



# 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
- \* **Daily and Weekly 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, visit [www.responsiveclassroom.org/morning-meeting-ideas](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org/morning-meeting-ideas). Or scan the code 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 than others to extend or shorten for your class.
- 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:

Fourth grade teacher Ms. Ramirez observed that cliques were forming, with some students feeling excluded at various times during the day. As part of her efforts to address this, she decided to focus on team building in the next Morning Meeting, so she chose the:

- \* Double-Takes greeting (page 22)
- \* You Like That Movie? Me, Too! sharing (page 74)
- \* Elevens group activity (page 122)
- \* Riddle, Riddle! Who Knows the Riddle? morning message (page 164)

# 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 grade 3–6 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 thumbs 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. To keep students engaged, try to balance repetition, variety, and challenge.
- \* **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
- \* Balls of different colors and types (beach balls, Koosh balls, playground balls, etc.)
- \* Bean bags
- \* CD/MP3 player
- \* Chart(s) of sentence starters and question starters (for sharings)
- \* Chart(s) of songs/chants and poems
- \* Chime or other pleasant sound-maker
- \* Dice
- \* Easel chart and paper
- \* Flash cards
- \* Index cards
- \* Markers
- \* Name cards (include photos if possible)
- \* Pair cards (same food, number, quotes, etc.)
- \* Pointers
- \* Sticky notes (various sizes)
- \* Tennis balls (in cans of three)

## 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** and other charts 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!
- \* **Consider using chairs** in the circle area. Students in older elementary grades may be more comfortable sitting in chairs.

# 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:
  - A Little-Known Fact About Me greeting (page 32)
  - My Favorite Food sharing (page 64)
  - Follow Me group activity (page 112)
  - Guest Teacher morning message (page 170)
- \* **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. Rotate the job of Guest Teacher Assistant (see page 170).

# Greeting Ideas AT A GLANCE

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>Moving in Circles</b>	<b>20</b>	PE/Music/Math	Coordination, sequencing
<b>Double-Takes</b>	<b>22</b>	Language Arts/Music	Finding similarities, creative thinking
<b>What's Your Place Value?</b>	<b>24</b>	Math/Science	Number recognition, understanding place value
<b>No Smiling!</b>	<b>26</b>	Language Arts	Empathy, giving encouragement
<b>1, 2, 3, Look!</b>	<b>28</b>	Math	Empathy, inclusiveness, probability
<b>What's the Word?</b>	<b>30</b>	Language Arts/ Social Studies	Reviewing, summarizing, making inferences
<b>A Little-Known Fact About Me</b>	<b>32</b>	Language Arts	Identifying facts, making connections
<b>Floppy Fish Greeting</b>	<b>34</b>	Dramatic Arts/PE	Pantomiming, coordination
<b>Closed-Eyes Greeting</b>	<b>36</b>	Language Arts	Cooperation, sequencing
<b>Middle Name Greeting</b>	<b>38</b>	Language Arts/Math	Word recognition, predicting, probability
<b>Quote Greeting</b>	<b>40</b>	Language Arts/ Social Studies	Comprehension, text connections



TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Dice Greeting	42	Math	Multiplication, division, addition, subtraction
Roll Call	44	Language Arts/Music	Chanting or choral reading, keeping a steady beat
Mix-It-Up Ball Greeting	46	Math/PE	Coordination, memory, sequencing
On the List	48	Dramatic Arts/Music	Pantomiming, creative thinking, sequencing
On the Phone	50	Language Arts/Music	Speaking with expression, choral singing/chanting
Secret Handshake	52	Language Arts	Cooperation, sequencing, creative thinking
Mistake Greeting	54	All Subjects	Empathy, cooperation
Lumberjack	56	Language Arts/Social Studies	Cooperation, coordination
Syllables in Our Names	58	Language Arts	Syllables, coordination

**\*Note: All the greeting ideas in this book reinforce these essential skills: 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	My Favorite Food	64	Health/Science	Using a complete sentence, making healthy choices
	What I Like to Do ...	66	Language Arts	Reflecting, reasoning
	Who Remembers ...	68	All Subjects	Reflecting, reasoning, recall
	Headlines!	70	Language Arts/ Social Studies	Main idea, summarizing, making inferences
	Announcements!	72	Language Arts/Music	Main idea, summarizing, chanting
	You Like That Movie? Me, Too!	74	Language Arts	Communicating a personal connection, reasoning
	Jokes and Riddles	76	Language Arts	Connecting, creative thinking

Partner Sharing	A Person Who Is Important to Me	78	Language Arts/ Social Studies	Explaining choices, main idea, being concise
	Looking Forward ...	80	Language Arts	Thinking ahead, being concise
	In Common ...	82	Language Arts/ Social Studies	Main idea, summarizing
	Concentric Circles	84	All Subjects	Cooperation, being concise
	Partner's Strengths	86	Language Arts	Summarizing, synthesizing

	TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
Focused Topic Dialogue Sharing	What I Like to Do With My Family	88	Language Arts/Social Studies	Using complete sentences, main idea, supporting details
	Name One Thing ...	90	All Subjects	Recall, responding to questions
	Fun With Tennis Balls	92	Language Arts	Main idea, details, conclusions

Open Topic Dialogue Sharing	Newsy News!	94	Language Arts	Critical thinking
	News Connections	96	Language Arts	Making connections, main idea, details
	Ready for Questions	98	All Subjects	Asking and responding to questions
	Ready for Comments	100	All Subjects	Empathy, making inferences
	Ready for Questions & Comments	102	All Subjects	Asking and responding to questions, expressing empathy

	Sharing & Responding to Serious News	104	All Subjects	Expressing empathy
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**\*Note: All the sharing ideas in this book reinforce these essential skills: self-control, friendly body language, active listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, decision-making, staying on topic, formulating questions, and understanding different points of view.**

# Group Activity Ideas AT A GLANCE

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>Follow Me</b>	<b>112</b>	PE	Focusing, coordination
<b>What Did You See?</b>	<b>114</b>	All Subjects	Observing, memorizing, recall
<b>5 Questions &amp; 3 Clues</b>	<b>116</b>	All Subjects	Asking questions, giving clues, drawing conclusions
<b>Rare Birds</b>	<b>118</b>	Language Arts	Drawing conclusions, making inferences
<b>Group Counting</b>	<b>120</b>	Math	Sequencing, counting
<b>Elevens</b>	<b>122</b>	Math	Mental math, reasoning
<b>Alibi</b>	<b>124</b>	All Subjects	Memory skills, deduction
<b>A Ding Dong</b>	<b>126</b>	Language Arts/ Music	Focusing, rhyming, singing/ chanting
<b>Group Charades</b>	<b>128</b>	All Subjects	Coordination, focusing, pantomiming, vocabulary
<b>Copy Cat</b>	<b>130</b>	Language Arts/PE	Giving directions, coordination
<b>Word Scramble</b>	<b>132</b>	Language Arts	Creative thinking, synthesizing information

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>Build a Silly Sentence</b>	<b>134</b>	Language Arts	Spelling, building vocabulary, creative thinking
<b>Give Us Your Sign</b>	<b>136</b>	Language Arts/Music	Creative thinking, cooperation, chanting
<b>Flub It!</b>	<b>138</b>	Math/All Subjects	Sequencing, focusing
<b>Encore!</b>	<b>140</b>	Music/All Subjects	Cooperation, vocabulary, recall, singing/chanting
<b>Back-to-Back</b>	<b>142</b>	PE	Cooperation, coordination
<b>Dramatic Reading</b>	<b>144</b>	Poetry/ Language Arts	Reading with expression, creative thinking, comprehension
<b>Tongue Twisters</b>	<b>146</b>	Language Arts	Word recognition, alliteration, pronunciation
<b>Tricky, Tricky Bear</b>	<b>148</b>	Language Arts	Rhythm, coordination, singing/chanting
<b>Hands Up!</b>	<b>150</b>	All Subjects	Categorization, coordination, singing/chanting

**\*Note: All the group activity ideas in this book reinforce these essential skills: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, predicting, analyzing, vocabulary-building, and problem-solving.**

# Morning Message Ideas AT A GLANCE

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>Graphing Favorites</b>	<b>158</b>	Math/Language Arts	Graphing, data analysis
<b>Our Class Experts</b>	<b>160</b>	Language Arts	Self-reflection, building self-confidence
<b>How'd We Do?</b>	<b>162</b>	All Subjects	Self-reflection, responsibility
<b>Riddle, Riddle! Who Knows the Riddle?</b>	<b>164</b>	Language Arts	Recall, critical thinking
<b>Numbers Around Us</b>	<b>166</b>	Math/Language Arts	Number relationships, mental math
<b>Be My Editor!</b>	<b>168</b>	Language Arts	Editing, punctuation, capitalization
<b>Guest Teacher</b>	<b>170</b>	All Subjects	Responsibility, empathy
<b>Wow Words!</b>	<b>172</b>	Language Arts	Vocabulary, creative writing, brainstorming
<b>Traditions</b>	<b>174</b>	Social Studies/ Language Arts	Vocabulary, making connections
<b>What Do You Know?</b>	<b>176</b>	Math/Language Arts	Geometry, vocabulary
<b>Welcome Back!</b>	<b>178</b>	All Subjects	Comprehension, vocabulary
<b>Special Days</b>	<b>180</b>	Social Studies/ Language Arts	Exploring historical events, goal setting
<b>Homework Pioneers</b>	<b>182</b>	All Subjects	Responsibility, organizing information, comprehension

TITLE	PAGE	CONTENT AREA	SKILLS REINFORCED*
<b>We Can Do It!</b>	<b>184</b>	All Subjects	Building self-confidence, test preparation
<b>Analogies</b>	<b>186</b>	Language Arts	Making comparisons, using context clues
<b>Compare and Contrast</b>	<b>188</b>	Science/All Subjects	Organizing ideas, comparing and contrasting
<b>Field Trip</b>	<b>190</b>	All Subjects	Formulating questions, prioritizing, categorizing
<b>Punctuation Exercises</b>	<b>192</b>	PE/Health/ Language Arts	Healthy habits, punctuation
<b>Predictions</b>	<b>194</b>	Language Arts	Comprehension, making predictions
<b>Looking Back</b>	<b>196</b>	All Subjects	Self-reflection, vocabulary, summarizing

**\*Note: All the morning message ideas in this book reinforce these essential skills: self-control, friendly body language, listening, clear and audible speaking, assertiveness, turn-taking, reading fluency, decoding, and following directions.**