

**Grade Level:** 3rd Grade (Homeschool)

**Time Allotment:** 45-60 minutes

## **Lesson Procedure:**

### **1. Introduction: What Can Your Hands Do? (5 minutes)**

- Ask the student: "What are some amazing things your hands can do?" (Writing, drawing, playing, eating, waving, pointing, building, etc.)
- Say: "Our hands are incredible tools! But how do they do all that? Inside our hands, we have special helpers called bones and muscles. Today, we're going to learn about the muscles that make our hands move and even how we can use our hands to talk without speaking!"

### **2. Activity 1: Mapping Your Mighty Hand (15 minutes)**

- Have the student trace their hand on a large piece of paper.
- Explain: "Inside your hand tracing, let's imagine the hard parts - those are your bones! They give your hand shape." (Briefly mention finger bones - phalanges - without needing to memorize the term).
- Say: "Now, the parts that pull on the bones to make them move are your muscles! Let's use playdough to show them."
- Guide the student to roll thin snakes of playdough and lay them over the traced hand drawing, roughly where muscles would be (along the fingers and palm). Explain that muscles work like stretchy bands that pull.
- Optional: Use straws (bones) and string (muscles/tendons) to show how pulling the string makes the straw bend.
- Have the student look at their own hand in the mirror while wiggling their fingers. Ask: "Can you see or feel things moving under your skin? Those are your muscles working!"

### **3. Activity 2: Muscles in Action! (10 minutes)**

- Explain: "Muscles usually work in pairs. One muscle pulls to bend your finger, and another muscle pulls to straighten it."
- Have the student make a fist (muscles pulling) and then open their hand wide (other muscles pulling). Repeat a few times, feeling the muscles in their forearm working too.
- Say: "These muscles need to be strong and work together perfectly to do tricky things, like picking up a tiny bead or... talking with your hands!"

### **4. Activity 3: Hand Talk - Introduction to Sign Language (10 minutes)**

- Ask: "Did you know some people use their hands to talk? This is called Sign Language."
- Introduce the American Sign Language (ASL) alphabet. Use a chart or video to show how to make the signs for the first few letters (e.g., A, B, C, D, E) or simple words like 'hello' and 'thank you'.
- Practice making the signs together. Emphasize how different muscles are working to shape the hand for each sign.
- Say: "See how your hand muscles have to work carefully to make each special shape? Just like they work carefully to help you write or draw!"

### **5. Conclusion & Check for Understanding (5 minutes)**

- Review: "So, what helps your fingers bend and straighten?" (Muscles!) "What do muscles pull on?" (Bones!) "What's one way people use their hands to communicate?" (Sign Language!)
- Ask the student to show you one of the ASL signs they learned.
- Encourage continued practice: "You can keep practicing the signs we learned! Maybe you can learn how to sign your name next time."

**Differentiation/Extension:**

- **Support:** Focus on fewer signs, primarily gross motor hand movements (open/close fist). Use simpler vocabulary.
- **Challenge:** Learn more ASL alphabet letters or signs, try spelling simple words, research different types of muscles (smooth, cardiac, skeletal). Investigate carpal tunnel syndrome or how tendons work.