



**Ecoles européennes**

Bureau du Secrétaire général  
Unité de Développement Pédagogique

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## **Program of the Orthodox Religion in Primary School**

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**APPROVED BY THE JOINT TEACHING COMMITTEE on 9, 10 and 11 FEBRUARY 2011  
IN BRUSSELS**

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**Entry into force: September 2011**

**Under the responsibility of the Orthodox Religious Authority**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Common objective for all religions being taught in the European schools

Religions classes taught in the European schools want to be special places of educational environment. By providing each pupil with points of reference for their future lives, different options of analysis for their daily choices in life, allows young people to organise themselves and live in a way that is carefully thought out and responsible.

They implement a global education which first and foremost searches for meaning and poses questions, “drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe”, as defined in the Preamble of the Lisbon Treaty.

Religions classes provide accurate information on the articles of faith of each denomination. They stimulate initiatives that develop a consistent approach of values in order to prepare all pupils to become responsible citizens, capable of contributing to the development of democratic societies, supportive, pluralist and open to other cultures, and to access the wealth of cultural diversity, all the while encouraging the recognition and respect of the diversity of beliefs.

Religion classes are included in the defined framework of the Convention on the Statute of the European schools: “In education and instruction, the conscience and convictions of individuals shall be respected.” (Article 4 §6)

In accordance with their religious or philosophical convictions, the right of parents to choose the religious curriculum of their choice or, alternatively, a course in non-religious ethics, provided as a compulsory subject, is in keeping with Article 14 §3 of the European Union’s Charter of Fundamental Rights.

Each religion class shall develop its own specific program in accordance with the fundamental aspects of the educational dynamic that the European Schools offer to their pupils. These are drawn up by the competent religious authorities according to the criteria of all school curricula and are approved by the Higher Council of the European schools.

It is up to the religious authorities of each denomination to propose their teachers of religion to the School authorities and to ensure their competence and qualifications.

The specific programs of each denomination, as well as the evaluation of the pupils that result, reflect the organizational conditions of the religious instruction provided by the European Schools: number of periods per week, classes that are often not homogeneous (for example: difference in knowledge levels of the pupils who sometimes arrive without any prerequisites). They also depend to a great extent on the pedagogical competences (teaching skills) of the teachers in order to be able to respond also to the various cultural and historical characteristics of each group.

## **1.2. General Common Objectives for all Subjects taught in the European Schools**

Primary School continues the education that has been initiated in kindergarten, expanding, and deepening the learning processes. This education is acquired in the various learning fields, by the basic learning skills laid down in the respective syllabuses and defined in the pages of the school report.

It presents pupils with the method for how to learn effectively by themselves in all areas, by stimulating their interest in discovery.

Primary School teaches pupils:

- how to ask essential questions and how to search by themselves for the appropriate answers and solutions with the help of present-day didactic resources and of the teachers;
- to establish and retain the essential skills and knowledge.

This education fosters a European spirit in pupils through the mixing of nationalities and languages and encourages pupils to exploit their natural gifts.

## **1.3. Specific objectives of teaching Orthodox Religion**

It is internationally recognized that religious education of pupils contributes to their moral and spiritual growth and is of immense social importance. Rendering it accessible in the educational environment of schools, operates complementary to the religious education provided within the framework of family and Church, and contributes to the integral education of the pupils.

For a period of twelve years in the curriculum of the European Schools, Christianity is studied

- as biblical word,
- as Orthodox Christian tradition,
- as cultural expression,
- as a course in history,
- as a quest for the truth, and
- as contemporary presence in the world.

Furthermore, the pupils are also provided with information concerning other Christian denominations.

The objective of this lesson is to further develop the personality of the pupils, to cultivate ecumenical and human values, as well as to develop an Orthodox Christian consciousness, on the basis of the Orthodox cultural heritage.

The purpose of teaching the subject of Orthodox Religion is to shape free and responsible citizens.

Teaching the subject of Orthodox Religion contributes to:

- Acquiring knowledge concerning Christian faith and the Orthodox Christian tradition;
- Promoting Orthodox spirituality, as both personal and collective experience;
- Understanding Christian faith as means of understanding world and life;
- Allowing pupils to contemplate and to ask question regarding religious issues;
- Discussing critically religious achievements, values and attitudes;
- Exploring the role that Christianity, and in particular Orthodoxy, has played and still plays in the culture and history of Europe;
- Understanding religion as an element that contributes to the development of civilization and spiritual life;
- Being aware of various expressions of religiosity;
- Dealing with social problems and with great contemporary dilemmas;
- Developing independent thought and free expression;
- Counting Christianity as a factor that improves human life.

## **2. PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**The skills (learning objectives) to be achieved are presented by school cycle.**

**The contents are suggested by year, the methods proposed are indicative.**

**Each teacher will make his or her own choices in order to meet the expected objectives, taking into account the reality of each group of pupils.**

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### **Pedagogical Orientation**

Teaching the subject of Orthodox Religion in Primary School has as specific objectives to help the pupils:

- To become familiar with the fundamental representations, themes and symbols of the Orthodox faith and life;
- To become aware of God's love for humanity and the world;
- To discover the meaning and the actuality of the Gospel for both our personal and social life, as well as for our civilization;
- To develop a spirit of factual solidarity, peace and justice; to respect and coexist with the religious particularity and the diversity of other peoples and civilizations;
- To appreciate the need to respect and protect the environment, as well as the cultural heritage of Europe and of humanity at large.

<b>2.1. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>		
<b>SKILLS</b> By the end of the school year, pupils will be able to:	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>INDICATED METHODOLOGY</b>
<p>C1- Show that they feel comfortable in a group</p> <p>C2 - Observe the world that surrounds them and begin to wonder about it</p> <p>C3 - Identify positive and negative behaviors in the presented narrations</p> <p>C4 - Listen carefully and respectfully to others</p> <p>C5 - Speak in front of the class in order and generally understand rules of everyday life</p> <p>C6 - Listen to stories and relating them to their lives</p> <p>C7 - Discover the relation of God and the world</p> <p>C8 - Understand work guidelines</p> <p>C9 - Apply Christian values that have been developed in biblical narrations</p> <p>C10 - Manage the time they are given for a task</p>	<p><b>1<sup>st</sup> year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biblical Narrations about the creation of the world</li> <li>• The story of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph)</li> <li>• Moses, the liberator</li> <li>• The Ten Commandments</li> <li>• Important figures of the Old Testament</li> <li>• Important moments in the Liturgical year - Feasts of Saints of the Orthodox Church</li> </ul> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The family – marriage – the baptism of a child</li> <li>• The Church: a big family</li> <li>• Entering the Church: initial steps and gestures</li> <li>• The Church: ceremonial objects - rites</li> <li>• The Divine Liturgy</li> <li>• Brotherhood and Christian love in the parables of Christ</li> <li>• Forgive and be forgiven</li> <li>• Lives of the Saints and Feasts of the Orthodox Church</li> </ul>	<p>Teaching Orthodox Religion presents a cognitive dimension. Through dialogue and dialectic cooperation, it allows pupils to participate and to engage themselves. Interactive learning and group work do not offer easy answers, but allow the wealth of discovery, helping thus the pupils not to be mere receptacles of information.</p> <p>Activities directly relevant to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing of texts (Biblical, Patristic, contemporary literature etc);</li> <li>• Analysis of artworks;</li> <li>• Group discussions;</li> <li>• Presentations;</li> <li>• Usage of audiovisual material and access to Internet;</li> <li>• Visits to monuments, museums and other relevant sites.</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, on a linguistic level, the usage and clarification of terms and concepts, the analysis of texts help pupils to enrich their oral and written vocabulary.</p>

<b>2.2 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year</b>		
<b>SKILLS</b> By the end of the school year, pupils will be able to:	<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>INDICATED METHODOLOGY</b>
<p>C1 – Put themselves in somebody else’s position</p> <p>C2 – Understand the reasons for respecting life</p> <p>C3 – Find the hidden meaning in biblical narrations, images and figures</p> <p>C4 – Understand the importance of feast days and traditions</p> <p>C5 – Participate in exchanges in a tolerant, positive and constructive manner, in a spirit of brotherhood</p> <p>C6 – Make reference to Christian norms and values</p> <p>C7 – Understand how celebrations commemorate key-moments of a community, and in particular of the Orthodox Christian community</p>	<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is with us</li> <li>• The gift of life and God’s wisdom</li> <li>• Life needs love and efforts</li> <li>• Life changes with Christ</li> <li>• The joy of living in the Church</li> <li>• Life with others</li> <li>• The Crucifixion and the Resurrection</li> <li>• The Feasts after Easter</li> </ul> <p><b>4<sup>th</sup> year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first steps in the Christian life</li> <li>• Those who show us the Way of God</li> <li>• Pentecost: the inauguration of the new world of Christ</li> <li>• Community life in the Church</li> <li>• Moving forward and overcoming obstacles with God’s help</li> <li>• The universality of Christ’s Message</li> <li>• Great Personalities and Feast-days</li> </ul>	<p>Teaching Orthodox Religion presents a cognitive dimension. Through dialogue and dialectic cooperation, it allows pupils to participate and to engage themselves. Interactive learning and group work do not offer easy answers, but allow the wealth of discovery, helping thus the pupils not to be mere receptacles of information.</p> <p>Activities directly relevant to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing of texts (Biblical, Patristic, contemporary literature etc);</li> <li>• Analysis of artworks;</li> <li>• Group discussions;</li> <li>• Presentations;</li> <li>• Usage of audiovisual material and access to Internet;</li> <li>• Visits to monuments, museums and other relevant sites.</li> </ul> <p>Furthermore, on a linguistic level, the usage and clarification of terms and</p>

<p>C8 – Start posing to themselves fundamental questions about life</p> <p>C9 – Recognize and accept the freedom of a human being within the context of our multicultural society</p> <p>C10 – Analyze current events with regards to Christian values</p> <p>C11 – Analyze the deeper meaning of presented texts and topics</p> <p>C12 – Recognize the responsibility of their actions and of their words</p>	<p>of the Orthodox Church</p> <p><b>5<sup>th</sup> year:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith, love and hope bring along courage and optimism in life</li> <li>• The Faith in the lives of the Holy Martyrs of the Orthodox Church</li> <li>• Struggling for our personal improvement</li> <li>• Art in the Orthodox Church creates a wonderful world</li> <li>• Efforts for a more human world</li> <li>• Great Personalities and Feast-days of the Orthodox Church</li> </ul>	<p>concepts, the analysis of texts help pupils to enrich their oral and written vocabulary.</p>
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### 3. EVALUATION

<b>Primary School</b>
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The assessment should be primarily formative.

Using the observations of the teacher, tests and self-assessment, the pupils acquire the knowledge of their level and of their progression.

The evaluation must be based on the learning objectives specific to this cycle.