

# Energizers and Brain Breaks

## Brain Breaks Defined:

### Benefits for Students

Social-emotional development

Cognitive development

Physical development

### Benefits for Teachers

Effective management

Builds positive community

Can be used for engaging academics

Continued ►

## Scaffolding for Success

Teach students expectations:

- Beginning and ending movement breaks
- Participation
- Use Interactive Modeling

Consider risk and complexity

# Highlights of Child/Young Adolescent Development

<b>5-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a lot of physical activity</li> <li>• Respond well to clear and simple expectations</li> <li>• Like to copy and repeat activities</li> </ul>	<b>10-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need a great deal of physical activity</li> <li>• Work well in groups</li> <li>• Enjoy cooperative games</li> <li>• Extra recess/playtime a must</li> </ul>
<b>6-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noisy, often in a hurry</li> <li>• Want to be first</li> <li>• Tremendous capacity for joy</li> <li>• Enjoy being active</li> </ul>	<b>11-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restless and energetic</li> <li>• Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep</li> <li>• Need a lot of time to interact with peers</li> <li>• Moody, self-absorbed, and sensitive</li> </ul>
<b>7-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong likes and dislikes</li> <li>• Improved physical abilities</li> <li>• Need structure</li> <li>• Don't like taking risks</li> </ul>	<b>12-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need lots of food, physical activity, and sleep</li> <li>• Enthusiastic and uninhibited</li> <li>• Both playful and serious</li> <li>• Love to play class games but can have serious discussions a moment later</li> </ul>
<b>8-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full of energy, need physical release</li> <li>• Love group activities</li> <li>• Enjoy socializing</li> <li>• Limited attention span</li> </ul>	<b>13-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of physical energy</li> <li>• Moody and sensitive</li> <li>• Will not do as well with cooperative games as 12-year-olds and older teens</li> <li>• Boys move awkwardly, girls are more agile</li> </ul>
<b>9-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Like to push physical limits</li> <li>• Often worried or anxious</li> <li>• Still learning physical control</li> <li>• Restless</li> </ul>	<b>14-year-olds</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very energetic</li> <li>• Need lots of exercise</li> <li>• Typically loud and rambunctious</li> <li>• Need physical release</li> <li>• Perform/behave better in afternoon</li> <li>• Like challenges</li> </ul>

# Energizers Used Today

## *Switch*

Students place their right hand in front of them, with the thumb up and all the fingers curled in. Then they place their left hand in front of them, with the pointer finger straight out.

Once everyone is ready, call out “Switch!”

Instantly everyone switches the positions of their thumb and pointer finger so that the right index finger is now pointing straight out and the left thumb is pointing straight up.

Teacher continues to call switch, challenging students to reverse thumb and finger positions.

## *Captain’s Coming*

Teacher stands in front of the room and gives directions for students to follow:

**Port**—students take a step to the left

**Starboard**—students take a step to the right

**Bow**—students take a step forward

**Stern**—students take a step back

**Liver for Lunch**—students pretend to gag

**Captain’s Coming**—students salute and say, “Aye, Aye, Captain!”

**Swab the Deck**—students kneel down and pretend to clean the floor

## *Playing Card Math*

All students get a playing card.

Have students mix and mingle, varying group size for each direction.

Have students:

- Create sums
- Find the difference
- Product
- Quotient
- Create a fraction (proper, improper, mixed number)
- Is it a prime number?
- Is it a composite number?

Continued ►

## *Walk, Stop (Name, Clap)*

**Round 1**—Students are instructed to follow the directions:

- Walk means walk, stop means stop (call out each direction a few times)
- Teacher then reverses direction (walk means stop, stop means walk)

**Round 2**—Still using the reversed directions from round 1, add in next level:

- When teacher says “Name,” students call out their first name. When teacher says “Clap,” students clap once.
- Teacher calls out all four directions: Walk (stop), Stop (walk), Name, Clap.
- Next round, teacher reverses “Name” to mean clap, “Clap” to mean name.

Add in variations as students get better at these commands, for example, Hop, Dance; Sit, Stand

## *Double This Double That*

Students stand facing a partner.

In unison, partners do a series of hand motions while they chant:

Double, Double    Tap pinkie side of fists against pinkie side of partner’s fists, twice.

This, This        Tap palms against partner’s palms, twice.

Double, Double    Tap pinkie side of fists against pinkie side of partner’s fists, twice.

That, That        Tap back of hands against back of partner’s hands, twice.

Double, This       Tap pinkie side of fists against pinkie side of partner’s fists, then tap palms against partner’s palms.

Double, That       Tap pinkie side of fists against pinkie side of partner’s fists, then tap back of hands against back of partner’s hands.

Double, Double    Tap pinkie side of fists against pinkie side of partner’s fists, twice.

This, That        Tap palms against partner’s palms, then tap back of hands against back of partner’s hands.

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## *Four Corners*

Teacher poses a question that has four possible responses, and designates one corner of the room for each response.

Example: Which part of the U.S. would you live in if you could move right now?

**Corner #1**—East coast

**Corner #2**—Midwest

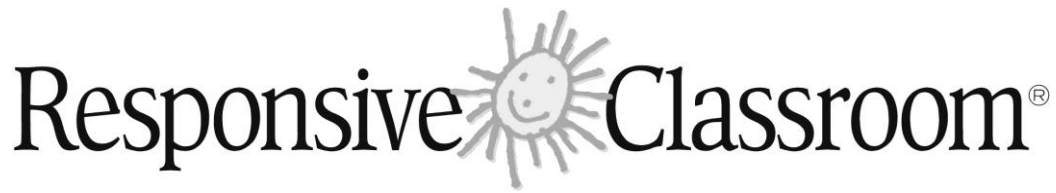
**Corner #3**—Mountain states

**Corner #4**—West coast

Students reflect on their choice and move to a corner. Once in the corner, students can pair up and discuss their choice. (30–45 seconds)

Repeat with new questions.

**Variations:** Can be used for academic processing as well as helping students to get to know each other.



## Morning Meeting Activities

### Focusing on Community Building

#### The Weekend Is Near

This activity combines a chant with pantomime. Everyone says the chant together. Going around the circle, each student answers the question ("Whatcha' gonna do when it really gets here?") with an action verb and a movement to represent the action. The group repeats the verb and the movement.

*Group:* Hey there, \_\_\_\_\_ (student's first name),

The weekend is near.

Whatcha' gonna do

When it really gets here?

*Student:* I'm gonna \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ (action verb and movement)

*Group:* S/he's gonna \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, (repeat verb and movement)

For example:

*Group:* Hey there, Sarah,

The weekend is near.

Whatcha' gonna do

When it really gets here?

*Sarah:* I'm gonna read, read, read. (Pantomimes reading a book)

*Group:* She's gonna read, read, read. (All pantomime reading a book.)

#### Preparing students for success:

- Brainstorm a variety of weekend activities and movements. Model and practice as needed.
- Practice the chant.

## Interview Activity

Students form inner and outer circles, facing each other. Everyone should be standing opposite a partner. To begin, partners in the inner circle talk about a teacher suggested topic. When the teacher rings a chime, everyone in the outer circle moves one step to the right and faces a new partner. In this round, students in the outer circle talk about a teacher suggested topic. The activity continues for one or two more rounds.

In the DVD *Morning Meeting Activities in a Responsive Classroom*, the teacher uses the Interview Activity as a follow-up to *The Weekend Is Near* and students talk about what they did over the weekend. However, these activities do not need to be done together.

### Preparing students for success:

- Model and practice forming inner and outer circles.
- Model and practice attentive listening.
- Model and practice staying on topic.

## Just Like Me

Either the teacher or a student can lead this activity. Everyone is seated and the leader stands in the center of the circle. The leader says a statement such as “I have a cat” and everyone to whom the statement applies, stands up and says “Just like me!” then sits down again. The leader reads another statement and group members again respond. The activity continues through a pre-determined number of statements.

### Preparing students for success:

- Brainstorm with the class the kinds of things they might have in common (e.g., favorite activities, favorite seasons, pets, vacation destinations, number of siblings, etc.).
- If a student is going to lead the activity, have the student prepare a list of statements ahead of time; review the list with the student to be sure that it reflects interests/experiences shared by other students in the class.
- Model and practice standing up and sitting down safely.

## Tony Chestnut

This is a song with movements. On each syllable, students touch a body part that corresponds to the sound of the syllable.

Tony Chestnut (Touch toes, knees, chest, and head)

Knows I love you (Touch nose, eyes, heart, and extend hand into the circle)

Tony know, Tony knows (Touch toes, knees, nose x 2)



Tony Chestnut (Touch toes, knees, chest, and head)

Knows I love you (Touch nose, eyes, heart, and extend hand into the circle)

That's what Tony knows (Touch toes, knees, nose on "Tony knows")

### **Preparing students for success:**

- Break activity down into manageable steps and take several days to teach, if necessary.
- Display words written on a chart.
- If needed, review words and motions each time you do the activity, especially if you haven't done it for awhile.

### **Double This, Double That**

This is a clapping game done with partners. Students form two circles, facing each other. They go through one round of the chant and accompanying hand claps with the person opposite them then the outer circle steps to the right and everyone repeats the chant and clapping movements with a new partner. For additional challenge, speed up the pace of the chant with each new partner.

Double, double (Touch fists together twice)

This, this (Touch palms together twice)

Double, double (Touch fists twice)

That, that (Touch backs of hands together twice)

Double (Touch fists once)

This (Touch palms once)

Double (Touch fists once)

That (Touch backs of hands once)

Double, double (Touch fists twice)

This, that (Touch palms and then backs of hands)

**Variation:** Instead of touching fists, participants clap their own hands on the "double" lines.

### **Preparing students for success:**

- Model and practice forming inner and outer circles.
- Discuss how to make sure everyone has a partner.
- Practice the chant and movements so that students are confident about sequence.

- Model and practice using a gentle, safe touch

## Body Drumming

Standing in a circle, students follow the teacher's lead in doing a series of rhythmic body claps. When students are familiar with the activity and able to maintain self-control throughout, teachers could have individual students establish the rhythm and sequence of body claps.

### Preparing students for success:

- When teaching the activity, break it down into manageable steps.
- Model and practice one step before moving on to the next step.
- Discuss, model, and practice safe movement.
- Stop the activity if students begin to lose self-control.

## Focusing on Academic Skills

### Pop

Choose (or have a student choose) a number. Children are seated in a circle. Going around the circle, the children count "one, two, three . . ." until they get to the designated number. The child who gets that number stands up and says "Pop." The counting then starts over. This goes around and around, with the counting skipping over the children who have already popped, until everyone in the circle is standing.

**Variation:** In the DVD *Morning Meeting Activities in a Responsive Classroom*, the teacher does a variation on this activity in which students pop up on multiples of a number (five). Students begin counting at one and keep going until everyone has popped. Other variations include popping for even numbers or odd numbers.

### Preparing students for success:

- Be sure that the number chosen (or multiple) is within the ability of all students in the class.
- Model and practice the popping routine.
- Discuss strategies for helping each other in a respectful, friendly way.

## Guess My Number

Think of a number and let students know that you've chosen a number between one and \_\_\_\_, choosing a number range that appropriately challenges the group, given their age and skill level. Going around the circle, students take turns asking a yes-or-no question to try to determine the number. If a student does not have a question, s/he may "pass." A student who thinks s/he knows the number may take a guess. If the guess is incorrect, the questioning continues. If it's correct, the teacher may choose another number or pick a child to choose a number.

### Preparing students for success:

Spend time talking about strategies such as asking questions that will give information about the number, rather than questions that just eliminate one number. For example, instead of asking if it's the number after fourteen, students might ask if it's a two-digit number, whether it's larger than ten, or if it has a five in it.

## Sparkle

Students are seated when the activity begins. One child draws a spelling word out of a basket or grab bag and says the word. The next child repeats the word. The next child in the circle uses the word in a sentence. The following students spell the word, one letter per student. When the word has been correctly spelled, the next student stands up and says "Sparkle!" Another student gets to choose a word and the activity follows the same sequence.

If a student makes a mistake in spelling, the next student can say "check." If that student does not catch the mistake, others in the circle can say "check." (If no students catch the mistake, the teacher needs to step in and say "check.") The student who made the mistake can then either correct the mistake or ask for help (a "lifeline").

### Preparing students for success:

- Be sure that the available words are within the ability of all students in the class.
- Review and practice the process and routines (sequence leading to "sparkle," use of lifeline, response to a mistake, etc.).

## I Have . . . Who Has?

This is a good activity for reviewing content. Prepare index cards with the statement “I have . . .” at the top and “Who has . . .” at the bottom, completing each with content material. For example, if the class is studying states and capitals, a card might read “I have New York; Albany is the capital of New York” at the top and “Who has Rhode Island?” at the bottom.

Be sure there are exactly enough cards for the number of students in the group. Each card must be different and the final card should ask for the “I have” information on the first card. Give one card to each student.

Choose a student to begin the activity—that student will also be the last to play. The first student—Lucy—reads only the question on her card: “Who has Rhode Island?” Linus, who has Rhode Island, calls out “I have Rhode Island. Providence is the capital of Rhode Island” and then asks the question at the bottom of his card: “Who has Nevada?” the student who has Nevada calls out “I have Nevada. Reno is the capital of Nevada” and then reads the question on his card: “Who has Alaska?”

The activity proceeds until all students have had a chance to ask and answer a question.

**Variation:** Depending on students’ confidence and knowledge level, you could include only questions on the cards and students supply the answers, with help from neighbors if needed. In the above example, the “I have” statement would read “Rhode Island” and the student who has that card would supply the name of the capital.

### Preparing students for success:

- As you distribute cards, be sure that each student gets a card with a question that is within his or her ability to answer.
- Review the process and routines (when to read the answer, when to read the question, where to put the cards when the student has taken a turn, etc.).
- Discuss strategies for helping each other in a friendly, respectful way.

## Bow-Wow-Wow

This partner activity involves a chant, clapping, and movement. The activity begins with students paired up and standing in a circle. Partners do one round of the chant, with accompanying clapping and movement. When partners join hands and circle ("Little Tommy Tucker's dog goes . . ."), they only go halfway around. On the last word ("woof"), each student does a little jump and turns around to face a new partner, with whom they do another round of the chant.

Bow wow wow x 2 (Slap thighs, clap hands, clap partner's hands x 2)

Little Tommy Tucker's dog goes (Partners join hands and circle half way around)

Bow wow wow (Slap thighs, clap hands, clap partner's hands)

Woof! (Individuals give a little jump and turn around to face a new partner)

### Preparing students for success:

- Break activity down into manageable steps and take several days to teach. In the DVD *Morning Meeting Activities in a Responsive Classroom*, Marlynn Clayton takes three days to teach the activity. On day one, she teaches the words and movements, which students practice individually. On day two, students do the chant and movements with a partner. On day three, they add switching to a new partner.
- Model and practice each new step before teaching a new step.
- Review previously learned steps as needed to ensure students maintain self-control.

# What Is Morning Meeting?

June 07, 2016 Categories: [Getting Started](#) / [Morning Meeting](#)



*Responsive Classroom* Morning Meeting is an engaging way to start each day, build a strong sense of community, and set children up for success socially and academically. Each morning, students and teachers gather together in a circle for twenty to thirty minutes and interact with one another during four purposeful components:

1. **Greeting:** Students and teachers greet one other by name.
2. **Sharing:** Students share information about important events in their lives. Listeners often offer empathetic comments or ask clarifying questions.
3. **Group Activity:** Everyone participates in a brief, lively activity that fosters group cohesion and helps students practice social and academic skills (for example, reciting a poem, dancing, singing, or playing a game).
4. **Morning Message:** Students read and interact with a short message written by their teacher. The message is crafted to help students focus on the work they'll do in school that day.



# Sharing Leads to Learning

April 11, 2014 Categories: [Getting Started](#) / [Morning Meeting](#)



An

adapted excerpt from [The Morning Meeting Book](#), 3rd edition

Sharing is a rich and vital part of a daily Morning Meeting, a key *Responsive Classroom* practice in which all classroom members—grown-ups and students—gather in a circle for twenty to thirty minutes to greet each other, share news and ideas, do an activity together, and read a message written by the teacher. Morning Meeting helps students begin each day as a community of caring and respectful learners, by getting to know each other, practicing academic and social skills, and looking forward to learning together in the day ahead.

## How sharing builds communication skills

Sharing, the second of [four components that make up Morning Meeting](#), plays an important role in building a positive classroom community. Just as important, sharing offers ample opportunities to practice and reinforce the speaking, listening, and thinking skills that are so crucial to school success.

As social beings, we learn through communicating with others—and this is true no matter what the subject matter. Knowing how to observe and reflect, to speak and to listen are skills fundamental to our ability to learn. These skills enable us to exchange perspectives

and ideas, explain our thinking, and critique the thinking of others—tasks that children need in all areas of school and of life.

In acknowledging the value of these communication skills to success in the 21st century, the [Common Core State Standards for Speaking and Listening](#) state directly that students should “prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners” and note that “to build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner.”

Additionally, the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](#) (CASEL) has identified relationship skills as one of its five core groups of social and emotional competencies that children need for success in school—and in life. And a fundamental aspect of relationship skills is the ability to share ideas clearly and respond thoughtfully and empathically.

Morning Meeting sharing not only gives students a daily arena for this crucial communications practice but also enables them to practice in meaningful ways that are integrated with the academic, social, and emotional content of their lives.

### Structuring sharing

As the examples below show, sharing can be focused on either an academic or a social topic and structured in various ways. These are the three basic sharing formats:

- Around-the-circle sharing
- Partner sharing
- Dialogue sharing

If you and your students are new to Morning Meeting sharing, you might start with **around-the-circle sharing**, in which all members of the meeting circle say something very brief about a teacher-chosen topic. Used early in the year, this format provides a safe way to introduce basic sharing skills: how to decide on an idea to share, how to speak clearly, how to listen attentively and remember what was shared.

### Around-the-Circle Sharing

A sixth grade class is about to start the sharing portion of their daily Morning Meeting. The teacher, Mrs. Sorenson, announces the topic for an around-the-circle sharing—someone who shows courage. “This can be someone you know or someone you’ve read or heard about,” she clarifies.

Students take a minute to think and then Jolene begins. “I saw a story on the news last night about firefighters who rescued three people from a burning building. I think they



showed a lot of courage.” Several other students make the “me, too” sign showing that they saw the same news story and agree with their classmate.

Salome is next. She says, “I think my grandmother shows courage—she’s really scared of the water but she’s decided to take swimming lessons—she says it’s good to face your fears.”

In **partner sharing**, students pair up to talk with each other on a teacher-chosen topic. This is a good way to introduce sharing if many students are shy about speaking in front of the group or tend to get restless while others are speaking.

### Partner Sharing

Fourth grade teacher Mr. DiFranco has noticed that students choose the same classmates over and over for all kinds of activities. To help them stretch their social circles, he has planned a partner sharing, pairing students with classmates they don’t usually work or play with. “Today we’re going to chat with our partners and find two things we have in common,” he instructs. “At the end, we’ll share those things with the class.”

Before they begin, he has students generate useful questions they might ask: What do you like to do after school? What kind of movies do you like? What do you like on your pizza? He writes the suggestions on a chart before announcing, “OK. You’ll have two minutes to discover at least two things you have in common and then one more minute to pick which one you will each share with the class.”

As students’ skills and comfort levels grow, introduce **dialogue sharing**, in which one student presents some news or information to the entire class and then asks for questions and comments. A few students share like this each day until everyone has had a turn. Dialogue sharing can be open-topic or focused on a topic chosen by the teacher. To be successful with dialogue sharing, students need to learn how to state a main idea and supporting details, speak clearly, listen to each other carefully, and offer thoughtful questions and comments.

### Dialogue Sharing

The entire school has been studying bridges, and each day for a week during Morning Meeting, a few students in this first grade class are sharing their work with classmates. Zachary has made a model of a truss bridge and the landscape in which it sits. He carefully transports the blue cardboard box lid holding his construction to the meeting circle and places it in front of him.

“This is my bridge,” he says. “I used clay and toothpicks and craft sticks. It was fun to make.” He pauses before concluding, “Oh, and it’s a truss bridge.”

He pauses again and then says, “I’m ready for questions and comments.” A few hands go up and he calls on Sam.

“What part did you make first?”

“I made the land first,” he responds, and then calls on another student.

### Fitting the format to the students

Once the class is competent in all sharing formats, choose which format to use on a given day depending on students’ needs, time constraints, and classroom events. For example, on a day when you want everyone to think and talk about a certain topic, you might use around-the-circle sharing.

On a different day, partner or dialogue sharing might provide a time for more in-depth conversations. For example, students could do a partner sharing or a focused-topic dialogue sharing about which character from a read-aloud book they like best and why.

There’s no prescription for how to choose among these three formats as the year unfolds. Many teachers focus on dialogue sharing, recognizing that this format provides deep practice in speaking, listening, and thinking skills. Others might find that around-the-circle or partner sharing best suits their students’ needs. The bottom line is to do sharing in a way that offers an appropriate level of challenge and enables all children to feel heard and cared for in a safe environment.

### Build community, bolster skills

Students who regularly practice Morning Meeting sharing benefit in two important ways. First, they build a caring, respectful community as they learn about—and respond to—each other’s ideas and concerns. Second, students bolster their competence in the key communication skills fundamental to all learning—skills that will help them meet not only the rigors of the Common Core State Standards but also the demands of daily life in the globally inter-connected 21st century.

## Keeping Morning Meeting Greetings Fresh and Fun

October 11, 2013 Categories: [Activity Ideas](#) / [Getting Started](#) / [Message Ideas](#) / [Morning Meeting](#)



After doing

many Morning Meetings, teachers often wonder how to keep the sense of comfortable routine while also varying the meetings enough to keep students (and adults) interested and engaged. Greetings can be especially important because they set the tone for the whole meeting—and the whole day. Here are answers to questions teachers frequently ask about greetings. (The answers apply to the group activity component, too.)

**Q:** Students are not showing enthusiasm for greeting the way they did earlier in the year. What can I do?

**A:** First of all, consider why students may be losing enthusiasm. Possibly they've turned a developmental corner. For example, greetings that felt safe and right for mostly seven-year-olds might be feeling too narrow for eight-year-olds, who crave sanctioned ways to vent their boisterous side. Look for greetings that fit students developmentally and you'll likely see a revival of enthusiasm.

Or perhaps you simply need more variety in your greetings. Take a look at the week as a whole and then find ways to vary the greetings from day to day. One day, pass a greeting around the circle; another day, do a group chant as a greeting; another day, do a greeting that gets children up and moving around the room or gives them a choice of whom to greet. Next week, switch to other greetings of the same types.

Here's a greeting that gets students up and moving while also practicing their math facts.

[Match Card Greeting](#)

1. Give each student a card on which you've written part of an equation. For example, one student gets a card that says "50 – 35"; another student gets one that says "= 15."
2. Students move around trying to find the match for their card.
3. When students find their match, they greet each other. A simple "Hello" or "Good morning" is fine.
4. Students sit with their matching partner in the order of an equation, visible to the rest of the circle. For example, the student with the "50 – 35" card sits to the right of the student with the "= 15 card."
5. Going around the circle, students announce their equation while holding up their cards so all can see.

This next one's fun when you want to rein in the movement a bit by keeping students in the circle rather than moving around the meeting space.

#### Doing the Wave

1. Students stand with one arm extended toward the classmate on either side of them and with palms touching (or palms facing but not touching).
2. Turn to the student on your left and say, "Good morning, Sara." Sara greets you back. You both then raise your arms in a wavelike motion.
3. Sara turns to the student on her left and they greet each other in the same way, with the same motions.
4. Continue in this way so that the wave makes its way around the circle.

**Q:** I want students to have fun, but when we do bouncy, loud greetings, they tend to get silly and forget to take the act of greeting seriously. What can I do?

**A:** You're right to be concerned about greetings becoming silly. It helps to focus on engagement rather than entertainment or frivolity. Remember that although greetings do need to be engaging, they don't always need to be bouncy and loud. First, it's not your role as a teacher to entertain students. Second, the best learning comes from engagement, which can take the form of deep concentration, even fascination, as well as playfulness and laughter. So instead trying to make greetings entertaining for students, look for those that will engage them. Here are a couple to try.

#### Spider Web

1. Holding a ball of yarn, a student greets someone across the circle and gently rolls the ball to that person while firmly holding on to the end of the yarn.
2. The student who receives the ball of yarn greets another student across the circle and rolls the ball to that student, making sure to hold onto the unraveling strand with one hand.

3. This continues until everyone has been greeted and the yarn has created a web across the circle.
4. To unravel the web, students greet each other in reverse order until the ball of yarn is wound up again.

#### Flightly Flight

1. Give the first greeter a paper airplane. She chooses someone in the circle across from her and greets him with a friendly “Good morning, \_\_\_\_\_!” and then gently tosses the airplane so that it lands in front of him. (Remind students to throw the plane carefully so that it doesn’t hit anyone.)
2. The student being greeted waits until the airplane lands and then retrieves it. (Remind students that only the person being greeted retrieves the airplane.) He returns the greeting: “Good morning, \_\_\_\_\_!” and chooses someone else to greet.
3. Repeat until everyone has been greeted.

**Q:** Coming up with enough greetings to keep things varied and fun takes time—the one thing I don’t have! How can I keep up?

**A:** Variety *is* important, but that doesn’t mean you have to change the greeting every day. It’s more important to gauge students’ interest level: If they’re enjoying a greeting—perhaps even asking for it—keep using it!

But it’s also a good idea to continue building the class’s stock so you can switch things up when you need to. One way to gather new greetings is to ask colleagues to share ones their students enjoy.

And remember that students themselves are excellent resources. When you ask for their help adapting familiar greetings or even coming up with new ones, their enthusiasm is sure to rise. Here’s a greeting devised by a fourth grader. It can be adapted for all grade levels and is especially useful early in the year when students are learning one another’s names.

#### Say Your Name

1. The whole class begins chanting the refrain: *Say your name and when you do, we will say it back to you!*
2. The first child then says his or her name aloud: *Melanie!*
3. In unison, the whole class repeats the name: *Melanie!*
4. The whole class chants the refrain again as the greeting continues around the circle.

Say Your Name is an example of a greeting that can be easily varied to feel new. Each student can use a different voice—soft, deep, high-pitched, spooky, etc.—which the whole class then echoes. Students can sing the refrain in rap style, add hand-clapping and thigh

tapping, or clap out the number of syllables in their names. To make the greeting livelier, students can add a movement to go with their names, which the class then mimics when they repeat the name.

Here’s another greeting that’s easy to vary. A bonus: it folds in sharing for those busy days when you have less time for Morning Meeting.

Hullabaloo

Post a chart like this:

Ways to move	Ways to greet	Topics to share
Tiptoe	Link elbows	Favorite dessert
Skip	Handshake	How many kids in family
Walk like a zombie	Pinky shake	Favorite book
Swim	High five	Favorite activities

1. Call out a direction from each category on the chart. For example, “Tiptoe, handshake, favorite book.”
2. Students tiptoe around the room to find a partner and greet them with a handshake. Partners then tell each other their favorite book.
3. Ring a bell to signal a new round. Call out three new directions. Students move, greet, and share in those designated ways.
4. Continue for three or four rounds.

Want more greeting ideas?

[80 Morning Meeting Ideas for Grades K–2](#). Susan Lattanzi Roser.

[80 Morning Meeting Ideas for Grades 3–6](#). Carol Davis.

[99 Activities and Greetings](#): *Great for Morning Meeting . . . and other meetings, too!*  
Melissa Correa-Connolly.

[Doing Math in Morning Meeting](#): *150 Quick Activities That Connect to Your Curriculum*.  
Andy Dousis and Margaret Berry Wilson.

[Doing Science in Morning Meeting](#): *150 Quick Activities That Connect to Your Curriculum*.  
Lara Webb and Margaret Berry Wilson.

[Doing Language Arts in Morning Meeting: 150 Quick Activities That Connect to Your Curriculum.](#) Joan Riordan, Jodie Luongo, and Kate Umstatter

[The Morning Meeting Book](#), 3rd edition. Roxann Kriete and Carol Davis. 2014.

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