

Jeremiah Learns Lessons from a Potter



Scripture Reference: [Jeremiah 18-19](#)

Suggested Emphasis: God is in control of nations and of our lives.

Story Overview:

Jeremiah continued to preach and prophesy the word of the Lord as he watched the Kings of Judah lead the kingdom to its downfall. God sent Jeremiah to watch a potter at work. In watching the potter mould the clay, Jeremiah learned that Judah was in the hands of God just as the clay was in the hands of the potter. Later, The Lord told Jeremiah to destroy one of the potter's clay jars by smashing it in front of the leaders of Judah. This showed how that the Kingdom of Judah would be destroyed if the people did not turn to God.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring pottery items (and/or pictures) to class today. Help show the children the rings that appear in the pottery and how the bottom is often a different texture and/or color. If possible, show pictures of a potter's wheel. "Pottery making has been around for thousands of years. We can even read about pottery in the Old Testament. In today's story we are going to learn about a prophet named Jeremiah and what happened when he visited a potter."

The Story:

Jeremiah was a prophet of God. God would give messages to Jeremiah and Jeremiah would preach the message to the people. Sometimes the people did not like the messages that Jeremiah preached. He sometimes told them that they were sinful. He warned them that God would destroy their country if they did not stop sinning.

One time God gave Jeremiah a message in a special way. He told Jeremiah to go to the house of a potter. A potter was someone who made pottery. They used clay to make bowls, lamps, plates and lots of other kinds of dishes.

The potter would take some soft clay and place it on a small round table. The potter would use his feet to make the table spin around and around. He would use his hands to squeeze

and shape the clay until it was exactly like he liked it. Then he would put it in a very hot oven called a kiln and bake it until it was hard.

After the clay was baked and hard, the potter could not change its shape. But when the clay was still soft, the potter could change its shape as much as he wanted.

Jeremiah watched the potter work. The potter spun the wheel and put his hands on the clay. Soon the clay began to take shape and look like a dish. As Jeremiah watched, something happened to the clay. Maybe there was a stone in the clay or some straw. Something was making the potter unhappy. The potter finally gave up and decided to throw the clay away and start over with some more clay.

God told Jeremiah that his message was like the potter's shop. God was like the potter and the people of Judah were like the clay. God wanted to shape his people and make them into a beautiful nation. Instead, the people kept sinning. Their sin was like a stone or straw in the clay. It stopped God from making Judah into something beautiful. God told Jeremiah to tell the people that if they did not stop sinning, then he would just throw them out and let them be destroyed like the potter did to the dirty clay.

Another time God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's shop and buy a clay jar. He told Jeremiah to take the jar and preach to the people. After he preached he should smash the jar. God's message was to tell the people that if they obeyed him then he would protect them. If they did not obey him then their country would be destroyed like the jar.

Some people think that prime ministers, kings or presidents are in control of countries. But really, God is in control of every country in the world.

Review Questions:

1. What was Jeremiah's job? He was a prophet – he delivered God's messages to the people
2. What kind of shop did God tell Jeremiah to go to? Potter's shop
3. How was the nation of Judah like the potter's clay? Israel was full of sin like the clay had something in it
4. What lesson did the people learn when Jeremiah smashed a clay jar? God would destroy them if they did not obey.
5. Who controls all of the countries in the world? God

Song Suggestions:

- He's Got the Whole World in His Hands Song
- My God is So Big Song

Learning Activities and Crafts:

- [\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Ask a potter to demonstrate their work.
- Sing “Have Thine Own Way, Lord” from the church songbook. Also, “He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands.”
- Find out the names of political leaders of our city or country and have the class pray for them. Discuss the fact that God rules each nation.
- Look up countries on a world map and pray for them. You might also pray about present problems in the world (wars, famines, etc.)

Crafts:

- Use clay or salt dough to make a bowl or pot. Place a small pebble in each student’s clay so they will find it as they work. The final project can air dry or be baked in the oven.

Instructions below

Easy Homemade Salt Dough Recipe

This is such an **easy salt dough recipe** and your toddler or preschooler will **love helping** you to **make it.....**and they will **love playing with it even more!**

This recipe for salt dough requires **common and cheap** household **ingredients** and **very little time and effort**. Once cooked, it can easily be painted or decorated and will last for years.

Basic Recipe

Note: *Depending on the amount of you need - increase or decrease the quantities of this recipe.*

What You Need:

- **3 cups plain flour - plus extra for kneading**
- **1/2 cup of fine salt (table salt)**
- **1 and 1/4 cups water**
- **bowl**
- **wooden spoon**

What To Do:

1. **Put the flour and salt in a bowl.**
2. **Add the water and mix with a wooden spoon until crumbly.**
3. **Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead until it becomes smooth and elastic - 5 to 10 minutes (kids love this part).**
4. **Start making fun things.**

Note: If the dough is too sticky - add more flour, or if it's too crumbly - add more water.

Note: You can add one tablespoon of vegetable oil. The oil will make the dough a little easier to knead and work with.

Once your child has created ornaments, figurines or whatever else, it's time to dry.

If you would like your child's creations to last for years, the salt dough needs to be **dried out properly**.

It can either be air dried - but that takes way too long...or it can be dried (baked) in a slow oven.

Baking Salt Dough

It's **important** that your oven temperature does not exceed 300 degrees otherwise the ornament may not dry out in the middle.

What To Do:

1. **Have your child place their little creations onto a baking paper lined tray.**
2. **You can then place the tray in the oven.**
3. **Depending on the thickness and size of the ornaments, drying times will vary from 1/2 hour to 3 hours.**
4. **Check the items regularly, and once they feel rock hard they're ready.**
5. **Allow to cool completely before painting and decorating.**

Air Drying Salt Dough

If you have the time, **and** your child has the patience, you can leave their little creations to dry naturally. Depending on the thickness and size, it can take anywhere from 1 to 3 days to dry.

Using Food Coloring

Simply add about a tablespoon of food coloring to the water in Step 2 of the basic recipe above. Then continue with the recipe.

Depending on how much food coloring you use - and you don't need to use much - you can get some pretty vivid colors. Although, it can stain your hands when kneading the dough - if you use too much.



Using Paint

Another way to color salt dough is by using paint, however this can get very messy and takes ages to work the paint into the dough. If you need a long activity to keep the kids busy - this is the way to go.

You can use [acrylic paint](#) - very messy and you need about 1/2 cup of paint to get a decent color - but fun for kids...



Tips for Playing with and Storing Salt Dough

Playing

Salt dough can be treated just like **play dough**. Cookie cutters, rolling pins, shaped stamps, blocks, jar lids and other fun gadgets, bit and bobs can be used to make fun things out of the dough.

Salt dough can be stored in the fridge - wrapped in plastic - for up to a couple of days.

When not in use - cover it with plastic or put in a large plastic zip lock bag, or store in an airtight container.