



# Forget Your Worries!

**Joann Pellegrino**

**T**he following lesson was inspired by a set of Guatemalan worry dolls, which are used within the Guatemalan culture to take people's minds off their worries. My students' worry containers were made out of clay and were based on something personal that helped them take their minds off their own particular worries. The insides of the containers were filled with representations of things students worry about.

## **What Students Worry About**

I began the lesson by discussing that worries are a natural part of life and how each person, whether they are five or fifty, has worries. I asked students to share some of their worries with the class. As expected, their worries were about things such as grades, love, money, family, or friends. Some students mentioned death, broken hearts, and, in some cases, specific family worries.

As the lesson progressed, students realized that the things they worry

about were not just specific to them, but were actually shared by many other students. We talked about the fact that what we worry about today may change as we grow up.

## **Worry Containers**

Students were asked to construct a worry container out of clay, utilizing a variety of handbuilding ceramic

techniques such as coil, slab, and pinch methods. Engobes were used for achieving all the different colors needed, along with a final coat of clear glaze. The containers themselves varied from ski slopes, baseball hats, trophies, stars, books, leaves, and musical notes.


Each of the worries in the containers was made separately so that it could be removed or replaced as lives changed and worries disappeared or changed. The nicest aspect of this project was the fact that students could share their worries with each other, or keep them secret within their container.

### Demonstrating Pottery Techniques

To begin, I demonstrated coil building techniques, as well as slab and pinch pottery techniques. Emphasis was placed on joining and blending of joints on the containers. Next, I demonstrated the process of cutting a lid. Discussion on adding imagery to embellish the exterior of the container

was given with regard to addition or subtraction of clay.

### Reflective Discussions

Because of the sensitivity of this project, the critique was centered on my sample with regard to both construction and shape of the container, and the impact of the images. If they were willing, students were welcomed to share their work. 

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#### NATIONAL STANDARD

*Students describe the function and explore the meaning of specific art objects within varied cultures, times, and places.*

#### WEB LINK

[www.sciencejoywagon.com/kwirt/mayan](http://www.sciencejoywagon.com/kwirt/mayan)

### Objectives

- Students will construct a container utilizing a variety of ceramic techniques such as coil, slab, and pinch methods of fabrication that shows the viewer how they cope with stress. Along with this container, students will make symbols that reflect their inner feelings and worries that will be placed inside the container.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of utilizing visual imagery in a three-dimensional art form to communicate their message.

### Materials

- sketchbooks and pencils
- stoneware clay
- ceramic hand-building tools
- slip
- wareboards and cardboard for templates
- engobes and clear glaze.

