



10 Reasons to Celebrate, Group Cheers, Team Handshakes

Classroom celebrations, group cheers, take very little time, but transform the tone and outcomes for learners. What are some of the positive outcomes of celebrations? Here are ten reasons to celebrate:

1. Celebrations reduce **stress** hormones and increase the feel-good hormones, creating a more brain-friendly learning environment in the class and in the brain.
2. Celebrations **reward** accomplishments. Knowing a reward is coming, we tackle a task with more energy.
3. Celebrations give **closure** to a learning event. They are the punctuation mark (!) at the end of an exclamation that allow us start a new sentence with a capital.
4. Celebrations **free** working memory: When we get closure on a task, we free attention for the next task.
5. Celebrations **increase** memory for what is learned because they generate **emotion**, and events associated with emotion are better remembered. See 'Memory and Emotion' by James L McGaugh, this principle is called Retrograde Memory Enhancement.
6. Celebrations **nourish** the brain: Celebrations are active, involving movement; movement increases the flow of blood to the brain carrying increased supply of essential brain nutrients — oxygen and glucose.
7. Celebrations are social events, increasing **bonds** among teammates and classmates.
8. If teammates create unique celebrations, the team celebration reinforces positive team **identity**, which enhances a sense of solidarity. Team Identity is one of the 5 aims of Teambuilding.
9. Celebrations are an **intelligence** shift: After solving a maths problem the team or pair celebrate, taking a break from the logical/mathematical, engaging the verbal/linguistic and interpersonal/social intelligences. Frequent intelligence shifts enhance brain engagement.
10. Celebrations are **fun**, lightening the tone, making the class a pleasure.

With cheers and celebrations, you will acknowledge:

- completion
- participation
- acquisition of skills or knowledge
- success

Group Cheers, Team Handshakes

Firecracker - Palms together in front of you as if praying. Make a sizzling sound (Ssssss) as you wiggle your palms up in the air like a firecracker going off. Clap them above your head, then wiggle your fingers around and down like the sparkles coming from a firecracker. Make an "Ahhhhhh" sound like people say when they see a firecracker.

Lookin' Good - Make a clicking noise as you make a pretend mirror around your face. Fluff hair as you say, "Lookin' good!"

Snap, Crackle, Pop - Snap your fingers, rub your palms together, then clap your hands.

Catch a Star - Tell children to think of something special about themselves, then reach up (stretch hand up in the air), grab that star (pretend to grab a star), and put it in their heart (put your hand near your heart).

Rattlesnake - Put palms together then wiggle in front of you as you make a hissing (sssssss) sound. Quickly stick your tongue in and out like a snake.

Silent Cheer - Tell the children they can jump around, wave their hands in the air, and make as much noise as they want - as long as you don't hear them!

Cowboy Cheer - Put one pointer finger in the air and circle it like a lasso as you say, "Yee haw!"

Pat Yourself on the Back - Have children pat themselves on the back as they say, "I'm good stuff." Next, have them pat their neighbor on their back as they say, "You're good stuff, too."

Fantastic - Pretend to hold a spray bottle and squirt it three times. Take your other hand and make a circle in front of you with your palm as if cleaning a window as you say, "Fantastic!" slowly.

Ketchup Bottle - Stick up left fist like it's a ketchup bottle. Pretend to hit it with your right palm as if trying to get ketchup to come out.

Kiss Your Brain - When children answer a question and their answer is clever, correct, or creative say, "Kiss your brain!" as you model how to kiss your fingertips and touch your head. (Their answer doesn't necessarily have to be correct. It just needs to reflect that they have been thinking!)

Team Handshake. Teams develop a team handshake which symbolises their team name.

Special Handshake. Teams put their right hands in the center, fingertips touching, thumbs up. Then gather fingers around like a spiral, cupping all right hands in one circle. The spiral can move up and down or twist back and forth. Before teammates let go, they can give a cheer.

Team Cheer. A simple but effective team cheer is to have teams pick two adjectives. They repeat one three times and end with the other. (Incredible, Incredible, Incredible, Great!)

Watch Christi perform some of these cheers <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mIGEO8EXkz0>

