

## “IMPRESS YOURSELF” TEXTURED PENDANTS

### ART, SOCIAL STUDIES/CULTURAL AND MATH

**GRADE LEVEL: ALL GRADES,  
WITH DIFFICULTY INCREASING WITH AGE**

#### OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn the basics of working with polymer clay and experiment with textures.

#### MATERIALS

Polymer Clay	beading wire
beads	rubber stamps
black stamp pads	texture tools
paper clips	toaster oven
extension cords	hot pad
aluminum foil	waxed paper
masking tape	corn starch
paper	hand lotion
wooden skewers or round toothpicks	

#### PREPARING THE CLAY

1. Condition the clay by warming it in your hands. Knead the clay until it is smooth.
2. Roll the clay to measure approximately 1/8 inch thick, a little wider than the width of your rubber stamp, and about a half inch longer than your stamp.
3. For an easy release of the rubber stamps, dust with baby powder or cornstarch, or spray lightly with water.

#### SAFETY

Polymer clay contains a chemical that keeps the clay soft until it is baked. Although the packages of clay are marked non-toxic, it is generally agreed among those who work with polymer clay that the following precautions should be followed to avoid any possible problems from the plasticizer:

- Never use the tools you use for clay for food ever again. This includes trays, knives, etc.
- Never make a vessel with the clay that might be used for food or drink.
- Never breathe the fumes from baking the clay.
- Never make an ashtray or any other item that might be burned.
- The plasticizer in the clay has the ability to soften or mar some plastics or other surfaces. Wrapping it in waxed paper first is one good way to store it because the clay can react with some plastic boxes or bags.
- If you want to varnish your beads, it's best to use a varnish that is sold to use with that brand of polymer clay. Some other varnishes react with the clay and become sticky over time. If you want to paint the clay, acrylic is a good choice.
- Clean your hands thoroughly after working with the clay. Scrubbing with hand lotion and paper towels followed by a good washing with hand soap works well.

#### APPLYING TEXTURE AND IMAGES

If you want pendants with a surface texture, it's best to apply the texture before you drill the hole so that the hole doesn't close up as you press objects into the clay.

Rubber stamps: Press the rubber stamp onto the clay. The cornstarch can be washed off after it is baked. You can also press the clay between two rubber stamps to make textures on two sides at once.

Variation: Cover a dark color with a layer of translucent. Coat with cornstarch then press in rubber stamps. The dark clay under translucent clay will show more where the impression is deepest, creating another kind of interesting effect.

Found objects: Press interesting textured objects into the clay after dusting the clay with cornstarch.

Salt: Roll or press in salt then bake. When the salt is washed off with water, the surface texture will resemble stone, cement, pitted metal, or coral.

# CLASS EXPERIENCE

## CREATING THE PENDANT

1. Cut your clay into a shape that is a little wider than your rubber stamp and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch longer than the longest part of the stamp. If you have any waste, you may use this to create beads to dangle from the bottom of your pendant, mixing and matching with other beads.
2. If you want a colored impression, fully ink your rubber stamp before pressing it into your clay. Remember to leave space at the bottom to punch out “dangle” holes and enough room at the top to create the attaching loop. (More on this later.) Do not press so hard to go through your clay or to leave an impression from the side of the stamp.
3. Carefully lift off the rubber stamp.
4. Use the wooden skewer to create holes along the bottom for wires and dangles. Be sure to space them apart wide enough so your beads don't bang into each other and break. Usually three or four dangles work well.
5. There are numerous ways to join the pendant to the necklace. You are only limited by your imagination!

Some suggestions are:

- Sandwich clay around a paperclip with the small end of the clip protruding from the top of the clay.
- Use pliers to make a zigzag with wire starting one inch above the top of the clay and ending one inch below the bottom of the clay. Sandwich this between two layers of clay, allowing the zigzag to protrude out of the sides if you like the look.
- Loosely roll the top edge of the clay forward, forming a tube two times the size of cord or chain you plan to use. The clay shrinks a little and this allows enough room for the cord to slide through. If you like the look, the roll can be made all as one or divide your clay and make two smaller loops.
- Skewer jewelry wire through pendant from one side to the other at the top of the pendant. If you use this method, your clay will need to be at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch thick at the top.

## BAKING

The temperatures at which polymer clay matures vary slightly by brand, but generally range from 225 degrees to 275 degrees. The lower temperatures are usually for transparent or light colored clay. Follow the directions for the brand of clay you are using regarding baking temperatures and times. Be sure to keep an eye on your projects—they can burn quickly!

## PERSONAL TOUCHES

Once your pendant is cooled, you may add wire or knotted cord through the bottom holes to create the dangles.

You may use purchased beads or hand created beads and found objects to add character to your pendant.

Add rattail cord, jewelry jute, or chain to form necklace.

## RESOURCES:

- Nemanich, Cheryl. *Stamping Polymer Clay & Wire*. Fr. Worth, Texas: Design Originals, 2002.
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- McMillan, Dotty. *Creative Ways with Polymer Clay*. New York, New York, Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. 2002.
- Miller, Sharilyn. *Rubber Stamped Jewelry*. Cincinnati, Ohio: North Light Books, 2003.
- Roche, Nan. *The New Clay: Techniques and Approaches to Jewelry Making*. Rockville, Maryland: Flower Valley Press, 1991.
- McGuire, Barbara A. *Foundations in Polymer Clay Design*. Iola, Wisconsin: Krause Publications, 1999.