

HELLENISTIC AND ROMAN OIL LAMPS

Please note, we have found countless oil lamps from all time periods excavated in Ashkelon. This module focuses just on Hellenistic and Roman oil lamps.

Questions Explored in this Module

How were homes during the Hellenistic and Roman periods in Ashkelon lit and heated?

What do the decorations on the lamps tell us about the people of Ashkelon?

How have oil lamps found in Ashkelon changed over time?

Archaeology Word Wall

Oil Lamp: An object used to light and heat homes in ancient times.

Log Book: We have found a variety of oil lamps here in Ashkelon, draw/write how an oil lamp would have been used in ancient Ashkelon.

Hellenistic: This time period of ancient Greece history occurred after the death of Alexander the Great and before the emergence of ancient Rome.

Roman: This time period of ancient history occurred after the Hellenistic time period. During this time Julius Caesar ruled, Jesus Christ lived, and the Coliseum in Rome was built.

Procedures

Video 1: Hellenistic Oil Lamp

Log Book: What things are used for light and heat your home?

Video 2: Roman Oil Lamp

Log Book: How do the Roman oil lamps look different from the Hellenistic lamp?

Junior Archaeology Assignment

Using air dry clay create your own oil lamp.



Oil Lamp I

1. Form a ball of clay (air drying or oven baking modeling compound)
2. Poke a hole in the middle and gradually squeeze the edges until it forms a bowl shape (be careful that the edges don't get too thin)
3. Squeeze the sides together on one side to form the place for the wick



Oil Lamp II

1. Follow the instructions of oil lamp I to form the base of the lamp.
2. Form a second ball of clay for the top, just like the bottom. Without smashing it, carefully poke a hole in the middle, and draw designs on it with a toothpick.
3. Wet the rim with water, and gently squeeze the edges of the top and bottom together, being careful to leave a hole for the wick, too.

You can send these home and families can choose to try them out there. It really works! Give families these directions:

1. Fill with olive oil
2. Pull the wick out of a candle stub--it can just be an inch or two long
3. Light: Never leave it unattended--adult supervision required

Interactive Homework

Design an oil lamp that represents you, your family, and where you live. Have your parent write down what about the lamp represent you, your family, and where you live.