

# Growing and Changing

## SPHE STRANDS:

**Myself – Growing and changing  
– As I grow I change**

**Myself and the Wider World –  
Developing citizenship**

### Prove It!

- Divide the children into groups of three or four and invite them to come up with as many examples of evidence that they have grown in the past five years. Write as many suggestions as possible on the board, e.g. shoes don't fit, clothes too small, can reach higher shelves, can walk farther, can cycle a bigger bike, etc.
- Ask the children does anyone know when a person's rate of growth is at its fastest. (First year of life.) Tell the children that in the first year of life a baby triples in size. What would it be like if this happened every year? What size do you think you would be now?
- Chat with the children about how everyone grows at different rates. Is everyone in the class the same size? Someone might be taller than you this year, and you might be taller than

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them next year. What do you think growth depends on? (Height of parents, country of origin, nutrition, etc.)

- Most people stop growing somewhere between eighteen and twenty-one years old. Does every part of your body stop growing then? (Hair, nails, you can get heavier or lighter.) Ears never stop growing!

## Art Activity

- Ask the children to imagine themselves as a man or woman and to draw a full life portrait of themselves.
- Invite them to discuss the picture with the child beside them.
- Ask if any of the boys drew themselves with a moustache or beard. This is one of the ways boys change as they grow. Does anyone know at about what age boys start to grow facial hair? (Explain that this can be as young as twelve or as old as sixteen or seventeen).
- Ask if any of the girls drew themselves as women with breasts. (Expect some embarrassment around this discussion, but it is important to explain to the children that this is just another perfectly normal change that occurs to girls as they grow up.) Explain that this may happen any time from about nine or ten to thirteen or fourteen.
- Both boys and girls also start to grow hair under their arms. This can happen any time from about ten years old and is perfectly normal.



## Poetry

Write the word TEENAGER or PRE-TEEN on the whiteboard vertically and, with the class, compose an acrostic poem, trying to include some of the changes already discussed. It is ok to inject a little humour into this exercise, as it is important for children to understand that growing up is fun!

Sample:

**T**eenagers are  
**E**nergetic,  
**E**ating lots and lots,  
**N**ew hair everywhere,  
**A**lways cool,  
**G**rowing and changing,  
**E**nthusiastic and  
**R**ebellious.

Alternatively you might like to teach this poem about growing up;

## Growing Up

My body keeps surprising me,  
I don't know what to say.  
There seems to be a different me  
In the mirror every day.

When I was small I couldn't reach  
The handle on the door,  
And I used to get around the house  
By crawling on the floor.

I'm very skilled at football now,  
My legs are really long,  
I can throw a ball into the net,  
My arms are very strong.

Soon I'll be a teenager  
With spots and lots of hair.  
My body keeps surprising me  
With changes everywhere.



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## **The Animal World**

Display pictures of animals with their young. (This website may be a useful resource: <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/14-beautiful-photos-of-animal-moms-with-their-babies/>)

Chat about all the differences the children can see between the adult animals and their young.

Invite the children to draw their favourite creature.

## **Reflection:**

Invite the children to close their eyes and read the following reflection:

Think of a baby photo you have seen of yourself. What did you look like? What colour was your hair? What were your hands and feet like? What could you do for yourself? Did you need help to feed? To move around? To keep yourself clean? Now think of the 'you' that you see in the mirror at the moment. What differences are there? Is your face and head bigger? Are your arms and legs longer? Do you need as much help to look after yourself? Now imagine yourself in three more years. You will be as big as the children in sixth class.

Growing is part of living. We all grow and change as we get older. God made us all to grow at our own pace. Our bodies were created to develop exactly as God planned. Thank God for the wonderful body you have been given. Help us to appreciate how lucky we are to be strong and healthy, growing and changing. Amen.