

Freedom to Choose

In their own way, parents have an essential role to play in the family, at the parish and at school :

In the Family

- ◇ they choose whether or not to give their child religious education.
- ◇ they choose the kind of religious education to give him or her.
- ◇ they awaken their child to the faith and accompany his or her spiritual growth, if that is their choice.

At the Parish

- ◇ they find out about the catechesis offered by the Christian Community, if such is their choice.
- ◇ they support their child's participation throughout this journey.



Mother and daughter, simultaneously baptized.

At School

- ◇ they choose between Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction and Moral Education.
- ◇ they become parent-representatives on the Governing Board or attend meetings as general participants, if such is their choice.

For more information, contact your parish or diocese.

Some concrete suggestions for fostering youngsters' faith journey in the family* :

- ◇ Develop a sense of self-confidence and confidence in life.
- ◇ Begin simply by stating the name of God and of Jesus, relating them to love, joy, and beauty.
- ◇ Teach them to pray to God using everyday words.
- ◇ Tell a bible story or read a few pages from the Bible.
- ◇ Display some religious symbols : a cross, the manger scene, a prayer corner.
- ◇ Maintain family, cultural, and religious traditions.
- ◇ Become involved in concrete service projects and gestures of sharing as a family.
- ◇ Awaken their moral sense, concern for personal growth and respect for others.
- ◇ Show interest in their discoveries, in their questions about the meaning of life, in their desire for solidarity and service.

* Based on « *Proposing Faith to Young People Today : A Strength for Living* »,
Assemblée des évêques du Québec, Médiaspaul, 2001.

**Proposing
Jesus Christ
a way to freedom and
responsibility**



**For parents
wondering about
the education of their children
in the Catholic faith**

*L'Assemblée des évêques du Québec
in collaboration with
l'Assemblée des directeurs et directrices
diocésains d'éducation*

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Different ways of approaching the religious education of children

Marilyn was baptized at birth. Her parents wanted her to know the religious tradition in which they themselves had grown up. So, they registered her in the Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction course at school. However, they do not wish to go further « Later, she can decide if she wants to continue in this direction ».

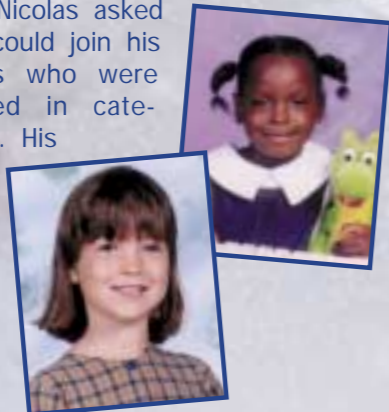


Yan's parents would like their son to receive the sacraments of Christian initiation as they did. They have registered him for catechetical activities in the parish. They have also chosen the Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction program for him, even though they know that it is not a prerequisite for what is offered by the Christian Community.



Nicolas' parents chose not to have him baptized at birth. At school, they registered him in the Moral Education program. At one point, Nicolas asked if he could join his friends who were enrolled in catechetical activities. His

parents decided to respect his choice. Likewise, the parish will take into account Nicolas' particular journey.



A Context of Change

These stories are a good illustration of the context of change in which we are living.

In a pluralistic society, belonging to the Catholic religion cannot be assumed and Christian education can no longer be done in the same way.

Bill 118 led to distinguishing the role of the public school from that of the Church in the religious education of young people.

Some responsibilities to share

From the perspective of growth, the celebration of the sacraments would not be a mark of achievement for young people; rather, it would be one stage in their journey of Christian life.

The family, the Christian Community and the school each have their respective responsibility in the religious education of young people :

- ◇ the family's responsibility is to awaken their child to faith and to accompany him or her on the journey;
- ◇ the Christian Community's responsibility is to propose faith in Jesus Christ and to educate believers;
- ◇ the school's responsibility is to offer Catholic and/or Protestant Moral and Religious Education.

Defining Terms

Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction

↓
is given at school
↓
through courses
↓
to acquire religious knowledge and to develop moral action

Catechesis

↓
takes place at home and in the parish
↓
through faith experiences
↓
that proclaim and nourish faith in Jesus Christ

The Parish

It is the role of the Christian Community to offer catechetical experiences and activities to help young people grow in faith.

The approach will be adapted to our culture. We are invited to move :

- ◇ from a religion based on acquiring knowledge → to a religion centred on the experience of faith;
- ◇ from a few meetings in preparation for the sacraments → to several activities spread out over time;
- ◇ from a uniform approach → to diversified pathways.

The School

The place of anything religious at the school has been profoundly modified by Bill 118. The school's new role is to expose young people to religious facts and to the spiritual dimension. Some of the other modifications are listed below :

- ◇ schools are no longer confessional;
- ◇ the time for Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction has been reduced considerably at the elementary level;
- ◇ Catholic Religious and Moral Instruction will no longer be offered in secondary III and V;
- ◇ a course in Ethics and Religious Culture will be given in secondary IV;
- ◇ a service of Spiritual Animation and Community Involvement, available to everyone, will replace the service of Pastoral Animation.

Parents can participate in making decisions concerning the implementation of these changes by becoming involved in the Governing Board of their child's school.