



Routines & Rituals: Connecting Teachers, Children, and Families



Today's Agenda

1. The 'WHY' behind Routines and Rituals
2. What is a routine?
3. What is a ritual?
4. A Framework for Change
5. Classroom Rituals throughout the year
6. Personal Reflections





Why develop routines and rituals?

- Help teachers, children, and families create special bonds
- Strengthen relationships
- Create a caring community

Routines and Rituals

- Do you have personal routines?
- Why did you develop this routine?
- Has your routine changed over time?
- Do you remember any routines from your childhood?
- Do you still use any of those routines or steps from those routines today?



Routines and Rituals

What is a routine?

A routine is a repeated predictable event that provides a foundation for daily tasks in a child's life.



Routines are:

Morning
Arrival/Drop Off

Handwashing

Diaper
Changes



Meal Times

Outdoor
Play

Whole
Group Time



Story Time



Learning
Centers

Routines and Rituals

What is a ritual?

Rituals are special actions or events that help us navigate emotionally important events in our lives.

Rituals enhance aspects of our daily routines to deepen our connections and relationships.



Routines and Rituals

- Do you perform any rituals during your day?
- Do you remember any rituals from your childhood?
- Do you continue to perform your childhood rituals as an adult?



Rituals are:

Special Snack
Time Stories

Favorite 'Clean
Up' Songs

'This Is The Way
We Wash Our
Hands' Song

Choice Greetings



Meal Chants

'The Author
Writes The
Words' Song

Hopscotch Out
the Door

Sweet Dreams
Spray

What is the value of a ritual?

Identity

Teaches us values

Helps us navigate changes

Allows us to connect to our cultural heritage

Helps us problem solve

Helps us cope with loss



Comfort

Teaches us skills

Security

Memories





Turning Routines into Rituals



A few reminders...

- It can take 3 weeks or more to establish a routine and even longer to turn your routines into rituals.
- All rituals have the following key elements
 1. The ritual marks the beginning or ending to a routine
 2. The ritual is intentional
 3. The ritual is individualized or personalized
 4. The ritual enhances the teacher's tools and techniques

A Framework for Change

Routine	
Ritual	
What is the purpose?	
How can you personalize it or individualize it?	
What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?	

Establish Identity

- Having an identity is the first step to developing rituals.
- An identity allows children and families to take ownership in the classroom and school community.
- Develop your identity from the things that you and the children are passionate about.



Getting Started

Pick **just one** part of your daily routine to develop into a ritual

- Morning Arrivals
- Meal Times
- Transitions
- Nap Time
- Helping a child cope with a personal challenge
- Afternoon Dismissal

Don't be discouraged by a
A SLOW START.
It offers the time and testing
you need to lay the right
foundation for success.

—— Michael Hyatt ——



michaelhyatt.com

Turning Your Morning Arrival Routine into a Ritual

Routine	Stand at the classroom door and say 'Hello _____' or 'Good morning _____'
Ritual	Ask children to select a greeting from the morning greeting apron.
What is the purpose?	Morning drop-off can still be challenging for children, especially if there are many changes at home. Allowing children to select how they want to be greeted will empower them it will also allow them to have as much or as little interaction as they are willing to engage in and it will help them get their minds off of their parents leaving.
How can you personalize it or individualize it?	My toddlers love the classroom climber and the outside tunnel. I can add an option to climb over the climber or move through a tunnel as a way to enter the classroom.
What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?	I need an apron or a poster for the door and I need to decide on 4-6 choices of greeting options. I need to ask families if they have a special handshake or physical gesture that they use with their children to show love and affection.

Turning Your Morning Arrival Routine into a Ritual



GOOD MORNING



A Framework for Change

Routine	
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Turning Your Meal Time Routine into a Ritual

Routine	Ask children to clean their hands before they take their seat at the table.
Ritual	Dim the lights, turn on the lamps, have the children place their napkins on their lap, play some mood music, and make believe your lunch is at a fancy restaurant.
What is the purpose?	It is challenging at meal times to keep children in their seats. If I start to teach some formal manners, I hope that children will remain seated. If they remain seated then they will have more opportunities to eat a balanced meal and practice having back-and-forth conversations with peers.
How can you personalize it or individualize it?	My preschool students love listening to our World Music CD. I plan to play this CD only during our meal times to make this time special for our class.
What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?	I need to be sure that I have enough paper napkins for each meal. I also need to check the lighting and make sure that there is enough light in the room to adequately supervise the children while they eat. I will want to move the music player and have the CD on the lunch cart.

Turning Your Meal Time Routine into a Ritual

AT THE DINNER TABLE

Wash your hands before food	Wipe your mouth with your napkin
Place your napkin on your lap	Lean over your plate
Chew with your mouth closed	Use the right utensils
Don't talk with your mouth full	Learn to set the table appropriately
Don't slurp	Say please & thank you

Sit Up
Straight



Hats Off

Clean
Hands



Hold
Silverware
Correctly



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Turning Your Transition Routine into a Ritual

<p>Routine</p>	<p>Setting a timer to have the children clean up and expecting them to be on the whole group carpet when the timer goes off.</p>
<p>Ritual</p>	<p>Instead of a timer, I am going to play the 'Clean Up Vacuum Cleaner' song by Jack Hartmann and then I will start the chant: "Everybody have a seat, have a seat, have a seat. Everybody have a seat right on the floor. Not on the ceiling, not on the door, everybody have a seat right on the floor." I will continue the chant until everyone is on the floor and then the whole group will say the chant one last time in a silly voice before I begin the whole group activity.</p>
<p>What is the purpose?</p>	<p>My transition times are lengthy and the children lose focus and then begin to engage in rough play and unsafe behaviors. This ritual is quick and can be used anytime I need to stop the children and bring everyone together (especially in an emergency).</p>
<p>How can you personalize it or individualize it?</p>	<p>The children love the play vacuum in the housekeeping center. I will purchase another play vacuum and allow the child that is working the hardest at cleaning up to use the play vacuum. I have also individualized it by having the children use silly voices because they love to make different sounds with their voices.</p>
<p>What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?</p>	<p>I need another play vacuum cleaner. I will also need to have the Clean Up Vacuum Cleaner song saved in my digital playlist or cued up on YouTube. I can also turn the lights off and on, dim the lights, or do the chant in a whisper voice if the children aren't cueing into my routine.</p>

Turning Your Transition Routine into a Ritual



♪ ♪ ♪ ♪ ♪
This is my cleanup song by Dr. Jean

A teddy bear is sitting on a red apple with a yellow star. The bear is surrounded by colorful letters (A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z) and numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

Everybody have a seat
Have a seat, have a seat
Everybody have a seat on the floor.
Not on the ceiling, not on the door
Everybody have a seat, on the floor!

A logo for "Fran" with a train and a house.

KindergartenCraigans.blogspot.com

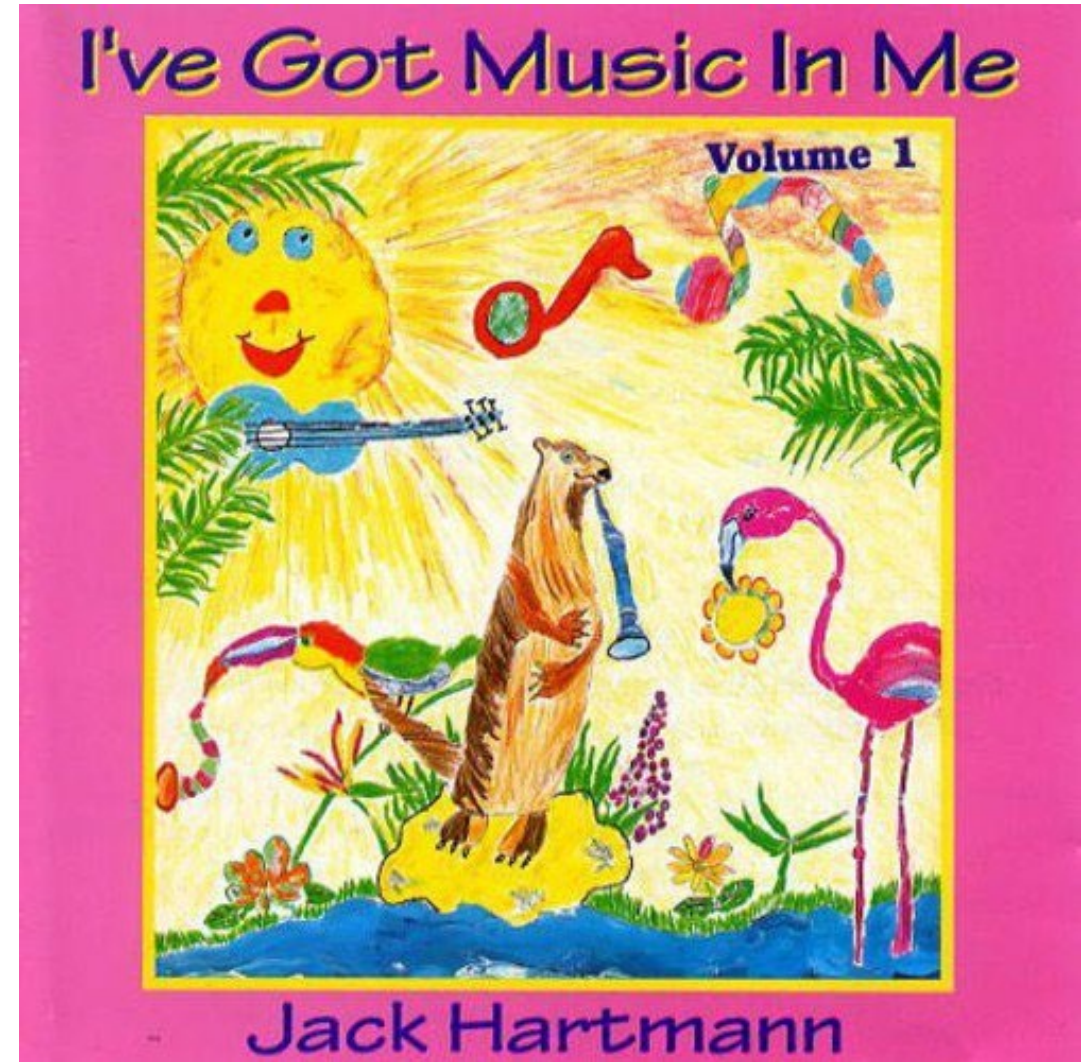
A Framework for Change

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Turning Your Nap Time Routine into a Ritual

<p>Routine</p>	<p>Set out the naptime cots during lunch. After each child's hands and face are cleaned, their diaper is changed, and they are told to go to bed.</p>
<p>Ritual</p>	<p>Instead of just sending children to bed after they are clean. I will set a book and a book buddy(stuffed animal) on their cot. The child will be invited to read to their book buddy while the lights are lowered and the rest of the classroom is getting cleaned up and changed. After everyone is on their cots, everyone will lay on their back, place their book buddy on their belly, and do deep 'belly' breathing to the song 'One Small Voice' before the lights are out for good.</p>
<p>What is the purpose?</p>	<p>The transition from lunch to nap feels chaotic and stressful for me. It takes children a very long time to get to sleep because there is so much movement and busy activity. The environment is energetic and not calm.</p>
<p>How can you personalize it or individualize it?</p>	<p>I love reading and looking at books before I fall asleep so if I can get the children to enjoy the routine too then I can build literacy skills and create a calmer environment. I also enjoy yoga and stretches before I fall asleep. Having the children do some deep breathing exercises helps them learn to self regulate and will calm their bodies and minds.</p>
<p>What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?</p>	<p>I need to gather a set of my favorite books for nap time and find a bag or container to keep the books in that can be easily accessed while setting out the cots. I also need enough small stuffed animals to hand out to every child. I need to have the song cued up in my playlist or bookmarked in YouTube.</p>

Turning Your Nap Time Routine into a Ritual



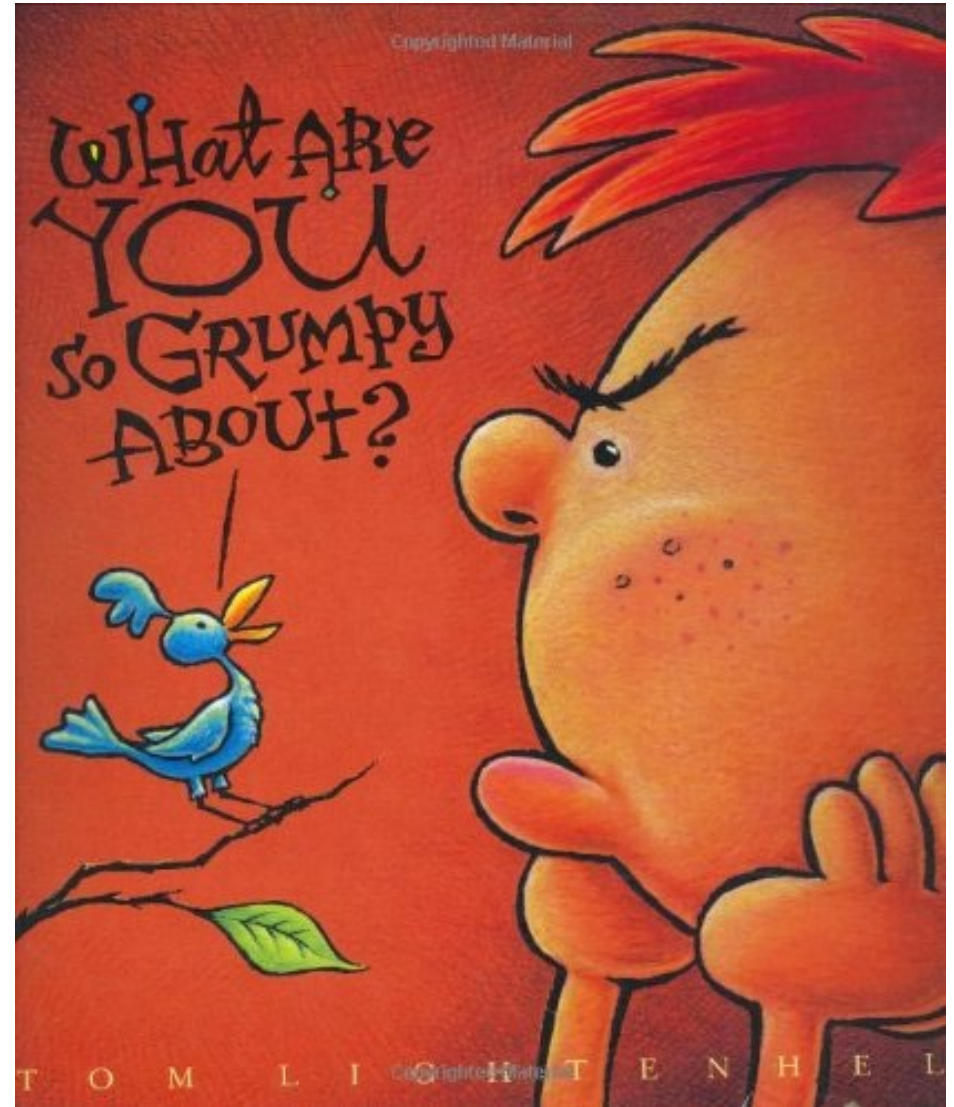
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Turning Challenging Times for Children into a Ritual

<p>Routine</p>	<p>When I notice an upset child, I get on their level, ask them if they would like a hug, and gently lead them over to our classroom safe spot where they can read books, play with fidgets, or just sit outside the group and watch.</p>
<p>Ritual</p>	<p>Instead of just guiding the child to the safe spot, I will use my 'GRUMPY GETTER' to brush the grumpies off of the child. I will then offer the 'GRUMPY GETTER' to the child and ask them to check and make sure I didn't miss any grumpy spots. Then the child and I will take the 'GRUMPY GETTER' outside or to the trash can and shake their grumpies away.</p>
<p>What is the purpose?</p>	<p>The 'GRUMPY GETTER' is a feather duster. The children will enjoy being tickled by the feather duster and that may take their mind off of why they are upset. The 'GRUMPY GETTER' will provide sensory input. Children will be able to see and feel a change in their emotions which will support their social and emotional well being and growth.</p>
<p>How can you personalize it or individualize it?</p>	<p>I can make my own 'GRUMPY GETTER' or have a choice of 'GRUMPY GETTERS' so that children that are sensory sensitive still have the option to enjoy the ritual.</p>
<p>What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?</p>	<p>I need several different types of feather dusters. I may need to provide light and deep input depending on the age of the child and the tolerance of the child.</p>

Turning Challenging Times for Children into a Ritual



A Framework for Change

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Turning Your Dismissal Routine into a Ritual

Routine	I get the child's attention when their parent has arrived and I walk them over to their parent. I speak with the parent about any important events or classroom incidents and then I tell the child 'Good Bye' and I let them know something they will be doing the next day.
Ritual	Ask children and parents to select a special 'Good Bye' hand gesture and saying from the Afternoon Apron.
What is the purpose?	Dismissal can be challenging for children. Not every child finds safety in their home environment and not every child is ready to stop playing with their school friends or special toys at school. Sometimes children are surprised by a change in adults picking them up. The Afternoon Apron allows one part of the dismissal routine to be constant no matter who comes for pick up. It also gives children a purpose to end their play.
How can you personalize it or individualize it?	My young toddlers are just learning language but they love it when I read books that rhyme. These good bye sayings and gestures will bring joy to them and help them build early phonological awareness skills.
What tools do you need? What techniques can you use?	I need an apron or a poster for the door and I need to decide on 4-6 choices of good bye sayings. I need to ask families if they have a special handshake or physical gesture that they use with their children to show love and affection.

 See you later, Alligator!
 After a while, Crocodile!
 Gotta go, Buffalo! 
 See you soon, Raccoon! 
 Be sweet, Parakeet!
 Take care, Polar Bear! 
 In a shake, Garter Snake! 
 Hit the road, Happy Toad! 
 Can't stay, Blue Jay! 
 Bye-bye, Butterfly! 
 Give me a hug, Ladybug! 
 Toodle-loo, Kangaroo! 
 Time to scoot, Little Newt! 
 Till then, Penguin! 
 Adios, Hippos! 
 Hasta mañana, Iguana! 
 Give me a Kiss, Goldfish!
 Get in line, Porcupine! 
 Out the door, Dinosaur! 
 On the bus, Octopus! 
 To your house, Quiet Mouse! 

Our school day now ends. So goodbye, my Dear Friends!



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Classroom Rituals Throughout the Year

Daily Classroom Rituals

- **Family Celebrations**
 - Birthdays
 - Cultural Holidays
 - Seasonal Celebrations
- **Morning Greetings**
- **Afternoon Departures**
- **Creating a Kindness Tree**



Weekly Classroom Rituals

- Missed You Monday
 - Share something you did over the weekend
- Try It Tuesday
 - Sample a new fruit, vegetable, or grain
- Wish Wednesday
 - Share a wish during circle time
- Thoughtful Thursday
 - Perform an act of kindness
- Fun Friday
 - Bring out a special toy or have a special outdoor activity



Monthly Classroom Rituals

- Shining Student or Star Student
- Show & Explain Day
- Classmate of the Month
- Theme Kick Off
- Season Starter



Yearly Classroom Rituals

- Cultural Celebrations
- Center Birthday
- Teacher Birthday
- Dr. Seuss's Birthday
- Water Day
- Field Day
- Week of the Young Child
- Annual Art Auction
- Annual Back to School Bash





How can you
create
intentional
rituals that
develop into
cherished
family
traditions?



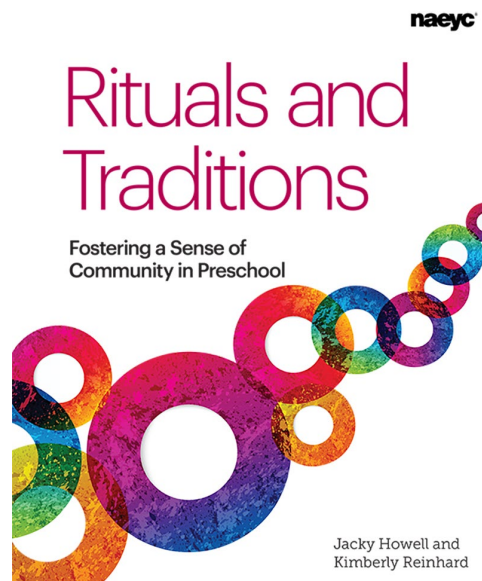
Course Resources



[Rituals to Ease Transition for Young Children](#)
by [Dr. Sandra Duncan](#)



[Creating a Sense of Place: Considering Routine, Ritual, and Belonging](#)



[Rituals and Traditions Fostering A Sense of Community in Preschool](#) by [J. Howell & K. Reinhard](#)

Questions?





Thank You!