



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.