

The Clay Teacher.

These instructions **MUST** all be followed for satisfactory results!

Finishing Clay Projects the Air Dry Way

When the projects have been completed, place them all together on a flat surface and lightly cover them with the plastic sheet provided over night to allow them to “equalize”. (This just means the moisture content in all the big and little pieces reaches the same level.) The next day uncover them for about 4 hours, then cover them again through the second night. After that they must be left open to completely dry. Before you paint make sure the clay is dry. It will change from dark grey to light grey, almost white. When the project has turned colour all over, it is time to paint. It is very important they are completely dry so **if in doubt wait another day or two.**

PAINT THE BOTTOMS FIRST

We suggest painting be a “team” activity with students working in pairs for the initial paint applications. One student can hold a project so its bottom is facing up and the other student can apply paint. The paint dries rapidly so the student can hold the project for a few minutes before setting it down on the paper. Once all the bottoms are done then the students can work on their own. Acrylic paint will wash off of hands but may not wash out of clothing. Wear your painting clothes or a smock (a garbage bag with holes cut in it works fine!)

PLEASE NOTE The best paint for this type of project is the cheapest type you can buy. (Dollar Store® or Walmart®) These cheaper paints are already thinned and go much further than the expensive paints. Choose one colour to paint the project in two stages as described next, and when it is dry, you can decorate and accentuate in different colours. For example, when painting a Christmas, winter, or arctic scene, paint the entire piece white and then add red and green trim.. Apply two coats of paint to the bottom and up the sides a bit, allow to dry, turn the project over and with the dry bottom side down, apply two coats to the top. The acrylic paint will soak into the clay. It is better to use more paint than less.

ALL SURFACES MUST BE GENEROUSLY COVERED

If a piece of the sculpture should come loose there are two ways of reattaching it. The number one method is to use paint as glue, put a blob between the pieces and stick! You can also use a glue gun, however you must paint both surfaces, allow to dry, then glue gun them together. After the glue sets, paint again.

PLEASE NOTE Glue will stick to painted surfaces but **NOT** to the bare clay surface.

In all cases, when the paint is dry, use the Krylon® Low Odour Clear Gloss Sealant provided. (More sealant may be purchased at Canadian Tire® or Michael's®)

It is better to have a teacher spray seal the projects after the students have finished painting them and the paint has dried. Cover the table with the paper provided and seal all the projects at the same time. The sealant is low odour, meaning it does have a bit of an odour, however it is not harsh at all and dissipates quickly.

When applying the sealant, as with the paint, seal the bottom first by turning over the project and spraying. Try to place the project so only the bottom is sprayed and the sealant can not stick to the paper. Allow the bottom to completely dry, for a minimum of at least one hour. Elevate the project on something smaller than the diameter of the bottom, for example the caps to disposable soft drink or water bottles, and spray, trying not to let the project touch the paper.

Once completely sealed **allow to dry over night.** (The projects actually “toughen up” over the next two or three days.) If the sealant sticks to the paper and removes some paint revealing the clay, simply reapply the paint to the spot and spot seal it again.

The projects are now finished and can be sent home in the paper bags provided. **NO BACK PACKS!!!** The projects are sturdy and will stand up to years of normal use as a decoration. They can be washed with a damp cloth.

If you have any questions about finishing or painting, contact The Clay Teacher at 780-218-9974 or by email at info@theclayteacher.com.