

A decorative background featuring a large, stylized letter 'D' outline. Inside the 'D', there are three smaller illustrations: a key on the left, a heart on the right, and two hands clasped together at the bottom. The entire design is rendered in a light gray color.

Grade 4

W-4.3 ***The student, as a child of God, will describe physical, emotional, spiritual and social changes that occur during puberty; e.g. menstruation, secondary sexual characteristics, maturing in ones identity and faith.***

Due to the sensitivity of this lesson, it is recommended that, if at all possible, boys and girls receive separate instruction with a same sex teacher.

Attention!

Students, whose parents have requested exemption from human sexuality lessons, must not participate in this lesson.

Catechetical Focus

- We marvel at the complexity of the human body and how God has created its parts to work as a whole.
- God is the author of what makes us male and female.
- God's call to growth involves changes physically, emotionally and spiritually.

Note to the Catechist

- Puberty means many physical, emotional, and social changes for students. Students begin to question the world around them as they mature in their identity and faith. The students need to know that these changes are normal and not to cause concern.
- During the next few years, their bodies will be rapidly changing at different rates. In boys, spontaneous erections are common during puberty and they may occur for no apparent reason. Boys will need to be assured that nocturnal emissions are normal and they will happen less frequently as they get older.
- Girls will begin to menstruate and they need to be prepared to deal with the discharge appropriately.
- It is important to develop sensitivity for each other that boys and girls are aware of and understand the changes that occur in each other and that these changes occur at different rates.
- Students will be asking many questions. Teachers should be prepared to deal honestly and tactfully with each of the questions.

Theological Background

Scripture Commentary

- From the moment of our conception within the womb, God knew us by name and wanted us. By our very nature and being we were created “good” and our development throughout life is “good”. The changes that occur within our bodies are “Wonder-full”. They make us more completely who we are destined to become, a mature Man or Woman, capable of living a Love relationship with God and others.

Scripture Texts

Ps. 139:13-15

13 For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.

Gen. 1:27-31

27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' 29 God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food. 'And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.'

Jer. 1:5

5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

Is. 49:1,14-15

1 Listen to me, O coastlands, pay attention, you peoples from far away! The LORD called me before I was born, while I was in my mother's womb he named me. 14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me." 15 Can a woman forget her nursing child, or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Commentary on the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- These passages highlight the goodness, the dignity and equality of the human person who has been created to respond to God's Call to love and reflect God's goodness and wisdom to the world.

CCC # 355-357 355 "'God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.' [Gen 1:27] Man occupies a unique place in creation: (I) he is 'in the image of God'; (II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; (III) he is created 'male and female'; (IV) God established him in his friendship." 356 "Of all visible creatures only man is 'able to know and love his creator'. [GS 12 # 3] He is 'the only creature on earth that God has willed for its own sake', [GS 24 # 3] and he alone is called to share, by knowledge and love, in God's own life. It was for this end that he was created, and this is the fundamental reason for his dignity. 'What made you establish man in so great a dignity? Certainly the incalculable love by which you have looked on your creature in yourself! You are taken with love for her; for by love indeed you created her, by love you have given her a being capable of tasting your eternal Good.' [St. Catherine of Siena, Dialogue 4] 357 "Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely

giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead."

CCC #369 "Man and woman have been created, which is to say, willed by God: on the one hand, in perfect equality as human persons; on the other, in their respective beings as man and woman. 'Being man' or 'being woman' is a reality which is good and willed by God: man and woman possess an inalienable dignity which comes to them immediately from God their Creator. [Cf. Gen 2:7, 22] Man and woman are both with one and the same dignity 'in the image of God'. In their 'being-man' and 'being-woman', they reflect the Creator's wisdom and goodness."

Development of Lesson 4.3

W-4.3 *The student, as a child of God, will describe physical, emotional, spiritual and social changes that occur during puberty; e.g. menstruation, secondary sexual characteristics, maturing in ones identity and faith.*

Activity 1 - Get ready

- Choose a scripture reading from the biblical texts identified in the section entitled Theological Background. Ask the student to reflect on this passage. What do you think God wants to tell us in this passage?
- Working individually, complete some of these sentence starters...
 The things I like about being a boy/girl are...
 I think a lot about...
 When I think about growing up, I feel...
 Sometimes, I feel like I am the only one who...
 I look forward to...
 I think puberty is...

As a class, make a poster of some of the responses.

- Complete the following Growth Chart: (Imagine your responses for age 12.)

Growing Up			
Age	The most important people in my life at...	What I look like at...	How I behave at...
3			
9			
12			

Activity 2 - Explore and apply

- Read the information pages, **Puberty: A Time of Change & What Happens During Puberty**
- Record the information in a Venn diagram, to compare and contrast the physical, social and emotional changes that both sexes experience.
- Make a list of the physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty and colour those that are strictly male changes red, colour those that are strictly female changes yellow, and colour those that are common changes to both sexes orange.
- Complete the worksheet, **Changes from Head to Toe**.

Activity 3 - Extend and commit

- Write own definition of puberty on the **Puberty Concept Frame**. Hand out slips of paper for questions/comments about puberty.
- Explore the definitions of gifts and talents. A talent is what makes it possible for you to do something that you can see and that is useful or beautiful, such as cooking, composing music, designing buildings. A gift is what God gave you that you use to help others or bring

joy, love or peace to others, such as the gifts of teaching, healing or helping. Reflect on and complete **I am Wonderfully Made**.

- Interview parents and/or older siblings about their experiences and interests during puberty.

Recommended Resources

Just Around the Corner for Boys (Video: Magic Lantern Communications Group, phone: 1-800-263-1717)

Just Around the Corner for Girls (Video: Magic Lantern Communications Group, phone: 1-800-263-1717)

Student Handout

Puberty: A Time of Change

A marvellous thing happens between the ages of 8 and 18. Our bodies change from head to toe. During this time we experience social, emotional, spiritual and physical changes. This time of change is called **puberty**.

Puberty is the bridge between being a child and becoming an adult. As you cross over this bridge, your body and your feelings change a great deal. You may begin to view your life and your relationships differently. You may have new friends at school and you might find that your parents have given you more responsibilities. These are called **social changes**.

You may find that your emotions change quickly - laughing with your friend on the phone one minute and snapping at your little brother the next. Your feelings might be hurt very easily when someone says something or because of something that happens. You might even discover some emotions you didn't realize you had. These new experiences are due to **emotional changes**.

Sometimes you might find yourself questioning why certain things happen. Why did my friend's bird die? When animals die, do they go to heaven? Such questioning is a sign that you are growing spiritually and so we call this **spiritual development**.

During puberty everyone's body changes. People get taller and some get wider. Boys begin to look like men and girls begin to look like women. Many more wonderful changes happen! We call the growth and development that takes place in our bodies, **physical changes**.

What Happens During Puberty?

Puberty means you're in for plenty of changes, but it is simply your body's transition from childhood to adulthood. Puberty begins when a very important hormone is produced in our bodies.

There is no exact moment when this hormone is released in everyone's body. We are all different and our bodies will grow and change at different times and in different ways, so no one experiences puberty in the same way and at the same time as someone else. We have to remember this so that we always treat our friends with respect and care.

It is important to learn about the many changes of puberty now, so that when you do go through these changes, you will be able to identify what is happening to you.

The Physical Changes: The most noticeable changes during puberty are the physical changes. Puberty causes us to grow taller and gain weight. We have new hair growth, our voices deepen, and acne may develop on our faces and backs. We often find that we need to bathe more often because our sweat and oil glands become more active causing perspiration (sweating) and body odour.

Boys, sometimes develop larger muscles during puberty and their shoulders will broaden. Their lung capacity and blood flow will increase which means that they are likely going to be able to

perform better at sports. Hair will begin to grow on their faces, under their arms, possibly on their chests, in their pubic area (between the legs), and their leg hair will get darker and coarser. The penis will eventually get larger and boys may experience more frequent erections (the penis becoming firm and larger). The boy's bodies are able to make sperm, which means they are now physically capable of participating in the creation of human life.

Girls' bodies change shape, too. Their hips will widen, and their breasts will grow larger. Hair will begin to grow under their arms, in their pubic area (between the legs), and the hair on their legs will get darker and coarser. During puberty, girls will begin to menstruate. This is the cycle that females experience monthly. One segment of the cycle is the discharge of the menstrual fluid from the body. Menstruation means that girls' bodies are now physically capable of participating in the creation of human life. They are able to become pregnant and give birth.

Emotional Changes: Along with the many physical changes boys and girls experience, there are many emotional changes. We become more concerned with the way our bodies look. We may feel awkward or embarrassed about the way we look, especially if we are growing and changing not at the same time as our friends. Because of the increased levels of hormones in our bodies, we sometimes become grumpy and we really can't explain why. Usually, we become more emotional and we react to situations more intensely than before. Sometimes, it is very difficult to control our emotions.

Social Changes: Our relationships also change during puberty. We tend to look to *our friends* for companionship and advice on things like style and entertainment. What others think of us can be a major concern. For some people, it is really important to fit in. *Our family* is important to us because they guide us in making decisions and they offer us love and support, even though we may try to gain more independence from our parents. Also, we may look to *other adults* in our community as good role models.

Spiritual Changes: As we grow older, we become more aware of the world around us. We may ask: Who am I? What is happening to me as I enter this time of change? Why do our bodies need to change? Why do I need to take on more responsibility? Even the way we think, and our interests, will change during puberty. We will be able to think about what might be and not just about what is. As questions start to arise, we need to talk about God's plan for us. It is important to discuss these questions with parents, grandparents, teachers, your parish priest or other trusted adults. It is through their guidance that we grow spiritually.

Puberty is an exciting time of growth and change. Remember that you are not alone. All your friends will experience the changes that you will, and you can look to the important adults in your life for advice and support.

Enjoy crossing the bridge from childhood to adulthood.



Student Handout

Changes from Head to Toe

Name some physical changes that occur during puberty in boys.

- _____
- _____
- _____

Name some physical changes that occur during puberty in girls.

- _____
- _____
- _____

List two changes that occur during puberty in both girls and boys.

- _____
- _____

Write some emotional and social changes you can expect.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

What spiritual questions might you ask at this time in your life?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Puberty Concept Frame

Key concept

Puberty

List at least five key words.

Write a definition or explanation in your own words.

Write two questions you still have about puberty.

List one fact.

Spiritual:

Physical:

Emotional:

Social:

Student Handout

I am Wonderfully Made!

Make this shape look like you. Write a number of gifts and talents about yourself.

(A talent is what makes it possible for you to do something that you can see and that is useful or beautiful, such as cooking, composing music, designing buildings. A gift is what God gave you that you use to help others or bring joy, love or peace to others, such as the gifts of teaching, healing or helping.)

