

REYNOLDA

DISCOVERY LESSON (AGE 3-5)

Autumns



Jasper Francis Cropsey, *Mounts Adam and Eve*, 1872. Oil on canvas. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Gift of Barbara B. Millhouse, 1970.2.1

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WHAT YOU NEED

- **Discovery Lesson:** Jasper Francis Cropsey's *Mounts Adam and Eve* on this card or on your computer screen. To zoom in and learn more about the artwork, visit reynoldahouse.org/collections/object/mounts-adam-and-eve.
- **Literature Connection:** Non-Fiction video [Autumn is Here!](#)
Optional library books: *We're Going on a Leaf Hunt* by Steve Metzger, or "The Surprise" from *Frog and Toad All Year* by Arnold Lobel, or other autumnally-themed stories or poems
- **Hands-on Activity (choose one or more):** **Tree sculpture:** paper bag; glue stick or glue sponge; masking or packing tape; red, orange and yellow paper **Leaf rubbing:** plain paper; a crayon with label removed; leaves collected from outside; tape **Leaf book:** plastic bags that zip; stapler or tape; markers and paper strips; collected leaves

DISCOVERY ACTIVITY

Introduce these two keywords to the child (or see what he or she knows about the word first):

Autumn/Fall - Autumn (sometimes called fall) is one of the four seasons of the year and is the time of year that transitions summer into winter. Along with the tree leaves changing color, the temperature grows colder, plants stop making food, animals prepare for the long months ahead, and the daylight starts growing shorter.

Explore study.com/academy/lesson/autumn-facts-lesson-for-kids for more videos with information.

Next, look together at the painting *Mounts Adam and Eve*, painted by Jasper Francis Cropsey in 1872. Present the painting *Mounts Adam and Eve* and introduce the key words.

Start by inviting the child to name all the things he or she sees in the painting. To promote careful looking, and to draw connections, prompt discussion with questions like these:

- Ask "What is going on in this picture?" Here, you might focus on the colors of fall and relate it to the colors of fall they can see around them.

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- Ask “What story do you think the artist is telling us about the change of season?”
- Ask “Who are the people and what are they each doing? How big or small are they in comparison with other things in the picture?”
- Follow with questions like: How does this painting make you feel? Why? What do you think the artist thinks is most important in this painting? Why do you think so?

As appropriate, share information about the painter Jasper Francis Cropsey, found on Reynolda’s website and in the box below.

Jasper Francis Cropsey

- Cropsey was born on Staten Island, New York, and grew up on his father’s farm.
- Because he had poor health as a kid, he did not receive much formal education. He trained as an architect and in the process, learned how to make watercolor sketches and eventually started painting as a hobby.
- When Cropsey first showed paintings with leaves colored like those in Mounts Adam and Eve, people there thought he must have chosen the wrong paints to paint the trees. They thought the fall colors he chose were unrealistic. Do they seem like colors you have seen on trees?
- The English critics had never seen colors quite like that, because the trees where they are do not change to the same kinds of vibrant colors that they do in parts of North America. When Cropsey shared some real leaves, he convinced his viewers that he was accurately choosing paints to make this and other scenes.
- In the painting, Mt. Adam is the smaller peak on the left and Mt. Eve the larger on the right. These neighboring peaks are in Warwick, NY

LITERATURE CONNECTION

Watch [Autumn is Here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fc9J7oLB-jU) ([youtube.com/watch?v=fc9J7oLB-jU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fc9J7oLB-jU)) by Scholastic Books.

While listening, pause and ask questions to extend on thoughts that are being cultivated. As the video progresses, point out how the seasons change and how we can see some of these changes now all around us. Draw attention to the changing tree colors, the cooler mornings where a sweater might be needed or how it is getting darker earlier.

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After reading, compare and contrast by re-visiting both images in the text and landscape painting. How are *Autumn is Here* and *Mounts Adam and Eve* similar? Prompt the child if needed to help encourage them to make connections between the two by considering these questions:

- What season is it in the painting? How can we tell?
- What color leaves do you see? Ask about specific colors if needed (e.g. “Point to some red leaves.”)

Autumn is Here is non-fiction; it tells us information and facts about fall. You might also want to explore some stories that bring certain experiences of fall to life! Borrow or find books and poems like...

- *We’re Going on a Leaf Hunt* by Steve Metzger
- *Fletcher and the Falling Leaves* by Julia Rawlinson
- “The Surprise” from *Frog and Toad All Year* by Arnold Lobel
- *Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf or Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert
- *Leaves* by David Ezra Stein (also available online [youtube.com/watch?v=n5Ow-WJH9QE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n5Ow-WJH9QE))

Or, enjoy the sounds of poetry and read Robert Frost’s “October,” [poets.org/poem/october](https://www.poets.org/poem/october) or “Fall” by Edward Hirsch, [poets.org/poem/fall](https://www.poets.org/poem/fall). Then, after reading a story or poem, look back at the painting and see if there are any connections you can make.

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: A COLORFUL FALL TREE

Re-create a fall scene you see in the painting and/or outdoors using a brown bag, paper scraps and a glue stick.

1. Place a flattened paper bag in front of you with the open end away from you.
2. Tear 4 or 5 vertical strips from the top of the bag to half way down the bag.
3. Open up the bag.
4. Next squeeze the bag in the middle then twist it.

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5. Suggestion: Tape the base of the tree down on a flat surface (floor or table). Then, start to twist each strip of paper bag to create the “tree branches.” Note: This is a way to build fine motor strength in young children’s hands. Assist as needed, as the child forms the shape of their tree.
6. Next, have the child tear up strips of colorful paper or use leaves from outside.
7. Then, encourage the child to use a glue stick to attach the “leaves” to the tree branches. Note: instead of a glue stick, you can also use a glue sponge to simply tap the paper onto and then affix it to the tree. Here’s a tutorial for making a glue sponge: [housingaforest.com/ how-to-make-a-glue-sponge/](https://housingaforest.com/how-to-make-a-glue-sponge/)

HANDS-ON ACTIVITY: LEAF RUBBINGS

- Collect fallen leaves of different shapes.
- Tape them to a smooth surface to help young children better be able to trace a leaf.
- Remove the paper wrapper from the crayon(s) you will use.
- Place your paper on top of the leaves.
- Show the child how to hold the crayon flat against the paper to make full contact with the parts of the leaf that push up to the paper. Rub across the paper, on top of the leaf. You may need to angle the crayon slightly to get some details. Help the child as needed, but encourage them to try out different methods to get the result he or she likes. You might want to start with a light color like yellow then add in an orange or red to add depth to the leaf color. ◇ Show and talk about the veins and stem (called a petiole) of the leaf.