Physical Changes During Puberty

Lesson Goals
• Review questions that students left in the question box from the last lesson
• Understand the physical changes experienced by both genders during puberty
• Describe the physical changes experienced by males during puberty
• Describe the physical changes experienced by females during puberty
• Express feelings associated with going through the changes of puberty
• Identify a parent/guardian or other trusted adult as a confidant
• Discuss puberty with a parent/guardian or other trusted adult
• Understand the importance of good hygiene during puberty and into adolescence

SEL Skills Addressed
Self-awareness
Social awareness
Self-management

Terms Used:
acne
antiperspirant/deodorant
hygiene
menstruation
perspiration
pubic hair

TIME: 45 minutes

Materials: Folders, Index Cards, Question Box and Handouts (Puberty: Physical Changes, Is Alex a Boy or a Girl?, Parent Interview)
**Activity 1 - What’s in The Question Box**

Greet students and ask volunteers to pass out folders, index cards and handouts. Tell students that you really appreciate the quality and thoughtfulness that has gone into the questions that you found in the question box. Give them some examples by answering some of the better questions. You may also create a few “exemplar” questions and respond to them as if they were actual student questions. This should encourage students to be more forthcoming with their questions. It will also serve as an opportunity for you to use questions to review the social and emotional changes that occur during puberty before moving on the physical changes that occur during puberty.

**Activity 2 - Physical Changes During Puberty**

Pass out the *Puberty - Physical Changes* handout. Go over the changes for boys, girls, and for both sexes. Encourage students to ask any questions they have.

Note: If students begin to ask questions about the reproductive systems (sperm, menstruation) tell them that these will be covered in the next lesson.

**Activity 3 - My Thoughts About Puberty**

Pass out the *My Thoughts About Puberty* Handout. Ask students to complete each sentence.

1) I am looking forward to getting older because...

2) I am nervous about...

3) I want my parents to understand...

Remind students that they can refer to any of the changes that we have talked about (emotional - social - physical) or things they have seen their older brothers or sisters go through. Invite students to share their responses. You can start by providing some examples for each.
Activity 4 - Hygiene

Help students understand the importance of developing healthy habits at this time in their lives. Use the handout *What Should I Do to Take Care of Myself?* Have students look at the pictures and discuss all the different ways they should take care of themselves. Some examples are listed below.

**What Should I Do to Take Care of Myself**

- Bathe/Shower Daily
- Try deodorant or an antiperspirant (apply after washing)
- Change clothes daily (sometimes more than daily)
- Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends 8.5-9.5 hours of sleep
- Proper nutrition is important
- Females use pads or tampons during menstruation
- Talk to an Adult About Your Feelings

Activity 5 - Is Alex a Boy or a Girl?

Pass out the handout - *Is Alex a Boy or a Girl?* This activity is designed to help students understand that puberty is a time of change for both boys and girls. Tell students that this is an article about someone’s experience with puberty. Have students read the letter and underline any evidence that they find that indicates that Alex is a boy - or any evidence that they find that indicates that Alex is a girl. In the end, they are to decide if Alex is a boy or a girl and support their decision with evidence. Follow-up with a class discussion that leads students to appreciate the experiences of both boys and girls.
Activity 6 - Parent Interview

Pass out the Parent Homework Questionnaire. Talk to students about the importance of having a trusted adult to talk to. For most, this would be a parent/guardian or other close family member. Older brothers and sisters can be helpful too, but it is important to always talk to a parent/guardian about your feelings and about all the changes you are going through. Keep in mind, that they went through the same changes when they were your age. This interview is designed to give students an opportunity to learn more about the experiences their parents had when they were in 5th grade.

Ask students to interview one parent (or both) using the 5 questions on the questionnaire. If interviewing both parents, they should plan to interview one parent at a time. This way, each parent will have their full attention. Students should do the interview privately, away from other brothers or sisters and at a time when the parent is not busy doing something else. They should ask their parent if they are willing to do this and assure them that what they share will remain confidential. Explain what this means.

Students are not expected to write the responses on their sheet. They should be good listeners. If they don’t understand a response, they should try to ask the question again in a different way.

Activity 7 - Closure

Collect folders and index cards. Have students put their index cards in the Anonymous Question Box. Inform students that our next lesson will focus more specifically on how the male body changes during puberty.
Puberty: Physical Changes

Boys and girls develop at different rates. Girls can begin to go through puberty as early as age 8 and as late as age 16. Boys can go through puberty as early as age 10 and as late as age 18. The average age for both sexes is 9 to 13.

**Changes for Boys Only:**
- Facial Hair (beards, mustaches)
- Body hair on legs, thighs, chest
- Shoulders become broader and thighs become more muscular
- Voice change

**Changes for Girls Only:**
- Breasts develop
- Hips widen and waist narrows
- Menstruation begins (getting your “period”)

**Changes for Both Sexes:**
- Develop underarm hair
- Sweat glands become more active (perspiration)
- Face complexion may change (pimples, acne)
- Develop pubic hair
- Reproductive organs begin to develop (males produce sperm and females begin to ovulate)
My Thoughts About Puberty

We have gone over the social, emotional, and physical changes that occur during puberty. Take a few moments to complete the following sentences.

1) I am looking forward to getting older because...

2) I am nervous about...

3) I want my parents to understand...
Is Alex a Boy or a Girl?

Hi, I’m Alex, and I’d like to tell you about what’s happening to me. It seems that every day brings a new change. It’s almost like I’m getting a new body! They tell me I’m going through puberty.

One of the things that’s happening is this new hair that’s growing in places it has never been before, like under my arms. I know this is normal and all, but it still takes getting used to.

I don’t mind some of the changes I’m seeing. In fact, some things I even like. I’m taller than I was last year; I’m almost as tall as my parents. I know I’m smarter just because I’m able to think and write about what I’m going through now.

But, then there are some changes that aren’t so good. Like body odor (BO). The first time I noticed it, I thought I had some kind of disease or something. Now I realize it’s not too bad if I wash and use a deodorant or antiperspirant.

A really dirty trick, though, is acne. I remember I was getting ready to go to a party, washing up and stuff, when I looked in the mirror and saw this big zit staring back at me. I held a hot washcloth on it for a long time. It went down, though not the whole way. I went to the party anyway. I noticed that many other kids had the same or worse luck with their zits. I wonder how common this is?

There’s one thing I get a little embarrassed about. It’s even hard for me to say this. When I was at the party the other night, I was with someone I liked (and I’m not mentioning any names) and I felt kind of funny on the inside. It was strange but kind of nice. They tell me it’s normal. Is it?

They tell me I’m going through puberty. That means I have to go to school with my zits and my B.O. But I am taller and smarter...I think I’ll survive. Don’t you?

Do you think Alex is a boy or girl?

_____ Boy _____ Girl _____ Not Sure

State your reason for your answer:________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
**Parent Interview**

Directions: Use these five questions as a guide to interview a parent (or both parents)/guardian or other trusted adult about their experience with puberty. Feel free to add a question of your own. *Do not* write any answers on this paper. Have the person you interview sign at the bottom of the page to show that you have completed this assignment.

1. What do you (adult) remember most about puberty and growing up?

2. What did you (adult) enjoy doing when you were my age?

3. What did you (adult) like and dislike about growing up?

4. How did you get answers to your questions about puberty and about growing up?

5. What do you want me to know about growing up?

Parent or adult signature___________________________________________