



Gouvernement du Québec  
**Comité protestant**

# Protestant Moral and Religious Education

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E58  
1984  
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QCSE

Québec 

ISBN 2-550-07476-9

Dépôt légal: deuxième trimestre 1984

Bibliothèque nationale du Québec

#993995



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E58  
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# Protestant Moral and Religious Education

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## **I THE PLACE OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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Moral and Religious Education (Protestant) is a program designed for the elementary and secondary schools of the province of Québec which follows a continuum of studies structured in three modules: at the elementary level, the Biblical module, the celebration module and the human development module; at the secondary level, the Biblical module, the phenomena of religion module and the personal development module (see pages 6-11). This program is designed to be used in conjunction with Teacher's guides approved by the Comité protestant (see page 13).

In the elementary school the program is identified as an integral part of the pupil's total curriculum to which a minimum of 100 minutes per week are devoted.

In secondary schools, moral and religious education is compulsory at every level. Within the regular five-day week of at least twenty-five hours of schooling, moral and religious education should be taught for one hundred minutes.

Although school boards have the right to distribute the time allotment in different ways, pupils are expected to achieve the objectives of the course and are awarded two credits per year after successful completion of the course. These two credits are part of the thirty-six credits which a pupil may attain at each level of secondary school (sections 27 to 36 of the Régime pédagogique for Secondary Schools).

The Régime pédagogique (section 43), Rules for Awarding Secondary Studies Diplomas, specifies that a pupil must have accumulated at least one hundred and thirty credits in order to receive a Ministry of Education diploma at the end of his secondary studies. Included in this total of one hundred and thirty credits are forty compulsory credits of which two must be Moral and Religious Education at either the secondary IV or V level.

The Régime pédagogique allows the local school to use up to 20% of the time allotted to a program for local adaptation, provided such adaptations are in conformity with the objectives of the program.

## **II THE COMITÉ PROTESTANT AND THE M.R.E. PROGRAM**

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### **a) Aims of the Program**

The aims of the moral and religious education program in the Protestant schools of Québec are set forth in the *Regulation* of the Comité protestant of the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. In brief the objective of this program is "to encourage the personal development of the pupil:

- by developing an understanding of the moral and religious values of the community in which he lives;

- by fostering an appreciation of his own religious tradition and a respect for the religious traditions of others;
- by helping the pupil to become aware of the moral principles by which he acts;
- by contributing to the development of the reasoning which he uses to reach moral judgements.”<sup>1</sup>

The Comité notes that a knowledge of the Bible is basic to the Protestant tradition.

Given the variety of denominational and ethnic backgrounds of pupils in Protestant schools, the Comité has attempted to provide courses of study that will be suitable and interesting to students with a wide range of religious and philosophic orientations. Pupils should acquire a general knowledge of other people’s beliefs and cultures so that they can communicate and live together. Part of this process involves developing habits of critical examination of both one’s own and other’s beliefs. To this end, the Comité believes, one can take a critical stance only if one knows one’s own values.

The Comité protestant has decided that education in human sexuality is an integral part of the moral and religious education program.

#### **b) The Non-indoctrinating Nature of the M.R.E. Program.**

Protestant education recognizes the freedom of the individual to interpret religious and moral questions according to his conscience. The Comité reaffirms that the child has a right to his own heritage without alienation from home and community.<sup>2</sup>

#### **c) The Right of Exemption for Pupils and Teachers**

Freedom of conscience is a fundamental principle of Protestant institutions. Provisions for exemption by reason of conscience are clearly set forth in the Regulation as follows:

“No pupil shall be required to follow this program if, for reasons of conscience, a written request for exemption is made to the head of the institution by the pupil’s father, mother or guardian. A pupil who has attained the age of majority may make his own request.”<sup>3</sup>

“The school authority shall exempt from the teaching of moral and religious education or from participation in activities of a religious nature any teacher who, for reasons of conscience, presents a written request for exemption.”<sup>4</sup>

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1. Section 8, *Regulation of the Comité protestant*.

2. Preamble, *Regulation of the Comité protestant*.

3. Section 7, *Ibid*.

4. Section 12, *Ibid*.

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Pupils must follow either a course in Moral and Religious Education (M.R.E.) or a course in Moral Education (M.E.) if they have applied for an exemption. The Comité protestant has recommended to the Ministre de l'Éducation that certain modules of the M.R.E. course be recognized as suitable to form part of a M.E. course for pupils granted an exemption.

**d) The Orientation of the M.R.E. course with regard to Education in Human Sexuality**

The Comité protestant expressed its views on education in human sexuality in several publications which may be obtained from the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation. (See the bibliography at the end of this document).

The Comité is clearly convinced that it is impossible to dissociate such education from the whole learning process, and that the school ought to be an extension of the home, and complete the essential role played by parents in that field.

The basic orientation of the Comité is toward values belonging to our Judeo-Christian heritage. However, if education in human sexuality is to promote deep reflection it should not be limited to the simple transmission of these values but be based also on the daily life of the child. A mechanistic question and answer approach involving a catalogue of sexual behaviors is not acceptable.

For this reason the Comité insists strongly upon an integrated educative approach to this area. Because it touches so many disciplines education in human sexuality cannot be considered as a single subject. It is deeply linked to the teaching of morals, biology, sociology, literature, psychology, physical education and religion. The Comité believes in an educational approach which presents as completely as it can the various possible dimensions of love in its affective and spiritual fullness.

The Comité advocates the transmission of a positive image of humanity and its sexuality, and wants to put the emphasis on self-esteem and love of other people in a context of self-discipline and a reaching out for spiritual values.

Finally, the Comité attaches a great importance to the personal and intellectual qualities of the educator, and requires in its Regulations an adequate training for Moral and Religious Education teachers.

### III THE STRUCTURE OF THE M.R.E. PROGRAM FROM ELEMENTARY THROUGH SECONDARY SCHOOL.

#### a) OVERVIEW OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

##### PRIMARY PROGRAMME

| LEVEL | THEME                 | JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN STORY                     |  | CELEBRATION  | RELATIONSHIPS   |
|-------|-----------------------|--|--|--|---|
| 1     | With My Family        | Abram<br>Joseph<br>Baby Moses<br>Boy David | Baby Jesus<br>Boy Jesus                                    | Family celebrations                                      | Life comes from life like itself<br>Needs of newborn<br>Role and Responsibilities in family |
| 2     | With My Friends       | David<br>Ruth<br>Daniel<br>Samuel          | & Friends<br>Jesus and his friends                         | Celebrations with friends                                | How life reproduces itself<br>Friendship  |
| 3     | Being Together        | Moses in Egypt                             | Jesus' Stories<br>Lost Sheep<br>Lost Coin<br>Widow's Penny | Celebrating in groups<br>Celebrating spontaneous moments | Reproductive system<br>Being part of a group  |
| 4     | Working Together      | Moses after Exodus                         | Jesus's baptism<br>Stories of Jesus                        | Secular rituals<br>Religious rituals                     | Care and function of human body<br>Rules and Responsibility                                 |
| 5     | A Growing Awareness   | Story of David                             | Jesus' Ministry  | Regular observances in World communities                 | Secondary Sex Characteristics<br>Influences on Behaviour                                    |
| 6     | A Deepening Awareness | Stories of Solomon<br>Daniel               | Jesus' Trial<br>Death                                      | Significance of Food and Dress in celebration            | Reproductive Anatomy and Physiology<br>Changing attitudes and responsibility                |



**SECONDARY PROGRAMME**

| LEVEL | THEME                             | BIBLICAL STUDIES                  | PHENOMENA OF RELIGION           | PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT |
|-------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1     | The Individual and Identity       | Our Religious Heritage            | Beginnings                      | Identity                        |
| 2     | The Individual and Ways of Living | The Life of Jesus of Nazareth     | Religious Expression            | Behaviour                       |
| 3     | The Individual and Community      | The Early Christian Community     | Ritual                          | Relationships                   |
| 4     | The Person in Society*            | The Human Condition and the Bible | The Religious Nature of Persons | Living in Society               |
| 5     | The Search for Meaning*           | The Human Quest and the Bible     | The Religious Quest             | The Quality of life             |

\* It is strongly recommended that only 2 of the 3 modules be studied at levels 4 and 5.

## b) OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAM AT THE VARIOUS LEVELS

MORAL & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

| LEVEL | THEME           | MODULE 1<br>Judaean-Christian Story   | MODULE 2<br>Celebration  | MODULE 3<br>Relationships  |
|-------|-----------------|---|--|--|
| 1     | WITH MY FAMILY  | <p><b>Stories From the Old Testament:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Abram</li> <li>— Joseph</li> <li>— baby Moses</li> <li>— David as a boy</li> </ul> <p><b>Stories about Jesus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— first Christmas</li> <li>— visit of the Magi</li> <li>— Jesus as a boy</li> </ul> | <p><b>Families celebrate:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Thanksgiving</li> <li>— Succot</li> <li>— Christmas</li> <li>— Hannukah</li> <li>— birthdays</li> <li>— anniversaries</li> <li>— etc.</li> </ul>      | <p><b>Learning about sexuality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— all life comes from life like itself</li> <li>— needs of animal and human newborn</li> </ul> <p><b>My Family and Me:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— roles and responsibilities</li> <li>— taking care of myself</li> <li>— caring, sharing</li> <li>— respect for self and others</li> <li>— conflict and compromise</li> <li>— choices and consequences</li> </ul> |
| 2     | WITH MY FRIENDS | <p><b>Stories from the Old Testament:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— David</li> <li>— Ruth</li> <li>— Daniel</li> </ul> <p><b>Stories about Jesus:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Jesus and his helpers</li> <li>— the lame man</li> <li>— the man called Zacchaeus</li> </ul>                      | <p><b>Celebrating with Friends:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Christmas at school</li> <li>— friends' birthdays</li> <li>— Hallowe'en</li> <li>— Valentine's Day</li> <li>— Easter</li> <li>— etc.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Learning about Sexuality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— reproduction in plants, birds etc.</li> <li>— reproduction in mammals</li> <li>— the life cycle of living things</li> </ul> <p><b>Friendships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— different kinds of friends</li> <li>— uniqueness/similarities</li> <li>— myself and other people</li> </ul>   |
| 3     | BEING TOGETHER  | <p><b>Stories from the Old Testament:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the story of Moses from his birth to the Exodus</li> </ul> <p><b>Jesus' stories</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Lost sheep</li> <li>— Lost coin</li> <li>— Widow's penny</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Community Celebrations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— sharing another's celebration</li> <li>— celebrating in groups</li> <li>— seasonal events and unexpected occurrences</li> </ul>                   | <p><b>Learning about Sexuality:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the wonder of being a girl/boy</li> <li>— male and female reproductive systems</li> </ul> <p><b>Being Myself:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— acceptance of myself</li> <li>— my behaviour when with others</li> </ul>   |

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (cont'd)**

| LEVEL THEME                   | MODULE 1<br>Judaean-Christian Story  | MODULE 2<br>Celebration  | MODULE 3<br>Relationships   |
|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| 3 <b>BEWG<br/>TOGETHER</b>    |  |  | <b>Being Together in Groups:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— belonging to different kinds of groups</li> <li>— we have a need to belong</li> <li>— roles/responsibilities in a group</li> <li>— basic social needs.</li> </ul>   |
| 4 <b>WORKING<br/>TOGETHER</b> | <b>Stories from the Old Testament:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— continuing the story of Moses from the Exodus to the departure from Sinai</li> </ul><br><b>Stories about Jesus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— rules for living as found in the stories of Jesus.</li> </ul>       | <b>Rituals help us celebrate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— secular events</li> <li>— religious events in different traditions</li> </ul>   | <b>Learning about Sexuality:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the miracle that is me</li> <li>— learning how my body develops</li> </ul><br><b>Being Myself:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— manners and courtesy</li> <li>— accepting/giving praise, criticism</li> <li>— capabilities and limitations</li> </ul><br><b>Rules:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— why we need rules</li> <li>— different kinds of rules</li> <li>— rules and responsibilities</li> <li>— being a follower, being a leader.</li> </ul> |
| 5 <b>GROWING<br/>TOGETHER</b> | <b>Stories from the Old Testament:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the life of David from shepherd boy to king</li> </ul><br><b>Stories of Jesus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the baptism</li> <li>— the temptation</li> <li>— his work</li> <li>— entry into Jerusalem</li> </ul> | <b>Celebrating in Different Traditions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— daily observances in different religions</li> <li>— weekly observances in different religions</li> <li>— New Year Celebrations</li> <li>— Native Indian Celebrations</li> </ul> | <b>Learning About Sexuality:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— male/female secondary sex characteristics</li> <li>— individual differences</li> <li>— physical and emotional growth &amp; needs</li> </ul><br><b>Looking at Myself:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— abilities</li> <li>— priorities</li> <li>— aspirations</li> </ul>   |

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM (cont'd)

| LEVEL THEME                  | MODULE 1<br>Judaean-Christian Story   | MODULE 2<br>Celebration  | MODULE 3<br>Relationships  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 5<br><b>GROWING TOGETHER</b> |   |  | <b>Influences on my Behaviour:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— family</li> <li>— friends</li> <li>— institutions</li> <li>— media</li> <li>— values</li> </ul> <b>Relating to others:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— co-operating</li> <li>— respect and understanding</li> <li>— acting fairly</li> <li>— communicating effectively</li> </ul> <b>My Behaviour with Others:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— family</li> <li>— friends</li> <li>— classmates</li> <li>— adults in the community</li> </ul> |
| 6<br><b>LIVING TOGETHER</b>  | <b>Stories from the Old Testament:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Solomon</li> <li>— the fall of Israel</li> <li>— Daniel</li> <li>— release of the Jews from captivity</li> </ul> <b>Stories about Jesus:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— the garden of Gethsemane</li> <li>— the trial</li> <li>— the crucifixion</li> <li>— the burial</li> <li>— the resurrection</li> </ul> | <b>Food &amp; Dress in Different Religious Traditions:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— customs and ceremonies involving food</li> <li>— significance of dietary customs</li> <li>— ceremonial dress and adornment</li> <li>— significance of dress and adornment</li> </ul> | <b>Learning about Sexuality:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— reproductive anatomy and physiology</li> <li>— conception</li> <li>— prenatal development</li> <li>— process of birth</li> </ul> <b>Changing Attitudes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— towards self and others</li> <li>— male/female roles in society</li> <li>— relationship between freedom and responsibility</li> <li>— interpersonal relationships</li> <li>— process of decision making</li> </ul>  |

**MORAL & RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  
SECONDARY PROGRAMMES**

| LEVEL    | THEME  | MODULE 1<br>Judaeo-Christian Story   | MODULE 2<br>Celebration  | MODULE 3<br>Relationships  |
|----------|--|--|--|--|
| Sec. I   | THE INDIVIDUAL<br>AND SEARCH<br>FOR IDENTITY | <b>Our religious heritage:</b><br>— overview of O.T.<br>— biblical covenants<br>— of God and Man   | <b>Beginnings:</b><br>— myth/fable/legend<br>— meaning of myth<br>— creation stories<br>— myth as a universal phenomenon   | <b>Search for Identity:</b><br>— heredity<br>— external and internal influences on identity<br>— values<br>— physical & social changes of adolescence<br>— decision-making<br>— setting short/long term goals              |
| Sec. II  | THE INDIVIDUAL<br>AND WAYS OF<br>LIVING      | <b>The life of Jesus of Nazareth:</b><br>— biblical and non-biblical sources<br>— geographical/social/political setting<br>— attitudes of Jesus to social issues<br>— teachings                | <b>Religious Expression:</b><br>— as evidenced in our environment<br>— in world cultures<br>— symbols of world religions<br>— impact on the Arts   | <b>Human Behaviour:</b><br>— emotions and self-control<br>— standards of behaviour<br>— social norms<br>— system of reward/punishment<br>— consequences of behaviour on the individual/interpersonal relationships/school. |
| Sec. III | THE INDIVIDUAL<br>AND<br>COMMUNITY           | <b>The Early Christian Community:</b><br>— historical/political setting<br>— basic beliefs<br>— life-style<br>— leaders<br>— growth of Christianity  | <b>Ritual:</b><br>— characteristics<br>— secular rituals<br>— religious rituals<br>— rites of passage in different religious traditions  | <b>Relationships:</b><br>— within the family<br>— interpersonal<br>— meaning/expression of love<br>— sexually transmitted diseases<br>— coping with conflict<br>— prejudice and the community relations                    |
| Sec. IV* | PERSONS IN<br>SOCIETY                        | <b>The Human Condition and the Bible:</b><br>— variety of approaches to the Bible<br>— composition/organization<br>— divine/human relationship<br>— prophetic writings<br>— questions posed by | <b>The Religious Nature of Persons:</b><br>— early religions<br>— monotheism<br>— pantheism<br>— polytheism<br>— perceptions of the divine and/or ultimate concern in different religious traditions | <b>Living in Society:</b><br>— definition/origins/influences on morality<br>— nature of justice<br>— nature of love<br>— social issues arising from love/justice<br>— relationship between love and justice                |

**SECONDARY PROGRAMMES (cont'd)**

| LEVEL THEME                    | MODULE 1<br>Judaean-Christian Story   | MODULE 2<br>Celebration  | MODULE 3<br>Relationships   |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Sec. IV*    PERSONS IN SOCIETY | Ecclesiastes/Job<br>— modern relevance of biblical questions  |  |   |
| Sec. V*    SEARCH FOR MEANING  | <b>The Human Quest and the Bible:</b><br>— biblical views of life in O.T. and N.T.<br>— concepts of atonement, salvation, human destiny | <b>The Religious Quest:</b><br>— life's ultimate goals as expressed in different religious traditions<br>— the good of society in humanistic traditions<br>— the variety of beliefs about death and the hereafter<br>— contemporary religious trends | <b>The Quality of Life:</b><br>— principle of human dignity<br>— principle of freedom<br>— social issues arising from dignity/freedom<br>— ethics and ethical systems<br>— views of living in contemporary society. |

\* Secondary IV and Secondary V/ It is recommended that only two of the three modules be attempted at each level, thus providing a more in-depth study of the content.

### c) TEACHER TRAINING

The Comité protestant has concluded that the qualifications of teachers working in the Protestant sector may be brought together under two headings. First, qualifications required of all teachers already teaching in schools recognized as Protestant, and secondly, the requirements for personnel assigned to the teaching of Protestant moral and religious education in the schools which they serve.

The general qualifications applying to every teacher in the Protestant milieu have been put forward by the Comité protestant by means of its Regulation. Section 14 reads that every teacher shall have knowledge of and respect the nature of a Protestant school and the values which are part of it. The Comité commissioned a history of Protestant education by Nathan Mair<sup>5</sup> which should be a subject for in-service training for all teachers.

The Comité protestant intends to change its Regulation in such a way that every teacher shall receive training in the moral and religious development of children, either in the course of his or her training or during an in-service workshop.

#### General Preparation

The Comité feels that it is important that the faculties of education inform future teachers of the requirements which they must meet in schools recognized as Protestant.

The Régime pédagogique requires all elementary teachers to teach all modules of the moral and religious education program. Secondary school teachers assigned to teach moral and religious education will be required to teach the approved program.

However, a teacher may be relieved from the duty of providing moral and religious education for reasons of conscience provided that he or she request exemption in writing. (Cf. Regulation of the Comité protestant).

#### *Special Preparation of Teachers of the Secondary Moral and Religious Education Program*

There is a specialist certificate available to teachers of moral and religious education at the elementary and secondary level. In addition, for a number of years the Direction de l'enseignement protestant has sponsored a Summer Workshop to assist teachers of moral and religious education.

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5. Mair, Nathan H. *Quest for Quality in the Protestant Public Schools of Québec*, Comité protestant, Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, 1980.

#### IV SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND GENERAL PUBLIC

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*Publications of the Comité protestant (CSE) 600, rue Fullum, 10<sup>e</sup> ét., Montréal H2K 4L1*

Regulation of the Comité protestant — Approved April 1984.

Education in Human Sexuality in the Protestant Schools of Québec — 1978.

Mair, Nathan H. *Quest for Quality in the Protestant Public Schools of Québec*. 1980.

*Direction de l'enseignement protestant*, Ministère de l'Éducation, 1035, rue de la Chevrotière, 13<sup>e</sup> ét., Québec, Québec G1R 5A5. *Program Guides and Teacher's Guides for the different grade levels*.

##### Other resources

Beck, Clive. *Moral Education in the Schools*, (Profiles in Practical Education #3). The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: Toronto, 1975.

Beck, Clive, McCoy, Norman and Bradley-Cameron, Jane. *Reflecting on Values: Learning Materials for Grades 1-6*, (Informal Series 20). The Ontario Institute for Studies in Education: Toronto, 1980.

Burt, John J. and Meeks, Linda Bower. *Education for Sexuality: Concepts and Programmes for Teaching*, (Second Edition). W.E. Saunders: Toronto, 1975.

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