

Fall Projects

1. Leaf Mandalas / Nature Collages

(view samples on Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/marlenesnest/leaf-mandalas/>)

- **Materials:** leaves (various sizes, colors), twigs, acorns, seed pods, glue, posterboard or watercolor paper
- **How to do it:** Collect natural bits on a walk. Back home, arrange them in circular or symmetrical patterns, or free-form collages. Optionally outline or paint around them.
- **Age tweaks:**
 - Ages 2–5: Place or glue large leaves; you do finer bits
 - Ages 6–9: Draw around shapes, create stories for items you use
 - Ages 10–12: Sketch, annotate, or press/laminate for preservation

2. Salt-Dough Leaf Bowls / Ornaments

(view recipe and images at: <https://meaningfulmama.com/salt-dough-leaf-bowls.html>)

- **Materials:** flour, salt, water, leaves, acrylics or paint, sealant
- **How to do it:** Mix dough, flatten, press leaves to leave texture, shape into shallow bowl form or cut out leaf shapes. Dry (air or bake gently). Paint and seal. Hang or display.
- **Age tweaks:** Let older kids add relief patterns, carve names or designs.

3. Acorn / Seed-Pod Garland / Mobile

(view instructions & images at: <https://sustainmycrafthabit.com/how-to-make-an-acorn-garland/>)

- **Materials:** acorns, pinecones, seed pods, small wooden beads, wire or thin dowels, twine, drill or wire wrap
- **How to do it:** Drill small holes or wrap wire through natural items. String onto twine or wire to build hanging mobiles, garlands, or wind chimes.
- **Age tweaks:** Younger kids help pick items or thread; older kids design balance, spacing, symmetry.

4. “Story Leaves” Collaborative Tale

(find free downloadable leaf cutout templates here: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/leaf.html>)

- **Materials:** paper leaf cutouts, pens/markers
- **How to do it:** On each paper leaf, write a prompt (e.g. “A leaf fell from a tall tree,” “Magic lives at the tip,” “What happens when the wind flips me?”). Take turns drawing one and adding a sentence to a shared story. Continue until you weave a narrative.
- This can become a monthly ritual or foundation of a homemade seasonal book.

5. Pumpkin / Gourd Decoration (Paint, Decoupage, Carving)

(ideas from Pinterest: <https://www.pinterest.com/mbgourds/crafting-ideas-for-gourds-and-pumpkins/>)

- **Materials:** pumpkins or gourds, paint, glue, decorative bits, safe carving tools (for older kids), LED lights
- **How to do it:** For younger kids, let them paint or glue bits; reserve carving for older children. Create faces, patterns, sculptural forms, or light-inside “lanterns.”
- A fun twist: co-design a surprise interior scene (tiny figures, plants, or fairy lights).