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Pupils and RE in secondary schools in the Netherlands

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Dutch educational system

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< 19 % affiliates as christian



43 % confessional schools

Young people

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Loneliness

Depression

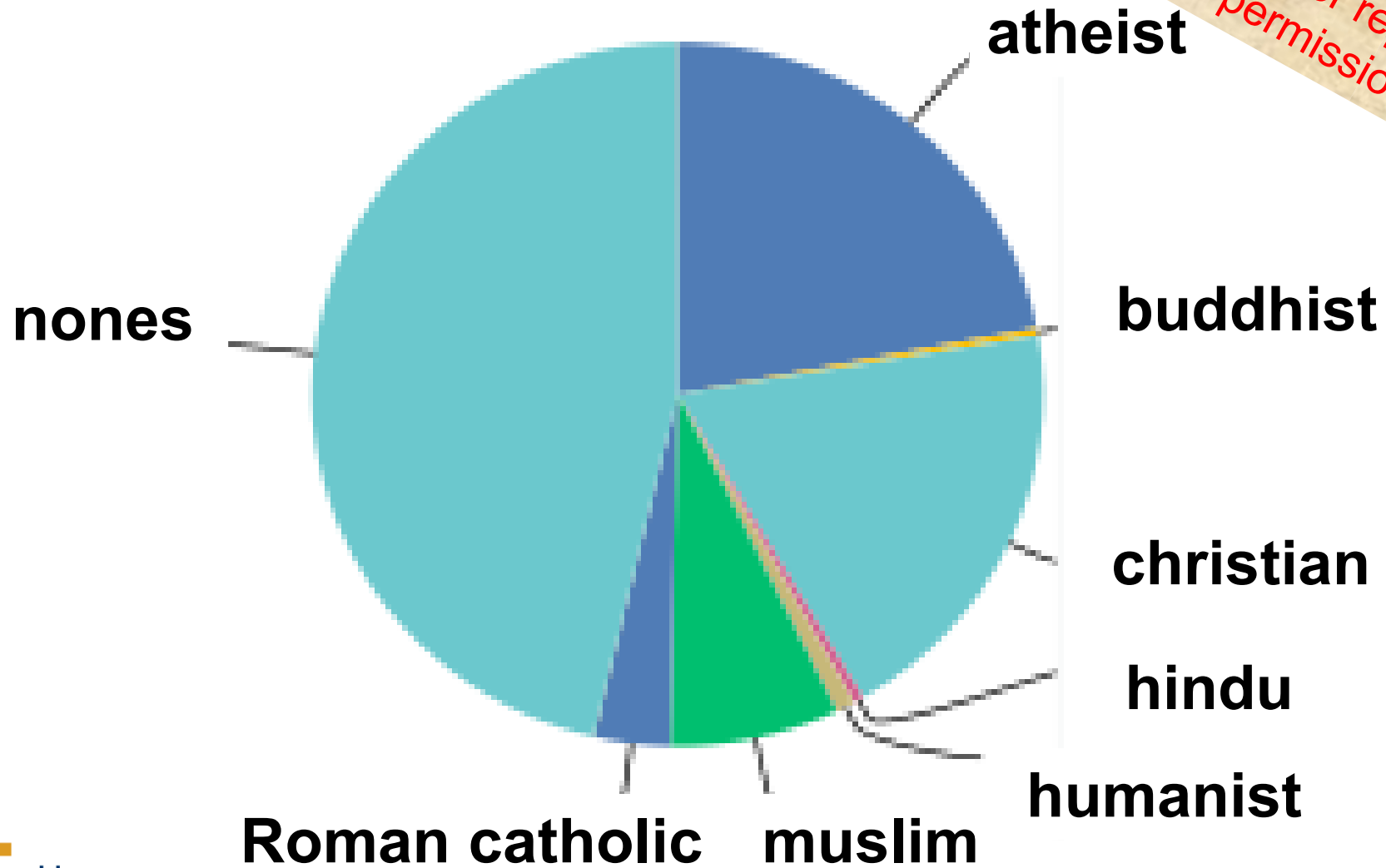
**Performance
pressure**

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1250 pupils

52% girls, 43% boys

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Survey 2022: important life goals

Being happy with yourself 93%

Enjoying life 93%

Being free and independent 91%

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Survey 2022: Unimportant life goals

Living a life guided by God, Allah or another higher reality

61 %

Having faith in God, Allah or another higher reality

59 %

Having faith

47 %

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Survey 2022: social goals seen as important

Being a good person	86 %
Being just	82 %
Having a happy relationship	82 %
Always being there for others	77 %

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Survey 2022: different voices in Dutch RE-classes

I believe it is important to spread the faith and bear fruit. I want to live a life in and for God.

I think everyone should do what feels right and not because their religion or a certain person says they have to. Because you want to.

My hobbies, friends and pets are very important to me. They give me peace of mind.

Everyone is free to believe in whatever they want, and I don't judge anyone for that.

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Survey 2022: different voices in the Dutch RE-class

You should believe in yourself above all else.

Religion has no influence on my life.

That you should feel good mentally, be calm and not be tense all the time or worry about things in your head.

I think it's important that everyone can and is allowed to express their own opinion in a religious way, and although I'm not religious myself, I would definitely want to work towards making that possible for every religious belief.

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Survey 2022: different voices in the Dutch RE-class

*I do attend church and celebrate holidays,
but I'm not very active or connected to religion.
However, I do like to pray occasionally.
It does give me a little hope.*

*I am a Muslim, so I think it is important to pray and to commit your life to your faith.
This also means living in the way prescribed by the Koran.*

That you should enjoy life

Spreading God's love and being there for people who need help.

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Conclusion about worldviews of secondary school students in the Netherlands



Diversity: religious background, cultural background etc.



Large percentage of 'nones'



Increase of mental health problems



Personal meaning-making and values



Polarisation in the classroom

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Each school has its own curriculum for RE

No RE on most public secondary schools

The monoreligious approach (confessional)

The hermeneutic-communicative approach (e.g. Roebben) (non-confessional)

The religious studies approach (learning about religions)

A perspective-oriented approach (LERVO)

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Challenges for RE in the Netherlands

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Unity in diversity

Building on a stronger position of RE in schools

RE in public secondary schools

In need of more students for teacher training in RE

Creating a *national curriculum* for RE, in which there remains space for schools to consider what is essential for their school population

Our view on RE: Tilburg School of Catholic Theology

Focus on the moral, religious, spiritual, and existential *formation* of students and teachers

Focus on the whole person: cognitive, affective, moral and spiritual

Narrative approach: working creatively and profoundly with the 'grand narratives' of Christianity and other religions

Spiritual approach: teaching methods to make space for deep listening, contemplative reading (Van Deursen-Vreeburg, 2023, 2024) and dialogue.

Teacher training: how to remain rooted in your own religious, moral and spiritual worldview and be open to all students in the classroom? What is your view on RE for the future?

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**Personhood
formation
through rooted
awareness
of core values**

Thank you for your attention!

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