

Photo by Sassy Massey Photography

Melu and Al Mercado with their triplets Mena, Miles, and Maddox

Life with multiples means double, triple, and quadruple the blessings and challenges

Raising Multiples

Written by Heather Lowrie

Maddox Mercado

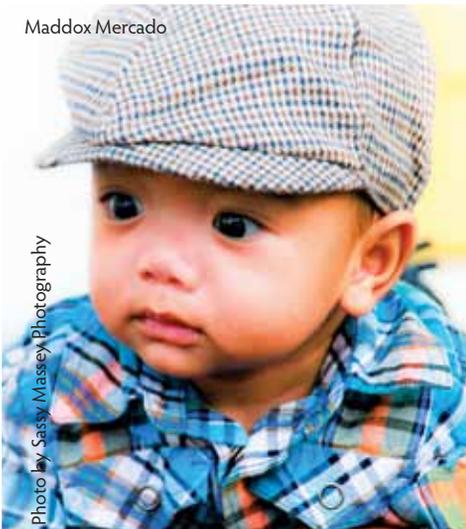


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Miles Mercado

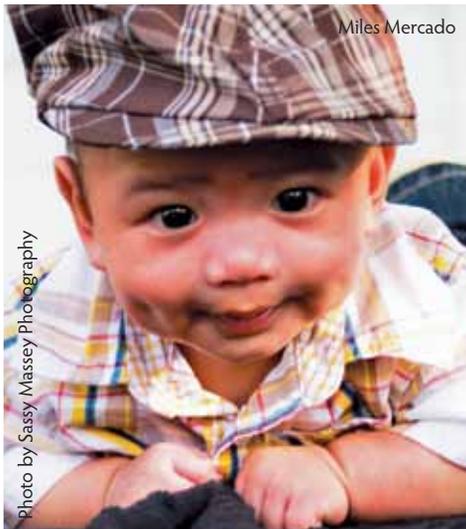


Photo by Sassy Massey Photography

Mena Mercado



Photo by Sassy Massey Photography

Joy fills the heart of expecting parents upon hearing the news their family will become a bit bigger. Many Katy families felt their joy and excitement multiply when they learned they would soon welcome home more than one baby. With much laughter and liveliness, these families embrace the many blessings and wonderful gifts of their multiple cuties.

Triple the Heartbeats

Waiting in the doctor's office, Melu Mercado just wanted confirmation. She knew what the at-home test said - the word "pregnant" was crisp and clear. Now, she just wanted the blood work to confirm the results. After a 24-hour waiting period, the call she had anticipated gave her the good news that she was indeed pregnant. At the ultrasound, Mercado felt excited, scared, and worried all at once. She knew her hormone levels were higher than normal and the possibility of twins could become a reality, but nothing could have prepared them for the triple beats.

"There were three strong heartbeats in my womb," Mercado shares. "We were happy the heartbeats were strong, but naturally shocked to find there were three. Whatever the outcome, we believed that God had blessed us and would not have given us more than we could handle." On April 2, 2011, Maddox Eugene, Mena Isabelle, and Miles Regan made their birthday debut.

The Twin-Triplet Surprise

The ultrasound technician watched the screen and knew for certain that Gabbi Browne was pregnant with twins. She could clearly see two hearts beating on the screen and then the technician said, "Wait a minute." Those words proved life-changing. "We thought that there were two babies, but one had moved and we could see three heartbeats on the big screen in the examination room," shares Browne.

The Brownes were overwhelmed in that moment, because it was completely unexpected. Even though they hadn't planned on having triplets, they knew that as in all things, life usually takes a path that is rarely planned, often unpredictable, and many times full of pleasant surprises. This was such a moment. Along with their first-born son Nathaniel, they welcomed the birth of Simon Gabriel, Edison Michael, and Fitzgerald Joseph on April 21, 2010.

Three Little Miracles

The Ortiz family knew all about the pure joy a new life can bring with the birth of their first daughter Monica. Then they experienced a heartbreaking and unexpected miscarriage, so they considered it a true miracle when they learned Jessica was carrying

twins. "My doctor and I were preparing for the ultrasound, when I noticed three little shadows on the screen," Jessica Ortiz recalls.

Those three shadows were not twins as they were originally told, but triplets. Through the surprise and tears, Ortiz's husband came in and the doctor relayed the shocking news to him. He quickly turned pale and needed a chair for support. Ortiz says, "It was one of the most wonderful, happy, and scary moments of our lives,

because we just turned from a family of three into a family of six instantly." Ortiz knew for certain that the Lord was sending them a beautiful present - their three little angels. Monica officially became a big sister on Jan. 19, 2007, with the birth of her new siblings Angelina, Joseph, and Joshua.

Team Mentality

Life with just one child can be a whirlwind, but three at once is a tornado. All three families encourage parents of multiples to ask for help

when you need it. It is impossible to think that one person can do the work of raising multiples; parents should seek help from family, friends, and the community.

"First and foremost, you and your significant other must work as a team and communicate openly and honestly with each other," shares Mercado. "Adjusting to life with multiples is a process. There are good days and bad days, but as long as you and your spouse work together, it all works out in the end and is well worth it."

Change, feed, play, sleep; change, feed, play, sleep. Parents of multiples find themselves repeating this process throughout the day. Then, there is the evening process of bathe, feed, swaddle, put to sleep on repeat until every last cutie is soundly asleep. A typical day starts and ends with this constant regimen of repeated activities done multiple times - a tornado of responsibility to say the least!

Ortiz believes the typical day needs to be organized, have a routine, be full of patience, and led by faith. These Katy families know that their lives have been blessed by raising these multiples in a home full of love, that the challenges are only temporary, and that the rewards will last forever.



Triplets Fitzgerald, Edison, and Simon Browne

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Family Fun for Everyone

Trying to find activities that suit the needs of triplets can be exhausting, so as a simple solution, the Mercado family takes late afternoon walks around the park each day. “The babies enjoy being outside, looking around at the sky and the trees,” says Melu Mercado. She looks forward to when they are a little older, so they can go grab a snow cone or some ice cream, go to the waterpark, and even walk their dog Oden.

The Browne family makes sure to spend quality time with their triplets, aside from taking care of their needs. “They know that we love them, because their day is our day,” shares Gabbi Browne.

For a day of fun family bonding, the Ortizes love to grab a fishing pole and head to the lake and have recently started going to the swimming pool. Their latest adventure has been going to the movies, which makes for a great family outing with multiples. But even with all the fun activities, just spending time together is the most rewarding part. Mercado says, “Just seeing my children and the love they profess for each other, how they play, how they cry, how they console each other, and even how they argue, [I know] there is always someone there for the others. It is wonderful.”

“We get to enjoy three hugs, three smiles, three laughs, and three kisses. Having these babies has filled our lives with so much joy and love.”

- Melu Mercado

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Three Times the Love

From the minute these Katy families welcomed their multiple bundles of joy into the world, they have watched them grow and change every day, doing all they can to make sure theirs is a happy and healthy life. They are truly inspiring examples of what raising a family is all about.

Browne reflects on how quickly her triplets are already growing up. “They are changing so rapidly,” she says. “It’s important to note and enjoy all the moments we can, because one year has already passed and it feels like one day.” These parents continue to go above and beyond caring for their multiples. They are making memories, remembering every moment, and taking it one day at a time. Mercado says, “We get to enjoy three hugs, three smiles, three laughs, and three kisses. Having these babies has filled our lives with so much joy and love. We are just over the moon with them!”
KM

HEATHER LOWRIE is a freelance writer who enjoys encouraging others through her writing. She is the proud mom of three precious children and can’t wait to see what adventures await in their family’s future.



Photo by Picture People

Twins Amberly and Scarlett Virgadamo



Photo by Kendra Martin

Matt and Meagan Clanahan and their twins Ryan and Quinn



Twins Quinn and Ryan Clanahan

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