

## **First Things First: Initial Encounters with Life Changing Rites of Passage**

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For some, life is perceived as an endless, homogeneous bland stream of unremarkable time and space. Profane space, according to scholar Mircea Eliade in his famous work, "The Sacred and the Profane," is described as "homogeneous and neutral; no break qualitatively differentiates the various parts of its mass." <sup>1</sup> There are no demarcations, no orientation, no significance given to events and times. In a profane world one cannot relate to sacred things or recognize the importance of drawing closer to a sacred time and place. Conversely, sacred space is defined, with a clearly fixed point, an axis mundi, creating a heterogeneous progression of space and time decreasing in sacrality from the center outward. <sup>2</sup> Sacred space recognizes the importance given to certain special times and places and promotes communication between different levels of the universe, such as between Man and God. In this cosmos there is a value grid that provides significance to different events and time. People are drawn towards the sacred and seek to recreate sacred events regularly. Sacred space abounds with Hierophanies, which are manifestations of the sacred.<sup>3</sup> To further mark the passage of time sacred time is punctuated with specific, life altering events, leaving the participants forever changed. These Rites of Passage are the topic of our discourse. I am particularly focused on firsts, and how a rite of passage can affect and change a person's feelings and emotions.

According to Eliade, a rite of passage essentially changes a person's ontological status.<sup>4</sup> A person's ontological status is a state of being, particularly within his or her society. Any individual is who they are as defined by where they have been and the factors around them. As a person moves through various rites of passage his or her ontological status, or state of being, changes. A rite of passage causes changes not only outwardly, such as in a person's role in society, but also inwardly, such as a person's view of his or herself. A rite of passage is a ceremony associated with a change in social status that can leave the participant not only advanced socially but also emotionally. Conversely, some rites of passage can be retrogressive, such as banishment, excommunication, or removal from a certain group or team. Often a rite of passage gives the persona new name, often of his or her choosing. The key to rite of passage is for the person involved to experience change. In such situations there is something that dies and something new that begins. The old version of you must die for the new version of you to continue. Change is inevitable in life, and a lot of change happens whether a person is

receptive or not. On a deeper level, a rite of passage is not only a change that happens to an individual but also an acknowledgement of existence. Some essential questions include, how does this ceremony cause this to happen? How does a rite of passage validate an event, or make the change official? Some rites of passage force change in an individual, such as boot camp or intense training for a police job. In such events there is an attempt to make you become another individual, to force you to change your status in society.

Some rites of passage may be more significant than others. While all ceremonies or events change an individual and changes their place in society, some events are more life altering and memorable. Every rite of passage should change you. However, we most often remember the first time something happens with more clarity. In my job as an elementary teacher I deal with a lot of firsts. Our students experience the first day of school, their first loose tooth, the first time they can tie their shoes. These events are significant in their lives and help bring about the change that is necessary as they move on as individuals. Why first? Why is it important to recognize the beginnings of something, when so much of life is about moving forward?

A first event is a significant, life altering change.<sup>5</sup> The first time you are introduced to something different can be overwhelming. A first event is not exclusive to young children; in fact, each time we experience something for the first time it is a rite of passage that changes us. This is my first DTI seminar, and with that comes a plethora of feelings and emotions. A person experiencing an event for the first time might feel fear, anxiety, stress, excitement. There is a lot of pressure put on an individual leading up to a first experience. For example, the stress leading up to a first kiss is fraught with tension, excitement, nervousness, and trepidation. After the event, the kiss, many of those feelings dissolve or transfer into elation, joy, and even more excitement. How it changes you is what makes the difference.

In this unit I am preparing the students for playing their first solo. The students will learn a solo, go off with a group or alone to practice their own solo, and come back to the group and perform before the class. In many cultures there is a ceremony for those who are coming of age. In such, adolescents are sent out from the tribe to have an experience, learn something, and then come back to the tribe and share what they have learned. Similarly, I will have the students who are practicing a solo separate from the group, work on their playing, and come back to perform. Giving them the opportunity to leave the group will attach more significance to the event and give them more ownership of their solo. After the performance I will give them a token, such as a medal, certificate, or sticker, presented formally in front of the class. I will give them a new moniker, such as solo master, or let them choose their new identity as a soloist.

I remember the first time I ever played a solo. I started taking piano lessons formally when I was about 6 years old. I played for different events at school and church, often accompanying other young students. When I was 9 my piano teacher held a recital in which all her students participated. I had been working on a piece, not realizing that she had in mind for me to perform at the recital. At that time, I was playing *Fur Elise*, the popular piano piece penned by Ludwig van Beethoven. My teacher gave me the full copy of the piece which I worked on diligently. The day we went to rehearse at the concert location I think I still did not realize the importance of the event. The recital was held in a church that had huge blue windows which let in aqua colored sunlight. The carpet, pews, and even offering plates were lined with a similar shade of blue. I recall my fascination with the blue windows far outweighed any trepidation or nervousness I felt playing in front of others. I knew my piece, I knew how to play it, I was just playing it on a different piano. The evening came, and I donned my dress, and sat with my family to wait. My brother played a few people before me, and I remember his swinging legs which didn't quite touch the floor as he played a rollicking little piece, *Through Central Park*, from the Michael Aaron books. When my turn came I went up to the stage and sat down. I was nervous, but my teacher was sitting up there, and I knew it was my turn to play. I had an issue when I first started, but I started over, and played my piece. I remembered all the repeats, the dynamic changes, the tempo changes, and each little trill as the theme returned. I still did not realize that I was performing before a large group of people, or what that signified. When I was finished everyone applauded as I stiffly made my way off the stage and back to my seat. I remember feeling blinded, feeling my way back to my seat more than seeing my path. It was hard to discern differences amongst all the blue, but I quickly found my way and went back to sit on the stiff pew. I don't remember much of the rest of the evening, other than one girl who played Chopin's *Revolutionary Etude*. People came up and spoke to me after, including the little balding man who was the organist at our church. I remember seeing him try to quickly walk sideways through the pews, making his way in my direction as quickly as his crab walk would allow. His face seemed excited, pleased, and intense. I'm sure he said I did nice job. I remember his face more than his words.

How did that change me? How did I walk away feeling differently? Has that left an impact on my life today? For this to be a rite of passage I had to walk away from that experience feeling changed. First, my first solo told me something about myself. From that moment, I realized that I was a pianist, a piano player. I played the piano. Until that point it was just something I did, a part of my life that I enjoyed but didn't really think about. I didn't know what to expect walking into that blue church, other than I would play the song I had been working on. Walking away I realized, this is me. This is

something I do. This is part of my identity. I can be a pianist. I can play the piano. Knowing that and recognizing that was empowering. I didn't know before that I could, or could well enough to perform. I didn't know I could play better than some others, but not as well as some. It gave me something to work towards. I also experienced a change in name, for suddenly I was a pianist. With that came certain responsibilities and opportunities. It also gave me the confidence to know I could play or perform before an audience. I, as a new person, a pianist, had experienced a new birth. I began to play more often, accompanying school choirs, playing for church, or playing for different events.

This was my first solo. The first time I played before an audience of such nature, the first time I performed at that level. A few years later I became the regular church pianist, and I played in front of people every Sunday. Now it is my job to regularly perform in front of audiences of all sizes. There have been other memorable performances, but none so much as the first. I remember so much from that first time, from the colors of the windows to the print of my dress. Even now, the first song I play if someone asks me to play something is that song. The notes are still burned on my brain, and my fingers just find the keys. If I am playing for students, or trying out a new piano, Beethoven's *Fur Elise* finds a way to slip out. My job both as a music teacher and an organist may not have been possible if I did not play that first solo so many years ago. I still remember it with such clarity because it was such a change from what I knew before, and it brought about great change in me. It was a very significant event with life altering results.

Rites of passage punctuate the flow of time.<sup>6</sup> Some are forced, like boot camp, others are a result of the natural flow of time, like coming of age ceremonies. A first experience is so important because it can set the tone for the future. The first time a part of you dies to experience the rebirth of a rite of passage it can be scary, fraught with uncertainty. While every rite of passage brings a certain amount of pressure and unease, there is also the knowledge that you have experienced something new before, giving you the confidence to do it again. A rite of passage is only effective when it makes you feel differently. A rite of passage needs to have meaning. Meaning is what makes things sacred. Meaning gives significance to sacred space and is what separates us from homogeneity. Successfully navigating a rite of passage in our lives can bring us closer to the axis mundi, closer to God or our spiritual center, and prevents us from being consumed by the amorphous homogeneity that is profane, unmarked space.<sup>7</sup>

### **Quinceanera: Coming of Age in Mexico**

Nearly every culture celebrates a rite of passage involving coming of age. For this unit I chose to explore these events in Mexico, China and the Amish. One of the coming of age rites of passage celebrated in Mexico is Quinceanera.<sup>8</sup> This ceremony has evolved over time but is centered around females when they turn 15 years of age. At this age the girls

are considered old enough to enter society as a woman and take on the responsibilities associated with womanhood. Typically, the ceremony includes a *Misa de accion de gracias*, which is a mass to give thanks for a completed childhood.<sup>9</sup> This formal religious ceremony is resplendent, commencing with the *festejada*, or young woman celebrating the birthday, sitting at the foot of the altar in a dazzlingly formal dress. She is flanked by her *damas* (maids of honor) and *chambelanes* (escorts) in a such as a bride at her wedding. Her family, friends, and extended family all gather around to help celebrate this monumental moment in her life. The mass is a solemn ceremony like a baptism which welcomes the girl to her new life and prepares her for the challenges ahead. Her friends and family, usually younger, are grouped around her in age groups, representing the different stages of her journey she has already completed. After leaving a bouquet of flowers at the feet of the Virgin of Guadalupe, the girl leaves the ceremony as a woman and goes off to celebrate. The party is lavish and long, filled with music, food, and dancing. The older women of the community gather around to give her advice and insight into the world of a woman, helping her assume her new position in society with grace and understanding. Historically this ceremony meant the young lady was of marriageable age, but that is a less common element of the celebration today.<sup>10</sup>

Some of the gifts bestowed upon the new women include a tiara, which however momentarily it may be, grants her the name of princess.<sup>11</sup> An actual new name may not be part of the ceremony, but there is a change in status, and therefore a new label attached to the individual. She is no longer a girl, adolescent, or youth, but now a full-fledged woman and member of society. Her responsibilities are different, her status more meaningful. This event most assuredly changes the individual's ontological status. For example, as an adolescent female, the individual knows her role and expectations as part of society. After the quinceanera, a young girl is considered a woman, and her role in society changes, as does her state of being. Everything that she has done or learned prior to the rite of passage has become who she is now, as a woman. Her role and expectations are different within her culture and society.

In former times, especially for the wealthy, a daughter who was coming of age was often sent away on a trip to Europe, most often France, to learn the ways of the world.<sup>12</sup> This is a significant part of any coming of age, as it gives the participant a chance to go out from the current society, grow, learn, and make changes, and come back and show what she (he) has learned. This is also a time for the individual to take more responsibility for their own life and decisions, so he or she can consciously decide to take their rightful place in society.

This is pertinent to my topic in many ways. First, we have many students of Latin-American heritage who can relate to this custom. For other students, the Quincenara is often equated with a Sweet 16, which is a similarly memorable birthday in American cultures. Also, although less in practice in a more modern society, it was at one-time part of the celebration to send the participant out and away from the society to learn to be on their own, and then have them come back and assume their rightful place in society. While the young woman may not have a complete name change, the title of princess is temporarily bestowed, followed by the formal title of a full-fledged woman. I would like my students to experience this “going away” as they prepare their solo. As they practice and prepare they can go to a different area of the room, away from the rest of the students. When they return, ready to play their solo, they will participate in the ceremony and chose a new name for themselves.

### **Sea Turtles: Crossing Oceans to Create New Paths**

Another example that has recently come to my attention that I consider relevant to my topic is the practice of Chinese students going to study abroad. The Chinese have historically sought out learned and educated individuals to be public and civil servants, valuing education and progressive thinking.<sup>13</sup> While not an ancient ritual or time honored practice in the traditional sense, the current trans-Atlantic migration of Chinese students to the US, with the hope that they return to China and bring new insights and ideas, directly relates to the idea of a person or individual who goes out on their own to learn how to take their rightful place in society. Since 1978 more than 2.6 million Chinese students have gone to study abroad.<sup>14</sup> Ranking among their top choices are American institutions and universities. Of the over 400,000 Chinese students who went abroad to study last year, more than half chose American colleges. Of all the students who went to study overseas about half have returned to make revolutionary and monumental changes for the Chinese people.<sup>15</sup>

Today, these students who leave China, go to study in a new country and return bringing new skills and ideas are called *haiku*, or *Sea Turtles*.<sup>16</sup> This is significant since they leave their current situation, go learn and grow on their own, and return to their own people beginning new skills and assuming a new role in society. They also receive a name change, as they are called sea turtles upon their return. They not only assume a more prominent role in society but also bring many new skills that help development in their country. The Sea Turtle moniker is a name change, making the change of ontological status complete.

### **Rumspringa: Looking Outward to Appreciate Inward Growth**

Another example of a group of people who leave home to pursue new experiences before more fully assimilating into their adult culture are the Amish. This is relevant to my

students because we live very close to an area where there is a large Amish population. While the Amish prefer to keep to themselves and have their own culture, houses of worship and governing body, their presence is a peculiar yet accepted part of our local landscape. The black buggies and stalwart stallions parked at the grocery store may draw the curious eye, but most accept their presence and contribution to society. The Amish hold strong religious beliefs and school their young in their culture and beliefs. In the Amish culture young people can leave home to experience the more secular world when they turn 16. This is called Rumspringa, or “running around,” and is an important part of their coming of age.<sup>17</sup> Despite dubious tales of debauchery and perfidy, most Rumspringa experiences are more sedate. While traditions vary greatly in different Amish religious sects or communities, the ideal goal of this temporary removal from the community serves a common purpose, with that hope that most if not all the young people return ready to assume their roles in the Amish church and society. Although this time may be filled with beer, smoking, and otherwise unsavory events, the goal is for the Amish youth to court and therefore find a suitable mate.<sup>18</sup> While on Rumspringa these youths can wear different clothes, cut their hair, drink, smoke, listen to secular music and even get a driver’s license. While some more sedate youth merely attend Saturday night hymn sings or partake in the occasional volleyball game, some go all out and spend their nights partying. Ultimately, the goal is for the young people to find a mate, decide to get married, baptized, and join the church together. At the time of their wedding the Rumspringa ends, completing the cycle of coming of age.<sup>19</sup> At this point, these individuals have assumed their natural role in their society, allowing their old selves to die as their new selves go forward. For many this involves a name change, from an adolescent to a wife, husband, or elder in their community. Their ontological status has changed, completing the rite of passage.

### **Rites of Passage: First Things First in the Elementary Classroom**

This unit focuses on a rite of passage, which is appropriate for students at the elementary level. Students at the elementary level experience many firsts during their first few years at school. Some examples include, the first day of school, their first bus ride, or the first time they walk to the office or go to the nurse’s office on their own. These students will experience their first gym class, their first music class, and their first piece of artwork as a student. While most of these events are fun and exciting, some firsts may be of a less palatable nature. For example, a student may experience the first time they are disciplined for something at school, or the first time they encounter an issue without a parent to intervene. A student may have his or her first argument with a friend or experience an unkindness or unfair situation. Elementary school is a blending of so many cultures and societies, each vying for acceptance in a new, combined society that is their classroom or their school. Everyday provides new opportunities for multiple rites of passage, through

which each student may pass at a different time. Each time a student experiences a rite of passage, a part of them dies as they assume a new version of themselves. As students learn new things and have new experiences frequently, some may experience these changes on an almost daily basis. Not every experience is going to be memorable or life altering. In the elementary classroom and this discourse, we celebrate and remember firsts.

I will open with a short story about a girl describing her first airplane ride, and all the feelings and emotions that soared and swooped as high as the plane. I will ask students to describe a similar event, such as their first bus ride to their first day of school. I will ask questions such as, can you recall an event that you experienced for the first time? How did you feel? Were you scared, nervous, excited? Can you describe your experience? How did it change you? How did you feel after? Were you relieved, excited, triumphant? What did you take away from this experience? These may be deep questions for some so young, but I think it will help get them into the mindset of thinking about things with more depth.

In many cultures firsts are celebrated in a variety of ways. Although students will experience many rites of passage, it is the first time one has an experience that is most memorable. I will give the students a few examples of some ways we celebrate firsts, especially those that apply to them specifically. In some cultures, there are ceremonies to celebrate a first haircut, first tooth, first solid food, or the first step.<sup>20</sup> Many students will experience a loose tooth as they progress through elementary school. I will ask questions such as, has anyone here lost a tooth? Does anyone have a loose tooth? What happens when you lose a tooth? Some answers may include putting your tooth under your pillow and waiting for the tooth fairy. How does this make you feel? Are you excited? Do you stay up in your bed and wait expectantly for the tooth fairy? Do you sit up excitedly in bed the next morning and throw your pillow to the side to see what treasure or trinket has replaced your tooth? Do you leap out of bed to ecstatically inform your parents that the tooth fairy came and left a gift? Do you tell your teacher, your bus driver, the cafeteria workers, and anyone else you see? Do you bring your trinket as a token of proof, flashing your gaping smile? How many of you have lost more than one tooth? Does the Tooth Fairy come every time? Is it as exciting the second or third time as it is the first time? Do you feel differently after losing more than one tooth? Can you tell the story of when you lost your 3<sup>rd</sup> tooth? Many students will relate to these examples, which will help establish the importance of something happening for the first time. The first time you lose your tooth you feel excited, happy, and grown up. You may have to be careful when you eat or take a bite, or when brushing your teeth. The first time is arguably more memorable and life altering than the multiple repetitions of the same event.



To get them thinking about practicing and performing a solo, I will ask questions in which they will hopefully describe an experience that they recall going through or doing alone. How did you feel the first time you rode the bus by yourself? How did you feel the first time your teacher sent you on an errand, or moved your clip in class? How did you feel the first time you had to read aloud in class, or do something by yourself? How did you feel, before, during and after? How did this affect you? How were you changed afterwards?

We would then discuss and define a solo. What is it? What does it mean? Someone could take a solo flight, or a solo walk. I will ask students to give me some examples for some things they can do on their own. A student might get up before the class and sing, dance, read, or recite a poem. How do we use solo in music? A solo is when we sing or play an instrument alone, without anyone else. I will explain that each student is going to work on playing or singing a solo. I will have the students first work in groups, or with partners, to work on playing a song. To demonstrate the “going away,” or the temporary removal from society, I will have a few students go to practice their solo in another part of the room, removed from the other students. I want them to understand they are working on something important, and they need to work alone. I want them in some way to experience that journey of going away from the main crowd and coming back to be reintroduced with something to offer. Some students will excel more than others, some will not be able to meet the challenge. Once I determine who can finish the solo, I will have them come down for additional practice time to prepare to perform their solo.

Experiencing a name change is a crucial part of a rite of passage. To help students understand the process of leaving the group to work on a solo and to better illustrate the steps of a rite of passage, we will first give names to the class, the groups, and the process. For example, at the beginning of the unit the students are part of the homogeneous group, or the class. Those students who are ready to move on and learn a solo will say goodbye to the class and work either in a small group or alone. They are no longer just a part of the class, so their name is unknown. When each student has completed a solo and performed for the class, he or she will choose a new name that reflects their new skill and ability. The other students will call the student by his or her new name, emphasizing the change in status.

## **Activities**

### **Read Aloud**

For this unit I will use a variety of activities that cover a wide range of core content standards and classroom teaching strategies. My first activity is a read aloud, which will help introduce my topic. I will first tell the students the story of my first solo and what I experienced. I will ask questions such as, how did I feel before the performance? How

did I feel during? How did I feel after? I would like to establish early on that a rite of passage is only effective if there is a change in how the person feels. We will then complete as a class a graphic organizer that has three sections, either on the white board or on the smart board. The graphic organizer will include three columns with the following headings:

- Firsts, with the subheading, “My First Solo.”
- Feelings before: How did I feel before the event? (solo)
- Feelings After: How did I feel after the event? (solo)

Students will give responses based on the story of how I felt before and after my first solo. This will be an informal formative assessment, with the teacher listing the student’s verbal responses on the board. This graphic organizer will be an example for the students’ individual assignment.

#### Graphic Organizer

Next, I will give the students a packet which will include the same graphic organizer. I will ask them to list at least 5 things they have done for the first time. Some examples may include the first day of school, first bus ride, first loose tooth, first time away from their parents, or first time they made a new friend. The students will list how they felt before and after each experience. I will give the students an example to start. They will all write “first day of school” in the middle column. I will have them think of how they felt before the first day of school. I will take a few verbal responses, and then have them write on their graphic organizer their answer. Similarly, I will have them record their own response after a group discussion for how they felt after. After the first example the students can fill out their paper individually. After the students have completed their examples I will have some of the students share their responses with the class.

#### Jigsaw

The next activity I will use is a Jigsaw. I will select various stories for the students to read together in a small group. I would like to keep the students in groups of 3 or 4 and have them read together. I will encourage them to use good reading strategies such as popcorn (each student reads a sentence) or taking turns, where each student may read a paragraph. In a story rich in dialogue I may assign parts, where each student reads a specific character, while someone narrates. I will need 4 or 5 stories to have all the students read something different. After each group has read their story I will have them share out to the group. I want each group to recognize and differentiate the event, the feelings before, and the feelings after. The students will have their packets and can take notes on the other students’ stories.

#### Individual Writing and Sharing

Next in the student packet will be a fresh graphic organizer, giving the student the opportunity to write his or her own story. I will ask the students to work individually on this part of the assignment. After hearing my story and the jigsaw share out, each student will think of an event he or she did for the first time and write about it. What was the event? How did you feel before it happened? How did you feel after? Record your ideas on the graphic organizer. I will allow the students to draw pictures or use symbols if they are struggling with writing. After the students have completed this section of the packet I will have them share their responses with the group.

### Socratic Seminar

At this point I hope the students will understand the significance of a first event. How does an event that happens for the first time affect you? How do you feel before something like this happens? How do you feel after? We will talk about these events as a rite of passage and describe what it means. We will also briefly discuss how a rite of passage involves a name change. For example, the first day of school is a rite of passage. Before the first day of school, you were a toddler, a child. After the first day of school you are now a student, a school goer, a bus rider, and a new individual. We will then discuss the significance of a first solo. First, what is a solo? What do you need to do before you can perform a solo? How much practice is involved? How might you feel before you perform your first solo? How about after? What might you be called, or what might be your name change, once you have performed a solo for the first time for an audience? All these responses will be verbal and informal.

### Vocabulary (music terms)

The activity I will employ in this part of the lesson is vocabulary. Students will learn solo, notes, performance, and other words and meanings. This part of the unit focuses on literacy and fluency in a different manner. The students will learn how to read, write and organize music notation as they prepare to play, write, or sing a solo. Students will make decisions about their work, such as, which instruments might I use for this piece? How can I write a solo with music notation to describe your written experience? The students will synthesize information and use rhythmic and melodic notation to write a solo.

### Practice and Performance

After the solo piece has been completed the students will work on the performance aspect of the unit. The students will select a piece of music, practice the selection, and perform it for their peers. This will be done individually in keeping with the nature of a solo. Those students who are able will perform the solo again later for an assembly of their peers, staff, teachers and other school professionals. After successfully completing a solo a student will be given a certificate and a token of completion, complete with a new title, or

name change, such as solo master, etc. The strategy employed in this section of the unit is performance based and in keeping with the core content music standards.

## **Strategies**

### *Jigsaw Puzzle*

The next strategy I will use is a Jigsaw and share out. The students will be assigned texts to read together in small groups. After reading in their original group, students break into secondary groups to share out information to the other groups. This is an ideal technique to maximize time in my class, allowing for the analysis of several text in a short amount of time. While in their original groups, students will be encouraged to use other reading strategies like partner read, popcorn read, and taking turns.

### *Partner Reading*

For partner reading students will take turns reading a passage or sentence to each other. One student may read the entire student while their partner tracks their progress with their finger. Then, the other partner will read while the other student tracks progress. Both students will have read the entire passage as part of this strategy.

### *Popcorn Reading*

Another strategy is popcorn reading. The students will read a story in groups of 4 or 5. Each student will read one word as they go around to group to complete the reading. All students will track the progress with their finger so everyone stays together. Students will have to pay attention and follow along so they know when it is their turn to read.

### *Taking Turns*

In this strategy students will take turns reading the story sentence by sentence with a partner. One student will read a sentence while the other tracks progress, then they will switch for the next sentence. Using a variety of strategies is important as not all readers are comfortable reading large passages. This is one way to differentiate instruction.

### *Vocabulary*

The strategy I will employ in this section is vocabulary. Students will use these music specific vocabulary words as they work on their solo. There is a vocab wall in my classroom that has all of these and other words listed. I will reference my vocab wall as I teach the students what the words mean. I also have posters that show notation so they can see at a glance what notes look like and how to write notes on the staff. My vocabulary wall and notation posters are easily visible at the front of the classroom and I will reference them frequently and remind students to do the same. The music specific

vocabulary we will learn includes the following: solo, notes, staff, treble clef, bar lines, double bar, melody, rhythm, and notation.

### Subject Specific Graphic Organizer

Students will individually complete a graphic organizer with information about an experience they had for the first time. Add something like: The graphic organizer included in this unit is designed to aid students in the analysis of a personal first. This analysis will determine if the first event was, in fact, a rite of passage. Students will need to be able to complete all sides of the graphic organizer about an event to declare it as a rite of passage.

### **Content Standards: The Why for the What**

The core content music standards promote the following ideals: Create, perform or produce, and reflect. While preparing their solo, students will invariably hit many of the standards designed to facilitate music education. First, they will create a solo. They will plan what notes they will play, how they will arrange them, and how their song will progress. They will then perform their piece not only for their classmates in an informal setting, but also for staff and teachers at a more formal ceremony. Upon completion of their solo they will receive a certificate or award designating their new position as a soloist. Students will have an opportunity to experience a name change as well as a change in ontological status. After their performance is complete they will no longer be merely a student, but a soloist. A tried and true performer who has earned the right to be called a soloist. Some students may choose a new name for themselves which will be emblazoned upon their certificate of completion. I hope to have a formal assembly, or ceremony, where the students can perform their solo for a larger, more receptive audience.

For a rite of passage to have meaning it has to change the individual in some way. I want this experience to be meaningful to the students. I want them to feel as if they reached a milestone and passed through a challenge with ease and confidence. As a Soloist a student will enter my classroom with more confidence, expressing more interest in the class and the subject at hand. Each student must feel a change for the rite of passage to be valid. It is my hope that these students will continue to come to my door with a love of music welling in their hearts and a willingness to learn, driving their minds and ambition. Many of these students may go on to play many more solos in many different venues. Will these students remember their first solo with the same fondness? Will a small solo on a small stage in a multipurpose room, facing a diverse yet captive audience, potentially change the course of their lives? Will they remember what it feels like to sing or perform for an audience? Will this experience change or alter them in some way, giving birth to new thoughts and ideas? For a rite of passage to be effective, it must

affect change. A student must recognize on some level that he or she has been transformed. A Soloist can leave behind the homogeneity of “the class” and move forward into a new world as a confident performer. It is my hope that each student who performs a solo takes with them the sense of being changed, of moving forward, and accepting his or her new role in the world of musicians as a Soloist.

**Resources:**

Vocabulary List

- Solo
- Notes
- Staff
- Treble clef
- Bar lines
- Double bar
- Melody
- Rhythm
- Notation

Graphic organizer

<b>Feelings Before:</b> Scared, excited, nervous, uncertain	<b>Firsts:</b> My First Solo	<b>Feelings After:</b> Excited, relieved, empowered
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**Teacher Resources**

Campbell, Joseph. *Hero with a Thousand Faces*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 1949.

This treatise is about the hero’s journey, describing how leaving a group and returning with new information, i.e, as a new person, is a rite of passage.

Eliade, Mircea. *The Sacred and the Profane*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc. 1957.

This book differentiates between ritual, religion, sacred and profane space. It describes a rite of passage as punctuating the flow of time and rituals as reliving a sacred event.

Fuller, Ed. "Sea Turtles: Linking China's Future to the World" Forbes Asia.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/edfuller/2014/05/29/sea-turtles-linking-chinas-future-to-the-world/#4c571c5011c0> (accessed December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017)

This article from Forbes online gives specific information regarding Chinese students who leave their home to travel or study abroad. It shines a light on attempts to link China's future to the rest of the world.

Learn NC: The Changing Face of Mexico. "The Quinceanera Celebration." <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/chngmexico/218> (accessed December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

This article provides information regarding not only Quinceanera but other events and rituals in the Mexican culture. It describes both the history and the current practices of Quinceanera.

Quinceanera-Boutique. "The Quinceanera Celebration." <https://www.quinceanera-boutique.com/quinceaneratradiation.htm> (accessed December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

This article gives more specific information about current Quinceanera practices with ideas for the celebration including flowers, gowns and accessories.

Schachtman, Tom. "Rumspringa: Amish Teens Venture into Modern Vices." NPR, *Talk of the Nation*. <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5455572> (accessed December 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017)

The article from NPR explores the different ways Amish celebrate Rumspringa, or their coming of age. The article also introduces a new book on the topic.

### **Student Resources**

Capucilli, Alyssa Satin. *Biscuit Goes to School*. USA. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2002.

This charming story depicts Biscuit, a puppy, and his first day of school. Students can relate to the newness of the event and the conflict when the teacher finds a puppy in her classroom!

Dean, James. *Pete the Cat: Pete at the Beach*. New York. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2013.

This story tells about Pete the Cat and his first visit to the beach. While there is a lot to see and do, Pete has to overcome some fears when he approaches a new challenge for the first time.

Love, Judy. *First Day Jitters*. Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge Press. 2000.

This book explores the feelings of a person when doing something for the first time, in the case, the first day of school. It will help demonstrate the feelings someone experiences before, during and after an event.

Rabe, Trish. *On the First Day of Kindergarten*. USA. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2016.

This book shows the excitement and nervous of doing something for the first time. It also clearly shows how we say goodbye to our old life and start a new life as a new person.

Rey, H.A. *Curious George's First Day of School*. New York. Houghton Mifflin Company. 2005.

In this story George is invited to school to be a helper. All goes well until chaos ensues.

Schaefer, Lola M. *Loose Tooth: My First I Can Read Book*. USA. HarperCollins Publishers Inc. 2004.

This story explores the joys, struggles and triumph one experiences over a first loose tooth.

## **Appendix**

Delaware Music Standards

*Anchor Standard 1: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.*

This standard asks the question, how do musicians generate creative ideas? This is an essential part of this unit as students will create a musical idea, practice their work and perform it for a group. Students will recognize they can pull musical ideas from a variety of sources.

*Anchor Standard 2: Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.*

The unit will meet Anchor Standard 2 by having students select which piece of music they want to practice and perform for a solo. The standard states that students will “demonstrate and discuss personal reasons for selecting musical ideas that represent expressive intent.” This will give students more ownership of their solo and give them more purpose.



*Anchor Standard 3: Refine and complete artistic work.*

This standard addresses the core of my unit. This standard, MU:Cr3.2 states, a student can “convey expressive intent for a specific purpose by presenting a final version of personal musical ideas to peers or an informal audience.” The final step in my unit is to have students perform a solo for an audience of peers and teachers.

Delaware ELA (Common Core) Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.2

Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. Students will listen to a story and answer specific questions orally. Teacher will use an informal formative assessment.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.6

Produce complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation. (Grade level one specific.) Students will write partial or complete sentences in their packet describing a specific event that happened for the first time.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text. Students will read a text and determine significant changes in the character(s) as they recognize a rite of passage.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. Students will discuss in small groups their findings after reading a short story.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. Students will share with their small group, large group, and later a larger audience what they have gleaned from the presented material.

**Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Eliade, 22.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 26.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 176.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 180-181.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 184.

<sup>8</sup> Quinceanera Learn NC: The Changing Face of Mexico. “The Quinceanera Celebration.” <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/chngmexico/218>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Quinceanera 2 Quinceanera-Boutique. “The Quinceanera Celebration.” <https://www.quinceanera-boutique.com/quinceaneratradiation.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Sea Turtles <https://www.forbes.com/sites/edfuller/2014/05/29/sea-turtles-linking-chinas-future-to-the-world/#4c571c5011c0> (accessed December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Rumspringa Schachtman, Tom. “Rumspringa: Amish Teens Venture into Modern Vices.” NPR, *Talk of the Nation*.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5455572>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Genep,176.