



Ecoles européennes

Bureau du Secrétaire général
Unité de Développement Pédagogique

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Program of the Orthodox Religion in Secondary School

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

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Under the responsibility of the Orthodox Religious Authority

**His Eminence, Metropolitan Panteleimon of Belgium
Exarch of the Netherlands and Luxemburg, of the
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
Avenue Charbo 71, 1030 Brussels
Tel. : 02/736.56.78 Fax: 02/735.32.64
Email : Eglise.Orthodoxe@skynet.be**

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

The secondary section of the European Schools has two objectives: to provide formal education revolving around various topics and to encourage the personal development of students in a wider social and cultural context. Formal education involves the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of concepts and skills within each subject area.

Students must learn to describe, to interpret, to judge and to apply their knowledge. Personal development takes place in a range of spiritual, moral, social and cultural contexts. It involves an awareness of appropriate behavior, understanding of the environment in which students work and live and the formation of their individual identity.

These two major objectives are inseparably nurtured in the context of an enhanced awareness of the richness of European cultures. This awareness and experience of a shared European life should encourage students to respect the traditions of all European countries, while preserving their own individual identity.

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. SECONDARY 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.

Pedagogical Orientation

Teaching the subject of Orthodox Religion in Secondary School, from the first until the last year, has as specific objectives to help the students:

- To learn about the nature of the religious phenomenon;
- To get to know Christianity, and in this case Orthodoxy, through Holy Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and the living Tradition of the Church and to obtain their own views about them;
- To realize that Christianity brings along proposals to the contemporary world for its cohesion, as well as for the quality of life;
- To enhance what this course has to offer by understanding the power of the Gospel message that will allow them to develop their personality, to make them sensible toward the problems of contemporary society and to actively take a position with regards to them;
- To realize that the true Christian message is ecumenical in nature, therefore beyond any races, or nations;
- To be aware of the multicultural, multiracial and multi-religious structure of our contemporary societies;
- To be aware of the need for communication between Christians and between other religious confessions.

2.1. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year		
SKILLS By the end of the school year, students will be able to:	CONTENTS	METHODOLOGICAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL INDICATIONS
<p>C1- Recognize the importance of Holy Scriptures</p> <p>C2 – Know how to analyze a biblical text and establish a relation with its historical context</p> <p>C3 – Question the deeper meaning of the basic texts of the Orthodox Faith</p> <p>C4 – Highlight unusual events and the profound truths that govern our humanity</p> <p>C5 – Analyze the profound truths of the Bible and find ways of applying them in our contemporary world</p> <p>C6 – Identify and use the sources of Christian values</p> <p>C7 – Integrate Christ’s message in their personal and social life</p> <p>C8 – Cultivate an attitude of constant and critical evaluation on the interpretation of world events</p>	<p>1st year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man’s quest for the Truth and Christ’s response • The Truth is recorded in the Bible and in the Divine Liturgy • The Truths that Christ taught • The Church safeguards throughout the centuries the Truth of Christ • Living the Truth in the Church • Different Confessions and different Faiths • Important figures and Feasts of the Church <p>2nd year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the study of the Old Testament • The Age of the Patriarchs: from polytheism to monotheism • Exodus: God liberates and guides the chosen people • The chosen people organize themselves having God in the epicenter of their life • The life of the Israelites after the 	<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>The methods that are used in teaching Orthodox Religion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derivative pedagogy (from “all” (general) toward the “particular”); • Inductive pedagogy (from the “particular” toward “all”(general)); • Hermeneutical- Interpretive pedagogy (understanding and interpretation of topics that are being studied). <p>Activities directly relevant to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing of texts (Biblical, Patristic, contemporary literature etc); • Analysis of artworks; • Group discussions;

<p>C9 – Discern and consider an autonomous behavior</p> <p>C10 – Listen to one’s self and obtain a better understanding</p> <p>C11 – Set goals and priorities; respect an established plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The people in crisis: the voice of the Prophets a call for alarm • Narrations of the Old Testament about the Creation <p>3rd year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the study of the New Testament • Jesus arrives and inaugurates God’s new world • Christ communicates with us and through His teachings reveals to us the Kingdom of God • With His miracles Christ testifies concretely to God’s new world • The Kingdom of God passes through the Passion of Christ • The Kingdom of God passes through the Resurrection of Christ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations; • Usage of audiovisual material and access to Internet; • Visits to monuments, museums and other relevant sites. <p>Furthermore, on a linguistic level, the usage and clarification of terms and concepts, the analysis of texts help students to enrich their oral and written vocabulary.</p>
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2.2 4th and 5th year		
SKILLS By the end of the school year, students will be able to:	CONTENTS	METHODOLOGICAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL INDICATIONS
<p>C1 – Study and evaluate the characteristics of the Christian Orthodox Faith</p> <p>C2 – Know the history of the Church and place the key-moments in a timeline</p> <p>C3 – Understand the importance of Orthodoxy throughout history until today</p> <p>C4 – Better understand the importance of Orthodox worship (celebration) and its impact on our life</p> <p>C5 – Analyze the symbolism of the sacraments and of the rites of Orthodoxy, as well as their significance for our life</p> <p>C6 – Understand the significance of the various liturgical components</p> <p>C7 – Acquire the ability to discern other ways of thinking</p> <p>C8 – Point out practical points of reference (landmarks) in order to find their place in society</p>	<p>4th year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Church History • The first steps of the Church • Expansion, adventures and official recognition of the Church • The foundation and flourishing of the Church • Christianity in the European realm • Evolution of the Church in the 2nd millennium • The Christian world today <p>5th year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiation to the liturgical life of the Church • The space of Christian worship • The time of Christian worship • Services of the Church • Sacraments of the Church • Concerns and reflections on liturgical matters • Religious phenomena in modern society 	<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>The methods that are used in teaching Orthodox Religion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derivative pedagogy (from “all” (general) toward the “particular”); • Inductive pedagogy (from the “particular” toward “all”(general)); • Hermeneutical- Interpretive pedagogy (understanding and interpretation of topics that are being studied). <p>Activities directly relevant to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing of texts (Biblical, Patristic, contemporary literature etc); • Analysis of artworks; • Group discussions; • Presentations;

<p>C9 – Use reasoning to construct and justify their point of view</p> <p>C10 – Analyze critically the messages that are passed through the media</p> <p>C11 – Get to know themselves better and learn how to place themselves in society</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of audiovisual material and access to Internet; • Visits to monuments, museums and other relevant sites. <p>Furthermore, on a linguistic level, the usage and clarification of terms and concepts, the analysis of texts help students to enrich their oral and written vocabulary.</p>
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2.3. 6th, and 7th year		
SKILLS By the end of the school year, students will be able to:	CONTENTS	METHODOLOGICAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL INDICATIONS
<p>C1- Develop arguments in connection with existential questions of concern</p> <p>C2 – Understand and to present the basics of Christianity and especially of Orthodoxy</p> <p>C3 – Be open to the diversity of religious, moral and philosophical beliefs</p> <p>C4 – Learn to be tolerant in our European multi-cultural society</p> <p>C5 – Express their opinion about the place of Orthodoxy in addressing the major issues of science</p> <p>C6 – Realize that Christian morality cultivates friendliness, cooperation and mutual respect in society</p> <p>C7 – Develop a clear understanding of their Christian identity within Orthodoxy</p> <p>C8 – Know how to decode the elements of the cultural and sociological news through the filter of Christian values</p>	<p>6th year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the religious phenomenon • Characteristics of the Orthodox Faith • Deeper examination of the Orthodox Faith • Contribution of Christianity to the European civilization • Monotheistic Religions • Polytheistic Religions – Philosophical Movements <p>7th year:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Christian Ethics • Ethics and Conscience • Christian morality and contemporary society • The biological dimension of the human being • Problems of conscience in the life of a Christian - Modern Technology • Extreme existential situations and responses given by Christianity 	<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>The methods that are used in teaching Orthodox Religion are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derivative pedagogy (from “all” (general) toward the “particular”); • Inductive pedagogy (from the “particular” toward “all”(general)); • Hermeneutical- Interpretive pedagogy (understanding and interpretation of topics that are being studied). <p>Activities directly relevant to the course:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processing of texts (Biblical, Patristic, contemporary literature etc); • Analysis of artworks; • Group discussions; • Presentations;

<p>C9 – Apply Christian values in their everyday life</p> <p>C10 – Be aware of the universality of the truths and existential values in the range of world religions</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usage of audiovisual material and access to Internet; • Visits to monuments, museums and other relevant sites. <p>Furthermore, on a linguistic level, the usage and clarification of terms and concepts, the analysis of texts help students to enrich their oral and written vocabulary.</p>
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3. EVALUATION

Secondary School

The assessment should be primarily formative.

With an initial assessment, and using the observations of the teacher, tests and self-assessment, the students acquire the knowledge of their level and of their progression.

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