

Good Tidings

good days start here

SCREEN-FREE Boredom Jar

PACKET

Less
screens.
More
awesome.

Because
the best
memories
aren't on
a screen.

72 fun ideas
to spark creativity,
curiosity & ❤️
real-life joy

BIG IDEAS
little hands

ADVENTURE IS EVERYWHERE

Make. Play. Imagine.

For curious
kids & parents
who want more
than 'just one
more episode.'

A SCREEN-FREE START CAN LEAD
TO SOME OF LIFE'S BEST DAYS.

START HERE: Boredom Is Not an Emergency

When kids are used to fast, ready-made entertainment, ordinary play can feel slow at first. That does not mean screen-free time has failed. It means their brains are switching gears. The goal of this jar is not to fill every second, ban screens, or turn free time into homework. It is simply to make the first step easier.

What makes this jar different

The slips are short, concrete, low-prep, and varied. Some get kids moving. Some invite imagination. Some let them build, notice, help, laugh, make, or simply wander into an idea. A good boredom jar gives a child a starting point - not another assignment.

The 3 rules

1. Pick before you reject.	Pull one slip. Give it a real 10-minute try before deciding it is not for you.
2. Grown-ups do not have to join.	A parent can join when they want to, but the activity should not automatically become the adult's job.
3. Bored is allowed.	If the jar idea does not stick, the child may sit with boredom for a bit. New ideas often show up after the easy entertainment is gone.

Helpful parent line: “You don't have to love being bored. Pick a slip, try it for ten minutes, and then decide what you want to do next.”

BUILD YOUR JAR IN 10 MINUTES

You need a jar, basket, mug, small box, or even a zip-top bag; scissors; and the activity slips in this packet. You can laminate the slips if you want them to last, but you absolutely do not need to.

A setup that works in real life

- 1. Choose your boundaries.** Remove slips that do not fit your home, your child's age, your space, or your rules.
- 2. Add only 20-30 slips at first.** Too many choices can feel like another problem. Rotate fresh ones in every week or two.
- 3. Put supplies within reach.** A small “yes bin” with paper, tape, crayons, cards, cups, string, blocks, and recyclables prevents every idea from becoming “Mom, where is...?”
- 4. Decide when the jar appears.** Examples: after chores, rainy afternoons, weekends, while dinner is being made, before asking for a screen, or during a family screen-free hour.
- 5. Let kids edit it.** After a week, remove the duds and duplicate the hits. The best jar is not the prettiest jar - it is the one your child actually uses.

Optional color-code

MAKE	MOVE	IMAGINE	EXPLORE	HELP / RESET
draw, build, create	wiggle, race, toss	pretend, invent, tell	notice, hunt, test	useful, not chore-y

Skip this: Do not secretly turn every slip into reading practice, math practice, cleaning, or “educational enrichment.” If every choice feels like school or chores, kids will figure out the trick.

WHEN THEY SAY, “BUT I WANT MY SCREEN.”

The jar works best when the adult response is calm, predictable, and brief. Long debates make the screen more interesting and the alternative less interesting.

“There’s nothing to do.”	“That’s exactly what the jar is for. Pick one, or you can come up with your own idea.”
“These are boring.”	“Maybe. Try one for ten minutes. You can be bored while you try it.”
“Will you do it with me?”	“I can help you get started for two minutes. Then it’s yours.”
“Can I have my screen after?”	If screen time is part of your family’s plan: “Yes, at the usual time.” Avoid making every screen-free activity a transaction.
“I don’t want any of them.”	“You don’t have to choose the jar. You can choose your own screen-free thing, too.”

A note about screens

Screens can be fun, social, creative, and useful. This packet is not built around making screens the villain. It is built around helping kids remember that entertainment can also come from their own hands, bodies, rooms, backyards, imaginations, books, toys, and ideas.

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

MAKE

Build the tallest tower you can from 20 things.

MAKE

Draw a tiny map of an imaginary island.

MAKE

Make a paper airplane and test 3 changes.

MAKE

Invent a new cereal. Design the box.

MAKE

Create a creature using only circles.

MAKE

Build a hideout for a stuffed animal.

MAKE

Make something useful from a cardboard box.

MAKE

Draw a comic with exactly 6 boxes.

MAKE

Make a bookmark for someone else.

MAKE

Create a mini museum with 5 objects.

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

MAKE

Build a bridge that can hold a book.

MAKE

Design the world's silliest pair of shoes.

MOVE

Do 5 animal walks across the room.

MOVE

Make a sock-ball target and keep score.

MOVE

Create a 3-move dance and repeat it 10 times.

MOVE

See how slowly you can cross a room.

MOVE

Set up a hallway obstacle course.

MOVE

Balance something safe on your head and walk.

MOVE

Do a freeze-dance song with no screen.

MOVE

Make up a new playground game.

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

MOVE

Try to toss 10 socks into a basket.

MOVE

Move like a robot for 5 minutes.

MOVE

Race the clock: put away 12 things.

MOVE

Make a paper 'floor is lava' path.

IMAGINE

Open a pretend restaurant for stuffed animals.

IMAGINE

Invent a superhero with a very inconvenient power.

IMAGINE

Pretend the floor is a map. Where are you going?

IMAGINE

Make up a commercial for an ordinary object.

IMAGINE

Create a secret handshake - even if it's just for you.

IMAGINE

Turn 3 random objects into story characters.

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

IMAGINE

Pretend you are a tour guide for your house.

IMAGINE

Invent a holiday and its weirdest tradition.

IMAGINE

Give a stuffed animal a ridiculous job interview.

IMAGINE

Make a menu for a restaurant on the moon.

IMAGINE

Tell a 1-minute story starting with 'Nobody believed the potato...'

IMAGINE

Create a new sport and explain the rules.

EXPLORE

Find 10 things smaller than your thumb.

EXPLORE

Go on a color hunt: find 2 things of 6 colors.

EXPLORE

Look outside and sketch 3 things you usually ignore.

EXPLORE

Find something in the house for every letter in your name.

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

EXPLORE

Test which paper shape falls slowest.

EXPLORE

Make a shadow shape with your hands.

EXPLORE

Find 5 objects that make different sounds.

EXPLORE

Go outside and find 4 different textures.

EXPLORE

Choose an object and list 10 unusual uses for it.

EXPLORE

Make a mini scavenger hunt for someone.

EXPLORE

Estimate 30 seconds without a clock. Then check.

EXPLORE

Find the coziest reading spot in the house and improve it.

HELP / RESET

Write a ridiculous note and hide it for someone to find.

HELP / RESET

Make a snack plate with 3 colors (ask first).

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

HELP / RESET

Pick one drawer or shelf and make it nicer for 5 minutes.

HELP / RESET

Teach a stuffed animal how to do something.

HELP / RESET

Make a 'good news' note for someone.

HELP / RESET

Choose 5 toys you forgot you had and make a scene.

HELP / RESET

Create a family award: 'Best ____ of the Week.'

HELP / RESET

Make a tiny surprise for someone using only paper.

HELP / RESET

Water a plant or check if one needs care.

HELP / RESET

Put on one song and do a lightning bedroom reset.

HELP / RESET

Make a cozy spot for tonight's story.

HELP / RESET

Choose one thing you have outgrown to donate (ask first).

CUT-APART JAR SLIPS

Cut on the lines. The background color shows the activity category.

MAKE

MOVE

IMAGINE

EXPLORE

HELP / RESET

MAKE

Read the funniest page you can find in any book.

MAKE

Make a fort and bring one book inside.

MAKE

Choose 5 random words and use them in a story.

MAKE

Draw a new cover for a book you know.

MAKE

Read to a pet, stuffed animal, sibling, or pillow.

MAKE

Find a word you like just because it sounds funny.

MAKE

Make a 'Would You Rather?' question for the family.

MAKE

Write a 4-line poem about your snack.

MAKE

Create a joke book with 3 original jokes.

MAKE

Pick a book blindly. Read only the first page.

MAKE

Make a sign for your bedroom door.

MAKE

Write instructions for something obvious, like sitting in a chair.



THE “DO THAT AGAIN” LIST

The goal is not to complete every slip. The goal is to discover a handful of screen-free things your child genuinely chooses again. Those are gold. Write them here.

Activity we actually liked	Solo / Together	Keep in jar?

Parent note: Watch for what your child returns to without prompting. That is more useful than whether an activity looked impressive, educational, or Pinterest-worthy.



THE “I DON'T WANT TO PICK A SLIP” BACKUP MENU

Sometimes the jar itself feels like too much. Offer five broad choices instead:

MAKE SOMETHING	paper, blocks, tape, cardboard, art supplies
MOVE YOUR BODY	outside, dance, toss, balance, obstacle course
USE YOUR IMAGINATION	pretend, invent, tell a story, make a game
FIND SOMETHING	scavenger hunt, nature, colors, sounds, forgotten toys
GET COZY	book, fort, music, drawing, puzzle, quiet corner

A good ending

You do not need to produce a child who never asks for a screen. You are simply widening the menu. With repetition, kids get faster at finding their own next thing - and the jar can gradually become something they need less, not more.

GOOD TIDINGS

Where reading, play, imagination, and ordinary kid life get to feel like fun.