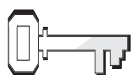


Jars of Clay



References

Jeremiah 18:1-6;
The Ministry of Healing,
pp. 471, 472



Memory Verse

"[O Lord], we are the
clay, you are the
potter; we are all the
work of your hand"
(Isaiah 64:8, NIV).



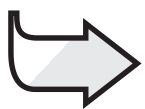
Objectives

The children will:

Know that God has a
plan for their future.

Feel safe and comfortable
in God's hands.

Respond by trusting God
and allowing Him to shape
them as He sees best.



The Message

God holds me in His
hands and molds me.

Monthly Theme

God keeps His promises.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God tells Jeremiah to visit a potter who is working at the wheel. The potter is making a clay jar. It has a defect, and the potter makes it again. God tells Jeremiah that Israel is in His (God's) hand, and that He has power to reshape the nation to conform to His will.

This is a lesson about grace.

Even though we are marred by sin, God has promised to mold us, to make us into His image, to change our lives to conform to His will, if we are pliable in His hands. He begins before we are born and continues to shape us throughout our lifetime, making us into valuable vessels.

Teacher Enrichment

The parable of the potter, "probably written during the early years of Jehoiakim's reign, illustrate[s] God's sovereignty over the nation. God has power over the clay (Judah), and he continues to work with it to make it a useful vessel. But Judah must soon repent, or the clay will harden the wrong way. Then it will be worth nothing and will be broken and destroyed.

"As the potter molded or shaped a clay pot on the potter's wheel, defects often appeared. The potter had power over the clay, to permit the defects or to reshape the pot. Likewise, God had power to reshape the nation to conform to his purposes. Our strategy is not to become mindless and passive—one aspect of clay—but to be willing and receptive to God's impact on us. As we yield to God, he begins reshaping us into valuable vessels" (*Life Application Study Bible, Notes and Bible Helps on Jeremiah 18:1-6* [NIV] [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2005], p. 1224).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 5.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	<i>A. Your Name in Dough</i> <i>B. Rainbow Handprints</i> <i>C. Clay in Your Hand</i>	Bibles, salt dough (see activity, p. 72), pencils, large piece of waxed paper, rolling pins yellow and green finger paints, rainbow wall banner started in Lesson 6, baby wipes or wet paper towels Bibles, modeling clay, plastic place mats or waxed paper
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbooks Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy, The SDA Hymnal</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> piece of pottery from last week with a sign reading "Mold me, Lord!" none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	several pieces of clay pottery; picture of potter's wheel (if possible, a real potter's wheel; small ones available in most large craft stores, optional); clump of pottery clay, modeling clay, or salt dough from Readiness A; plastic place mats or waxed paper today's memory verse written for all to see, paper, pencils, thin markers/chalk, white/chalkboard Bibles, plastic soap dishes or small boxes for each child or paper for a book, markers, pencils, small pieces of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>What Am I?</i>	piece of pottery (plate or cup); hard, dry clay; soft clay; plastic place mats or waxed paper
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Something Special</i>	clay or salt dough object for each child (see Applying the Lesson, p. 76), sealable plastic bags

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- Bibles
- salt dough (see recipe)
- pencils
- large piece of waxed paper
- rolling pins

A. Your Name in Dough

Recipe for Salt Dough

4 cups of flour; 2 cups of salt; 2 cups of water; 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil; 4 teaspoons of cream of tartar; few drops of food coloring

Method: Mix flour, salt, and cream of tartar. In separate container add food coloring and oil to water. Add liquid to flour and salt mixture. Cook over low heat until very stiff. Knead on floured surface. Dough can be stored in a plastic container. Refrigerate.

Prepare salt dough in advance. Give each child a lump. Have them roll out their piece of dough on waxed paper and make two holes so they can hang the plaque when it is dry. Have them use a pencil to imprint their name. When the dough hardens, display the plaques as part of your room decor.

Debriefing

Say: **God loves you so much. Just as you wrote your name in the dough, God has promised to engrave or keep you on the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16). What does Jesus have on His hands that shows His forever love for you? (nail-prints—see John 15:13; 20:25.) Imagine Him holding you in His hands and molding (making, shaping) you more and more like Himself. Let's read our memory verse, Isaiah 64:8. Read aloud together. Today's message is:**



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- yellow and green finger paints
- rainbow wall banner started in Lesson 6
- baby wipes or wet paper towels

B. Rainbow Handprints

Continue creating the "rainbow handprints" wall banner that you started earlier. (See Lesson 6.) Work with yellow and then the green. Next week they will finish with blue, indigo, and violet (or just blue and violet, if you prefer).

Debriefing

Ask: **Are you enjoying making the rainbow wall banner? (yes) How does this remind you of God's promises? (God made a rainbow when He promised Noah that He would never again destroy the whole world with a flood.) The hands on our rainbow handprint banner remind us of our message:**



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

Say that with me.

C. Clay in Your Hand

Allow the children a few minutes to make pots, cups, etc., from the clay. Remind them to keep the clay on the plastic place mats or waxed paper.

Debriefing

Ask: **Do you enjoy making things with clay?** (yes) **Do you like soft or hard clay?** (soft clay) **Why?** (Soft clay is easier to work with. If the thing I am making isn't right, I can make it over again.) **Our Bible story today is about clay in the hands of a man who makes pots—a potter. Let's read our memory verse, Isaiah 64:8.** Have the text read aloud. **In other words we could say with today's message that:**



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- Bibles
- modeling clay
- plastic place mats or waxed paper

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (*The SDA Hymnal*, no. 567)

"Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 123)

"I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124)

"Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 110)



Mission

Use a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Say: **We are collecting our offering with a piece of pottery. In our Bible story for today, pottery was made beautiful in the hand of a potter. When we give our offerings, it's like placing them in God's hands, and He does something beautiful with them.**

You Need:

- piece of pottery from last week with a sign reading "Mold me, Lord!"



Prayer

Kneel together and sing the first verse of "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (*The SDA Hymnal*, no. 567) as a prayer. Invite each child silently to give Jesus permission to mold specific things in their lives so they can live according to God's will. Close by singing together the fourth verse.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- several pieces of clay pottery
- picture of potter's wheel (if possible, a real potter's wheel)
- clump of pottery clay, modeling clay, or salt dough from Readiness A
- plastic place mats or waxed paper

Experiencing the Story

If available, set up the potter's wheel in advance. Distribute the pottery clay, modeling clay, or salt dough. Give each child a portion. As you tell the story, let the children make something out of the clay/dough. They might try braiding the clay or making a simple cup.

Read or tell the story.

The skilled artist drew out his knife and cut a slab of clay from the large lump. He slapped it on his potter's wheel and sat down. *[If available, demonstrate with the potter's wheel. If unavailable, show a picture and go through the motions.]*

Then he spun the wheel as he formed the clay. In the potter's hands the clay seemed to take on a life of its own. Once flat, it now had a hollow center and smooth, pale sides. The potter dipped his hands quickly in a basin of water and returned to his work. Almost lovingly, his hands put pressure on the days, and the shape responded instantly. Rounded sides began to narrow to a long neck. A lip was formed in the front. Then the potter's wheel slowed and came to a stop.

The potter braided some smooth pieces together and fastened them firmly onto one side of the pot to make a handle. Once again he took his knife, and this time he slid his creation off the wheel, setting it carefully on the drying shelf. What was once a slab of clay had become a beautiful clay pitcher with a braided handle.

But the potter kept working. His fresh batch of clay wouldn't last long.

He cut another slab from the batch, and as he had done before, he slapped it onto his potter's wheel. Round and

round, and up and down. As the sides of a waterpot rose between his hands, his attention was drawn to a man watching him. The potter looked up and smiled. But in that instant the sides of the pot fell into the center and the spinning wheel came to a stop.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," the man said as his hand flew to his mouth.

"Think nothing of it," said the potter. "I'll fix it in no time."

The visitor introduced himself. "My name is Jeremiah, and I was sent here by God to watch you work."

The potter seemed interested. "The beauty of clay," he said, "is that if it is too thin in one spot, or if I find mistakes as I go along, I just pinch out the problem or pat down the lump and start over. Sometimes that makes it even stronger than before. I always try to make the clay into what it seems best for."

"So mistakes can be fixed?" Jeremiah asked.

"Yes. I can shape and reshape the clay until it's just what it should be. When I'm happy with it, others will find it beautiful and useful too."

Jeremiah nodded. "Your work is beautiful," he said. He admired the objects on display. There were small oil lamps for a bedroom; pitchers of all sizes for cream, milk, or water; huge pots that came up to his waist for storing olives or grain, or for cooling water.

Everything was made from the same material, by the same creator, and yet each one was a little bit different. Each one had a special purpose. This was the lesson God wanted Jeremiah to learn by watching the potter at work. Now Jeremiah could explain how God shapes each person's life, dealing with the mistakes that happen and using them to form something beautiful.

In God's hands every life can be of service to others.

Debriefing

Ask: **How does the clay feel in your hands?** (soft, nice) **Do you enjoy making things out of clay?** (yes) Invite the children to show what they made as you were telling the story.

How do you think God feels as He holds us in His hands and makes us into something really special? (He enjoys it too.)

Now hold up one piece of the pottery that you have on display. Ask: **What is each piece of pottery used for?** (drinking, eating, storing, serving, etc.) **Which piece is most important?** (They are all important, depending on what you want to do.) **The cup is the most important if you need a drink, the bowl is the most important if you want to eat something, etc.**

It is the same way with us. Jesus made us all for a special purpose and we are all equally valuable. Always remember our message:



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

Say that with me.

Memory Verse

Have the children trace their own hand on the paper and copy the memory verse on the traced hand. Have each child read their verse, then say the verse together. "[O Lord], we are the clay, you are the pot-

You Need:

- memory verse written for all to see
- paper
- white/chalk-board
- pencils, thin markers, chalk

ter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8, NIV). Repeat until the children know the verse.

Bible Study

Have six children take turns reading the verses of Jeremiah 18:1-6, one verse per child. Ask them to find any promises from God in this passage (for example, verse 6). Then they write the promise on a small piece of paper and put the promise into their box or book. During Bible study time next week they will continue to add God's promises to their box or book. Keep the boxes/books until the last Sabbath of the month.

As time allows, have the children read other Bible verses that refer to clay, such as:

- Isaiah 29:16
- Isaiah 45:9
- Lamentations 4:2
- Romans 9:21
- 2 Timothy 2:20

Talk about what these verses mean.

Debriefing

Say: **Last week's Bible promises were about healing. This week's Bible promise is about what?** (We are in God's hands, and He will shape us like the potter shapes clay.)

Ask: **Why would you want God to shape you?** (He knows best how my life should look.)

If you ever worry about what will happen to your life, what will you remember? Let's answer with today's message:



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

You Need:

- Bibles
- plastic soap dishes or small boxes for each child or paper for a book
- markers, pencils, etc.
- small pieces of paper

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- piece of inexpensive pottery (plate or cup)
- hard, dry clay
- soft clay
- plastic place mats or waxed paper

What Am I?

Break a pottery plate or cup and then ask the children to try to put it back together.

Ask them to make a cup from the hard, dry clay, and then ask them to make one from the soft, moist clay.

Note: Keep the soft clay item for the next activity.

Debriefing

Ask: **Which is easier to work with?** (soft clay) **How was it with hard, dry clay?** (It was hard to work with.) **What was it like to make something with the soft, new clay?** (Much easier to make something beautiful.)

How are we like these different types of clay? Share the following ideas:

The hard plate or cup. Determined to be what we want to be, stubborn, headstrong, independent, feeling as though we know more than God.

The hard, dry clay. Not really caring; not wanting to listen to my parents; refusing to study, pray, or listen to what God wants me to learn.

The soft clay. Praying, praising, listening for God's voice; spending more time seeking God's plan for my life than I spend trying to get what I want. Willing for God to make me what He wants me to be instead of what I think I want to be.

Which kind of clay do you want to be in God's hands? (soft clay) **Remember our message:**



GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS AND MOLDS ME.

Say that with me.

Note: Go directly to the next activity.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Something Special

Have each child show what they made in the previous activity. Suggest that they plan to use it to remind someone else that Jesus is the potter and wants to make each one of us into something really special.

Have the children put what they made in a sealable plastic bag and take it home.

Debriefing

Ask: **Did you enjoy working with clay and making something beautiful?** (yes)

How do you think God feels when He works on you? (sometimes happy, sometimes sad, etc.)

Have you thought of the person

you will share this with? What will you say?

Encourage each child to say a quiet prayer, dedicating his or her life to God and asking God to make them what He wants them to be. Also pray for the people who will receive the cups or plaques that they will want to be what God wants them to be.

Let's close by saying our message:



**GOD HOLDS ME IN HIS HANDS
AND MOLDS ME.**

Closing

Sing again verse 1 of "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (*The SDA Hymnal*, no. 567) as the closing prayer.

Remind the children to use their Bible study guide every day and to do the daily activities.

You Need:

- clay or dough object for each child made in Applying the Lesson
- sealable plastic bags

Jars of Clay

References

Jeremiah 18:1-6;
The Ministry of Healing,
 pp. 471, 472

Memory Verse

"[O Lord], we are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand" (Isaiah 64:8, NIV).

The Message

God holds me in His hands and molds me.

Sammy loved to make things from clay or play dough. It was very soft and it felt so good. He made animals, buildings, cars, people, and cups. The clay in Sammy's hands became whatever Sammy wanted.

A man in the Bible enjoyed working with clay too. Perhaps it happened like this . . .

Lifting the corner of a wet cloth, the skilled artist cut a slab of clay from the large lump. He slapped it on his potter's wheel and sat down. He pulled his robe up to his knees. Then slowly he begins to turn his wheel and form the clay.

Underneath the potter's hands the clay seemed to take on a life of its own. Once flat, it now had a hollow center and smooth, pale sides. The potter dipped his hands quickly in a basin of water and returned to his work. Almost lovingly, his hands put pressure on the clay, and the shape responded instantly. Rounded sides began to narrow to a long neck. A lip was formed in the front. Then the potter's wheel slowed and came to a stop.

The potter braided some smooth pieces of clay together. He fastened them firmly onto one side of the pot to make a handle. With a happy smile he slid his creation off the wheel, setting it carefully on the drying shelf. What was once a slab of clay had become a beautiful clay pitcher.

The potter looked out at the busy street. Customers stood nearby watch-

ing him work. Some bought clay pots for water or flour. But the potter kept working. His fresh batch of clay wouldn't last long.

He cut another slab from the batch. As he had done before, he slapped it onto his potter's wheel. Round and round, and up and down. As the sides of a waterpot rose between his hands, his attention was drawn to a man watching him. The potter looked up and smiled. But in that instant the sides of the pot fell into the center and the spinning wheel came to a stop.

"Oh, I'm so sorry," the man said as his hand flew to his mouth.

The potter waved his hand in the air. "Think nothing of it," he said. "I'll fix it in no time."

The man introduced himself. "My name is Jeremiah. I was sent here by God to watch you work."

The potter seemed interested. "The beauty of clay," he said, "is that if it is too thin in one spot, or if I find mistakes as I go along, I just pinch out the problem or pat down the lump and start over.

Sometimes that makes it even stronger than before. I always try to make the clay into what it seems best for."

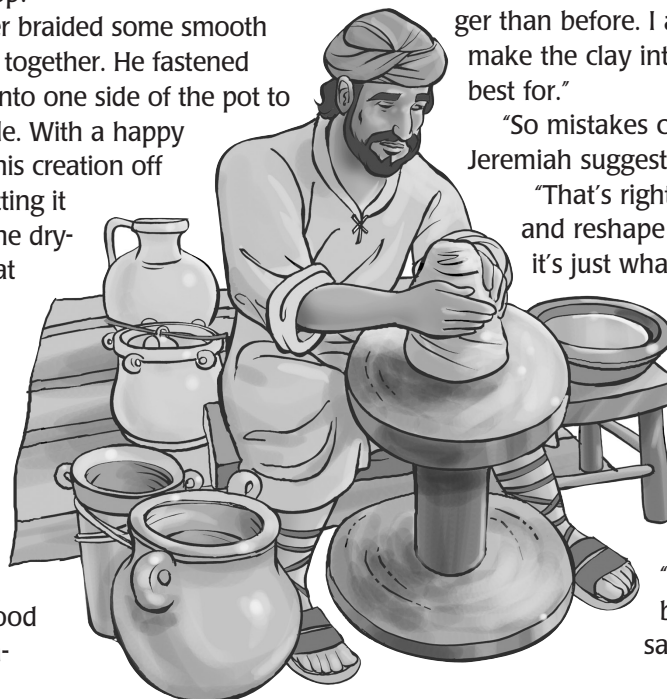
"So mistakes can be fixed," Jeremiah suggested.

"That's right. I can shape and reshape the clay until it's just what it should be.

When I'm happy with it, others will find it beautiful and useful too."

Jeremiah nodded.

"Your work is beautiful," he said. He stood and



watched the potter for a few minutes longer. Then he admired the objects on display once more. There were small oil lamps for a bedroom; pitchers of all sizes for cream, milk, or water; huge pots for storing olives or grain, or for cooling water. Everything was made from the same material, by the same creator. Yet each was a little different. Each one had a special purpose.

This was the lesson God wanted Jeremiah to learn. That was why He had sent Jeremiah to watch the potter at work. Now Jeremiah could explain how God shapes each person's life, how He corrects the mistakes that happen and uses them to form something beautiful. In God's hands every life can be of service to others.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Take a walk with your family. Look for beautiful things God has made.
- Read your Bible lesson story together. Then read and discuss Isaiah 64:8.
- Sing "I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124) before prayer.

Sunday

- During family worship, read and discuss Jeremiah 18:1-4. Ask someone to help you find and read about clay in an encyclopedia or on the internet with supervision. Tell three things you learned.
- Look around your house. How many things are made of clay? Thank God for them.

Monday

- Read and discuss Jeremiah 18:5, 6 with your family.
- Trace around your hand with a pencil onto paper. Write the words of your memory verse in different colors on the hand tracing. Read the verse out loud. Read your name instead of "we." Then put the name of each family member in the verse and read it to them.

Tuesday

- Together with your family, read Lamentations 4:2. What does this verse mean to you?
- Make a pinch pot from clay or play dough. Here's how: Knead the clay to make it soft. Form the clay into a ball. Push one thumb into the center, but not through it. Cup one hand under the clay and use the other to pinch the clay as you turn it. The opening will get larger and larger. Carefully scratch a design on the side. Let your pot dry.
- Ask God to continue to mold and shape your life according to His will.

Wednesday

- With your family, read Jesus' prayer about letting God mold Him in Matthew 26:42. When did He pray this prayer?
- In Sabbath School you made something to share with someone. Share it today. (Or make a picture of a clay cup or plaque.) As you give it away, remind that person that Jesus is the potter and wants to make each of us into something really special. Pray for that person today.
- Say your memory verse from memory.
- Sing "Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 123) with your family.

Thursday

- With help, draw and color a rainbow on a paper plate.* Draw five small clouds on white paper and cut them out. Write one of the following on each cloud: (1) God keeps His promises; (2) Acts 1:11; (3) Psalm 91:11; (4) Malachi 3:6; (5) Psalm 50:15. Attach the clouds to the paper plate so they hang from the bottom of the rainbow. Hang it where all can see. During family worship, read the promises and tell what they mean to you.
- Thank God for all His promises.

Friday

- Tell your lesson story to your family during worship time. Show the pinch pot you made this week.
- How should we respond when God wants to mold us? Sing together "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (*The SDA Hymnal*, no. 567). Then say your memory verse together as a prayer.

* The order of the rainbow spectrum is red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.