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**Ecumenical education of children and youth
according to *The religious education core curriculum
of the Catholic Church in Poland (2018)*
and *The curriculum for the Roman Catholic
religious instruction in kindergartens and schools (2018)***

Abstract

The article presents an ecumenical education in the light of new core curricula for the religion education at schools and kindergartens. These documents were accepted and approved in 2018 and will take effect on the 1st of September of 2020. Currently one can see ongoing work on new series of workbooks. The aim was to notice and detect, whether or not, new documents and propositions within can inspire catechists and teachers to explore and become familiar with an ecumenical education. Goals and contents of the new core curriculum of the religious education for the Catholic Church in Poland of 2018 for kindergartens and schools were carefully analysed, described and presented. It was done with the focus on ecumenical education. It was observed that the very idea of the ecumenism was treated lightly in aforementioned documents. The authors addressed this idea rarely and sparsely. Clear and concrete description of main foundations of the ecumenical formation were also not observed. The authors of analysed documents don't put any stock in forming attitudes such as attitude of dialog, openness or respect, or so it seems. According to them, the main focus of religious education should be on history of the Church and general concepts and usual terms (i.e. divisions within the Church, attempts to undertake a dialog, etc.). All of these can create particular challenges and difficulties for those who work on new workbooks to include ecumenical education in its fullness.

Keywords: ecumenism, catechesis, education, dialog, attitude, formation, catechetical instruction, core curriculum, program for catechesis.

Wychowanie ekumeniczne dzieci i młodzieży według *Podstawy programowej katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce (2018)* i *Programu nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach (2018)*

Streszczenie

W niniejszym artykule przedstawiono wychowanie ekumeniczne w ujęciu nowych dokumentów programowych nauczania religii w przedszkolu i w szkole. Zostały one zatwierdzone w 2018 r. i będą obowiązywały od 1 września 2020 r. Obecnie trwają prace nad nowymi seriami podręczników. Starano się więc zauważyć, na ile zawarte w nowych dokumentach propozycje mogą inspirować katechetyków i katechetów w zakresie wychowania ekumenicznego. Szczegółowo poddano analizie, a następnie opisano cele i treści zapisane w *Podstawie programowej katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* i *Programie nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* z 2018 r. Dokonano tego pod kątem katechezy ukierunkowanej ekumenicznie. Zauważono, że sama idea ekumenizmu nie została należycie potraktowana w wyżej wymienionych dokumentach katechetycznych. Sporadycznie i w sposób uproszczony autorzy podejmują tę problematykę, zwłaszcza na poziomie szkoły podstawowej i przedszkola. Nie dają tym samym rzetelnych podstaw do wychowania ekumenicznego. Małą wartość przypisują formacji takich postaw, jak postawa dialogu, otwartości, szacunku i tolerancji wobec wyznawców innych religii i wyznań chrześcijańskich. Przekaz wiedzy, zdaniem autorów, powinien koncentrować się na ogólnych pojęciach i historii Kościoła (np. podziałach w Kościele, próbach podejmowania dialogu). Trudno zatem znaleźć w nowych dokumentach programowych inspiracje dla katechezy ukierunkowanej ekumenicznie. To z kolei rodzi kolejne wyzwania dla katechetyków, katechetów i twórców nowych serii podręczników katechetycznych.

Słowa kluczowe: ekumenizm, katecheza, wychowanie, dialog, postawa, formacja, nauczanie religii, podstawa programowa katechezy, program nauczania religii.

The core curriculum and the curriculum for religious instruction constitute basic documents which define the direction, quality and methods of didactic, educational and catechetical work. Because of target learners, their families, socio-cultural and religious situations, they undergo particular changes. These changes have also affected the ways of knowledge acquisition in and out of school, or development of skills and shaping of attitudes. New achievements in instruction and education cannot be ignored, either. Therefore, from the catechist's point of view, one can say that everyday life and practice enforce changes in programming religious instruction at school. The Church deeply cares about catechesis being faithful both to God and man in its integral concept¹. This goal can be achieved only when obligatory curriculum documents are verified, and new proposals are searched for and implemented as far as contents, form and didactic means are concerned. It is difficult to determine in what direction or how far and in what way the curriculum changes should go.

¹ Many articles have been written on this topic. See e.g.: Andrzej Hajduk, Zbigniew Marek. 2001. „Zasada wierności Bogu i człowiekowi w polskiej katechezie”. *Seminare* 17: 33–46; Tadeusz Panuś. 2001. *Zasada wierności Bogu i człowiekowi i jej realizacja w polskiej katechizacji: studium w świetle Ramowego Programu Katechizacji funkcjonującego w latach 1971–2001*. Kraków: UNUM.

It has been a subject of dispute for a long time. However, it is good that the debates of this kind are accompanied by subsequent (truly new in objectives and contents, or new in name only and the year of publication?) curriculum proposals for religious instruction in Polish schools. They include the latest catechesis documents in Poland, i.e. *The religious education core curriculum of the Catholic Church in Poland*² and *The curriculum for the Roman Catholic religious instruction in kindergartens and schools*³ from 2018. Without any doubt both documents refer to all the tasks in integral catechesis⁴. Therefore, they should also include ecumenical education. Thus, it raises numerous questions which need to be answered. One of them is what ecumenical education of children and youth should be like, in the opinion of the authors of new catechesis documents? It leads to further questions, such as: what new ideas do the mentioned above documents generate in the current theory of ecumenically-oriented catechesis? Are these only cosmetic, formal changes, or crucial ones for the goals and contents to be implemented? What practical value is offered in the proposals written in the new religious education core curriculum and in new curriculum for the Roman Catholic religious instruction in kindergartens and schools? While trying to answer such questions, first of all, one must base scientific reflection on the catechesis documents which were mentioned in the title of the present paper. A starting reference point, and simultaneously a basic source of scientific reflection is in the latest religious education core curriculum, and in the new curriculum for the Roman Catholic religious instruction in kindergartens and schools which was drawn up for it. These documents will be legally binding from 1st September of 2020, when based on these documents new series of religious instruction textbooks⁵ will be successively devised and approved. They already aroused interest among religious instruction teachers, catechists and media workers⁶.

² Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2018. *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*. Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła (abbr.: PPK 2018).

³ Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego Konferencji Episkopatu Polski. 2018. *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach*. Częstochowa: Edycja Świętego Pawła (abbr.: PNR 2018).

⁴ Cf. Konferencja Episkopatu Polski. 2001. *Dyrektorium katechetyczne Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*. Kraków: WAM.

⁵ Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego KEP. *Uchwała z dnia 19 września 2018 roku w sprawie obowiązywania „Podstawy programowej katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce” i programów nauczania religii oraz oceny podręczników wraz ze zmianami wprowadzonymi w dniu 5 grudnia 2018 roku – tekst jednolity* (10.03.2019). <https://opoka.org.pl/biblioteka/W/WE/komisje/kwk/uchwala20180918.html>.

⁶ See e.g.: *Jest nowa podstawa programowa dla pokolenia smartfonów* (10.03.2019). <https://www.gosc.pl/doc/4796040.Jest-nowa-podstawa-programowa-katechezy-dla-pokolenia-smartfonow>; Jarosław Kowalczyk, Marek Korgul. *Ukazał się nowy Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* (10.03.2019). <https://opoka.news/ukazal-sie-nowy-program-nauczania-religii-rzymskokatolickiej-w-przedszkolach-i-szkolach>.

For the sake of clarity of this scientific reflection, based on the commentaries of Polish catechists, it should be reminded here again how the author understands ecumenical education of children and youth, as it is accepted for the sake of this present paper⁷. Generally speaking, it is treated as a process connected with systematic, purposeful formation of children's and teenagers' character, in which it is also vital that ecumenical attitudes should be shaped⁸. In this respect, each pupil's own activity matters greatly. Under a catechist's influence and the environment (e.g. family, peer group, Church community, new ways of media), every pupil undergoes particular changes. These include a cognitive-instrumental area (e.g. understanding of ecumenical reality, dialogue skills, cooperation and prayer with the followers of other religious communities), and an emotional-motivating sphere (e.g. shaping attitudes toward followers of other religions, their beliefs, attitudes, doctrines and organizations)⁹. While creating adequate environment for shaping an ecumenical attitude among children and youth, catechists provide favourable conditions for mutual understanding and tolerance¹⁰. Later on, while living life as a grown up people, all of this may find reflection in the behaviour, attitudes, manner, speech and thoughts of students, about the followers of different religions and Christian faiths¹¹. It also may play a crucial role in building up Christians' unity in creed, within the Church as well as in the world, or in mutual cooperation for well-being of all, and social order. Considering all of the above one not only cannot pass over ecumenical education of children and teenagers in religious instruction, but rather should greatly enhance it, in order to try to transform the premises of ecumenical movement into catechetical practice.

⁷ See e.g.: Piotr Goliszek. 2016. „Teologalne wychowanie w katechezie”. *Roczniki Teologiczne* 53 (11): 129–139; Tadeusz Kałużny. 2011. „Ekumeniczny wymiar katechezy”. *Symposium* 15 no. 2 (21): 55–67; Jerzy Kostorz. 2010. „Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii – doświadczenia katolickie”. *Paedagogia Christiana* 2: 233–249; Anna Zellma. 2015. „Wychowanie do postawy dialogu w katechezie dzieci”. *Studia Oecumenica* 15: 397–412.

⁸ Goliszek. 2016. „Teologalne wychowanie w katechezie”, 129–139; Kałużny. 2011. „Ekumeniczny wymiar katechezy”, 55–67; Kostorz. 2010. „Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii”, 233–249; Zellma. 2015. „Wychowanie do postawy dialogu w katechezie dzieci”, 397–412.

⁹ Goliszek. 2016. „Teologalne wychowanie w katechezie”, 129–139; Kałużny. 2011. „Ekumeniczny wymiar katechezy”, 55–67; Kostorz. 2010. „Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii”, 233–249; Zellma. 2015. „Wychowanie do postawy dialogu w katechezie dzieci”, 397–412.

¹⁰ Kostorz. 2010. „Wychowanie do postawy ekumenizmu w nauczaniu religii”, 233–249.

¹¹ “Ecumenical work is, therefore, indivisible and it must be carried out on two fronts: *ad intra* and *ad extra*. The ecumenical dialogue *ad intra* refers to the Christians of other Churches and ecclesiastic Communities. In other words, it is a dialogue within Christianity itself. The dialogue *ad extra* embraces great religions of the world, all other religions, religious systems and the dialogue with the lay world as a whole (various intellectual, ethical, cultural, political, social currents and trends)”. Jerzy Kostorz. 2007. *Ekumeniczny wymiar posoborowej katechezy w Polsce*. Opole: Redakcja Wydawnictw Wydziału Teologicznego Uniwersytetu Opolskiego: 18.

1. Aims and content of ecumenical education of children and teenagers – an attempt of evaluation

As approved in 2018, core documents concerning teaching of religion to children and youth describe in new ways what provides to be a basis for the catechetical activity of the Church¹². What matters here are not so much catechesis' goals – general requirements, and contents – detailed requirements (as they were nearly identically formulated in the earlier documents on catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland), but mostly the attitudes which are not subjected to school's assessment¹³. Despite the fact that they are not subjected to school's assessment, they were strongly emphasized because of their educational importance. In this context, correlation with school education takes on a new meaning as it clearly has an educational dimension¹⁴. The correlation between lessons on religion and broadly understood school education creates a foundation for moulding an attitude of dialogue and tolerance as well as creates possibility for cooperation in establishing peace within the local, ecclesiastical, national and international communities¹⁵. However, as it seems through practice, already at the level of religious instruction programming, this chance has not yet been properly used. This can be easily proven, considering the peripherally treated above-mentioned task. The authors, so it seems, sporadically postulate either need for shaping such attitudes or effectuation of a contribution to social, cultural and religious dialogues. Thus they diminish the importance of ecumenical education in modern catechesis.

Both, the Polish Bishops' Conference, and the Commission for Catholic Education of the Polish Bishops' Conference – authors of documents that became the subject of this scientific reflection – understand changes in children and young peoples' mentality¹⁶. It is clearly visible in the characterization of particular target groups and the environments they live in¹⁷. It is crucial for ecumenical education although not fully used as the objectives and contents of teaching religion .

Authors of documents on catechesis in kindergarten, refer to children's natural experiences, pointing out the need for discovering God's presence in their

¹² PPK 2018: 7 and next; PNR 2018: 9 and next.

¹³ PPK 2018: 7 and next; PNR 2018: 9 and next..

¹⁴ See and cf. Anna Zellma. *Nowa formuła korelacji w edukacji szkolnej i jej realizacja w nauczaniu religii* (11.03.2019). <https://www.katecheta.pl/Archiwum/2011/Katecheta-5-2011/VER-BA-DOCENT/Nowa-formula-korelacji-w-edukacji-szkolnej-i-jej-realizacja-w-nauczaniu-religii>.

¹⁵ PPK 2018: 7 and next; PNR 2018: 9 and next.

¹⁶ PPK 2018: 7 and next; PNR 2018: 9 and next.

¹⁷ PPK 2018: 19, 29–30, 53–56, 97–98.

closest environment and also in the community of the Church. However, they do not approach ecumenical questions openly, which is hard to understand and to find a rational justification for such an attitude towards planning of the program for religious instruction. After all, kids in their environments (and more and more, as well as in their families) already meet followers of some other religions and Christian beliefs. If this problems connected to practical ecumenism were taken more seriously under consideration, particular objectives of the curriculum could be accomplished more successfully. The authors of catechetical documents for catechesis in kindergarten consider as crucial that “a friendly relationships with other people should be developed in a child”¹⁸ and that there should be developed “a connection between the right image of God and the necessity to treat other people with love, both while having fun and in harmony as well as in misunderstanding or conflict”¹⁹. This intention, although does not contain any formulation which would point to ecumenical education, is undoubtedly connected with this particular area of education. It provides certain basis for a solid ecumenical formation. It can be treated as a sort of *novum* in reference to present core curriculum of catechesis for preschool children. This is because it seems crucial that preschool children should be encouraged to love each human being, irrespective of his or her views and religious beliefs. Content of religious education is clearly bound with the knowledge, passed on to children, that they should treat other people with respect and care. This way, general and detailed objectives, can be treated as a solid basis for ecumenical education. However, it is hard to understand the omission of concepts typical to ecumenism. Basing on child’s experience and perception of the world, one could strive to explain, e.g., why there are other followers of various Christian denominations; what does it mean to be in unity despite some differences; why prayer for the unity of all Christians is important.

Similar conclusions can be drawn after analysing core curricula of religious instruction for children from 1st to 4th year of school’s education, like the catechesis of initiation to sacraments of penance, reconciliation and the Eucharist²⁰. At this stage of religious education, a strong emphasis was laid on learning to accept other people (peers, teachers), and understanding others’ points of view, as well as taking into consideration their needs, desires and interests²¹. Children compare themselves with others, their values, principles and norms of conduct²². At this age they

¹⁸ PPK 2018: 20; cf. PNR 2018: 32–33.

¹⁹ PPK 2018: 20.

²⁰ PPK 2018: 29–50; PNR 2018: 39–82.

²¹ PPK 2018: 28–50.

²² PPK 2018: 28–50.

more and more confront their own opinions with views of others²³. Therefore, the following activities are reasonable for school levels 1–4 like motivating to enjoy discovered reality, teaching on respect for different traditions and people, encouragement to do good and to be honest, serving those in need and loving neighbours²⁴. These are intrinsically connected to ecumenical education. In this process, as it was noticed before, not only is it important to strengthen Christian identity, but also to shape the attitude of respect, love, humility and dialogue with beliefs of followers of other Christian denominations. Hence, the objectives and contents of the new core curricula for religious instruction in the levels 1–4 should be considered as of great value in children's preparation for interpersonal contacts based on love, truth, service, dialogue and respect. It is not only about dissemination of specific knowledge but, also about human formation, as without it there is no authentic Christian and ecumenical formation. These goals can be achieved in the correlation between religious instruction, social education and the languages specific to nation, ethnic minorities, or a particular region²⁵. The children from the levels 1–4 should be effectively helped with the education on friendly interaction with their peers and adults, and also in acceptance of other nationalities, religions and cultural traditions²⁶. This objective is important both theoretically and practically. It favours the integration between religious instruction and activities that are undertaken within the framework of early school education. It also refers to pupils' experience and their life in local communities they live in. At the same time, it strives to shape social attitudes based on dialogue and tolerance. It would be advisable to combine such goals with ecumenical education. But it has not happened yet. Authors of new core curricula for religious instruction for levels 1–4 of primary school omit ecumenical aspects both at the level of dissemination of knowledge and formation of attitudes. In reality, pupils, especially in the communities which are culturally and religiously diversified, often meet followers of other religions and Christian beliefs (e.g. in Silesian Cieszyn, Pomerania, Masuria, Silesia, Opole, Podlaskie or Warmia). Often, this people are their peers, acquaintances or even relatives. Regrettably, this chance of ecumenical education has not been noticed by authors or pondered upon

However, there is a difference in the content concerning presentation of ecumenical problems in religious education for levels 5–8 of primary school²⁷. There

²³ PPK 2018: 28–50.

²⁴ PPK 2018: 28–50.

²⁵ PPK 2018: 47–48; see and cf. PNR 2018: 43, 45, 57, 63.

²⁶ PPK 2018: 47.

²⁷ PPK 2018: 53–93; PNR 2018: 85–156.

are many substantial elements which are vital for ecumenical education²⁸. Taking into consideration developmental changes of pupils' different aspects of personality as they are expressed by questions, religious doubts, or even a rebellion, the authors emphasize the need for deepening their faith contents²⁹. However, levels 5–8 of primary school are dominated by doctrinal contents³⁰. This phase of religious teaching abounds in detailed issues dedicated to the truths of faith³¹. Yet the authors do not forget about moral formation³². Facing this task, they sensitize the youth to do good³³. They point this out as every man's first and basic calling³⁴. Authors combine it with the need for formation of youth's attitude of openness and readiness to serve to others. Within these premises, much attention is given to training of learners of religion so that they will actively participate in social life³⁵. Thus direct connection with ecumenical education is found in the objectives and contents concerning education to life in the community and in the introduction to missions³⁶. The notion of "ecumenism" appears here for the first time³⁷. The authors use this term in the context of topics like: the necessity of Church for salvation, credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, attributes of the Roman Catholic Church³⁸. However, it is easy to notice that in the framework on formation of attitudes they omit ecumenical formation. There is no reference, whatsoever, to formation towards the attitude of dialogue, respect or tolerance. What is more, teaching on collaboration between learners and followers of other religions and Christian denominations is clearly missing. Such an approach to ecumenism is erroneous as it seems to be very superficial and marginally treated. It omits what is essential, as when it is overlooked brings no authentic ecumenical education. Undoubtedly, the basis for ecumenism is set by education towards a dialogue (also with different Churches and Christian communities) based on mutual understanding, respect and tolerance³⁹. Also in the framework on education on prayer, objectives and contents connected to ecumenism were not planned. For example, there is no reference to prayer for Christian unity. Thus spiritual ecumenism has

²⁸ PPK 2018: 53–93; PNR 2018: 85–156.

²⁹ PPK 2018: 53–93.

³⁰ PPK 2018: 53–93; see and cf. PNR 2018: 85–156.

³¹ PPK 2018: 53–93; see and cf. PNR 2018: 85–156.

³² PPK 2018: 68–73.

³³ PPK 2018: 68–73.

³⁴ PPK 2018: 68–73.

³⁵ PPK 2018: 68–73.

³⁶ PPK 2018: 78.

³⁷ PNR 2018: 113.

³⁸ PNR 2018: 112–113; PPK 2018: 78–80.

³⁹ See and cf., e.g. Mieczysław Polak. 2015. „Wychowanie do dialogu w katechezie młodzieży”. *Studia Oecumenica* 15: 413–426.

been overlooked. Formation of the attitude open to followers of other Christian denominations has also been ignored. Only in the introduction to missions one can notice some indirect references to ecumenical education. The authors concentrate mainly on chosen contents. They included such topics as: main religions of the world, similarities and differences between Christianity and great religions, or circles of Christ's Church⁴⁰. However, teaching on attitudes is marginalized, and focus is directed mostly toward passing on of information. The authors assume that due to proper knowledge, pupils will be able to respect followers of other religions while simultaneously caring about their own identity as Catholics⁴¹. One cannot agree with such an approach to ecumenical education. It is simplified and marked with didacticism as it marginalizes a formative dimension. It ignores the fact that at present, addressees of catechesis, live in the multi-cultural and multi-denominational communities. Thus they are exposed to different social, cultural and religious influences. The authors of new catechetical core curricula forget the fact that easy access to smartphones and thus to Internet, social networking websites as well as frequent possibilities to travel abroad, naturally put young people in different situations which require openness, dialogue, respect and tolerance. So it seems, the authors ignore young people's experiences in the above-mentioned areas. They neglect to make an appeal to things and circumstances pupils are familiar to. That is why they lose the chance the ecumenical education carry. Similar conclusions can be drawn based on the analysis of premises concerning correlations between teaching religion and general education subjects, in the levels 5–8 of primary school⁴². Apart from historical, geographical and social knowledge, there are no references to ecumenism here neither. The authors only emphasize the need for a discussion on: 1) reasons for and consequences of the Reformation; 2) Martin Luther's and John Calvin's venture; 3) the circumstances of foundation of the Anglican Church; 4) confessional relations in the Commonwealth of Poland⁴³. With this in mind they remind only about the need to neutralize lack of tolerance towards minorities⁴⁴. However, they do not specify what minorities they mean. Further on, they underline the need for educating young people to show respect and understanding of other cultures⁴⁵.

Nonetheless, having premises devised this way, it is difficult to clearly derive what is indispensable for ecumenical education. One can see only confu-

⁴⁰ PPK 2018: 79–80.

⁴¹ PPK 2018: 79–80.

⁴² PPK 2018: 81–92; PNR 2018: 90, 92, 94, 96, 98–99, 101 and next.

⁴³ PPK 2018: 84.

⁴⁴ PPK 2018: 84.

⁴⁵ PPK 2018: 84.

sion of terms and lack of precision. Restricting oneself solely to teaching historical knowledge not only weakens that what is crucial to formation of an attitude open to members of other Christian denominations, but also does not instruct on how to undertake a dialogue and cooperation with the Churches and communities of different Christian denominations. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the authors of new catechetical core curricula truly cared for ecumenical education of students in levels 5–8 of primary school. What can be noticed is lack of a concept for ecumenical education, as well as proposal of its implementation in teaching religion.

Aforementioned conclusions are also valid, to a certain degree, with the reference to what is proposed by the authors of new catechetical core curricula for secondary schools⁴⁶. And although they keep it in mind that young people in high school, technical school and trade school are “internally diversified in the area of faith and religious aspirations”⁴⁷, and as a consequence they can “manifest rebellion against Church as an institution”⁴⁸, it seems that authors don’t value enough the role of ecumenical education in rediscovering and search for one’s own place in the Church, in the world and family. It needs to be emphasized here that contents proposed by the authors have foremostly, a didactic dimension, although to some degree, practical dimension as well. Within the premises of education to life in the community, the authors emphasize the necessity for pondering problems like: “rudiments of ecumenical thought” and “most important Christian denominations”, as well as “an introduction to the reality of catholic, and particular Church”⁴⁹. A student of a high school or a trade school should be able to explain term “ecumenism” (accordingly, in the context of the ecumenism: “intercommunion”, “apostolic succession” and “necessity of God’s grace for salvation”) and explain differences and similarities of Catholicism and other main Christian denominations, as well as name perspectives and boundaries of ecumenism; he or she will also name ecumenical initiatives organized by Catholic Church and also by other churches and Christian communities⁵⁰. It was not specify though, neither what differences authors have in mind, nor what these differences pertain to. One can only presume that they probably refer to the most important Christian confessions, however they were not named or listed anywhere. Further in their work, authors of these documents specify how a young person can mould his/her ecumenical attitude. As a way of doing so, they highlight the need for respect and

⁴⁶ PPK 2018: 97–137; PNR 2018: 159–343.

⁴⁷ PPK 2018: 99.

⁴⁸ PPK 2018: 99.

⁴⁹ PPK 2018: 120–121.

⁵⁰ PPK 2018: 120–121; PNR 2018: 171–172.

drive to understand people of other beliefs, also active participation in ecumenical initiatives and the need to nurture the attitude of unification. Although, when writing about the necessity for involvement in common evangelistic, apostolic or charitable actions, authors don't define whether they mean ecumenical actions or rather those within the Catholic Church context only⁵¹.

According to authors of the new catechetical core curricula for secondary schools opinion "the role of religion in the contemporary world and thus the meaning of the Second Vatican Council for the activity of the Roman Catholic Church all over the world, and for the idea of ecumenism" is important⁵². To speak about it in this context is very important but not sufficient. In ecumenical education different features of core curricula are necessary – other goals, additional contents, and instructions to accomplish it all. It can be seen in multiple forms of volunteer work and projects initiated with adherents of different Christian denominations like e.g. the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, or worship concerts carried out by bands representing different Christian Churches. Awakening and systematic animation of spirit of ecumenism among children and youth is not accomplished only by passing on the knowledge but also through influence on emotional and volitional sphere of person's life. In conclusion, it seems the authors in the above-analysed core curricula for teaching religion in kindergartens and primary schools treat matters pertaining to ecumenical education too generally, compared to what they propose for secondary schools' core curriculum.

2. Summary and practical comments

Considering understanding of ecumenical education mentioned at the beginning of this scientific reflection, one can definitely state, that the authors' proposals concerning new catechetical core curricula do not pertain directly to what is indispensable for moulding an attitude of openness, dialogue and tolerance, especially in kindergartens and primary schools. It is difficult to notice there clearly defined concept of ecumenical education of children and youth. Based on the analysed catechetical documents one cannot define how this education should look like in practice. It remains mainly on the knowledge level which is fragmentary and simplified. Although there can be noticed proposals of formation essential for ecumenical education in kindergarten and 1–4 levels of primary school, nevertheless, they appear there sporadically. The authors do not connect them though,

⁵¹ PPK 2018: 121.

⁵² PPK 2018: 131; see and cf. PNR 2018: 171–172, 234, 292.

directly with ecumenical education. It seems that new catechetical curricula are not attuned to ecumenical signals coming from the social environment which is multi-cultural and multi-confessional. After all, both culture and society pose new challenges in the sphere of ecumenical education, challenges that should be taken into account and faced with solutions.

Peripheral approach to ecumenical matters does not bring anything new compared to already existing curriculum proposals included in documents on core curriculum from 2010 and 2001⁵³. Therefore, the idea of ecumenically-oriented catechesis does not get new food for thoughts. It is also difficult to notice any new inspirations which could be useful to writers of next series of course-books and catechetical materials, as ecumenical content appear only sporadically, especially on kindergarten and primary schools' level. The changes, suggested by the authors, sparsely contribute to the idea of ecumenically-oriented catechesis. Thus there is still a great opportunity for development and still a lot of space for improvement in this particular, crucial for contemporary world, area of education. That is why it is worthy to continually remind catechists about ecumenism during their own formation, as beginners and on each level of personal growth. However, it seems, that these actions may not be sufficient enough. There is a clear need for debates on ecumenically targeted catechetical activity at school and in a parish, with participation of catechists of different Churches and Christian denominations.

Ecumenical education in religious instruction is not only a current but also a principal task of the Church. Ecumenism has an essential meaning for her life. It requires full participation of a new generation to build unity at each level of community life (in a family, school, peer group, home, parish community). It necessitates undertaking in-depth research, not only a theoretical one, describing how it should look like, but also an empirical one, diagnosing it and also explaining what are the expectations and possibilities. Only on this basis one can take further actions in reference to programming and composing new ecumenically-oriented catechetical materials.

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⁵³ See and cf. Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego Konferencji Episkopatu Polski. 2001. *Program nauczania religii*. Kraków: WAM; Komisja Wychowania Katolickiego Konferencji Episkopatu Polski. 2010. *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach*. Kraków: WAM.

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