



SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE

Written and illustrated by Anita Riggio

Spunky middle child, Rosie Roselli handles the trials and the triumphs of being "smack dab in the middle".

SUGGESTIONS FOR CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES (provided by the author)

For Kindergarten through Grade 2

CHART IT!

1. Fold a paper into eight sections.
2. In the first section, write: RAINBOW WEEK.
3. Write one day of the week in each remaining section.
4. At the end of each day, draw a self portrait in that day's section. Color yourself the way you feel: yellow (happy), red (angry), blue (sad)--or a combination of all three colors!
5. "Show and Tell" about your RAINBOW WEEK.

WRITE IT!

1. Copy and complete the following sentence:

I like being the (oldest, middle, youngest, only or twin)
because_____.

2. Copy and complete the following sentence:

I don't like being the (oldest, middle, youngest, only or twin)
because_____.

ILLUSTRATE IT!

Use cut paper, crayons, or paint to create an illustration for each sentence.

For Grades 3 and 4

GRAPH IT!

1. Fold a paper into quarters. Using both sides of your paper, write one of these words at the top of each quadrant:

INDEPENDENT
PATIENT
EASY-GOING
FAIR
CREATIVE
ORGANIZED
SECRETIVE
RESPONSIBLE

2. Write these words down the left side of each quadrant:

Totally!
Sort of...
NOT!

3. Along the bottom of each quadrant, write your initials and the initials of two or three people (siblings, cousins or friends) whose places in their families are different from yours.

4. Under each set of initials, write: OLDEST, MIDDLE, YOUNGEST, ONLY or TWIN.

5. Now rate each person (using the choices of *Totally!*, *Sort of...*, and *NOT!*) on the attribute in each quadrant (INDEPENDENT, PATIENT, etc.)--BE HONEST!

6. Get together with two or three other classmates. Compare and contrast your ratings of oldests, middlers, youngests, onlys and twins.

7. Together, make a graph that shows the averages of your group's findings.

WRITE IT!

1. Choose a character from a favorite novel. Is this character an only, oldest, middle, youngest child or a twin?
2. List this character's personality traits as you think they relate to birth order.
3. Support your opinions by citing specific actions this character takes.

WRITE MORE!

1. Make a list of the names of people who have encouraged you.
2. Pick the name of one person.
3. Close your eyes for a few minutes and relax. Remember a specific situation when this person encouraged you. Watch the scene in your mind as if it were a movie: Where are you? What is happening? What is the conversation? How does your scene end?
4. When you open your eyes, let the scene drain from your head, down your neck, shoulder and arm, through your hand, out your fingertips and onto your paper--SPLAT! Remember every detail you can! Don't worry about spelling or grammar! Don't reread! Don't erase! Keep your hand moving! WRITE FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES WITHOUT STOPPING!
5. Rewrite your SPLAT!. Correct spelling and punctuation. Add more details if you'd like. You've written in living color--good for you!

ILLUSTRATE IT!

Use cut paper, crayons, paint, or any other art supplies to create a picture or a series of pictures that illustrates the memory you've written about.

LEARN MORE...

about how birth order effects personality. Check out these web sites:

<http://pbskids.org/itsmylife/family/birthorder/index.html>

<http://www.drspock.com/article/0,1510,5547,00.html>

PRESENTATIONS: Booktalk

Anita Riggio is available to give BOOKTALKS about the process she used in developing *Smack Dab in the Middle*. Anita begins her program by reading the story while showing slides of the illustrations. She continues the slide program explaining details of writing, manuscript revisions, sketches, dummies, and final art. Following the slides, Anita shows the audience original artifacts from the book, including dummies, drawings, final illustrations, press sheets and f&gs. A lively question-and-answer session concludes the program.

(For K-Grade 1, 30-45 minutes; 2nd Grade to adult, 60-75 minutes.)

For school visits, please direct inquiries to:

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REVIEWS of *Smack Dab in the Middle*

"...Rosie is a delightfully spirited character..." --**School Library Journal**, Sept. 2002

"Rosie Roselli is 'smack dab in the middle' of Riggio's uplifting tale... Riggio's spreads play up the mounting tension with bold black outlines of the characters filled in with a 1950s palette (each character in a shade of chartreuse or mod pink)--except for Rosie, who always appears as a white cutout with rosy cheeks and knees...the unusual style of the artwork conveys the family's warmth even through their unwitting negligence. This tale may well comfort youngsters who identify with Rosie's plight." --**Publishers Weekly**, Sept. 3, 2002

"...So roll on, Rosie! The energy of this little twirling character will never be lost, even in a crowd." --**Book Page**, November, 2002

Find more teaching guides and tips at: <http://us.penguinroup.com/youngreaders>.