

SHAPES for Sharing

by Kelly Brinkmann

Peter uses handmade pottery to share the Gospel at Christmas.

Peter B. holds up his handmade clay ornament. “This is just like the angels that were there on Jesus’ birthday!” he says.

For this 11-year-old, making ornaments is more than an art project. It’s a way for him to share his faith in Jesus.

Before Christmas, Peter invites his whole class to a party at his mom’s pottery studio in Washington, Missouri. He helps design the invitations and shops for drinks and after-school treats.

During the party, Peter teaches his classmates how to make ornaments that he’s spent weeks

designing. Peter wants the ornaments to look good, but more importantly, he creates them to tell the Christmas story. He sketches designs, then molds them out of clay. With practice, his designs get better and more detailed.

Christmas Clay

Like Peter, you can make simple shapes that share the Christmas story.

Gather

- old newspaper
- air-dry clay
- Christmas cookie cutters
- butter knife
- pencil
- fork or pattern roller
- straw
- paint
- paintbrush
- ribbon or string

Go

1. Cover table with old newspaper.
2. Roll out clay into a flat pancake, about 1/2 inch thick.
3. Cut clay into shapes using cookie cutters or a butter knife. Choose shapes that tell the Christmas story, such as a star, angel, sheep, donkey, heart, gift or candy cane (which resembles a shepherd’s staff).
4. Write your initials and the year on the back in pencil.
5. Add texture to the top of the clay using a fork or roller. Make patterns such as stripes, swirls or crosshatch.
6. Poke a hole near the top of your ornament using a straw.
7. Let the clay dry completely for 1-3 days.
8. Once it’s dry, paint your ornament.
9. Thread the ribbon or string through the hole. Hang your ornament on the Christmas tree and tell your family how it relates to the Gospel.

—Art & Souls Creative Studio

“This year, I’m going to do a star ornament,” he beams. “The star of Bethlehem hung over the stable where Jesus was born.”

Each ornament has a message. The present ornament reminds people that God sent Jesus as a gift to the world. The dove represents hope, like it did for Noah on the ark.

Party With a Purpose

On the day of the Christmas party, Peter puts on his smock. His siblings help him set out snacks and sample ornaments. Then, as a family, they pray that Peter’s classmates will feel the love of Jesus.

Kids race into the studio. They’ve been peppering Peter with questions all week.

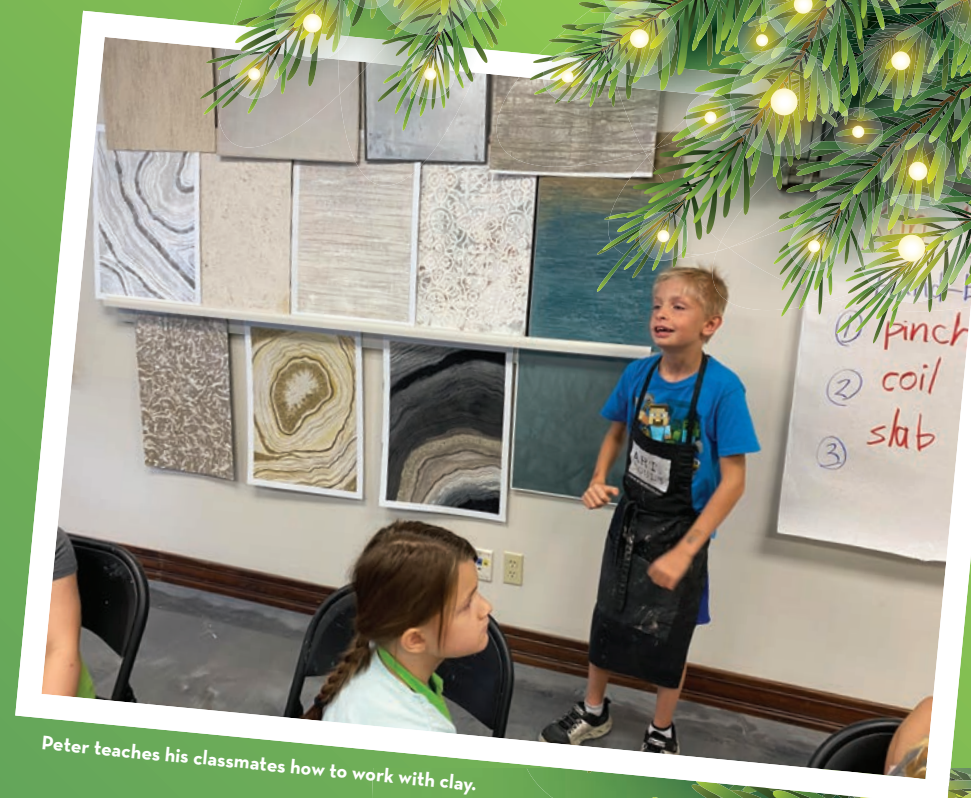
Once everyone eats a quick bite, Peter steps forward. “Today, we will be making three ornaments,” he says. “I made some to show you, like this star. I also made a heart because God loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth. My family celebrates Jesus being born on Christmas. You can make ornaments like these for your Christmas tree.”

Peter shows his friends how to flatten clay and cut it into shapes. Then they add texture using special rollers.



Peter’s Favorites

Activity: Marble runs using found materials
Food: Pizza
Color: Blue
Bible Verse: John 3:16



Peter teaches his classmates how to work with clay.

“Wow! These are really cool!” a classmate says. Peter nods and smiles.

But they’re not done until the students go to the painting station.

“The colored underglaze really makes the designs pop!” Peter explains.

A Story to Celebrate

After he and his mom fire the ornaments in the kiln and put them in gift bags, Peter walks into school carrying a big box.

“Are those our ornaments?” his friends exclaim. “Where’s mine?!”

Peter happily watches his friends unwrap their finished designs. Just like the ornaments, Peter knows God carefully crafted each of his classmates. They are precious to Him, and hopefully, the ornaments will share that message for years to come.

Peter has thrown Christmas parties for three years. At each one, he tells his friends and classmates about Jesus. Sharing the Gospel doesn’t have to be difficult, especially at Christmas.

“Start with being kind and be a friend,” Peter says. 🎁

“Just like clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in My hand.”

—Jeremiah 18:6