PROJECT #42

MAKE A JOY JAR

To make a joy jar you will need:

A jar with a lid, or other small container like a box or plastic tub — one for each student

Decorating materials like colorful tapes (or masking tape and markers), pens, collaging materials, stickers, paint, etc.

Scissors

Glue

There is no time like the present to practice finding value in everyday objects, and seeing ordinary things in new ways.

Thank you to writer and publisher, Laura Stanfill, for sharing this project with us. Do you have a project you'd like to share? Let us know!

Step 1 of 8

Start by hunting through the family recycling for a glass jar with a lid. You can also use a small box, a plastic tub, or any kind of container you can open and close.

Step 2 of 8

Next, decorate your container. Here are some ideas:

Draw pictures of what gives you joy, or create a doodly pattern you like. If you don't have markers that write on glass, try wrapping your jar with some masking tape or another kind of solid tape and drawing on that.

Write words on your jar, like your name, JOY JAR, or things that make you feel happy. Maybe you can cover your entire jar in words! That would be pretty cool.

Decorate your jar with colorful tape, ribbon, string, or stickers.

Step 3 of 8

Then the hunt is on! What around your house makes you happy? What could serve a different purpose? What would—in ordinary times—be considered scraps or junk?

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Step 4 of 8

Maybe you have some leftover craft beads. A marble that doesn't have any mates. A really old coin. A sticker from the doctor's office, loose dice, or a feather. Basically, anything that's not food can be part of your Joy Jar.

You don't have to figure out a purpose for each thing you collect—not yet. The idea is to pull small things together into a homemade treasure box.

Step 5 of 8

When your jar is complete, you can set it on a bookshelf or your bedside table to admire. Anytime you need a joy boost, pull off the lid and have a look inside.

You can spill all your treasures on the floor and sort them by shape, color, or size. You can play with the dice and the marble, fold a tiny piece of paper even smaller, or arrange all of your treasures into a pattern or picture. Just remember to put it all back for next time!

Step 6 of 8

The great thing about the joy jar is this: it's yours. You can add and subtract items whenever you want. So if a paperclip seemed like a good idea when you collected your objects, but now you find it annoying, take it out and add something else.

Step 7 of 8

Want to share your Joy Jar in our gallery? We would love that. But first, how about trying a little relaxation exercise? First, get into a comfortable position with your Joy Jar on your lap, then read through these instructions and give it a try:

Close your eyes and shake your joy jar, then open the lid and let one item fall into your palm. Does it have hard edges or soft? Is it heavy or light? Fuzzy or smooth? Can you think of a few other objects around the house that have similar characteristics? The idea isn't to identify your object, but to use your sense of touch instead of letting your eyes have all the fun.

Step 8 of 8

Okay, ready to share your Joy Jar? We can't wait to see it!

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