

Series: Who is Who

Lesson 2—The Potter and the Clay

OVERVIEW

Bible Passages: Jeremiah 18:1-12

Key Verses: Isaiah 45:9-12; 64:8; 29:13-16.

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Consider what the idea of God as a “Potter” means.
- Consider what the idea of you being “clay” in the Potter’s hand means.
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed Sunday School.
- Pray for each student by name.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

The first time a student is absent, give them a call. Following the second absence, send them a postcard. The third week they are absent, pay them a visit.

Think about it: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.” Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Activity: Create It

(As students enter the room give each a lump of Play-Do and ask them to create something while you discuss the following questions.)

- *If you had unlimited power for a day and could do anything, what would you do? (Go around the room and let each student answer. If students needs more time to think, they can “pass” but only once and be sure to come back to them.)*
- *If you could change anything about the world, what would it be? (Go around the room and let each student answer. If students needs more time to think, they can “pass” but only once and be sure to come back to them.)*

- *What are you making with your clay and why?* (Go around the room and let each student answer.)

- *What does clay have to do with the Christian life?*

- *The Bible compares our relationship to God as the Potter and the Clay, but before we talk about what that means, what are some other things that God compares our relationship to Him as?* (As Father and son, as a shepherd and sheep, as a vine and its branches, etc.)

NOTE: Have the students put the Play-Do back in their containers.

Activity: Who Am I?

SAY: When we take a look at who God is, we catch a glimpse of who we are in relationship to Him. Last week we listed as many descriptions of God as we could in one minute. They included God being a rock and refuge, a friend and fortress, a Savior and Father. Now in one minute I want to see how many descriptions of the Christian you can give me. In other words, who am I? Ready...Go!

(Let the students randomly give descriptions. Here are some examples: The Christian is...saved, bought with the blood of Christ, a royal priesthood, a chosen people, redeemed, surrendered to God, special, God's delight, God's child, God's treasure, made pure, a saint of God, a new creation, being renewed in the spirit of his mind, be transformed to likeness of Christ.)

- *Was it easier to list descriptions of God or of Christians?*

SAY: Some people struggle to live the Christian life because they don't know who they are in Christ. Today we're going to look at what it means that God is the potter and you are the clay.

BIBLE LESSON

Choose a volunteer—To Read Jeremiah 18:1-6.

- *What is God painting a picture of here?* (His ability and right to mold a person's life to be what He wants it to be.)
- *What do you think it means by a vessel that was spoiled?* (The slightest imperfection in a vessel would ruin the whole creation.)
- *What are some things that could spoil your life?* (Any sin you commit or any act of obedience to Christ that you are not willing to do—i.e., baptism, active church attendance, etc.)
- *How do these verses relate to you?* (If a creation had an imperfection, the potter didn't throw it away. Instead he would smash it, re-lump it and begin molding it all over again. He does the same in the lives of those who live in sin—He tears them down that He may make them new again)

Choose a volunteer—To Read Jeremiah 18:7-12.

- *How does it make you feel that God will uproot, pull down, or destroy a nation that is in rebellion against Him?*
- *Do you think God uproots, pulls down, or destroys an individual's life who is living in sin? If so, how? (In the Old Testament, the covenant was with the nation of Israel. Not so under the New Covenant—now the relationship is with individuals. That God will uproot, pull down, or destroy those who rebel against Him that He may later build and plant is a theme that is found throughout the Bible. It takes pressure to re-mold the clay; it sometimes takes pressure to re-mold the believer too.)*

SAY: A key point to the verses we read is that the potter made what pleased him—not what pleased the clay. A minute ago you made something, but you didn't ask the clay what it wanted to be. It had no choice.

- *How is this the same or different from your relationship with God? (Many believers think they are in a “partnership” with God—that it's somehow on a give-and-take level, but this is not a Biblical view of the Christian life. The true follower of Christ is fully surrendered to anything and everything that God wants to do in his life. Although the believer has a choice, that choice is surrendered as a permanent “yes” to whatever God asks or desires. In other words, the believer's choices fall in line with God's desires.)*

- *On a scale of 1 to 10 how surrendered are you?*

- *Would you complain or grumble if God did things in your life that you didn't desire?*
- *In order to re-make you in His image, what if there were certain things in your life that the Lord would first need to pull down and uproot—would you be willing to let Him? (Actually, this question is a contradiction. God doesn't need your permission to “let Him.” If you are a Christian and there is sin in your life right now, then know that God is already at work to pull it down and uproot it so that He can re-build and re-plant you in His image.)*

- *If there is sin in your life right now or an area of your life that is not surrendered to God, are you willing right now to repent of it and turn away from it that God may bless you? (God will never bless sin and He will never have His hand on one who walks in sin. To live in sin is to live outside His presence. To live in sin is to choose a path of destruction and pain from which only God can deliver.)*

KEY VERSE

Read the following verses. After each add to a list of Characteristics of the Potter and Characteristics of the Clay. You may want to keep this list on a marker board where all can see it.)

Choose a volunteer—To Read Isaiah 45:9-12

● *In these verses what characteristics of the Potter do you see?*

● *What are some characteristics of the clay?*

Sample Characteristics of the Potter (God):

- (1) He is the Creator of all.
- (2) He has all power.

Sample Characteristics of the Clay:

- (1) Woe to him who quarrels with His maker.
- (2) The clay doesn't have a right to question what His maker is doing and why

● *What does it mean to "quarrel with His maker"?*

● **IMPORTANT QUESTION:** *Is it okay to ask God about things He is doing in your life or to question Him if you don't understand?* (Of course it is. The symbolism of the Potter and the Clay pictures our surrender and God's authority but keep in mind the other relationship-pictures God has given us such as the Father and the son. If a dad did something a child didn't understand and that child asked about it, would the father hush him into silence or chastise him because of his desire to know the father's heart and reason. Of course not. It's okay to ask God what He is doing—Job did. Job, who was a righteous man, even expressed his frustration toward God. God made you with feelings and God understands what you're made of, but don't let feelings guide you. Stay surrendered to His will and continue following Him even if you don't understand what He is doing.)

Choose a volunteer—To Read Isaiah 64:8

● *What characteristics of the Potter do you see?*

● *What are some characteristics of the clay?*

Sample Characteristics of the Potter (God):

He is also a Father.

Sample Characteristics of the Clay:

We are the work of His hands

● *Is there anything in your life (besides sin and the consequences of sin) that you don't like? If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?* (God made you. You are the work of His hands. He fashioned you the way He wanted you both inside with desires and dreams as well as on the outside with the nose and freckles that you have. God chose your family. God chose how you look. God chose the pitch of your voice. Nothing escaped his attention—You were created special the way you are so that you could fulfill a specific plan that no one else can fulfill. Never be down on yourself for how God chose to create you—He made no mistake. He makes no junk.)

Choose a volunteer—To Read Isaiah 29:13-16

- *In these verses what characteristics of the Potter do you see?*
 - *What are some characteristics of the clay?*

Sample Characteristics of the Potter (God):

- (1) He sees all things.
- (2) He knows all things.
- (3) God judges sin.

Sample Characteristics of the Clay:

- (1) The clay cannot deny the existence of the potter.
- (2) The clay cannot judge the decisions of the potter.

WRAP IT UP

- *What are some areas in which you believe Christians struggle with surrender? (Time, money, etc.)*
 - *What are some areas of your life that you might need to more fully surrender to God?*
(Suggestions: Obeying what God wants you to do, not being down on yourself since you are the creation of God, etc.)
- *In your life right now which would you say is going on: Is God pulling down, uprooting and destroying or is He building and planting?*
 - *Why do you think God made you?*
- *How does it make you feel that the plans for your life are not in your hands but in the hands of the Potter who made you:*
 - Glad because I don't have to work things out myself. All I have to do is keep following God and trusting Him and I'll get to where He created me to go.
 - Nervous because I want to be in control. What if God created me for something I don't like? (This is a great question that is usually resolved when a person realizes that God also created them with the desires to do what He created them for—In other words, when you are doing what God made you to do, you'll be completely fulfilled.)
 - I don't like it because I like choosing things for myself. This is a statement of non-surrender. In other words, I still want to be in control.

Prayer Time

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

