



Connecting the Dots  
Health as Art

# ***EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT***

An art-based social emotional health activity  
for peer leadership based learning





# ***WHAT IS PEER LEADERSHIP BASED LEARNING?***

Peer leadership-based learning is all about inspiring others through healthy behaviors and actions, and providing guidance and support for our peers to do the same. It helps us develop self-confidence and personal agency, as well as collaboration, communication, and goal-setting skills. Peer leadership-based learning helps us enhance the world around us through collective action and prosocial behaviors!

# ***EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT***

It all began in 1990 when Linda Blackburn and John Hartom sent home bowls of soup with their students after a bowl making class. They did this as a way of bringing awareness to all of those who are hungry across the globe. Empty Bowls was created to unite those who shared the same interest of caring for one another and ending world hunger. This community is comprised of artists worldwide who set out to feed their communities and raise money for food related charities. Empty Bowls has raised millions of dollars over the years through their events, and currently has a goal of collecting 1000 bowls and their stories .





# ***CONNECTING THE DOTS***

Projects like the Empty Bowls Project help us to build social awareness, strengthen our understanding of the world around us, and discover ways of creating healthier communities through awareness and capacity building. We can also reflect on the role healthy eating plays in keeping us strong and healthy in body and mind. In doing so, we can raise awareness of the importance of having access to healthy foods and good nutrition - through many culinary practices around the world.



# ***LEAD YOUR OWN EMPTY BOWLS PROJECT***

Learn how to create decorative bowls out of homemade air-dried clay. These bowls can then be filled with bucket-list activities to create an activity bowl. Strengthen your leadership skills, learn more about nutrition education, and gain an appreciation for the foods that keep us healthy and strong. At the end of the activity, you can submit a photo to [leroy@emptybowls.com](mailto:leroy@emptybowls.com) in support of Empty Bowls.

Read on to learn how to create your own empty bowls project and see how it can be led as a peer leadership activity!



# ***PLANNING AS A PEER LEADERSHIP ACTIVITY***

If planning as a peer leadership activity, think about the steps you need to take to be a good leader. Reflect on your skills and strengths and think about how they can help you lead and inspire others. Find ways to gather input and ideas from others, and focus on lifting others up to discover their own strengths.



# ***TIPS FOR BEING A PEER LEADER***

- Familiarize yourself with the activity and its background. What materials are needed to complete this activity? Approximately how long will this activity take? What questions do you have about the purpose or background of this activity?
- Predict what questions students might have and prepare possible answers or switch around the activity to make it more clear for your audience.
- Identify your role in this activity. Will you be providing instructions and answering questions, or will you be more hands by assisting in creating materials?



# ***TIPS FOR BEING A PEER LEADER***

- Start out with a background on the activity. What is the purpose of this activity? In this case talk about Empty Bowls and their goal of collecting 1000 bowls.
- Demonstrate each step of the activity for your group.
- Walk around and compliment their work. Offer advice or help if you see them stuck.



# ***HOMEMADE POTTERY: AIR-DRY CLAY BOWL***



## ***MATERIALS NEEDED***

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup salt
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 cup water
- Large bowl for mixing
- Spoon

## ***DIRECTIONS***

- Mix flour and salt first
- Then add vegetable oil
- Slowly add in water as you mix
- Knead clay into desired texture

***STEP 1: MAKING  
HOMEMADE AIR DRY  
CLAY***



## ***MATERIALS NEEDED***

- Rolling pin
- Bowl for shaping
- Butter knife or pencil
- Stamps (or use items on hand such as leaves, textured items, or small toys with patterns)

## ***STEP 2: BUILDING YOUR BOWL***

## ***DIRECTIONS***

- Roll out clay, so that it is 3-5mm thick
- Place bowl upside down on rolled out clay
- Cut around the bowl and remove excess pieces of clay
- Once you have your template measured, remove the bowl
- At this point, you can stamp on your clay using paint on your stamp, use a stick-like object (pencil, chopstick) to carve out designs, or print different patterns using textured objects.
- Place finished circle of clay from inside of the bowl with your designs facing away from the bowl
- Gently press to form the shape of your bowl
- Remove and let sit out to dry for 48 hours or bake on 250 for 15 min.

## ***MATERIALS NEEDED***

- Water-based paint such as acrylic paint
- Paintbrushes

## ***DIRECTIONS***

- Decorate your bowl by painting some of your favorite healthy foods

***STEP 3: DECORATING  
YOUR BOWL***



# ***TURN YOUR BOWL INTO AN ACTIVITY BOWL***

While air-dry clay is not safe to consume foods out of, you can repurpose your bowl into an activity bowl. Activity bowls are just a different version of activity jars. Grab a piece of paper and tear it into strips. On each strip of paper, write out health activities that you can do in the classroom or at home. Pick a time (once a week, every Friday, etc.) and draw an activity out of the bowl and complete!



# ACTIVITY BOWL IDEAS

## SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

- Practice mindful breathing.
- Write or draw in a journal.
- Move your body to music and reflect on how you feel.

## TASTE TESTS

List fruits, vegetables, grains, and dairy that you have never tried before. Create a strip of paper for each food item and add it to your bowl!

## NUTRITION CHALLENGES

- Fill half of your plate with fruits and veggies.
- Drink 8 glasses of water.
- Eat each color of the rainbow.

## NUTRITION FACT OF THE DAY

Become a nutrition detective. Check out sites like CDC, USDA, MyPlate, and AFHK. Write various tips or facts on strips of paper and add them to your bowl! Start a discussion around the fact and see what you learn!

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CHALLENGES

- Do 10 jumping jacks.
- Run in place during commercial breaks.
- Go on a nature walk and reflect on what you see



# ***SUBMIT YOUR BOWL***

After completing your bowl, take a picture and write your bowl's story. Here are some questions to ask yourself while writing your story:

- What would you eat out of your bowl if you could?
- Describe the process of making your bowl and what you put inside of it instead of it.

Email [leroy@emptybowls.com](mailto:leroy@emptybowls.com)  
with your photos and stories!

# ***REFLECTIVE WRAP-UP***

For leaders...

- What was the biggest challenge leading your activity?
- What strategies did you use to instruct your group? Demonstrations, verbal instructions, asking leading questions, etc.?
- How did it make you feel contributing to a bigger project like Empty Bowls?



# ***REFLECTIVE WRAP-UP***

For all...

- How did it make you feel contributing to a bigger project like Empty Bowls?
- What was something new you learned today about nutrition, healthy eating, or food access?
- What is a food you are planning on tasting?
- What was your bowls story?