

Religions and Virtues

Religious studies
in Bulgaria







“Is it any wonder that we have fallen so far behind spiritually and morally that we do not know where to turn? Is it any wonder that we have fallen so far behind materially that we have nothing to offer for a better life? Is it any wonder that now, by royal decree, the church truths that were taken away from us have been returned to us and we have been allowed to be masters of our own share, stewards of our own goods and free to dispose of our church and national affairs as we please, and we here too, if on one side they are straining with all our might to work for the regulation of our common good, on the other we sit stunned, watching the scene from afar, as if we were from another people, from another tribe?

The improvement of our national destiny depends only on our mental development and enrichment with various knowledge - on enlightenment!”

Hristo Danov

Sunday schools



The first attempt to open a Sunday school is attributed to Hr. Danov as a teacher in the village of **Strelcha**, Panagyurishte Region in 1850.

1850

1869

In 1869, the **widespread opening** of Sunday schools in the country began.

In the period from 1899 to 1905, numerous Sunday schools developed, especially in the old educational centers of the country: Tarnovo, Stara Zagora, Sliven, Kotel, Vratsa, Vidin, etc. Sunday schools are free.

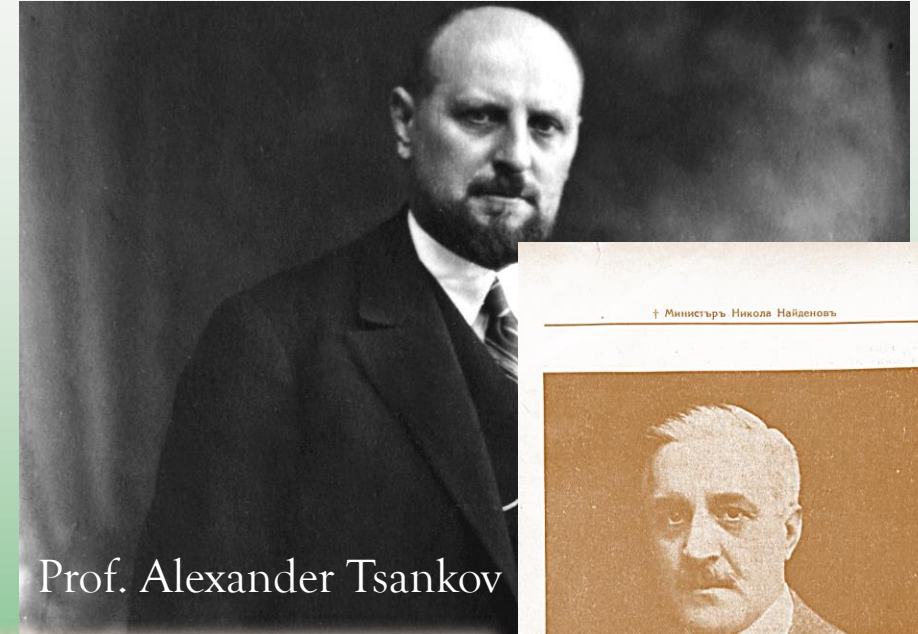
1899 →

Religion in the Bulgarian School

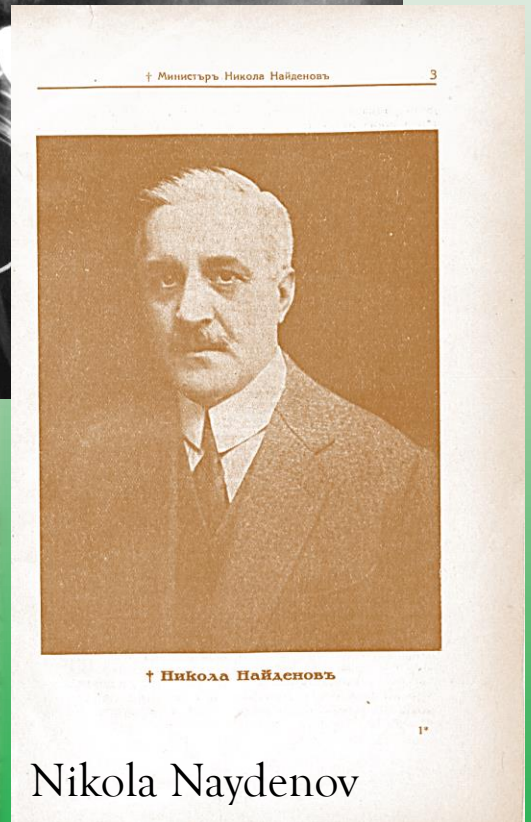
After 1923, the governments of the *Democratic Alliance*, with their ministers of education, **Prof. Alexander Tsankov** and **Nikola Naydenov**, maintained the traditional policy in education.

First of all, they set as their goal the elevation of education as a means of moral strengthening and cultivation of higher virtues in the younger generation.

“Strengthening the prestige and affirming the spiritual and educational role of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, *through* the preparation of a larger number of specially educated priests.”



Prof. Alexander Tsankov



Nikola Naydenov

D^aily pr^ayer before 19⁴4

Дядо Господи, прости ме,
моля ти се от душа,
с ум и разум надари ме,
да не мога да греша.
Запази ми Ти сърцето
от зли мисли и неща;
всичко виждаш от небето,
зло на мен недей праща.
Дай на мама, дай на тате,
здраве, сила и живот;
мир, любов на всички братя
и добро на наш народ.
Амин!

Lord God, forgive me,
I pray to you from the bottom of my heart,
Grant me with mind and understanding,
so that I may not sin.
Protect my heart
from evil thoughts and things;
You see everything from heaven,
Do not send evil to me.
Give mom, give dad,
health, strength and life;
peace, love to all brothers
and good to our people.
Amen!

1944

After the coup of 1944, the trends in our education changed radically. A few years later, religious education was removed from the curriculum, and the appearance of Bulgarian education became entirely materialistic and atheistic.

The past years have clearly and categorically shown that within the framework of the only scientific-materialistic and atheistic education, some reasons for the state of our contemporary society are hidden. And more specifically – in the lack of moral religious education and upbringing.



Religion in the Bulgarian School

During the 1997/1998 school year, the subject "Religion" was introduced in the elective preparatory classes.

The Bulgarian Orthodox Church – Bulgarian Patriarchy is building a comprehensive concept regarding the status of the subject Religion.

The Holy Synod insists: from the academic year 2008/2009, the subject "Religion" should be introduced as a *compulsory* preparation by *gradually* implementing the educational documentation from grades 1 to 12.

This was done in 2015 with the provisions of the Preschool and School Education Act.

The Education Commission approves the introduction of the subject "Virtues and Religions".

1997

2007

2008

2012

2015

2025

31.07.2025

Since 2007, the issue and possibilities of including the subject of Religion in the list of compulsory subjects have been repeatedly considered.

After this issue was once again put on the agenda and *examined* in detail in 2012, the status of the Religion subject as an optional or elective was finally confirmed, and *measures* were taken to reform the curriculum for this very important subject and bring it into line with EU requirements.

"Virtues/Ethics". The subject will be included in the curriculum within the framework of compulsory classes initially at the primary stage. VIRTUES AND RELIGIONS
VIRTUES (ETHICS)
RELIGION
ORTHODOX AND RELIGION – ISLAM.



Sunday schools

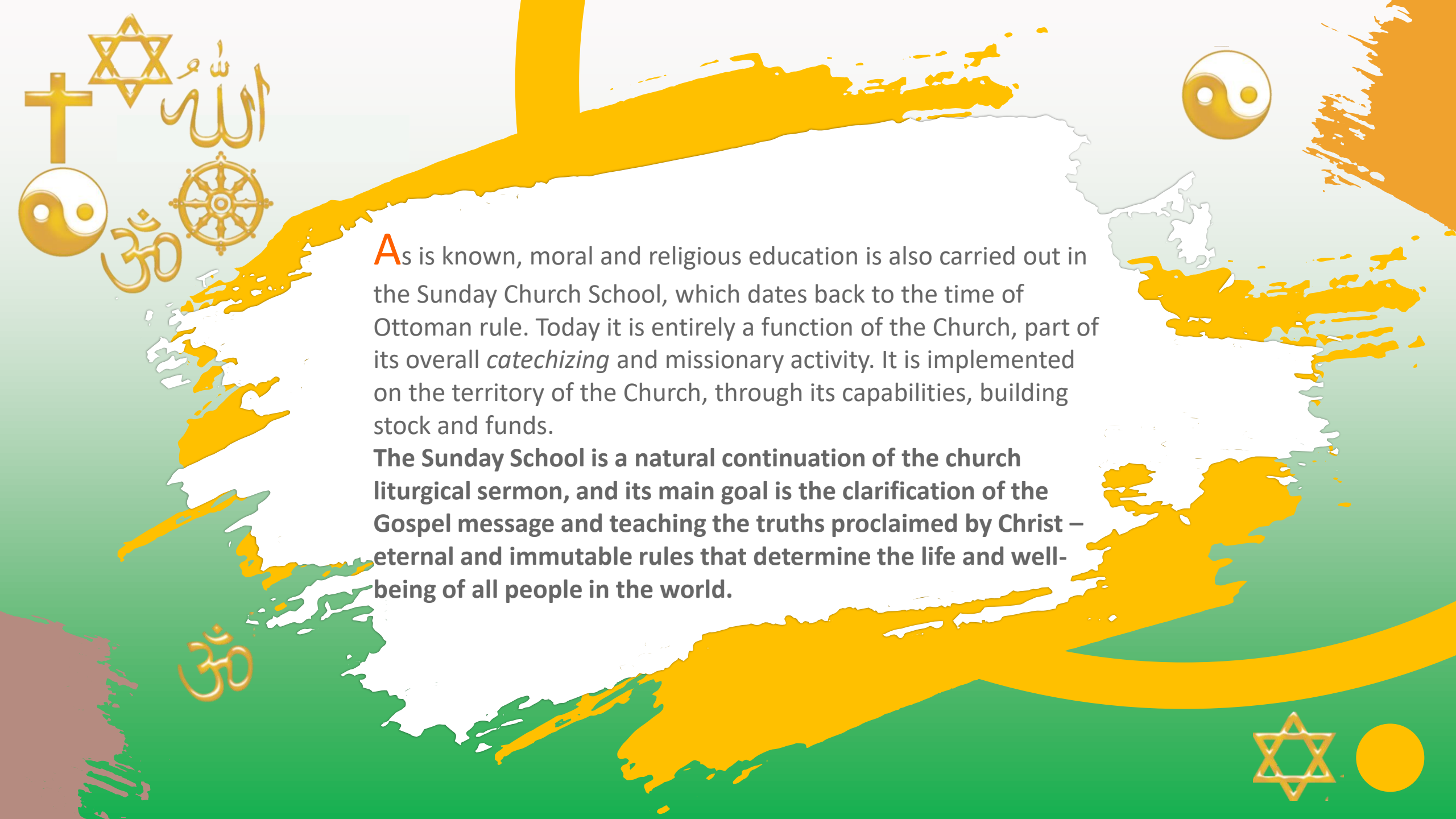


The Church is connected to the world through its human nature and spiritualizes it through her divine essence. The Church also calls its faithful children to participation in public life, which must be based on the principles of Christian morality.



Religious tolerance

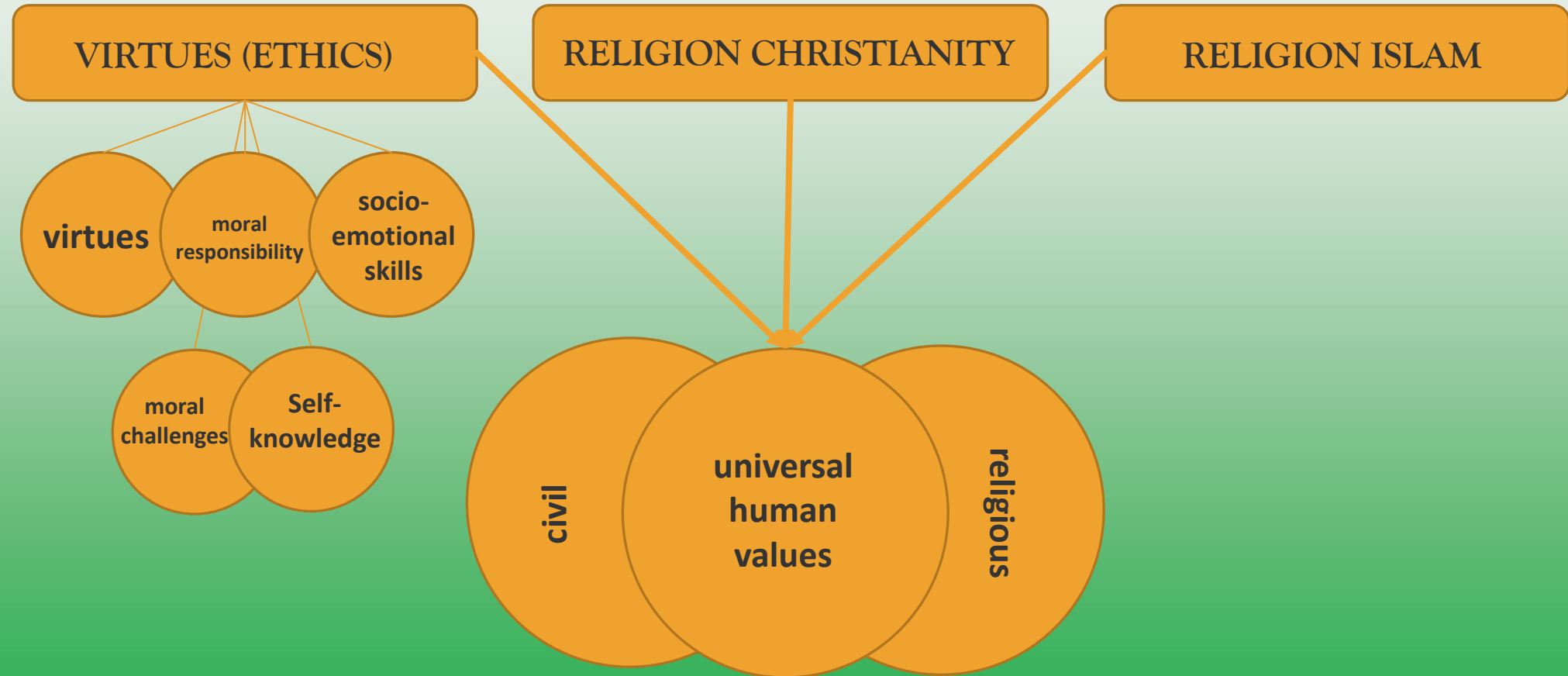




As is known, moral and religious education is also carried out in the Sunday Church School, which dates back to the time of Ottoman rule. Today it is entirely a function of the Church, part of its overall *catechizing* and missionary activity. It is implemented on the territory of the Church, through its capabilities, building stock and funds.

The Sunday School is a natural continuation of the church liturgical sermon, and its main goal is the clarification of the Gospel message and teaching the truths proclaimed by Christ – eternal and immutable rules that determine the life and well-being of all people in the world.

Virtues and Religions





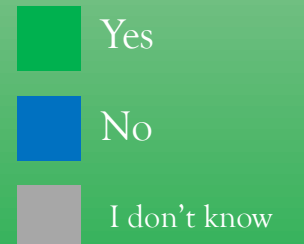
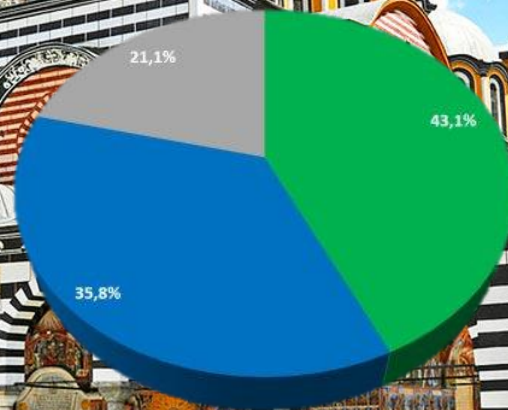
The purpose of introducing the subject "RELIGION CHRISTIANITY" is not **indoctrination**, that is, the formation of religious consciousness, but the **teaching of knowledge that allows for making a competent and enlightened choice**, as well as the systematic introduction in an accessible and interesting form to the tradition in which we have lived for more than 1,000 years, which was interrupted during the period of state atheism.

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE BOC

GALLUP®, 2022



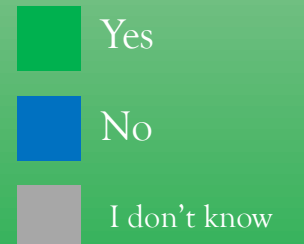
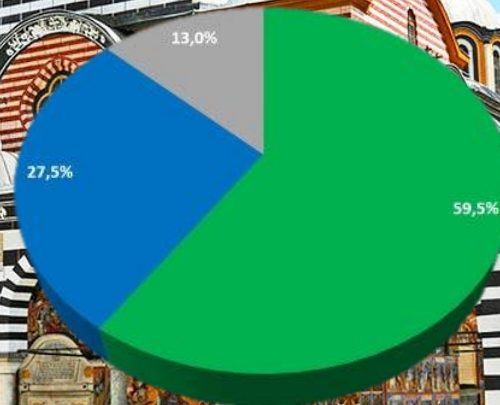
Do you trust in the Church?



GALLUP®, 2022



Do you believe in God?





Patriarch Daniil - Bulgarian Patriarch

„Faith is not instilled by force. Even the children of priests are not always in church. The goal is to provide information, to educate in goodness. A person must have a choice and know that there is another path - the path of forgiveness, of virtue, of self-control.“

Examples of global topics around which training
can be conducted



Examples of global topics around which training can be conducted

1. Self-knowledge – self-respect, self-control, feelings and desires, strengths, right to privacy, feelings and emotions – their recognition and healthy expression.

2. Friendship and coexistence – sharing, cooperation, trust, forgiveness, mutual assistance, respect for others, empathy, tolerance and acceptance of differences – cultural, religious, individual.

3. Moral norms and ethical rules – honesty, justice, free will, rules and rights, solidarity, moral and social rules.

4. Values and virtues – freedom, responsibility, kindness, patience, courage, modesty, gratitude, compassion, responsiveness, generosity, resilience, diligence.

5. Conflict resolution – types of conflicts, strategies for peaceful resolution, countering aggression, countering hate speech.

6. Contemporary moral challenges – environment, nature and ethics, responsible behavior, nature conservation, engagement, media and ethics, truth and manipulation, safe internet, ethics in the professions.

Ministry of Education and Science, Bulgaria



Krasimir Valchev

“

If we make children better people, there will be more harmonious social relations. The subject will not be taught by clergy.”

”



“

Nikolay Denkov counts on both the Bulgarian Orthodox Church and the Muslim denomination to help that virtues are brought to children and that they become again a priority at school along with education.

”



PROGRAM



- For preschoolers – I want to be a good child! (Introduction to Christian moral education);
- For primary (grades 1–4) – Orthodoxy, Homeland, Holidays and Customs (acquaintance with Bulgarian Orthodox culture);
- For junior high school (grades 5–8) – Orthodoxy in its cultural-historical and moral perspective (formation of Christian morality and virtues);
- For high school (grades 9–12) – Historical and philosophical foundations of Orthodoxy, other Christian confessions and the main world religions;
- Grade 9 – Cultural and church history of Christianity (Christian cultural studies);
- Grade 10 – Christian morals (Christian ethics);
- Grade 11 – Christian teaching about man (Christian anthropology);
- Grade 12 – History of Religions (World Religions) and Religion in the Modern World.

VIRTUES AND RELIGIONS (ETHICS) RELIGION - ORTHODOX AND RELIGION - ISLAM

- Ethical awareness and moral responsibility
- Education in virtues
- Inclusive and positive school environment
- Socio-emotional skills
- Cultural and spiritual heritage
- Universal human values and virtues
- Religious civic responsibilities





Religious Schools

- Higher Islamic Institute
- Jewish School (Plovdiv)
- Secondary General Theological School "Mirza Said Pasha"
- United Theological Faculty
- Pentecostal Theological Faculty, Ruse
- Orthodox Theological Faculty (Veliko Tarnovo University)
- Orthodox Theological Academy "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"
- Sofia Theological Seminary





Thanks for your attention

SHTELYAN DIMOV