

Cozy Light, Cozy Night
By Elisa Kleven
Questions and Activities

Richly illustrated, Kleven's latest picture book feast presents a year of everyday wonders, giving children an opportunity to snuggle up with a parent and enter into a warm, cozy world, where even the planets are tucked cozily into bed along with the shining stars.

Questions:

- ❖ What do you like about autumn?
- ❖ Is it cold or rainy where you live?
- ❖ Do the trees change colors where you live?
- ❖ Do you have a favorite food that you like to eat during autumn months?
- ❖ Does it snow where you live?
- ❖ Do you like the snow? Why or why not?
- ❖ What winter holiday do you enjoy?
- ❖ Are there any family traditions that you look forward to during the winter?
- ❖ What holiday do you look forward to in the spring?
- ❖ Have you ever decorated eggs? If so, what is your favorite way to decorate them?
- ❖ What is your favorite season?
- ❖ What types of things do you like to do in the summer?

Activities:

(Instructions for the activities are below.)

- Make a picture with the fall leaves that you collect.
- Make a cozy blanket.
- Decorate eggs.
- Make seed bombs and plant some wildflowers.



Sensory Autumn Art Project

Doesn't the fall just make you want to go out and play with all the beautiful fall leaves? It brings out memories, real or imagined, of running and joyfully jumping into a pile of leaves. This art project gives you a reason to play with leaves.

Target Skills:

- Sensory processing (tactile defensiveness and proprioception)
- Fine Motor
- Science Facts

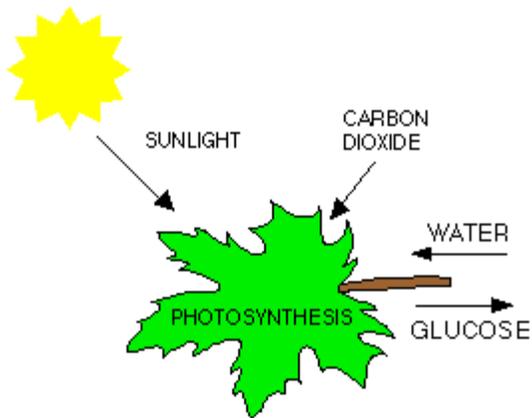
Materials:

- Bag
- Paper
- Glue

Instructions:

- Go for a walk and collect leaves in a bag.
- Talk about why leaves change color in the fall. The explanation follows.
- Jump on the bag and crush all the leaves. (This is really fun.)
- Mix crushed leaves with glue.
- Cut out or draw an outline of a leaf.
- Use hands or paintbrush to place the crushed leaves on the leaf template or outline.
- Use other objects, like sticks or moss that you have collected to add details.
- Tell a story about your picture.

Here is an explanation about fall leaves from <http://www.sciencemadesimple.com/leaves.html>



Leaves are nature's food factories. Plants take water from the ground through their roots. They take a gas called carbon dioxide from the air. Plants use sunlight to turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and glucose. Oxygen is a gas in the air that we need to breathe. Glucose is a kind of sugar. Plants use glucose as food for energy and as a building block for growing. The way plants turn water and carbon dioxide into oxygen and sugar is called photosynthesis. That means "putting together with light." A chemical called chlorophyll helps make photosynthesis happen. Chlorophyll is what gives plants their green color.

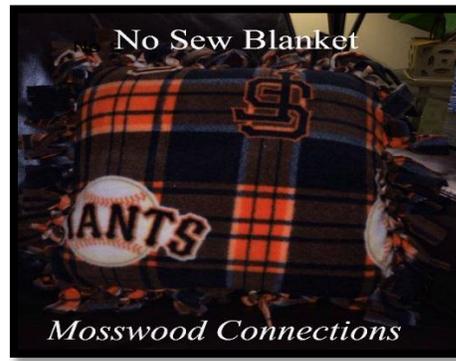
As summer ends and autumn comes, the days get shorter and shorter. This is how the trees "know" to begin getting ready for winter.

During winter, there is not enough light or water for photosynthesis. The trees will rest, and live off the food they stored during the summer. They begin to shut down their food-making factories. The green chlorophyll disappears from the leaves. As the bright green fades away, we begin to see yellow and orange colors. Small amounts of these colors have been in the leaves all along. We just can't see them in the summer, because they are covered up by the green chlorophyll.



The bright reds and purples we see in leaves are made mostly in the fall. In some trees, like maples, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn cause the leaves turn this glucose into a red color. The brown color of trees like oaks is made from wastes left in the leaves.

It is the combination of all these things that make the beautiful fall foliage colors we enjoy each year.



No Sew Blanket

This activity has become a classic. It is great for fine motor and knot tying skills but you can build in many lessons. I have seen it used in Special Day Classes to make blankets for the children's hospital. In the past, I used this activity with a child who had experienced a traumatic event. As we tied the knots we talked about what had happened. Then we tied in a few comfort items and the blanket helped him sleep through the night. This year a special pillow was made as a gift for a sports lover turning the project into a lesson on perspective taking and gift giving.

These instructions can be found on Wiki-How



1) Select your **fleece blankets.** Use two different fleece patterns or two solid fleece blankets that complement each other. Alternately, use a pattern on one side and a solid color on the other. Try different combinations. Some patterns that don't seem they would go together actually complement each other quite well. You never know what will look good until you try it out in person.

2) Purchase anywhere from 1.5 to 3 yards (1.3-2.7 meters) of each fleece. 1.5 yards makes a decent size throw, 2.5-3 yards makes a nice twin size blanket.



3) Spread out the material. Spread it out so that the softer or more brightly colored sides face out, matching both up at one end and the sides as far as they lay flat. Trim if needed.



- Consider the area you have available to spread out your material. If you don't have room to spread out the whole material or you can't physically crawl around on the floor, you can adapt by using a kitchen table or available floor room to cut and tie your fleece.

4) Consider how you will measure the cuts to make the ties. They don't have to be exact. When cutting

against the nap (usually the narrower end) the strips need to be a little longer (about 4-5 inches/11-14 cm) than along the long sides, (about 2.5-3 inches/7-9 cm) because they don't stretch as much while tying.



5) Cut out a rectangle from both corners with a pair of scissors (see tips). Make sure you are cutting through both pieces of fleece. Use something rectangular in shape to measure. If you have trouble seeing the graduations on a ruler, a card cut

to the right measurements (for instance 3"x5"/9x14 cm) is easier to use to make corner cuts even and strips uniform in length. Use the long edge of the card for the longer strips and the short edge for the shorter ones.



6) Start cutting strips. Cut strips of approximately 1 inch from each corner down the end and the sides for as long as the material lies flat. These strips don't have to be exactly uniform, but they should be approximately the same size. Small irregularities will not be noticeable in the finished product. An easy way to measure is by using your thumb. If your fingers are



7) Tie the corner strips together. Using a simple knot, attach the bottom layer to the top layer.

8) Tighten the knot. If you have trouble getting the knot tight due to arthritic or weak fingers, hold the end of one tail of the knotted pair with one hand and slide the fingers of the other hand up to push the knot tighter.



9) Tie the strips at the end between the two corners next in the same way. Don't worry if the fleece puckers.

10) Flatten the fleece out. Use flat hands to stretch and smooth the material so it lies flat again.

11) Tie the strips down each side for the length of the blanket. Flatten as needed.

12) Fold the tied portion up. Move the fleece down so that more of the material lies flat (trimming if needed) and repeat steps #6 through #8 until about 2/3 of the blanket is tied.

13) Turn the blanket around. Spread the blanket out so that the remaining end is flat.

14) Trim end and sides as needed. Repeat from step #5 until blanket is finished.

- a. Notice how all those little imperfections seem to magically blend into the pattern.
- b. Fold blanket, place into gift bag and tie handles together with ribbon.
- c. Give it someone who will appreciate it, or give it to yourself and make good use of it.

Decorate Eggs Using Silk Ties:

You need **100% silk** for this to work.

I try to find an assortment of colors and patterns. Usually dark blues, purples, and reds work the best, but it's fun to experiment with all kinds of things. The interesting thing is that you never know how much of the color and pattern will transfer to the eggs.



The first step is to deconstruct the tie. Snip the seams and remove the lining so you are just left with the silk.



Next you cut a piece large enough to cover an egg. Wrap the egg with the **right side** of the fabric making contact with the egg. The right side is the printed side, or the side that would be on the outside of the tie. You want to try to wrap the fabric as tight as you can without breaking the egg of course. The more direct contact the silk has with the egg shell the clearer the imprint of the pattern. Where there are folds in the fabric you'll get kind of a swirly water color effect. I love those parts- it adds to the charm. Once wrapped, tie with a piece of string or a twisty tie. (Do yourself a favor and go with the twisty tie!) Now, notice how I tied the eggs in the above photo- with the tie on the top of the long side of the egg. If you do this, the opposite end of the egg will have the best pattern. If you are going to be sitting the eggs upright in an egg cup, this is the best way to wrap them.



However, if you want the best part of the design on the wide *side* of the egg, you'll want to wrap them horizontally. Just wrap them as smoothly and tightly as you can for the best transfer.



After the eggs are wrapped in silk, you're going to wrap them again with a light colored light weight piece of fabric. An old pillowcase, sheet, or thin dish cloth is perfect. If you go to the thrift store to get ties, you may

want to grab a pillowcase too.

Put all those little guys in a pot and cover them with water. Add 1/4 C vinegar and bring it to a boil. After about 20 minutes you can remove the eggs and set them in a colander or on a towel to dry and cool. Once they're cool enough to handle you can remove the fabric. If you want to add a little shine, just put a little vegetable oil on a paper down and give them a light rub.



Wildflower Seed Bombs

Targeted Skills:

- ❖ Learning about plant life
- ❖ Sensory Integration
- ❖ Literature Connection
- ❖ Fundraising or gift giving
- ❖

Materials:

Clay-Based Seed Bombs:

- ❖ 1 part native wildflower seeds (you can substitute other seeds.)
- ❖ 3 parts organic compost
- ❖ 5 parts clay (You can buy the clay from an art supply store or use your own soil if it has some clay.)
- ❖ 1-2 parts water
- ❖ Large Bucket to mix everything in
- ❖ Tray for drying seed bombs

Paper-Based Seed Bombs:

- ❖ A tall stack of recycled paper
- ❖ 1 cup of native seeds
- ❖ Cookie cutters
- ❖ Drying tray
- ❖ Large bucket or container
- ❖ Blender

Instructions:

Clay-Based Seed Bombs:

Combine seeds and compost thoroughly by hand. Add in clay and mix again. Slowly add water and continue mixing by hand until well-blended. You will know when you reach the right consistency when the mixture holds together in a ball without falling apart. Mold mixture into balls about the size of a jawbreaker. Allow the balls to dry on a flat surface in the sun or in a dry place. If the balls are too moist, the seeds will sprout.

Paper-Based Seed Bombs:

Shred paper and soak in water for 10 minutes.

Put paper in blender or food processor to make pulp. You will need to add a lot of water to get it to blend. Once it resembles oatmeal you are ready to remove it from the blender and pour it into a cheese cloth where you will squeeze out as much of the water as possible. If you would like to skip the blender then soak the water for a day or two. You need your pulp to be as liquid free as possible so that the seeds don't sprout right away.

In a large bowl combine the paper pulp with the seeds until the seeds are well distributed.

Press the pulp into a cookie cutter shape. It won't work to try to cut them out. You have to press the pulp in and then gently push out. If this process is too difficult for the kids then you can simply roll them into balls.

Allow to dry. You can place them in front of a small portable heater to speed up the process. Remember, if the seed bombs are too moist, the seeds will sprout.

There are many ways to add color. My preferred method is to add colored tissue paper but you can also use food coloring.