



# LEAF Open Farm Sunday Activities



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# LEAF Open Farm Sunday Activities



## Introduction

Hundreds of farms all over the country will open their gates for **LEAF Open Farm Sunday**. As the farming industry's annual open day, it offers a fantastic chance for people to discover real farming at first hand and see for themselves how their food (and much more besides) is produced.

A successful Open Farm Sunday visit may well welcome families with children. To this end, we all know it is important to keep children engaged and interested. Inevitably, there will be lots to see on the farm—maybe animals of various sorts, big machinery, crops to identify. But alongside the fascinating facts and lovely landscapes, farmers can provide some memorable hands-on activities for younger visitors. The ones in this booklet are most suitable for children of primary school age.

This booklet provides a compilation of resources, many of which have been taken from activity booklets which were originally written to accompany school visits to farms. The ideas presented are those more suitable for families and require no knowledge of the school curriculum!

Some planning and preparation will be required in advance and certain activities do need some adult supervision. Just make sure that your volunteers are given a run through of an activity before the visitors arrive so they feel confident to make sure the youngsters have fun whilst learning something about the farm.

No volunteer should be left in sole charge of a child or children so make sure parents and carers realise you are not offering a babysitting service!

If you wish to do so you can ask for small donations to cover the cost of the materials used.



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## Guess the veg

**Aim:** To help children become more aware of a range of vegetables. To increase sensory skills. To improve vocabulary and communication skills.

**What you need:** A selection of vegetables (if you grow vegetables on the farm, make sure you use your own produce).

A number of bags (textile bags are the best if available).

**What to do:** If you have enough children at any one time, they can work in pairs or small groups. Each child is given a bag containing a vegetable but they must NOT look inside! Ask the child to describe what they can feel. Is it knobbly? Smooth? Fat? Thin? Other children take turns to guess the vegetable in the bag. Make sure the adult knows the answer!

Let the children take turns with different vegetables.







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## Woodland words

**Aim:** To encourage closer observation of wildlife in a woodland or other small area on the farm.

**What you need:** Letters on cards which ultimately spell out a relevant word e.g. dragonfly, badger, hedgerow

**What to do:** Cards or boards bearing the letters that make up your chosen word are placed at points of particular interest in your woodland or specific area. For example, the letter O can be placed beneath an oak tree and the letter H next to a holly bush.

If the item you wish to highlight is not evident (e.g. badger) you can use an artefact in its place (e.g. a toy badger). Adults may need to help identify the features that the letters sit next to.

Working as a small group, children collect all the letters.

Once all the letters are collected, the children try to identify the new word.



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## Making bird feeders

**Aim:** To help children create bird feeders which can be placed at points on the farm. To help children learn about the importance of birds on the farm.

**What you need:** A selection of pine cones

Bird seed

String

Lard or vegetable fat

This is a messy activity; you will need warm water, soap and paper towels to wash hands.

**What to do:** This is a simple and messy activity. Children will need varying levels of assistance depending on their age and dexterity.

Tie a piece of string to each pine cone to make a hanging loop.

Children push the lard or vegetable fat into the pine cone.

Press bird seed into the fat. The lard and seeds can be ready mixed to make the process even easier.

Check for children with wheat allergies!





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## Hedgerow Birds Game

**Aim:** To understand the importance of feeding birds. To learn about the concepts of camouflage, food chains, predator prey relationships.

**What you need:** Some pipe cleaners to be worms/caterpillars ( some bright colours, others browns and greens.)  
A nearby hedge.

**What to do:** Wait until you have enough children to split into two teams and stand them by the hedge. Explain that they are little birds that live in the hedgerow. Scatter the “caterpillars” about 10m from the hedge, making sure they are well spread out.

The teams then have a relay race: one child runs out, grabs a caterpillar and runs back; the next team member goes and so on, until one team wins. You should find that the brightly coloured caterpillars have been “eaten” more than the camouflaged ones.

Replace the caterpillars and run the race again, this time with a child (or adult) representing a sparrowhawk. The hawk’s aim is to catch the sparrows as they fly out of the hedge. When a child is tagged by the sparrowhawk, they drop out of the game and their next team member goes.

Caterpillars could be hidden in the hedge to change the game.



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## Plant a shoe

**Aim:** To learn what plants need to grow.

**What you need:** In advance of Open Farm Sunday, make a collection of old or worn out shoes. You are going to use the footwear instead of plant pots.

An adult should punch some holes in the sole for drainage.

Gravel

Compost

Selection of small plants, bulbs or herbs

Trowels

Disposable gloves

**What to do:** Provide some gravel for children to put in the shoe for drainage and then fill with compost. Disposable gloves can be made available for children who are not keen to get their hands dirty.

Small plants, bulbs and herbs can be added to the compost and then watered. Children may like to take their planted shoes home or they can be displayed on the farm.







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## Farm walk treasures

**Aim:** To collect a variety of “treasures” to remind children of their farm walk.

**What you need:** A collection of egg boxes

**What to do:** Children love collecting things. This activity combines the attraction of a treasure hunt with an incentive to use descriptive words. The only materials you need to supply are empty egg boxes.

On their walk children find six objects to store in the egg box. Talk to the children in advance about health and safety and the kinds of things they should be looking for or avoiding. Do not encourage them to pick flowers but to look for items on the ground such as leaves, pebbles and feathers. Accompanying adults should encourage children to talk about their treasured items. What words can they find to describe the treasures?





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## Looking at the past

Aim: To understand that places change over time.

What you need: An old building on the farm. If you intend people going inside the building, make sure it is safe to do so.

Drawing materials (paper, crayons and clipboards or tables).

What to do: Make sure someone knowledgeable is available but they need to prompt the children with questions rather than talking at them

Examples of questions might be:

What is the building used for today?

Has it always been used for this purpose?

What was it used for in the past?

Who might have used it in the past?

What is it made from?

Is there anything unusual about it?

Some children might like to make a drawing of the building.



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## More ideas!

Children's activities at shows and events

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1194>

Environmental Arts

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1181>

Trails on the farm

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1178>

Wet weather activities

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1168>

Wildlife spotting sheets

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/view?id=705>

Leaf iDial

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/naturedetectives/activities/leaf-idial/>

Make a model milking cow

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1177>

Breakfast food images (print off for children to match the pictures and the products)

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/1165>

3D Model Farm Animals

<http://www.countrysideclassroom.org.uk/resources/658>