



A FEAT OF CLAY:

“WE ARE SCULPTORS OF THE SOUL”

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Part One: Compare young people to clay; WIBYT

1. Walk in front of the group holding a large ball of clay above your head. Be silent. Smile. Take your time. Look at the clay. Pause. Say slowly:
“This —— is a camper. In *some* ways. In other ways, definitely *not*. In some ways, the campers who will arrive in a few days are just like this hunk of clay. In other ways, they are different from clay. I’d like you to think about this for a moment. In fact, for about two minutes, I’d appreciate it if you would write down two lists. **In one list, please write as many possible ways you can think of that campers are like clay.** For example, young people and clay are fun to play with. **On the second list, write how they are different.** For example, clay doesn’t talk back. There really aren’t any right or wrong answers — it’s what you think. Try to be creative and make your lists as long as possible. Please start now. Please do this quietly so others can concentrate. Thanks!”
2. Give them about two minutes to work on their own (WIBYT = write it before you talk).

Part Two: Lead large group discussion

1. Now lead a brief discussion, getting some of their ideas on the flip chart up front.
2. After staff make contributions in your large group discussion, you can and should add some ideas of your own if you feel that particular areas have been unexplored.
3. These are some examples of staff responses about the similarities between children and clay:
 - come in different colors, sizes, and shapes
 - no two are exactly alike
 - highly malleable
 - changed and shaped by our contact
 - once we contact, they’re never the same again
 - pick up dust and garbage along the way
 - judging books by their cover: we often assume what’s inside from what we see on the outside; we might be wrong
 - can be made into useful things, works of art
 - they change under pressure
 - respond to touch
 - have great potential to become more than they are now
 - the more you work with them, warmer they get
 - can be misused or cause damage to others
 - when left alone and unprotected, they can grow less flexible and harder to mold and change
 - without attention, crumble and fall apart
 - as age, become less impressionable
 - greatly flexible, but only within limits; then they break
 - they can come completely apart
 - breaking points and fault lines not always obvious on the surface

- helps to be creative in working with them
- can brighten up a room
- you can put both in front of a t.v. and they will often look the same
- not edible

4. And here are some examples of how they are different:

- children have feelings
- children shape us as well
- talking to clay has no effect
- clay doesn't talk back
- clay is passive and does not help or cooperate with the process
- clay comes with directions
- children can remember past shapes and experiences
- clay doesn't grow
- we can make clay into any shape WE choose; children, however, are independent souls, and we have great responsibilities when we try to "make" them into something
- children are more fragile than clay
- pounding is good for clay, not for children
- clay won't change unless someone directly molds it, but young people can be greatly influenced indirectly by our conduct, even if we're not aware of this impact
- if you leave clay it will be there when you come back, unless child's name is Clay...

5. You will find that your staff will produce some creative, thoughtful, and useful thoughts, any one of which can serve as a springboard from which you can elaborate and emphasize. For example, when someone mentions that clay and children come in many colors, shapes, and sizes, this is a great opportunity to state how diversity is handled at your camp.

6. The discussion will serve as a good foundation on which you can set further training.

Part Three: Break up clay—set up WIBYT on changes

1. Now take the ball of clay and walk to the front row. Stay in the front row so you will be visible to everyone at all times. Break off a chunk and hand it to a staff person sitting there. Break off another chunk to the person sitting next to them. Continue until you've given all the clay away; a total of about six or seven pieces will work well.
2. As you're giving out the pieces, explain that we shape campers, work with them inside and out, mold them to be the best they can, one small step at a time, and so on. Ask the staff with the pieces to carefully work and inspect each part of their piece thoroughly, molding and shaping every molecule of it, through and through.
3. Ask everyone: "So we mold and shape our children. Here's the question. At the end of our work, when camp is over, what do we want them to look like? Not outside, but inside? How to want them shaped? How do we want our campers to change in positive ways?"
4. At the flip chart write and ask: "*How do we want them to change in positive ways as a result of camp?*"
5. Have them do another WIBYT. Tell them they will have about three minutes. Remind them to be specific. As always, get one example from someone before they work on their own. "More confident" or "better problem-solvers" or "more creative" would be good

examples. Finally, tell them that the work they are about to do in the next few minutes will some of the most important work they do during their entire time at camp. Because in writing down these expected changes, staff will be setting our goals and defining our targets.

Part Four: The magical production

1. It's time for you to perform a striking piece of magic. I'm going to talk you through it now but first we have to make an arrangement. The secret I'm disclosing to you is to remain our secret. One of the most entertaining parts of magic is its mystery. We must honor this and not weaken it by disclosing secrets simply to satisfy the curiosity of others. I am teaching you how to do this piece of magic because I want you to use it to train staff to help children. Please stay true to this exclusive purpose and do not tell others how it is done. Thank you!
2. Here's what you do. Collect the chunks of clay. Before touching the first one, pause, look at each of your open empty hands on both sides, rub them together palm to palm several times. Don't be dramatic about this. We don't want anyone to believe anything special is going to happen. Just be deliberate and slow. Now get the chunks. Deliberate. Slow. Be sure both of your hands stay in sight at all times. All you've done is to recollect the clay that they have examined and roll it back up in a ball. Keep the ball held up high and fully visible to all.
3. Ask the people who had the chunks: "You looked carefully at every piece? You took them completely apart and put them back together?" They will nod.
4. "So here's the question. At the end of camp, they may look about the same on the outside. But on the inside, things have changed. They are different. We've added special things inside. Things of value. Things they may not have even known they could have."
5. As you say these words, hold the ball at the fingertips of one visibly empty hand and slowly use the fingers of your other visibly empty hand to dig into the center of the ball. Now slowly remove from the ball a folded piece of greenish paper. You don't need to comment on it. Just show it. Unfold it in plain view. It's a \$20 bill. Put a small impressed look on your face, look pleased, and smile.
6. I will explain how you make all of this happen in a moment. Let's keep going and then we'll come back to the secret stuff.

Part Five: Lead large group discussion

1. Now say: "Our job is to help put treasure into our children. It's not magic. The secret is that we do this with skills. That's why we're here in orientation, to learn those skills. So what are the treasures? What changes do we want?"
2. You lead another large group discussion in which you collect, write, and post many of the changes volunteered by staff. Tell staff to add to their own lists items that are presented in the large group that don't already appear on their lists. Use your follow-up questioning to help them be specific. When one of your staff says "I want them to have values" you will say, "Let's talk a little about what particular values you want them to have...." Also use follow-up questions to explore why their particular suggested change would be so important to produce in children.

3. Time won't permit getting one suggestion from every staff person, so it's important to note that even if every item on their list is not put up on the flip chart, it's important for them to keep and think about their lists because they represent the answer to the essential question, "Why are we here?"
4. You now move to the last phase of the discussion. You write and ask this question at the flip chart: "What skills and program will we need to use as staff to make these changes happen?" Lead a brief general discussion. You won't intend to fully explore this now. The idea is to just get staff thinking about these goals as practical targets and that reaching these targets will require our learning and using specific skills. So what you're looking for here are just a few examples.
5. Here's one example of three things need to produce "creative" campers: We will need to give campers chances in the program to practice changing and making up new games and other activities, we'll need to look for and specifically praise creative behaviors so that campers learn what these are and that they are valued, and model creative choices ourselves.
6. Be sure note again at the conclusion that the rest of orientation will be about acquiring these and other skills.

The secret stuff

1. Here's the secret to the money production. Please remember this secret is imparted to you with trust that you will not disclose it. Only one other person will know it. You use a secret helper.
2. Before the activity begins, you privately give the bill, rolled or folded up in a small chunk of *extra* clay, to someone who will sit in the front row. *Be sure to pick someone who you can outrun. Otherwise you may never see that bill again.* Tell them to hide the chunk. When you distribute pieces to people in the front row, your helper secretly adds the extra piece to the one you give them. They will have lots of time to do this because everyone will be busy with their WIBYT. When you collect everyone's pieces, make sure this special chunk gets into the center of the big ball for your "discovery" a few moments later.
3. Please be sure to select a helper that will keep the secret. Make it strongly clear to them that their keeping this information confidential is a *very* serious matter with you. Lay on the eye contact very heavily here.
4. It really undermines the effect and distracts from the image of treasure in the children if the secret is disclosed. If people ask you or offer speculation as to how it is done, just smile and say "I promised not to tell. We take trust and keeping promises very seriously here."
5. Thank you for keeping your promise.