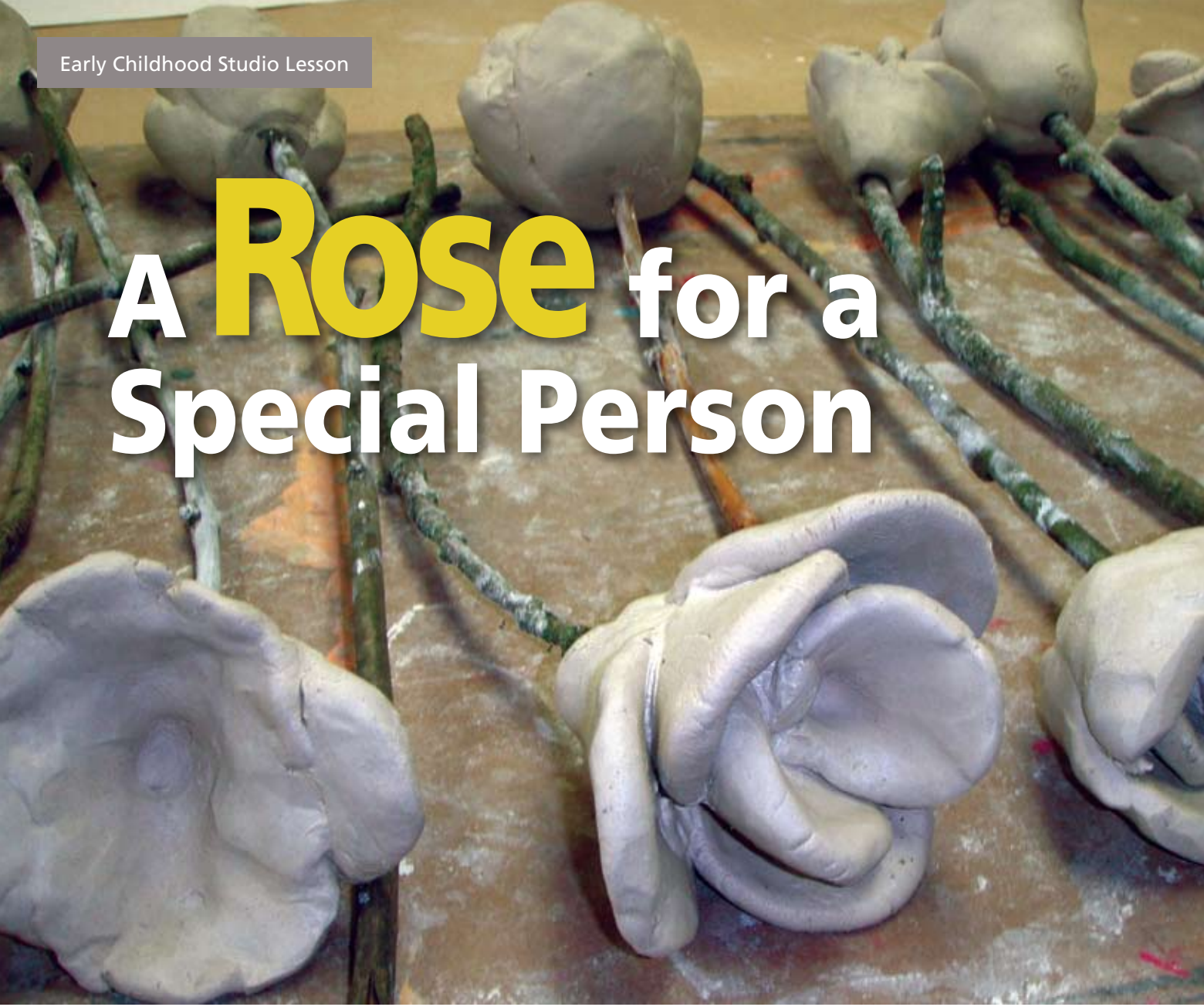


A Rose for a Special Person



Aileen Pugliese Castro

Roses have different meanings for different occasions. A rose can be given as a sign of love or to show sympathy, compassion, or concern. A bouquet of roses can be given to honor an accomplishment. Whatever the reason, roses are a way of showing that someone is special.

I asked my students to construct their own variations of a rose and to think of a special person to whom they could give their rose. This provided students the opportunity to think about how art can be used to recognize those who make significant contributions to their lives.

A Closer Look

We started by gathering sticks of different lengths and thicknesses outside our school. When we went back into the classroom, a number of pictures of flowers and roses were placed around students' tables. I used images from calendars because they were big enough for students to see with a variety of close up and distant points of view, and they were more economical than real roses.

This provided students the opportunity to think about how art can be used to recognize those who make significant contributions to their lives.

I asked students to take a closer look at the images around the room, then we sat together on the carpet to look at what they had gathered outside. We discussed the different textures of the sticks and how they felt in our hands. I asked students to each select a stick for their roses and to think about who would be the recipient of the rose and why. We shared stories and discussed what it means to be cared for and to care for others.



Finlay Moylan.

Students first colored white modeling medium with water-soluble markers. By coloring the outer surface of a portion then kneading it, students were able to customize their colors.

Next, each student rolled up a ball of modeling medium about the size of a cherry, then pushed it flat like a petal. They cupped it in their hands, forming a half funnel shape, and pinched the narrow end around the tip of their sticks. Additional petals were added by joining them together at the base of the rose in a spiral fashion.

They also created small green leaves and added them to the base of the flower. A larger leaf was made by folding a green piece of paper and cutting out a leaf shape with a stem, starting at the fold.

With teacher assistance, students stapled their leaves to the stem. They each finished their roses with a message and signed them with their names.

Clay Alternative

My older artists (ages six through eight) made similar flowers but used white clay

that was then fired in the kiln without the stem. Before firing, the stem was fitted to the clay, labeled, and removed. Once the clay roses were fired, students used plaster gauze to securely fit the rose to the stick.

Students next attached a cardboard or foam leaf with plaster gauze strips and covered the rest of the stick to give it a sturdy base. After the plaster dried, they added color with acrylic paints. Once dried, the roses were each wrapped in a colored piece of tissue paper, like a bouquet from a florist.

This lesson was presented in response to the fact that art for holidays, such as Mother's Day, can be a difficult situation for some of our young artists. By presenting this as an opportunity to create art to recognize those who are special in our lives, the result was a more inclusive experience. It also provided an opportunity to share stories of those who cared for us and who we care for. 🌹

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Forming the Roses

For my youngest students, we used nontoxic, air-dry modeling medium because of its malleability for little hands. We used the same techniques that a cake baker would use when building a three-dimensional icing rose. I demonstrated each step first, then gave students time to practice it themselves.



Derek Wu, preschool.

NATIONAL STANDARD

Students will select and use subject matter, symbols, and ideas to communicate meaning.

WEB LINK

www.jaedworks.com/clay-spot/techniques/roses.html