

First Things First: Experiencing First Rites of Passage

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Do you remember the first time you did something? Losing your first tooth, your first day of school, your first time away from home? Your first kiss, first day of a new job, or first day without a loved one? We experience many rites of passage in our lives, many with life altering results. A rite of passage is a ceremony that changes the ontological status or state of being of the participant, giving him or her a new position in society, a new name, and a new life. How can we teach these concepts to elementary students? How can we demonstrate such concepts through music? In this unit we will explore various rites of passage in different cultures, highlighting some coming of age rituals. We will explore the importance of doing something for the first time, specifically, the first solo. Students will select, prepare, practice and perform a solo for an audience of peers and teachers. Additionally, students will discuss the process of practicing and performing the solo, with an emphasis on how the experience brought about change. Upon completion and performance of their solo the students will complete the cycle by choosing a new name to represent their new position in society as a Soloist.