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## TEACHING GUIDE



**PUBERTY: A BOY'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL  
AND SOCIAL CHANGES  
NO. 9575  
Recommended for Grades 4-6**

**Part 1:** Matthew confides in older brother Andrew that he is nervous about having the “puberty talk” in health class. Andrew provides some reassuring information about the physical changes boys experience during puberty.

**Part 2:** While Matthew and his friends are at a neighborhood cook out, older brother Andrew and his friend Emily discuss many of the emotional and social changes that both boys and girls experience during puberty.

**Part 1, Topics Include:**

- Physical Changes
- Male Reproductive System
- Hormones
- Nocturnal Emissions
- Perspiration and Acne
- Hygiene and Health

**Part 2, Topics Include:**

- Respect for yourself and others
- Body Image
- Peer Pressure
- Bullying
- Self Esteem
- Feeling Socially Awkward
- Cliques
- Exercise/Sleep/Nutrition

## SCRIPT

### Part 1-Physical Changes

**Mom:** You might need this! Have fun at Matthew's sleepover, and remember I'm only two doors down if you need me.

**Jacob:** Thanks Mom. And don't worry, I'm just two doors down if you need ME!!

**Dad:** You have your cell phone, Michael?

**Michael:** Got it - bye Dad!

**Sister:** Mom's working tonight, so text me later and check in, OK? Have fun - and don't try to cause TOO much trouble!!

**Joshua:** Yes, don't worry. Bye!! Hi Jacob! Hi Michael!

**Boys all talking at once:** Let's shoot some baskets - I brought the game - what are we eating - how late can we stay up - come on let's go upstairs!

**Dad:** WOW!

**Andrew:** Was I like that?

**Dad:** You were worse! But everybody goes through it!

**Andrew:** I guess it's just . . . (to camera) part of the journey!

**Andrew:** Everything OK? Matthew, why are you in here all by yourself? Where are your friends?

**Matthew:** Oh, they're downstairs. I . . .

**Andrew:** Well, what's wrong?

**Matthew:** Next week they're going to be teaching us about puberty and human development in health class, and I have to get Dad to sign this permission slip. It's just so . . . embarrassing and weird and kind of scary.

**Andrew:** Well, it doesn't have to be embarrassing, or weird, or scary, and Dad can be really good to talk to about this puberty stuff.

**Matthew:** Really?

**Andrew:** Yeah, he really can be - you might be surprised. Puberty happens . . . to everybody. I went through it; all my friends went through it. Yes, even our parents went through it! Every boy and every girl; we ALL go through puberty! And there are bound to be times when you feel awkward, or clumsy, or self-conscious.

**Matthew:** I just wish I knew what to expect!

**Andrew:** Well, would it help if I filled you in on the things I learned when I was your age?

First of all, for boys, puberty usually starts between the ages of nine and sixteen. There are many different glands that provide a variety of substances our body needs to function. There are oil glands and sweat glands. Other glands produce chemicals called hormones that are carried in the blood stream to different organs in the body. Hormones are what cause the many changes that happen during puberty. It all starts with the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of your brain.

The pituitary gland is sometimes called the “master gland” of the body because it controls many body processes, including growth and development. The pituitary gland produces hormones that stimulate the reproductive glands. The male reproductive glands, or testes, are located in the scrotum behind the penis. The testes send out the hormone testosterone, to start all kinds of changes in your body.

During this time your height and weight will increase and you’ll start to look like a young man. Hair will begin to grow in your pubic area and your testicles will grow larger. Your arms and legs and your hands and your feet will grow quite a bit. Over the next few years, muscle bulk will increase, and your shoulders will broaden. Hair will grow under your arms, on your arms and legs, and on your face. Some boys, but not all, will develop chest hair.

Some boys start shaving around this time. But you really need to check with Dad or another trusted adult before trying this yourself. And you shouldn’t share razors with anyone since that can spread viruses and bacteria.

During puberty, sweat glands in your body become very active. The purpose of sweat; perspiration; is to help cool the body. The sweat glands that start working at birth are called eccrine glands and they produce clear, odorless perspiration. But body odor is triggered by your apocrine glands; the sweat glands that kick in during puberty. The apocrine glands produce perspiration that can smell bad when it comes in contact with bacteria on your skin.

Since lots of apocrine glands are under your arms, many people use underarm deodorants or antiperspirants to combat body odor. You can also help reduce body odor by taking a shower or a bath every day and wearing clean clothes every day will help too! And, of course, don’t forget to brush your teeth in the morning and at night...and floss, too.

Your skin contains glands that produce oil to keep it healthy. During puberty, those oil glands increase their activity and produce more oil which can become trapped in a pore, causing a pimple or blackhead to erupt. The best way to fight pimples and black heads is to keep your skin clean. Wash your face gently with a mild soap and water or cleanser at least twice a day. Keeping your hands clean and avoiding touching pimples will also help. Talk to a parent or the school nurse about finding a cleanser that is best for you.

One of the main things I learned when I was going through puberty is to RESPECT the fact that everyone is different. We all start changing when our bodies are ready. Some of my friends started developing before me and some started after me. If we stick together and support each other it will make all these changes so much easier to handle.

By the time you are eighteen or twenty you should be nearly finished with the physical changes of puberty.

**Matthew:** We're going to be learning about the reproductive system. It just seems so complicated!

**Andrew:** Well, it's a LITTLE complicated, but it's pretty amazing, too!

During puberty, the reproductive system reaches maturity. The job of the reproductive system is to make new human beings. There are two primary parts in the male reproductive system, the penis and the testicles. The penis is a tube-shaped organ at the front of the body. Behind the penis are the testicles, two egg-shaped organs carried inside a pouch of loose skin called the scrotum. The testicles produce and store male reproductive cells, which are called sperm, or sperm cells. The sperm duct is a passageway for the sperm to travel from the testicles to the penis.

The duct system includes the epididymis and the vas deferens. These ducts lead to the urethra – the tube that carries urine from the bladder through the penis to the outside of the body. Behind the scrotum is the anus. The job of the anus is to discharge solid waste as a bowel movement.

Normally, the penis hangs down. However, for sperm to be released from the body, the penis must become erect. An erection is a stiffening and enlarging of the penis that causes it to stand out in front of the body. Sometimes during puberty, boys may experience involuntary erections. They happen without warning and for no apparent reason. This is normal. The erection will go away as the muscles relax. Erections may also occur while you're asleep, and the sperm may be released. This is called a nocturnal emission, or a wet dream. If you find wetness in your pajamas or sheets, don't worry. It's completely normal and harmless. The release of sperm is a sign that your reproductive system is maturing.

**Matthew:** I remember when your voice started changing. Will that happen to me?

**Andrew:** Both boys' and girls' voices change during puberty, but in boys it's usually more noticeable.

Your vocal cords work a little like guitar strings: the longer they get, the deeper your voice gets. You'll know your voice is changing when it "cracks" on you. It's just one of a number of occasionally awkward growing pains you'll experience. Try to keep your sense of humor and remember; puberty happens to everyone.

(Knock on door)

**Andrew:** Hi Dad!

**Dad:** Hey Matthew, why aren't you downstairs with the other boys?

**Matthew:** Oh, I need you to sign this. We're studying puberty next week in school.

**Andrew:** And I'm just giving him the basics of what he needs to know.

**Dad (to Andrew):** I remember how nervous you were when it was time to learn about all these changes.

**Dad: (to Matthew)** Some of this is a little tough to go through. But, we can talk about it later more, if you like.

**Andrew:** Just remember - every boy grows and changes at a different rate.

**Dad:** But everyone goes through it, and it all leads to new experiences, and new adventures.

**Michael:** There you guys are!

**Joshua:** What are you guys talking about?

**Matthew:** Oh . . . nothing . .

**Dad:** Alright, it's getting late, so, remember, Mom needs your help tomorrow. The Andersons are coming over for a BBQ. Mom said your friends can stay for the party, so GET SOME SLEEP!

**Andrew:** See you guys tomorrow!

## **Part 2-Emotional and Social Changes**

**Emily:** Whew! Did you get ANY sleep last night?

**Andrew:** Not much, Matthew and the guys were acting pretty crazy!

**Emily:** TELL me about it!! Ella and the girls were bouncing off the walls!

**BOTH:** HORMONES!!

**Andrew:** And Matthew had some interesting questions for me!

**Emily:** I know! Ella was asking me all about puberty, and growing up, and all that stuff.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it made me remember how AWKWARD I was at their age.

**Emily:** And self-conscious.

**Andrew:** I remember those times. Sometimes it was painful and embarrassing and

**BOTH:** Exhausting!!

**Andrew:** But we got through it!

**Emily:** Just like everybody does!

**Andrew:** What we're talking about here is BODY IMAGE.

**Emily:** Almost everyone wishes there was SOMETHING different about their body. Some kids think their legs are too long, or not long enough; that they weigh too much, or they're too skinny. It's important to remember that not everyone grows or develops at the same time or in the same way.

**Andrew:** Those glamorous images of people you see on movies and TV, well those aren't exactly real! Magazines, websites, and entertainment use digital manipulation, airbrushing, special lighting and effects, to create unrealistic images of beauty and body development that can put pressure and false expectations on young people.

**Emily:** Part of growing up is being healthy - and happy with who you really are, and what you really look like. Respect yourself! Try to develop a positive body image. If you have a positive body image, you probably like and accept yourself the way you are, even if you don't fit some phony media ideal.

**Andrew:** The same hormones that cause all these physical changes also cause some emotional changes.

**Emily:** Sometimes you'll find yourself being happy one moment and grumpy the next. Sometimes you might feel angry about nothing.

**Andrew:** Don't let these feelings get the best of you. Remember that what is happening has a physical reason, and choose to react positively.

**Emily:** And remember, you're not the only one with these feelings.

**Andrew:** If you feel sad or mad, confused, or frustrated.... talk to someone such as a parent, the school nurse or another trusted adult. They've been there/done that, so they can give you helpful advice.

**Emily:** During puberty, your self-esteem goes through changes, too. Self-esteem is about how you see yourself as a person.

**Andrew:** It's about how valuable and worthwhile you think you are, and how good you feel about yourself.

**Emily:** Feeling good about yourself can affect how you act, how easily you make friends, how you get along with your family, and how much fun you have.

**Andrew:** I remember sometimes feeling like I was an outsider; like I just didn't fit in.

**Emily:** I know what you mean. I remember having times when I felt like everyone was cool and had it together except me.

Feeling socially awkward happens to almost everyone at some time in their life, especially during puberty. All the body changes, voice changes, new feelings, new awareness, can make you feel like you're an alien on the wrong planet!

**Andrew:** Take a deep breath - you'll get through this.

Some good techniques to help with social awkwardness are:

Be a good listener. Ask people questions about themselves. Most people like to talk about themselves. AND it's a good way to find out who has interests like yours.

**Emily:** Respect other people. Don't get caught up in gossip or social games. The best way to make good friends is to BE a good friend. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. The people who appreciate you for who you really are, those are the friends you want to keep.

**Andrew:** And if you really freeze up in social situations, it can help to rehearse in your mind what you will say and do. Practice asking interesting questions, finding subjects to talk about; areas of common interest. This can really help when you have one of those "brain-freeze" moments!

**Emily:** During puberty, almost everyone becomes more self-conscious. Getting used to your growing body can take some time.

**Andrew:** But being self-conscious can also mean getting to know yourself better!

**Emily:** Get to know the things you are good at, the things that make you feel good about yourself and things that help others to feel good about themselves!

**Andrew:** Your friends, your peers, are people around your own age who you like to be around! Probably you share some of the same interests and experiences. You'll find that these are the people you like to spend time with.

**Emily:** This is usually a good thing! It's human nature to listen to and learn from people your own age. And this is where you make your best friends. You might find that you spend more time with your friends than you do with your parents and siblings.

**Andrew:** Besides close friends, your peers can come from groups you belong to, like people in your class, your youth group, sports teams, or a dance group. These peers can influence you by the way they dress and act, the things they're involved in, or the attitudes they have.

**Emily:** But sometimes, cliques develop. A clique is a group of kids who leave other kids out on purpose. They are often run by kids with strong personalities, who decide who can and can't be part of the group.

**Andrew:** Cliques sometimes try to control who you can have as friends. This is not a good thing. If one of your peer groups starts acting this way, be brave! Either change the dynamic or change who you're hanging out with.

**Emily:** People are influenced by peers because they want to fit in; to be like the friends they admire; to do what others are doing, or have what others have.

**Andrew:** Sometimes, though, the stresses in your life can actually come from your peers.

**Emily:** The pressure to do what others are doing can be very strong. Everyone wants to fit in and be accepted.

**Andrew:** A person might feel pressure to do something just because others are doing it; or they say they are. Some peer pressure is relatively harmless, like dressing a certain way. But other peer pressure can have serious consequences.

**Emily:** Peer pressure affects just about everyone. Even with your very best friends, you will sometimes find yourself in a situation where you have to make a difficult decision.



**Andrew:** Respect and trust your instincts. If the situation makes you uncomfortable, then you probably know it's not the right thing to do.

**Emily:** It's a good idea to plan ahead. How you will handle pressure situations?

**Andrew:** Think about it. Learn to say no. Even rehearse what you will say and do.

**Emily:** Have some good excuses ready: "I have a big test Monday" or blame your parents. Say "It's not worth all the trouble I'll be in if my parents find out - and they always find out!"

**Andrew:** Most importantly figure out who your real friends are.

**Emily:** Chances are, if you have an inner voice that tells you a situation isn't right, there's someone else who has that voice inside them, too.

**Andrew:** Hang with people who have similar values, and who will respect and support your decisions.

**Emily:** And be there for them when they are the ones feeling peer pressure.

**Andrew:** There can be lots of different kinds of peer pressures, but sometimes things just get out of hand.

**Emily:** We're talking about bullying! This is a time when young people are finding their strengths, finding out what they're good at, and figuring out how to interact with others.

**Andrew:** Unfortunately, some people find their strength, and find out what makes them feel good is to make other people feel bad!

**Emily:** If someone exerts power over someone else by threatening or intimidating them; that's bullying!

**Andrew:** If someone spreads rumors, sends threatening texts or emails, posts mean or embarrassing messages or pictures, that is bullying; cyber bullying!

**Emily:** And if someone verbally or physically attacks someone else...

**Andrew:** That is definitely bullying!

**Both:** So what do you do if you are being bullied? Here are some tips:

- Tell the person to STOP! Say it directly and confidently
- Use humor - say something funny to disarm the situation
- Walk away. Bullies are usually baiting or daring you to argue or fight with them.  
**Because you ARE going to...**

- **TELL AN ADULT.** Bullying isn't just mean. In some cases IT'S ILLEGAL! Tell your teachers; your principal; your parents. They will make it STOP.

**Emily:** Even if you are not the person being bullied, you should say something, or do something if you see someone else being bullied.

**Both:** Again, tell an adult. While it's happening, after it's over, even the next day. Tell a trusted adult what happened.

- Don't give the bully an audience.
- Don't laugh, don't support it.
- Encourage your friends to join you in saying stop.
- Be a brave friend. If you see someone being bullied, encourage them to walk away with you.
- Be kind, and let them know that you support them.

**Andrew:** Wow! A lot to think about!

**Emily:** There are so many physical and emotional demands on you during puberty.

**Andrew:** Here are some things you can do to make sure you feel your best. Pay attention to what you eat. It's a good idea to stay away from junk food. Try to eat healthful foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables. And breakfast truly is the most important meal of the day.

**Emily:** Try to drink less soft drinks and more water and skim milk. Sometimes, all that growing and changing can make you feel tired. Don't worry about being a little tired. It's completely natural. Be sure to get enough sleep. You need at least 8 to 9 hours every night.

**Andrew:** Try to set a regular bed time. Go to sleep at about the same time every night, and try to get up at the same time every morning. This sets your body clock, and makes it easier to go to sleep, and to get up. Listen to your body. When it says it's tired, give it a rest. Exercise is important. If you enjoy sports, that's great. Find a team that works for you.

**Emily:** If sports aren't your thing, there are still a lot of fun ways to get exercise. Even taking a walk can give you the exercise you need. Just 60 minutes a day, 6 times a week, will make you feel better, look better, and have more energy.

**Andrew:** There can be a lot of pressures at this time in your life!

**Emily:** That's why it's a good idea to find an adult you can trust, someone you can talk to about your feelings.

**Andrew:** Someone who can answer your questions. A parent or a special care giver is the best person to go to. Your parents have a lot of experience they can share with you, and they have your very best interests at heart.

**Emily:** But a school counselor or nurse, or a teacher can also be a good listener and advisor.

**Andrew:** Growing up isn't always easy, and some days it might seem pretty hard.

**Emily:** But everyone gets through it, and so will you.

**Girl:** Do we have time to go to the park?

**Girl:** What time does the movie start?

**Boy:** Hey, we need to get going if we're going to get there on time!

**Emily:** Don't worry - we'll all get there . . .

**Andrew:** It's all part of the journey!

### ***The End***

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Cast

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Malachi Deason	Delaney Danner
Kay Kay Jurries	Myla Wilkes
Rick Tamblyn	Lori Plank Allen
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## VOCABULARY

### Part 1:

Apocrine Glands  
Anus  
Blackhead  
Bowel Movement  
Duct system  
Eccrine Glands  
Epididymis  
Erection  
Hormones  
Nocturnal emission  
Perspiration  
Pimple  
Pituitary gland  
Progesterone  
Puberty  
Pubic area  
Reproductive system  
Scrotum  
Semen  
Sperm  
Testicles  
Urethra  
Urine  
Vas deferens  
Vocal cords  
Wet dream

### Part 2:

Body Image  
Bullying  
Cliques  
Cyber Bullying  
Embarrassing  
Peers  
Peer Pressure  
Respect  
Self-conscious  
Self-esteem  
Socially Awkward

## **INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS**

1. To describe the physical, emotional and social changes boys will experience during puberty.
2. To identify the structures of the male reproductive system.
3. To reassure students that the changes they experience are normal and healthy.
4. To show students productive ways of dealing with peer pressure and bullying.
5. To promote self-esteem and a healthy body image.
6. To emphasize the benefits of good nutrition and regular exercise.

## **CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES**

1. Puberty classes help students learn about the physical, emotional and social changes that will happen to them over the next few years. For some students, this will be their first exposure to the topic. There may be some students who don't know basic information and may be anxious about having to learn about it. Open with a discussion regarding typical reactions of students learning about puberty (feelings range from curious and comfortable to embarrassed or disgusted.)

Work with students to construct a list of ground rules that will increase their feelings of safety and comfort while discussing puberty, i.e. no personal questions or sharing of private information; respect yourself and others; use dictionary words when discussing body, etc. Make sure students know the correct name for body parts and functions. Include a box for anonymous questions.

2. Create a list of behaviors that are common during puberty. Ask students to raise their hands if the behavior applies to them. Help students realize that everyone has something they would like to change. Some examples are "How many of you...
  - Would like to sleep later in the morning?
  - Would like be older than your current age?
  - Have felt awkward in social situations?
  - Wish you could change something about yourself?
3. Ask students to create a "Perfect World." In this world, would everything look the same? Would everyone look and behave the same? If so, how would this change our world as we know it? How does diversity make our world more interesting?
4. Have students list the milestones in their lives, such as when they took their first step, started preschool, learned to ride a bike, etc. Ask students to include the physical/emotional changes that made each milestone possible.

Students can then make a list of the milestones they are looking forward to, such as going to middle school; driving a car; graduating from high school, going to

college. What physical/emotional changes will be needed to achieve each of these goals?

5. Discuss the roles of the media, parents, peers or other influences that affect how students feel and behave. Role play situations of peer pressure and techniques for managing choices that may be different from friends' choices.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are some typical changes that boys can expect to experience during puberty?
2. How does your body know when to start puberty?
3. Do girls experience changes during puberty too?
4. What is the function of perspiration?
5. It helps to talk to someone about the changes of puberty. Are classmates a good source of information? Why?
6. Define peer pressure. When is peer pressure a good thing? When is it detrimental? In what other areas of life do you experience peer pressure from outside influences?
6. What should you do if you are being bullied or you see someone else who is being bullied?

## RESOURCES

### *Related Titles From MarshMedia*

A Baby Is Born  
A Boy's Guide to Growing Up  
A Boy's Guide to Puberty and Personal Safety  
A Girl's Guide to Growing Up  
A Girl's Guide to Puberty and Personal Safety  
Growing Up! For Boys  
Growing Up! For Girls  
Just Around the Corner – Boys  
Just Around the Corner – Girls  
Let's Just Talk! – For Boys  
Let's Just Talk! – For Girls  
Meet the New You-For Boys  
Meet the New You-For Girls  
Straight Talk About Anger  
Straight Talk About Peer Pressure  
Straight Talk About Puberty – For Boys  
Straight Talk About Self-Confidence  
Straight Talk About Self-Image and Identity  
Straight Talk About Sex, Gender and Media  
Straight Talk About Sexual Choices  
We're Growing Up!  
We're Just Around the Corner  
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