Greetings kids, parents, grandparents, guardians, friends and neighbors!

Welcome to issue 6 of the Minis at Home newsletter. Each newsletter features a special theme and offers pertinent information, a craft, and recommended reading. Grownups: please work on projects together with your children. Your participation is important! We will offer hints and tips for ways to create art as a twosome or a family.

This week’s theme = SCARECROWS

It's that time of year when we might see scarecrows sitting or standing around our neighborhoods. Why do some people put scarecrows around their homes and yards? Are scarecrows all about Halloween and being spooky? Well, yes, but farmers and home gardeners put up scarecrows for another reason as well: In summer and fall, many crops, such as corn and beans, are ripe and ready to be picked. Birds and animals love fresh veggies just as much as we do! So during harvest time, some people use scarecrows to scare away birds and animals that would like to have a nibble or two.
A scarecrows is usually made out of sticks and old clothes: Sticks for the body and arms, and old clothes stuffed with hay to make arms, legs and a head with eyes, nose and mouth. A big hat makes it look even more menacing. Since many animals and birds are scared of humans, the scarecrow not only looks like a person…it smells like a person because of the real clothes it wears!

Scarecrows have become a big part of our fall celebrations, not only because they can scare birds and animals away from our farms and gardens, but because they are great decorations...and lots of fun to make!

Take a walk around downtown Easton, and you'll see some pretty fabulous scarecrows. Perhaps you and your family can make one by finding some big sticks, recycling some old clothes (the more worn, the better) and having fun creating a silly-scary face.

Craft: MAKE A SCARECROW FACE

Get as silly or as scary as you want with this fun craft.

Using a paper bag will allow your scarecrow head to sit on a table or counter.

Paper bag scarecrow heads make a great centerpiece for a Halloween or Thanksgiving table as well.

Materials:

Paper lunch bag

Large googly eyes, buttons, bottle caps or construction paper circles

Assorted construction paper colors for the nose, cheeks, mouth, hat, and straw “hair"

(Notes: You can use a marker to draw the mouth or raffia for the hair if you prefer)

Glue stick for gluing paper

Aleene’s Tacky Glue or glue dots for gluing heavier items

Newspaper to stuff your paper bag and protect your work area

Stapler or tape
Procedure:

- Cover your workspace with newspaper
- Cut 2 circles for cheeks (about an inch in diameter)
- Cut 1 triangle for the nose
- Cut out the mouth (or draw it with marker)
- Glue down all of the features, using a glue stick for paper items and tacky glue or glue dots for heavier items
- Cut a large triangle (at least 4 inches tall and wide) for a hat, as well as a long, rectangle for the hat's brim.
- Stuff your paper bag with newspaper—but not too full.....you want your bag to be able to stand up
- Fold over the opening of the bag (about an inch wide) and tape or staple it shut.
- Cut strips of construction paper, at least 4 inches long, for hair (this is great for scissor practice!) and glue onto the folded opening of the bag at the top of the scarecrow's head.
- Glue the hat on the very top of the folded side, making sure you don't cover up all the hair.

OPTIONS: If you don't have a lunch bag, you can always use a paper plate for the scarecrow's face. Just color or paint the paper plate a tan color or use tan tissue paper squares to glue all over the plate.

* IDEA * Could you make a life-sized scarecrow out of your clothing and perhaps a pumpkin for its head?
**Activity: CHANTING AND MOVING**

Scarecrow, scarecrow, turn around

**Scarecrow, scarecrow, touch the ground** (bend over and brush your fingertips on the floor.)

**Scarecrow, scarecrow, reach up high** (arms way up in the air)

**Scarecrow, scarecrow, touch the sky** (wiggle your fingers as you try to reach even higher. You can stand on your tiptoes if you like)

**Scarecrow, scarecrow, bend down low** (bend over, as before)

**Scarecrow, scarecrow, touch your toes** (Grownups: can you do this as easily as your kids?)

(Adapted from Teaching Mama)

Now do this 100 more times. Only kidding!

**Activity: SINGING**

*I'm a Little Scarecrow*  
(sung to *I'm a Little Teapot*)

I'm a little scarecrow, stuffed with hay  
Here I stand in a field all day  
When I see the crows, I like to shout "Hey you crows you'd better get out!"

(from Kiboomers 2016)

Can you come up with your own scarecrow song to this tune? How about to another tune? I’m thinking of starting with

Scarecrow, scarecrow stand up straight…

to the tune of Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star
Activity: FINGERPLAY

5 Little Scarecrows all stuffed with hay (Hold your palm out, fingers up and wiggle)

Stood in the field on a sunny fall day! (Hold all fingers motionless)

The 1st one said, “It’s a beautiful autumn morn!” (Wiggle your thumb)

The 2nd one said, “We’re here to protect the corn!” (Wiggle your index finger)

The 3rd one said, “I’ll shoo the crows today!” (Wiggle your middle finger)

The 4th one said, “Let’s work hard and then we’ll PLAY!” (Wiggle your ring finger)

The 5th one said, “The crows are flying away! (Wiggle your pinky)

Then the 5 Little Scarecrows took a break to RUN and PLAY – (Wiggle all of your fingers vigorously)

The crows didn’t DARE snack on field corn that day! (Make an exaggerated scarecrow smile face and keep wiggling your fingers!)

(Adapted from The Preschool Toolbox)

Activity: ARMCHAIR TRAVELER

There is a small village known as Nagoro Scarecrow Village in Japan that only has about 35 people but over 350 scarecrows in the fields around it! (Would you like to visit there?)


The woman who makes the scarecrows is named Ayano Tsukimi, and there is a short movie about her that shows lots of them. Ask your grownup to watch it with you: https://vimeo.com/92453765.

Photo Credits:
Left: Maryam Mohry
Right: Fritz Schumann
Scarecrow Fun Facts

Did you know that people have been making and using scarecrows to keep their crops safe from animals for 3000 years? The Ancient Egyptians used them to protect their wheat fields along the Nile River.

The Ancient Greeks would carve their scarecrows out of clay to look like a very ugly Greek God named Priapus. The Greeks decided that this very ugly scarecrow would really keep away pesky animals and birds!

Have you heard of the Scarecrow in the film The Wizard of Oz? This scarecrow is one of the most famous and friendliest scarecrows of all times. (Grownups: Scare up a picture of the Scarecrow from Google; better yet, watch the movie together)

In Japan, farmers would make scarecrows using stinky old rags, fish and meat bones. These were SO smelly that anything—birds, animals and other humans, would stay far away from the fields! (Don’t try this at home!!)

During Medieval times in England, many young boys had the job of walking through the fields making noise and scaring away animals. They would scare away the critters by clapping or banging wooden pieces together. These boys were called "bird scarers." When there were no longer enough boys to do these jobs, the farmers began making scarecrows for their fields. (How would you like to be a birdScarers?)

Even though scarecrows are not used as much as they once were, many people still make things to put in their gardens or fields to scare away unwanted animals: Shiny objects that may flap around in the wind, wind chimes, flags, or pinwheels. Can you think of objects that you might put in your garden to keep away the animals who may want to eat your vegetables or flowers?

Pictures above are by Fritz Schumann and are stills from the film about Ayano Tsukimi
My Scarecrow Pal
by Constance Del Nero

Scarecrow, scarecrow: you stand so still in summer’s heat and autumn’s chill
You wear dad’s old shirt and mom’s ripped jeans, caked with dirt and bursting seams
Your bulky head and straggly hair give birds and rabbits quite a scare
They think you’re real—a menacing beast who guards the veggies: a humongous feast.
But I know you’re just a great big doll with hay for guts, standing big and tall
You don’t scare me the slightest bit: with me and my friends, you’re a great big hit!

Snuggle up in a big comfy chair and read together:

**Otis and the Scarecrow**, by Loren Long
*The Scarecrow’s Hat*, by Ken Brown
*The Little Scarecrow Boy*, by Margaret Wise Brown
*Scaredycrow*, by Christopher Hernandez
*Scarecrow*, by Cynthia Rylant
*The Scarecrow*, by Beth Ferry

Literacy: **POEM TO SHARE**

Literacy: **RECOMMENDED BOOKS**

See you next week with issue 7 of **Minis at Home**!

Share your work on [https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/](https://www.instagram.com/minimastersaam/)
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ahansen@academyartmuseum.org
or Constance Del Nero
cdelnero@academyartmuseum.org

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