

## CHARLIE'S LITTLE ANGELS

THREE'S A  
HAPPY CROWD

While some parents shiver at the thought of an ever-growing brood, this mother-of-two-with-one-on-the-way says that, in her experience, the more children you have, the merrier your family will be



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A blink-and-you-miss-it look of bewilderment, followed by a split-second furrowed brow, rapidly replaced by a polite smile and the inevitable (and quite frankly downright rude) question, “was it planned?” These, dear readers, are the responses you enjoy upon telling people that you’re expecting your third child.

In contrast, when you tell people you’re expecting your first baby, there’s nothing but joyous handclapping and enthusiastic backslapping. Then as soon as number one elbows its way out of your uterus, it’s an endless round of enquiries about when its sibling will make an appearance – steady on, let me just unpack my hospital bag before I answer you.

Announce the impending arrival of a third and it’s as though you’ve gone insane. Comments like, “You’re brave!” and, “Rather you than me!” are uttered with annoying regularity. Yes, I am well aware that I have only two hands. And yes, my husband and I together make two and yes, the beautiful urchins will outnumber us so that if I grab one and he grabs another, one will still escape. My skills may lie in words and not in numbers, but even I can do that little sum.

And yet look at us, we’re happy. Well, if you ignore my husband’s slightly glazed-over 50-yard stare and air of denial that surrounds him, the joy is palpable.

Growing up in a house with three children meant laughter and noise became the backing track to my childhood memories – and that’s exactly what I want for my family. I admit that compromise, concession and controversy are all part and parcel of living in a commune-like environment, but then again so is on-tap merriment. Now that we’re all mothers ourselves, my sisters and I are each others’ best friends.

Theirs are the first numbers I dial when there’s news to share, or a silence to be filled – because one downside of growing up in a large family is that the sound of silence is utterly abhorrent and to be avoided at all costs. Also, being one of three or more, you become both more self-sufficient and, at the same time, less so – which is strange. On the one hand, you have to learn how to do things for yourself earlier. But the flip side is that I’ve

never had to learn to amuse myself, as someone else was always there to do that. Even now, if my husband is going out for the evening, I’ll see the empty hours stretching in front of me and feel baffled at how to pass the time.

You definitely adapt to what you’re used to. I have friends who are only children and they revel in memories of having their parents’ undivided attention and of leaving their dolls in

one place and returning hours later to find, lo and behold, they were still in that exact spot. And with their hair still intact – something that was never taken for granted in my house.

The concept of having to share possessions and parents is as alien to only children as eating off only your own plate is to me. Yes, money will be tighter, we’ll have to pick our favourite, most promising child to send to school and home school the others (joke), but it’s going to be deliciously noisy all the time, which to my ears is absolute bliss.

In a bid to convince my husband of the pros of three children, I may have even uttered the ridiculous statement during a rare moment of calm with our current two, “The trouble is darling, this all seems quite, well, manageable at the moment. What we need is a little bit of chaos in our lives.”

I would wager that should I go to meet my Maker before him, my loving husband may

well inscribe this on my headstone as a fitting epitaph to a life spent in a cloud of beautiful mayhem. **A**

*“Laughter and noise became the backing track to my childhood memories and that’s exactly what I want for my family”*

