

The Potter And The Clay

UPPER ELEMENTARY LESSON PLAN

Theme: We are the clay and God is the Potter

Scripture: Isaiah 64:8

Memory Verse: Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. - Isaiah 64:8

The Children's Sermon

Do you think God will ever be finished with us, and we'll turn into a hardened piece of clay? I don't think so. He'll always be wanting us to be growing and changing and having new purposes. I heard this week about a 102-year-old man who lives near here. He says God must still have a reason for him to be alive. God is still working in his life and making him to be more like Jesus.

Now, let's think about clay for a moment. Have you ever played with clay or Play-Doh? You know how it feels when it's soft and easy to shape. You can make it into almost anything you want, right? But what happens if you leave it out too long? It gets hard and you can't change its shape anymore. Our hearts can be like that clay. If we keep them open to God, He can keep shaping us, making our Clay Transformation never-ending and full of surprises.

God is like the best artist ever, and He's making something beautiful out of us. Just like an artist has a plan for their clay, God has a plan for each of us. Sometimes, we might not understand what He's doing. We might think, "Why is this happening?" But just like clay in the artist's hands, we need to trust that God knows what He's doing. He's making

us into beautiful creations, full of love, kindness, and all the good things He wants for us.

But how do we stay soft clay? How do we make sure we don't become hard and unable to change? One way is to talk to God. Just like you talk to your friends and tell them what's happening in your life, you can talk to God. Tell Him everything - what makes you happy, what makes you sad, and even what makes you mad. God listens, and He keeps our clay soft through His love and care.

Another way to stay soft is to listen to God. This might sound a bit harder, because God doesn't usually speak out loud. But He talks to us in different ways - through stories in the Bible, through things that happen to us, and through other people. When we listen, really listen, we can hear God's guidance, helping us to stay on the right path, the path that keeps our clay ready for transformation.

And don't forget, clay transformation isn't just about us. It's about how we can help others too. When we let God shape us, we start to see the world differently. We see people who might need a friend, or someone who's sad and needs cheering up. God uses us, His clay, to spread love and kindness in the world. It's like we become little artists too, working with God to make the world a better place.

Remember, clay transformation is a never-ending journey. It doesn't matter if you're young or old, like the 102-year-old man we talked about. God is always ready to shape us, to help us grow and learn. And the most amazing part? As we change, as we become more like Jesus, we get to experience the joy and peace that comes from knowing we're exactly where God wants us to be.

So, let's be excited about our clay transformation. Let's stay soft and open to God's touch. Let's talk to Him, listen to Him, and be ready to spread His love everywhere we go. And whenever we feel like we're starting to harden, let's remember to ask God to make us soft again, ready for whatever beautiful shape He has in mind for us next.

In closing, let's pray together: Dear God, thank You for loving us and for never giving up on us. Help us to stay soft clay in Your hands, ready for the wonderful transformations You have planned for us. Help us to listen to You, talk to You, and spread Your love to others. We want to be part of Your beautiful artwork, today and every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Bible Memory Verse

Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. - Isaiah 64:8

You Will Need:

- Modeling clay or playdough
- Plastic knives or clay tools
- Paper plates

Get Ready:

- Gather enough modeling clay or playdough for each child.
- Set up a table with paper plates and clay tools for sculpting.

Do This:

1. Give each child a portion of clay and a paper plate. Explain that they will be creating something unique out of the clay, just as God shapes us.
2. Read Isaiah 64:8 aloud and discuss what it means to be the clay in God's hands. Encourage the children to think about how God is shaping them in their lives.
3. Allow the children to use their hands and tools to shape the clay into any form they wish, expressing their individuality and how they feel God is shaping them. As they work, play soft music in the background to help them reflect.
4. After they finish, have each child share their clay creation and explain what it represents about their relationship with God. Remind them that just like their creations are unique and special, so are they in the eyes of God.

Bible Interactive Experience

You'll Need:

- Air-dry clay
- Plastic tablecloths
- Bible or printed verse of Isaiah 64:8
- Decorative items (beads, sequins, etc.)
- Toothpicks or clay tools for inscribing
- Paper plates
- Paints and brushes (optional)

Get Ready:

- Cover tables with plastic tablecloths for easy cleanup.
- Divide air-dry clay into individual portions, one for each child.
- Set up a display area for finished projects.
- Have the Bible verse Isaiah 64:8 visible for all children to read or memorize.

Do this:

1. Begin with a group discussion about Isaiah 64:8, asking the children what they think it means that God is the Potter and we are the clay. Encourage them to think about how God shapes us and molds our lives.
2. Give each child a portion of air-dry clay. Instruct them to think about what they would like to mold that represents how they see themselves as clay in God's hands. It could be a symbol of their faith, a representation of their personality, or something they feel God is teaching them.
3. As they work on their clay, encourage them to inscribe their name and the verse Isaiah 64:8 on the bottom of their creation using a toothpick or clay tool. They can also decorate their creations with the provided decorative items.
4. Once everyone is finished, allow each child to share their creation with the group, explaining the symbolism behind what they made and how it relates to being molded by God.
5. If using paint, allow creations to dry according to the clay instructions before painting. Set all finished projects on paper plates to be taken home, reminding the children to let them dry completely if not painted.
6. Wrap up by emphasizing that just like they shaped the clay, God shapes us for His purposes, and we can trust Him to mold our lives beautifully.

Snack Activity: Potter's Clay Treats

You'll Need:

- 1 package of Oreo cookies (or any chocolate sandwich cookies)
- 1 package of cream cheese (8 oz.)
- 1 bag of white chocolate chips
- Food coloring (optional, to decorate)
- Wax paper

- Rolling pin or food processor
- Microwave-safe bowl

Get Ready: Crush the Oreo cookies into fine crumbs using a rolling pin or a food processor. Then, mix the cookie crumbs with the cream cheese until you have a moldable 'clay'.

Do this:

1. Take small portions of the cookie and cream cheese mixture and shape them into various objects, as if you are the potter and the mixture is your clay. You can make shapes like pots, animals, or anything that comes to mind.
2. Melt the white chocolate chips in a microwave-safe bowl, heating in 30-second intervals and stirring in between until smooth. If you want to add colors, divide the melted chocolate into smaller bowls and mix in different food coloring.
3. Dip your cookie 'clay' creations into the melted chocolate or drizzle it over them to decorate. Place them on wax paper to set.

As you work on shaping and decorating your treats, reflect on Isaiah 64:8, discussing how God shapes us and molds our lives for His purposes.

Game Activity: Potter's Clay Hopscotch

You'll Need:

- Sidewalk chalk
- A small stone or bean bag
- A large, open concrete area

Get Ready: Use the sidewalk chalk to draw a large hopscotch grid on the concrete. Instead of numbers in each square, write attributes that we aim to have as creations of God (e.g., 'Loving', 'Patient', 'Kind', 'Joyful', 'Faithful', 'Gentle', 'Self-Control', 'Peaceful', 'Good'). At the start, write 'We are the clay' and at the end, write 'God is the Potter' (Isaiah 64:8).

Do this:

1. Players take turns tossing their stone or bean bag onto one of the attribute squares.
2. The player then hops through the hopscotch grid, skipping the square their marker landed on, while reciting Isaiah 64:8. If a player steps on a line, misses a square with their marker, or falls, they start over.
3. Upon reaching the end, the player picks up their marker (on the way back), then shouts 'Shaped by God!' and explains how they can embody the attribute they landed on in their daily lives.
4. The game continues until all players have had a chance to hop through the grid and share.

Craft Activity: The Potter's Hand: Shaping Our Faith

You'll Need:

- Air-dry clay
- Rolling pins or smooth bottles
- Various sculpting tools (plastic knives, toothpicks, cookie cutters)
- Small bowls of water
- Paints and brushes (optional)
- Isaiah 64:8 printed on paper

Get Ready: Set up a clean, flat workspace for each child. Distribute the air-dry clay and sculpting tools. Place the small bowls of water within reach for smoothing their creations. Have the Isaiah 64:8 prints visible for all to see and reflect upon.

Do this:

1. Begin with a group reading of Isaiah 64:8, discussing how God shapes us and molds our lives. Encourage the children to think about what it means to be clay in God's hands.
2. Give each child a portion of air-dry clay. Instruct them to think about their personal faith or how they can be shaped by God as they mold their clay into a creation that represents their relationship with God or a symbol of their faith.
3. As they work on their creations, encourage them to smooth and shape their clay, reflecting on how God smooths and shapes us through our experiences. They can use the water bowls to help smooth the clay, just as God's love smooths our rough edges.
4. Once they are satisfied with their creations, if time and resources allow, they can paint their sculptures. As they paint, discuss how God adds color and joy to our lives, making us vibrant and unique creations.
5. Conclude the activity with a sharing circle, where each child can talk about their creation and what it represents about their faith or relationship with God. Remind them that just like their sculptures needed time to dry and set, our growth in faith also takes time and patience.

Prayer Activity: Shaping Hearts: We Are the Clay

You'll Need:

- Air-dry clay
- Small rolling pins or sturdy round objects
- Various sculpting tools or household items for texture (e.g., forks, toothpicks)

Get Ready: Gather all materials on a clean, flat surface. Divide the clay into small portions, one for each child. Prepare a short introduction to Isaiah 64:8, explaining how God shapes us and molds our lives according to His purpose.

Do this:

1. Begin with a discussion on Isaiah 64:8, asking the children what they think it means to be clay in God's hands. Encourage them to share times they felt God guiding or shaping their lives.
2. Give each child a portion of air-dry clay. Instruct them to think about the ways God is molding them as they use their hands to shape the clay into a form that represents their relationship with God or how they see God shaping them.
3. As they work on their clay creations, encourage them to say a prayer silently, asking God to continue to mold them according to His will. When they are finished, have each child share their creation and what it represents about their relationship with God.
4. Conclude the activity with a group prayer, thanking God for being our Potter and asking for His guidance and strength to follow His plans for us.