

When my husband Loren looked under the microscope, he saw two perfectly formed five-day blastocysts. I could only imagine what they looked like as he described them to me. I was lying back, my legs up in stirrups trying very hard to control the beating of my heart.

"They look just like me," Loren joked. "Well, now that I've seen both of those babies, they both have to make it." He squeezed my hand, gave me a kiss and moments later, I was carrying both of those embryos safe and sound home with me in my uterus.

I spent the rest of the day and most of the next sending down positive thoughts of "hatching and latching" to my tiny embryos. I had been told that around Day 6, a blastocyst will hatch from its outer shell and latch onto the uterine wall.

While I lay there, I held my then 16-month-old little boy, Angus, gingerly protecting any blows his little legs were inadvertently delivering to my uterus, as he climbed all over me. Snuggling with him, I wondered what life would be like for him as a big brother and my heart ached at the thought.

What an amazing little gift he had been already in just sixteen short months - he, himself, an IVF miracle. He was a bundle of redheaded energy and a welcome addition to our family of five, which included my husband, me, and my three older children from a previous marriage. Angus was a golden child. He was everybody's baby and attention was lavished upon him in generous amounts.

And then came the news. Not only had the two embryos hatched and latched, but one had split. Triplets! If my heart



# Angus and the Triplets

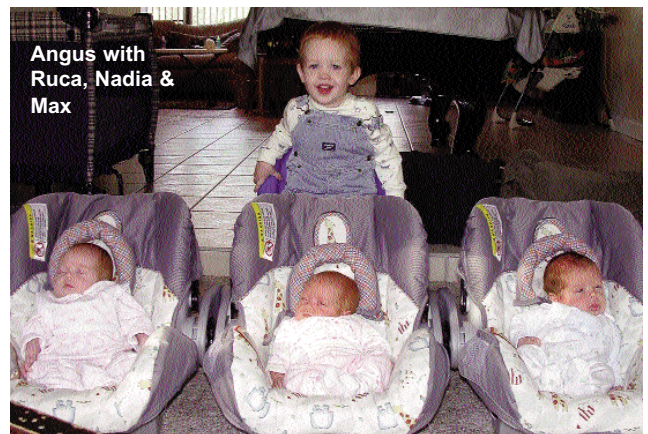
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ached at the thought of ONE baby usurping all of the attention given Angus, imagine what the thought of three was doing to me. My little guy was about to have his life turned upside-down and he had no clue.

So, I searched the internet. I searched not only for me, for the health of our pregnancy, but for books that would help us explain to our little boy, in terms he could understand, just what his life would be like. There were loads of books about bringing home one sibling, even twins, but none describing life with triplets.

We did all we could to help him understand that there were three babies inside me. We drew pictures of "stick-figure-mommy" complete with three stick-figures standing at full attention in a big oval belly. We bought him three baby dolls to nurture. We took him for rides in the Runabout we'd yet to use for our trio. But, we were never really certain he understood.



So much upheaval took place during those seven short months of pregnancy. Bedrest followed morning sickness. Hospital bedrest followed that. Our pregnancy was closely followed by our friends and family, by specialists, and even by the Discovery Health Channel, who would eventually air part of our story on Twins in Peril, a show about Twin-to-Twin Transfusion Syndrome. Lost in the whole turbulent pregnancy was my tiny not-quite-two-year-old boy, Angus.

I think there's a natural rhythm to life that helps to ease any transition we face. From before the transfer of our embryos, while going through the IVF process, until after the triplets were born, I was less and less able to offer my undivided attention to Angus and my older children. I think that alone, helped to prepare Angus for what followed.

When the trio came home, Angus's life began a whole new chapter, just as ours did. Remarkably, he was not nearly as fazed by the change as we'd anticipated. But twinges of sadness mixed with guilt still tugged at our hearts from time to time. Mommy and Daddy didn't belong just to him, as before.

### "The trio has been a blessing."

Angus has forgotten what life was before triplets. He forms alliances, he opposes, he nurtures, he's both aggravated by and comforted by all three of his younger siblings. They are three of the most important people in his life. And, as much as our triplets are a gift to us, they are just as much a gift to Angus.

Watching Angus interact with his triplet siblings fed my desire to create a book especially for the one who falls in the shadow of triplets. It's a tough place to be. Strangers all but ignore the "big brother of triplets" until I speak up in praise of just how proud we are of big brother, Angus. He beams. It's important.

Written from the perspective of a little boy, in terms a young child could understand, the book shares some of the fun and wonderful craziness that comes with having triplets at home. Angus loves for us to read "his book" to him. He laughs aloud heartily reliving some of the crazy moments he's experienced in his life, relayed in simple water-color sketches. He knows the book is as much about his life as it is about the triplets' lives.

The dynamic of any family changes with each additional family member. Add to that a little boy who has been his daddy's "everything." Multiply the amount of care three newborns need and divide that by the time one is able to spend with each child. Whoa! That's a lot of math and I'm getting lost in the equation. I guess what I'm saying is that it all adds up and you eventually get the answer you're looking for if you work hard enough.

We've gotten there. Angus and the triplets has become Angus and the Triplets, and they are one busy wonderful bunch of kids. Life is good. ♥



Angus and Mom with Ruca, Max & Nadia