What a hoot!

Owls are everywhere. And no, I don't mean in your barn or in the tree in the backyard. They are on backpacks and cards and necklaces and even perched on your bedside table. But really, "hoo" doesn't love a cute little owl?

Our adorable feathered friends were the inspiration for my cupcake treats when I hosted the FCA junior highers at my house last week. #1: They are just too darn cute. #2: The colors are perfect for fall. #3. Did I mention they are cute??

I found these cupcakes on Pinterest (of course!) and 6bittersweets.com , but I ended up making up my own directions so they would be super easy. I used a boxed chocolate cake mix

and a tub of milk chocolate frosting, but if you want to make those things from scratch, be my guest.

I used brown and orange M&Ms for the eyes and beak, but you could also use junior mints or Reese's Pieces. I also bought red and yellow cupcake liners, but I'm sure anything would work for that, too.

One word of caution: Oreos are harder to twist apart than you might think. 6-year-olds might have the twist-and-lick motion mastered, but I'm not so talented. (And unfortunately you don't get to lick the cream off these Oreos!) I would recommend halfway slicing with a sharp knife and halfway pulling the Oreos apart. You might have to spread some of the cream back on, but it's OK if they aren't perfect. Buy some extra cookies just in case you break a few!

You're going to have a lot of Oreo crumbs left over, but that's just another excuse to make dirt cups or cookies'n'cream ice cream! (And just so you know, I have another Halloween recipe coming up that uses cookie crumbs.)

Have fun with your cupcakes! "Owl" be wishing you a happy October and happy autumn!

Owl Cupcakes

1 chocolate cake mix (including water,
oil and eggs according to package)
1 tub chocolate frosting
24 cupcake liners
48 cream filled chocolate cookies (Oreos)
48 brown-colored chocolate
candies (M&Ms)
24 orange-colored chocolate
candies (M&Ms)

Prepare cake mix according to directions on package; fill and bake 24 cupcakes in liners. Let cool. Set aside a small spoonful of frosting. Frost cupcakes.

Twist or slice apart cookies crosswise, leaving cream all on one side. Place two cookies, cream side up, on center of frosted cupcake for the two eyes. Take two brown candies, dab in frosting that was set aside and stick to the cream of the cookie for the center of the eyes. (Play with the position of the candies to give each owl its own personality.) Below the eyes, stick an orange candy into the frosting for the beak.

Using the cookie halves without cream, cut or break at 1/2 inch from the side for a half-circle shape (slightly smaller than if you cut in the exact center). Gently press into frosting above the eyes, textured side facing up and round edges inward, to form the ears. Finish by showing off the adorable cupcakes to all your friends!

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