

How to Make a Glitter Jar for Mindfulness — Easiest Recipe!

Making a glitter jar is an activity you can do with your kids to introduce them to how their mind works when experiencing difficult emotions and how to calm down during difficult times. Glitter jars have many names: I've seen them called glitter bottles, mind jars, mindfulness jars, calm bottles or calm down jars, galaxy jars, sparkle bottles, and more! I heard a cute story recently that one little boy called it his "mad jar". No matter what you and your family call them, glitter jars can be a great asset to your family's mindfulness practice.

When the glitter jar is unshaken, the glitter is settled peacefully at the bottom of the jar. You can see clearly through it. The glitter can represent thoughts. When we're feeling angry or upset (shake the bottle), thoughts are swirling around so we aren't able to think clearly. Watch the glitter though, it always settles. And as you watch the glitter settle, notice the mind settling too. When the glitter returns to the bottom of the jar, you will feel more calm and can think more clearly.

This really works best when have your kids make their own bottle. It'll help with buy-in and can be done at almost any age. My daughter was two when we first made a "parkle jar". I recommend creating a glitter jar with your kids as a fun activity, then explaining to them how this amazing thing they just made can represent their thoughts and feelings, calm them down and help them feel better, and more (see the "Ways to Use a Glitter Jar" section for a few more ideas below).

Moody Cow Meditates



A mind jar is also featured in the children's book, "[Moody Cow Meditates](#)". In the book, Moody Cow's grandfather helps him make a mind jar after a particularly bad day and shows him how to meditate on the jar until the sparkles settle and so does his mind. The book contains a recipe — although more complex than the one below — and instructions for use.

Glitter Jar Ingredients & Recipe

When I went looking for a recipe for a glitter jar, I came across all kinds of recipes that differed quite a bit. Some called for glycerin, some called for dish soap, others required just water and glitter. I tested a few recipes out and ended up coming up with my own recipe that has ingredients that are easy to find and suspends the glitter in a solution of water and glue that allows the glitter to fall slowly. This, I believe, encourages longer periods of meditation and has a soothing, calming effect.

Jar or bottle

For the jar, I use plastic water bottles so I don't have to worry about glass breaking. For durability and shape, I prefer to use [11.2oz \(330ml\) Voss Water](#) bottles. The labels peel off fairly easily, but you have to go slowly.

Glue

I really like [Elmer's Clear School Glue](#) for my glitter jars. If you're using the 11.2oz bottles I recommend above, one 5oz bottle contains enough glue for about 2 glitter jars.

Glitter

Fine glitter works best. I've used glitter from a [glitter sample pack](#) and we added in a few of the larger hearts and stars spangles from this [Sugar Sparkles Sample Pack](#).

Water

Warm water, straight from the tap. With the first glitter jar we ever made, I had microwaved the water to near-boiling and even though it had cooled down a lot by the time we added it to the bottle, I sealed the cap shut while it was still fairly warm. As it cooled, the water contracted and warped the bottle shape a little. (Science!)

Optional

- Food coloring to color the water. One or two drops is more than enough!
- A small funnel for the glitter. Our glitter came in little packets, so I just snipped the corner so the kids could easily pour it into their bottles, but it might be worth it to use a funnel or make a small paper funnel so your kids' glitter goes mostly where they want it!

Now it's time to make your glitter jar!

1. Fill your bottle about 1/8 to 1/3 full with glue. The more glue you add, the longer it will take for the glitter to settle after shaking.
2. Add glitter, start with a tablespoon or so. Take a deep breath as you watch your child pour glitter everywhere but inside the bottle. PS: a slightly damp paper towel wipes up fine glitter pretty well. A vacuum works even better.
3. Fill the bottle the rest of the way with warm water. At this step, before filling the bottle all the way, you can leave a little less than an inch of space at the top of the bottle, cap it, and shake it to see if you want to add more glitter, more glue, or just more water.
4. When the bottle is full up to the neck with water, glitter, and glue, cap it. I recommend using a hot glue gun to seal the cap closed. I did this by applying a single ring of glue all around the top threading and then screwing the cap on.



Glitter jars on a rainy day

Ways to Use a Glitter Jar

For Calming

This is why some people call it a “calm bottle” or “calm-down bottle”. The swirling glitter is very calming as it falls to the bottom of the bottle, for both kids *and* adults. If you’re feeling

agitated, try it for yourself. Shaking the bottle feels just as good as watching the last few specks of glitter fall to the bottom of the bottle. I keep a bottle on my desk in my office.

For Relaxation

In the same way it can calm you when you're agitated, shaking the bottle and watching the glitter settle can further relaxation when you're already calm. My son keeps his at the corner of his bed and uses it when he is getting ready to sleep.

For Learning About the Brain

You can use a glitter jar as a tool to explain how the brain works, in conjunction with [the hand model of the brain](#). When your emotions are rising up, the brain (the bottle) floods with cortisol (the glitter) and you flip your lid (shake the bottle), losing access to the prefrontal cortex, its flexibility and reasoning capabilities. As you breathe, the cortisol dissipates (the glitter settles to the bottom of the bottle) and you feel calmer and the prefrontal cortex comes back online, making it easier to feel calm and make better decisions.

For Mindful Communication

An [article in Mindful magazine](#) mentions the whole family can use a glitter jar for mindful communication in the heat of the moment. "We are all upset with lots of thoughts and feelings right now. So let's all take a break until the glitter in the calm-down jar has settled and then start talking again."

Focus-building: Find-It Fun

For a variation, put in one larger piece of metallic confetti in for find-it fun (star, heart, letter of the alphabet, etc). You can even use a googly eye in a pinch. When I was a kid, I had a Where's Waldo glitter wand that had one tiny Waldo and a bunch of glitter and confetti and other things that he blended in with; I spent many afternoons turning and twisting it in search of that one little Waldo. At the time, I didn't know why I liked that thing so much, but now I know that school was emotionally difficult for me, and searching for Waldo in the wand focused my attention into present-moment awareness where the anxiety and worries of the school day lost their power. (I think the Waldo wands have been long discontinued, but if you ever run across one of these for sale, please let me know!)

Focus on Falling Stars

Add several larger pieces of glitter to your glitter jar, like [star spangles](#) and after you shake the bottle, pick one to watch. Watch your piece of glitter until you either lose sight of it, or until it falls to the bottom of the jar. Then, choose another to watch.