

Leaf (Template) Bowls

Creative Clay: Sculptural

Suited for students of all ages.

Duration: 1 90-minute session with an optional 30-minute session

Learning Goal(s): Students will demonstrate understanding of the slab building technique in creating leaf bowls.

Learning Objective(s): Students will construct leaf bowls using a slab and following templates.

Big Question(s): (1) How can I use different templates and shapes to create a bowl? (2) What things do I need to consider for my slab (i.e., thickness, use of a rolling pin, etc.)?



Skills/Necessary Demos: Session 1 - slab construction, tracing a template, painting, glazing, and sgraffito

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

- Clay
- Ceramics
- Slab
- Sgraffito
- Mishima
- Underglaze
- Glaze
- Bisque Fire (bisqueware)
- Glaze Fire (glazeware)

Variations/Modifications:

- This project works well for all ages.
- This lesson is written for leaf bowls, but could easily be adapted for any slab template bowl. For example, you could do hearts for Valentine's Day, or flowers for spring.
- The project can be extended into multiple sessions, especially for older students, by dividing the project into a building and separate decorating class. This would allow the students to roll out smaller slabs and focus more on surface decoration.

Cultural/Artistic References:

- Artist website: [Deb Williams](#)
- Artist website: [Sonya Wilkins](#)
- Artist website: [Lauren Sumner](#)

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Session 1 Materials:

- Clay
- Needle tool (or skewer)
- Template
- Mold (or bowl)
- Newspaper
- Gloss glaze*
- Underglaze*
- Clear glaze*
- Paint brushes
- *Optional: texture making tools*

Optional Session 2 Materials:

- Gloss glaze*
- Underglaze*
- Clear glaze *
- Paint brushes

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

Construction Process:

Session 1 (90 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Make the slab	1. Form a slab from a piece of clay using a rolling pin or the palm of your hand. The slab should be slightly larger than the leaf template.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The slab should be about the thickness of your finger, no thinner than a $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. • Stretch the clay quickly to avoid the canvas from absorbing too much moisture and drying out the slab.
2	Cut out the leaf	1. Place a leaf template over the slab. Trace the shape with your needle tool first. Then, cut it out using the needle tool. 2. Use your finger to smooth the cut edge of the leaf. 3. <i>Note: It is easiest to label the bottom of the piece now before placing it in the mold.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clay scraps can be reused or recycled. • To avoid sharp edges after firing, be sure to smooth both the bottom and top edges of the cut slab. • <i>Optional: Rather than using a template, you could use real leaves as the template.</i> • <i>Optional: You could also use different texture tools to make patterns on the surface of the leaf.</i>
3	Bowl mold	1. Place a sheet of newspaper on the bowl. 2. Center your slab on the mold. 3. Gently press your slab into the mold to help the slab take the form of the mold.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any type of bowl will work as a mold, just make sure that your template fits inside your mold prior to cutting the slab.

4	Decorate (can also be done in session 2)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Cover the surface with underglaze, then scratch designs into the surface with a needle tool (sgraffito). Finish with clear glaze after drying. Option 2: Cover the entire surface with a colored gloss glaze. Option 3: Scratch designs directly into the unpainted clay surface. Then decorate after firing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a hair dryer or heat gun to help dry the underglaze layer to prepare for sgraffito. Use a light pressure when scratching on the clay to avoid cutting all the way through. Remove any clay pieces that fall on the surface when scratching to avoid sharp areas after firing.
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Collect all projects and fire them in the kiln.

Construction Process: Optional Session 2 (30 minutes)

	ACTIVITY	STEPS	DISCUSSION POINTS
1	Enhance surface decoration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you chose option 3, from Activity 4 above, you can paint the surface of the leaf bowl, then wipe away the glaze to enhance the left textures (mishima). 	
2	Glaze	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cover the entire surface with a colored gloss glaze. Or, underglaze and clear glaze. 	<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.

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.

Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities:

9.1. Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts
A. Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
B. Recognize, know, use, and demonstrate a variety of appropriate arts elements and principles to produce, review and revise original works in the arts.
C. Know and use fundamental vocabulary within each of the arts forms.
H. Use and maintain materials, equipment and tools safely at work and performance spaces.

Image Resources



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