

# Coffee with the Counselors

June 16, 2020



## Battling Boredom

Giving Children and Teens the Tools to Move Past "I am Bored"

# What is boredom?

## **Bored**

*feeling weary* because one is *unoccupied* or *lacks interest* in one's current activity  
(Google Dictionary)

## **Boredom**

the state of *being weary* or *restless* through *lack of interest*  
(Merriam-Webster.com)

(Italics added)

# Situations in which children may say they are bored:

## For Elementary School Students:

- Doing a task independently
- Times when a child has to be alone
- If a child is upset or worried for other reasons and is then asked to embark on a task independently
- Children tend to feel less comfortable on their own – and alone with their own thoughts

## For Middle School Students:

- When something is too hard or too easy
- When they are not sure how something is relevant to their interests or life
- As a mask for self-doubt or confusion - if they are not sure they can succeed
- When what they are asked to do does not carry meaning to them
- When they don't like what they have been asked
- When they do not know how to challenge or entertain themselves
- If they are extraverted and need outside people/stimulation for energy

## “I’m bored” can be understood as meaning:

- *I am not engaged.*
  - *I don't like being alone.*
  - *I'm uncomfortable with how I'm feeling and nothing feels good enough.*
  - *I don't want to do this - it has no meaning or value to me.*
  - *I don't know what to do next.*
  - *I can't do anything I want to do right now.*
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# What to say/do when your child says, “I am bored”.

- **Don't say**, “How can you be bored? How about this? How about that?”
- **Say**, “OK, got it. So enjoy your free time and figure out something to do that isn't boring to you.”
- **Normalize it.** “Sometimes mommy is bored. It happens to everyone.”
- **Give choices or help them to find choices in what they have to do.**
- **Share and brainstorm ideas.** “When I have to do something I find boring, I ..... What do you think you could do ...”
- **Touch on their interests. Spark curiosity.**
- **Use an ‘I’m Bored Jar’.**



# I'm Bored Jar

For Elementary School Age Students:

<https://www.amomstake.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/60-Things-to-do-when-youre-bored.pdf>

For Middle School Age Students:

<https://www.kitchencounterchronicle.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Im-Not-Bored-Jar.pdf>

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# Teaching Children to Entertain or Challenge Themselves

- Help them to generate ideas
    - *"For the next five minutes, I'd like you to make a list of activities you could do today - come back and show me when you are finished"*
  - Help them to start an activity/task or check in during it
  - Empathize and explore feelings
    - *"Sorry that you are bored, that's not a fun feeling."*
    - *"Do you think it's just being bored, or do you have another feeling as well? Like lonely? or sad"*
  - Help them create schedules, goals, and routines
  - Help them rethink the task to make it more challenging/interesting
    - *"What could you do differently to make it more interesting?"*
  - Make starting an activity the focus not finishing it
    - *"You can't sit there doing nothing. You need to pick an activity that we've discussed and do it for at least x minutes, and then if you still don't want to do it at that point then you can stop"*
  - Share the why - Help them to see the bigger picture
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# Get started on your summer fun with these resources!

<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/family/story/gma-summer-camp-started-summer-fun-kids-71119337>

<https://www.goodmorningamerica.com/family/story/22-online-camps-approved-common-sense-media-71132123>

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**Q & A**

**Have a wonderful summer!**

