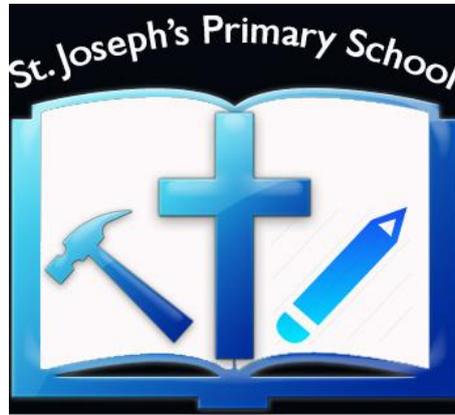


St. Joseph's Primary School, Meigh



Relationships & Sexuality Programme Policy (RSE)

Agreed by Governing Body	October 2019
Review Date	October 2021
Review Schedule	Biennial
Person(s) Responsible	Principal/Safeguarding Team
Signed (Chair of Governing Body)	

St. Joseph's Primary School, Meigh is committed to providing a happy, caring environment where all are valued and every child matters and where children are prepared for the challenges of education, work and life.

Vision;

'Let Your Light Shine'

Mission;

In our school we aim to create a safe and caring environment where everyone feels happy and valued. Through our Catholic ethos we encourage respect for self and others. We ensure each child is motivated and provided with the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Core Values and Aspirations for all;

L SHOW LOVE

E HAVE EMPATHY

T TELL THE TRUTH; BE HONEST

Y BE YOURSELF

O BE ORGANISED

U SHOW UNDERSTANDING & TOLERANCE

R RESPECT FOR SELF, OTHERS, ENVIRONMENT & PROPERTY

L HAVE A LAUGH

I BE INQUISITIVE

G SHOW GENEROSITY

H BE HUMBLE

T SHOW YOUR TALENTS

S SPEAK OUT – USE YOUR VOICE

H BE HAPPY

I HAVE AN 'I CAN' ATTITUDE

N NEVER GIVE UP

E ENJOY YOUR TIME AT SCHOOL

Relationships And Sexuality Education (Rse) Policy

‘...a lifelong process which encompasses the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills, and the development of attitudes, beliefs and values about personal and social relationships and gender issues.’

Rationale

St. Joseph’s Primary School is committed to the education of children regardless of race, religion, gender or status. All pupils have a right to an education which adequately prepares them for adult life, and RSE plays an integral part. In the Northern Ireland Primary School Curriculum, one of the areas of learning is Personal Development and Mutual Understanding (PDMU). An integral part of the PDMU curriculum is the provision of RSE. As a Catholic school, St. Joseph’s Primary School advocates the promotion of a ‘Personal Development’ approach to RSE whereby children in our care are given the skills to help them resist peer and media pressure, and make informed decisions based on their own internal self-respect and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to recognise their individual needs to respecting the needs and wants of others. RSE is a lifelong process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, understanding and skills and the development of attitudes, beliefs, morals and values.

Teaching RSE should provide opportunities which enable pupils to:

- form values and establish behaviour within a moral, spiritual and social framework;
- examine and explore the various relationships in their personal lives;
- learn how to develop and enjoy personal relationships and friendships which are based on responsibility and mutual respect;
- build the foundations for developing more personal relationships in later life;
- make positive, responsible choices about themselves and others and the way they live their lives.

Aims

The aims of RSE are to:

- enhance the personal development, self-esteem and well-being of the child;
- help the child develop healthy and respectful friendships and relationships;

- foster an understanding of, and a healthy attitude to, human sexuality and relationships in a moral, social and spiritual framework;
- promote responsible behaviour and the ability to make informed decisions;
- help the child come to value family life and marriage;
- appreciate the responsibilities of parenthood;
- promote an appreciation of the value of human life and the wonder of birth.

Learning Objectives

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of self;
- develop a positive sense of self-awareness, self-esteem and self-worth;
- develop an appreciation of the dignity, uniqueness and well-being of others;
- understand the nature, growth and development of relationships within families, in friendships and in wider contexts;
- develop an awareness of differing family patterns;
- develop strategies to make decisions, solve problems, and implement actions in various personal, social and health contexts;
- become aware of the variety of ways in which individuals grow and change and understand that their developing sexuality is an important aspect of self-identity;
- develop personal skills which will help to establish and sustain healthy personal relationships;
- develop some coping strategies to protect self and others from various forms of abuse;
- acquire and improve skills of communication and social interaction;
- acquire and use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss feelings, sexuality, growth and development.

Skills

The RSE curriculum should enable pupils to develop the skills necessary to form and maintain relationships and to make informed choices and decisions regarding health and

well-being. Pupils should also be helped to develop skills to critically evaluate the wide range of information, opinions, attitudes and values.

They need opportunities to develop:

- practical skills for everyday living; for supporting others; for future parenting;
- communication skills - learning to listen, listening to others points of view; putting one's own view forward clearly and appropriately; giving and receiving feedback; handling and resolving conflict peacefully; being assertive;
- decision-making and problem-solving skills for sensible choices made in the light of relevant information; making moral judgements about what to do in actual situations and putting these judgements into practice; acting responsibly and with initiative as an individual or as a member of a variety of groups;
- inter-personal skills for managing relationships confidently and effectively; for developing as an effective group member or leader.

Morals And Values

RSE should enable pupils to clarify what they believe and why they believe it and develop a respect for and interest in the beliefs of others. Pupils need opportunities to explore values and attitudes and to consider how they affect them, and others.

Children should be taught RSE within a framework which models and encourages the following values:

- a respect for self;
- a respect for others;
- non-exploitation in relationships;
- commitment, trust and bonding within relationships;
- mutuality in relationships;
- honesty with self and others;
- a development of critical self-awareness for themselves and others;
- an exploration of the rights, duties and responsibilities involved in relationships;

- compassion, forgiveness, mercy and care when people do not conform to their way of life;
- self-discipline.

The Catholic School Ethos

The ethos of our school is founded on principles of Catholic education. Catholic Education takes place in communities inspired by the Spirit of Christ. Christ's commandment to love God and neighbour inspires a caring ethos which is expressed in relationships within and beyond Catholic schools. Catholic Education is person-centred. It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of each person who is made in God's image and uniquely loved by God. Catholic Education is inclusive. It is respectful of, and engages with people of all beliefs; it encourages the religious development of all in their own faith. Catholic Education is rooted in the Gospel values of Respect for Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice; it aims to harmonise faith and culture, build a better society and pursue the Common Good. Together, Catholic Schools provide high quality, rounded education for all young people, so that they develop their full uniqueness and potential where tolerance and respect for others is paramount.

Catholic schools are communities inspired by the spirit and message of Christ. Christ's commandment to 'love one another as I have loved you' promotes an ethos which is:

Gospel-inspired: It gives living witness to the Gospel values of love, respect, truth and justice in every aspect of school life.

Person-centred: It promotes the dignity, self-esteem and full development of all, as persons made in the image and likeness of God.

Life-affirming: It promotes a positive culture of respect for life at all its stages, proclaiming the 'Good News' of life to the full and an eternal life of love to come.

Reflective and Worshipping: It encourages an open and inquiring approach to faith and learning, promoting opportunities for reflection, prayer, and celebration of the sacraments.

Welcoming and Inclusive: It welcomes and is respectful of people of all faith traditions, personal circumstances and community backgrounds, contributing actively to the work of peace, reconciliation and sharing.

It is our intention at St. Joseph's Primary school, Meigh that everyone feels valued and our pupils are encouraged to develop their full potential in a caring and supportive environment.

This policy reflects the ethos of our school.

Relationships Between Home, School And Community

The effectiveness of this policy and its implementation is dependent on a collaborative process involving teachers, parents/carers, governors and other educational and health professionals. Each of the partners has distinctive contributions to make.

Keeping parents/carers informed about the school's provision for health education is a vital element of RSE. Informal sessions may then be arranged so that interested parents/carers could consider issues such as the readiness of children for aspects of the RSE programme, the appropriateness of resources the content and methodologies proposed, and the handling of sensitive topics.

The delivery of RSE must prepare pupils to view relationships in a responsible and healthy manner and should be taught in harmony with the ethos of the school and reflect the moral and religious principles.

Department of Education Circulars providing advice on developing or reviewing their RSE policy is provided in:

- Circular 2001/15 Relationships and Sexuality Education;
- Circulars 2001/15a and 2001/15b);
- Circular 2013/16
- . Circular 2015/22 Relationships and Sexuality Education

These circulars are available on the Department's website: www.deni.gov.uk. Guidance and resources on RSE are also provided on the NI Curriculum website at www.nicurriculum.org.uk/.

Links To Other Policies

- Teaching and Learning
- Safeguarding and child Protection
- Pastoral Care
- Health Education
- Drugs
- Positive Behaviour

In primary schools, RSE builds, in a developmentally appropriate way, on children's existing knowledge and experience of their bodies, relationships and the world around them. RSE and Health Education are complementary since both emphasise the development of a positive self-image, and a respect for self and for others, as well as the provision of appropriate and accurate information.

An RSE programme for primary schools should provide structured opportunities for pupils to learn about:

- themselves as unique human beings;
- their spiritual, social, emotional and physical growth;
- their friendships and relationships with others; and
- the various changes that occur as they progress towards adolescence and adulthood, particularly the emotional and physical changes which occur at puberty.

Meeting The Needs Of Pupils

To ensure that the learning experiences are effective, positive and relevant to all pupils, the RSE programme should be developmental, accessible and be appropriate to the age and maturity of the pupils. It should meet the needs of both genders and be a positive experience for all participants.

Roles And Responsibilities

- The Board of Governors examines and ratifies the school's RSE Policy.
- The Safeguarding Team co-ordinates the school's approach to RSE and consults with the Board of Governors, staff, pupils, parents/carers, and health professionals.
- The staff provide a link and have a complementary role with parents/carers and deliver the school's RSE programme within the context of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

Content / Detail

RSE will be delivered in a holistic, cross curricular way, ensuring that teaching is at all times appropriate to the maturity and understanding of the pupils. Teachers will be ever alert to the personal and emotional circumstances of the pupils. RSE will include the physical and emotional changes that occur at puberty but will not include sex education.

Pupils should also have the opportunity to provide feedback about the content of the programme of RSE delivered by the school so that it can be responsive to their needs.

CURRICULUM ORGANISATION And DELIVERY

The following outline teaching programme illustrates the topics covered through the delivery of the Northern Ireland Curriculum in St. Joseph's Primary School. Many of the aspects included below are also part of the Health Education curriculum, PDMU, RE, the World Around Us, PE, Drama or in reaction to specific situations. All teachers will deliver the RSE programme.

Topics and themes are often repeated at regular intervals. The sequence in which ideas are presented below is not intended to imply a teaching order.

Foundation Stage And Key Stage 1

Myself

- Myself: how I grow, feed, move and use my senses; caring for myself, for example, hygiene, sleep, exercise.
- Naming parts of the body (basic) - developing an agreed language for our bodies.
- Being myself - I am unique, my self-esteem, self-confidence, independence, respect and caring for myself.
- Similarities and differences between myself and others, for example, uniqueness, fingerprints, different rates of growth.
- An introduction to the stages of human development - changes as we grow, for example, baby, child, teenager, adult, mother/father, grandparents.
- Recognising moods, feelings and concerns and developing a language and an appropriate manner of expressing them, for example, what do I do if I feel sad or angry?
- Personal likes and dislikes.

My Relationships

- My family, special people in my life - what they do for me and what I do for them.

- Friendships, getting on with each other, for example, communicating, playing together, listening, co-operating and sharing.
- Ageing- how do we know that things are alive, dead, young and old.
- Loss and mourning - death of a person or a pet. (Note: the situations of the pupils should be taken into account prior to introducing this topic.)
- Respect and caring for family members and friends, for example, caring for a new baby.
- Bullies and what to do about them.
- Personal safety - simple skills and practices to maintain personal safety.
- The difference between good and bad touches.
- Realise that adults and older children are not always friends; the potential danger of relationships with strangers or acquaintances.
- Strategies which pupils might use to protect themselves from potentially dangerous situations.

My Community/Environment

- Awareness of different types of families and the roles of individuals within families.
- Keeping safe, for example, dangerous places, dangerous situations, the adults who will help, how to get help from others.
- Rules at home, at school and in the community.
- Respect and caring for people in the community, e.g. elderly people.

KEY STAGE 2

Myself

- My body, how it works and how to keep it healthy.
- The physical, social and emotional changes that occur during puberty (girls and boys).
- Myself and my peers - different rates of growth and physical development, maturity.
- Valuing and respecting myself, identifying personal strengths and weaknesses.

- Feelings, for example, things that make me happy, sad, excited, embarrassed, angry, scared; expressing our feelings, showing love and affection.
- Gender roles.
- Making choices - the influences on me and the consequences of actions for oneself and others.
- Distinguishing between right and wrong.
- Secrets - knowing the difference between good and bad secrets, what to do about bad secrets.

My Relationships

- Identifying the positive traits of friendship and their corresponding values.
- Differences and similarities in people; the need to respect other people's views, emotions and feelings.
- Families and how they behave - what family members expect of each other.
- The meaning of friendship and loyalty; making and maintaining friendships and social relationships, for example, identifying and understanding pressures and influences, taking account of other people's point of view.
- Handling difficult situations, for example, teasing, bullying, death of a family member.
- The meaning of relationships within families, between friends and in the community.
- Behaviour - what constitutes appropriate and non-appropriate physical contact.
- Identifying dangers and risks within relationships.
- Being assertive in defending individual rights and beliefs.
- People who can help pupils when they have anxieties, concerns or questions.

My Community/Environment

- Appreciation of the family in relation to the school and the wider community.
- Cultural differences in families and family relationships.
- Helping agencies which can support families and individuals in different

circumstances.

- Messages and images about health, gender roles and sexuality from the media, family and peers.

Selection Of Teaching Resources

The selection of teaching resources should be:

- consistent with the school's RSE policy and the aims and objectives of the RSE programme;
- consistent with the school's morals and values framework;
- appropriate to pupils' age, level of understanding and maturity;
- factually correct and respectful of its audience;
- likely to appeal to pupils in terms of appropriate language level, images, attitudes and values, maturity, contexts and situations, and the knowledge required;
- complementary to the existing programmes which the school offers;
- encouraging consideration of a range of issues, attitudes and beliefs pertinent to the topics covered;

In St. Joseph's Primary School, we believe it is essential that teachers create a classroom environment which is supportive, where self-esteem is fostered and where the pupils feel valued and affirmed. The climate of the classroom needs to promote mutual respect and the dignity of each individual. It is important to create an atmosphere in the classroom. which allows all pupils to feel comfortable to express opinions and feelings in a secure and safe manner and to explore issues which may be sensitive and personal. Every effort should be made to ensure that the whole group is at ease, with pupils showing respect for each other and realising their responsibilities to each other.

Ground rules should be agreed to help to minimise embarrassment and encourage the respect of each other's opinion. Realistic scenarios, case studies, role-play, drama, videos and stories can be used to enable pupils to discuss issues without personal disclosure.

Important considerations are the:

- degree of trust, respect and positive regard for pupils;
- relationships between the teacher and pupils, and between the pupils themselves;
- need for clear expectations, goals and learning objectives;
- use of teaching and learning methods which involve pupils actively in their own

learning and encourage the consideration of attitudes and values and the ability to make informed and healthy decisions; and

- need to be aware and take account of the current youth culture.

Confidentiality and Child Protection/Safeguarding Children

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Where there is disclosure by a child of abuse, Child Protection/Safeguarding Children procedures will be implemented.

The classroom is an open environment and confidentiality cannot be maintained. Therefore, staff and pupils are not encouraged to talk about their personal relationships or experiences during class discussions.

The child's right to privacy must be respected at all times by both the teacher and all other pupils in the class. A key rule to agree in advance of any discussion is that no one will be expected to ask or answer any personal questions. It is equally important that the teacher shares this right and never feels obliged to impart information about his/her own personal life. However:

- teachers cannot promise confidentiality. A child does not have the right to expect that incidents in the classroom or in the wider context of the school will not be reported, as appropriate, to his or her parents/carers and/or the principal. (Refer to our Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy).
- the Principal or Designated Teacher for Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy must be informed of any disclosures which might suggest that a pupil is at risk or that physical or sexual abuse is suspected. If a child confides in a member of staff and requests that the information is kept secret, the child must be told, sensitively, that the matter must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Decisions can then be taken in accordance with the procedures detailed in the school's Child Protection/Safeguarding Children Policy.
- teachers can provide general educational advice to all pupils as part of the curriculum. This general advice can be given to pupils individually or within group situations. It is important that the type of advice and the manner in which it is given is supportive of the role of the parents/carers;

- there will be occasions when teachers will have to exercise their discretion and judgement about how to deal with particular issues raised by an individual or by a group of pupils. An initial judgement will need to be made about whether or not it is appropriate to deal with the issues with the whole class. The teacher may wish to discuss the issues with the parents/carers to see how they would like the matter to be handled. Teacher colleagues or a member of the school's Leadership Team/Safeguarding Team might also provide useful guidance. It may be appropriate to respond to the issues with individual pupils or to arrange time for group discussion outside class time. In all cases, teachers should encourage pupils to discuss any issues and concerns they might have with their parents/carers;
- teachers are not medical professionals and will not give detailed personal medical advice to any pupil. Only doctors and health professionals should give medical advice to pupils;
- Teachers encourage young people, where possible, to discuss their concerns with parents/carers.

Withdrawal From RSE

Since RSE is a statutory requirement, it should be inclusive. As a school we actively promote the implementation of RSE and strongly discourage withdrawal. The school will, however, take account of parent/carer concerns.

Sacredness Of Life

The value of human life and the uniqueness of each individual will be at the heart of RSE teaching.

Specific Issues

There will be no direct teaching of issues such as homosexuality, AIDS, contraception etc. However, if these issues are raised by pupils, the teachers will address them sensitively.

Puberty Talks (Year 7 pupils)

Parents will be consulted re content and delivery of any Puberty related lessons and will have the opportunity to withdraw their children from any lessons they so require.

Terms listed in Glossary section may be used as part of lessons. The 'Wonder of my Being Lessons' also attached to the end of this policy may be followed as a guide to delivery of lessons.

Use of Visitors

Where appropriate, we may use the skills and expertise of outside agencies and professionals. Where this occurs, the school will be satisfied that contributions from informed outsiders are an integral part of the whole programme and in harmony with the aims and ethos of the school.

Staff Training

Training needs will be considered and will be accessed using the Education Authority, Public Health Agency and/or other appropriate health agencies. Where outside Agencies are used for training purposes, their remit will be clear and will reflect the ethos of the school.

Pubertal Changes

Glossary of Terms (words with simple explanations)

Puberty

The changes that take place between childhood and adulthood.

Body Odour

Hormones cause more sweat to be produced by the body. If we do not wash regularly, this can give off a bad smell.

Hygiene

Taking care of your body - washing, grooming, using deodorant etc.

Growth Spurts

The fast growth take takes place in your body during teenage years.

Egg

This is what unites with the sperm to make a baby. This egg is released in a woman's body every month.

Ovary

A woman has two of these inside her body. This is where the eggs are stored.

Uterus / Womb

Special part of mum where the new baby grows.

Vagina

Opening through which the period comes out and in the future babies are born.

Periods

Little bit of blood loss that a woman has every month. This happens so that one day she will be able to have a baby and become a mum.

Conception / Fertilisation

When the egg from the mum and the sperm from dad meet. That is the beginning of a baby.

Intercourse

This is the special relationship between mum and dad where sperm from the penis enter the vagina.

Testicles

A boy has two of these that lie outside the body. They produce sperm.

Scrotum

This is the soft sac that contains the testicles and hangs behind the penis.

Penis

Where urine and sperm leave a man's body.

Sperm

Created or produced in the testicles; is part of the life-giving gift of God that is vital in the creation of life.

**THE WONDER OF
MY BEING**

**RELATIONSHIPS
AND
SEXUALITY EDUCATION**

PUBERTY TALK FOR BOYS

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INTRODUCTION

- Parents should be informed that the lesson will take place and encouraged to support children and teachers.
- Sufficient time should be given to the lesson. It should be delivered in an unhurried way. A morning or afternoon might be required to allow time both for the lesson and for reflection, questions and discussion.
- It would be good to plan a follow up prayer time or assembly involving both the boys and girls in the days following the lesson.
- The lesson should be linked with *The Wonder of my Being* resources and also *I'm Special You're Special (Inside Out)* and PD&MU *Living, Learning Together* year six unit three.

The lesson will help children to understand the changes that take place in the human body during adolescence. It will be presented in a way appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the children. They will be taught the appropriate vocabulary for discussing aspects of life related to growing up and changing. It will help them to approach adolescence with confidence and will provide them with an avenue to communicate about themselves. All of this will help to develop self-knowledge and self-esteem.

SETTING

- Classroom or assembly hall.
- It is important to have a sacred space. If possible the children could sit in a circle with the sacred space in the centre. The sacred space should have a religious object suitable for using in a discussion about creativity. Artwork or other examples of the children's creativity should be incorporated into the sacred space and also a candle.
- Soft background music for prayer time.

RULES AND BOUNDARIES

- At the outset guidelines should be established as to "What is in" and "What is out". Boundaries for questions and discussions should be established.
- Only correct terminology should be used.
- A question box might be used.
- Some more sensitive issues will be referred to parents/guardians.
- Teachers cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.

PRAYER

The lesson should begin with a prayer. We suggest that part of Psalm 139 be incorporated into the prayer time but teachers should feel free to choose their own prayer.

PRAY SLOWLY (FROM PSALM 139)

*It was you who created my inmost self,
and put me together in my mother's womb;
for all these mysteries I thank you,
for the wonder of myself,
for the wonder of your works.*

**ALLOW TIME FOR QUIET REFLECTION ON THE WORDS OF THE PSALM ...
QUIET MUSIC COULD BE PLAYED**

Lord, thank you for the wonder of my being,
for creating me as I am with all my strengths, talents and abilities.
As we discover more about ourselves today,
guide us and give us real self-respect.
Because you have created us
may we bring that respect to others too.
AMEN

Invite the children to look at the religious object in the sacred space. Remind them that it was created by someone to give us a message. It is a symbol filled with meaning. The person who created it poured a lot of his/her talents into it and has shared it with others. Invite the children to share their thoughts about what the artist/sculptor/potter might have had in mind as they worked on the object. Link with any creative work the children themselves have done. Pottery in the first term perhaps, when they were learning about the Prophets. *"Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand"*.

Think of people who are creative (artists, dancers, actors, writers etc). Some of these people are famous. Others we meet every day. All of them have different talents and all are special in the eyes of God.

Remind the children that we all have the gift of being creative. It is a gift from God. Just like the person who created the religious object, we have the chance to reveal all sorts of wonderful things – to share them with others. Ask them to think about how they share their creativity? How do they use and look after this precious God given gift?

God gave us spiritual gifts also ... link with Confirmation.

Invite the children to thank God for their talents and abilities, for their individuality and for everything that makes them special. Ask them to pray that they may always use their talents well and creatively.

CREATION

Lead in to a talk about another precious gift. It is something which is unique and special for each person. It needs to be looked after. It is our human body.

- You all know that God created the world and everything in it ... seas, land, animals, birds. Invite the children to give examples. The most important part of this creation is people; you and me.
- When you look at nature, you can see how every living thing grows and changes ... a seed/bulb goes through many changes to become a flower; a tadpole goes through many changes to become a frog. Invite the children to give examples.

- You will have already talked about the changes that happen when a baby is growing in its mother's womb. Then once the baby is born, it continues to grow and change: think of how you have changed since you were a toddler or Primary 1 child (get examples).
- Growth and change in your body is caused by hormones which are like messages from your brain. Most of the time we don't even notice that these changes are happening as they are all coming about very gradually. Now that you are 10-11 years old, you are adolescents and the changes that are happening are called puberty. Some of you may have already noticed some of these changes that are happening in your body. They will happen to everyone and it means that you are beginning to develop into a man. One thing that all adults have in common is that they have ALL come through adolescence and puberty. Growing up can be fun but it can also be puzzling. The thing to remember is that you will all make your way through it at your own unique pace, the pace that's right for you. It doesn't matter if someone is developing slower or faster than you. Puberty is just like other developments that you have already gone through. Some of your friends might have gone through them before you. Others might have gone through them after you. The important thing to remember is that you must have respect for everyone, whatever is happening to them. You are all unique. Enjoy being the person you are with all the changes that you are going through. Enjoy being with your friends with all the changes that they are going through too. Respect your friends no matter what they are going through.

Because of the hormones present in your body at puberty, these are some of the main things that will happen to you.

GROWTH SPURT

- Some people can grow as much as four inches in a year.

CHANGES IN YOUR BODY SHAPE

- Your shoulders will become broader. Your body will become more muscular and strong. Your penis will grow too.

MOOD CHANGES

- You may notice that your mood changes very quickly. This is due to the special hormone that is travelling around your body. One minute you feel happy and the next you feel a bit down. It just means that your feelings are becoming more mature. These changes are exciting but sometimes they leave you feeling confused.

HAIR GROWTH

- Hair will begin to grow in different places on your body (under your arms, on your legs, in your private parts).

SKIN CHANGES

- Your skin will become more oily and this means that you or some of your friends might begin to get spots on your faces. It is very important that you cleanse thoroughly. Your body will also perspire more, so again you must be aware of your hygiene, and shower or bath very regularly. At this time, you should also begin to use a deodorant.

MALE PUBERTAL CHANGES

- Every part of our body is special and sacred in God's eyes. The proper and respectful name for the part of the male human body which is essential for going to the bathroom is penis. There is a sack underneath called the scrotum which holds and protects the testicles.
- Sperm is created in the testicles. The scrotum gets tighter if it is very cold and gets loose when quite warm.
- There is also hair growth around the penis and scrotum, and this is called pubic hair.
- All these changes are totally natural, and remember, nothing is shameful about our bodies; it's what we do with them that can be shameful. We use them responsibly at the right time and in the right way.

FEMALE PUBERTAL CHANGES

- Just as boys change, girls do too. While boys have the gift of being creative with responsibility, so do girls. We have already talked about the parts of our bodies that are preparing for the time when we are older and when we might become a father. It is the same with the girls. Their bodies are also getting ready for the time when they might become a mother. The special parts of their bodies that are used to create a baby are:

womb (the baby grows inside this)

ovaries (the ova or eggs are stored here)

- When you are older and are ready to become a father, your sperm will join with one of your wife's eggs to create a baby. If you have any more questions about this, you should talk to an adult at home.

PUBERTY TALK FOR GIRLS

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- It would be good to plan a follow up prayer time or assembly involving both the boys and girls in the days following the lesson.
- The lesson should be linked with *The Wonder of my Being* resources and also *I'm Special You're Special (Inside Out)* and PD&MU *Living, Learning Together* year six unit three.

The lesson will help children to understand the changes that take place in the human body during adolescence. It will be presented in a way appropriate to the age and developmental stage of the children. They will be taught the appropriate vocabulary for discussing aspects of life related to growing up and changing. It will help them to approach adolescence with confidence and will provide them with an avenue to communicate about themselves. All of this will help to develop self-knowledge and self-esteem.

SETTING

- Classroom or assembly hall.
- It is important to have a sacred space. If possible the children could sit in a circle with the sacred space in the centre. The sacred space should have a religious object suitable for using in a discussion about creativity. Artwork or other examples of the children's creativity should be incorporated into the sacred space and also a candle.
- Soft background music for prayer time.

RULES AND BOUNDARIES

- At the outset guidelines should be established as to "What is in" and "What is out". Boundaries for questions and discussions should be established.
- Only correct terminology should be used.
- A question box might be used.
- Some more sensitive issues will be referred to parents/guardians.
- Teachers cannot guarantee 100% confidentiality.

PRAYER

The lesson should begin with a prayer. We suggest that part of Psalm 139 be incorporated into the prayer time but teachers should feel free to choose their own prayer.

PRAY SLOWLY (FROM PSALM 139)

*It was you who created my inmost self,
and put me together in my mother's womb;
for all these mysteries I thank you,
for the wonder of myself,
for the wonder of your works.*

**ALLOW TIME FOR QUIET REFLECTION ON THE WORDS OF THE PSALM ...
QUIET MUSIC COULD BE PLAYED**

Lord, thank you for the wonder of my being,
for creating me as I am with all my strengths, talents and abilities.
As we discover more about ourselves today,
guide us and give us real self-respect.
Because you have created us
may we bring that respect to others too.
AMEN

Invite the children to look at the religious object in the sacred space. Remind them that it was created by someone to give us a message. It is a symbol filled with meaning. The person who created it poured a lot of his/her talents into it and has shared it with others. Invite the children to share their thoughts about what the artist/sculptor/potter might have had in mind as they worked on the object. Link with any creative work the children themselves have done. Pottery in the first term perhaps, when they were learning about the Prophets. *"Just like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand"*.

Think of people who are creative (artists, dancers, actors, writers etc). Some of these people are famous. Others we meet every day. All of them have different talents and all are special in the eyes of God.

Remind the children that we all have the gift of being creative. It is a gift from God. Just like the person who created the religious object, we have the chance to reveal all sorts of wonderful things – to share them with others. Ask them to think about how they share their creativity? How do they use and look after this precious God given gift?

God gave us spiritual gifts also ... link with Confirmation.

Invite the children to thank God for their talents and abilities, for their individuality and for everything that makes them special. Ask them to pray that they may always use their talents well and creatively.

CREATION

Lead in to a talk about another precious gift. It is something which is unique and special for each person. It needs to be looked after. It is our human body.

- You all know that God created the world and everything in it ... seas, land, animals, birds. Invite the children to give examples. The most important part of this creation is people; you and me.
- When you look at nature, you can see how every living thing grows and changes ... a seed/bulb goes through many changes to become a flower; a tadpole goes through many changes to become a frog. Invite the children to give examples.
- You will have already talked about the changes that happen when a baby is growing in its mother's womb. Then once the baby is born, it continues to grow and change: think of how you have changed since you were a toddler or Primary 1 child (get examples).

- Growth and change in your body is caused by hormones which are like messages from your brain. Most of the time we don't even notice that these changes are happening as they are all coming about very gradually. Now that you are 10-11 years old, you are adolescents and the changes that are happening are called puberty. Some of you may have already noticed some of these changes that are happening in your body. They will happen to everyone and it means that you are beginning to develop into a woman. One thing that all adults have in common is that they have ALL come through adolescence and puberty. Growing up can be fun but it can also be puzzling. The thing to remember is that you will all make your way through it at your own unique pace, the pace that's right for you. It doesn't matter if someone is developing slower or faster than you. Puberty is just like other developments that you have already gone through. Some of your friends might have gone through them before you. Others might have gone through them after you. The important thing to remember is that you must have respect for everyone, whatever is happening to them. You are all unique. Enjoy being the person you are with all the changes that you are going through. Enjoy being with your friends with all the changes that they are going through too. Respect your friends no matter what they are going through.

Because of the hormones present in your body at puberty, these are some of the main things that will happen to you.

GROWTH SPURT

- Some people can grow as much as four inches in a year.

CHANGES IN YOUR BODY SHAPE

- Your hips will get wider and you will begin to get a curvy figure. This is because you may become a mother when you grow up and your hips have to be wider to hold your womb and carry the baby growing inside you.

BREASTS DEVELOP

- Again nature is preparing you for the time when you might become a mother and feed the baby from your breasts.

MOOD CHANGES

- You may notice that your mood changes very quickly. This is due to the special hormone that is travelling around your body. One minute you feel happy and the next you feel a bit down. It just means that your feelings are becoming more mature. These changes are exciting but sometimes they leave you feeling confused.

HAIR GROWTH

- Hair will begin to grow in different places on your body (under your arms, on your legs, in your private parts).

SKIN CHANGES

- Your skin will become more oily and this means that you or some of your friends might begin to get spots on your faces. It is very important that you cleanse thoroughly. Your body will also perspire more, so again you must be aware of your hygiene, and shower or bath very regularly. At this time you should also begin to use a deodorant.

MENSTRUATION

- While all this is happening, there are also changes going on inside your body which will mean that you will soon menstruate or “get your period”. The reason this will happen is again to prepare you for the time when you might become a mother. Inside your body you have two ovaries which store eggs. Every month an egg will be released from one of these ovaries and travel down a little tube towards your womb. Your womb will prepare a special lining in case there is a baby. When there is no baby, the lining will dissolve, mix with a little blood and leave your body through your vagina. (This is a little passageway just behind where your urine comes out). The little blood that is flushed out is called a period. Girls can begin to take their period at any time between about 9-18 years. Your period will last for about 5-7 days and it will come every month. During the first few years it might be a bit irregular and won't come every month, but this is quite normal. You will need to wear a special little pad, called a sanitary towel while you have your period.

MALE PUBERTAL CHANGES

- Just as girls change, boys do too. While girls have the gift of being creative with responsibility, so do boys. We have already talked about the parts of our bodies that are preparing for the time when we are older and when we might become a mother. It is the same with boys. Their bodies are also getting ready for the time when they might become a father. The special parts of their bodies that are used to create a baby are:

penis

testicles

scrotum (this is like a bag which holds the testicles and keeps them safe)

sperm (this is created in the testicles)

- When you are older and are ready to become a mother, one of your eggs will join with your husband's sperm to create a baby. If you have any more questions about this you should talk to an adult at home.