



Coping with the Changes of Adolescence Outline Plan



Aim/s

- To help them to understand the changes of adolescence
- To learn how to cope with change

Bible references

Luke 2:41-52

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 4:14-16

Resources select from -

Cuttings from magazines & newspapers, glue & paper – see Collage

Items for object bag (see other ideas at the end)

For games: balloons; sweatshirts; toilet roll or old towel/sheet

Video/DVD Shrek 2

Puppet or something similar (see background notes)

Puppet script

[School Reports Get Outdated](#)

Starter/s select from

Nappy game: In teams (of the same sex) try to dress someone in a nappy made out of toilet roll or an old towel or sheet.

Balloon game: Using balloons and large sweatshirts, dress someone up as an adult (again same sex teams). They do get very silly about this but it's great fun. One suggestion was to have a competition to make the most muscular-looking body builder. My group chose their own fun way of doing this and they had a wonderful time.

Object bag: Have a bag of items which relate to different stages of life. As you pull them out they have to say what age group would use them. Suggestions: teddy bear; train set; jigsaw puzzle; chess; can of beer; driving licence; wedding veil. Just look around and see what you can find.

Video clip from Shrek 2, starting from where Shrek takes the 'Happy ever after' potion, up to where Fiona finds that Donkey has changed into a stallion. Allow 15 minutes, plus flexible discussion time.

Follow-up questions - either with the whole group or divide into small groups

- Why did Shrek take the potion? (wanted to change)
- What did he expect to happen? (unsure = uncertainty = insecure)
- What were the drawbacks of taking the potion? (side effects)
- Did the potion affect only him? (friends & family were involved)
- Was the change permanent? (matter of choice, eventually)

Puppet sketch

I am very fortunate to have a fine chimpanzee puppet named Charlie. We met at a Christian Resource Exhibition and he followed me home!!! I would not normally use a puppet when working with this age group. The reason why I did so on this occasion was because I was dealing with issues which can make the youngsters feel really self-conscious and this can make them fidgety. By focusing on the puppet and his 'problems' it meant they could consider these issues without embarrassment. Alternatively you could talk about a fictitious friend. Another way of helping them to be less self-conscious is to give them something they can quietly fiddle with such as playdough or paper and pens.

Puppet sketch 5-10 minutes

Introduce Charlie who was on this occasion dressed up in some play cowboy clothes and a colourful wig (any silly clothes would be ok). He also had several bright orange circles stuck on his face representing spots. The following notes give **guidelines** for a basic script.

- We have a visitor today – this is Charlie – he is usually very cheeky but he is not himself lately – not sure he wants to be here...
- Why are you hiding under that wig Charlie, it's not like you to be shy.
- Oh I see. You're feeling very self-conscious because your hair is greasy and you're covered in spots.
- Any other problems?
- Feeling dizzy, moody, gone off (*no longer likes*) marshmallows, developed a craving for hoola-hoops (*or some other savoury snack*). Hmmmm
- You're not pregnant are you? No of course not, you're a boy chimp.
- I don't want to offend you Charlie, but why are you wearing that 'interesting' outfit today? It's a little big.
- All your friends are wearing that type of outfit and if you wear the wrong thing you will lose all your friends? I see!! And what does your Mum think?
- Your Mum and Dad used to be fairly okay, but they've suddenly gone really stupid and don't know anything anymore!
- Do you know what I think you've got Charlie? ATD. Ape Teen Depression. Don't worry, it's quite normal and won't last forever. It just feels as though it will.

A simple puppet can be made from an old sock. If a puppet is unavailable, it's possible to be quite creative with some old clothes, rolled up newspaper, wool, crayons etc. Making such a figure could also be used as a starter activity if the Shrek video is unavailable.

Short Serious Talk

You can still talk about Charlie but without attempting to talk to him.

- What changes is Charlie experiencing?
- How does he feel about this?
- How can we encourage him?

Physical changes

Most schools teach about physical and sexual development in Human Biology.

In a pastoral lesson I would mention only a few of the physical changes such as those below, (these can be covered through the puppet sketch) & concentrate more on the emotional, intellectual & spiritual changes of which they may be less aware.

- Hair
- Sweat
- Spots
- Dizzy phases, can occasionally feel faint or sick
- Stomach – tastes change – less liking for sweet things and a greater liking for savoury
- Growth spurts – make people clumsy because they can't gauge distances – everything is suddenly 'nearer'. Arms sometimes grow faster than legs.
- The energy which goes into these changes means they sometimes need extra sleep

Emotional Changes

- Self-conscious stage
- Embarrassment
- Irritable
- Insecure
- Mood swings
- Inferiority

Spiritual Changes

- Understand spiritual things more deeply
- Looking for a faith which WORKS
- Search for reality – an experience of God
- Want to know if the Bible is relevant to everyday life

Intellectual changes

- Think differently/ more deeply about things
- Will ask deeper questions about faith
- Develop the capacity for abstract thought eg
 - Things could have been different
 - Things should have been different
 - Things could be changed
 - Things are not the way they seem

This leads to changes in their relationship with parents.

Teenagers can see their parents' faults much more easily. This can be disturbing and irritating because parents are 'supposed to get it right'.

Application

Reassure them that this stage of life doesn't last for ever and it does get easier. Think of positive things to discuss about it. Many young people struggle with life whilst they are at school but they go on to find their vocation and lead rewarding lives. Try to give them examples of people they know who have struggled and got through.

See [School Reports Get Outdated](#)



Can God help?

Jesus was once an adolescent. He may well know what it's like to wake up with your face covered in spots. He too may have found himself shouting because the volume control of his voice had changed. He understands us even if others may not.

Jesus at 12 was searching for a deeper relationship with his heavenly Father

Jesus as a twelve-year-old had a misunderstanding with his parents.

Jesus is also a high priest who is able to sympathise with our weaknesses.

Hebrews 2:17-18

Hebrews 4:14-16

Some groups may like to finish with a **prayer activity**.

Give an opportunity for anonymous questions.

Activity

Collage: Give them some cuttings from magazines & newspapers, glue and paper. Help them to make a collage to show their hopes and fears about growing up. If magazines are not available, just put them in groups & let them write or draw on a piece of paper.

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Image: Grow up by Miss Brillig deviantart.com via Microsoft clip art