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NOTICE TO PARENT OR GUARDIAN
OF RELIGIOUS PERMEATION

The *Alberta Human Rights Act* requires a school board to give notice to a parent or guardian when courses of study, educational programs, institutional materials, instruction or exercises include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion.

All of the schools in this district are Catholic Separate Schools, the essential purpose of which is to fully permeate Catholic theology, philosophy, practices and beliefs, the principles of the Gospel and teachings of the Catholic Church, in all aspects of school life, including in the curriculum of every subject taught, both in and outside of formal religion classes, celebrations and exercises.

Every course of study and educational program, all institutional materials, instruction and exercises will at all times include subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with religion.

**Role of the Family, Parish, and Community**

Parents, as primary educators of their children, have both the right and the duty to nurture, guide, and prepare their children for the obligations of living and learning outside the home. The Religious Education program in the school supports parents in their efforts by modeling and teaching the truths of the Catholic faith. If this education is to be successful, parents must cooperate actively with the school, be kept informed of the Religious Education program, and support the Religious Education efforts of the school by making use of the structures offered for parental involvement in the school. Good parent-teacher relations contribute to a well-rounded experience for the child.

Ultimately, Religious Education takes place within a community living out its faith in a space and time not limited to the school. Religious Education is the work of a lifetime, aimed at enriching the faith life of students at each stage of their development, and leading them to an eventual adult understanding to which they are able to respond fully.
Religious Education Program Philosophy

As Catholic Educators, we have a philosophy. It emerges from our faith and it is expressed in our concept of and relationship with God, human beings, our environment, and society. Our philosophy is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ.

As religious educators, we represent the Church. Thus, our teaching cannot be limited to our own thoughts and opinions. We speak for the Church community, its history, and its divine authority to teach.

“The activity of a Catholic school is, above all else, an activity that shares in the evangelizing mission of the Church; it is a part of the particular local Church of the country in which it is situated, and shares in the life and work of the local Christian community.”

The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School
The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education
Rome, 1988

Regarding the teaching of human sexuality:
“The role of parents is so vital in the basic education of children that no other agency can adequately replace it. The Church and school can only assist and support parents in fulfilling their responsibility for developing moral attitudes and Christian values.”

Guidelines for Family Life Education
Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1987
The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality
Catholic Principles

1. Parents are the primary educators in the area of human sexuality.

2. Pope John Paul II states, “The family is the primary but not the only exclusive educating community.” He emphasizes the importance of parents and educational groups to strive for the “formation of a perfect educating community.”

3. Each person is created unique in the image and likeness of God.

4. All life is valuable and worthy of respect from the time of conception and in every age and condition.

5. The role of Catholic Education is to present “Human Sexuality as a sacred mystery and in accord with the doctrinal and moral teaching of the church.”

6. Sexuality, including the genital experience, is to be valued.

7. Sexual intercourse has a two-fold purpose: unitive and procreative.

8. “Only information proportionate to each phase of their individual development should be presented to children and young people.” As educators, we must make good judgment calls. “The principle of decency” must safeguard the virtue of chastity. “Therefore in passing on sexual information in the context of education for love, the instruction must always be ‘positive and prudent’ and ‘clear and delicate’.

Alberta Education Guidelines
(Directive 4.1.2)

- Every school operated by a board shall provide human sexuality education to students in Grades 4 through 9, and in at least one senior high course required of all students.
- Human sexuality education shall be taught within the normal school day.
- Human sexuality education may be offered through different instructional structures. The goals and objectives outlined in the health curriculum are prescribed, but may be offered through family life or religion classes.
- Parents shall be advised prior to the start of human sexuality instruction of their right to exempt their child from this course component.
- Parent information nights to meet the teachers and ongoing chances for parents to review learning resources and teaching concepts are strongly recommended.
- Schools will provide alternate learning experiences for those students who have been exempted from human sexuality instruction by their parents.
Teaching Human Sexuality
in the Calgary Catholic School District

Guidelines for Teachers

1. Parents are their children’s primary educators.

2. All teachers new to teaching human sexuality in the Calgary Catholic School District must take the “Teaching Human Sexuality” in-service prior to teaching this component of the Family Life Program.

3. Human sexuality is taught in the spring in grades 4 – 9 when rapport has been developed between teachers and students.

4. A letter must be sent home to parents in September, informing them that human sexuality will be taught in their child’s classroom later that year, and listing the topics that will be addressed. A second letter must be sent home one month prior to instruction, listing the topics and dates of instruction. Parents have the right to exempt their children from human sexuality instruction. Schools will provide alternative learning experiences for those students who have been exempted.

5. All resources must be approved by the District. Always check the reference for appropriate Catholic content and that information given is compatible with Church teachings.

6. Check the Approved Organizations & Agencies book in your school library before booking guest speakers.

7. Preview videos. All videos at I.M.C. have been approved. If you are using videos from other sources, they must be approved.

8. Students in combined grades must be taught human sexuality according to their grade level curriculum only.

9. The School Nurse is available as a resource for teachers. The School Nurse does not teach curriculum and cannot be asked to teach students human sexuality.

10. Stay within the curriculum guidelines. If the resources go beyond the curriculum for your grade level use only the applicable material.

11. For further information, support, resources, and other help, please contact the Religious Education & Family Life Consultant.
Creating the Climate

Discussing topics on sexuality with young people can be very challenging. It is important to create the climate in which sexuality issues are to be discussed. The following will provide you with a few suggestions.

- In preparing to teach each lesson, read and reflect on the scripture texts and church teaching included in the Theological Background of the section for the teacher. A key passage is in bold type.
- Begin each lesson with a prayer and a discussion of a scripture passage as indicated in the lesson plan. This helps to set the context of our faith tradition. To give the Scripture text the dignity it deserves, read the Scripture from the Bible in your prayer space.
- Be sensitive to the varying degrees of student comfort level. Silly questions may arise, which may reflect student anxiety with the topic at hand.
- Set ground rules for discussion. Such rules may include: Be a good listener, no put downs, laugh with each other, but not at each other, respect one another, use appropriate language. “No names” (to protect the anonymity of people, “I know someone who…”). “Right to pass” (no one should feel pressured to respond to a question).
- Use a Question Box (see p.5).
- Keep the tone of the lesson light.
- In combined grade classrooms, human sexuality instruction must be grade-specific. Arrangements must be made to separate students according to grade for these lessons.
- Due to the sensitivity of certain lessons, teachers may arrange for the boys and girls to receive separate instruction.
- Keep parents informed. There are two letters for this purpose – one to be sent home in September and the other to be sent home one month prior to beginning instruction (see p.6 & 7).
- Develop an instructional plan for students whose parents request they not participate in human sexuality lessons.
Question Box

The topic of sexuality can be challenging to teach. Many young people are very interested in the topic of sexuality, but are not always comfortable asking questions. To facilitate student questions, it is recommended that teachers use the “Question Box”. The “Question Box” encourages students to ask questions while maintaining confidentiality.

Directions:
Make a box with the label “Question Box”. At the end of the class, or every second or third class, pass around slips of paper to all the students. Ask all students to write down a question or comment that they may have on the lesson of the day. The teacher then collects all the slips of paper into the question box. This process ensures anonymity. It is strongly recommended that the teacher sort through the questions. Be prepared to discard inappropriate questions and comments. Review the questions asked by the students and prepare suitable responses for the next lesson.

Heads Up!
- Remember, teacher responses must always reflect our Catholic tradition.
- Answer questions that reflect the context of the curriculum outcomes. It is important that teachers focus on age appropriate material, which is District Approved, and use correct terminology.
- If some students need questions answered that go beyond the curriculum outcomes, do not hesitate to refer these questions to the parents, who are the primary educators.
- If you are uncertain as to how to answer a question, let the students know. Research the question and then provide correct information to the student.
Sample Parent Letter
(To be sent home in September on School Letterhead
with all students in Grades 4 - 9)

(Date)

Dear Parent(s):

Parents are the primary and most important educators of their children, especially in matters related to faith and morals. Our role as Catholic educators is to support you in teaching your children in these matters. This letter is to keep you informed regarding human sexuality instruction in your child’s classroom.

The human sexuality curriculum was developed by a working committee established by the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, and is being taught across Alberta in Catholic schools in Grades 4 through 9. At the request of our parents, this curriculum is taught in the Religious Education program. This provides the opportunity for teaching the principles of family life education in the context of our faith tradition.

Human sexuality instruction in your child’s class will include addressing the following topics:

(Teachers: enter the appropriate grade level outcomes from the curriculum.)

We will be teaching these lessons (Teachers: insert approximate dates – i.e. “mid-May” or “after Easter”).

The Calgary Catholic School District has developed a Family Life Parent Handbook to support parents in teaching their children about human sexuality. It includes some information about Church teachings regarding this topic, more information about the curriculum, some tips for parents, and additional resources. If you would like a copy of this resource, please visit the District website at www.cssd.ab.ca/programs/coresubjects/religioused or call me.

Pursuant to section 11.1(2) of the Human Rights Act, you as a parent/guardian may request that your child be excluded from the above-identified instruction, without academic penalty, by having your child either:

a) leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction; or

b) remain in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place without taking part in the instruction or use of instructional material.

In order to exercise this option, you must sign and return the attached exemption form to ________________________________ [teacher’s name] on or before the date of the instruction indicated above. If this form is not returned before that date, your child will be included in the instruction.
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this instruction, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

(Teacher name and signature)
TO: Principal/Teacher of __________________________ [identify school], of __________________________ [identify school board].

In response to the notice provided to me by my child’s school ___________________ [name of School] of __________________________ [name of school board] dated __________________________ [date of notice]

indicating that a course or program of studies in which my child is enrolled, or an instructional material or exercise used in a course or program of studies in which my child is enrolled, includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with __________________________ [specify human sexuality or sexual orientation], I, __________________________ [name of parent/legal guardian], in accordance with section 11.1(2) of the Human Rights Act, hereby request that my child, __________________________ [name of child] be excluded from the instruction, exercise or the use of instructional material identified in the notice.

I request that my child: (check relevant box)

☐ A) Leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction.

OR

☐ B) Remain in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place without taking part in the instruction or use of instructional material.

I confirm that I am the legal guardian of __________________________ [name of child] and have chosen to exercise my option to have my child excluded from the instruction described in the notice from __________________________ School [name of school] on the dates indicated in the notice. I also confirm that it is my obligation to ensure that this form is returned to the school principal/teacher on or before the date of the instruction indicated in the notice.

The child to whom this exemption notice applies is: __________________________ [name of child] Grade: __________

__________________________________  ________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian                  Date

__________________________________  ________________________
Independent Student                   Date
One Month Prior to Human Sexuality Instruction:

Sample Parent Letter
(Printed on School Letterhead)

(Date)

Dear Parent(s):

Parents are the primary and most important educators of their children, especially in matters related to faith and morals. Our role as Catholic educators is to support you in teaching your children in these matters. This letter is to keep you informed regarding human sexuality instruction in your child’s classroom.

The human sexuality curriculum was developed by a working committee established by the Catholic Bishops of Alberta, and is being taught across Alberta in Catholic schools in Grades 4 through 9. At the request of our parents, this curriculum is taught in the Religious Education program. This provides the opportunity of teaching the principles of family life education in the context of our faith tradition.

Human sexuality instruction in your child’s class will include addressing the following topics:

(Teachers: enter the appropriate grade level outcomes from the curriculum.)

The instruction in human sexuality will occur in your child’s class on the following dates:

_________________________________________________________

The Calgary Catholic School District has developed a Family Life Parent Handbook to support parents in teaching their children about human sexuality. It includes some information about Church teachings regarding this topic, more information about the curriculum, some tips for parents, and additional resources. If you would like a copy of this resource, please contact me or visit the District website at www.cssd.ab.ca/programs/coresubjects/religioused

Pursuant to section 11.1(2) of the Human Rights Act, you as a parent/guardian may request that your child be excluded from the above-identified instruction, without academic penalty, by having your child either:

a) leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction; or

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In order to exercise this option, you must sign and return the attached exemption form to _______________________________ [teacher’s name] on or before the date of the instruction indicated above. If this form is not returned before that date, your child will be included in the instruction.
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this instruction, feel free to contact me. Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

(Teacher signature)
STUDENT EXEMPTION UNDER SECTION 11.1 OF THE ALBERTA HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

TO: Principal/Teacher of ________________________________ [identify school], of ________________________________ [identify school board].

In response to the notice provided to me by my child’s school ____________________ [name of school] of ________________________________ [name of school board] dated ___________________ [date of notice]

indicating that a course or program of studies in which my child is enrolled, or an instructional material or exercise used in a course or program of studies in which my child is enrolled, includes subject matter that deals primarily and explicitly with ___________________________ [specify human sexuality or sexual orientation], I, ________________________________ [name of parent/legal guardian], in accordance with section 11.1(2) of the Human Rights Act, hereby request that my child, ________________________________ [name of child] be excluded from the instruction, exercise or the use of instructional material identified in the notice.

I request that my child: (check relevant box)

☐ A) Leave the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place or where the instructional material is being used for the duration of that part of the instruction.

OR

☐ B) Remain in the classroom or place where the instruction is taking place without taking part in the instruction or use of instructional material.

I confirm that I am the legal guardian of ________________________________ [name of child] and have chosen to exercise my option to have my child excluded from the instruction described in the notice from ________________________________ School [name of school] on the dates indicated in the notice. I also confirm that it is my obligation to ensure that this form is returned to the school principal/teacher on or before the date of the instruction indicated in the notice.

The child to whom this exemption notice applies is: ________________________________ [name of child] Grade: _________

______________________________________  ________________________
Parent/Legal Guardian Date

______________________________________  ________________________
Independent Student Date
Grade 4

**Outcome 1**

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

Grade 4

**Outcome 2**

The student will examine the various factors that influence body image: e.g. culture, media, peers, role models, weight loss industry and, as a child of God, critique their standards of beauty.

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

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**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. *Parents of the Calgary Catholic School District have requested that this topic not be taught until Grade 5.*
- 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 1

Grade 4 The student, as a child of God, will describe physical, emotional, spiritual and social changes that occur during puberty; e.g. secondary sexual characteristics, maturing in one's identity and faith.

(Teachers Please Note: Parents of the Calgary Catholic School District have requested that menstruation not be taught until Grade 5.)

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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>The most important people in my life at…</th>
<th>What I look like at…</th>
<th>How I behave at…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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Activity 2 - Explore and apply
• Read the information pages, Puberty: A Time of Change & What Happens During Puberty
• Ask students to complete the Handout Characteristics of Girls and Boys. Discuss.
• 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.
Puberty: A Time of Change

A marvelous 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).

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.

**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.
Characteristics of Girls and Boys

**Directions:**
The first column lists characteristics that develop during puberty. Some changes happen only to **boys**, others happen only to **girls**, and some happen to **both**. Read through the list and put a check in the correct column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>BOTH</th>
<th>CHARACTERISTICS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Voice changes and deepens.</td>
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<td>2. Hips widen.</td>
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<td>3. Body hair grows on legs and under the arms.</td>
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<td>4. Body odor from sweat develops, especially under the arms.</td>
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<td>5. Skin changes.</td>
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<td>6. Hair grows on the face.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Body hair grows near the genitals (pubic hair).</td>
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<td>9. Penis and testicles grow larger.</td>
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<td>10. Weight and height increase rather quickly.</td>
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<td>11. Shoulders widen.</td>
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<td>12. Vocal cords grow larger and thicken.</td>
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<td>13. Moods swings</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14. Growth spurts</td>
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<td>15. Increased perspiration and oily skin</td>
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<td>16. Muscular development in chest</td>
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<td>17. More concern about appearance</td>
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<td>18. Changes in friendships</td>
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<td>19. More questioning about “Who am I?” and life issues</td>
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<td></td>
<td>20. Changes in the way we think about things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

Write a definition or explanation in your own words.

List at least five key words.

List one fact.

Spiritual:

Physical:

Emotional:

Social:

Write two questions you still have about puberty.
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.)
Development of Lesson 2

Grade 4

The student will examine the various factors that influence body image:
Outcome 2 e.g. culture, media, peers, role models, weight loss industry
and, as a child of God, critique their standards of beauty.

(Note: This lesson is adapted for the Calgary Catholic School District from the Health & Life Skills curriculum, Grade 4, Wellness Choices, W 4.4)

Activity 1 - Get ready

• Begin with a reading from Psalm 139:13-14
  “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.”
  Ask students to share their “I Am Wonderfully Made” sheets from the previous lesson, beginning with the statement, “I am wonderfully made”. Invite other students to also name the gifts they see in each other.

Activity 2 – Explore and apply

• Discuss factors that may affect how we feel about ourselves and our bodies. These factors may include peers, media, role models, family, etc.
• Working with a partner, go through magazines and collect pictures of young people from ads. Make a collage called Ads tell us that… Examine the ads and identify what messages they send about how young people should look, dress, think, and act.
• Discuss other sources of messages about how young people should dress and act, look and think.
• With a partner, do a think-pair-share of how the “perfect young person” should look, from head to toe. Discuss whether or not this is realistic. How interesting would it be if everyone looked similar?
• Discuss what students think God’s image of how the “perfect young person” should look. How is this different from the messages they receive from other sources?

Activity 3 – Extend and commit

• Working individually, complete the following statements:
  o “The messages from television about what I should look like are…”
  o “My friends seem to feel that bodies should be…”
  o “The things that influence me most about how I feel about my body are…”
• Read the following aloud:
  “Don’t you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and who was given to you by God?” 1 Corinthians 6:19
  Discuss: What is God trying to tell us about our bodies? Why is taking care of our bodies important? How does that give honour to God?
  What can we do to counter the negative messages given to us by television, etc. about our bodies? How can we respond when someone is being teased about what they look like?