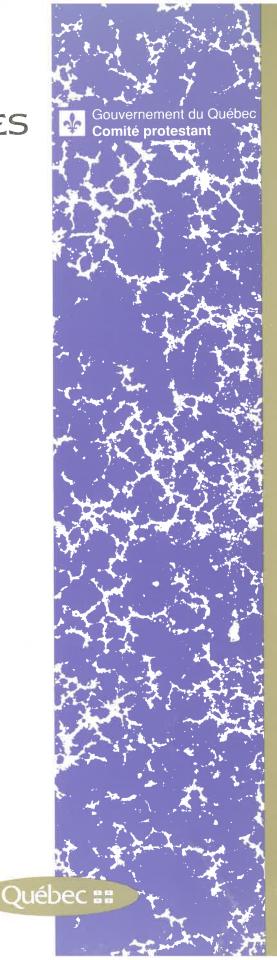
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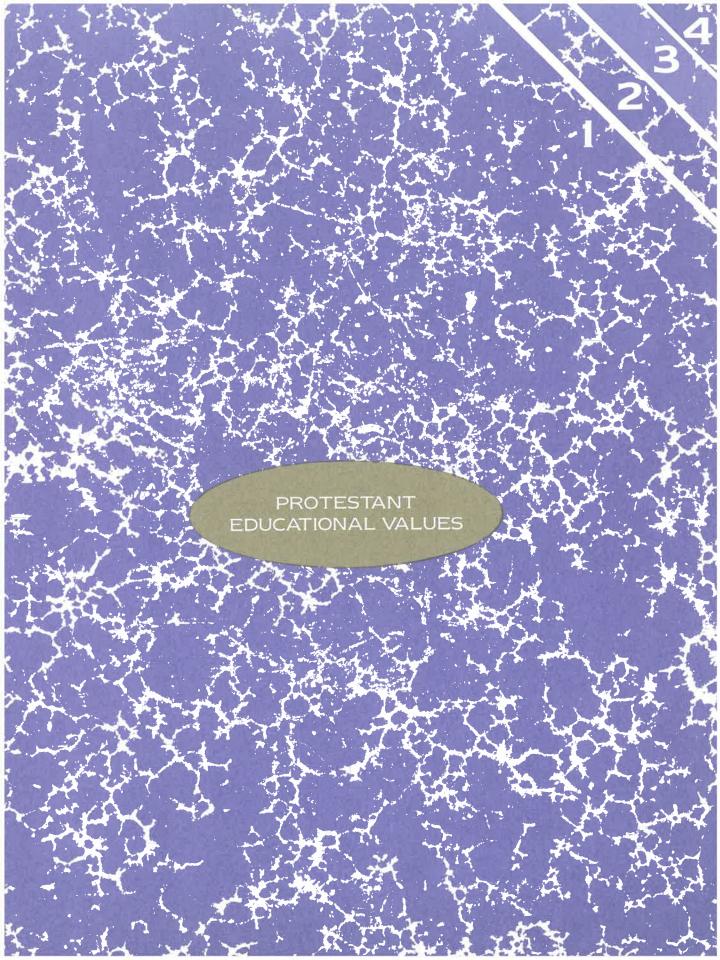
PROTESTANT EDUCATIONAL VALUES

- PROTESTANT MORAL AND
  RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM
- THE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT
- RELIGIOUS ANIMATION

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DOCUMENTATION

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ion and the read:

The preamble to both the act establishing the ministère de l'Éducation and the accompanying act establishing the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation read:

WHEREAS every child is entitled to the advantage of a system of education conducive to the full development of his personality;

WHEREAS parents have the right to choose the institutions which, according to their convictions, ensure the greatest respect for the rights of their children;

WHEREAS persons and groups are entitled to establish autonomous educational institutions and, subject to the requirements of the common welfare, to avail themselves of the administrative and financial means necessary for the pursuit of their ends;

WHEREAS it is expedient to establish, in accordance with these principles, to collaborate with the Minister of Education and the Minister of Higher Education and Science, the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation with which shall be associated a Catholic committee, a Protestant committee, and boards to make suggestions to such Council respecting various branches of education.

The present Education Act (R.S.Q. c. I-13.3), enacted in 1988, incorporated the right of the pupil, or the pupil's parents when the pupil is in elementary school or the first two years of secondary school, to choose each year between Protestant or Catholic Moral and Religious Education and Moral Education (article 5). This right is to be exercised during the enrolment procedures each year (article 241). Refusal or failure to choose places the pupil in the option chosen the previous year or failing that in moral education. The school board dispenses Protestant or Catholic Moral and Religious Education or Moral Education in accordance with the pupil's choice (article 225). At present, this right of choice is exercised by pupils enrolling in a school board other than a confessional or dissentient school board.

It is the aim of the Protestant Committee, in the quotations which we have selected, to present those values in the education system which have been central to Protestant education in order that parents and educators may underscore what it is that they hold important and take what steps they deem necessary to promote such values. In this way parents who have been well informed may make a choice about:

- (1) the Protestant Moral and Religious Education program;
- (2) the educational project of the school;
- (3) religious animation.

This right of choice is deemed important and is embodied in the Education Act.

## 1. THE FAMILY. In Protestant education the family is seen as the primary educator and the place where responsibility lies for the religious orientation of the child.

"Protestant education recognizes the right of the child to his or her own heritage without alienation from home and community". (Protestant Committee, **Preamble to Regulation 1988**).

The agreed basis for Jews and Protestants in the 1970's was that "... the home and the community of faith must be held responsible for the development of the religious identity of the growing person,... the public schools had a role in helping students face broad moral and spiritual questions and in teaching and enforcing the general moral values required for effective citizenship". (N. Mair, **Quest for Quality**, p. 50).

"The school is designed to serve the child and the family of which it is an extension. Like the family, the school is responsible for the discipline of the child, for fostering a sense of belonging, responsibility and community. Aside from the family it is the school which sees the child's needs and identifies his or her learning problems". (C. Middleton-Hope, **The Social Role of the School**, p. 1).

"Protestant education in Quebec has been characterized, throughout its history, by the maintenance of a close relationship to parents and to the local community. The relationship was fostered historically through the school boards, Home and School Associations, visitors' days, and the contact of classroom teachers with parents through the children being taught". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 68).

#### In summary:

Protestant education has as a fundamental goal the empowering of parents and family to be involved in education. Protestant education promotes respect for

parental rights and strong ties between the home and the school and the community. Protestant education fosters participation.

The relationship between the school, parents and community mentioned by Mair is now continued and furthered through the following channels which have been developed since that time: Orientation Committees, Parent Committees, School Committees and Parent Representatives on the School Board.

# 2. THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION. Protestant education encourages a holistic approach to education in which the spiritual dimension is an integral part.

"(The Protestant school's) essential pedagogical thrust... is to be found in a personal search for meaning. All learning activity is ideally placed within this general context of quest, and nowhere should this be clearer than in the moral and religious dimension, for it is here that the ultimate identity questions are addressed... All teaching can be seen as contributing to this search for identity on the personal, social and cosmic levels. It is an individual undertaking with a fundamentally religious aim... The importance of teaching for commitment is obvious. Equally obvious is the importance of individual freedom in regard to the content and direction of that commitment". (R. Jensen, Some Pedagogical Implications of the Confessional Dimension of the Protestant School, p. 2).

"The manner in which one lives life cannot be separated from the ultimate meaning which one attributes to life". (R. Jensen, op. cit., p. 4).

"But one way of defining religion is to say that it is part of the story that man tells about himself. If this is an acceptable definition, then the relation of religion to education is neither peripheral nor complementary". (M. Buch, **An Attempt to Define a Protestant School**, p. 2).

"... education as conscious training in making decisions ... education is training in how to think rather than in what to think; it is a confrontation, a dialogue between ways of assessing evidence and supporting conclusions". (E.W. Shideler's position as explained in S.B. Frost, **Memorandum on the Protestant View of Education**, p. 14).

"Protestants do not believe that the public school is the right place for doctrinal instruction. The right context for doctrinal instruction is the Church and the home.

But the informational content of religion, most of which is contained in Scripture, can and is taught very effectively in Protestant schools". (S.B. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 13).

"All education must be based on a profound respect for the child's personality and religious education is no exception". (S.B. Frost, op. cit., p. 16).

"Protestant education recognizes the freedom of the individual to interpret religious and moral questions according to his or her conscience". (Protestant Committee, **Preamble to Regulation 1988**).

#### In summary:

In Protestant education the religious components may be seen as integrating factors. The centrality of Biblical knowledge and the study of the human quest have an important role in assisting each person to mature and accept responsibility for his or her actions. By this means students develop basic aptitudes for inquiry and dialogue, criticism and creativity, autonomy and commitment; aptitudes which enable them to find their place in society and to define themselves amid social change. The nondenominational approach to education implies that Protestant education will be non-proselytizing and non-indoctrinating in its outcomes. It will train the child to be independent, fully integrating the spiritual dimension into his or her life.

### 3. TRUTH. Protestant education encourages a passion for truth and the unity of truth.

This passion for truth and its unity flows from the importance the Protestant places on the religious dimension in life. Education includes the integration and the insistence upon the relevance of the religious dimension to all of education. It encourages people to ask ultimate questions without seeking pre-packaged answers.

"... the Protestant has a passion for truth. He believes in it **and he trusts it**... It is this profound trust in the unity of truth which permits the Protestant, while believing in Christian education, to permit and even encourage the emergence of systems which are independent of direct ecclesiastical control". (S.B. Frost, op. cit., p. 10).

"Shideler dismisses the possibility that the teacher can merely «teach the bare facts» without disclosing any personal bias; first because the selection and presentation of any set of data relating to fundamental questions are always conditioned by personal predilections, and secondly, because teaching necessarily involves the imparting of personality as well as the transmission of facts". (S.B. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 14).

"The refusal to count any particular expression of truth or of life as final, and its complements, a sense of wonder and a delight in the exploration of the new, nourished in Protestant schools a readiness to experiment and an expectation of discovery". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 65).

"Protestant education promotes the search for truth in all fields of human experience, including the moral and religious, while recognizing that each individual must be free to weigh alternative points of view". (Protestant Committee, **Preamble to Regulation 1988**).

"Only blind dogmatism could exclude the academic study of human faiths from the curriculum. It is essential to the study of English and French literature, to history, to the arts and even to science". (G. Johnston, **The Future of Protestant Education in Quebec**, p. 7).

"The Bible was studied in Protestant schools as the source of the moral and spiritual ideas and ideals of the Jewish and Protestant traditions and of much of Western culture. But its presence as a symbol was perhaps even more significant. This implied that its teaching and the Protestant ethos were normative in the schools... Even unopened, the Bible was witness to the Protestant belief that ultimate truth is greater than anything that can be expressed or known". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 72).

#### In summary:

Protestant education fosters a spirit of critical inquiry and the right of protest and openness. For example, in the light of this value the Protestant Moral and Religious Education program contains three modules, one devoted to a knowledge of the Bible, a second related to the cultivation of respect for other religious traditions, and a third which helps the pupil to understand the moral principles behind his or her actions. The program seeks to help develop the reasoning used to make moral judgements. This quest for truth is pursued throughout the curriculum.

### 4. PRACTICALITY. Protestant education promotes a positive orientation to life and the world of work.

"In Protestant schools (such sentiments of vocation and the dignity of work) were transmuted into values closely associated with Protestant education: the pursuit of excellence, the dignity and necessity of work, an impatience with «religiousness» for its own sake, and an exaltation of the importance of earthly life and occupation". (N. Mair, *op. cit.*, p. 70).

"The two critical aspects of the Protestant Principle (as enunciated by Paul Tillich) are **protest** and **openness**. The protest is against all forms of absolutizing, in which ultimacy is denied and finite things are thought to be self-sufficient... The openness is to ultimacy in culture - such as a demand for honesty in scientific research, or the unique value placed on individual human life". (M. Buch, op. cit., p. 3).

"Protestant education cherished the free conscience, and saw schooling as directed toward the liberation both of the person and of society. But the peculiarly Protestant element in such education had always a realistic note. It placed a check upon humanist and rationalist ideas which sometimes viewed education as its own end, and as able of itself to accomplish the liberation of man. Protestants have insisted that, important as education is, the fulfillment of life cannot be ultimately tied to a man's endeavour, but only to God's grace". (N. Mair, *op. cit.*, p. 66f.).

"The critical spirit, born of a Protestant refusal to count anything human divine, kept dogmatism in check; and openness to experiments, the corollary of the Protestant belief that no human mind can hold the fullness of truth but must ever pursue it further, kept Protestant education open to the future". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 30).

#### In summary:

Work has been seen as a vocation in which one is called to serve one's fellows and one's God. The dignity of labor requires each one to do his or her personal best in the sphere in which he or she is found. Protestants exhibit a flexibility, a pragmatism toward governing systems and structures. This is displayed in a sense of compromise and accommodation.

## 5. ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESPECT. Protestant education fosters attitudes of accountability and respect for persons and the development of independent but responsible citizens.

"To be a person is to have certain inalienable rights, one of which is always to be treated as a person and never as a thing.... To implant ideas properly in the mind of a person, we must do so in a way which recognizes him as a person — we must present those ideas to his conscious reason, and afford him the opportunity to test, to challenge, to judge and finally to approve or disapprove of those ideas for himself..." (S.B. Frost, *op. cit.*, p. 11).

"Protestant education recognizes the right of a child to receive an education which presents various opinions concerning truth without imposing a particular religious or ideological position". (Protestant Committee, **Preamble to Regulation 1988**).

"The value given to freedom and to respect for persons in Protestant schools was demonstrated in their condemnation of any attempt to force religious beliefs on the pupils. The teaching of religious ideas was always to include the permission of the pupil to disagree, or to reject what was taught". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 62).

"The idea of accountability was expanded to include the pupil's relation to his peers, to the school as a whole, and to democratic society". (N. Mair, *op. cit.* p. 61).

"Protestant education promotes the nurturing of a sense of responsible citizenship in each child". (Protestant Committee, **Preamble to Regulation 1988**).

"Education (is) that process... by which a given community transmits a culture and prepares its subjects (younger or older) for the exercise of citizenship in the contemporary world of mankind". (G. Johnston, *op.cit.*, p. 1).

"Protestant education cherished the free conscience, and saw schooling as directed toward the liberation both of the person and of society". (N. Mair, op. cit., p. 66).

#### In summary:

Protestant education promotes respect for the individual and his or her rights, along with a respect for diversity in belief, worldview and approach to living.

In the increasing ethnic diversity of today's school, this value is at the forefront as educators seek to foster attitudes of personal accountability.

## 6. LITERACY. Protestant education stresses the value of literacy as the basis of learning and maturing.

«A general definition of literacy is «the ability to function effectively in one's environment». Being literate in a technological environment is considerably more complex and extensive that being able to read and write.»

«The literate person is able to read, comprehend and evaluate information in print, on the screen, from the computer and through the arts. The literate person is also able to express information, ideas and emotions in these forms.»

«The literate person is aware of thinking and learning processes, both his or her own and those of others.»

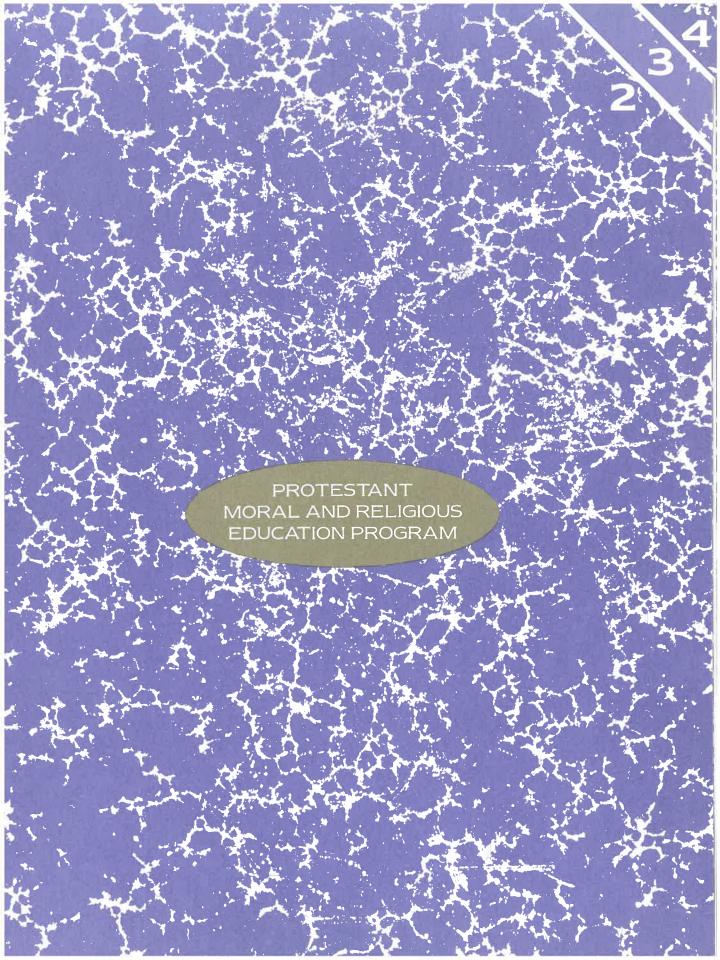
«The literate person has the capacity to think critically and to communicate effectively, and is able to use his or her expanded understanding of the world to enhance relationships.»

(The Canadian Home and School and Parent-Teacher Federation, What is Literacy?).

#### Conclusion

There are many different ways in which these values may be embodied in an educational system. The following represent opportunities for incorporating these values into the present educational picture in Québec.

Our commitment is not to a particular form of education but rather to the inclusion of those values we hold important within whatever form that it may take. Ideally each school community will decide on the combination of values and the emphasis which permits it to best serve the pupils who are its central concern.



This is one opportunity to embody the foregoing values in the present Québec education system.

Article 5 of the Education Act (1988) gives every pupil (or his or her parents acting on the pupil's behalf in elementary school and the first two grades of secondary school) the right to choose every year between Protestant Moral and Religious Education and Moral Education.

The Protestant Moral and Religious Education program is non-denominational and does not impose a particular religious, moral or secular position; indeed, to attempt to do so would contravene the Protestant principle that responsibility for religious commitment belongs to the Church and the home.

At the elementary level the pupil receives Protestant Moral and Religious Education for a minimum of 100 minutes per week.

At the secondary level the pupil receives a minimum of 50 hours of Protestant Moral and Religious Education per year.

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.

The régime pédagogique permits the local school to enrich and adapt the program provided such adaptations are in conformity with the objectives of the program.

Article 9 of the Regulation of the Protestant Committee defines the aims of Protestant Moral and Religious Education as the fostering of the personal development of the pupil:

- (1) by providing a knowledge of the Bible;
- (2) by fostering an understanding of the moral and religious values of the community in which the pupil lives;
- (3) by cultivating respect for all religious traditions including the pupil's own religious tradition;
- (4) by helping the pupil to become aware of the moral principles directing the pupil's actions;

(5) by contributing to the development of the reasoning used to make moral judgments.

The program which is informational in nature consists of three modules:

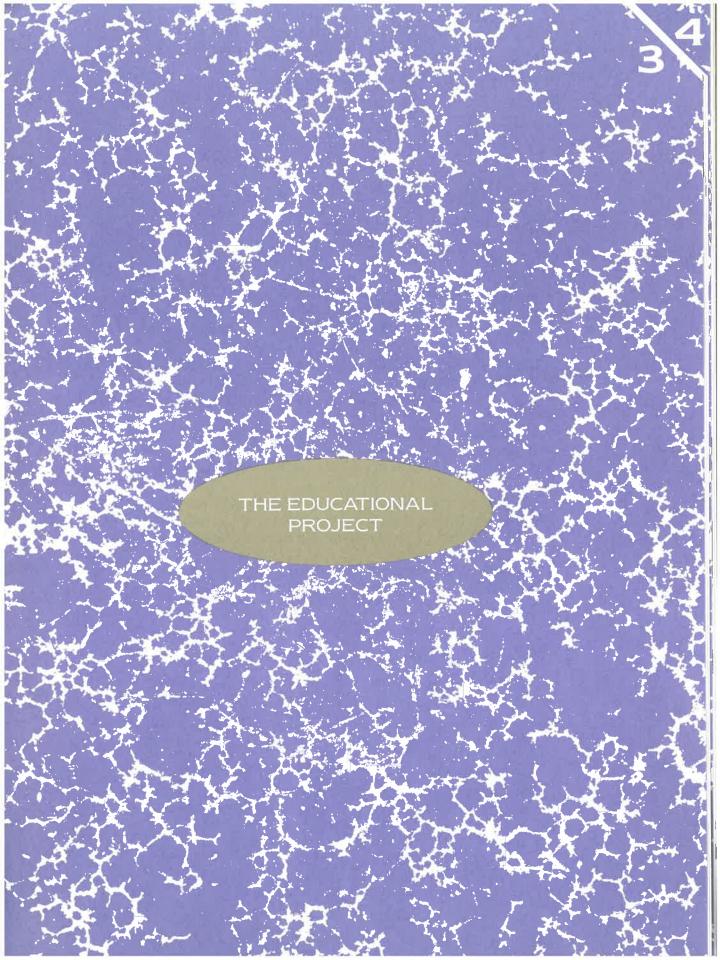
At the elementary school these are: the Biblical module; the celebration module; and the human development module.

At the secondary school these are: the Biblical module; the phenomena of religion module; and the personal development module.

A knowledge of the Bible has always been at the heart of Protestant education. The Bible is not only the source of the moral and spiritual values of the Protestant tradition, but it is also the foundation of many values found in Western culture and civilization. Western literature is replete with themes and allusions reflecting the concerns and influence of the Bible. The forms and contents of both law and government owe much to concerns that have their origin in the Bible. Moreover, the Bible is the standard by which the Protestant and many in North America evaluate critically Western cultural norms.

An understanding of other religious traditions is important in today's diverse and religiously pluralistic society. The program seeks to make pupils aware of the practices, the morality and the enunciated beliefs to which members of other religious traditions adhere in order that the pupils may respect the sincerity of commitment of adherents of other religions.

The program has also been concerned to provide a context within which the student may see moral and spiritual values brought into focus in the concerns of life and work. Topics such as human sexuality are examined within the context of positive human relations. The environment, sustainable development, peaceful solutions to conflict, concern for the vulnerable, such as aged and poor, are also viewed from the perspective of religious and spiritual values.



This is a second opportunity to embody the foregoing values in the present Québec education system.

The mission of the school is enunciated in and attained through an educational project.

Article 37 of the Education Act (1988) provides that the educational project is elaborated, carried out and evaluated by pupils, parents, teachers and other personnel of the school and the school board.

According to article 77 of the same act the orientations of the educational project are determined by the School's Orientation Committee and measures are adopted by the school's principal to ensure its carrying out and evaluation.

The mission statement of the school will embody the values and goals which the school intends to promote. It will be inclusive in nature designed to welcome pupils from the diverse community which the school serves.

The elaboration of an educational project provides an opportunity for parents, teachers, students and administration to work cooperatively in keeping your school responsive to the needs of its students and to the community.

The Protestant Committee suggests that the following elements might enter into the mission statement of your school as you take into consideration the values which were previously articulated:

- Excellence of instruction in all aspects of the curriculum;
- Individual and group initiative in the teaching-learning process;
- The physical, intellectual, social, emotional, moral and spiritual development of the child;
- The right of the child to his or her own heritage without alienation from home and community;
- The acquisition of a knowledge of the Bible;
- The freedom of the individual to interpret religious and moral questions according to his or her conscience;

- The right of a child to receive an education which presents various opinions concerning truth without imposing a particular religious or ideological position;
- The nurturing of a sense of responsible citizenship in each child.

Similarly the Protestant Committee suggests that the following goals might find a place in your school's mission statement:

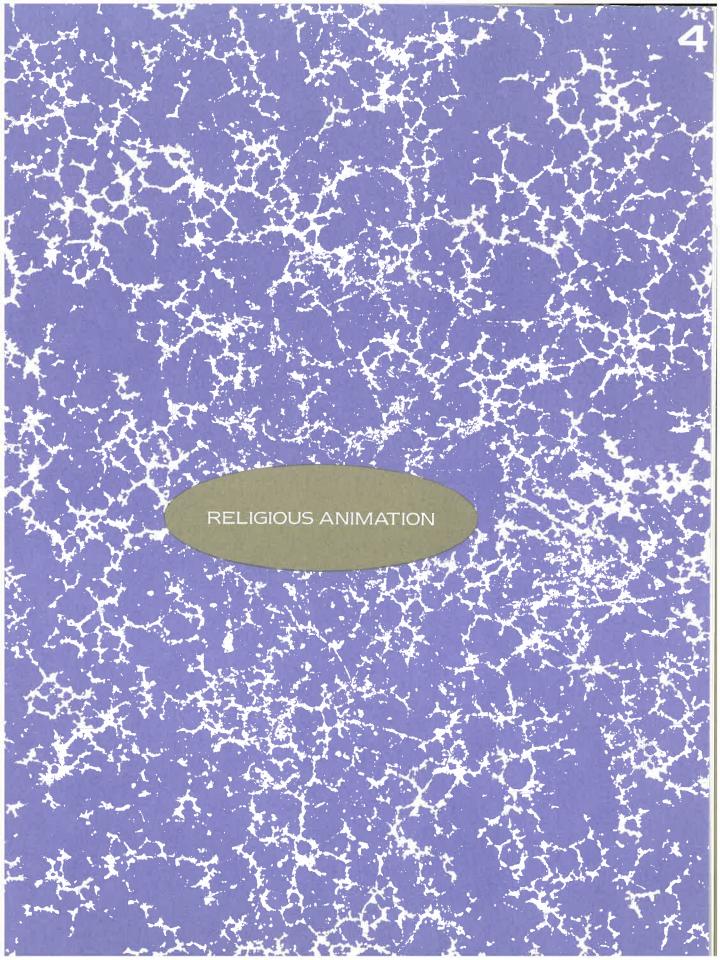
- To provide an education conducive to the fullest development of every child's personality;
- To develop a critical understanding of the full range of the child's cultural heritage and the interrelationships with other faiths and civilizations;
- To promote the search for truth in all fields of human experience, while recognizing that each individual must be free to weigh alternative points of view;
- To promote excellence of educational standards and be open to the testing of new ideas whenever and wherever they emerge.

The questions below may help you to see your school as a place for learning, a place for personal growth, and a place for community:

- Does our school foster a striving for excellence in academic and vocational studies? How?
- Does our school encourage the exploration of truth, individual and group initiative, and good working habits? How?
- Does our school encourage reading, the use of the school library and other community resources? How?
- Do our students feel welcome to approach teachers and administration for assistance? How?
- Does our school curriculum help students to be informed about and reflect upon moral, social and religious questions? How?
- Does our school transmit a knowledge of our heritage and culture including Biblical knowledge, scientific and technical thought? How?
- Does our school cultivate the student's individual potential? How?

- Does our school promote respect for oneself and for others as well as social responsibility? How?
- Does our school provide religious animation to help the child live out the commitments he or she has made? How?
- Does our school help individuals to understand themselves physically, morally and spiritually? How?
- Does our school teach respect and help students to understand and accept personal, cultural and religious differences? How?
- Does our school promote communication among children themselves? How?
- Does our school demonstrate such important values as caring, sharing, mutual trust and fair play? How?

It is hoped that such questions will give your school community food for thought and action and enable you to elaborate your own educational project tailored to the needs, shared values and goals of your community. The Protestant Committee hopes that this process will enable you and your school community create a school which will give full opportunity for each child to develop his or her full personal potential.



This is a third opportunity to embody the foregoing values in the present Québec education system.

Article 6 of the Education Act (1988) gives Protestant pupils the right to have complementary services of religious animation.

Religious animation takes its place within the Pupil Personnel (or Student) Services that are a facet of every school. Like the Auxiliary Services (which are largely extra-curricular), they are a complement to the Instructional Services which are the raison d'être of the educational system.

The school years are marked by a search for meaning and for identity, a search that is sometimes carried out in isolation and loneliness. It is also marked by conflict, by a desire to be part of the world, and - frequently - by an inability to reach out and to solve conflict constructively.

Religious animation is a witness of commitment to the spiritual realm of life - a commitment which recognizes something beyond and outside of oneself. The animator must have an awareness of the spiritual needs of the community and foster by example a sense of social responsibility for a neighbour. This expression of commitment is not necessarily accomplished in a specific activity, but rather in all aspects of the animator's work.

The animator may discuss personal religious commitment if a person wishes to discuss matters of faith and belief. Indoctrination or proselytizing, however, is inappropriate in a public Protestant school.

The religious animator is overseer and/or coordinator for religious activity in, and associated with, the school. Religious expression by the school community should be encouraged, but need not be under the direct supervision of the animator.

The aims of religious animation are to nurture spiritual maturity by:

- promoting the development of a sense of personal identity;
- providing support and personal counselling on a spiritual basis;
- fostering a sense of belonging among those of the same religious tradition;

- providing an opportunity to celebrate within the school setting important events of a religious nature;
- furnishing opportunities to exercise a sense of commitment and responsibility.

The spirit of community is a fundamental value directly related to the process of creating an identity, both personal and collective. This spirit of community has traditionally been fostered and nurtured through activities such as school assemblies and school class projects. The bringing together of the school community to observe religious events can serve to create a sense of harmony and contribute to the development of a feeling of belonging. Other celebrations of a non-religious nature such as recognizing an exceptional accomplishment by a member of the school or by a group, anniversaries, graduations, departures, or even the opportunity to express respect and grief on the occasion of a death can fulfill the same purpose.

Outlined below are some roles which may be performed by the animator. These areas may be arranged in order of priority on the basis of the needs of the individual school community and may vary from year to year. They are to be seen as descriptive rather than prescriptive.

#### Counsellor

Counselling implies that the religious animator be available:

- · to help students and school personnel with pertinent concerns;
- to help students and school personnel with questions about values, faith and interpersonal relationships;
- to help students and school personnel in times of personal crisis.

#### **Animator**

Animation in the school implies that the religious animator be available:

- to engage the school community in expressing the spiritual dimension of human life within the school milieu;
- to celebrate events of cultural significance to the school community;
- to provide a means of responding to important events which affect the school community.

#### **Community Liaison**

Community liaison implies that the religious animator be available:

- to sensitize students and school personnel to the needs and values of the community;
- to provide the opportunity for students and school personnel to act upon personal moral and spiritual values through direct involvement in the community.

#### **Social Advocate**

Social advocacy implies that the religious animator be available:

- to refer students, if necessary, to other professional services which may assist them with specific problems;
- to provide support and guidance for students who are in need.

#### **Resource Person**

Acting as a resource person implies that the religious animator be available:

- to act as a resource person for Moral and Religious Education teachers;
- to assist teachers in the examination of ethical concerns related to various fields of study;
- to act as a resource person to the school committee in matters of confessionality within the school system.



CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

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Édité par la Direction des communications du Conseil supérieur de l'éducation

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