

TRANSITIONS

Sustaining Social Change

*there is no beginning without an end
what is over? what isn't?
what can I let go?
what can I keep?*

New Beginning Ceremony

Most of us celebrate common rites of passage such as high school graduation or marriage, but we fail to mark other significant life transitions along the way. Most transitions that cause us to redefine who we are or how we relate to the world around us warrant celebration. Marking these transitions with a ceremony -- no matter how small -- acknowledges the life shift that has occurred and can reinforce one's new identity.

At Children's Village, a residential facility for young men in foster care, youth who complete one year in the Transitions Workshop hold a Rite of Passage Ceremony to acknowledge their individual transitions. The group celebration includes each youth reading an excerpt on Transitions, staff commenting on each youth's journey throughout the workshop, and ends with the young men receiving a gift that marks the event. One year, the young men received shirts with a unique logo that commemorated their membership in this community.

Here are a few points to consider when planning a New Beginning Ceremony:

- Celebrate with those who have helped you manage this transition and those who will help you maintain your New Beginning
- Include time to reflect on lessons learned and challenges faced with this transition
- Identify a ritual or symbolic act that represents your new identity or the transition that you have made
- Research rites of passage ceremonies from other cultures for ideas