

Understanding the Body, Day 2: Puberty

Special Education: Secondary, Lesson #17

Student Learning Objectives:

To be able to...

1. Correctly label pictures as boy/girl/man/woman
2. Identify three body changes of puberty for females
3. Identify three body changes of puberty for males
4. Identify two feelings that may change/emerge during puberty

Materials Needed:

Transparencies 1-4 (puberty changes - male and female, and myths and facts)

Magazine pictures of girls and women (clothing catalogues)

One copy of *Facts and Myths about Puberty Worksheet* for each student

Agenda:

1. Introduce the lesson
2. Men & boys, women & girls
3. Body changes in puberty
4. Puberty landmarks
5. Feelings changes in puberty
6. Sexual feelings
7. Facts & myths about puberty
8. Other resources

Body and feelings changes during puberty can be confusing and upsetting. Particularly if you don't understand what is happening to you - a situation many of your students face. Puberty can also be a very exciting time, if you know what to expect and have trusted adults to talk with about what is happening.

Activities:

Puberty means “growing up.”

First, review male and female. Have students stand if they are males, then stand if they are females. Or, if you have any gender variant students for whom being forced to publicly self-identify would be painful – not confusing, but embarrassing – then just remind students that the term “male” means boys and men; “female,” girls and women.

1. Introduce the lesson

Tell students that:

“Everyone here either has begun or soon will begin to change from a child to an adult. This time of life is called puberty.

These changes start between the ages of 9 to 15 for girls and 10 to 16 for boys. It takes a long time (about 4 years) to go through puberty.”

2. Men & Boys, Women & Girls

A. Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a stack of magazine pictures of people. (Clothing catalogues are great for this).

B. Have students look through their pictures and find a picture of each of the following kinds of people:

- an adult man
- a little boy
- a teenaged boy
- an adult woman
- a little girl
- a teenaged girl

C. Ask students how they could tell the difference between the males and the females. Ask also, how they knew the person in the picture was an adult or a child. Discuss that as we get older and go through puberty, our appearance changes.

3. Body Changes in Puberty

A. Project Transparencies 1 & 2 (puberty changes, male and female) and have students brainstorm body changes that occur during puberty. Write their list on the blackboard.

Be sure to include:

- height growth spurts (both)
- shoulders broaden (boys)
- hips widen (girls)
- breasts develop (girls, and to some extent, boys)
- acne (both)
- malodorous perspiration begins (both)
- pubic and underarm hair develops (both)
- facial hair and chest hair develop and body hair may thicken (boys and to some extent, many girls)

- voice deepens (both, though more in boys)
- genitals grow (both; more noticeable in boys)
- erections (penis or clitoris gets hard) happen more frequently (more noticeable in boys)
- sperm production and ejaculation begins (boys)
- nocturnal emissions begin (boys)
- ovulation and menstruation begin (girls)

B. Help students to go back through the list and decide which body changes happen to boys only, which happen to girls only, and which happen to both.

4. Puberty Landmarks

A. Body change landmarks of adolescence - Menstruation and Ejaculation.

Discuss with your students that there are two events, one for males, one for females that occur during puberty for the first time and continue through adulthood.

For the female, menstruation is the landmark.

For the male, ejaculation is the landmark.

Write the two terms on the board.

B. Menstruation.

Explain to your students that Menstruation, “having your period” is something that only happens to females. The average age for getting the period is about 12 and a half. The range is wide.

Explain that:

“Menstruation involves human eggs that are very, very tiny (about as big as a dot made by a pencil). These eggs stay in the ovary (new vocabulary word) until puberty or adolescence, and then one at a time, about once a month, they start to come out.

Inside young women, is a special “growing place” called a uterus (new vocabulary word), where a baby could grow from the egg.

It has a lining that gets thicker and fills with blood that would help a baby to grow. But if no baby is growing, then this lining is not necessary, so about once a month, it comes out, so the uterus can build a fresh new lining, and the whole cycle can start again.

This lining coming out, bleeding, is called menstruation or “having your period.”

For most females, having your period doesn’t hurt or cause problems. It just means you have to catch the blood in a sanitary pad or tampon to stay clean. For some females, having their period can cause cramping feelings in their uterus area, or make them crabby or tired. Talk with your trusted adult friend about any problems or questions you may have.

Identify “having your period” and ejaculation “white sticky stuff coming out of the end of the penis,” as healthy body changes of puberty.

Depending on the comprehension level of your students, you may wish to leave the topic of menstruation at that point, if you think that they can handle, or would like more information you can continue.

C. Menstrual Hygiene (optional as part of class - can be taught individually)

Teacher Note: This part of the lesson should be considered optional for male students. Menstrual hygiene is most appropriately taught in context (i.e. in the bathrooms both at school and at home) in cooperation with other supporting adults. Consistency across settings is critical.

The steps of menstrual hygiene are presented both here (so that you can address this aspect of menstruation during the lesson if you choose to) and in summary form (for making available to others who might be involved in menstrual hygiene training) at the end of the Sexual Health & Hygiene lesson.

Discuss the following menstrual hygiene steps using the simplest language you know:

- recognizing that your period has started (noticing blood or red on your underwear)
- cleaning up (cold water for clothing)
- getting supplies (where are they kept, where are they purchased)
- using supplies (demonstrate using spare underwear and supplies)
- appropriate disposal of used supplies (use samples, red food coloring and water mixture, toilet paper and demonstrate folding pad so that red is inside/can't be seen, wrapping used pad or tampon in toilet paper, placing used wrapped supply in appropriate location - bags, wastebasket, etc.). Wash your hands.
- emphasize privacy - menstrual care is a private activity, performed in private places.

Teacher Note: Films or videos may also prove useful to teach about menstruation.

D. Ejaculation. Explain to your students that ejaculation occurs in males when the penis suddenly has a “super-good” feeling (often after it has been rubbed - during masturbation, and sometimes at night when boys are asleep - nocturnal emission) and white sticky fluid called semen comes out of the end.

Explain that this is normal for males, not harmful, and will be discussed more in future classes.

E. Again, there are many other approaches you can use, but the main point to get across is that ejaculation is a male adolescence land mark, a sign of good health and approaching adulthood.

5. Feelings Changes in Puberty**A.** Ask students to brainstorm changes in the way people

Roleplay some of the feelings changes for some students. You can also draw a large face on the blackboard, and change the facial expression inside the circle, to indicate changes in feelings that are part of “growing up.”

Other language: “think about things”

- boys
- girls
- future
- jobs
- world

Be sure students understand that masturbation “rubbing the private parts” is a PRIVATE behavior.

feel about things - emotional changes that often occur during puberty.

Write their list on the blackboard.

Be sure to include:

- crushes and attractions may begin (both)
 - sudden mood changes may begin (both)
 - self-consciousness may increase (both)
 - freedom to make decisions grows (both)
 - friction with parents may grow (both)
 - understanding of self may grow (both)
 - concern for others may grow (both)
- B. Help students to go back through the list and decide which emotion or feeling changes happen to boys only, which happen to girls only, and which happen to both.
- C. Point out how many similarities there are between boys and girls.

6. Sexual Feelings

A. Sexual feelings. Discuss with students that:

There may also be changes in how we feel about other people sexually. While before, we might have been interested in other people only as friends, now we might:

- be attracted to other people in a sexual way. They may be the other sex or the same sex as we are, or some of each.
- think about private parts of the body more than we did before - both our own private parts and other people’s private parts.
- think about private behaviors more than we did before. things like masturbation, intimate touching, kissing, etc.
- want to have a relationship with someone else.
- masturbate more often - to masturbate is to touch or rub our private parts in a way that feels good to us.

Sometimes, after people have been rubbing for a while, they will have an orgasm (climax, come). In males, some semen will come out and should be cleaned up with a tissue. In females, they may become very relaxed and feel good.

Many people think that masturbation is all right to do, as long as it is done privately, by yourself alone, in your bedroom or bathroom with the door closed, and you don’t do anything that would hurt yourself.

Other people think masturbation is not okay to do. You should decide what your feelings and beliefs are about masturbation for you. If you need help to decide what is okay for you, you should talk to a trusted adult, (family or clergy).

B. Explain that having sexual feelings is a normal part of

growing up. Just because we have sexual feelings doesn't mean we have to act on them.

Choose the most relevant 4 or 5 Facts and Myths and work on them with some students by reading and discussing individually or in small groups.

7. Facts & Myths about Puberty

- A. Project the Facts and Myths about Puberty transparency. Hand out the worksheet copies of the transparency that you've made for students.
- B. Discuss with your students that because there are so many body and feelings changes associated with puberty, it can be confusing. There are many facts and myths about puberty, and now is the time to ask questions and get straight answers.
- C. Go through each of the facts and myths on the worksheet and discuss them with students. Have students mark whether each statement is true or false on their worksheet:
(answers: 1.T, 2.T, 3.F, 4.T, 5.T, 6.F, 7.T, 8.F, 9.T, 10.T, 11.T, 12.T, 13.T, 14.T, 15.T)

Ask students to identify one person they could talk to about body and feelings changes "growing up" if they had questions or concerns. It may be helpful to refer them to the photographs on their personal relationships posters.

8. Other Resources

- A. Ask students who they could talk to if they had other questions later. Remind them of their trusted adult friends, their family members and other support people they could ask (including you, the teacher) if they have questions or concerns.
- B. Point out helpful resource books and materials which have been added to your classroom library.

Dear Trusted Adult,

In class we talked about puberty; body and feeling changes that occur during adolescence. We discussed typical body changes that occur during puberty

- Height growth spurts (both)
- shoulders broaden (boys)
- hips widen (girls)
- breasts develop (girls, and to some extent, many boys)
- acne (both)
- malodorous perspiration begins (both)
- pubic and underarm hair develops (both)
- facial and chest hair develop and body hair may thicken (boys and to some extent, many girls)
- voice deepens (both, though more in boys)
- genitals enlarge (more noticeable in boys)
- erections happen more frequently (more noticeable in boys)
- sperm production and ejaculation begins (boys)
- nocturnal emissions begin (boys)
- ovulation and menstruation begin (girls)

We discussed feelings changes that sometimes occur during adolescence. Some of the changes we may have with our feelings are:

- crushes and attractions may begin (both)
- sudden mood changes may begin (both)
- self-consciousness may increase (both)
- freedom to make decisions grows (both)
- friction with parents may grow (both)
- understanding of self may grow (both)
- concern for others may grow (both)

We also discussed sexual feelings that may change during adolescence. Students discussed that we may also have different sexual feelings during puberty. While before, we might have been interested in other people only as friends, now we might:

- be attracted to other people in a sexual way. They may be the other sex or the same sex as we are, or some of each.
- think about private parts of the body more than we did before - both our own private parts and other people's private parts.
- think about private behaviors more than we did before. Things like masturbation, intimate touching, kissing, etc.
- want to have a relationship with someone else.
- masturbate more often - touch or rub our private parts in a way that feels good to us.

Continued ...

We also explored facts and myths about puberty. Students identified one person they could talk to about their questions about puberty. There are several ways you can support this learning.

- Bring out personal supplies used during/after puberty (pads, bra, athletic supporter, shaving equipment, deodorant, etc) and discuss their use.
- Declare your "askability". Discuss that you are willing to answer questions or help find out what the answers are.
- Share your answers to the following questions:
"What was it like when you had your first crush?"
"What was your most embarrassing moment during puberty?"

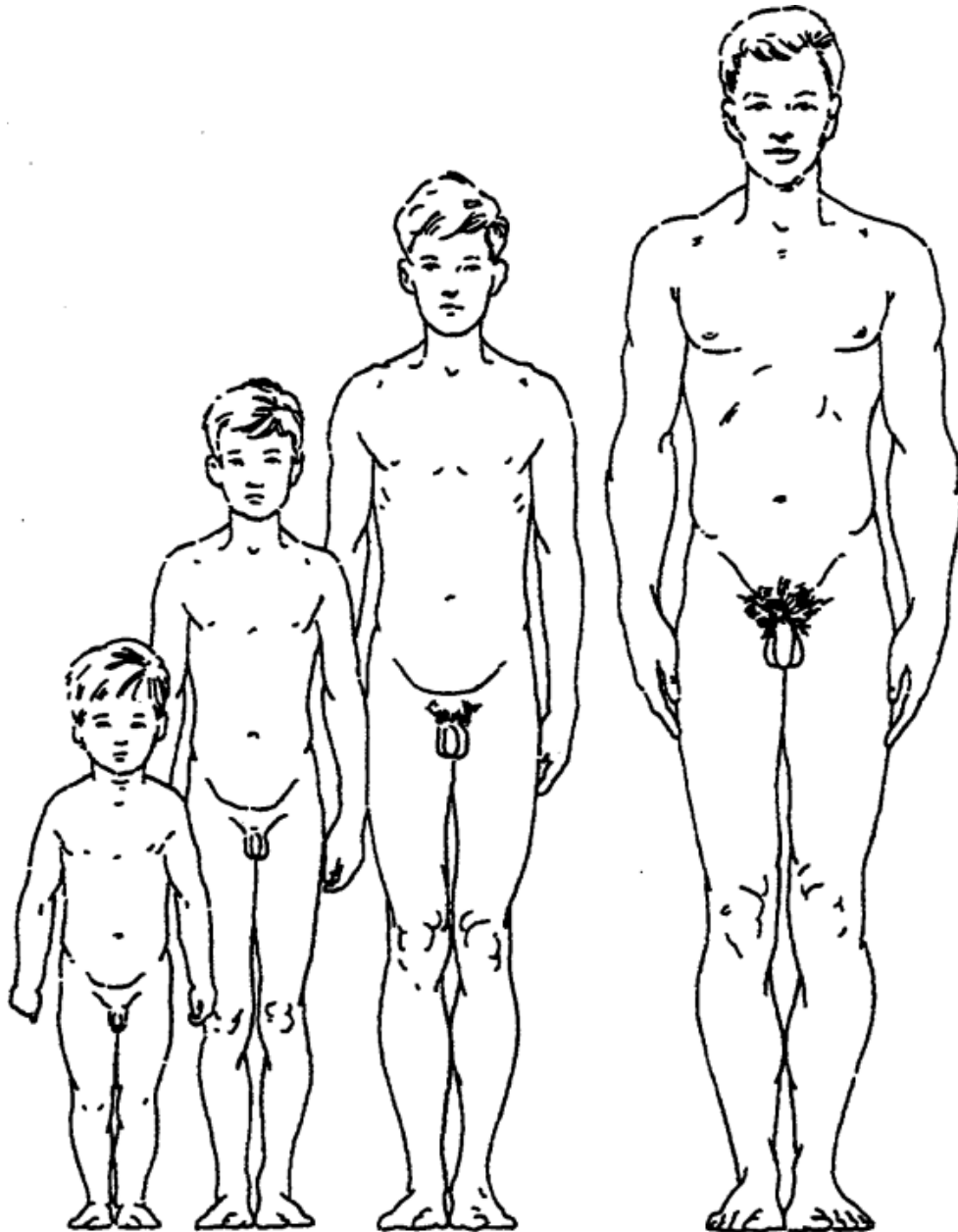
If you have any questions or comments, please call me.

Sincerely,

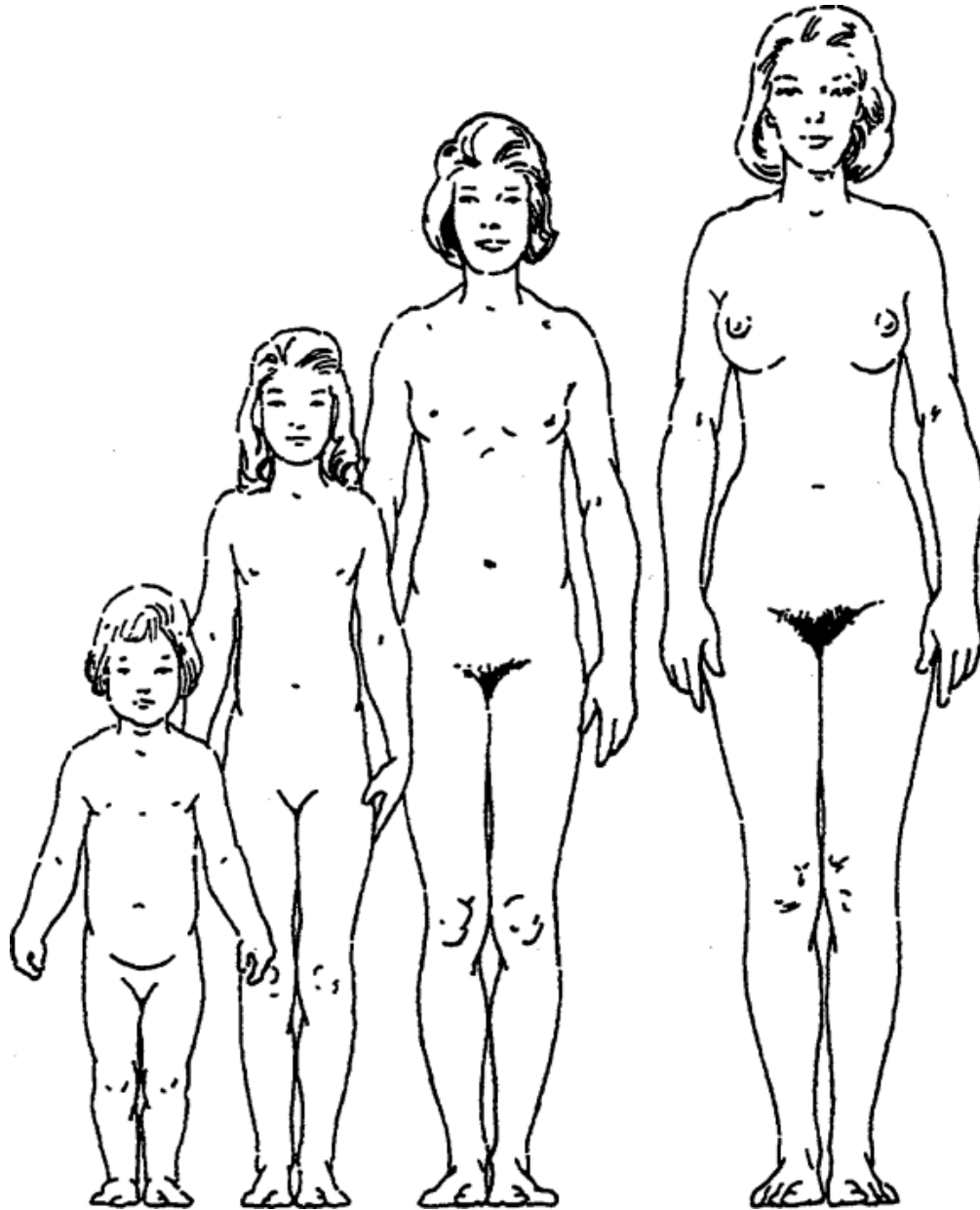
Teacher, Principal or Nurse

NOTE: All Trusted Adult Exercises are Optional.

Transparency 1: Male Puberty Changes



Transparency 2: Female Puberty Changes



Facts and Myths about Puberty Worksheet

DIRECTIONS: For each statement, circle "TRUE" or "FALSE"

NAME _____

1. Girls may start puberty any time between the ages of 9 and 16. (TRUE or FALSE)
2. Usually, boys start puberty between the ages of 10 and 17. (TRUE or FALSE)
3. Boys only get erections when they think about something sexual. (TRUE or FALSE)
4. A person's feelings may change from moment to moment, especially during puberty. (TRUE or FALSE)
5. If your parents started puberty early, you might too. (TRUE or FALSE)
6. You can tell whether a girl is menstruating by looking at her. (TRUE or FALSE)
7. It is common for boys to have nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) during puberty, but it is also healthy not to. (TRUE or FALSE)
8. The main reason teenagers get acne during puberty is from eating the wrong foods. (TRUE or FALSE)
9. There is nothing wrong with a boy if he ejaculates in his sleep. (TRUE or FALSE)
10. It is okay for a girl to shower or play sports during her period. (TRUE or FALSE)
11. A boy should start wearing an athletic supporter (jock strap) during puberty when he plays sports, to protect and support his genitals. (TRUE or FALSE)
12. A girl may start wearing a bra for support when her breasts start to develop, especially if she is uncomfortable playing sports and being active. (TRUE or FALSE)
13. Just because you have a sexual feeling, you don't have to act on it. (TRUE or FALSE)
14. It is necessary to wash more often once you begin puberty. (TRUE or FALSE)
15. It is better to ask a trusted adult about changes you have questions about, than to worry. (TRUE or FALSE)

Transparency 3: Facts and Myths about Puberty

1. Girls may start puberty any time between the ages of 9 and 16. (TRUE or FALSE)
2. Usually, boys start puberty between the ages of 10 and 17. (TRUE or FALSE)
3. Boys only get erections when they think about something sexual. (TRUE or FALSE)
4. A person's feelings may change from moment to moment, especially during puberty. (TRUE or FALSE)
5. If your parents started puberty early, you might too. (TRUE or FALSE)
6. You can tell whether a girl is menstruating by looking at her. (TRUE or FALSE)
7. It is common for boys to have nocturnal emissions (wet dreams) during puberty, but it is also healthy not to. (TRUE or FALSE)
8. The main reason teenagers get acne during puberty is from eating the wrong foods. (TRUE or FALSE)

Transparency 4: More Facts and Myths

9. There is nothing wrong with a boy if he ejaculates in his sleep. (TRUE or FALSE)
10. It is okay for a girl to shower or play sports during her period. (TRUE or FALSE)
11. A boy should start wearing an athletic supporter (jock strap) during puberty when he plays sports, to protect and support his genitals. (TRUE or FALSE)
12. A girl may start wearing a bra for support when her breasts start to develop, especially if she is uncomfortable playing sports and being active. (TRUE or FALSE)
13. Just because you have a sexual feeling, you don't have to act on it. (TRUE or FALSE)
14. It is necessary to wash more often once you begin puberty. (TRUE or FALSE)
15. It is better to ask a trusted adult about changes you have questions about, than to worry. (TRUE or FALSE)