

# Change Is Good!

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering responsibility by respecting young people's rights to honest sexuality education.

**TARGET GRADE:** Grade 6

**TIME:** 50 Minutes

## **MATERIALS NEEDED:**

- Prepared Change is Good cards, enough complete sets for one third of the student in class
- Letter-sized envelopes in which to place the sets of change cards.
- Scotch tape—one roll per small group of 3 students
  
- Pencils in case students do not have their own
- Answer Key: "Change is Good" - one copy for teacher

## **ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:**

- Print out the Change is Good cards and cut them up.
- Mix the cards up and place an entire set in an individual envelope. Be sure each group has a set of four header sheets for each as well (see below).

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES:**

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Name at least one physical, social, cognitive and emotional change young people go through during adolescence. [Knowledge]
2. Identify at least two websites that contain additional medically-accurate information about puberty and adolescence for young people their age. [Knowledge]

## **A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:**

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman. This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities.

You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

## **PROCEDURE:**

**STEP 1:** Introduce the class by saying, "You are all at a time in your lives where your body is going through some amazing changes. For some of you, this may have started already; for others, these changes may not start for a few years yet. Some of these changes will make you feel really good about yourselves; it's exciting to see yourself growing up! Other changes may feel weird, like you're body's a bit out of control at times. As we go through the lesson, and as you experience these changes, try to always remember that all of these changes are normal. They are all important parts of growing up that everyone goes through. This time of growth is called 'puberty' and that it's started by the natural chemicals in our bodies, called 'hormones.'" (5 minutes)

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**STEP 2:** On the board, write the words, “physical, social, cognitive, emotional” in a vertical line, one beneath the next. Say, “Although a great deal of emphasis tends to be placed on the physical changes of puberty, the changes we go through during this time are not simply physical, they are also social, cognitive and emotional. Social changes have to do with how we interact with others. Cognitive changes have to do with how we think, process information and learn. Emotional changes have to do with feelings, and our awareness of what may or may not cause us to feel certain things.”

Ask the students if anyone can give you an example of a physical change of puberty. Write that on the board next to the word “physical.” Ask what they think might change socially when you start adolescence/going through puberty. If they cannot think of one, say, “You may end up spending – or wanting to spend – more time with your friends than with your family.”

Next, ask what they think might change cognitively when they start adolescence/going through puberty. If they cannot think of an example, tell the class that an example of a cognitive change might be some temporary fogginess in how they think – followed by a clearing of that fogginess as they get older. Explain that an example of this fogginess might include forgetting to bring things with them when they go to or from school. Finally, ask for an example of an emotional change. If they cannot think of one, tell them that they may end up feeling very strong emotions out of nowhere, both positive and negative. Say, “While there’s a stereotype that only girls feel these strong emotions, students of all genders usually experience this at different times during adolescence.” (12 minutes)

**STEP 3:** Tell the class that you will now be doing an activity in which they will be given a number of changes people go through during adolescence and puberty and they will work in small groups to decide which category of change they are. Divide the group into groups of three, and provide each small group with an envelope containing a complete set of “Change is Good” cards, as well as one roll of tape. In each set will be four header sheets: physical, social, cognitive and emotional. Ask the students to spread the header sheets on the desk space (or floor) in front of them. They should then take out the remaining cards, read through them together and decide which kind of change each is. Tell them that once they all agree, they should tape each card on the corresponding header sheet. Remind them to look up at the board if they forget the definitions of any of the header terms. Tell them they will have about 10 minutes in which to do this work. (13 minutes)

**Note to the Teacher:** *The physical change header will have the most responses attached to it; feel free to add a second header sheet, or to instruct students to tape some to the front, and some to the back.*

**STEP 4:** After about 10 minutes, stop the students and ask for a group to volunteer to report back what was on the “physical” changes sheets. Make corrections as necessary using the “Answer Key: Change is Good!” Have a second group read their responses to what was on their “cognitive” changes sheets, making corrections as necessary. Ask a third group to go through their responses on their “emotional” changes sheets, making corrections as needed. Ask a fourth group to go through their responses on the “social” changes sheet, also making corrections as necessary. (18 minutes)

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# Change Is Good Cards - Page 1

**Grow taller  
(growth spurt)**

**Grow hair under arms, on  
legs, around genitals**

**Feel hungrier/  
Eat more**

**Get acne**

**Grow breasts**

**Hair texture may change**

**Voice deepens**

**Hormone surges can make  
your moods go  
up and down**

**Menstruation**

**Hips widen**

# Change Is Good Cards - Page 2

**Voice cracks**

**Peer pressure increases**

**Muscle growth**

**More interested in being  
with friends**

**Start to become interested  
in others more than friends/  
finding a boyfriend or  
girlfriend**

**Sweat starts to smell**

**May want to try different,  
sometimes risky things**

**May have more conflict  
with parents/caregiver**

**Anxiety and stress  
can increase**

**May feel self-conscious  
about how your  
body looks**

Might have a hard time  
making up your mind/feel  
unsure

Experience more intense  
feelings - happy one  
minute, upset the next

Feel "paranoid" -  
"Everyone's looking at/  
talking about me!"

Might have a hard time  
understanding instructions the  
first time they're told to you

Feel like you forget things  
people told you just a few  
minutes before

Might start thinking, "Who Am  
I?" - try to start defining yourself  
as a person

Feel kind of clumsy/  
trip over your own feet  
sometimes

May feel really strong/  
powerful because of  
how your body looks

## Change is Good Answer Key

PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL	COGNITIVE	SOCIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow taller (growth spurt)</li> <li>• Grow hair under arms, on legs, around genitals</li> <li>• Feel hungrier/eat more</li> <li>• Get acne</li> <li>• Hair texture may change</li> <li>• Hormone surges can make your moods go up and down</li> <li>• Wet dreams</li> <li>• Hips widen</li> <li>• Grow breasts</li> <li>• Weight gain</li> <li>• Voice deepens</li> <li>• Menstruation</li> <li>• Voice cracks</li> <li>• Muscle growth</li> <li>• Sweat starts to smell</li> <li>• Feel kind of clumsy/ trip over your own feet sometimes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety and stress can increase</li> <li>• Feel self-conscious about how your body looks</li> <li>• Experience more intense feelings — happy one minute, upset the next</li> <li>• Feel "paranoid" — "Everyone's looking at/talking about me!"</li> <li>• May feel really strong/powerful because of how your body looks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May want to try different, sometimes risky things</li> <li>• Might have a hard time making up your mind/feel unsure</li> <li>• Might have a hard time understanding instructions the first time they're told to you</li> <li>• Feel like you forget things people told you just a few minutes before</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer pressure increases</li> <li>• More interested in being with friends</li> <li>• Start to become interested in others as more than friends/ finding a boyfriend or girlfriend</li> <li>• May have more conflict with parents</li> <li>• Might start thinking, "Who Am I?" —try to start defining yourself as a person</li> </ul>



**Physical**

**Social**

**Emotional**

**Cognitive**