

Jars of Clay

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

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, up and down, up and down, his foot began to move the pedal, and the wheel began to turn.

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, 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 watching 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 water pot rose between his hands, his attention was drawn to a man watching him. The

potter looked up and smiled. But in that instant the

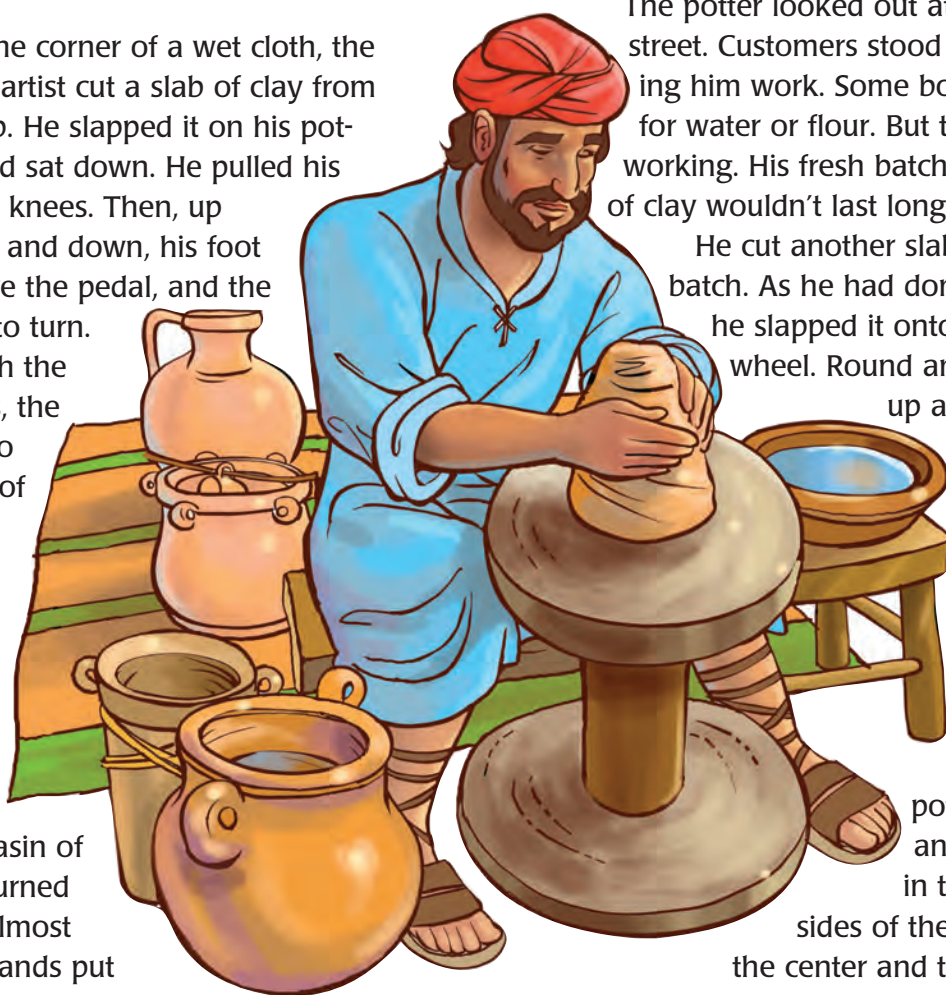
sides of the pot fell into the center and the spinning

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



The Message

God holds me in His hands
and molds me.

Memory Verse

*"O Lord, . . . we are the
clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of
your hand"*

(Isaiah 64:8, NIV).

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.

S A B B A T H

DO Take a walk with your family. Look for beautiful things made from clay.

READ Read your Bible lesson story together. Then read and discuss Isaiah 64:8.

SING Sing "I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 124) before prayer.

S U N D A Y

READ During family worship read and discuss Jeremiah 18:1-4. Ask someone to help you find and read about clay in an encyclopedia. Tell three things you learned.

DO Look around your house. How many things are made of clay? Thank God for them.

For more than 40 years Jeremiah gave God's messages to the Israelites.



M O N D A Y

READ Read and discuss Jeremiah 18:5, 6 with your family.

DO 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.

T U E S D A Y

READ Together with your family read Lamentations 4:2. What does this verse mean to you?

DO 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.

PRAY Ask God to continue to mold and shape your life according to His will.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO With your family, read Jesus' prayer about letting God mold Him in Matthew 26:42. When did He pray this prayer?

SHARE 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.

DO Say your memory verse from memory.

SING Sing "Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 123) with your family.

THURSDAY

DO 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.

PRAY Thank God for all His promises.

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

FRIDAY

DO Tell your lesson story to your family during worship time. Show the pinch pot you made this week.

DO 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.



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PUZZLE

Directions: Jeremiah learned that God shapes us like a potter shapes a clay pot. God molds us into a special shape to achieve a special purpose for Him. Finish this clay pot and decorate it.

