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## PROBLEMS OF UPBRINGING FOR PEACE IN CURRICULAR ASSUMPTIONS AND IN SELECTED POLISH RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEXTBOOKS

### Abstract

The article presents the content relating to the issues of education for peace in the curriculum assumptions and in selected methodical textbooks for teaching religion and presents conclusions and postulates concerning the indicated content. The author of the article attempts to answer the question: are religion lessons able to help catechised persons understand the need to join in building peace in the world? It analyses *The core curriculum of the Catholic Church in Poland (Podstawa Programowa Katechezy Kościoła Katolickiego w Polsce)*, *Curriculum for the teaching of Roman Catholic Religion in kindergartens and schools (Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach)* and methodological manuals for teaching religion in kindergartens, primary schools and general secondary schools, published by Wydawnictwo Jedność in Kielce, and Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw.

**Keywords:** peace, religious instruction, catechesis, education

### Streszczenie

## PROBLEMY EDUKACJI DLA POKOJU W ZAŁOŻENIACH PROGRAMOWYCH I W WYBRANYCH POLSKICH PODRĘCZNIKACH DO NAUCZANIA RELIGII

W artykule przedstawiono treści odnoszące się do problematyki wychowania dla pokoju w założeniach programowych i w wybranych podręcznikach metodycznych do nauczania religii oraz prezentuje wnioski i postulatory dotyczących wskazanych treści. Podjęto próbę

odpowiedzi na pytanie: czy lekcje religii są w stanie pomóc katechizowanym zrozumieć potrzebę włączenia się w budowanie pokoju na świecie? Przeanalizowano *Podstawę Programową Katechezy Kościoła Katolickiego w Polsce, Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* oraz podręczniki metodyczne do nauczania religii w przedszkolach, szkołach podstawowych i liceach ogólnokształcących, wydanych przez Wydawnictwo Jedność w Kielcach i Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne w Warszawie.

**Słowa kluczowe:** pokój, nauczanie religii, katecheza, wychowanie

## Introduction

At a time of ongoing wars and increasing tensions between nations and states, as well as between individuals, it is essential to build consensus for peace. Despite this obvious necessity, the measures taken on the political, economic and cultural levels are not always sufficient. Hence, the mission of the Church since its inception, is not only to call for peace, but above all to pray for peace and to undertake educational activities to help understand, realise and promote peace in a divided world. The World Day of Peace was established by Pope Paul VI in 1967 and has since been celebrated every first day of January on the Solemnity of the Holy Mother of God Mary. It is addressed not only to the faithful of the Catholic Church, but to all people of good will. Also on 1 January 2024. The Church will pray for the peace that is sorely lacking in the world. The World Day of Peace has a different intention each year, indicated by the Pope, in a special message. Also for 1 January 2024, Pope Francis issued a message *Artificial Intelligence and Peace*, which he summarised with the words “I hope that this reflection will encourage, to do everything possible to ensure that advances in the development of forms of artificial intelligence ultimately serve the cause of human brotherhood and peace. This is not the responsibility of a few, but of the entire human family. For peace is the fruit of relationships that recognise and accept the other in his or her inalienable dignity, and the fruit of cooperation and commitment to the integral development of all persons and all peoples”<sup>1</sup>.

In his encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis not only addressed peace between people, but offered a platform for understanding and building it<sup>2</sup>. This platform refers to the idea of universal brotherhood and making it a reality is a challenge for religious education, which can contribute to building peace and understanding between nations, individual social groups, as well as between individuals<sup>3</sup>. The school religion lesson fits into this context,

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1 Franciszek, „Orędzie Jego Świątobliwości Franciszka na 57. Światowy Dzień Pokoju 1 Stycznia 2024 r.”, dostęp 18.12.2023, <https://www.ekai.pl/dokumenty/orędzie-papieża-franciszka-na-57-swiatowy-dzien-pokoju-1-stycznia-2024>.

2 Franciszek, *Encyklika „Fratelli tutti”. O braterstwie i przyjaźni społecznej* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2020).

3 The issue of religious identity formation as a task of religious education in relation to the idea of universal brotherhood is discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of the article: Adam Rybicki, Paweł Mąkosa, Radosław Mazur, „Religious education and the concept of universal fraternity in the light of the encyclical «Fratelli tutti» of Pope Francis”, *Teaching Theology & Religion* 25 (2022): 93–96.

being a place to promote peaceful coexistence and an opportunity to seek ideas and concepts for building peace and cooperation between people as well as cultural traditions, creeds and religions, often so distant from each other.

The analysis of the assumptions of the religious education curriculum and methodical textbooks for teaching religion is one of the many research tasks of catechetics. Through the content of the curriculum and textbooks, not only religiosity, but also the social consciousness of the young generation is shaped, allowing pupils to acquire various competences necessary for adult life. The aim of this article is to identify the provisions relating to the issue of education for peace in the curricular assumptions and in selected methodological manuals for the teaching of religion and to present conclusions and postulates concerning the indicated contents. The article also concludes by attempting to answer the question: are religion lessons able to help catechised learners understand the need to contribute to building peace in the world? Therefore, an analysis was made of *The core curriculum of the Catholic Church in Poland (Podstawa Programowa Katechezy Kościoła Katolickiego w Polsce*<sup>4</sup>; hereinafter: *The core curriculum*), *Curriculum for teaching Roman Catholic religion in kindergartens and schools (Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach*<sup>5</sup> (hereinafter: *The Curriculum*) and methodical textbooks for teaching religion in kindergartens, primary schools and general secondary schools<sup>6</sup>, published by Wydawnictwo Jedność in Kielce, Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw. The selection of textbooks for the search was guided by their popularity and availability in different regions of Poland.

## 1. Peace education issues in *The core curriculum*

The latest *core curriculum* was approved on 8 June 2018 during the 379th Plenary Meeting of the Polish Bishops' Conference. It replaced the 2010 document and is one of the fruits of the ongoing reform of the school system, concerning both the structure of schooling and educational assumptions. The new document responds to the challenges of the Polish school, uses the language of educational outcomes and adopts a reformed layout of educational stages, although it retains a certain distinctiveness concerning the division of primary school into two equal educational stages (grades I–IV and V–VIII) – unlike in *The core curriculum* for General Education. Because *The core curriculum* the requirements to be placed on pupils taking part in school religion lessons, the recipients of the document are not only the authors of programmes and textbooks, but also the religion teachers themselves. This makes it a practical guide for catechists, who have easier and more concrete access to the tasks, content and requirements they will present to pupils.

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4 Konferencja Episkopatu Polski, *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* (Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła, 2018).

5 Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego Konferencji Episkopatu Polski, *Programu nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* (Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła, 2018).

6 A list of textbooks is provided in the bibliography.

The authors of the document, address the issue of peace education as early as the pre-school stage, where attention is drawn to “the need to awaken in children the longing for security, peace”<sup>7</sup>. For the second time, issues of peace education were not enshrined until the secondary school stage. Among the contents to be implemented in the religion lesson, “defence of peace” was indicated<sup>8</sup>. In the specific knowledge and skills requirements, the assumption is made that the pupil will be able to discuss “the importance of peace as a value in human life and society”<sup>9</sup>. On the other hand, among the attitudes not subject to school assessment, it is stipulated that the pupil will engage in peace building and respect for peace, and pray for peace<sup>10</sup>. At the same educational stage, within the framework of the correlation of religious education with school education with the subject of education for security, content concerning the threat of peace time and war time is indicated<sup>11</sup>. The theme of peace was taken up further among the content on catechesis for people with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities, where attention was drawn to the fact that God is the giver of peace<sup>12</sup>.

## 2. Peace education issues in *The curriculum*

*The curriculum* was adopted at the meeting of the Commission for Catholic Education of the Polish Bishops’ Conference in Częstochowa on 19 September 2018. The document is fully consistent with the assumptions of *The curriculum*. The authors of *The curriculum* use terminology that respects school standards and take into account the guidelines of the Church and the Polish catechetical tradition. The document is an aid to textbook authors and catechists adapting this programme to the educational needs of the educational institution in which they work.

The authors of *The curriculum* assume that pupils in the 7th grade of primary school, as part of the correlation of the teaching of religion with the subject of history, will receive information on the effects of wartime destruction<sup>13</sup>. Eighth-grade pupils, on the other hand, learn about the profiles of martyrs from the war and Stalinist period. The life stories of the martyrs not only show the tragedy of war, but also teach the need to care for peace<sup>14</sup>. Among the requirements for third-year high school pupils are written “the importance of peace as a value in the life of man and society” and the concepts: “just war and

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7 *The core curriculum*, 31.

8 *The core curriculum*, 112.

9 *The core curriculum*, 112.

10 *The core curriculum*, 112.

11 *The core curriculum*, 134.

12 *The core curriculum*, 155.

13 *The curriculum*, 133.

14 *The curriculum*, 149.

preventive war<sup>15</sup>, it is also intended to form attitudes that will enable the catechized to engage in building and respecting peace and motivate them to pray for peace<sup>16</sup>.

### 3. Issues of education for peace in methodological manuals

#### 3.1. Peace education issues in Methodological textbooks developed by Wydawnictwo Jedność in Kielce

Religious education textbooks in kindergarten for groups of three and four-year-olds do not contain content relating directly to the topic of education for peace. Children in the six-year-old group learn about the meaning of the sign of peace, which is given during Mass<sup>17</sup> and are made familiar with the Message of Fatima, from which they learn that Mary asked that the rosary be recited daily to ask for peace in the world<sup>18</sup>.

Pupils in the first year of primary school learn that St Jacinta died after a long illness and that she offered her own sufferings for world peace<sup>19</sup>. Children learn about the symbolism and meaning of the sign of peace, which is given during Mass<sup>20</sup>. They also learn that Mary is the Queen of peace and to her we can petition for peace in the world<sup>21</sup>. Second grade primary school pupils learn the importance of praying for world peace<sup>22</sup> and learn that peace is a gift from the Holy Spirit<sup>23</sup>. Children are informed about the negative consequences of the wars that have been on the territory of our country<sup>24</sup>. In third grade, pupils are motivated to entrust their own lives to Jesus, who will help them transmit God's love and peace<sup>25</sup>. The teacher reminds the children that Mary asks us to pray the rosary for peace in the world<sup>26</sup> and that at every Mass God comes to us with the gift of peace, which we can receive and pass on to others<sup>27</sup>.

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15 *The curriculum*, 199, 254, 309.

16 *The curriculum*, 199, 255, 309.

17 Dorota Adamek i in., *Tak! Jezus mnie kocha. Przewodnik metodyczny do nauczania religii dzieci sześciolatek*, 214 (further Jedność six-year-olds).

18 Jedność six-year-olds, 235.

19 Dorota Adamek i in., *Poznaję Boży świat. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa I szkoły podstawowej* (Kielce: Jedność, 2020) (further Jedność 1 SP), 337.

20 Jedność 1 SP, 296.

21 Jedność 1 SP, 366.

22 Dorota Adamek i in., *Odkrywam królestwo Boże. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa II szkoły podstawowej* (Kielce: Jedność, 2021) (further Jedność 2 SP), 28.

23 Jedność 2 SP, 246–247.

24 Jedność 2 SP, 327, 373.

25 Jedność 1 SP, 249.

26 Jedność 1 SP, 255.

27 Jedność 1 SP, 216.

Fourth-grade pupils learn that through prayer each of us can contribute to bringing harmony, love and peace to the world<sup>28</sup>. They will learn one of the Beatitudes, which refers to peacemakers<sup>29</sup>. Children receive assurance that the risen Christ brings peace to the world<sup>30</sup>. Based on a short story by Kazimierz Wójtowicz<sup>31</sup> Pupils reflect on the words “whether there is harmony, love and peace around us depends also on us. Peace in the world starts with the individual person, with peace in the family, at school. It is worth reflecting on what I am doing so that there is more peace around me? If peace is within us, we bestow it on those with whom we came into contact”<sup>32</sup>. The children then participate in a discussion where they look for answers to the question “how can we contribute to peace building in our immediate environment? (at home ... at school ... in the yard ...)?”<sup>33</sup>. In the next lesson, students learn about Teresa of Calcutta and find out that she received many awards, including the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize, which she donated entirely to the poor<sup>34</sup>. In a lesson dedicated to the heroes who gave their lives for the freedom of the homeland, children learn about the consequences of the cruelty of war<sup>35</sup>. Fifth-grade pupils in the lesson entitled *The Christian greeting an expression of my faith* learn the meaning of the word *shalom* (Hebrew for peace)<sup>36</sup>. During two lessons, they are encouraged to pray often for world peace<sup>37</sup> and deepen their understanding of the gesture of the sign of peace given during Mass<sup>38</sup>. In a lesson on conflict resolution, which most often arises during adolescence, an attitude is developed in pupils that will enable them to resolve family and friendship conflicts peacefully<sup>39</sup>. In the following lesson, the children learn about the king Jadwiga and her contribution to world peace<sup>40</sup>. During a lesson entitled *Lives given for God and country*, pupils learn in detail about the importance of peacekeeping missions<sup>41</sup>. In three lessons, the textbook’s authors point out examples of the futility of warfare<sup>42</sup>. In the sixth grade, pupils learn about the spiritual fruits of the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation,

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28 Dorota Adamek i in., *Miejsca pełne BOGA* Actw. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa IV szkoły podstawowej (Kielce: Jedność, 2020) (further Jedność 4 SP), 47.

29 Jedność 4 SP, 208.

30 Jedność 4 SP, 279.

31 Kazimierz Wójtowicz, *Przyczynki* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Wrocławskiej Księgarni Archidiecezjalnej TUM, 1991), 26.

32 Jedność 4 SP, 281.

33 Jedność 4 SP, 281.

34 Jedność 4 SP, 102.

35 Jedność 4 SP, 94.

36 Kamil Banasik i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy szukają prawdy*. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa V szkoły podstawowej (Kielce: Jedność, 2020) (further Jedność 5 SP), 245.

37 Jedność 5 SP, 389, 405.

38 Jedność 5 SP, 232.

39 Jedność 5 SP, 273.

40 Jedność 5 SP, 356.

41 Jedność 5 SP, 384.

42 Jedność 5 SP, 112, 143, 402.

among which special attention is given to peace<sup>43</sup>. In the lesson *The Republic of Poland as a country of religious tolerance* the issue of religious tolerance is discussed. Among other things, pupils learn that “mutual respect between adherents of different religions and beliefs leads to agreement and harmonious coexistence between them. Only then are we able to achieve true peace”<sup>44</sup>. In the following lesson, pupils were introduced to Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian leader who, in his quest for freedom for his homeland, rejected every form of violence and, through the use of “peaceful methods achieved more than others with machine guns”<sup>45</sup>. The children learn about the history of the Days of Prayer for World Peace, that representatives of most religions take part in the meetings every year and that Assisi is a special meeting place<sup>46</sup>. In two lessons, pupils were introduced to the injustices suffered by humanity during First and Second World Wars<sup>47</sup>. Young people of the 7th grade learn about the many diplomatic actions that John Paul II took, concerned about world peace<sup>48</sup>. During one of the lessons, students are asked to pray through the intercession of St. John Paul II for peace for our homeland<sup>49</sup>. In the next lesson, the young people consider the blessing: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God*, and learn about the consequences accompanying those who accept this blessing with an open heart<sup>50</sup>. In the lesson entitled *Dialogue with adults is possible* pupils receive information on conflict resolution in the family and compose a prayer “for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in their families”<sup>51</sup>. In three lessons they receive information about the evils that happened during the wars waged<sup>52</sup>. In the lesson entitled *Love Above All. Martyrs of World War I*, pupils learn about the characters of four saints who, despite the cruelty of war, helped to create an atmosphere of peace<sup>53</sup>. Pupils in the eighth grade learn that one of the effects of the sacrament of the anointing of the sick is peace<sup>54</sup>. During lesson *The eternal conflict between generations* young people learn about the principles of peaceful conflict resolution<sup>55</sup>. In the next lesson, pupils will learn about contemporary areopagus, among which there was a particular focus on “activities for peace”<sup>56</sup>. In the following lesson,

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43 Dorota Adamek i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy czynią dobro. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa VI szkoły podstawowej* (Kielce: Jedność, 2022) (further Jedność 6 SP), 171.

44 Jedność 6 SP, 230.

45 Jedność 6 SP, 126.

46 Jedność 6 SP, 234.

47 Jedność 6 SP, 155, 374.

48 Dorota Adamek i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy czynią dobro. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa VII szkoły podstawowej* (Kielce: Jedność, 2022) (further Jedność 7 SP), 397.

49 Jedność 7 SP, 401.

50 Jedność 7 SP, 426.

51 Jedność 7 SP, 196–203.

52 Jedność 7 SP, 305, 308–319, 372.

53 Jedność 7 SP, 383–392.

54 Jedność 7 SP, 92–93.

55 Jedność 7 SP, 54.

56 Jedność 7 SP, 286.



pupils discuss the theme of “Forgiveness and the pursuit of mutual reconciliation, which is an expression of living the Gospel and the same time the only condition for the preservation of peace between individuals and whole peoples”<sup>57</sup>.

First-year high school pupils on the basis of an excerpt from the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*<sup>58</sup> reflect on one of the Beatitudes and seek together to answer the question: What do peacemakers do? Among other things, they learn in the lesson that “peacemakers are a source of peace, building peace and social friendship. Peace-building is an art that requires serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill”<sup>59</sup>. In the following lesson, pupils are introduced to the truth that the person who honestly approaches God is his instrument through which he brings peace and unity among people<sup>60</sup>. In the next lesson, young people learn about the principles of dialogue between the Catholic Church and adherents of non-Christian religions, among which the issue of upholding peace and social justice is discussed in detail<sup>61</sup>. In two lessons, young people analyse in detail the words of the Prayer for Peace by St Francis<sup>62</sup> and the words of the prayer *Make me an instrument of peace*<sup>63</sup>. The last lesson in the handbook is an opportunity to familiarise young people with the figures of contemporary martyrs and advocates of peace, Fr Zbigniew Strzałkowski and Fr Michael Tomaszek, who were murdered by terrorists of the Communist Party of Peru *The Shining Path*. The terrorists murdered them on the grounds that “by preaching peace and undertaking evangelistic and charitable activities, they put the people to sleep in order to prevent the masses from undertaking a revolutionary upsurge”<sup>64</sup>. In the second year of high school, pupils learn about the principles that lead to happiness, developed from the words of Pope Francis. Among the principles, a lot of attention is given to the principle: “fight for peace – build it in your own family and environment”<sup>65</sup>. At the end of the next lesson, they learn the *Prayer for Peace* by St. John Paul II<sup>66</sup>. The next lesson is dedicated to the person of the Holy Spirit, who is called the Spirit of Peace. Pupils learn that, like the apostles who received the Holy Spirit, they are specifically sent to restore peace among people and between God and man<sup>67</sup>. In the lesson entitled *Where do wars come from and where do quarrels come from? Religious wars*, the authors focus on analysing the causes

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57 Jedność 7 SP, 353.

58 Franciszek, *Adhortacja Apostolska „Gaudete et exsultate”. O powołaniu do świętości w świecie współczesnym* (Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła, 2018), 87–89.

59 Kamil Banasik i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy żyją wiarą. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa I liceum i technikum* (Kielce: Jedność, 2020) (further Jedność 1 LO), 15–16.

60 Jedność 1 LO, 133.

61 Jedność 1 LO, 258.

62 Jedność 1 LO, 254.

63 Jedność 1 LO, 134.

64 Jedność 1 LO, 583.

65 Kamil Banasik i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy żyją wolnością. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa II liceum i technikum* (Kielce: Jedność, 2021) (further Jedność 2 LO), 157.

66 Jedność 2 LO, 195.

67 Jedność 2 LO, 275.



which have led to the outbreak of wars in the past and provide valuable insights which are useful in resolving conflicts and fostering peace<sup>68</sup>. In addition, pupils were reminded of the message of Fatima, which concerns the concern for world peace<sup>69</sup>.

In the third year of secondary School, during the lesson entitled *The Polish Church during World War II*, the teacher conducts a guided conversation on the theme “peace is the greatest value” and analyzes with the pupils an passage from St. John Paul II’s *Message for the 19th World Peace Day*. Then the pupils learn about the biographies of people who were martyrs of World War II and contributed to the spread of peace<sup>70</sup>. In the following lesson, pupils analyse the essence of peace, which is the fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit. They consider what is involved in the life of a person permeated by the presence of the Holy Spirit and what consequences this has for peace among loved ones and in the world<sup>71</sup>. In the lesson entitled *The Freedom Uprising in Poland*, pupils learn that the idea of Solidarity drew its peaceful content from the teachings of St. John Paul II. Which led to a peaceful change of the political system. This is why Solidarity became known throughout the world as a symbol of peaceful changes leading to the collapse of communism<sup>72</sup>. In the lesson entitled *Have Your Westerplatte* youth were shown and explained ways to serve the formation of conscience. Furthermore, an attempt is made to motivate young people to form their conscience according to God’s law, which helps to educate them to live of peace<sup>73</sup>. The following lesson recalled facts about the atrocities of war<sup>74</sup>. The theme of the cruelty of wars recurs again in seven lessons<sup>75</sup>. In the fourth year of high school, the lesson entitled *Charter of family rights* begins with a prayer for world peace. The teacher then seeks with the pupils to answer the questions “What does world peace depend on? What values do people value most in their lives?”<sup>76</sup>. He concludes by explaining that “world peace depends primarily on whether people have peace in their hearts and how they share it with their loved ones”<sup>77</sup>. During the lecture in the next lesson, the catechist explains that “The common good is peace, that is, the permanence and security of a just order. It requires that the authority, by decent means, protect the community and its members. This is the basis of the right to legitimate personal and collective defense”<sup>78</sup>. In the lesson entitled *Peace to save a threatened world* the authors

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68 Jedność 2 LO, 329–336.

69 Jedność 2 LO, 463–464.

70 Kamil Banasik i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy żyją nadzieją. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa III liceum* (Kielce: Jedność, 2022) (further Jedność 3 LO), 358–368.

71 Jedność 3 LO, 466.

72 Jedność 3 LO, 395–402.

73 Jedność 3 LO, 51–56.

74 Jedność 3 LO, 51.

75 Jedność 3 LO, 132, 271, 329, 331, 345, 354, 358–368.

76 Kamil Banasik i in., *Szczęśliwi, którzy żyją miłością. Przewodnik metodyczny. Klasa IV liceum i V technikum* (Kielce: Jedność, 2023) (further Jedność 4 LO), 116.

77 Jedność 4 LO, 116–117.

78 Jedność 4 LO, 142.

of the textbook set as the objective of the lesson: “to learn what peace is and what its sources are”<sup>79</sup>, while as to the requirements for pupils, they indicated “the ability to define the terms: war, local conflict, global conflict, terrorism, violence, peace, intermingling of cultures, peaceful coexistence, arms race, cold war. Knowledge of the efforts made by the Church for peace, the ability to formulate a claim to seek peace and pray for peace in one’s own heart and in the world”<sup>80</sup>. Then, working in groups, young people consider the question of building a culture of peace, based on the statements of three popes<sup>81</sup>. The lesson concludes with a joint prayer for world peace<sup>82</sup>. Three lessons cite facts that demonstrate the cruelty and senselessness of wars<sup>83</sup>.

### 3.2. Peace education issues in Methodical textbooks published by The Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw Ltd.

The Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw does not publish textbooks for pre-schools groups of three- and four-year-olds. Five-year-old children learn to sing the song Christ came to give peace to the world during kindergarten classes and this peace he leaves us<sup>84</sup> and six-year-olds songs God’s peace fills my soul<sup>85</sup>.

In the first grade of primary school, the authors of the textbook focus on participation in the Mass. The teacher explains to the pupils what the sign of peace is and explains the meaning of the blessing given and “the words, Go in the peace of Christ. We have, like the Apostles, to show the world the Lord Jesus”<sup>86</sup>. In the following lessons, children in second grade learn about the principles of the life of a disciple of Christ, which help to live in peace<sup>87</sup> and learn that Our Lady of Fatima calls us to pray for peace<sup>88</sup> and that the Holy Spirit is the source of peace<sup>89</sup>. In the third grade, the teacher reminds the pupils of Our Lady’s message from Fatima, in which Our Lady calls for prayer for peace and an end to war in the world<sup>90</sup>. Children also learn that the fruit of the sacrament of penance

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79 Jedność 4 LO, 233.

80 Jedność 4 LO, 233.

81 Texts of John Paul II, John XXIII, Paul VI are considered. Jedność 4 LO, 234–238.

82 Jedność 4 LO, 238.

83 Jedność 4 LO, 127, 233–244, 238.

84 Aneta Rayzacher-Majewska i in., *Jesteśmy dziećmi Bożymi. Poradnik metodyczny do nauczania religii w przedszkolu w grupie pięcioletków* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2017) (further WK pięcioletki), 101.

85 Beata Śmigiera i in., *Z Panem Jezusem. Poradnik metodyczny do nauczania religii w przedszkolu w grupie sześciolatek* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2017) (further WK sześciolatki), 27.

86 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *W imię Ojca i Syna i Ducha Świętego. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie I* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2020) (further WK 1 SP), 191.

87 WK 1 SP, 116.

88 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *To jest mój Syn umiłowany. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w kl. II* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2021) (further WK 2 SP), 266.

89 WK 2 SP, 260.

90 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *Kto spożywa moje Ciało, ma życie. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie III* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2022) (further WK 3 SP), 114.

and reconciliation is peace<sup>91</sup>, learn a prayer for peace in the world and pray it together in class<sup>92</sup>.

Fourth grade pupils learn that forgiveness is a source of peace<sup>93</sup> and that one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is peace<sup>94</sup>. In fifth grade, the teacher conveys that “the common good of mankind is peace and good coexistence between different peoples”<sup>95</sup>. In the next lesson, the children will learn about the “Benedictine vocation *ordo et pax*, or order and peace, and its importance for building peace, the source of which is the human heart”<sup>96</sup>. In the sixth grade, pupils learn two prayers for families in which peace education is carried out “May each family become a temple of God in which mutual love and peace reign”<sup>97</sup>, “Have mercy on us and cause peace to return to our family, for if You do not grant it to us, no one else can give it to us”<sup>98</sup>. They will also read an excerpt from Pope Francis’ prayer *For Peace and the Cessation of Terrorism*<sup>99</sup>. In seventh grade, pupils consider the truth about one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, which is peace<sup>100</sup>. In the next lesson, they will learn the facts about the meeting that took place at the initiative of St John Paul II in Assisi in 1986. During the meeting, followers of different religions prayed together for peace in the world<sup>101</sup>. In eighth grade, the theme of one of the lessons is the *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Pupils in this lesson learn the importance of the sacrament of Holy Orders, which contributes, among other things, to building peace in the world<sup>102</sup>. In the next lesson they will learn the *Franciscan Prayer for World Peace*<sup>103</sup>. Another lesson was devoted to the figure of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, during which pupils reflect on the Blessed’s commitment to peace<sup>104</sup>. In the textbook for the oldest grade of elementary school, four lessons show the cruelty of wars<sup>105</sup>.

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91 WK 3 SP, 186.

92 WK 3 SP, 306.

93 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *Trwajcie w miłości mojej! Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii dla klasy IV* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2023) (further WK 4 SP), 249.

94 WK 4 SP, 294.

95 Mariusz Czyżewski i in., *Bóg nas szuka. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie V* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2020) (further WK 5 SP), 66.

96 WK 5 SP, 234.

97 Mariusz Czyżewski i in., *Jezus nas zbawia. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie VI* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2021) (further WK 6 SP), 109.

98 WK 6 SP, 262.

99 WK 6 SP, 294.

100 Mariusz Czyżewski i in., *Kościół wskazuje nam drogę. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie VII* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2022) (further WK 7 SP), 131.

101 WK 7 SP, 218.

102 Michał Polny i in., *Duch Święty nas uświęca. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii dla klasy VIII* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2023) (further WK 8 SP), 179–182.

103 WK 8 SP, 217.

104 WK 8 SP, 241–245.

105 WK 8 SP, 220, 229–231, 251, 256.

First-year high school pupils at the beginning of the lesson entitled *My Westerplatte* say a prayer for those in power for world peace<sup>106</sup>, they learn to distinguish between the terms *defensive war*, *unjust war*. At the end of the lesson, pupils carry out a reflection on the tragic consequences of wars<sup>107</sup>. In the following lesson, young people discuss the nature of the cross. One of the issues to be discussed is the cross inscribed in the life of a man, which, lived in union with God, becomes an opportunity for peace<sup>108</sup>. In second grade, during one of the lessons, pupils analyse the importance of living in truth for peace around us and in the world<sup>109</sup>. During a lesson on truth, young people reflect on the words of Pope John Paul II “A key issue for peace is the question of religious freedom”<sup>110</sup>. The next lesson relates to papal primacy, however, issues of peace emerge. Pupils learn about Benedict XV and his pursuit of peace during the First World War, and about the work of the current Pope Francis for peace in the world, who, among other things, has made repeated appeals for peace in Ukraine, the Holy Land, Syria and the Middle East. This lesson also introduced the idea of the *World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi*, which is attended by religious and political leaders from around the world<sup>111</sup>.

It is noteworthy that in the third grade an entire lesson was devoted to the topic of education for peace. The topic of the lesson was entitled *The challenges of today – peace*. As the objective of the lesson, the authors of the textbook indicated: “discovering the value of peace in the world; recognizing war as a human calamity”<sup>112</sup>. In conclusion, the teacher summarises the information provided during the lesson and reminds us that “peace is not the absence of war. Peace is the fruit of justice and love. Peace is endangered when man is not granted what he deserves as a human being, when his dignity is not respected, and when human relations are not oriented towards the common good (...) war is always a failure of man. Crime, violence, rape are justified by the need to gain more influence, power, money, convenience or recognition”<sup>113</sup>. In a lesson on conscience, pupils learn about the types of conscience and learn that a *post-conscience* is important for peace<sup>114</sup>. During the lesson on the meaning of the Beatitudes, the young people learn that “A peacemaker is someone who cooperates with God by developing his qualities and correcting his defects, so that he has peace in his heart. Such a person restores harmony between people and

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106 Pierzchała Piotr i in., *Na drogach wolności. Poradnik metodyczny do nauczania religii w klasie I liceum czteroletniego i technikum pięcioletniego* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2020) (further WK 1 LO), 42.

107 WK 1 LO, 43.

108 WK 1 LO, 146.

109 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *To jest mój Syn umiłowany. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w kl. II* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2021) (further WK 2 LO), 76.

110 WK 2 LO, 92.

111 WK 2 LO, 92.

112 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *Kto spożywa moje Ciało, ma życie. Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie III* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o., 2022) (further WK 3 LO), 270–272.

113 WK 3 LO, 272.

114 WK 3 LO, 83.

builds benevolent relationships”<sup>115</sup>. An entire lesson hour is devoted to the Church’s teaching on the conditions that justify legitimate defense with military force. Pupils learn that the Church has never taught that there is a holy war. Every war brings death, physical and spiritual suffering, destruction of human cultural heritage and environmental degradation. None of these effects of war come from God and have nothing to do with holiness. The teacher explains that in the history of Christian thought only the so-called just *war theory developed*, which is nowadays described as legitimate because of the defense of life and liberty. This concept, however, does not sanctify or justify war. It merely indicates the conditions whose preservation makes it possible for attacked peoples to defend themselves, while at the same time reminding us that the only way of development for man and peoples is the way of peace<sup>116</sup>. On the other hand, in the textbook for the secondary school graduating class, we will not find content concerning the problems of education for peace<sup>117</sup>.

#### 4. The problem of education for peace – a comparative approach

In order to analyze the issue of education for peace, documents and textbooks were grouped according to educational stages:

- a) educational stage – kindergarten;
- b) educational stage – grades one to four primary school;
- c) educational stage – grades five-seventh school;
- d) educational stage – Secondary school.

Table 1. Issues of educating for peace – a comparative view

Issues	Curriculum basis				Curriculum				Wydawnictwo Jedność				Wydawnictwo Catechetical			
	a.	b.	c.	d.	a.	b.	c.	d.	a.	b.	c.	d.	a.	b.	c.	d.
I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Longing for peace	x															
Learning songs about peace													x			
The need to defend peace				x										x		
Peace as a value				x				x				x				x
Commitment to peace building				x				x			x	x				

115 WK 3 LO, 104.

116 WK 3 LO, 233–234.

117 Robert Rafał Szewczyk i in., *Trwajcie w miłości mojej! Poradnik metodyczny Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii dla klasy IV* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne sp. z o.o., 2023).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Prayer for peace				x				x	x		x	x		x	x	x
Threats to peace				x												
Effects of wars				x			x			x	x	x			x	x
Distinguishing types of wars								x								x
Patterns of peacemakers							x			x	x	x			x	x
Interpretation of <i>the peace sign</i>										x	x			x		
The Message of Fatima									x			x		x		
Peace as a gift of the Holy Spirit										x		x		x	x	
Peace as the fruit of a life of faith										x				x	x	x
Understanding the blessings associated with peace											x	x			x	x
Ways of resolving conflicts											x					
Fruits of the sacrament of penance											x			x		
Religious freedom											x				x	
Initiatives for world peace											x					
The need for forgiveness											x				x	
Church actions for peace												x			x	x
Causes of wars												x				
Papal teaching for peace												x				x
Formation of conscience												x				x

## 5. Conclusion and demands

We are all obliged to care for peace, which is one of the most important and timeless values in the life of human beings and whole societies. The very universality of the desire for peace is a testimony to the development of social consciousness and its importance for individuals. The Church is involved in efforts to maintain peace and to create the conditions that make it sustainable, and she pursues the goal of educating the young generation of Catholics to live in peace through, among other things, religious instruction.

Given the importance of the issue at hand, extensive content on education for peace should be present in religious education curriculum documents. The juxtaposition of the core curriculum with the programme and the textbooks makes it possible to ascertain

to what extent the assumptions concerning the issue of peace education indicated in the core curriculum have been taken into account by the authors of both the programme and the textbooks.

On the basis of an analysis *The core curriculum* and *The curriculum* it must be concluded that this content is insufficiently present. In *The core curriculum* at the pre-school stage, the authors refer to the issue only once, drawing attention to the need to awaken children's longing for security and peace. Apart from this one instance, we do not find any more references to peace education in the kindergarten and primary school educational stages in the document. While it could be assumed that in kindergarten and grades one to four of primary school, children are still too young to be brought up to peace, it is surprising that these contents are not found in *The core curriculum* in grades five to eight. Adolescence is not only a time of increasing rebellion and symptoms of aggression it is also a time when young people mature in their understanding of the meaning of peace becoming open to the transmission of values according to which they will be able to shape their lives. However, it should be noted that the authors *The curriculum* have fortunately added peace content in the seventh and eighth grades, however, even these seem insufficient. It is therefore proposed that in future editions of the *The core curriculum* and *The curriculum* add missing issues related to the topic under discussion. Particular attention should be given to adding more extensive content in the second stage of primary school. On the other hand, it has to be said that the content dedicated to secondary school is available in both documents, but it should be expanded, at least to include topics such as: peace as a gift of the Holy Spirit, peace as a fruit of living the faith, ways of resolving conflicts, religious freedom, initiatives taken for peace in the world, the need for forgiveness, the Church's action for peace, the causes of wars, papal teaching for peace and the formation of a conscience that helps to live in peace and create peace in the world.

Turning to the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the method books, it must be said that it was fortunate that the authors of Wydawnictwo Jedność in Kielce and Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw went beyond the premise of the curriculum documents and added relevant content to their own textbooks. The authors of both series of textbooks primarily deal extensively with the following topics: peace understood as an essential value, the need for commitment to peace building, sensitisation to the need to pray for peace, the consequences of waging war, examples of the lives of those striving for peace, understanding the sign of peace given at Mass, the importance of the Fatima message of the gift of peace, which is a gift of the Holy Spirit and the fruit of a life of faith, understanding the blessing of the *Blessed are the peacemakers*. Other content, although equally relevant, has been given little coverage. It is proposed that the topics of: ways of resolving conflicts; fruits of the sacrament of penance; religious freedom, initiatives for peace in the world; the need for forgiveness; the Church's action for the restoration of peace; the causes of the outbreak of wars; the Pope's teaching for peace; the formation of conscience; the distinction between types of wars contemporary threats to peace, should be more extensively included in the next editions of the textbooks. In particular,



these topics should be included in the method books Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne in Warsaw in the graduating class, because there we do not find any content referring to education for peace.

In conclusion, it is important to state that the curricular assumptions and the content presented in the textbooks provide an opportunity for religion lessons to help students understand the need to be involved in building peace in the world. All the contents indicated are permeated by a personalistic way of thinking, which is the basis of education for peace, which, especially today, is an important social, educational and ecclesial commitment. However, it seems necessary to add selected above-mentioned content at the various educational stages. This article could be used by the authors of the next edition of curriculum documents and methodological textbooks for teaching religion, to make fuller use of the content referring to education for peace in order to make this knowledge more accessible to pupils.

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#### **Cytowanie chicagowskie:**

- Bielinowicz, Adam. „Problems of upbringing for peace in curricular assumptions and in selected Polish religious education textbooks”. *Studia Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeskie* 31 (2024): 113–130. DOI: 10.18276/skk.2024.31-06.

#### **Cytowanie oksfordzkie:**

- Bielinowicz A., *Problems of upbringing for peace in curricular assumptions and in selected Polish religious education textbooks*, „Studia Koszalińsko-Kołobrzeskie” 31 (2024), s. 113–130. DOI: 10.18276/skk.2024.31-06.