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The Incredible Me: A Journey Inside Our Amazing Bodies

Materials Needed

- **Books:**
 - *The Magic School Bus Inside the Human Body* by Joanna Cole
 - An age-appropriate book on female anatomy, such as the American Girl book *The Care and Keeping of You 1*
 - *Me and My Amazing Body* by Joan Sweeney
 - *Listening with My Heart: A story of kindness and self-compassion* by Gabi Garcia
- **Art & Craft Supplies:**
 - Large roll of butcher paper or easel paper
 - Markers, crayons, and colored pencils
 - Red and blue yarn
 - Play-Doh or modeling clay (various colors)
 - Construction paper, scissors, glue stick
 - Empty paper towel rolls
 - Cotton balls
- **Science & Activity Supplies:**
 - A large clear jar
 - Balloons
 - Journal or notebook and pencils
 - Index cards
 - A "Feelings Jar" (any empty, clean jar or box)
 - Yoga mat or comfortable space for movement
 - Ingredients for a healthy snack (fruits, yogurt, vegetables, etc.)

Week 1: The Body's Building Blocks & Super Systems

Focus: Skeletal, Muscular, Circulatory, and Respiratory Systems.

Day 1: My Body Blueprint (Skeletal System)

- **Science:** Have your student lie down on the large butcher paper while you trace their body outline. Read about the skeletal system in *Me and My Amazing Body*. Together, start drawing the major bones (skull, spine, ribs, arm and leg bones) inside the outline. Talk about how bones give our body shape and protect our organs.
- **Writing:** In the journal, use the prompt: "If my bones could talk, they would say..." Encourage creativity—maybe the leg bones love to run, or the skull loves to think!
- **Movement:** Play "Bone-mon Says." Use simple bone names: "Simon says touch your skull," "Simon says wiggle your phalanges (fingers/toes)," "Simon says puff out your ribs."
- **Body Care:** Discuss foods that build strong bones, like milk, cheese, yogurt, and leafy greens like spinach. Enjoy a snack of yogurt with berries.

Day 2: Mighty Muscles (Muscular System)

- **Science:** Learn how muscles help us move. Use different colors of Play-Doh to create "muscles" and lay them over the bones on your body map. Show how some muscles are big (like in our legs) and some are small (like in our face).
- **Writing:** Write a short story from the perspective of a muscle. Is it a heart muscle that never stops beating? A leg muscle running a race? An eye muscle reading a book?
- **Movement:** Do a series of stretches. Reach for the sky, touch your toes, do arm circles. While stretching, ask your student which muscles they can feel working. Try a few simple yoga poses like Warrior or Tree Pose.
- **Body Care:** Talk about how protein (from foods like chicken, beans, and nuts) helps build strong muscles and how stretching keeps them from getting tight.

Day 3: The River of Life (Circulatory System)

- **Science:** Read about the heart, blood, and blood vessels in *The Magic School Bus*. Explain that the heart is a powerful pump. Use the red yarn for arteries (carrying blood from the heart) and blue yarn for veins (carrying blood to the heart), and glue them onto your body map.
- **Writing:** Create a simple "Owner's Manual for the Human Heart." Include sections like "What It Does," "How to Keep It Healthy," and "Fun Facts."
- **Movement:** Feel your pulse. Then, do 30 seconds of jumping jacks. Feel your pulse again. Discuss why it's beating faster (to pump more blood and oxygen to your working muscles!).
- **Body Care:** Brainstorm a list of "heart-healthy" activities, like riding a bike, swimming, or playing outside.

Day 4: The Breath of Life (Respiratory System)

- **Science:** Discuss the lungs and how we breathe. Use a balloon to demonstrate: blowing it up is like breathing in (inhaling), and letting the air out is like breathing out (exhaling). Draw and add the lungs to your body map.
- **Writing:** Write a poem about breathing. Use sensory words: what does the air feel like? What does a deep breath sound like? How does your belly feel when it fills with air?
- **Movement:** Practice "Belly Breathing." Lie on your back and place a small stuffed animal on your belly. Watch it rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out. This is a wonderful tool for calming down.
- **Mind Care:** Connect the movement activity to caring for our minds. Explain that when we feel worried or upset, taking a few slow, deep breaths can help our brains and bodies feel calm and safe.

Day 5: Systems Celebration!

- **Art & Science:** Finish and label all the systems you've learned about on the body map. Let your student be the teacher and give you a "tour" of their work.
- **Writing:** Create a "Healthy Me" poster. Divide a piece of paper into four sections for each system learned. Draw or write one healthy habit for each one (e.g., drink milk for bones, stretch for muscles).
- **Movement:** Create a "Body Systems Dance"! Make up a move for each system: a stiff robot walk for the skeleton, flexing for muscles, a hand-pumping motion over the heart for circulation, and a big inhale/exhale for respiration. Put it all together with music.
- **Body & Soul Care:** Make a fun, healthy snack together, like a fruit rainbow on a stick or "ants on a log" (celery with peanut butter and raisins). Enjoy your creation while talking about your favorite part of the week.

Week 2: Control Center, Fuel Factory & The Whole Me

Focus: Nervous System, Digestive System, Female Anatomy, and caring for our Body, Mind, and Soul.

Day 6: The Body's Boss (Nervous System)

- **Science:** Introduce the brain as the body's control center, with the spinal cord and nerves as its messengers. Add a brain to your body map and use string or markers to draw nerves reaching out to the hands and feet.
- **Writing:** Journal about a favorite memory. Discuss how the brain is amazing for storing all our precious memories, thoughts, and feelings.
- **Movement:** Play "Red Light, Green Light" or freeze dance. Explain that the brain is sending super-fast signals to the muscles to "GO" and "STOP."
- **Mind Care:** Talk about how sleep is like recharging a battery for the brain. It helps the brain sort memories and get ready for a new day of learning and fun.

Day 7: The Fuel Factory (Digestive System)

- **Science:** Read about the digestive system in *The Magic School Bus*. Trace the path of food from the mouth, through the stomach and intestines. For a fun (and contained!) experiment, put a few crackers in a sealable plastic bag, add a little water, and let your student squish it to simulate how the stomach breaks down food.
- **Writing:** Create a comic strip titled "The Adventures of an Apple Slice" showing its journey through the digestive system.
- **Movement:** Do some "Tummy Taming" yoga. Gentle twists and cat-cow poses are great for helping digestion.
- **Body Care:** Discuss how water and fiber (found in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains) help our digestive system run smoothly and keep us comfortable.

Day 8: Wonderfully Made (Female Anatomy)

- **Science:** Using *The Care and Keeping of You*, gently introduce the internal parts of the female reproductive system (uterus, ovaries). Frame this as a special and powerful system inside the body. Focus on health and the amazing potential for creating life far in the future. Keep the tone positive and matter-of-fact. Add these organs to the body map.
- **Reading:** Read the book together. Let your student lead by asking questions. Focus on parts about celebrating how unique and strong girls' bodies are.
- **Writing:** In the journal, list or write about three amazing things a body can do (run fast, give a warm hug, grow, heal, etc.). Celebrate strength and function.
- **Soul Care:** Introduce the idea of body positivity. Our bodies are all different shapes, sizes, and colors, and that's what makes us unique and beautiful. Affirm that her body is her own and it is good.

Day 9: Caring for My Whole Self (Mind & Soul)

- **Mind/Soul Care:** Read *Listening with My Heart*. Discuss the connection between our brain, our feelings, and how we treat ourselves. Introduce the idea of "self-talk" and being a kind friend to ourselves.

- **Writing:** Create your "Feelings Jar." On small slips of paper, write down different emotions (happy, sad, frustrated, proud, shy, excited). When a big feeling comes up, she can pull a paper from the jar, name the feeling, and know that it's okay to feel that way.
- **Movement:** Play "Emotion Charades." Take turns acting out an emotion from the jar using only your body and face, and have the other person guess what it is. This is a fun way to build emotional intelligence.
- **Soul Care:** Practice a 2-minute "kindness meditation." Sit quietly, close your eyes, place a hand on your heart, and think one kind thought about yourself.

Day 10: Celebration of Me!

- **Project Showcase:** Present the completed "Incredible Me" body map! Have your student proudly explain each system and one fun fact she learned about it.
- **Writing:** Write a thank-you letter to "My Amazing Body." Encourage her to thank it for specific things, like "Thank you, legs, for helping me run and play," or "Thank you, brain, for letting me imagine new worlds."
- **Movement:** Have a "Healthy Body Party"! Play favorite upbeat songs, do the Body Systems Dance again, and enjoy a healthy, delicious snack you make together.
- **Body, Mind & Soul Care:** Create a "Self-Care Wheel." Draw a big circle and divide it into three sections: Body, Mind, and Soul. In each section, draw or write down simple activities that care for that part (e.g., Body: play outside; Mind: read a book; Soul: cuddle with a pet). Hang it up as a reminder of all the ways to be kind to her whole self.

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