

THIRD AND FOURTH CLASS

Resource Materials for

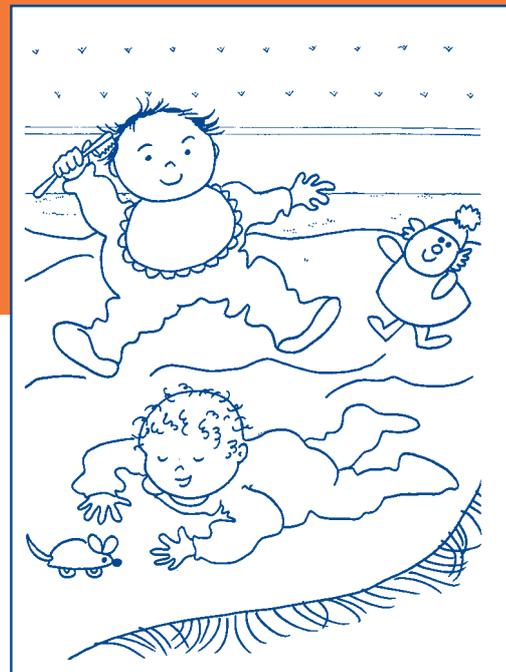
Relationships & Sexuality

E d u c a t i o n



Social, Personal and Health Education

6 The Wonder Of New Life





Theme 6

The Wonder Of New Life

Aim: To provide the children with opportunities to recognise and learn to sequence the stages of development of the human baby from conception to birth.

Option 1

Theme Menu

Information Lesson: Someone Special

Sequencing Activity: A New Life Time-Line

Option 2

Visit: From Parent(s) And Baby

Writing Activity 1: About The Lesson/The Visitor

Follow-up Activities

Writing Activity 2: Diary Of A New Baby

A Note on New Life

Children have many experiences of new life - springtime; new growth in the garden; new pets at home or new animals on the farm; the arrival of a new baby brother or sister, cousin or neighbour. Their sense of awe and wonder at the simplest experience of new life is refreshing and may awaken in the adults around them an appreciation of even a green shoot in Spring. By teaching children to understand new life and how it comes about, the teacher is encouraging them not to take these daily miracles for granted and to respect, value and cherish new life.

The approaches that follow are suggestions only. Teachers may feel more comfortable about teaching these materials, and more confident about answering the questions the children may ask, if they do some background reading first. Strategies for dealing with inappropriate questions may be decided by the school.

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class

Theme 6

The Wonder Of New Life

Option 1

Information Lesson: Someone Special

Sequencing Activity: A New Life Time-Line

Information Lesson: Someone Special

The information given here should be simple and the following text may be useful:

Have you ever seen a bird's nest up close? What is it made of? (Grasses/twigs/etc.) How does the mother bird make it comfortable for her little ones when they hatch? (She lines it with grass, leaves and moss).

Before you were born you spent about nine months cradled in your mother's womb. The womb prepared a soft lining to keep you comfortable. It did this by becoming softer and thicker. This lining kept you safe and snug. You needed nine months to grow completely and to be strong enough to live outside the womb. Nine months is the usual length of time a baby spends in the womb.

To start with you were a round fertilised egg, very, very small, the size of a full stop on a page in fact. It took just four weeks for you to change greatly, no longer round like an egg, but instead like a little sea horse. Your heart had started to beat. You were still very tiny - just 2mm long. Can you show how small this is on your ruler?

During that time the womb was your home. Everything you needed for life and comfort was provided for you there. You were joined to your mother by a tube called the umbilical cord. You may have learnt about the umbilical cord last year. Through the cord you got the food you needed to grow. The food you didn't need returned to your mother.

So, to start with you had a quiet and peaceful life floating in a sac filled with liquid. This watery liquid was always at the same temperature so you were always warm enough and protected from any sudden bumps. Snug and safe you got on with the very important business of growing up. At six weeks you were the size of a baked bean. You would have fitted neatly on a 1p piece.

At eight weeks you were the size of a grown up's thumb nail, the size of a 20p piece. Your hands and feet had already started to grow and you began to move about. You kicked gently. But because you were so small your mother didn't feel you moving around. Now you were beginning to look like a baby.

When you were three months old, using special equipment a doctor or nurse could tell if you were a boy or a girl. Though your eyes were closed, you moved your arms and legs around, stretching and kicking, curling your toes, making fists, frowning and making faces. You were doing your exercises and this helped your muscles to grow strong.

At four months you were 16cm long and would have fitted into a teacup. Can you find 16cm on your ruler? Though you were so small you were completely formed. All the important parts of your body had grown. You even had fingerprints. All you had to do now was grow bigger and stronger.

At five months you could fit into the palm of a grown up's hand. You were about 25cm long. Now your mother could feel you moving and she might tell you this felt like little fish zigzagging inside her.

When you were six months you could hear your mother's heartbeat, voices, music and

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other sounds. How did you spend your day? Well, you spent some of the time awake and the rest of it asleep. You were busy testing out your reflexes. As well as kicking, you were grasping with your fingers and toes. You also practised sucking. Some babies find their thumbs and like to suck them even before they are born.

By now your mother knew all about the moving and stretching you were doing. With all the kicking you were doing, sometimes she felt you must be doing football practice!

As the day of your birth drew near, you had grown so much you had less room to move around. Now you practised breathing. There was no air in the womb, only liquid. Sometimes you swallowed the liquid and this gave you hiccups. Mother may have felt you burping and wondered what was going on. Every day you grew a little more complete - your heart and lungs and stomach developed until they were perfect.

After nine months you were ready to be born. As you were welcomed into the world you were ready to begin another wonderful adventure.

Sequencing Activity: A New Life Time-Line

This material can be used in a number of ways. There are ten pictures, ten time cards and ten corresponding information cards.

1. The teacher could go through the pictures in sequence with the children, matching the appropriate picture card, time card and information card and telling the children about each picture.
2. The teacher could ask the children what they think the correct sequence of pictures is. When this has been established she could ask them to guess the time-scale using the time cards. Finally, the teacher reads out each information card in sequence telling the children about each stage of development.
3. The teacher could ask the children what they think the correct sequence of pictures is. When that has been established she could ask them to guess the time-scale using the time cards. Finally, the teacher reads out each information card and the children could decide which card is appropriate to each stage of development.
4. Using photocopies of this material, groups of children could sequence the pictures and match them with the time and information cards.

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Day One

One Month

Two Months

**Three
Months**

**Four
Months**

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**Five
Months**

Six Months

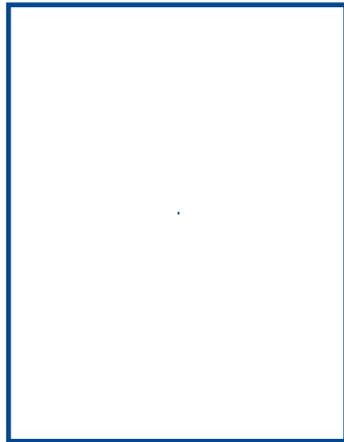
**Seven
Months**

**Eight
Months**

**Nine
Months**

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Fourth Class Theme 6 The Wonder Of New Life



Day One



First Month



Second Month



Third Month



Fourth Month

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

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Fifth Month



Sixth Month



Seventh Month



Eighth Month



Ninth Month

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Fourth Class Theme 2 The Wonder Of New Life

To start with, the baby is a tiny, round fertilised egg, the size of a full stop on a page. These cells multiply and the egg grows and changes. Usually a baby spends nine months in his/her mother's womb before s/he is born. Nine months is the time the baby needs to grow completely and to be strong enough to live outside the womb. The womb is a safe and comfortable place for a baby.

Day One

There have been great changes in the baby. During the last month the baby has settled in the womb. The womb has prepared a soft and thick lining to keep the baby safe and comfortable. Though still very tiny, just 2mm, the baby is no longer round like an egg. Instead s/he looks like a little sea horse. The baby's heart starts to beat around the twenty fourth or twenty fifth day.

One Month

The baby is now the size of a 20p piece and is growing fast. The baby's arms and legs have started to grow and the baby begins to move about. The baby's mother cannot feel these movements because the baby is so tiny. Now the baby is beginning to look a bit more like a baby.

Two Months

Even though the baby is only 8cm long, it is now possible to tell whether the baby is a boy or a girl. The baby's eyes are closed. The baby moves both arms and legs, stretching and kicking. By exercising like this, the muscles in the baby's body are helped to grow strong.

Three Months

The baby is 16cm long and would be small enough to fit into a teacup. Though the baby is still very small, all the important parts have grown. Babies of this age even have fingerprints. All they have to do now is to grow big and strong enough to live outside the womb.

Four Months

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At five months, the baby is 25cm long and could fit into the palm of a grown-up's hand. The baby's mother can feel the baby moving by now. Some mothers say it feels like a fish zigzagging inside.

Five Months

By six months the baby can hear. The noises the baby hears include the sound of his/her mother's heart beating, voices and music. The baby spends some of the time awake and the rest of it asleep. As well as kicking, the baby is grasping with fingers and toes. The baby also practises sucking. Some babies find their thumbs and like to suck them even before they are born.

Six Months

Every day the baby grows a little more complete. If the baby was born at this stage s/he would need special care. His/her lungs, heart and stomach need to develop more.

Seven Months

The baby has less room to move around. S/he spends some of the time awake and the rest of it asleep. The baby practises breathing. The baby's heart and lungs and stomach develop until they are perfectly formed and ready for use in the world outside the womb.

Eight Months

After nine months the baby is ready to be born. S/he is now strong enough to leave the safety of the womb. S/he will need the love and care of his/her mother and the other members of the family.

Nine Months

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Fourth Class Theme 6 The Wonder Of New Life

Option 2

Visit: From Parent(s) And Baby

Writing Activity 1: About The Lesson/The Visitor

Visit: From Parent(s) And Baby

The focus of this lesson is the development of the human baby from conception to birth. Arrange for a visit from parent(s) and baby. Brief the parent(s) thoroughly as regards the objective of the lesson. It is important that the visitor be comfortable with the subject matter.

The steps for preparing for a visitor are on Page 12.

Writing Activity (1): About the Lesson/The Visitor

As a follow-up to the visit or the information lesson you might ask the children to write what they learned about each stage of the baby's development, month by month, under headings such as size, appearance and ability. This work might be illustrated. The teacher could give guidelines in the form of questions, or unfinished sentences written on the blackboard, e.g.,

A Special Visitor To The Classroom.

Today Baby and visited our classroom. Baby is weeks old.

Before a baby is born it spends about months in its mother's

The baby gets through a tube called the umbilical cord.

To start with the baby looks like

The baby is the size of

After a month the baby looks like

At two months the baby is the size of

The baby looks like

Now the baby can

When the baby is three months old, s/he is able to

At four months the baby is

At five months the baby can

When the baby is six months in the womb, s/he can

As the baby's birth day comes near, the baby

After nine months the baby is ready to be born.

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Fourth Class Theme 6 The Wonder Of New Life

Follow-up Activities

Writing Activity (2): Diary Of A New Baby

Writing Activity (2): **Diary Of A New Baby**

Ask the children to write the diary of a baby waiting to be born. This work might be illustrated. The information cards and illustrations used earlier in this lesson would be helpful. Each entry in the diary might answer one or two of the following questions:

What does the baby look like? What size is the baby? What can the baby do?

Day One I look like ... I am the size of ... I can ...

After a month

Two months

Four months

Five months

Six months

Seven months

Eight months

Nine months Hurrah it's my birth day today!

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Fourth Class Theme 6 The Wonder OF New Life



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to recognise and learn to sequence the stages of development of the human baby from conception to birth. By teaching children to understand how new life develops, parents and teachers are encouraging them not to take the miracle of life for granted and to respect, value and cherish new life.

This home-school links page suggests that children are told the story of the growth of the baby in the womb before being born. You may wish to personalise it, telling your child the story of his/her own development, whether you are Daddy, Mammy or Guardian. It is advisable to read it for yourself first and to present it in your own words, as naturally as possible. Your child will probably have many questions to ask you about himself/herself after hearing this story.

Have you ever seen a bird's nest up close? What is it made of? (Grasses, twigs etc.) **How does the mother bird make it comfortable for her little ones when they hatch?** (She lines it with grass, leaves and moss).

Before you were born you spent about nine months cradled in your mother's (my) womb. The womb prepared a soft lining to keep you comfortable. It did this by becoming softer and thicker. This lining kept you safe and snug.

You needed nine months to grow completely and to be strong enough to live outside the womb. Nine months is the usual length of time a baby spends in the womb.

During that time the womb was your home. Everything you needed for life and comfort was provided in the womb. You were joined to your mother by a tube called the umbilical cord. Through the cord you got the food you needed to grow. What you didn't need returned to your mother (me).

At eight weeks you were the size of a grown up's thumb nail, the size of a 20p piece. Your hands and feet had already started to grow and you began to move about. You kicked gently. But because you were so small your mother (I) didn't feel you moving around. Now you were beginning to look like a baby. Though your eyes were closed, you moved your arms and legs around, stretching and kicking, curling your toes, making fists, frowning and making faces. You were doing your exercises and this helped your muscles to grow strong.

As the day of your birth drew near you had grown so much you had less room to move around. Now you practised breathing. There was no air in the womb, only liquid. Sometimes you swallowed the liquid and this gave you hiccups. Mammy may have felt you burping and wondered what was going on!

After nine months you were ready to be born. As you were welcomed into the world you were ready to begin another wonderful adventure.

8 Growing And Changing





Theme 8

Growing And Changing

Aim: To provide the children with opportunities to understand the changes that take place in both males and females during growth to adulthood.

Option 1	Theme Menu
	<p>Information Lesson: Growing Up</p> <p>Worksheet (1) : Growing And Changing</p>
Option 2	
	<p>Opening Game: As if ...</p> <p>Media Studies: Growing And Changing</p>
Follow-up Activities	
	<p>Art Activity: A Growing Up Story</p> <p>Worksheet (2) : A List of Changes</p> <p>Television Drama: The Early Early Show</p>

A Note on Growing

Children experience a range of life changes as they grow. As changes occur physically, socially and psychologically, they learn to adapt to societal and cultural changes around them. A focus on some of these changes advances the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem in children.

A note to the teacher on an approach to teaching children in fourth class about menstruation.

In the materials that follow there is a very simple explanation of menstruation.

Before this is taught, the children need to recognise and understand that just as the womb prepares to receive a fertilised egg, there are other kinds of readiness required for pregnancy such as emotional and psychological maturity.

These materials provide opportunities to learn about the care that needs to be taken of an expectant mother and her baby, the preparations an expectant mother and her family make, the responsibilities of parents and the extended family and of an individual as s/he grows.

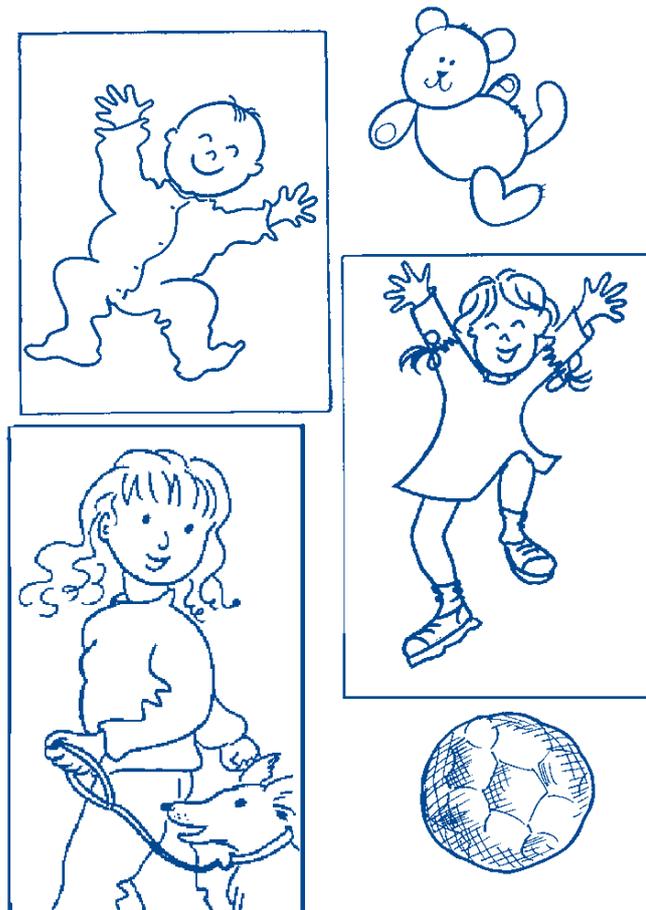
The subject of menstruation ideally should be presented when children have been given the opportunity to learn about the wonder of how the human body operates. The teacher could begin by setting aside a little time each week to talk about the human body. Ideally this information should be activity-based and there should be plenty of visual materials. The Usborne series of books may be useful.

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

The teacher might begin with a series of experiments on the five senses as in the materials for third class on page 86. The children could, for example, examine the eye's response to changes in lighting and identify foods by taste alone.

Other topics might include the skeleton, the nervous system and the digestive system. The latter, tracing the passage of food through the body, is an ideal preliminary to other lessons as, with the right approach, the embarrassment factor can be dispensed with. By the time the topic of menstruation is introduced, the children are comfortable with talking about the human body.



Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

Option 1

Information Lesson: Growing Up

Worksheet(1): Changing And Growing

Information Lesson: Growing Up

The information given in this lesson should be simple and appropriate to the children's developmental level. The following may give the teacher some direction. The headings are for teacher guidance also rather than for use with the class.

The lesson itself may be taught over a number of sessions. Some of the information is revision of third class materials and it will be repeated in more detail in the senior classes.

Introduction

You are part of the world of nature. You have seen how things grow and change in the natural world. You have seen how a seed goes through many changes to become a flower. Do you remember the changes that butterfly eggs go through as they grow into butterflies? Do you remember the changes that happen in the nine months it takes a fertilised egg to grow into a baby that is ready to be born?

Once born, compared to most of the world of nature, we grow very slowly. Most other mammals can stand and run within minutes of being born. It took you at least a year. Because of this, you had time to learn and develop safely and healthily. From photos, you can see how you grew since you were born. This didn't happen over night and we didn't see it happen.

We grow fastest as a baby. In the first year a baby triples in size. If this were to happen every year, by the time baby was three s/he would weigh the same as a fully grown adult.

How tall you grow depends mostly on chemicals which move around your body. These are called hormones. Hormones are like messages from the brain. The growth hormone reaches every cell in your body. This is what makes cells grow, so that your body can grow.

Growing from boy to man and growing from girl to woman

Young people grow in other ways too. They grow up to be men and women. Hormones cause these changes in the body too. At a certain age a special hormone travels around the body. This special hormone starts the changes that turn boys into men and turn girls into women.

Girls usually start to change at an earlier age than boys. Most of the important changes take place in girls between the ages of nine and eighteen, and in boys between the age of eleven and eighteen. Boys usually experience a growth spurt from the age of twelve and by the time they are fourteen they may be taller and weigh more than girls. Have you noticed this? A group of boys and girls may be the same age but they are different heights. We all grow differently. At ten many girls will be taller than boys of the same age. But the boys grow faster as teenagers and many catch up and overtake the girls in height.

Changes in Shape

As well as growing taller, other changes happen too. The body's shape changes for instance. If it didn't it would grow bigger but keep the baby shape it started with. Can you imagine what that would look like?

A girl's hips get wider. Can you guess why this might be? A girl's hips get wider because she may be a mother when she is grown up and nature is preparing her for this. The hips have to be wider to hold the womb and carry the growing baby inside the woman. A girl's breasts develop. Once again nature is preparing for motherhood. A mother can feed her baby with milk from the breasts.

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

A boy changes shape. His body becomes more muscular and stronger. His shoulders broaden. A boy's penis grows too. He is changing into a man.

Menstruation

A girl begins to menstruate and this is called 'getting her periods'. This is another way nature prepares for a baby. Every month an egg travels down a tube into the womb. Do you remember we heard about the way the womb prepares a special lining, in case there is a baby? The womb does this every month. When there is no baby, the lining dissolves, mixes with a little blood and leaves the body through the vagina. A period lasts for about three to five days and a girl will need to wear special towels (pads) to protect her clothing while she has her period. Menstruation can begin at any time from 9-18 years. It is normal for a girl's periods to be irregular during the first years.

Voice Changes

A girl's voice begins to sound more like a woman's. A boy's voice becomes lower. He begins to sound more like a man.

Changes in Friendship Patterns

Boys become interested in girls and girls get interested in boys. They begin to share more of the same interests. Establish with the children the 'gender composition' of their friendships group. A pattern is likely to emerge where the majority of friends that children of this age have are 'same sex' friends. Ask the children why they think this is. Why do they think this might change?

Mood Changes

As boys and girls grow and change they may find that their moods change quickly. One moment they may feel very happy and the next they may feel lonely and sad. The special hormone that is travelling around the body is part of the reason this happens. Feelings and emotions may change too. This is because young people are growing up. It wouldn't do for the body to grow up and the mind and feelings to stay the same as a child's. These changes are exciting but sometimes they can leave people feeling confused.

Increases in Body Hair

Boys of course start to get hair on their face. Eventually they will need to shave unless they want to grow a beard. Boys also grow hair on their chests and legs. In both boys and girls hair grows underarm. Hair also grows around a boy's penis and a girl's vagina. These areas are called the pubic areas and the hair is known as pubic hair.

Skin Changes

In boys and girls, skin becomes more oily. They also perspire more. Because the skin will be more oily and the body will perspire more, it is also a time to remember to wash well all over daily. (The teacher may wish to talk about personal hygiene during puberty in more detail. This topic is dealt with more fully in fifth class.) During this important time you will need the right food, exercise and sleep to grow properly. These are some of the changes that happen when you are growing up. They are all part of nature's wonderful plan to turn you into a man or woman.

Worksheet(1): Growing And Changing

The following worksheet deals with a variety of the changes that occur as we grow and change. The teacher could discuss it with the children and ask them as individuals or in groups to fill it in.

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

Name: **Growing And Changing**

When I was a baby

Now I am In Fourth Class

When I was hungry

When I am hungry I

.....

.....

When I was happy I

When I am happy I

.....

.....

When I was lonely I

When I am lonely I

.....

.....

When I wanted to play I

When I want to play I

.....

.....

When I wanted sweets I

When I want sweets I

.....

.....

When I was sick I

When I am sick I

.....

.....

I looked like

I look like

.....

.....

Ask the children when will be they be teenagers?

Are they looking forward to being teenagers? Why?/Why not?

When do they think they will be a grown up?

Are they looking forward to being a grown-up? Why?

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

Option 2

Opening Game:	As If ...
Media Studies:	Growing And Changing

Opening Game: As If ...

The teacher calls out an age-group category and asks the children to respond as if they are that age, changing categories and actions at a given signal, e.g.,

Move (Stand, Eat, Smile, Drink, Wave, Cry) as if you are ...

(a baby, a child, a teenager, an adult or a senior citizen)

At certain points the teacher may say 'freeze the action' and ask a relevant question, e.g.,

To baby:	Why are you crying?	I want my bottle
To child:	Where are you going?	I'm going to school
To teenager:	What are you listening to?	I'm listening to pop music
To adult:	What are you doing?	I'm cooking a meal
To senior citizen:	Why are you standing there?	I'm taking a rest

The children sit in a circle and the teacher leads a discussion on attitudes and perceptions in relation to different age-groups. Children are labelled as one category and asked for a comment on another category, e.g.,

John, you are a senior citizen. What do you think of young people? Why do you say that?

Mary, you are an adult. What do you think of babies? Why do you say that?

Thomas, you are a baby. What do you think of adults? Why do you say that?

Mark, you are a child. What do you think of teenagers? Why do you say that?

Children are asked to judge from the answers whether or not one age-group has fixed ideas about the other.

The next exercise will address the issue of how age-groups are portrayed by the media and perceived by the viewers.

Media Studies: Growing And Changing

Teacher and children brainstorm on well-known television programmes which have characters from a variety of age-groups. A list is compiled from which two or three appropriate programmes are chosen as the subjects of discussion. The teacher puts age-group headings on the blackboard and the television characters are named and categorised accordingly:

Babies Children Teenagers Adults Senior Citizens

The characters in each category are discussed individually and then compared with each other:

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

What kind of a person is ...?

Does s/he help other people?

Where does s/he live?

Who lives with him/her?

What is their house like?

What kind of clothes does s/he wear?

What kind of hairstyle has s/he?

What does s/he do every day?

What are his/her friends like?

Where does s/he eat?

What does s/he usually eat?

How is s/he the same as/different to the other ... (babies/children, etc.) on the list?

Having discussed each category separately, they can be compared and contrasted to real life figures:

Do babies usually ... (select aspects of babies life)

Do children (teenagers, adults or senior citizens) usually ... (select aspects of TV portrayal)

In reality what is the biggest change

- a) **from being a baby to being a child?**
- b) **from being a child to being a teenager?**
- c) **from being a teenager to being an adult?**
- d) **from being an adult to being a senior citizen?**

The teacher offers comment on the beauty of all ages and age-groups and helps children to appreciate the cycle of life.

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing

Follow-up Activities

Art Activity: A Growing Up Story

Worksheet (2): A List Of Changes

Television Drama: The Early Early Show

Art Activity: **A Growing Up Story**

Using a storyboard format, ask the children to draw a cartoon showing a person, maybe themselves, growing up. A selection of the following questions may be useful as a starting point:

What were you like as a baby, as a toddler and starting school?

What are you like now?

What do you think you will be like as a teenager, as an adult and as an older person?

How do you think you will have changed as you mature?

Worksheet (2): **A List Of Changes**

Growing Up

Our bodies change as we grow. Some of the changes we can see. Some changes happen inside the body and some occur on the outside. Make a list of these changes.

Changes that happen inside the body...

Changes that happen outside the body...

Changes that happen in the mind...

Television Drama: **The Early Early Show**

There is a panel of people on the Early Early Show, one person representing each age-group. Children are selected/nominated by the teacher and/or class to be the panel people. This is an interactive, participative show so the audience (class) are part of the action. One child is the main interviewer/host. Each panel member is asked why s/he is in the news and s/he explains, e.g.,

I'm a senior citizen and I'm celebrating my 100th birthday

I'm a baby and I've just taken my first steps

I'm an adult and I am getting married next month

I'm a teenager and I'm starting post-primary school

I'm a child and I'm learning how to play the piano

The interviewer and the audience ask many questions and the answers, appropriate to the age-group, should illustrate the growth and development that take place during our lifetime.

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Fourth Class Theme 8 Growing And Changing



Home-School Links

It is recommended that this Home-School Links page be sent home in advance of doing the lesson in class

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to understand the changes that take place in both males and females during growth to adulthood. Children experience a range of life changes as they grow. As changes occur physically, socially and psychologically, they learn to adapt to societal and cultural changes around them. A focus on some of these changes advances the development of self-knowledge and self-esteem in children. The following information is given here so that you will be familiar with the content of the class lesson and you may wish to prepare or revise information with your child.

In the materials that follow there is a very simple explanation of menstruation. Before this is taught, the children need to recognise and understand that just as the womb prepares to receive a fertilised egg, there are other kinds of readiness required for pregnancy such as emotional and psychological maturity.

The subject of menstruation ideally should be presented when children have been given the opportunity to learn about the wonder of how the human body operates. You might begin with a series of experiments on the five senses. Your child could, for example, examine the eye's response to changes in lighting and identify foods by taste alone. Other topics might include the skeleton, the nervous system and the digestive system. The latter, tracing the passage of food through the body, is an ideal preliminary to other lessons as, with the right approach, the embarrassment factor can be dispensed with. So by the time the topic of menstruation is introduced the children are comfortable with talking about the human body.

Introduction

You are part of the world of nature. You have seen how things grow and change in the natural world. You have seen how a seed goes through many changes to become a flower. Do you remember the changes that butterfly eggs go through as they grow into butterflies? Do you remember the changes that happen in the nine months it takes a fertilised egg to grow into a baby that is ready to be born.

Once born, compared to most of the world of nature, we grow very slowly. Most other mammals can stand and run within minutes of being born. It took you at least a year. Because of this, you had time to learn and develop safely and healthily. From photos you can see how you have grown since you were born. This didn't happen overnight and we didn't see it happen. We grow fastest as a baby. In the first year a baby triples in size. If this were to happen every year, by the time baby was three s/he would weigh the same as a fully grown adult.

How tall you grow depends mostly on chemicals which move around your body. These are called hormones. Hormones are like messages from the brain. The growth hormone reaches every cell in your body. This is what makes cells grow, so that your body can grow. You grow in other ways too. You will grow up to be a man or woman. Hormones cause these changes in your body too. When you reach a certain age a special hormone travels around your body. This special hormone starts the changes that turn boys into men and turn girls into women.

Girls usually start to change at an earlier age than boys. Most of the important changes take place in girls between the ages of nine and eighteen. Most of the important changes in boys start when they are eleven and by the time they are fourteen boys start to be taller and to weigh more than girls. Have you noticed this? A group of boys and girls may be the same age

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class

Theme 8

Growing And Changing

but they are different heights. We all grow differently. At ten many girls will be taller than boys of the same age. But the boys grow faster as teenagers. They often catch up and then overtake the girls in height.

Changes in Shape

As well as growing taller other changes happen too. The body's shape changes for instance. If it didn't it would grow bigger but keep its baby shape. Can you imagine what that would look like? A girl's hips get wider. Can you guess why this might be? A girl's hips get wider because she may be a mother when she is grown up and nature is preparing her for this. The hips have to be wider to hold the womb and carry the growing baby inside the woman. A girl's breasts develop. Once again nature is preparing for motherhood. A mother can feed her baby with milk from the breasts. A boy changes shape. His body becomes more muscular and stronger. His shoulders broaden. A boy's penis grows too. He is changing into a man.

Menstruation

A girl menstruates or 'gets periods'. This is another way nature prepares for a baby. Every month an egg travels down a tube into the womb. Do you remember we heard about the way the womb prepares a special lining, in case there is a baby? The womb does this every month. When there is no baby, the lining dissolves and leaves the body through the vagina. The lining is mixed with a little blood and the egg.

Voice Changes

A girl's voice begins to sound more like a woman's. A boy's voice becomes lower. He begins to sound more like a man.

Changes in friendship patterns

Boys become interested in girls and girls get interested in boys. They begin to share more of the same interests.

Mood Changes

As boys and girls grow and change they may find that their moods change quickly. One moment they may feel very happy and the next they may feel lonely and sad. The special hormone that is travelling around the body is part of the reason this happens. Your feelings and emotions may change too. This is because you are growing up. It wouldn't do for your body to grow up and your mind and feelings to stay the same as a child's. These changes are exciting but sometimes they can leave you feeling confused.

Body Hair

Boys of course start to get hair on their face. Eventually they will need to shave unless they want to grow a beard. Boys also grow hair on their chests and legs. In both boys and girls hair grows under the arms. Hair also grows around a boy's penis and a girl's vagina. This is called pubic hair.

Skin Changes

In boys and girls, skin becomes more oily. They also perspire more. Because your skin will be more oily and you will perspire more, it is also a time to remember to wash well all over daily.

9 Problem-Solving





Theme 9

Problem-Solving

Aim: To provide the children with opportunities to discuss how problems can be solved.

Option 1

Board Game:	Solve The Problem
Let's Talk:	About Ways Of Solving Problems

Option 2

Group Problem-Solving:	Solving Scenarios
Group Reflection:	Process And Product

Option 3

Case Study:	Cathy's Problem
Action Plan:	What We Have Learned

Follow-up Activities

Forward Planning:	For Future Reference
Game:	Missing Pieces

Note on Problem-Solving

Living life to the full involves solving problems and making decisions and choices. Such processes may be encountered as an individual or as a group. Trying to solve children's problems or to resolve their difficulties for them instils in them the attitude that someone else can always "fix it" and that they themselves are not capable of solving even simple problems without adult help. The decision-making process in these materials can be taught to a class or individual who will, with practice, be better able to make responsible, age-appropriate decisions autonomously with an appreciation of the consequences.

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Option 1

Board Game:	Solve The Problem
Let's Talk:	About Ways Of Solving Problems

Board Game: Solve The Problem

For this Board Game the teacher needs the Problem Path (accompanying sheet may be photocopied), the Problem Cards (accompanying problems to be photocopied and cut up) and a dice. There are four players and one referee to every game.

The children throw the dice and proceed as in Snakes and Ladders. If they land on a Problem they must pick a card, listen to the Problem being read by the Referee and choose the A, B or C Solution. They score and move accordingly. The child who reaches **Home** first is the winner. Alternatively, there is a time limit and the child who is farthest ahead at the 'time up' signal is the winner.

1. The Problem

June and Jade are both in Fourth Class. Everywhere June goes Jade follows. June did not mind in the past when they were the best of friends. Now they are always arguing. Jade copies June. She even copies the way June wears her hair. Everything June says, Jade agrees with it. June is getting tired of this. Recently June got a new green top. The very next day Jade had the exact same one. Jade gets jealous if June talks to anyone else.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| A. | June could talk to Jade about how she feels | Score + 2 |
| B. | She could ignore Jade | Score -1 |
| C. | She could get a gang after Jade | Score - 3 |

2. The Problem

There is a new boy in the class. His name is Joe. He seems shy and is very quiet. The teacher has asked Cathal to show Joe around, to show him where everything is, to help him make new friends and to settle in. Cathal finds this hard. Joe has little to say for himself. The other boys have noticed too. One gang in particular is picking on him and calling him names. Cathal knows the teacher has asked him to look after Joe but he is afraid of this gang.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|------------------------------|-----------|
| A. | Cathal could organise a gang | Score - 3 |
| B. | He could tell the teacher | Score +2 |
| C. | He could drop Joe | Score - 1 |

3. The Problem

Laura's big sister is called Louise. Laura loves her very much. They used to be good friends and play a lot together. But Louise is in post-primary school now. She has homework and choir practice and new friends and Laura hardly ever sees her. Laura started to read Louise's diary to find out what she is doing. Laura knows that the diary is Louise's private property but doesn't know how else to find out what Louise is thinking and doing.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|----------|
| A. | Laura could talk to her mother/father | Score +2 |
| B. | She could talk to Louise | Score +2 |
| C. | She could keep reading the diary | Score -2 |

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

4. The Problem

Claire has invited Sharon to her birthday party. Sharon is surprised. Claire often picked on her and called her names. Claire has told Sharon that it is a fancy dress party. It isn't - Claire is just trying to make a fool of Sharon. Imagine how Sharon would feel arriving at the party in fancy dress to find the other girls in their party clothes. The other girls know about the trick. Some of them want to warn Sharon but they are scared of Claire.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| A. | The girls could talk to Claire | Score +1 |
| B. | They could ignore the problem | Score -2 |
| C. | They could talk to Sharon | Score +2 |

5. The Problem

John's Granny lives with him. She is very kind and gentle but she is very old and forgets things. Sometimes she thinks she is a child again herself and that John's mother is her mother too. John is afraid to invite boys from his class to visit, in case they make fun of his Granny. The other boys wonder why John never invites them to visit. They think he isn't being very friendly.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| A. | John could tell the boys to get lost | Score -1 |
| B. | He could tell and invite a few close friends | Score +2 |
| C. | He could tell his mother or father | Score +3 |

6. The Problem

Simon is the eldest at home. He has lots of brothers and sisters. Home can be a noisy place. His best friend at school is an only child. His name is Mark. Home is a quiet place for Mark. Both boys are afraid to invite the other to visit because of what they might think of each other's home. Each boy wonders why the other hasn't invited him to visit.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| A. | Simon could give out to his young brothers/sisters | Score -3 |
| B. | He could talk to his mother/father | Score +3 |
| C. | He could invite Mark and explain the situation | Score +2 |

7. The Problem

Gemma and Kelly are good friends. Kelly appears to be very upset about something. Gemma doesn't know what the matter is.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------------|
| A. | Gemma and Kelly could spend more time together | Score +1 |
| B. | Gemma could talk to Kelly | Score +2 |
| C. | Gemma could ignore Kelly being upset | Score -2 |

8. The Problem

Kevin has found out that Larry has been telling untrue stories about him to their friends at school.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| A. | Kevin could tell the teacher | Score +2 |
| B. | He could ignore Larry and his stories | Score -2 |
| C. | He could talk to Larry | Score +2 |

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

9. The Problem

Frank is standing in a queue in a shop waiting to be served. An adult pushes past and the shop assistant starts serving the adult first.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| A. | Frank could say 'excuse me, I was here first' | Score + 3 |
| B. | He could make a face at the adult | Score - 3 |
| C. | He could ignore what is happening | Score 0 |

10. The Problem

Louise is annoyed to find her younger sister Laura has been borrowing her clothes. She borrowed her jacket and it was torn when Louise got it back.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----------|
| A. | Louise could talk to Laura | Score + 3 |
| B. | She could take something that belonged to Laura | Score - 3 |
| C. | Louise could get a lock for her press | Score + 1 |

11. The Problem

Megan goes shopping with her mother to buy some clothes for herself, but it seems to Megan that her mother wants to make all the decisions about what to buy.

What do you believe is the right thing to do?

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------|
| A. | Megan could agree with her mother's decision | Score 0 |
| B. | She could sulk and refuse to talk | Score - 2 |
| C. | She could look for a compromise | Score + 3 |

Let's Talk: About Ways Of Solving Problems

When the Board Game is finished, the children sit in a circle and talk about the problems they encountered and the solutions that were chosen. Varying answers can be analysed. The teacher points out that most people encounter problems occasionally. The response to a problem, in the effort to solve it, influences the outcome for better or worse. The teacher asks the children, in turn, to say what they learned from the game about ways to solve problems. Some solutions may be listed and put on a chart, e.g.,

To Solve A Problem ...

Talk to the person involved

Listen to the other person

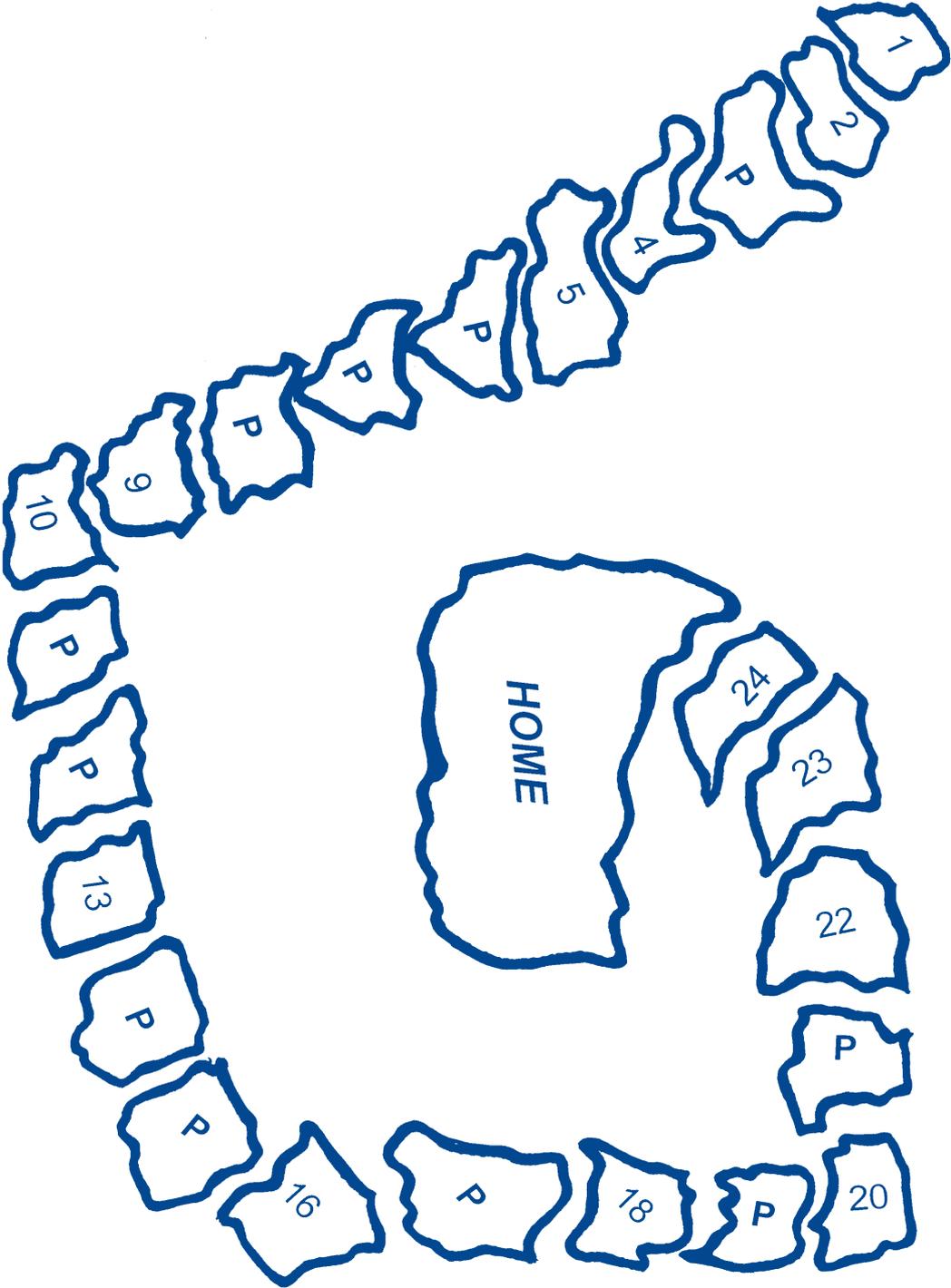
Ask questions for more information

Explain your point of view

Tell someone you trust

Ask someone you trust for help

Solve the problem game



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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Option 2

Group Problem-Solving: Solving Scenarios

Group Reflection: Process and Product

Group Problem-Solving: Solving Scenarios

The following are suggested problem scenarios. The teacher may wish to devise others, based on relevant home-based or school-based situations. A different scenario is assigned to each group of six children. The children are asked to find a solution to the problem, to consider the possible consequences of this solution and to think about what they might do themselves in similar circumstances. Leading questions might be:

What is the problem here? What do you think about it?

Who is causing the problem? Who is being hurt? Who is losing out?

How do you think this problem could be solved?

Would this be the right thing to do? Why?

What might happen then? Would that be the end of the problem?

Would everyone be happy? Would the problem be solved?

Did anything like this ever happen to you? What did you do?

If this happened to you, what would you do?

A process of group decision-making is outlined in the Suggested Teaching Approaches, Page 11 and it may be used here. In each group, children work alone at first, deciding how they would deal with the situation. Then three pairs are formed in the group and the two children in each pair compare and contrast their decisions. When this is done, the three pairs combine and work as a group of six people, sharing their ideas towards finding the best possible solution.

The Scenarios for the Decision-Making Groups

1.
June and Jade are both in Fourth Class. Everywhere June goes Jade follows. June did not mind before. They were once the best of friends. Now they are always arguing. Jade copies June. She even copies the way June wears her hair. Everything June says, Jade agrees with it. June is getting tired of this. Recently June got a new green top. The very next day Jade had the exact same one. Jade gets jealous if June talks to anyone else.

2.
There is a new boy in the class. His name is Joe. He seems shy and is very quiet. The teacher has asked Cathal to show Joe around, to show him where everything is, to help him make new friends and to settle in. Cathal finds this hard. Joe has so little to say for himself. The other boys have noticed too. One gang in particular are picking on him and calling him names. Cathal knows teacher has asked him to look after Joe but he is afraid of this gang.

3.
Laura's big sister is called Louise. Laura loves her very much. They used to be good friends and play a lot together. But Louise is in post-primary school now. She has homework and choir practice and new friends and Laura hardly ever sees her. Laura started to read Louise's diary to

Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

find out what she is doing. Laura knows that the diary is Louise's private property but she doesn't know how else to find out what Louise is thinking and doing.

4.

Claire has invited Sharon to her birthday party. Sharon is surprised. Claire often picked on her and called her names. Claire has told Sharon that it is a fancy dress party. It isn't - Claire is just trying to make a fool of Sharon. Imagine how Sharon would feel arriving at the party in fancy dress to find the other girls in their party clothes. The other girls know about the trick. Some of them want to warn Sharon but they are scared of Claire.

5.

John's Granny lives with him. She is very kind and gentle. But she is very old and forgets things. Sometimes she thinks she is a child again herself and that John's mother is her mother too. John is afraid to invite boys from his class to visit, in case they make fun of his Granny. The other boys wonder why John never invites them to visit. They think he isn't being very friendly.

6.

Simon is the eldest at home. He has lots of brothers and sisters. Home can be a noisy place. His best friend, at school, is an only child. His name is Mark. Home is a quiet place for Mark. Both boys are afraid to invite the other to visit, because of what they might think of each other's home. Each boy wonders why the other hasn't invited him to visit.

7.

Gemma and Kelly are good friends. Kelly appears to be very upset about something. Gemma doesn't know what the matter is.

8.

Kevin has found out that Larry has been telling untrue stories about him to their friends at school.

9.

Frank is standing in a queue in a shop waiting to be served. An adult pushes past and the shop assistant starts serving the adult first.

10.

Louise is annoyed to find her younger sister Laura has been borrowing her clothes. She borrowed her jacket and it was torn when Louise got it back.

11.

Megan goes shopping with her mother to buy some clothes for herself, but it seems to Megan that her mother wants to make all the decisions about what to buy.

Group Reflection:

Process And Product

With reference to the work which they have undertaken, the children reflect on the process of deciding how to deal with the various scenarios. The **process** of group decision-making, **how** decisions are arrived at, is a significant one. It is important that the class discuss the solutions and the **process** of arriving at them. The **Who? What? Why? How?** questions facilitate this reflection.

The **product** of group decision-making, what the group decides, should represent consensus among the members of the group. Group problem-solving is analysed in the context of:

- (i) the responsibility to make right choices;
- (ii) the needs of the people involved;
- (iii) the possible consequences or outcomes of the proposed solutions.

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Option 3

Case Study:	Cathy's Problem
Action Plan:	What We Have Learned

Case Study: Cathy's Problem

The teacher guides the class through a process of problem-solving using a particular case study. The following is dramatised with three children acting as Cathy, Mammy and the baby.

**Cathy is trying to tell her mother something important.
Cathy's Mammy is tired and distracted by Cathy's younger brother.
She doesn't seem to be listening.**

The teacher gives general introductory questions to set the children thinking:

- How do you think Cathy feels now?
- How might she have behaved differently?
- What would you have done?
- What can Cathy do now?
- What might she say to her Mammy when she talks to her?
- What might happen then? Would this solve the problem?

The teacher and children might suggest that

Cathy should stop, calm down and think before before doing anything.

What might be a good way of calming down?

Count to ten, take time out, try to see things from her Mammy's point of view etc.

What might Cathy do then?

She might describe the problem to herself and see how she feels about it, for example:

Cathy thinks

- I am trying to tell my Mammy something I think is important.
- She isn't listening because my little brother needs attention.
- I feel disappointed, worried and anxious.

Cathy should decide who the problem belongs to:

- It's my problem because if I don't tell Mammy this ...
- It could be Mammy's problem because if she doesn't get to hear this ...
- It isn't my little brother's problem. He is too young to understand.

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Cathy should identify the real reason for the problem, stating the problem:

I have important news for my Mammy.

This might not be the right time to talk to her about it.

She is tired and my little brother needs minding.

Cathy should think about the problem and examine all sides of the question, in the light of the relevant facts. It may be necessary to establish these. She might ask herself:

Is this really important news?

What would happen if I didn't tell Mammy now?

Might there be a better time to tell her?

What might happen if I didn't tell her at all?

Cathy should think of lots of solutions:

I could stop trying to tell her and forget about it.

I could stop trying to tell her but feel upset.

Maybe I could get Mammy's attention by sulking, crying or shouting.

I could talk to a school friend about it instead.

I could wait for a better time to talk to her because I understand the reason why she didn't listen before.

Cathy should think ahead to the consequences and implications of each alternative:

If I stopped trying to tell Mammy and forgot about it, she wouldn't hear my news and she wouldn't be able to advise me, help me etc.

If I stopped trying to tell her but felt upset, Mammy wouldn't get to hear my news and I would feel upset.

If I could get Mammy's attention by sulking, crying or shouting I mightn't be able to get my message across. I'd upset Mammy, myself and my little brother. I would be showing my little brother bad example.

If I talked to a school friend about it instead, I might get different advice from that I would get from a grown up.

If I waited for a better time to talk to her because I understood the reason why she didn't listen before, Mammy would get to hear my news and have time to give me proper advice. But the same problem might happen again.

If I could find a better time to talk to Mammy and also tell her how I felt when she didn't listen before, I would be able to tell her my news and she would understand me better. We might be able to decide on a good time everyday to catch up on each other's news. Then maybe the problem wouldn't happen again!

Cathy should make a decision on the basis of all she has thought about.

Cathy can then go ahead and try the best plan.

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Action Plan: **What We Have Learned**

On the basis of the Case Study on Cathy's Problem, elicit from the children the possible steps to be taken when solving problems, e.g.,

1. **Stop, calm down and think before you act.**
2. **State the problem and how you feel about it.**
3. **Decide who the problem belongs to.**
4. **Identify the real reason for the problem.**
5. **Think about the problem. Examine all sides of the question in the light of the relevant facts. It may be necessary to establish these.**
6. **Think of lots of solutions.**
7. **Think ahead to the consequences and implications of each alternative.**
8. **Make a decision on the basis of what you have thought about.**
9. **Go ahead and try the best plan.**

Encourage the children to use their own language when formulating these guidelines for problem solving. Display these steps on a chart or poster.

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Follow-Up Activities

Forward Planning: For Future Reference

Game: Missing Pieces

Forward Planning: For Future Reference

The teacher assigns each child a partner at random or according to friendships.

In each pair, the first child poses a problem asking the second 'what would you do if ...'.

The second child responds, giving problem-solving strategies outlined in previous lessons.

The roles are reversed and this time the second child poses the problem and the first child responds.

The class reassembles and children, in turn, are invited to say

From this exercise I learned ...

Game: Missing Pieces

The accompanying diagrams of circles may be photocopied onto card, cut up, mixed up and put in five envelopes, as many times as is necessary to make up a set of envelopes for each group of five children in the class.

The class is divided into groups of 5 children. Each child gets an envelope with pieces of circles. Each child is asked to make a complete circle. The pieces in the envelope do not fit together as a complete circle. Within each group the children have all the pieces necessary to make up five complete circles.

Children work silently. To solve their problem and make up complete circles, children will have to be willing to give up the pieces they don't need and put them in the centre of the table for others to take and use. Children take pieces from those in the centre and if they don't suit they return them. The task is completed when each child in the group has completed a circle.

The children are given a limited time to complete the task. They then sit in a circle and talk about the experience, being prompted by questions from the teacher, e.g.,

What did you do when you opened the envelope?

How did you feel when you found that the pieces didn't make a circle?

How did the children in the group help each other?

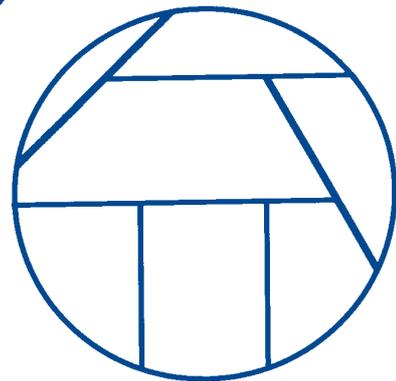
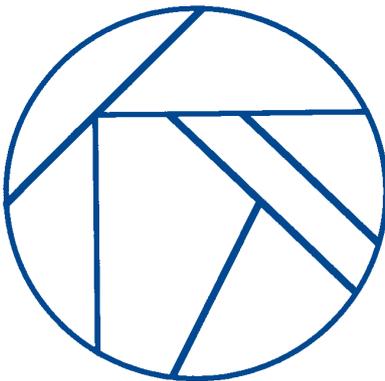
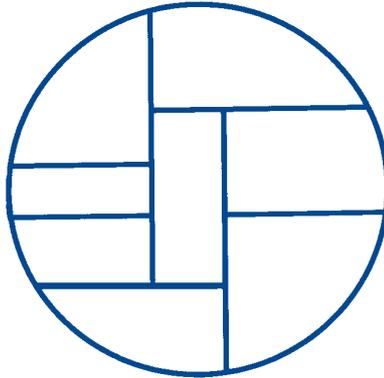
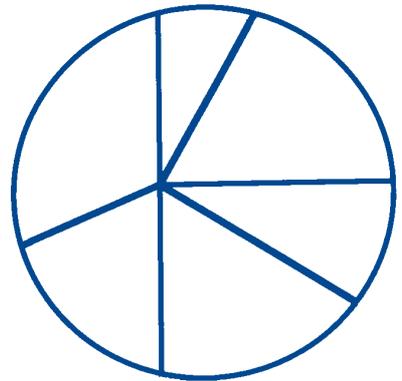
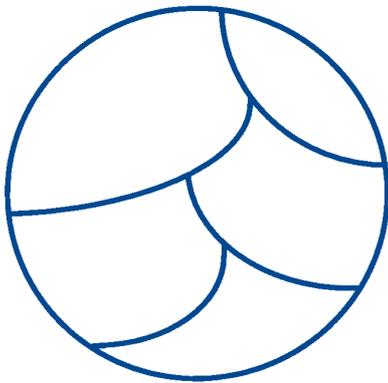
What did you learn from the exercise?

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Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving

Game: Missing Pieces

These diagrams of circles may be photocopied onto card, cut up, mixed up and put in five envelopes, as many times as is necessary to make up a set of envelopes for each group of five children in the class. This sheet may be photocopied as a self-correcting sheet for the pupils to check their results after the task has been completed.



Resource Materials for Relationships and Sexuality Education

Fourth Class Theme 9 Problem-Solving



Home-School Links

Dear Parents/Guardians,

The aim of this lesson is to provide children with opportunities to discuss how problems can be solved. Living life to the full involves solving problems and making decisions and choices. Such processes may be encountered as an individual or as a group. Trying to solve children's problems or to resolve their difficulties for them instills in them the attitude that someone else can always "fix it" and that they themselves are not capable of solving even simple problems without adult help.

The following are suggested activities which you might like to undertake at home with your child.

In the case of each of the following pretend situations, discuss with your child possible ways of finding a solution:

His/her only friend has a cousin coming to stay and says s/he won't be available to play for a couple of weeks;

Homework is not done because it wasn't written down;

S/he kicked a school football into a building site next to the school yard;

S/he is sometimes late for school because s/he stays watching television;

S/he is asked for his/her lunch every day by a child in school?

In the case of each you could ask:

What is the problem here? What do you think about it?

Who is causing the problem? Who is being hurt? Who is losing out?

How do you think this problem could be solved?

Would this be the right thing to do? Why?

What might happen then? Would that be the end of the problem?

Would everyone be happy? Would the problem be solved?

Some strategies for solving problems could be worked out:

Think about the problem;

Think of lots of solutions;

Think what would be the right thing to do;

Think ahead to the consequences and implications of each alternative;

Make a decision on the basis of what you have thought about;

Go ahead and try the best plan.

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