

Clay Lesson with 1st to 6th Classes

‘Pinch a Pot’

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Curriculum Strand: Clay (Visual Arts Curriculum p.36, 54, 72)

Objective: *Make simple pottery (p.36)*
Make simple clay pots (p.54)
Make simple pottery and sculpture (p.72)

Linkage: **Paint and Colour** > *Discover pattern and rhythm in natural and manufactured objects and use them purposefully in his/her work (p.50)*
Explore the relationship between how things feel and how they look (p.68)
Drawing > *Explore shape as seen in natural and manufactured objects and become aware of the shape of shadows cast by objects (p.30)*

Integration Possibilities:

History: Early Peoples and Ancient Societies: *Become familiar with aspects of the lives of these peoples (p.48, 67)*

Continuity and Change over Time: *Study aspects of social, artistic, technological, and scientific developments over long periods (p.71)*

Developing this Activity in Class:

Getting Started: Before I start an art lesson I find it very helpful to do a little exercise with the children to unlock their imaginations and to create a safe environment in the classroom for them to show and discuss their work without fear of ridicule. “When I was a child it took up to six weeks to send a photograph to my cousins in Australia. We can send photographs in minutes now with our mobile phones! This is because people used their imaginations and made this happen. Anything can happen in our imagination if we only let it! Close your eyes and imagine a big door. It can be any colour you like. Written across the door in big capital letters is the word IMAGINATION. Now reach out and slowly open the door, let your imagination out! Open your eyes and let me see the sparkle! Now we can do anything, our imaginations are at work and we are all different!”

Materials Needed: Potter’s clay
 Wooden boards or strong card (to work on)
 Clay tools or lollipop sticks
 Poster paints or acrylics (to decorate when dry)
 Plastic bucket with tight fitting lid, or plastic bags for storing the clay

Stimulus: Show the children a selection of pots, vases, mugs, bowls or other earthenware containers. Allow them to handle them and discuss the shapes, textures and decorations they can see. If possible show pictures or slides of pottery from other countries and times and encourage the children to talk about what they see.

Activity: Give each child a ball of clay that fits comfortably in his/her hand. Let them roll it between their palms before pushing both thumbs down the centre of the ball. By slowly forcing the thumbs out, the children will begin to deepen and enlarge the hole they have made. Encourage the children to do this slowly, otherwise they will push their thumbs through the clay. By gently pinching and rotating the clay they will build out an

even wall of clay. It may take several attempts before the children are happy with their pots. Given time to experiment with this technique, they will build interesting shapes which can be decorated, textured or marked as they wish.

Evaluation/Looking and Responding:

This will be happening as the children work. The children can then take turns describing the pots they have made and how they decorated them. Encourage the children to respond to pottery made here in Ireland and to pictures of pots from other cultures such as Moche Pottery.

Extension Activities:

Pinch pots can be inverted to make other interesting things....if bits are added what could it become? If bits are taken away, what could it become? If two pinch pots are joined together what could they make? The children could join the pots with slip to make interesting 3D creatures.

ICT Possibilities:

http://www.handsoncrafts.org/vp_frame.htm

This is an interactive site where the children can throw a pot online. (Shockwave required on your computer.)

Using the I Am An Artist DVD:

The *Clay* programmes on the DVD offer opportunities to see and hear the children using clay as a medium for imaginative expression. You can see and hear a child describe her pot and the wonderful story it tells.

Note:

I found that using a plant spray was best for keeping the clay moist as the children were working. Keep your slip in an airtight container for future use. If using poster paints to decorate the pots, they can be painted over with PVA to create a glossy finish.

Relevant Artists:

Mosse Pottery
Moche Pottery
Bridge Pottery

Relevant Websites:

Learn about the ancient Moche people and their pottery
<http://www.museum.upenn.edu/Moche/mocheculture.html>

View Nicholas Mosse pottery
<http://www.nicholasmosse.com/patterns/>

View designs at Bridge Pottery
<http://www.bridgepottery.com/JustBrowsing2.html>

Scoilnet, which is a portal to lots of sites useful in the classroom
<http://www.scoilnet.ie>