigs, small sticks, stones, leaves, pine cones, etc. to represent all of the features on the map. They will also need to make a key with the various nature objects they used to represent things on their map.

Note: This week is a bit different from the other weeks. The activities are all connected like steps, as opposed to an assortment of different activities. You can still allow for free play, coming in and out, but in general, this week's guide is meant to be used as a plan. The children will be creating a natural map of their site.



Week 8: Geography



Supplies Needed

- Small compasses (1 per each pair or group)
- Paper/pencil (1 per each pair or group)

Closing

- Discuss the skills that were learned today - did the children learn something new about geography and directional language?
- Share the maps, paper or natural, and compare the different representations of the same site!
- Allow for open share time, to allow children to share freely what they discovered and found interesting about the time spent together.

Book List Suggestions

- Autumn is Here by Heidi Pross Gray (ages 2-6)
- Looking for a Moose by Phyllis Root (ages 4-8)
- Animals in the Outhouse by Anja Frohlich (ages 4+)

Continue at Home

This week, we focused on geography, map building, and using directional and locational language. Your child practiced using a compass and creating a map of the forest school site with a small group. To continue this week's focus at home, include your child in finding and following directions. Have them follow you on a GPS device as you drive around town. Create a map of your home or neighborhood. Look at real maps together, or use Google maps to show topography and directional relations to friends/family that live around the world.





List of Books*



Week 1

- Step Gently Out by Helen Frost (ages 2-5)
- The World is Waiting for You by Barbara Kerley (4-9)
- Awesome Autumn by Bruce Goldstone (3-8)

Week 3

- Fall Walk by Virginia Brimhall Snow (ages 4-8)
- Fletcher and the Falling Leaves by Julia Rawlinson (2-6)
- Earl the Earthworm Digs for His Life by Tim Magner (5-9)

Week 5

- Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf by Lois Ehlert (ages 2-6)
- A Seed is Sleepy by Dianna Aston (7-11)
- Whose Tracks are These? by James Nail (3+)

Week 7

- A Whiff of Pine, a Hint of Skunk: A Forest of Poems by Deborah Ruddell (all ages)
- Sounds of the Wild: Forest by Maurice Pledger (5-9)

Week 9

- Stick Man by Julia Donaldson (ages 3-8)
- Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak (all ages)
- Fall Leaves by Loretta Holland (6-11)

Week 11

- In November by Cynthia Rylant (ages 5-9)
- Leaf Man by Lois Ehlert (2-6)
- Time to Sleep by Denise Fleming (3-7)

Week 2

- One Small Square: Woods by Donald Silver (ages 6-9)
- Pumpkin Soup by Helen Cooper (2-7)
- Fall Mixed Up by Bob Raczka (4-9)

Week 4

- Frederick by Leo Lionni (ages 5-8)
- Foxes and Their Dens by Martha E.H. Rustad (ages 4-8)
- The Biggest Pumpkin Ever by Steven Kroll (ages 2-9)

Week 6

- Fall is Not Easy by Marty Kelley (ages 3-8)
- Leaves by David Ezra Stein (ages 2-6)
- Why Do Leaves Change Color? by Betsy Maestro (ages 4-7)

Week 8

- Autumn is Here by Heidi Pross Gray (ages 2-6)
- Looking for a Moose by Phyllis Root (4-8)
- Animals in the Outhouse by Anja Frohlich (4+)

Week 10

- Forest Has a Song by Amy Ludwig VanDerwater (poetry) (ages 6-9)
- Sounds of the Wild: Nighttime by Maurice Pledger (5-7)
- The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson (2-8)

Week 12

- The Wump World by Bill Peet (ages 8-12)
- The Water Hole by Graeme Base (5-8)
- Leaf Trouble by Jonathan Emmett (2-6)

*Note: You can find these items linked to Forest School For All's Amazon Affiliate Account on the webpage: <http://forestschoolorall.com/autumn-forest-discoverers-supplies-books/>. By purchasing items via these links, you further support FSFA and our mission. Thanks!