

Butter Dish

Creative Clay: Functional

Best suited for middle/high school students.

Duration: 1 90-minute session with a 1 45-minute decorating session

Learning Goal(s): Students will construct a butter dish using slab construction techniques.

Learning Objective(s): Students will be able to use slab construction techniques to build a functional butter dish and decorate using inspiration from ceramic artists.

Big Question(s): (1) How will I design my butter dish to be functional and interesting aesthetically? (2) How can I use a template to help me build my butter dish?



Skills/Necessary Demos: Session 1 - slab construction, slipping and scoring (scratching and attaching), cutting shapes using a template, rolling a coil for the handle *optional: imprinting texture*; Session 2 - painting, glazing

Ceramic Terms ([Claymobile Vocabulary Terms](#)):

- Clay
- Ceramics
- Slab
- Slip and Score (scratch-and-attach)
- Template
- Mishima
- Underglaze
- Glaze
- Bisque Fire (bisqueware)
- Glaze Fire (glazeware)

Other Related Terms:

- **Collage** - a combination or collection of various things (texture collage)
- **Texture** - the feel, appearance, or consistency of a surface
- **Imprint** - pressing texture making tools into clay, for example stamping, scratching, or pressing things into clay.

Variations/Modifications:

- If doing this project with younger students, slabs could be made thicker to make the piece more structurally sound.
- For older students and adults, slabs could be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch thick and a stronger emphasis could be placed on surface decorations.
- Similar templates and steps can be used to create a box by using the base as a lid.

Cultural/Artistic References:

- Ann Ruel Workshop Series: [Constructing, Underglaze Painting, and Glazing a Beautiful Butter Dish](#)
- Artist Portfolio (images of functional work including butter dishes): [Liz Zlot Summerfield](#)
- Artist Portfolio (images of functional work including butter dishes): [Carrie Day](#)
- [Butterdish Collection](#) from Clay Akar
- Demo video on YouTube: [Creating a Lidded Butter Dish from Karan's Pots and Glass](#)

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Session 1 Materials:

- Clay
- Scoring tool (or fork)
- Needle tool (or skewer)
- Slip
- Butter dish templates (see pages 5 & 6)
- Newspaper
- Optional: Texture tools
- Optional: Rolling pin

Session 2 Materials:

- Underglaze*
- Clear glaze *
- Paint brushes
- Small sponges

**Colored gloss glaze can be used in lieu of under-glaze and clear glaze.*

Construction Process:**Session 1 (90 minutes)**

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Slab construction	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form a slab from a piece of clay. 2. Place both butter dish templates on your slab. Use your needle tool to trace the shape of the template. 3. <i>Optional: Use a rolling pin to imprint texture onto your clay, or stamp different patterns.</i> 4. Cut out your shapes using the needle tool. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The slab should be about the thickness of your finger, no thinner than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. • <i>Note: You can use the palm of your hand to create the slab, or a rolling pin.</i> • Put your clay scraps off to the side to be used later for decorations and a handle.
2	Fold and attach slabs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting with your slab for the top of the butter dish (the lid), fold each wall into a box shape. <i>Note: it is easiest to do this upside down so that the dish opening is facing up.</i> 2. With the walls up, trace your finger along the folded edges making a rectangle to help crease each fold. 3. Slip and score each corner where the slab edges are connecting. Smooth all edges. 4. Repeat this process for the bottom dish, start with folding and then slip and score each attachment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using your finger, smooth the edges of the butter dish using light pressure. • <i>Note: Jagged clay pieces left behind can create sharp areas on the piece after firing.</i> • <i>Firing Note: Allow the pieces to dry thoroughly and slowly before firing to avoid the pieces warping in the kiln.</i>
3	Adding a handle	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Option 1:</i> Using your extra clay, roll a coil, fold into a "C" shape, slip and score it to attach the handle to the top of the butter dish. 2. <i>Option 2:</i> Using your extra clay, cut a small rectangular shaped slab, fold into a "C" shape, slip and score it to attach the handle to the top of the butter dish. 3. <i>Option 3:</i> Using your extra clay, create a tiny figurine to use as a knob. Slip and score it to attach the figurine to the top of the butter dish. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note: If your clay is too soft to support the weight of the handle, loosely roll a ball of newspaper and place it inside the lid to support the weight of the handle while the project dries.</i> • Make sure that students label both the lid and dish of their project prior to firing.

Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

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Construction Process: Session 2 (45 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Optional: Mishima	1. If you textured your slabs, you can enhance the surface decoration by painting your piece with underglaze, then wiping off the top layer using a moist sponge.	
2	Underglaze	1. Using a paint brush, use short brush strokes (or dab) the underglaze on the butter dish surface, inside and out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use multiple layers to achieve a richer, more opaque color. <i>Modification/Variation: Student can paint with colored gloss glazes rather than underglaze and clear glaze.</i>
3	Clear glaze	1. Let the surface dry, then coat the butter dish with clear glaze, inside and out.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If there is glaze on the bottom of the piece, it will fuse to the kiln shelf during firing. Sponge bottoms of pieces to ensure no glaze remains. Both gloss and clear glaze seal the surface of the clay body once glaze melts in the kiln, making the piece food safe. <i>Firing note: Do not stack the lid and dish when firing and be sure to wipe the bottom edge of the dish where it is touching the kiln shelf.</i>
Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.			

National Core Art Standards:

Creating - Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard #1. Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard #2. Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
Anchor Standard #3. Refine and complete artistic work.

Presenting - Interpreting and sharing artistic work
Anchor Standard #6. Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

Connecting - Relating artistic ideas and work with meaning and external context
Anchor Standard #10. Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities:

9.3. Critical Response

B. Describe works in the arts comparing similar and contrasting characteristics.

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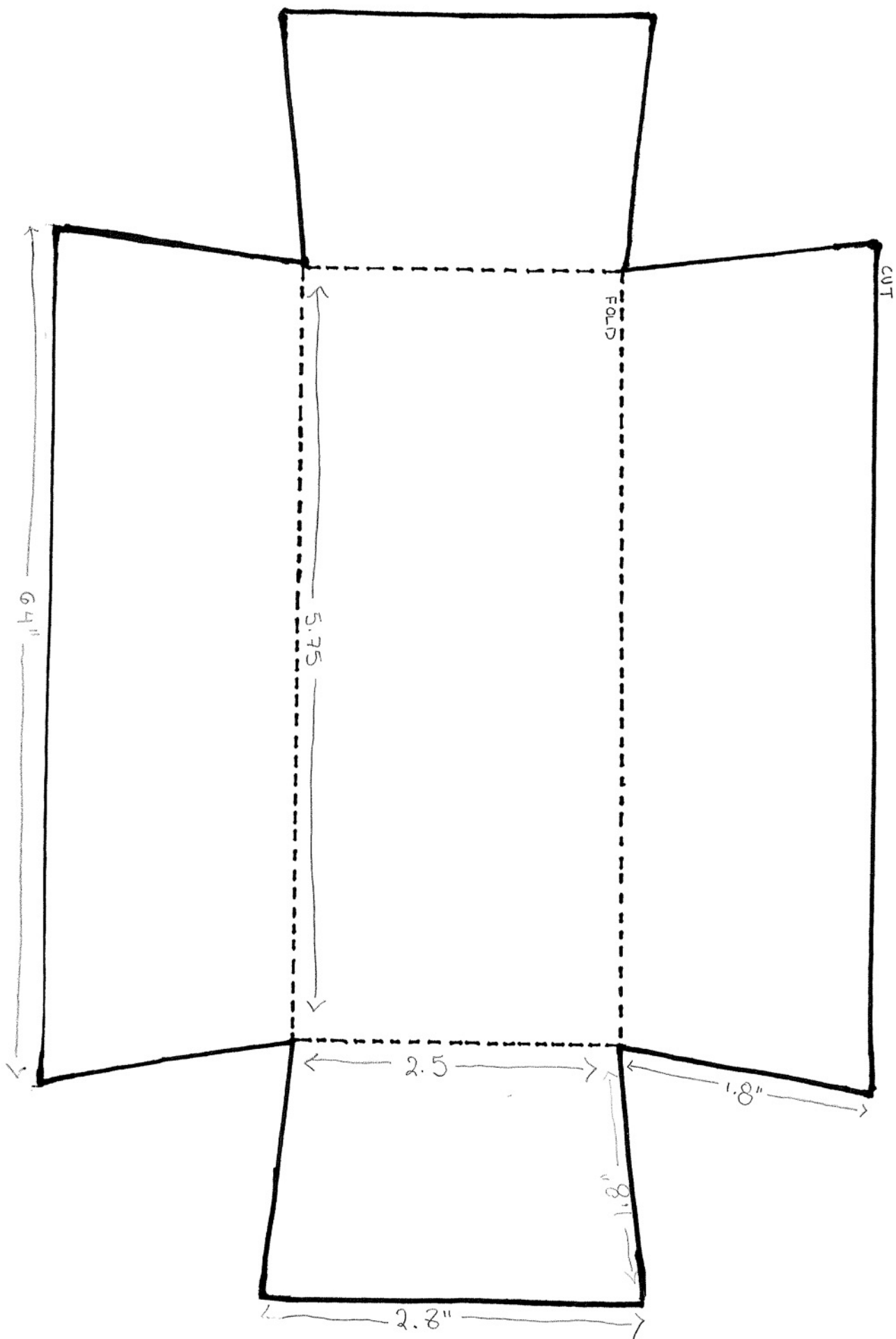
Image Resources



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BUTTER TRAY

