



Community Arts Handbook

A Ministry of Gifted Hands

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners... *(Isaiah 61:1, NIV)*

Table of Contents

3	Program Overview
5	Frequently Asked Questions
6	Projects and Devotionals:
7	Printmaking: Block Prints
8	Button Mosaic Picture Frames
9	Paintings Inspired by Joan Miro
10	Hand-bound Journal with Scripture Page
11	Bookmarks
12	Personalized Note Cards
13	Votives / Candles
14	Clay Christmas Ornaments

Community Arts Program

This handbook is designed to help volunteers and churches run a Community Arts Program based on the model developed by Gifted Hands and their partner church, Morningstar Community Church, NYC. The following information functions as a framework for organizing and leading a volunteer event for the Community Arts Program, potentially with a long-term volunteer group. Please use these recommendations as a guideline and feel free to adjust according to the needs of the program and the size of the volunteer group.

WHAT DOES A COMMUNITY ARTS NIGHT LOOK LIKE?

Generally, a Community Arts night is comprised of the following elements:

- **Snacks:** Food and drink is provided at the beginning of the night for all participants (both adults and children)
- **Child care** (*if necessary*): This allows the adults to have focused time for fellowship and worship with a group of peers
- **Art project:** A 30- to 45-minute craft led by volunteer artists
- **Praise & worship:** If a musician is available, a 5- to 10-minute worship time provides a segue into a time of study and discussion
- **Devotional time:** A 5-10 minute Bible study based on a theme that relates to the art project
- **Closing Prayer**

HOW CAN I ORGANIZE A COMMUNITY ARTS NIGHT?

Organizing a Community Arts event can be broken down into three phases: 1) Preparation *before* the event; 2) Organization *at* the event and 3) Follow-up with the volunteer team *after* the event.

Before the event:

1. **Coordinate all of the volunteers** that will be needed. For larger groups of volunteers, consider including a set-up crew and a clean-up crew to help avoid burnout among long-term volunteers:
 - Snacks and drinks (as needed)s: 2-3 volunteers
 - Child Care: 2-3 volunteers
 - Art Project: 1-2 volunteers
 - Devotion: 1 volunteer
 - Photographer (for recording participants and projects) : 1 volunteer
 - Extra volunteers can fill-in areas as needed
 - “Set-up” crew- 2-4 Volunteers will arrive an hour early to help set up and will leave promptly at project-end.
 - “Clean-up” crew- 2-4 Volunteers will arrive at the start of event and will stay an hour after to help clean-up.
2. **Choose an art project** and a related devotion (see pages 6-14 for a list of ideas)
3. **Prepare all necessary supplies** for the project

At the Site

The following information is a sample time line for a 2-hour program including set-up and clean-up. Please adjust as necessary to suit the needs of your program.

6:00 pm: Begin set-up (*if using a set-up crew, this is when they should arrive*)

- Arrange main work stations
- Arrange children’s area (if applicable)
- Gather and distribute necessary art supplies
- Set up food table with 2-3 bags of chips, 3-4 Liter bottles of soda, 2-3 packages of cookies. (*If there is any kind of snack storage, this is an idea time to go through your stock — clean out old snacks, determine need for new snacks, etc.*)
- Decide which volunteers will work with kids, help with art project, and float the room.
- Set up Sign-in sheet. Have ALL volunteers sign-in!

(Continued, next page)

At the Site, continued

7:00 pm: Participants and remaining volunteers arrive

- Have 1 Volunteer by door signing in the participants
- Welcome participants and direct them to the main work area
- Ask permission and take their child to the kids' room
- Invite participants to help themselves to snack table
- Instruct everyone to find a seat for the remainder of the event

7:15 pm: Start art project (See p6 for art project ideas)

8:15 pm: Finish art project / take pictures

8:30 pm: Begin Worship and devotion time

9:00 pm: End of Event

- Women & set-up crew leave.
- Start Clean-up

9:30 pm: Closing up

- Clean up crew leaves

After the event

1. Check in with the Volunteer Coordinator.

We at Gifted Hands love to stay informed on how projects and ministries are going from your perspective. So when you have time, email over a quick update and let us know what's happening. We're always excited to hear from you!

2. Record attendance and hours.

Make sure to keep track of the number of volunteers, length of each program and how many clients were served. If you are a volunteer through Hope for New York, please report your volunteer hours to HFNY (www.hfny.org).

3. Thank the volunteers.

You can never thank volunteers too many times, and showing appreciation is a great way to ensure that people will continue coming back! One easy way to do this is to send them thank you emails or electronic thank you cards.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do I do if a problem arises on my programs?

Explain the situation to your volunteers. The more up front and forthright you are with them, the more understanding and forgiving they will be of the situation. Maintain a positive attitude and stay in communication with ministry staff.

2. What if there isn't enough work?

Ask the ministry leaders if there is additional work to be done. Consider also dividing into smaller groups to handle different tasks that were not initially presented to your team. Learn to creatively respond to needs in the ministry; we never want volunteers to feel like they're wasting their time.

3. What if the task you end up performing is not the one volunteers signed up for?

Explain the situation and give volunteers the opportunity to leave gracefully. For example, someone who signed up to teach art to children may not be able to help them a teen with his homework in Calculus.

4. What happens if I have too many volunteers?

Explain why the situation occurred (i.e. fewer children attended than were supposed to, etc). Offer volunteers the opportunity to leave and apologize for the inconvenience.

5. What if I have too few volunteers?

Improvise and do as much work as possible. Remember that some volunteers may not be able to stay beyond the stated conclusion time of the project. If the project is going over time, give volunteers an estimation of how much longer the project will run but give them the option of leaving if they need to.

6. What if you get sick on the day of your project and can't lead the project?

If possible, contact an experienced volunteer of the project to substitute lead the project.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Keep safe and prevent accidents by making sure volunteers:

- Follow any guidelines provided by the ministry affiliate
- Use appropriate equipment
- Are familiar with tools and how to use them correctly
- Use their common sense. Most accidents are caused by carelessness — help your volunteers stay alert.

In the event of a serious injury or emergency, please follow the procedures listed below as closely as the situation allows:

- Appoint someone to call 911 for appropriate help (ambulance, police, fire department) immediately
- If someone has been injured or is sick, do what is necessary to stabilize the individual. Use first aid knowledge only if you are absolutely confident; injuries can be made worse by well intentioned but unskilled bystanders.
- Do not move an injured or sick person unless you have no other choice.
- While you attend to the medical emergency, make sure someone else is attending to the other volunteers. They should be moved away from the injured party.
- As soon as possible, contact Gifted Hands at 917.604.6171.

Remember:

- Please contact Gifted Hands staff as soon as possible if there is an incident of emergency or injury.
- For everyone's protection, do not discuss the situation with any outsiders, including the press. Gifted Hands staff will make all necessary comments.

Projects & Devotionals

The following projects and devotionals represent a basic starting point. They can be used as-is or adapted to suit the needs of a particular community, space or group of volunteers — feel free to expand, adjust, and improve each lesson as your needs require. Whatever final iteration they take, these examples seek to accomplish several goals:

- Plant a seed of spiritual awareness
- Improve self-esteem
- Foster leadership qualities
- Promote individual creativity
- Increase sensory awareness
- Build relationships

Above all — be creative and enjoy your accomplishments!

Printmaking: Block Prints



Materials

- 4" x 6" Soft-Kut Blocks*
- Water-soluble Printing Ink*
- Rubbing tools*
- Cutting tools*
- Plastic Spatulas*
- Hard Rubber Brayers*
- 9" x 12" Printmaking Paper*
- Waxed Paper
- Masking Tape
- Paper Towels
- Pencils

**Materials available at www.dickblick.com

Instructions

1. Setting Up

- You will need two different kinds of work stations: one where the students can sit and work on their blocks and one that will function as a separate inking/printing station.
- Blocks, cutting tools and pencils can be set at each work station or they can be distributed to each individual student on arrival.
- At the inking/printing station, use the masking tape to adhere a large piece of waxed paper to the work surface. Be sure to tape all edges securely — think of it as making a complete seal around the waxed paper. This will be the area where ink is rolled out onto brayers and then onto the cut blocks so use as much tape and waxed paper as necessary to create a station suitable to your class size.

2. Cutting the block

- Students can draw directly onto the blocks with pencils. Once a design is ready, they can use the cutting tools to cut away the rubber. Encourage students to experiment with different kinds of marks and cuts.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE** — The final block will work like a stamp: areas that are cut away will remain white, the surface that remains uncut will print black. Remind participants that the final image will be a mirror image of their block so think carefully before incorporating letterforms or words.

2. Inking the block

- Bring a finished block over to the inking / printing area.
- Using a spreading tool or hard plastic spatula, scoop a generous amount of ink onto the waxed paper. Using the spatula, spread the ink out across the work area to create an even, square area.
- Roll the brayer back and forth (both vertically and horizontally) across the ink until the roller is thoroughly, evenly coated. Try not to use too much ink! If applied too heavily, the ink will fill in the marks cut into the block.

3. Printing the block

- Take the inked roller and roll it onto the block until there is an even coating of ink on the image side.
- Move the block to a clean printing area and place it down, ink side up. Take a sheet of paper and carefully lay it across the inked block. Use one hand to hold the paper securely in place on the block. In the other hand, take a rubbing tool and rub it across the entire surface of the paper. This is the action that transfers the ink from the block to the paper. Use even, moderate pressure.
- Carefully pull the paper away from the block. Set the print aside to dry and have students sign their prints before taking them home. Students can make multiple prints from the same block and the blocks can be cleaned using warm water.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: Genesis 1:26–27 (NLT) says,

Then God said, "Let us make people in our image, to be like ourselves. They will be masters over all life—the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the livestock, wild animals, and small animals." So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.

Main message:

God created us in His own image. Therefore, we bear the likeness of His character.

Possible discussion questions:

1. What comes to mind when you think of the word "image?"
2. Has anyone ever said that you resemble your mother or father? What does that mean to resemble your mother or father?
3. Because God created us in His own image, how is this similar to resembling your parents?
4. What are some words to describe God's character?
5. Since we resemble or were created in God's likeness, what does that say about our own character and identity?

CLOSING PRAYER

Button Mosaic Picture Frame



** Sample pictured from PVSN's etsy shop: www.etsy.com/shop.php?user_id=5503150*

Materials

- Simple picture frames. Frames with wide, flat surfaces work best for this craft project.
- Buttons
- Other decorations: old jewelry, glitter paint, mosaic tiles, puzzle pieces, etc.

Adhesive Alternate 1:

- Small hot glue guns (enough to supply a glue gun to each participant)
- Hot glue sticks
- Power strips (optional) to ensure enough outlets to plug in the hot glue guns.

Adhesive Alternate 2:

- A quick-drying craft adhesive — preferably one bottle for every one or two participants. Some options that are available:
 - Aleene's Quick Dry "Tacky" Glue
 - Quick Hold Craft Glue
 - 3M Quick Dry Tacky Adhesive
 - Scotch Quick dry adhesive

Instructions

1. Setting Up

- You will need two different kinds of work stations: one where the students can sit and work on their frames and one that will function as a decorations area. If space is at a premium, a selection of decorations and buttons can be distributed at each table.

- Each participant will be given a frame and adhesive (either a bottle of quick-drying craft glue or a hot glue gun).

2. Decorating

- Participants can use any materials to decorate and personalize their frame.
- Decorations should be kept primarily at the decorations area so that they are available to everyone. Encourage participants to take a selection of buttons and other decorative materials to their work area. Items like glitter paint should be returned to the decorations station when they are finished using them.
- Decorations can be minimal or totally over-the-top. Encourage participants to have fun!
- **IMPORTANT NOTE:** The guns and the hot glue are extremely hot. Please advise participants to handle them with care.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: 1 Corinthians 12

When Paul discussed the members of Christ's body in 1 Corinthians 12, he used hands, feet, ears, and eyes to emphasize the fact that "there are many parts, but one body" (v. 20), and that body grows "as each part does its work" (Eph. 4:16). (The passage from 1 Cor. is a bit lengthy so depending on the group's attention span, you can either summarize the passage or actually read the entire thing (v. 12-31).

Main Message:

We are all created with special gifts, personalities, strengths, and weaknesses. God created us this way with a specific purpose in mind, to have us play a unique role in our families, among our friends, and in our community.

Possible Discussion Questions:

1. We can see that different parts of our bodies have different jobs to do. What are some examples that come to mind?
2. What would happen if one of those parts stops working properly or stops working all together?
3. The Bible says that each one of us is like a body part. We were created to with a purpose in life to fulfill a specific job or function. What do you think your role in your families, friends, and or community is right now? (Can share in small groups or with the person sitting next to you. Or the devotional leader can share his/her own experience.)
4. What are some gifts, personalities, strengths, and or roles that you see in those around you that you are thankful for?
5. How do our differences and uniqueness make us stronger as a whole?

CLOSING PRAYER

Paintings Inspired by Joan Miro



Materials

- Samples of Miro's work
- Canvas boards
- Pencils
- Black Sharpie markers
- Acrylic paint (red, yellow, blue, black, white, gold)
- Paint brushes
- Palette paper for mixing paints
- Large plastic cups or bowls to hold water for rinsing brushes

Instructions

1. Setting Up

- Brushes, water, paints and pencils and Sharpie markers can be distributed among the work stations before participants arrive. Be sure that each work area has a good selection of paint colors and brushes.
- Each participant will be given a canvas board and a piece of palette paper.

2. Discussion

- Take a bit of time before starting the craft to show the samples of Miro's work. Discuss how he uses black lines and simple shapes to make patterns and images.
- Use this time as a reminder to the participants to have fun! There is no wrong way to paint and the finished piece can look like anything at all. Encourage them to use the Miro examples as a starting point for their own work.
- NOTE: Additional information on Joan Miro and his work can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Miro

3. Painting

- Participants can use pencils to draw directly onto their canvas board.
- When the drawing is complete, they can use the Sharpie markers to create strong black outlines and shapes. Because Sharpies are permanent markers, they will be able to paint right on top of these black marks without them running or bleeding.
- When the Sharpie drawing is complete, have participants wait a minute or two to let the ink dry before they begin painting in the shapes and colors.
- As they work, ask participants to take note as they complete the different stages of their artwork. How do they feel about the piece before they add color? If the image is representational, ask them about their subject. If the image is abstract, ask about the shapes and their arrangement on the page.
- Acrylic paints dry very fast. By the end of the devotional time, everyone's paintings should be dry to the touch and easy to transport.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: 2 Corin. 5:17 (NIV)

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come."

Main Message:

Jesus wants to give us a fresh start in life. We can trade in our old life and identity for a brand new one.

Possible discussion questions:

1. Why does the "new" (whatever it might be i.e., an object, a person, an experience, etc.) always seem more attractive than the "old?"
2. How do we see this pursuit of things new in our own lives? Going deeper, what does that say about our hearts?
3. Jesus promises to make us into a "new creation" and take away the "old" if we give our lives to Him. What do you think he means by "The old has gone, the new has come?"
4. What would a new life look like for you? What would that mean for you?

CLOSING PRAYER

Hand-bound Journals with Scripture Page



Materials

- Journal papers (all standard 8.5x11"): regular weight paper for the interior pages of the journal; Heavy card stock for front and back covers; Light, decorative paper or vellum for end sheets
- 2-Piece Steel Fasteners or simple brads for binding. (*See below*)
- Large binder clips
- Gallon-size ziplock bags — one for each participant
- All kinds of paper for decorating; anything with a pattern or pictures or colors that can be cut up and applied with glue.
- Scissors and hole punches — one to each participant
- Pencils, Markers and Colored pens
- Tape, Gluesticks, Glue
- Stamps, stickers, ribbon, glitter, stencils, labels or label-makers.

Instructions

1. Preparation — *before* the craft event

First, prepare the following types of paper:

- **A pre-printed scripture page (*optional):**
Using Microsoft Word or a desktop publishing program, set your scripture pages to print 2 to a page in landscape format.



- **Regular weight paper** for the interior pages
- **Heavy card stock** for covers
- **Light, decorative paper** for end sheets (***optional**)

- Use a paper cutter to trim all of the paper in half so that you are left with small vertical pages that are 5.5 x 8.5". The following number of pages is needed for each participant:
 - 2 cover pages (one front, one back)
 - 2 end paper pages (one front, one back) — *Optional*
 - 1 personalized scripture page — *Optional*
 - 20 blank interior pages
- Collate a full complement of pages, a large binder clip and a binding device (either two brads or a 2-piece steel fastener) into each ziplock bag.

2. Setting up — *at* the craft event

- Distribute hole punches, scissors, glue, glue sticks and a large selection of decoration supplies to each work station.
- Each participant will be given a pre-assembled ziplock bag containing the supplies outlined above.

2. Decorating and Assembling

- Students can use any materials to decorate and personalize the cover (and interior pages) of their journal.
- When a journal is ready to be bound, be sure to assemble all of the pages in the correct order (ie: front cover, scripture page, blank interior pages, back cover).
- Use a large binder clip on the **RIGHT HAND SIDE** of the pages to secure the pages together. This will leave the left hand side of the book clear for binding.
- Mark the spots on the cover where holes will need to be punched for the fasteners. Using the hole punch, punch holes through each page of the book and insert fasteners.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: **Philippians 4:6-7**

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Main Idea: Pray for your fears and anxiety.

Possible discussion questions:

1. What are some fears that worry you?
2. Which of them have you been able to handle on your own? Which do you think God can't handle?
3. When are you more likely to pray? Least likely to pray?
4. Can God use anxiety in your life?

CLOSING PRAYER

Bookmarks



Materials

- Beads for decoration (larger beads are better)
- Ribbons for length of bookmark
- Yarn, string or ribbon to make the tassel
- Scissors and 3x3 inch square of cardboard
- Needle-nose pliers and wire cutters
- Gallon- or quart-size ziplock bags (one for each participant)
- 6x6 inch styrofoam sheets (often used for packing and shipping, approximately 1/8" thick) — one for each participant
- Plastic bowls — enough to hold the beads and decorations distributed to each work station
- Wire — any thin gauge brass or silver

Instructions

1. Preparation — *before* the craft event

This craft will run more smoothly with a little bit of pre-class preparation. Take the time to prepare gallon- or quart-size ziplock bags containing the following supplies, one for each participant:

1. Approximately two feet of ribbon
2. Six inches of brass or silver wire
3. One 6x6 styrofoam sheet
4. One 3x3 inch cardboard square, wrapped 60-80 times with the thread/yarn/ribbon that will be used to create the tassel. Also include one length of thread/yarn/ribbon cut to approximately five inches long and another cut to about 15 inches long.

The remaining supplies (needle-nose pliers, wire cutters and beads) can be distributed to each table or work station the night of the craft.

2. Setting up — at the craft event

- Distribute wire cutters, needle nosed pliers and a large selection of beads to each work station.
- Each participant will be given a pre-assembled ziplock bag containing the supplies outlined above.

3. Making the tassel

- Take the cardboard square that has been wrapped with string and the two lengths of string — this will become the tassel.
- Take the short 5 inch string and slide it through the top of the tassel on the cardboard until it comes out the other side of the string on the card. Make a loop with the 5 inches of thread. Leave half inch opening for the loop. Tie a knot, and slide the knot under all the thread, clip long edges off. Take the tassel off the cardboard.
- Next, take the scissors and clip through the bottom of the threads on the cardboard. (Be sure the edges are trimmed straight across the bottom for a neat tassel.)
- Wind the remaining 15 inch piece of string a quarter inch from the top and around the tassel. Leave both ends out so you can tie a knot in the string. Clip the string and tuck the knot under the string so it doesn't show.

4. Wiring & Beading

- Bend the wire in half. Arrange the largest bead in the middle of the wire. Design beads on both sides of the wire. Save 3/4 inch of wire at the top of your bead work to make a loop.
- Twist the wire all the way to the top and clip so there is about 3/4 inch left on the top. Use the needle-nose pliers to make a loop. Slide the 2 feet of ribbon through the wire loop.

5. Finishing Touches

- Take the ribbon and put both ends through the loop of the tassel. Tie a knot in the ribbon and clip the edge of the ribbon on a diagonal. Leave about half inch of ribbon at the end. Your book mark is finished!

DEVOTIONAL

Bible Verse: TBD

Main Message: TBD

Possible Discussion Questions: TBD

CLOSING PRAYER

Personalized Notecards



* Sample pictured from AndreaStamps' etsy shop: [etsy.com/shop.php?user_id=5850461](https://www.etsy.com/shop.php?user_id=5850461)

Materials

- Blank foldover cards and matching envelopes — both A6 and A7 sizes work well for this project. (In New York City, these can be purchased in bulk from Jam Paper: www.jampaper.com)
- Pretty ribbon for tying the invitations together into a package at the end of the session
- All kinds of paper, fabric, ribbon, etc. for decorating
- Scissors (enough to supply one to each participant)
- Markers and Colored pens
- Tape, Gluesticks, Glue, Staple Guns
- Stamps, stickers, glitter
- Stencils, labels or label-makers
- Anything else to decorate with!

Instructions

1. Setting Up

- You will need two different kinds of work stations: one where the students can sit and work on their notecards and one that will function as a decorations area. If space is at a premium, a selection of decorations can be distributed at each table.
- Each participant will be given 6 blank notecards and 6 envelopes

2. Decorating

- Students can use any materials to decorate and personalize the inside and outside of their notecards.

- Two details to keep in mind for the decorations: First, heavy decorations will increase the weight of the cards which will then incur additional postage. Second, decorations on the envelopes should be kept to a minimum to ensure that the cards meet postal regulations.
- Decorations should be kept primarily at the decorations area so that they are available to everyone. Encourage participants to take a particular pen or decorative paper back to the work area and then return them to the decorations table when they are finished.

3. Assembling

- Once the decorations are complete and all glue/paint/ink is fully dry, wrap each package of notecards and envelopes together with a pretty ribbon. This makes for a beautiful package that can either be used by the participant or given as a gift.

4. Additional notes

- Consider doing this project in November so that the cards are available for gift-giving in December.
- Depending on your program budget, consider purchasing stamps to give to each participant so that it is easy (and affordable) to send their works of art to friends or family.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: I Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Main message:

Encourage one another.

Possible discussion questions:

1. What are some things you find encouraging?
2. What are ways that you can encourage your friends and family? Be Specific, what you find encouraging others may not. (To single moms: how can you encourage your children?)
3. Is there any benefit to you from encouraging others? Where are places you can draw encouragement from?
4. Instead of a negative criticism, how can you give positive constructive criticism?

CLOSING PRAYER

Stained Glass Votives



**Sample pictured from V Silcox Design's etsy shop: www.etsy.com/shop.php?user_id=5695473*

Materials

- Glass votives (Can be purchased at a local dollar store or thrift store. Occasionally local church will have extras that can be donated. As an alternative use glass plates, cups or vases.)
- Paintbrushes
- Water
- Toothpicks
- Bottles of Gallery Glass Paint or Liquid Rainbow Paint



Instructions

1. Setting Up

- Cover the work area with newspaper or disposable tablecloths.
- Supplies can be set at each work station or they can be distributed to each individual student on arrival.

2. Painting the glass

- Make sure plenty of liquid rainbow paint or gallery glass paint is available for each student / table.
- Squeeze paint out of tube covering the area you want to paint. If you are right handed, start from the left and work to the right. If you are left handed, work the opposite way.
- Let the paint dry.
- Finished pieces are for decoration, only — they are NOT FOODSAFE and should not be put in the oven or washed except with a damp cloth.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible Verse: John 8:12

Jesus declared, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"

Main Message:

Jesus is the light of the world. He is our light in a dark world.

Possible Discussion Questions:

1. What can you do in the light that you can't do in the dark?
2. Why do living things (humans, plants, animals, etc.) need light? What happens to them if they are kept in the dark?
3. Jesus says that He is the light of the world. What do you think He means by that?
4. Jesus also says that we walk in darkness. What do you think He means by that?
5. How would knowing and having the light of life change the way we view our lives now? Would our lives look any different?

CLOSING PRAYER

Clay Christmas Ornaments

Image to come.

Materials

- Activa Air Dry Clay in Terracotta; 1-2 pounds per participant**
- Wooden rolling pins; plan for 3-4 people per rolling pin*
- A good variety of cutting, sculpting and smoothing tools*
Dick Blick carries a collection of inexpensive plastic tools called the "Duron Plastic Sculpting Tools Set". Each set has 12 different tools. Depending on the number of participants, a few of these sets will serve for the whole class.
- A variety of mark-making tools:
 1. *Things found at home:* Plastic forks and knives, Dull pencils (sharp pencils will perforate the clay), Old pieces of jewelry or lace (to use as stamps), Anything that will make an interesting impression on the clay surface.
 2. *Art Tools:* Clay Stamps, Rolling Wooden tools, Continuous Design Tools, Clay Hammers*
- Festive ribbon (red, green, gold, silver)
- Sturdy paper plates (for transporting ornaments home)

*Materials available at www.dickblick.com

**This clay may stain fabric — handle with care (or bring a selection of old shirts to use as smocks)

Instructions

1. Setting Up

- Before the participants arrive, cut the clay into workable pieces; roughly 1/2 pound sections. (A one pound piece of clay is roughly the size of a grapefruit.) Keep these portions of clay in one central location and distribute them to the participants as they are ready to use them. This will help prevent unused clay from drying out.
- Cut lengths of ribbon to be used as hanging loops — use your discretion. These will be tied onto the finished ornaments.
- A selection of rolling pins, cutting/shaping tools and cookie cutters can be distributed at each work station.
- Give each participant a single ball of clay to begin.

2. Creating

- Students can roll out their pieces of clay into roughly 1/4" thick pancakes. They can then use cookie cutters to create ornament shapes or they can use the cutting tools to make their own shapes. Encourage the participants to experiment with mark-making —there is no wrong way to make a Christmas ornament!

3. Finishing

- As each ornament is completed, use a pencil to punch a hole near the top. This is where the ribbon will thread through to make a hanger. (Try not to make it too close to the edge to avoid cracking.)
- As each ornament is completed, give a new ball of clay. Students can make as many ornaments as they like until the clay is finally used up (or until time is out for the session).
- Clay will be fully hardened in 24 hours. The semi-soft ornaments can be transported home on sturdy paper plates.

DEVOTIONAL

Bible verse: Isaiah 64:8

"Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand."

Main Message:

God is the one in control of and shaping our lives. He molds us through struggles and experiences into lovely and useful pottery.

Possible Discussion Questions:

1. Describe what the piece of clay looked like when you first got it.
2. What did you have to do to the clay to make it into what you had designed in your mind?
3. Imagine that you are the piece of clay. How did you feel when your designer was trying to mold you into what he/she wanted?
4. What was the purpose behind all the shaping, pinching, and molding?
5. In the Bible it says that we are the clay and God is the potter. How do you respond to the thought of being clay in the Potter's hands? (Some possible responses might be the following.)
 - I trust God to shape my life to accomplish His purposes in and through me.
 - I'm comforted by the thought that God is in control of the events in my life.
 - It makes me uneasy to think about the process clay must go through to become a useful vessel.
 - I don't like the idea of being clay at all. I am responsible for shaping my own personality, character, and destiny.

(Adapted from "Lessons From Clay" by Wendy Lawton, *Discipleship Journal* Issue #115 January/February 2000)

CLOSING PRAYER