

Polymer Clay Chalice!

In your bag you have SIX small packets of polymer clay. These are for making your very own UU flaming chalice, and you have two battery-operated candles to use with it, too! There are instructions below, but the directions will make even more sense if you watch the video tutorial that's on Youtube at https://youtu.be/_Bcz4pLZQHA.

Polymer clay (though pretty hard when you first get started) is malleable and moldable until it is baked, when it hardens and the shape becomes permanent. So this is a craft to do with a grownup's help!

To make a chalice big and sturdy enough to hold your candle, you'll need to use all six of your packets. Don't skimp!

Also, to keep the clay from sticking to your fingers, it's recommended to rub some lotion into your hands just before starting. And put a piece of paper or other protective surface down to work on.

Here's what to do:

1. Open your packets of clay and start to work them with your hands. It's hard work and takes some time – you may want to ask for help from a grownup, who can help get the clay warmed up and ready for you to work with.
2. The chalice has two main parts – a base and a bowl. Both need to be nice and sturdy. Use three clay pieces for each, or mix all six together and split in half, and then use one half for each piece.
3. You can smoosh the clay together, keeping big sections of each color, fold and twist them together just enough to make the colors swirl together (Catherine's favorite!), or mix two or more colors of clay together until they are completely mixed and make a new color. Just make sure the clay is combined well enough that it will hold together in a single piece for your chalice.
4. Make the base first, using half of your clay. Make it nice and thick and sturdy – we want this chalice to stand up and not fall over or break! The very bottom should be a little wider than the top of the base, to make sure it won't tip.
5. Then make your bowl with the other half of your clay. It too needs to be nice and thick and sturdy – if the walls of the bowl are too thin, it may smoosh before you can get it baked, or break later. **IMPORTANT:** use your candle to help you see what size to make the bowl – as you form the bowl, make sure the candle will fit!

6. Then score the top of the base and the bottom of the bowl – that means to use a pencil tip, or a utensil or even a fingernail to make little lines up and down and across the surface, to make it a little bit rough instead of smooth, in the places where the two pieces will be joined together. It helps them hold together so they don't snap apart easily. Then put them together and smooth the clay to get rid of the seam.
7. You have a chalice! Do any final gentle shaping and smoothing needed to make it just right. Check one more time to make sure your candle fits.
8. Then ask your grownup to bake your chalice for you. Here's what it needs:
 - a. Bake at 275 degrees for 30 minutes per 1/4 inch of thickness. I baked my sample chalice for two hours, and it turned out just right.
9. Once it's had plenty of time to cool down, put your candle in and try it out! Find a special place to keep your chalice – your own altar space - and light it to celebrate the light of hope and kindness and truth within the chalice of your family and our TVUUC community.

