**Birth Order Exercise**

Divide class into groups based on birth order.

Ask one person to be the scribe for each group.

Have each group talk to their group about what it is like to be either first born (middle/last/only) depending on the group they are in.

What was positive and negative about being in your birth order?

Have there been any lasting effects with your parents and siblings?

After the small group discussion, choose one of the groups to remain silent and request that the members of the other birth order groups share with the large group responses to the following questions:

What do you think it's like being first-born/middle, etc. (the first-born group is not allowed to talk during this discussion) Go around to each group

What kinds of personality characteristics do you [associate](http://ccvillage.buffalo.edu/Village/WC/wsc/outlines_and_handouts/diversity_skills/out02.html) with first borns, middle children, etc. (whichever group has been asked to be silent)?

Do these characteristics hold true across all people? If not, why?

**Then ask the silent group:**

What was it like to hear comments about you being made by others? What feelings did you have as you listened? Did you agree or disagree? How would you respond to what has just been said about you?

Repeat the above exercise with the other birth order groups.

When all groups have been addressed, note the process of stereotyping, how it begins at an early age based on assumptions that are overly general, and how it might, at times, serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

**Oldest**

Responsible

Conservative

Doesn’t make waves

Follows parents’ wishes

Emotionally intense

Authoritarian

Perfectionist

Driven

Surrogate parent

Leadership material

Usually set up as an example to the other children.

Treated more like an adult by his/her parents.

A high achiever

Given and accepts more responsibility than the other children.

Usually college bound.

Independent

Is affectionate

Get all the attention from parents. Don’t have to compete for the focus.

**Middle**

Peacemaker

Negotiator

Highly attuned to needs of others

Doesn’t like to follow authority

Creative

Independent

Peer-focused

“Chameleon”

May work extra-hard to get recognition.

Is usually a peace maker.

is somewhat average in schoolwork, but is an all-around good student

Is usually a calm, even-tempered adult

Trys to excel at something the oldest can’t do. If the oldest is academic, the middle will usually go for sports. Can be quiet, with a lot of friends.

**Youngest**

Comical/entertaining

Likes to be the center of attention

Okay with people taking care of things

Doesn’t have to worry about competing

Always considered the “baby” no matter how old

Highly social

Laid back

Dependent

Creative

Unconventional

Few expectations of self

Gets a lot of attention, along with a lot of bossing.

May be spoiled

Usually matures quickly

May be undisciplined and irresponsible

Is easy-going about school.

Likes to associate with someone who takes charge of situations.

charming, outgoing, manipulative, blames others, perceptive with people

Only Child

Only children have no one else competing for their parents’ attention. They are encouraged to succeed and develop self-confidence. They usually get along well with adults, but may not have social skills for peer relationships unless given opportunities to spend time with peers. Other qualities of only children are: critical, lonely, super-reliable, perfectionist, follows directions, conscientious.

WHAT IS YOUR TEACHER?

Oldest child:

* Create complicated projects for students to complete.
* They like structure and order in the classroom.
* They are happiest when students are sitting in nicely arrange desks, straight in a line.
* Students are quiet and do as they are told.
* the oldest child teacher will be frustrated unless they learn how to achieve the organization in a different way.

A middle child teacher:

* is interested in the psychological well being as well as the academic achievement of the student.
* They seek out the students in hope of influencing them in a more positive direction.
* They try to achieve order through mutual respect and understanding.

A teacher who is a younger child:

* are more creative, fun loving, adjust well to noise and disorder.
* Teachers allow students to take
* more responsibility so they won’t
* have to do everything
* themselves