

Puberty

SPHE STRANDS:

**Myself – Taking care of my body
– Knowing about my body**

**Myself and Others –
Relating to others**

Everything's Changing!

Prepare the children for today's lesson by reminding them that we are all growing physically everyday (except the teacher who stopped growing when she/he was a certain age!). Growing is exciting and interesting. It's important to learn about how we grow. Today's lesson will look at this in more detail.

- Explain that you, as the teacher, are there to help them to understand the changes that take place in their bodies somewhere between ten and sixteen years old. These changes are a perfectly natural part of growing up. They happen to everyone. This time of change is called puberty.
- Explain that if they have questions you will be more than happy to try to answer them, but that it's very important to also ask their parents/guardians, as they too went through puberty and can help. Stress that the changes of puberty happen very slowly and there is nothing to worry about.

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- A gender-neutral outline of a person should be displayed on the board. The teacher can then explain changes such as underarm hair, leg hair, pubic hair, facial hair and breast development while pointing at the areas where these changes will take place.
- When the children are more comfortable discussing these changes and have gotten over any initial embarrassment, the teacher will explain: periods, wet dreams and genitals as below.

Genitals

- Explain that the word 'genitals' is the official word for our private parts. In girls it means the vagina and the area around it and in boys it means the penis and the area around it. We will be using these words from now on.

Periods

- Using a diagram of a womb, explain that when a girl gets her 'period' it means her body is preparing for motherhood some time in the future. It means her womb is getting ready. This is also called menstruation. Every month an egg travels down a little tube to the womb. When there is no baby, it then mixes with a little blood and travels out of the body through a girl's vagina. Show this on the diagram. A period lasts for three to five days and girls wear pads at this time to protect their clothes.

Wet Dreams

- Displaying a picture of boys genitalia explain that boys' penises get bigger during puberty and they start to produce a fluid called sperm. This is preparing them for becoming fathers some day. Sometimes boys release some sperm while they are asleep. This is called a 'wet dream' and is perfectly normal. There is nothing to worry about if this happens.

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Activity

Divide the class into groups of three or four and distribute a bag of words to each and two laminated sheets – one with the outline of a boy and the other a girl.

- Explain that the task is to place the changes that occur to boys on the boy picture and the changes that occur to girls on the girl picture. If they identify a change that could happen to a boy or girl, they should put it between the two pictures.
- The word in the bag should be as follows:

Getting taller
Voice breaks
More perspiration
Underarm hair
Broader shoulders
Periods start
Chest hair
Wet dreams
Genitals develop
Pubic hair
Breast development
Facial hair
Leg hair

When the children have finished the activity, allow them to call out the right answers, being sensitive to children who may feel they are not as knowledgeable as other children on these matters.

- Give the children a parents leaflet and encourage them to ask their parents' about anything they are unsure about over the next few days.

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Reflection:

Invite the children to close their eyes and read the following reflection:

Go deep into your imagination and think of yourself five years ago. Who were your friends? What games did you like to play? What did you look like? How tall were you? What size shoes did you take?

Now imagine yourself in five years time. You will be a teenager. How will you look then? How tall will you be? How will you feel? Who will your friends be?

Life is full of changes and our bodies are ready for all of them. We have exactly what we need to get by. We have exactly what we need to grow and develop into young men and women. When the time comes we might become parents.

We thank God for our amazing bodies. Help us to welcome all the changes we will experience knowing that it is all part of God's plan for us. Help us to take good care of our bodies and to treat them with respect. Help us to show respect for other people's bodies too. We ask God to be with us as we grow and change. Amen.