Westerners have long been fascinated by the Japanese Tea Ceremony. In Japan, the act of drinking tea is more than an elaborate ritual. It is an interlude which leads to the spirit of beauty, quietude and politeness toward others. In this three-session workshop led by George Woideck, students craft personal tea bowls from clay. They then decorate their tea bowls with colorful glazes. The experience culminates with the students celebrating the Tea Ceremony using their own tea bowls to drink tea and enjoy Japanese treats while sitting on bamboo mats. The program includes videos exploring Japanese art and culture.

**Content Standards**

**Social Studies**

Early civilizations with unique governments, economic systems, social structures, religions, technologies and agricultural practices, and products flourished as a result of favorable geographic characteristics.

Political, environmental, social and economic factors cause people, products and ideas to move from place to place in the Eastern Hemisphere in the past and today.

Modern cultural practices and products show the influence of tradition and diffusion, including the impact of major world religions.

**Visual Arts**

Recognize that people from various times and cultures create works of art to be looked at, valued and enjoyed.

Connect making art with individual choice and understanding personal cultural identity.

Form and express opinions about artworks and apply critical and creative thinking skills to assess and refine their artworks.

**Objectives**

1. **Create** an individual tea bowl.
2. **Decorate** the tea bowl with ceramic glaze.
3. **Participate** in the re-creation of a Japanese Tea Ceremony.
4. **Reflect** on their experience of another culture.
Have students search and view museum and gallery websites including the Google Art Project and the Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.

Have students search the web for images of Japanese tea bowls and the Tea Ceremony.

Have students reflect about the rituals in their own lives involving eating and drinking tea or coffee and ask what kind of significance those rituals have for them.

Students can journal their experience with the Tea Ceremony.

Students can create a one-page cartoon, illustrating their experience.

Explore and discuss other unique Japanese cultural forms.

Have students explore the question: Why are there only five cups in a Japanese tea set?

**Vocabulary**

**Tea Ceremony**: An elaborate Japanese ritual of serving and drinking tea as an expression of Zen Buddhist philosophy

**Glaze**: A vitreous substance fused onto the surface of pottery to form a hard, impervious decorative coating

**Domo Arigato**: Japanese for “thank you very much”

**About George Woideck**

George Woideck trained as a painter with time off to tour as a rock musician. He began his full-time career as a ceramic artist in 1975. Since then he has been an artist-in-residence in schools throughout Ohio and Michigan. George was named National Young Audiences Artist of the Year in 2001. He also presents ceramic workshops for the Teacher Resource Center of the Cleveland Museum of Art. His studio work has been displayed in numerous local and national exhibitions. To learn more about George’s work, visit his website at [www.tileandclayart.com](http://www.tileandclayart.com) and his blog for educators at [tilemosaicandclay.blogspot.com](http://tilemosaicandclay.blogspot.com)

**Resources**


*The Living Treasures of Japan* video produced by National Geographic Magazine.

*The One Taste of Truth: Zen and the Art of Drinking Tea*, William Scott Wilson (Book - 2012)

**About the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning**

Through a balance of demonstration and audience participation, the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning teaching artist performances and workshops introduce students to an art form, support various curricular areas, and inject excitement and wonder into the school day.