

What Phase of Transition are People In? Listening for Clues

Endings¹

- You know, I miss . . .
- Last year we . . .
- We always . . .
- Sue has *always* been in charge of the Christmas bazaar . . .
- Why did we change _____? Things were working fine before.
- There are so many changes around here it hardly seems like St. _____'s anymore!
- Calling you (or your spouse/partner) by the name of the previous incumbent (spouse/partner)

Neutral Zone

- How did we ever decide to do _____ -- I can't remember.
- I don't understand what our mission is anymore!
- I used to be able to call Bill if I needed to get something in the bulletin, but now I don't know who to call.
- It feels like we're just marking time, waiting for some direction.
- I just had a great idea for worship – I wonder if we could try it.

Beginnings

- That parish meeting went really well – I could feel the energy in the room.
- I think the new committee structure is going to work – we may just need to do some refining.
- Once you get used to the new worship schedule, it isn't half bad.
- I really like . . .
- It seems like (the new rector/assistant) has been here forever – he/she fits in so well.
- Our mission and ministry may have shifted some, but we are really moving out in ways that seem to be consistent with who we are.

¹The names of the three phases come from William Bridges' model of transition. His book, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* (2nd Edition, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, 2003), while oriented toward the private sector is a good introduction to his theories of leading through a transition.