

## Explorations

Grade Level: 2-3

Curricular Area: Visual and Performing Arts

### CLAY BIRDS



#### WHAT YOU NEED:

- Clay (we used Crayola Air-Dry Clay)
- Clay Tools and Gadgets (toothpicks, wooden craft sticks, rulers, screws, nuts, bolts, firm toothbrushes)
- Newspaper or scrap canvas pieces to cover your work surface.
- Containers and sponges

- Water
- Paint (we used Crayola Washable Metallic Paint)
- Mod Podge (optional)
- Feathers

### WHAT YOU DO:

Each child will need a three small handfuls of clay for each bird they will be making. One larger than the others.



Children can flatten the balls using a yogurt container lid (that they press down on). Or they can use the flat of their hands.



Next, they need to attach the large flat circle and one of the smaller flat circles together using the “score and slip” method. The clay needs to be scratched where it will be joined (with a toothpick or firm toothbrush) and some water needs to be applied before another piece can be added.



Here the pieces are, attached. Head and body.



The second flat circle can be cut in half and attached to the larger circle to form a wing. Remember to score and slip before attaching the wing to the body.

The last piece of clay will be used to create a small beak and any other details the children might wish to add. Again, make sure they score and slip!



A beak can be added (score and slip!) and a hole can be punched through the back of the body for a feather to be added once the clay has dried.

If you wish for these to hang as ornaments, a hold should be created at the top of the body.



Once the clay has dried (about 4 to 5 days), the birds can be painted.

Liquid tempera (or poster) and acrylic paints are both great choices. But stay away from watercolors when using air-dry clay. Reason being, the water will soften the clay (because it hasn't been fired in a kiln).

If using liquid tempera or poster paints with air-dry clay, **avoid using water** (because your clay will turn to mush) and instead, make use of a painting mat to wipe excess paint off of brushes.

For air-dry clay, I love using Crayola Metallic Paints. They are washable and have a really nice sheen, making the finished pieces look as though they have been

glazed and fired in a kiln. I also really love the Crayola glitter paints. But, any paint will do (except watercolors!).

You can also add a coat of Mod Podge to the painted pieces, once they are dry. In addition to making the clay projects look shiny, Mod Podge also seals the work.

Here is the finished piece, complete with a feather!

