



# Getting Each Day Off to a Great Start

*Responsive Classroom*® Morning Meeting is a fun, friendly, and powerful way to get each day off to a great start. These 20- to 30-minute daily whole-group gatherings help create community and reinforce academic and social skills in lively ways.

**This book gives you 80 ideas and many tips** to help you plan engaging and purposeful Morning Meetings for your class. These 80 ideas cover the four sequential components of Morning Meetings:

- 1 **Greeting** \* Each child is greeted by name, the most basic way of providing a sense of belonging.
- 2 **Sharing** \* Children share news or information about themselves, which helps them get to know one another and strengthen communication skills.
- 3 **Group Activity** \* A whole-group activity reinforces learning and encourages cooperation and inclusion.
- 4 **Morning Message** \* A brief note from the teacher to the class further reinforces skills and sparks children's excitement about what they'll be learning that day.

In these pages, you'll find ideas for 20 greetings, 20 sharings, 20 group activities, and 20 morning messages. Each idea comes with clear, step-by-step directions, along with tips for helping children succeed and for maximizing social and academic learning.

# How to Use This Book

For practical tips and help in “mixing and matching” ideas based on children’s academic and social needs and abilities, use the:

- \* **Ideas at a Glance** (pages 8–15)
- \* **Sample Combinations** (pages 199–201) of greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message ideas
- \* **Morning Meeting Planners** (pages 202–203)

Also see “Teacher Language That Enriches Morning Meeting” on pages 204–205. You’ll find sample reinforcing language and open-ended questions that allow children to benefit from the full power of the ideas in this book.

To see video clips of Morning Meeting in action in real classrooms, visit [www.responsiveclassroom.org/morning-meeting-ideas](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/morning-meeting-ideas). Or scan the code now to watch.



*Take advantage of the mixture of routine and surprise,  
comfort and challenge, in this collection of ideas to plan  
Morning Meetings for your class all year long!*

**NOTE:** This book is not intended to provide comprehensive instruction on *Responsive Classroom*® Morning Meeting. For that, refer to *The Morning Meeting Book* by Roxann Kriete (Northeast Foundation for Children, Inc., 2002) and the other resources listed on pages 206–207.

# Three Keys to Planning Successful Morning Meetings

- 1 **Determine how much time you have and choose ideas accordingly.** Some of the ideas in this book may be easier to extend or shorten for your class than others.
- 2 **Consider students' learning objectives for the day.** Look for greeting, sharing, group activity, and morning message ideas that especially support or can be easily adapted to support these objectives.
- 3 **Think about students' strengths and challenges.** Where are they in their development? What are some recent challenges that they would benefit from working on? What social or academic skills might need a little extra reinforcement and practice?

## Here's an example:

Second grade teacher Mr. Johnson observed that conflicts were increasing at recess and lunch. He decided to focus on team-building in the next Morning Meeting, so he chose the:

- \* Ball Roll greeting (page 32)
- \* Fun Food Finds sharing (page 82)
- \* Mouse Trap group activity (page 128)
- \* Let's Exercise morning message (page 166)

# Scaffolding for Success

Just as for academic subjects, it's essential to break down Morning Meeting skills and routines based on students' developmental needs and abilities and then gradually put the pieces together. With some scaffolding, all the ideas in this book can work for any K–2 classroom. Use the following guidelines to help you adjust the complexity of an idea so that it's appropriate for students at any given point in the school year.

- \* **Phase in Morning Meeting** by teaching one component at a time. (The best order of introduction is greeting, group activity, morning message, and sharing, even though this isn't their eventual order in a full Morning Meeting.)
- \* **Break down routines into bite-size pieces.** For example, before introducing a greeting that involves saying a classmate's name, asking and answering a question, and doing a handshake, be sure you've taught—and students have a solid command of—each of these elements.
- \* **Use Interactive Modeling** to teach Morning Meeting skills and routines. (To learn more about Interactive Modeling, visit [www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org).) It helps to model these signals, which are used often in Morning Meeting:
  - I'm ready (for example, put thumb up)
  - Turn up the volume/speak up (for example, cup hand by ear)
  - Signal for quiet attention (for example, using a chime or raising one hand)

- \* **Use reinforcing language and open-ended questions** to help children build and expand their skills. (See pages 204–205 for examples of teacher language you can use to enrich Morning Meeting.)
- \* **Know that it's OK to repeat an idea multiple times.** Then, as children gain expertise, introduce variations one at a time. Students, especially young ones, like repetition.
- \* **Write out chants, songs, poems, and other helpful texts.** Also consider using anchor charts, such as number lines.
- \* **Keep it simple!** Doing so helps students stay focused and keeps them from getting overwhelmed.

You'll find specific scaffolding suggestions for greetings, sharings, group activities, and morning messages on pages 18, 62, 110, and 154.

# Morning Meeting Supplies

Here are some supplies commonly needed for Morning Meetings:

- \* Ball of yarn
- \* Beach ball
- \* Beanbags
- \* Chart(s) of sentence starters and question starters (for sharings)
- \* Chime or other pleasant sound-maker
- \* Counting bears (or other counters)
- \* Easel chart and paper
- \* Flash cards
- \* Hand mirror
- \* Koosh ball
- \* Magnifying glass
- \* Markers
- \* Name cards (include photos if possible)
- \* Pair cards (same food, number, color, etc.)
- \* Playground ball
- \* Pointers
- \* Sticky notes (various sizes)

## Some Suggestions

- \* **Keep supplies in one handy place**—a basket under the chart stand, for example.
- \* **Keep the Morning Meeting space clear**, so it's inviting and easy for children to gather in a circle. Post the Morning Meeting rules where they can be seen during the meeting.
- \* **Save each message**, song chart, and so on that you create for possible reuse. Consider displaying them at the end of the year so children can see all that they did during Morning Meeting!

# When You Have a Guest (Substitute) Teacher

- \* **Plan a Morning Meeting that students will enjoy and can do smoothly.** You may want to create a standard Morning Meeting plan for all guest teacher days—for example:
  - We're So Glad You're Here Today greeting (page 28)
  - What's New? Chant sharing (page 72)
  - Jolly Jump Up group activity (page 114)
  - Guest Teacher morning message (page 180)
- \* **Provide the guest teacher with instructions for each Morning Meeting component.** You can use pages from this book for this purpose.
- \* **Prepare students in advance.** Ask an adult to role-play being a guest teacher with the class. Assign students to help with Morning Meeting tasks they have experience in doing, such as being the first ball-roller or guesser.

# Greeting Ideas AT A GLANCE

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>Who Do You See?</b>	<b>20</b>	Language Arts	Choral chanting, paying attention
<b>We'll Cheer Hooray</b>	<b>22</b>	Language Arts/Music	Focusing, voice volume
<b>Stand and Reach Up High</b>	<b>24</b>	Language Arts/Music	Singing/chanting, coordination
<b>We're So Glad You Came to Play</b>	<b>26</b>	Language Arts/Music	Reading fluency, timing, learning full names
<b>We're So Glad You're Here Today</b>	<b>28</b>	Language Arts/Music	Singing/chanting, creative thinking
<b>Friends in Our Class</b>	<b>30</b>	Language Arts/ Social Studies/Music	Keeping a steady beat, snapping fingers
<b>Ball Roll</b>	<b>32</b>	Phys Ed	Coordination, sequencing
<b>Knock, Knock</b>	<b>34</b>	Language Arts	Learning/using full names
<b>Skip Two</b>	<b>36</b>	Math	Counting, number relationships
<b>Micro-Wave</b>	<b>38</b>	Language Arts	Using clear voices, wordplay
<b>Here We Are Together</b>	<b>40</b>	Language Arts/Music	Singing/chanting in unison, learning names

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Round the Circle	42	Math	Coordination, clockwise/ counterclockwise directions
Chant Your Name	44	Language Arts	Keeping a steady beat, cooperation
Hand Stack	46	Math/Phys Ed	Coordination, cooperation
The Frog	48	Science/ Language Arts	Coordination, creative thinking
Magnifying Glass	50	Science	Welcoming language, using a magnifying glass
The Roaring Greeting	52	Language Arts	Creative thinking, keeping a steady beat
TA DA!	54	Language Arts	Coordination, creative thinking, timing
Backward Day Handshake	56	Language Arts	Sentence structure, sequencing
Dove of Peace Handshake	58	Language Arts/ Phys Ed	Coordination, left/right, sequencing

**\*The following skills apply to all of the greeting ideas listed above: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, and turn-taking.**

# Sharing Ideas AT A GLANCE

	TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Around-the-Circle Sharing	Apples or Bananas?	64	Health	Turn-taking, decision-making, using a clear voice
	My Favorite Game	66	Language Arts/ Social Studies/Math	Reflecting, decision-making, using complete sentences
	My Favorite Season ... and Here's Why!	68	Language Arts/ Science	Reasoning, decision-making, using complete sentences
	Who Remembers?	70	Math/Social Studies	Reasoning, recall
	What's New? Chant	72	Language Arts/Music	Keeping a steady beat, reflecting on personal experiences
	You Like That Animal? Me, Too!	74	Language Arts/ Science	Communicating a personal connection
	Book Talk	76	Language Arts	Signaling connections/new learning

Partner Sharing	My Family	78	Language Arts/ Social Studies/	Taking turns speaking/listening, staying on topic
	More About My Family	80	Language Arts/ Social Studies/	Taking turns speaking/listening, staying on topic
	Fun Food Finds	82	Health/Science	Finding commonalities
	Reporting Food Finds	84	Health/Science/ Language Arts	Finding commonalities, public speaking
	My Partner's Pride	86	Language Arts	Self-reflection, summarizing

	TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Focused Topic Dialogue Sharing	Family Photo	88	Language Arts/Social Studies	Speaking clearly, using several complete sentences
	Name One Thing	90	Language Arts	Comprehension, recall
	Share Bear Jar	92	Language Arts	Topic sentence, supporting details, concluding statement

Open Topic Dialogue Sharing	What Could We Share About?	94	Language Arts	Brainstorming, decision-making, critical thinking
	Making Connections	96	All Subjects	Public speaking, making connections
	Asking Questions	98	All Subjects	Asking and responding to questions respectfully
	Mirror My Feelings	100	All Subjects	Expressing empathy
	Questions & Comments	102	All Subjects	Asking and responding to questions, making appropriate comments

	A Lesson on Sharing and Responding to Serious News	104	All Subjects	Expressing empathy
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**\*The following skills apply to all of the sharing ideas listed above: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, decision-making, formulating questions, and understanding different points of view.**

# Group Activity Ideas AT A GLANCE

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>A Counting Rhyme</b>	112	Math/ Language Arts	1-1 correspondence, sequencing, numerical order, singing/chanting
<b>Jolly Jump Up</b>	114	All Subject Areas	Word, number, & shape recognition
<b>Bug in the Rug</b>	116	Science	Observing, memory skills, giving clear clues, chanting
<b>Black Socks</b>	118	Language Arts/Music	Focusing, singing as a group and in rounds, word recognition
<b>Aka Baka Soda Cracker</b>	120	Math/Phys Ed	Coordination, keeping a steady beat, predicting
<b>Lost Tooth Poem</b>	122	Language Arts/Health	Reading poetry, word recognition, rhyming, keeping a steady beat
<b>Off My Back</b>	124	All Subject Areas	Deduction, estimation
<b>Apples, Peaches, Pears, and Plums</b>	126	Language Arts/Social Studies/Science	Predicting, letter/word recognition, keeping a steady beat
<b>Mouse Trap</b>	128	Phys Ed	Coordination, focusing
<b>Rumpelstiltskin</b>	130	Language Arts	Decision-making, deduction
<b>Purple Soup</b>	132	Language Arts/Music	Pantomiming, teamwork, singing/chanting

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Hello, Neighbor!	134	Language Arts/Music	Sequencing, left and right, synonyms, singing/chanting
Bluebird, Bluebird	136	Language Arts/ Science/Music	Following directions, coordination, observation, singing/chanting
The Teacher's Cat	138	Language Arts	Keeping a steady beat, adjectives, alphabetical order, creative thinking
Who Has Seen the Wind?	140	Language Arts/ Science	Sequencing, reading with expression, word recognition
Fruit Salad	142	All Subject Areas	Coordination, concept recognition
Herman the Squirmin' Worm	144	Language Arts/ Science/Music	Sequencing, pantomiming, size relationships, singing/chanting
Ahoy Matey!	146	Social Studies	Coordination, following directions, focusing, pantomiming
Super Gooney Bird	148	Language Arts/ Science/Music	Coordination, sequencing, memory, singing/chanting
The Swing— An Action Poem	150	Language Arts	Reading fluency, rhyming, 1-1 correspondence

**\*The following skills apply to all of the group activity ideas listed above: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, predicting, analyzing, and problem-solving.**

# Morning Message Ideas AT A GLANCE

	TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Emergent Readers	Today, We Are Painters!	158	Art/Language Arts	Recognizing letter patterns, reading left to right
	Let's Go!	160	Health/Social Studies/ Language Arts	Reading left to right and top to bottom, categorizing, counting
	What Color Are You Wearing?	162	Math/Language Arts	Pre-reading strategies, color recognition, self-awareness, most/least
	Wild Weather!	164	Science/Language Arts	Summarizing, recall, most/least
	Let's Exercise!	166	Health/Language Arts	Writing, drawing, exercising for good health
	An Apple a Day	168	Health/Language Arts	Nutritional awareness, spelling, patience

Beginning Readers	How Many Buttons?	170	Math/Language Arts	Number correspondence, addition
	Music Makers	172	Music/Language Arts	Categorizing, punctuation, music
	What's Your Name?	174	Language Arts	Finding patterns, making comparisons, using alphabetical order
	Time to Rhyme!	176	Language Arts	Rhyming, poetry
	How Does Your Garden Grow?	178	Science/Language Arts	Observing, measuring, predicting, estimating
	Guest Teacher	180	Language Arts	Responsibility, empathy
	My Name Starts With ...	182	Math/Language Arts	Letter recognition and formation, making predictions, graphing

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Favorite Numbers	184	Math/Language Arts	Sequencing, computation skills
How's the Weather?	186	Science/Language Arts	Weather vocabulary, letter-sound recognition
Today Is a Special Day	188	Social Studies/Language Arts	Exploring historical facts and traditions
Count Your Name	190	Math/Language Arts	Counting, categorizing, odd/even
Where in the World?	192	Social Studies/Language Arts	Categorizing, geography
How Do We Do It?	194	Language Arts	Verbs and adverbs, creative writing, brainstorming
Searching the Solar System	196	Science/Language Arts	Organization, classification, compare and contrast

**\*The following skills apply to all of the morning message ideas listed above: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, reading fluency, decoding, and following directions.**