

Physical changes during Puberty

Lesson 1

Grades
4th & 5th

What we know about puberty

In this lesson we will explore what your students know, or think they know, about puberty.

Materials needed: journals, 3x5 cards, mailbox

To begin this unit, I am going to give you each a journal. (Pass out the journals as you are going over the rules for the journal.) **This is your journal. No one will ever read anything in it unless you choose to share it with them. I won't read it unless you decide to share it with me. You may reflect in it at other times than during our health lessons. It is your journal. There are only two requirements I have for this journal: 1) That your writing be open and honest and 2) you share one of your writings, or a reflection on your journaling experience at the end of the unit. Any questions?**

Side Note: You probably will get questions about what you mean by 'open and honest' writing. You decide what you want from them. You may allow them to draw their reflections. Or you may require them to write a certain number of pages for each response. It is really up to you and what you feel your students are capable of.

I'd like you to open your journals to the first lined page. Put the date in the top right hand corner (or however you have your students head their papers). **Write 'Puberty is...' Now I'm not going to tell you what puberty is yet, but I'm sure you have some of your own ideas. Write down these ideas now. I am going to give you 3 minutes to write all you know or have heard, or even what you want to learn about puberty. I want you to keep writing for the entire 3 minutes. Go.**

Side Note: Give the girls 3 minutes to write. They will slow down. Some may stop. Encourage them individually to continue. While they are writing create three columns on the board (or three pieces of chart paper) at the front of the class – no headings. At the end of 3 minutes, tell them to finish the sentence they are writing and put their pencils down.

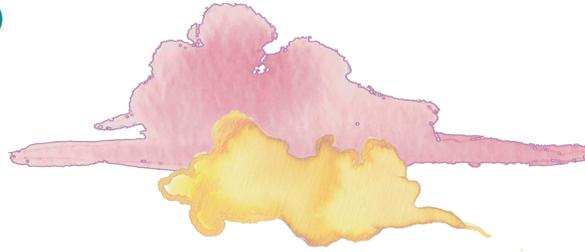
I'd like to know what you've written. Now, like I said, I am not going to read your journals. But, I'd like each of you to share something that you wrote in your journal about puberty.



Side Note: Try to get each girl to tell you at least one thing that she wrote in her journal. Some may want to tell you more. That's great, but make sure you get around to everyone. Don't require everyone to talk as talking about this subject may be very difficult for some.

You may get comments such as:

- ◆ You get your period during puberty (p)
- ◆ You get breasts during puberty (p)
- ◆ You can get a boyfriend (s)
- ◆ You can get pregnant (p)
- ◆ You get taller (e/p)
- ◆ You get PMS (p)
- ◆ You grow into a woman (e)
- ◆ You don't get to be a kid any more (e)
- ◆ Your mom takes you bra shopping (s)
- ◆ You get to have sex (s)
- ◆ You get to make your own decisions (e)



As they tell you what they wrote, list their points in the columns you created. Group the comments into physical, emotional and social categories – but remember, don't put headers on the columns. Keep taking comments as long as the girls are willing to give them to you. Write down comments even if you know they are myths. They need to be dispelled, but not right away. The more they feel you are listening to what they have to say at the beginning of this unit, the more comfortable they will be later when discussion topics become a bit more uncomfortable.

As you can see, I have put what you know about puberty into three categories. What do you think the categories are? How should I label them?

Side Note: Take some brainstorming answers. Don't let them struggle too long. Write Physical, Emotional, and Social at the top of your categories.

Why do you think I have these category titles, Physical, Emotional, and Social, listed above all the different things you told me about puberty? What do you think the titles mean?

Side Note: Possible answers might be:

- ◆ All the physical stuff happens to your body
- ◆ Friendships are social
- ◆ Boyfriends are social
- ◆ PMS makes you sad that's emotion



You are all right. During puberty, the changes that occur will, in general, fall into these categories — Physical, Emotional, and Social. Physically, your body will begin to change from that of a girl's to a woman's. Emotionally, your moods and feelings may change. And, socially, your friends may change along with your changing interests, opinions and values. In the next few days we are going to discuss these changes. They may make you feel a bit uncomfortable. We'll talk about the clinical terms for body parts and body functions, but we'll also talk about what you know, and the terms that you use. I may not

even know some of them. Maybe you can teach me something. Sound okay? All right, let's get started.

What do you want to know? I want you to take another 3 minutes and write it down in your journal. I am also going to come around and pass out 3 x 5 cards. If you feel like you can't say what you want to know out loud, write it on one of the cards. At the end of each of our sessions, I will pass around a box. Everyone will put a 3 x 5 card folded in half into it. If you have a question, you can put it in, if you don't, put a blank card in. That way, everyone will be putting something into the box. No one will be put on the spot. And if you have a question that comes up NOT during the lessons, I will keep a stack of 3 x 5 cards on my desk along with the mailbox.

At the end of every session, I will answer the anonymous questions from the mailbox.

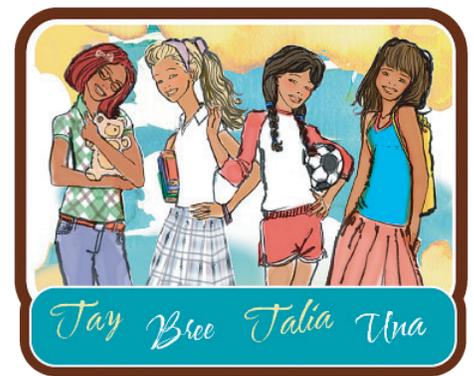
Now I am going to pass out the reading for the physical section of the puberty lesson. (Walk around and pass out one packet to each girl.) Look over it. Read it at home tonight as homework. The hard part is, I want you to give it to your parents for them to review. You must also talk to your parents about it and they must sign the back of your pamphlet. What and how much you and your parents discuss about these puberty materials is up to you. Let them know we will cover it all in class. Then I want you to write in your journals what you think, feel, or learn from reading the material, talking to your parents. Also, write down any questions you have so you can remember them tomorrow, when we open up this topic again.

Now I am going to pass around the mailbox for your question cards. Everyone take out a card. If you have a question, write it on the card. You don't need to put your name on it. If you don't have a question, write 'No Question' on your card. All cards should be folded in half. As the mailbox makes it to your desk, put your folded card into it. I will collect the mailbox after it gets to everyone.

Side Note: Make sure everyone puts a card in the mailbox. There will be peeking to see who put something in and who didn't. When it reaches the last student, ask her to bring you the box. Look through the questions and choose any that you think are relevant to today's discussion.

You may have questions like:

- ◆ When do you get your period
- ◆ When did you get your period
- ◆ How do you use a tampon
- ◆ What if you get your period at school
- ◆ What do you do if you can't tell your mom you got your period
- ◆ What is sex
- ◆ When will I grow breasts
- ◆ When can I have sex
- ◆ What is masturbation
- ◆ What is oral sex
- ◆ How do you not get pregnant
- ◆ What if you do get pregnant



Make sure you give basic answers to all of the questions. Let the girls know that you will be talking more in depth about these topics in the next few days. If you feel comfortable answering questions about yourself, do so. But if you don't, just shuffle them in with the 'no question' cards.



The girls may begin to raise their hands to get new questions answered that have been raised by those from the mailbox. Don't answer those at this time.

I see that many of you have more questions to ask. Write these questions down in your journal or on your question cards. You can put them in the mailbox on my desk after class today, or tomorrow when we discuss this subject again. I hope today made you think about growing up. Next time we'll talk about all the things that will happen to your body during puberty. So be prepared.

Three stylized pink butterfly illustrations are scattered across the page. One is at the top center, one is to the right of the top center, and one is in the middle of the page.

Friend to the Modern Girl on-the-go

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This lesson was developed in consultation with Dr. Michelle Bourke.

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