

Squirreling It Away

PreK

Materials: A set of acorns or cubes (1-10) for each pair of students, paper and pencil, crayons, or markers

Discussion on the rug: “Here are some acorns. What animal likes to eat acorns?” Teacher continues to ask children to name animals who like acorns. Teacher holds five acorns in his or her hand. “Suppose I had five acorns and one squirrel came up to me and I gave it an acorn. How many would I have left?” The teacher encourages the students to find answers for different amounts of acorns and asks the students to explain how they know.

In small groups: Each group has a set of acorns or cubes. Teacher asks the following questions and goes on to the next question when students have success.

1. “You have 10 acorns. Four squirrels come to you. You give each squirrel one acorn. How many acorns did you give? How many are left? Now two more squirrels come to you and you give them each an acorn. How many did you give now? How many are left? How many more squirrels can you feed?”
2. Select a set of numbers that is reasonable for your class. “You have __ acorns. __ squirrels come to you. You give the squirrel each one acorn. Now __ more squirrels come to you and you give them each an acorn. How many more squirrels can you feed?” At the end of the investigation, have students either draw a picture or dictate to you to represent their solutions.

