

So you have your very own journal? Awesome! But how do you use it? Here are some ideas to get you started.

- Remember, journaling is ANY kind of self expression on paper that is done with the purpose of helping you feel or be better! It can be art or writing, it doesn't matter!

First off, set the mood! Find a quiet space, put on some music you like. Grab your journal and a pen or pencil. Decide if you're going to put a time limit on your journaling. Maybe grab a snack or a drink if you want. Get ready to go!

Now you have to decide what kind of journaling you want to do. There are a few different ways to journal, do whatever feels best for you...or challenge yourself and do something that feels different and new! Journaling is the perfect way to test out new things and experiment! Here are some different ways to journal

1. **Diary** - When most people think of "journaling" this is what they think of. This is when you write down what happens in your day and how you felt about it. This is a great way to journal if you want to be able to process what happens to you or if you want to make sure you remember something that happened.
2. **Free Flow** - Just write what comes to mind. Whatever comes up, write it down. It doesn't matter what it is, just get it out on paper! This is a great way to journal if you're feeling overwhelmed and need to get it all out.
3. **Dialogue** - A dialogue is like a conversation, when you journal in this way you're having a conversation with yourself. You ask yourself a question, answer it, then ask yourself the next question that comes to mind and follow that line as you search for answers inside yourself. You can even argue with yourself. This is a great way to journal if you're feeling confused or unsure about things.
4. **Letter Writing** - Write a letter to someone. It can even be to yourself. You don't have to give it to the person, but sometimes it's helpful to just get all our thoughts and feelings out. This is a great way to journal if you're having big feelings about someone and have a hard time talking to them about it.
5. **Make a List** - Sometimes it can be helpful to make lists of things because it helps us to notice patterns, and when we notice things we can change them. Try to come up with 100 items relating to a topic (100 things that make me sad, 100 things that make me angry etc.). Look at what keeps coming up over and over again. This is a great way to journal if you're unsure where some of your feelings are coming from.

6. Guided - Sometimes we're not sure where to start when we journal. That's OKAY! There are tons of resources (including some from Paper Thoughts) that provide journal prompts; questions or statements that help you think about things to journal. Instagram and Pinterest are also great for finding journal prompts. This is a great way to journal if you want to learn more about yourself, but aren't sure exactly where to start.
7. Specific Journaling - Some people like to use their journals for just one special topic. Maybe you write about your dreams, or you write about how your day was, or you write about what you'd like to pray for, or you write about where you'd like to travel, or the things you're grateful for. This is a great way to journal if you'd like to keep track of things or if you have more than one journal and want to stay organized.
8. Trackers - Sometimes writing long paragraphs can feel like school! It's okay, maybe a tracker is for you. You can track things in your journal like; your mood, what you eat, how you sleep, and a ton of other things. You can check out Paper Thoughts, Pinterest, and Instagram for ideas. This is a great way to journal if writing or art isn't your thing, but you'd still like to work on yourself.

These are just some ideas. Feel free to make up your own, and share it with us on our social media to help other kids like you! We hope you like your journal! Don't forget to #writeyourheartout and #artyourheartout

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