

How to use
Autumn leaves
in ELSA SESSIONS



How can you use Autumn leaves in ELSA sessions? A huge thank you to those that participated and gave their ideas. More minds are always better than one! If you want to join our [ELSA group](#) on Facebook then please do!

- Make leaf people using different shapes of leaves
- A getting to know you craft session. There are so many crafts you can do with autumn leaves from spiky hedgehogs to angry lions.
- Looking at the veins in the leaf. 1 leaf/person lots of friends, achievements, family etc all branching off from that one person/leaf.
- Make a green to red anger scale. Choose leaves with varying colours. End with a brown crunchy leaf that indicates that no one feels good.
- Make a leaf mandala, creating circles of autumn leaves.
- Cut star shapes out of leaves to make wishing wands.
- Make autumn leaf bunting to decorate your area.
- Get the children to use a big leaf template and label it a new leaf. They then write 5 things they want to achieve in the new coming year. Brilliant for Year 6. They can then colour / decorate it. Great thing to look back on in the summer term to see if they did achieve them or not.
- Discuss how trees change & grow. Life is full of changes, where one leaf drops off another will grow. New opportunity. "This too shall pass".
- Make a leaf animal, one to represent how they are feeling right now.
- Use words to describe how the leaves look, how they feel, how they smell and how they sound. – use senses.
- Mindfulness through counting – count a pile of leaves, sort the pile of leaves by colour, shape, size.
- Go for a crunchy autumn leaf walk if you have woodland nearby and link this to mindfulness. What can you hear? What can you see? What can you feel? What can you smell?
- Draw different shaped leaves by copying the real thing. Decorate using zentangle.
- Use as a transition tool. Discuss how things change.
- Make a family tree by choosing different leaves to represent different family members. Why have they chosen that leaf for that person?
- Get a range of leaves and order them from smallest to biggest. Talk about scaling emotions. The smallest leaf is the smallest feeling and the biggest leaf is the biggest feeling.
- Tearing up paper is therapeutic. Get some paper in the right colours and an outline of a leaf. Fill the leaf with colour.
- Get some stick-on googly eyes and make leaf people out of different shaped leaves. Use a black sharpie to draw facial features
- Make an autumn sensory bin with different leaves, acorns, pinecones or whatever else you can find.

- Go for a walk and ask the pupils to collect their favourites. Give each child a laminating pouch to place their leaves. Laminate and use as a lunchtime mat or a sun catcher.
- Leaf rubbings – sensory, therapeutic activity.
- Make an autumn leaf wreath for a child suffering a bereavement by using a paper plate. Write the person's name in the centre and stick leaves around the edge.
- Use a large leaf and hold in front of the child. Get them to practise breathing.
- If you have spinning jennies, then have fun throwing them up in the air and watching them spin downwards. Warm up activity or mindfulness.
- Make a dream catcher using autumn leaves instead of feathers.
- With a big pile (and outside) jump in them, kick them about, throw up into air... to release tension, angst etc.
- Raking up leaves to show how feelings can build then jumping on them all?
- Leaf lanterns or leaf sun catchers for mindfulness.
- Get several different coloured leaves and create a mindfulness rainbow.
- Each part could be a family member or friend and you could look at how you're all coming from the same place but make different prints on the world.
- Use hole punches crinkle edged scissors, or shape hole punches and make confetti, or environmentally friendly 'glitter'. Lots of chatting can be involved whilst the child is busy doing? Get to know you activity, thread the leaves into string, 'who are you making it for, tell me about them'.
- Similar to the laminating ideas – use a piece of card and cut it into the shape of a window frame. Stick the leaves to the edges of the frame, leaving no holes, hold it up to the window and it's like a beautiful stained-glass window effect, especially if you can get reds, yellows, oranges and greens in it.
- Use them to show children that by adding something (rubbing in hand cream, oil, Vaseline etc) to something that is crispy, dry, sad looking and fallen down can help make it feel a lot better and soft and shiny. In other words when you feel down and done then there is always something that will make you feel better you just have to find out what that something is. They try rubbing in a few things until they find the one that they think works the best.

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