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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CURRICULUM DOCUMENTS AND SELECTED RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION TEXTBOOKS

Abstract

Caring sensibly for our health means caring for the supreme gift that is life, bestowed on us by God. Physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, affecting not only physical fitness, but also helping to maintain the so-called psychological well-being promoting spiritual development. Every teacher employed in a modern school should also be a facilitator of physical activity among pupils. Naturally, religion teachers can also become involved in educational activities in the health domain by implementing programmes promoting active lifestyles. This assumption should be reflected in the latest religion teaching documents containing fundamental principles and indications that provide structure to the teaching of religion, as well as in textbooks. The aim of this study is to indicate the provisions concerning physical activity in the most recent documents programming the teaching of religion, which are: the *Core Curriculum for Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*, *Program for teaching Roman Catholic Religion in kindergartens and schools*, and selected textbooks on religious education published by Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o. in Warsaw. Based on the analysis of the indicated documents and textbooks, conclusions and postulates are proposed for the correlation of school religious instruction with education in order to promote health-oriented attitudes among students.

Keywords: catechesis, religious instruction, health, physical activity, education, sport

Streszczenie

ZAGADNIENIE AKTYWNOŚCI FIZYCZNEJ W DOKUMENTACH PROGRAMUJĄCYCH I W WYBRANYCH PODRĘCZNIKACH DO NAUCZANIA RELIGII

Rozsądna troska o nasze zdrowie to dbanie o najwyższy dar, jakim jest życie powierzone nam przez Boga. Aktywność fizyczna jest niezbędnym elementem zdrowego stylu życia, decydującym nie tylko o sprawności fizycznej, ale także pomaga zachować tzw. dobrostan psychiczny sprzyjający rozwojowi duchowemu. Każdy nauczyciel zatrudniony we współczesnej szkole powinien także być promotorem aktywności fizycznej uczniów. W sposób oczywisty również katecheci mogą włączyć się w działania edukacyjne w obszarze zdrowia poprzez realizowanie programów promujących aktywny styl życia. Założenie to winno mieć odzwierciedlenie w najnowszych dokumentach katechetycznych zawierających fundamentalne zasady i wskazania, które nadają kształt nauczaniu religii, a także w podręcznikach. Celem niniejszej pracy jest wskazanie zapisów dotyczących aktywności fizycznej w najnowszych dokumentach programujących nauczanie religii którymi są, *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce*, *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach*, oraz wybrane podręczniki do nauki religii wydane przez Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o. w Warszawie. Na podstawie analizy wskazanych dokumentów i podręczników, zaproponowano wnioski i postulaty dotyczące korelacji szkolnego nauczania religii z edukacją, służące promowaniu postaw prozdrowotnych wśród uczniów.

Słowa kluczowe: katecheza, nauczanie religii, zdrowie, aktywność fizyczna, wychowanie, sport

Introduction

The phrase “a healthy mind in a healthy body” has been well known to us since immemorial times. By that, we understand it to mean that if we take proper care of our bodies, it will result in better physical and mental health, as well as promote integral spiritual development. The obligation arising from the fifth commandment of the Decalogue is to take care of life. In the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* it is written: “life and physical health are precious goods entrusted to us by God. We are to take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of the other person and the common good”¹. The commonly used contemporary definition of health was specified in 1946 by the World Health Organ-

¹ *Katechizm Kościoła Katolickiego* (Poznań: Pallottinum, 1994) (hereinafter KKK), n. 2288.

ization as being “a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality, and not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity”².

Physical activity is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle, crucial to the physical fitness of a person, which undoubtedly determines a better quality of life and well-being. Regular physical exercise is of key importance in the prevention of various diseases by helping to maintain what is known as mental well-being. Neither should the positive impact of physical activity on spiritual development be overlooked. Every teacher employed in a modern school should also be a facilitator of physical activity among pupils. Naturally, religion teachers can also become involved in educational activities in the health domain by implementing programmes promoting active lifestyles.

The aim of this study is to identify provisions concerning physical activity in curriculum documents for teaching religion and in selected textbooks for religious instruction. With this aim in mind, the following texts were analysed: *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* [*Core Curriculum of Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*]³ (hereinafter: *Curriculum*), *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* [*Programme of teaching the Roman Catholic Religion in kindergartens and schools*]⁴ (hereinafter: *Programme*) and selected textbooks for religious instruction published by Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o. in Warsaw⁵ (hereinafter:

2 Konstytucja Światowej Organizacji Zdrowia, Porozumienie zawarte przez Rządy reprezentowane na Międzynarodowej Konferencji Zdrowia i Protokołu dotyczący Międzynarodowego Urzędu Higieny Publicznej, podpisane w Nowym Jorku dnia 22 lipca 1946 r. Dz.U. 1948 nr 61 poz. 477.

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

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

5 *Jesteśmy dziećmi Bożymi. Podręcznik do nauczania religii w przedszkolu w grupie pięcioletków*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *Z Panem Jezusem. Podręcznik do nauczania religii w przedszkolu w grupie sześciolatków*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *W imię Ojca i Syna, i Ducha Świętego. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy I*, parts 1 and 2, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2020); *To jest mój Syn umiłowany. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy II*, parts 1 and 2, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2021); *Kto spożywa moje Ciało, ma życie. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauczania religii w klasie III*, parts 1 and 2, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *Jestem chrześcijaninem. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy IV*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *Bóg nas szuka. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy V*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2020); *Jezus nas zbawia. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla kl. VI*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2021); *Twoje Słowo światłem na mojej drodze. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy VII*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *Ty ścieżkę życia mi ukazesz. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy VIII*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2018); *Na drogach wolności. Podręcznik do nauki religii dla klasy I liceum czteroletniego i technikum pięcioletniego*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2020); *Na drogach dojrzałej wiary. Podręcznik do nauki religii dla klasy II liceum czteroletniego i technikum pięcioletniego*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2021); *Być świadkiem Zmartwychwstałego w rodzinie. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy III liceum oraz III i IV technikum*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2017); *Być świadkiem Zmartwychwstałego w świecie. Podręcznik Archidiecezji Warmińskiej do nauki religii dla klasy III liceum czteroletniego i technikum pięcioletniego*, ed. Piotr Tomasiak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne, 2021).

student textbook) as well as methodology textbooks from the same publishing house⁶ (hereinafter: methodology textbook). The article ends with conclusions and postulates regarding the indications with regard to physical activity that religion teachers should implement during religion lessons.

1. The analysis of *Podstawa programowa katechezy Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce* [*Core Curriculum of Catechesis of the Catholic Church in Poland*]

The latest *Core Curriculum* was adopted on 8 June 2018, during the 379th Plenary Meeting of the Polish Episcopal Conference. It replaced the document issued in 2010 and is one of the outcomes of the ongoing reform of the school system, concerning both its structure and educational objectives. The new document addresses the challenges of Polish schools, uses the language of educational outcomes and adopts a reformed system of educational stages, although it retains a certain separateness concerning the division of primary school into two equal educational stages (grades 1–4 and 5–8) – unlike in the *Core Curriculum for General Education*⁷. Since the *Core Curriculum* sets out the requirements to be met by students taking part in school religion instruction classes, the recipients of the document are not only the authors of curricula and textbooks, but also religion teachers themselves. This makes it a practical guide for religion teachers who are provided with easy and contextualised access to the tasks, content and requirements they will be presenting to their students.

The authors of the *Core Curriculum*, within the framework of the correlation of religious education with pre-school education, recommend in the area of physical development to use movement games, construction games and exercises that will allow forming the habit of maintaining the correct posture of students.

At the second stage of primary education (grades 5–8), the authors of the document in the chapter “Specific requirements” assume that the student will acquire knowledge and skills that will allow him/her to name “good habits of life and health” and among attitudes (not subject to school assessment) indicate that the student “cares about his/her

6 The methodology textbooks were edited by Piotr Tomasiak and published in the same year and place as the student textbooks. The titles note that this is a methodology textbook (hereinafter PM with an addition of school grade).

7 See: Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z 14 lutego 2017 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej wychowania przedszkolnego oraz podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły podstawowej, w tym dla uczniów z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w stopniu umiarkowanym lub znacznym, kształcenia ogólnego dla branżowej szkoły I stopnia, kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły specjalnej przysposabiającej do pracy oraz kształcenia ogólnego dla szkoły policealnej, Dz.U. z 24 lutego 2017 r., poz. 356, access 16.12.2020, <https://www.podstawaprogramowa.pl>; Rozporządzenie Ministra Edukacji Narodowej z 30 stycznia 2018 r. w sprawie podstawy programowej kształcenia ogólnego dla liceum ogólnokształcącego, technikum oraz branżowej szkoły II stopnia, Dz.U. z 2 marca 2018 r., poz. 467, access 16.12.2020, <https://www.podstawaprogramowa.pl>.

own health and that of others”⁸ and is involved in sports activities⁹ and will be able to plan positive life activities such as sports¹⁰. In turn, the correlation with physical education highlights “factors that positively and negatively affect health and well-being”¹¹. As part of the correlation with safety education, it is emphasised that “religious education is involved in educating pupils to be responsible for their own health and for wise relations with others – referring to Christian values (e.g. content related to the Decalogue)”¹² and attention is drawn, among other things, to health-promoting behaviour and the ability to self-assess health-related activities¹³. Given the fact that physical activity is very often associated with team games, it is important to emphasise that the authors of the *Core Curriculum* in the second stage of primary school, under social competence, referred to “the principle of ‘fair play’: respect for opponents, respect for the rules of the game, compliance with the decisions of the referee; appropriate behaviour in situations of victory and defeat”¹⁴.

At the secondary school stage, the authors of the core curriculum, in the chapter “Detailed Requirements”, assume that in attitudes (not subject to school assessment), students will be able to demonstrate care “for their own and others’ health and life”¹⁵. A number of specific provisions can be found within the framework of the correlation of religious education with physical education, which recommends: reference to the strengths and weaknesses of pupils’ physical fitness; recommendations for physical activity depending on gender, period of life, type of work, season, environment; risks associated with the commercialisation of sport, including the Olympic movement; the issue of safety during physical activity (e.g. the ability to assess the risk of injury associated with certain sports or physical effort)¹⁶. Since the practice of sport is very often accompanied by strong emotions and the need to compete, it seems justified to draw the attention of the authors of the Fundamentals to “Olympic ethics and the ethical consequences of using doping substances”¹⁷.

The authors of *Core Curriculum* point out that people with moderate intellectual disabilities are characterised by slower development and have limited opportunities in terms of motor skills. However, they acknowledge that these individuals, in adulthood, are usually fully mobile and physically active¹⁸. In contrast, for people with severe intellectual disability, they point out that “most people with this diagnosis are characterised by

8 PPK, 71.

9 PPK, 72.

10 PPK, 73.

11 PPK, 89.

12 PPK, 89.

13 PPK, 89.

14 PPK, 89.

15 PPK, 112.

16 PPK, 134.

17 PPK, 134.

18 PPK, 147–148.

a marked degree of motor impairment and other associated deficits that indicate clinically significant damage or abnormalities in the development of the central nervous system”¹⁹.

2. The analysis of *Program nauczania religii rzymskokatolickiej w przedszkolach i szkołach* [*Programme of teaching Roman Catholic Religion in kindergartens and schools*]

The latest *Programme* was adopted during 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 *Core Curriculum* and represents their practical application. The authors of the *Programme* use terminology respecting school standards, taking into account the guidelines of the Church and the Polish catechetical tradition. The document serves as assistance to textbook authors and religion teachers who will adapt this programme to the educational needs of the school in which they work.

The authors of the *Programme* refer to the analysed issue already at the preschool stage, as part of the correlation in the area of physical development. Religious teachers are advised to “use movement games, construction games and exercises shaping the habit of maintaining correct body posture during the staging of biblical events”²⁰. Describing in detail the *Guidelines for the implementation of the programme*, it is recommended that religion teachers should use active methods, adapting them to the physical development of children²¹.

In the first grade of primary school, singing and movement games are recommended as part of the correlation with music education²². In the first through fourth grades, however, the *guidelines for the implementation of the programme* included a similar provision: “diverse and varied methods should be used in teaching. (...) These should include both classical methods (...) and activating methods based on activities, such as performing exercises”²³.

In the fourth grade of primary school, a topic covering “physical and mental needs and the consequences of their non-satisfaction” was identified as part of correlated education, alongside nature as a subject²⁴.

The authors of the *Programme* at the stage of the seventh grade in the first section titled *Let’s meet in community*, assume in the requirements that the student “plans life activities, e.g. sports, in a positive way”²⁵. In the same grade, as part of the correlation

19 PPK, 149.

20 PNR, 33.

21 PNR, 33.

22 PNR, 44.

23 PNR, 50, 59, 69, 78.

24 PNR, 76.

25 PNR, 126.

with physical education, two issues were indicated: “behaviour in situations related to dance activity”²⁶ and, in relation to social skills, the principles of ‘fair play’, respect for the opponent, respect for the rules of the game, submission to the decisions of the referee and appropriate behaviour in situations of victory and defeat”²⁷.

In secondary school, in the third grade of the general secondary school and of technical secondary school, the issue of Olympic ethics is indicated within the framework of correlation with physical education²⁸.

3. Religious instruction textbooks

The first textbooks developed and published by Wydawnictwo Katechetyczne Sp. z o.o. were released in the school year 2012/2013. The authors of the textbooks are religion teachers connected with the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, under the guidance of Rev. Prof. dr hab. Piotr Tomasiak. The Warmian edition of the textbooks (analysed below) was published in August 2016 and differs from the “national” version not only in its cover but also in several topics that were added to each grade like those related to the tradition, history and present day of the Church in the Warmian Archdiocese.

The *Introduction to the Methodical Textbook* for five-year-olds provides a valuable note: “the proposed verbal games, movement games and other activities not only meet the needs of children, but also support their all-round development, at the same time linking thematically to the objectives of a particular lesson unit”²⁹. The consequence of this statement is that the authors repeatedly point to specific examples of methods involving preschoolers in physical activity. The proposed movement methods include: *Show me, Beads, Close your eyes, First, then, Fish in a net, My reflection does what I do, Warm-cold, Looking for summer, Big and little Easter cakes, The beacon, I like doing just that, Not enough of us, Storks, At the king’s command, Lost sheep, Skipping over a puddle, Children grow up, Like our parents*³⁰. The methodology textbook designed for working with six-year-old children also contains numerous examples of methods referring to physical activity, in addition to those mentioned above: *Hawk and pigeons, Road to church, How many sounds, Wait for your turn, Catch the light, We are on a pilgrimage, Obstacle course, At the signal, Picking flowers for the Virgin Mary, Indian village*³¹.

Both *methodology textbooks* for preschoolers contain numerous references to examples that promote physical activity among children, and the most characteristic ones should be highlighted here. For the five-year-olds: images of well-known athletes³², references

26 PNR, 127.

27 PNR, 127.

28 PNR, 191, 253.

29 PM five-year-olds, 7.

30 PM five-year-olds, 24, 28, 31, 33, 57, 59, 90, 92, 123, 108, 144, 159, 170, 175, 194, 197, 201.

31 PM five-year-olds, 37, 40, 67, 81, 92, 174, 184, 195.

32 PM five-year-olds, 118.

to sporting activities, e.g. playing football, cycling, walking, rollerblading and scooter riding³³, for the six-year-olds: a discussion which starts with the following questions: “Who receives the cups, medals, diplomas? What do you need to do to be the best in sport? What would happen if an athlete stopped training (...)? What helps athletes win (...)?”³⁴; encouragement for walking³⁵. The student books contain many pictures referring to children’s physical activities, e.g. for five-year-olds playing with a ball, skiing, family walking³⁶, etc.; for six-year-olds, e.g. cycling, playing with a skipping rope, swimming, Nordic walking, playing football, running competitions³⁷.

The methodology textbook for the first grade of primary school proposes the use of only one method based on physical activity, namely a movement game with music³⁸. The introduction to the methodology textbook for the second grade of primary school contains a statement that “a variety of methods should continue to be used in teaching (...) both classical (...) and activity-based methods, such as performing exercises”³⁹. In the last chapter, entitled *Suggestions for play and animation*, the authors of the textbook have included a description of particular methods using students’ physical activity⁴⁰.

A lesson titled *I care about life and health* has been prepared for the third class. During this lesson, students are encouraged to engage in physical activity such as gymnastics or taking walks⁴¹.

In the methodology textbook for the fifth grade, when discussing the purposefulness of the activities, the teacher first asks the pupils to write answers to the questions: What does physical exercise give us and what is its value? The teacher then explains that the purpose of undertaking physical activity is to maintain good health⁴². A lesson on talent development is focused on the development of *sporting talent*, using the image of a footballer⁴³. Among the methods of working with students, the authors of the textbook once recommended a movement game, *Treasure Hunt*⁴⁴. In the student textbook, the lesson titled *God gives us community* uses the example of the school football team and points out the need for systematic practice as an expression of activity for a specific community⁴⁵.

In the sixth grade, during the lesson *I live in community*, the authors of the methodology textbook refer to the principle of *fair play* as part of the correlation with physical

33 PM five-year-olds, 35, 212.

34 PM six-year-olds, 141.

35 PM six-year-olds, 144.

36 PU five-year-olds, 13, 15, 16, 35,

37 PU six-year-olds, 9, 10, 19, 20, 22, 94, 120.

38 The authors recommend mainly movement games with music. PM Primary school class 1, 68, 80, 83, 93.

39 PM Primary school class 2, 9.

40 PM Primary school class 2, 303–311.

41 PM Primary school class 3, 89–91; PU Primary school class 3 (part 1), 47–49.

42 PM Primary school class 5, 54.

43 PM Primary school class 5, 177–178.

44 PM Primary school class 5, 172–173.

45 PU Primary school class 5, 23.

education⁴⁶. In the *Passion Sunday* lesson, it was recommended that teachers should provide their students with examples of outstanding athletes⁴⁷.

In the final year of primary school, the lesson titled *Do I love my life?* contains an excerpt from a letter written by a pupil whose hobby is practising sport, and although, as the author himself admits, “it is difficult to combine involvement in sport with study”⁴⁸, he nevertheless recommends physical activity. In the commentary under the letter students learn that sport, is “one of the passions that serves health, does not harm others, and makes a person’s life more joyful”⁴⁹. The methodology textbook contains a suggested class activity, which includes a commentary on the quoted letter from the student textbook “the letter of a boy playing sports says that pursuing a passion in life is an important part of life and helps to interpret its meaning”⁵⁰.

The student book for the first grade of general and technical secondary schools contains an important statement: “Taking a look at contemporary world religions, one could say that the era of polytheism has passed into oblivion (...) However, it appears that it is not entirely true. A contemporary, modern, well-educated person very often declaring his atheism or agnosticism can, in fact, be viewed as a polytheist (...) practising belief in many gods. What could be such an idol for contemporary man? Attractive appearance, physical strength”⁵¹. According to the methodology textbook, as part of the summary of the same lesson, the teacher should explain that “belief in God excludes all forms of polytheism, including an idolatrous attitude to physical fitness, sporting, professional or material success (...) an idolatrous attitude consists in worshipping false deities and today can take various forms – it is associated with sporting success, the cult of the body, etc.”⁵². At the end of the lesson, the students are introduced to the dangers of unhealthy rivalry in sport and the use of doping.

In another lesson aimed at analysing and interpreting the practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and deepening the understanding of Lent practices, a method of brainstorming was recommended, starting with the question “What do you associate the word training with?”. The teacher should then explain to the pupils that good training aims to bring about a change in a person – both physically and spiritually. Next, the teacher proceeds to explain that “asceticism in Greek means exercise, training. It is the practice of (...) certain goods and activities in order to achieve holiness, discipline and spiritual perfection”⁵³.

In the second year of secondary school (general and technical school), during a lesson devoted to ways of celebrating a holy day, the teacher of religion, summarising the stu-

46 PM Primary school class 6, 67.

47 PM Primary school class 6, 352.

48 PU Primary school class 8, 201.

49 PU Primary school class 8, 201.

50 PM Primary school class 8, 150.

51 PU Secondary school class 1, 174.

52 PM Secondary school class 1, 131–132.

53 PM Secondary school class 1, 195–196.

dents' work, should point out that "the most appropriate ways of experiencing feast days include (...) active recreation with family and relatives"⁵⁴. While presenting the biographical sketch of Saint John Paul II, it is emphasised that at school age "he was considered a talented and athletic boy who regularly played football and went skiing, went on sight-seeing tours and on walks in the area surrounding Wadowice"⁵⁵. In the lesson concerning the first commandment of the Decalogue, examples of contemporary idolatry were given, among which was pointed out the exaggerated "worship of the body, which leads to an idolatrous attitude to beauty, physical fitness and sporting success"⁵⁶. This is followed by an example of the instrumental treatment of athletes in the history of competitive sport in the GDR. There is also a reference to research done by historian Giseller Spitzer, who collected and described all cases of forced doping. In his investigation he acquired the knowledge about a SED doping system with names of athletes, coaches and doctors who used it. His research showed also when and how much each player was dosed⁵⁷.

In the third year of high school and technical school, during a lesson titled *The Cult of Matter*, specific content was identified as correlating with school education: "physical education – sport equals health"⁵⁸. Students in the class are offered a reading from the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*: "man is not allowed to despise his bodily life (...) May this leisure be used properly to relax, to fortify the health of soul and body (...) through sports activity which helps to preserve the equilibrium of spirit even in the community"⁵⁹. For a complete picture of what a Christian's attitude to the body should be, the authors of the textbook refer to the teaching contained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "although morality calls for respect for physical life, it does not make it an absolute value. It objects to a neo-pagan conception that seeks to foster a cult of the body, to devote everything to it, to an idolatrous attitude to physical fitness and sporting success"⁶⁰.

Summary – conclusions and proposals

In conclusion, it should be noted that the analysis of the documents providing the curriculum for religious education and selected textbooks for teaching religion does not fully exhaust the issue of the correlation of physical activity and school religious instruction. In order to take a broader and more comprehensive look at the research problem under consideration, an analysis of textbooks also issued by other publishers and of recent

54 PM Secondary school class 2, 117.

55 PM Secondary school class 2, 227.

56 PU Secondary school class 2, 135.

57 PU Secondary school class 2, 133.

58 PM Secondary school class 3, 155.

59 PM Secondary school class 3, 156; Sobór Watykański II, „Konstytucja duszpasterska o Kościele w świecie współczesnym «Gaudium et spes»”, no. 14, w: Sobór Watykański II, *Konstytucje, dekrety, deklaracje. Tekst polski* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Pallottinum, 1967), 811–987.

60 KKK, n. 2289; PM Secondary school class 3, 156.

religion teaching literature should be carried out. In addition, it seems necessary to carry out a survey among religious teachers in order to show the level of awareness and the role they can play in promoting and appropriate approach to physical activity. It is worth asking religion teachers whether, and to what extent, they implement the discussed issue; whether textbooks and methodological aids take sufficient account of the content covered; how they think students relate to this issue and whether religious education can be translated into physical education. For a complete picture to be presented, a survey of the students of religion lessons themselves would also need to be carried out. It would be useful to ask students whether they are aware of the risks and consequences of not being physically active or of the wrong approach to physical activity; whether they have encountered issues relating to physical activity in their formative class and in religion lessons; and whether they properly understand the need to take care of their own body and its fitness.

The analysis of the *Core Curriculum* and the *Programme* allows us to conclude that both documents refer to issues concerning physical activity. It should be positively emphasized that already at the preschool stage, mainly as part of the correlation in the area of physical development and indications for the implementation of the programme, it was recommended to use movement games, construction games and exercises forming the habit of maintaining the correct posture of the body. Moreover, it was stipulated that religion teachers should use active methods, adapting them to the physical development of preschool children. The authors of the analysed textbooks for five- and six-year-olds fully implement the assumptions of both curriculum documents. The games and movement methods identified meet the needs of the children and support their comprehensive development. Furthermore, it is worth noting that both methodology textbooks aimed at preschoolers include numerous references to examples that promote physical activity among children.

However, what is very surprising is the lack of reference to this issue in the *Core Curriculum* for the first stage of education. The two documents should be consistent with each other. Nevertheless, in this case, it is worth emphasising that the authors of the *Programme* did not take into account the lack of indications in the *Core Curriculum* and, at this stage, explicitly recommended using movement games and various activity-based methods, based on action, e.g. performing exercises. In addition, it is worth mentioning that the authors of the Programme, next to the subject of nature, have indicated the issue of physical and psychological needs and the consequences of the failure to meet them, which should be correlated with the religious instruction at school. Consequently, it is proposed that in the forthcoming editing of the new *Core Curriculum*, within the first stage of education, the authors should supplement the recommendation to use activation methods based on movement and physical exercise, and add content concerning the promotion of a healthy lifestyle and physical activity. In contrast, it may be considered quite surprising that in the first year of primary school there is only one proposal for the use of a method based on physical activity. The second grade textbook not only encourages the use of activity-based, action-oriented methods, but also provides a detailed description

of games and activations based on the physical activity of students. This seems advantageous in view of the age and needs of children, and it is therefore advocated that recommendations for use, as well as a description of methods based on physical activity, should be supplemented in both the first grade textbook and the textbooks for other grades of the first educational stage.

The issue reappears in the *Core Curriculum* at the second stage of primary school, where the authors of the document assume that the students will acquire knowledge and skills that will allow them to implement good habits in the field of life and health, that they will take care of their own health and that of others, will engage in sports activities and will be able to plan positive life activities, such as sports. Since physical activity is very often associated with team games, it is worth noting that the authors of the *Core Curriculum* refer to the principle of fair play, i.e. respect for the opponent, respect for the rules of the game, compliance with the referee's decisions; appropriate behaviour in situations of victory and defeat. It is important to note that the contents concerning physical activity, included in the *Core Curriculum* for the second stage of primary school, can also be found in the *Programme*. The textbooks for fifth, sixth and eighth graders contain a number of important provisions as well as whole lesson units on physical activity and health care. It seems that the authors of the textbooks took into account the indications of the curriculum documents, although it is surprising that the discussed issue was completely omitted in the seventh grade. Therefore, it is advocated that the missing content be supplemented in the textbook for the penultimate grade of primary school.

At the secondary school level, the authors of the *Core Curriculum* assume that students will acquire the skills to care for their own and others' health and life; recognise the strengths and weaknesses of physical fitness; understand recommendations for physical activity; recognise the risks associated with the commercialisation of sport; and be able to consider the issue of safety during physical activity. In contrast, the authors of the *Programme* refer to the issue in question only in the third grade, and only within the framework of the issue of Olympic ethics. For this reason, it is requested that in the next revision of the new *Programme*, the authors add at least those contents that are covered by the *Core Curriculum*. All of the primary school textbooks under examination include sections promoting physical activity. At this point, it is important to emphasise the fact that the authors have appropriately addressed the explanation of the difficult issues that are related to the subject under discussion, concerning, for example, polytheism, exaggerated concern for physical appearance and strength; an idolatrous attitude to physical fitness and sporting success, the dangers of the issue of unhealthy sporting competition and the use of doping, as well as activity in order to achieve holiness, discipline and spiritual perfection.

In the case of a special school, it is important to remember that only a small percentage of students, due to the type and severity of their disability, are excluded from physical activity. Nevertheless, for the majority of people with disabilities, physical activity also has a positive meaning and performs many functions, among which the compensatory

and corrective function is particularly important⁶¹. The authors of the *Core Curriculum* point out that people with moderate intellectual disabilities are characterised by slower development and have limited opportunities in terms of motor skills. However, they acknowledge that these individuals, in adulthood, are usually fully mobile and physically active. Hence, the question arises as to why both curriculum documents, in relation to the special school, omit the topic of physical activity. It seems that both the use of activation methods based on movement and exercise and the inclusion of content promoting physical activity is advisable, at least in the group of people with moderate intellectual disabilities. The omission of physical activity issues in special schools seems to be a significant shortcoming. As it is difficult to find a justification for this situation, it is proposed to add the above-mentioned issues into the curriculum documents for religious education.

The presented conclusions should become an inspiration for the authors of subsequent versions of religion teaching documents, as well as programmes and textbooks for teaching religion. They can also prove useful in the work of religion teachers and all educators who are concerned with integral education, taking into account the spiritual and physical development of students.

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