The Jewish Museum is an art museum located on Fifth Avenue and East 92nd Street in New York City. Our exhibitions and programs explore the intersection of art and Jewish culture for people of all backgrounds. The Museum’s collection spans 4,000 years and includes nearly 30,000 works of art, ceremonial objects, media, and antiquities from around the world.

This lesson plan can be used to support discussion and exploration of antiquities from the Jewish Museum’s collection. Expand on this lesson by exploring related artifacts in the Museum’s collection listed at the end of the lesson. For a more extensive look at antiquities, visit our online collection or the Ancient Civilizations and Archaeology Educator Resource.
Archaeology: King Hezekiah’s Jar

Stamped Jar Handle, Late 8th Century BCE. Clay: wheel-formed, stamped, fired. 2 ⅛ x 3 13/16 inches. Find the work on the Museum website here.
Discussion Questions

1. Look closely at the object above. Make a list of your observations. What did you notice?

2. What do you think it is made of?

3. Describe the image that is stamped on this object. What do you think the image represents?

Next, watch the video *What Happened to King Hezekiah's Jar* to find out more about this object.

The symbol or stamped marking on the jar handle shown in the video depicts a sun with two wings on either side. This symbol was popular in ancient Israel, Egypt, and the Near East as a symbol of power and the divine. The stamp also includes the word “LMLK” or “lamelekh,” (“melekh” means king in Hebrew) which tells us that this object belonged to the King.

Such markings are made using a stamp. Stamps can be designed to make markings on wet clay.

- Why do you think kings had their objects marked with a symbol or seal?
- Do you mark any of your objects in some way? (Example: Some people write their names on the first page of their books). Why do you do that?
- What image or images might you use to create a symbol or seal that represents yourself?
Activities

Materials:
- Paper
- Pencil
- Modeling material such as clay, Model Magic, or Play Doh
- Toothpick
- Plastic fork or knife

1. Take a closer look at the jar handle. Draw the jar handle to the best of your ability, paying close attention to the details of the symbol that is stamped on the object.

2. Find 5 objects in your house that have a symbol representing a person, a group, or something else. Take photos of these objects and their markings. Can you create a photo collage of these symbols? Share your photos or photo collage with a family member or friend.

3. Create your own symbol. The symbol for King Hezekiah was a sun with wings. Create a symbol for yourself or your family. What images or objects represent you? Draw the symbol on paper. If you have any modeling material, try to recreate your own symbol in clay using a toothpick, plastic fork, or knife.

4. Take a picture of your creation and share it with the Jewish Museum here.
Vocabulary

- **ARCHAEOLOGY**: The study of things made and used by people of the past to understand what these individuals were like and how they lived
- **ARCHAEOLOGIST**: Someone who practices archaeology by identifying places or sites to dig and by finding and studying the objects found at these sites
- **ARTIFACT**: Any object made and used by people
- **TEL**: A hill or mound that marks where an ancient city is buried
- **DIG**: The place or site where archaeologists dig for objects

Vocabulary source: [Archaeology – Britannica Kids](https://www.britannica.com/science/archaeology)

Related Works of Art in the Jewish Museum’s Collection

- **Storage Jar**, 800–586 BCE, Clay: wheel-turned and fired
- **Shipping Jug**, 1st-2nd century CE, Glass: mold-blown
- **Stamped Jar Handle**, c. 110–80 BCE, Clay: wheel-turned, slipped, stamped, and fired
- **Double Offering Bowl**, early 2nd millennium BCE, Basalt: ground