



Northern Ireland Forest School Association

NIFSA Lesson Plan – Leaf Families

17 November 2025

Planning	
Location	Secret Garden
Date	17/11/25
Class	Preschoolers - Kilmoor
Classroom Management	Whole class introduction at welcome time, then split group work with additional adults which will be spread around the outdoor classroom area.
Connected Learning/Prior Knowledge	Forest school rules and how we operate a session. Show boundary signs and what they mean. Revise the whistle rules. Discuss what we will find in the Secret Garden? What natural resources are there? Signs of autumn? Remind children of Makaton signs for the colours of leaves- red, yellow, brown, green, orange. Sign for autumn, leaf and hedgehog. 5 Little Leaves rhyme.
Health and Safety	Risk Assessment carried out & Daily Checks before session and then final check on arrival. Clothing/footwear, depending on weather. Taking care when collecting natural resources ie nettles. Wash hands thoroughly after session.
Learning Intention	Children can find autumnal natural resources such as conkers/leaves/stones/sticks/pine cones.
Success Criteria	The children will follow instructions and keep within the boundary signs. Children will be able to collect natural materials to create transient art pieces to represent people, also leaves to make their leaf families (choosing different shapes and sizes for family members). The children will enjoy experimenting with natural resources and how each resource can represent a different body part.
Resources	Need Whistle, rucksack, boundary flags. Tuff tray set up with paper, trays, eye stickers, googly eyes, glue. Pen, wipes. ***Black rucksack with allergy equipment & mobile phone when identified child is out**
Differentiation/Target Groups	All inclusive – activities will be adapted to allow accessibility by all. Children will partner up with others to discuss and look for different

	resources. 1 of the children will have 1:1 adult - divide groups equally so all groups have assistance of an adult. Smaller groups to help learn the rules as they are a new cohort of children.
Other	All the children split into colour groups to make it easier to keep them in different groups.

Lesson Content	
On Arrival	Children will have the rules of Forest School explained indoors. They will be repeated again outside. One whistle – freeze like a tree; two whistles come back to me. The boundary flags will be placed and what they mean. 1. Explain what will happen during the session. 2. Break into two groups (1 adult per group) 3. Find resources – show visual examples 4. Return to use them to create leaf families and people
Activity explained	1. Children will go in groups/pairs to find items shown in the environment that they wish to use. They will be shown what examples of what they are looking for and bring it back to one area. 2. Important to only use natural things loose on the ground already.
Finishing	Bring children together to talk about what they found. Who was in their family, how they made different people using natural resources. Remember the importance of clearing up and leave no trace.

Evaluation/Review	
How did the group session go?	Children worked well in the two small groups, having an adult with each helped to support the children who needed it, but an extra adult would have been of benefit for several who found following instructions challenging. The children continue to respond to the whistle approach as we have used this from the very beginning of the year for all outdoor activities. In fact, they responded to the whistle almost immediately. The second session was more enjoyable due to repeating the activities and knowing what worked better from the first group of children. During the second session we chose to use only stickers for eyes as the googly eyes did not stick very well. Instead of glue sticks we will also use PVA glue and perhaps cardstock as the moisture in the air made the paper damp and fragile
Focus on individual pupils	Several children find listening to instruction challenging so I had to make sure they understood what the boundary signs meant and keep reminding them. We added more boundary signs than usual for one

	specific child to help them understand that they couldn't pass the sign. The extra signs reinforced the visual and worked better.
What would you change for next time?	Some resources such as cardstock, pva glue and just eye stickers. On reflection smaller groups at the start of the year to really be able to concentrate on the rules rather than the activity and ensure we are 100% repeating these throughout the session to consolidate the children's understanding. This is especially important when only two members of staff are doing Forest School.

