



# Shifting Gears in the Classroom

Transition times are those moments when one activity ends and the next one begins. It can also be when students move from one room to another, when the class begins, and when it ends. Transitions can be noisy and chaotic as children move and shift. Here are a few ideas you can use to move students out of and into activities with a minimal amount of noise and disruption.

**Know the schedule.** Be prepared for what's next on the schedule. If you begin the wrong activity by mistake, go ahead and finish it.

**Plan the schedule well.** Students may find it hard to end a fast-moving game to suddenly be still for prayer time. If possible, have a time for a "cool down" activity right after a game to give students time to settle down.

**Be prepared.** Have all the necessary items available in the classroom where they can easily be found. Students can get out of hand if the teacher has to stop and look for supplies or has to leave the room to get something.

**Schedule adequate time.** Set aside sufficient time for an activity. Be sure to include time for cleanup. You may want to extend an activity if students are enjoying it. If one activity runs too long, readjust a new activity so that there is sufficient time to finish it. If an activity ends quickly, move on to something new. It's better to end an activity while interest is high.

**Make use of signals.** Use hand gestures, ring a bell, flick the lights on and off, or sing a special song to indicate transition time.

**Be ready at the start.** It's easier to begin class if students are immediately involved in an activity when they enter the classroom. It puts their minds in learning mode and creates excitement for the class.

**Plan a routine ending.** During class time, students not only need variety but also like to be part of a routine. Have a standard dismissal practice. Use the same pattern each time so that students get a sense of closure.