

# *The opinions of adolescents on the methodics of religious education in Poland*

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## **Abstract**

The aim of the presented research is a theoretical-empirical analysis of issues concerning selected aspects of the implementation of religion lessons in Polish secondary schools. The achievement of the theoretical goal was based on an analysis of the literature on the subject, mainly in the field of general didactics and the didactics of religion. The empirical goal was to learn about the opinions of secondary school students on the methods of education, forms of student activity and didactic means used during religion lessons in Polish schools. The research used the method of the diagnostic survey and the technique of the questionnaire. The study involved 1670 secondary school students from all over Poland. In accordance with the research assumptions, a minimum of 100 persons were surveyed in each province. The survey shows that students are quite positive about the implementation of religion lessons in Poland. They emphasise that the predominant teaching method is transmission, the valued form of pupils' activity is collective work. Films and multimedia presentations were among the didactic means indicated as important by the respondents. They also stressed the importance of religion textbooks, indicating their strengths and weaknesses. The article ends with conclusions from the research and recommendations for further pedagogical work.

Keywords: **Religion lessons, educational methods, forms of student activity, teaching resources.**

## **Opinie młodzieży na temat metodyki nauczania religii w Polsce**

### **Streszczenie**

Celem prezentowanych badań naukowych jest teoretyczno-empiryczna analiza zagadnień dotyczących wybranych aspektów realizacji lekcji religii w polskich szkołach ponadpodstawowych. Osiągnięcie celu teoretycznego oparto na analizie literatury przedmiotu, głównie z zakresu dydaktyki ogólnej i dydaktyki religii. Celem empirycznym było poznanie opinii uczniów szkół ponadpodstawowych na temat metod kształcenia, form aktywności uczniów oraz środków dydaktycznych stosowanych podczas lekcji religii w polskich szkołach. W badaniach wykorzystano metodę sondażu diagnostycznego oraz technikę ankiety. W badaniu wzięło udział 1670 uczniów szkół ponadpodstawowych z całej Polski. Zgodnie z założeniami badawczymi, w każdym województwie badaniami objęto minimum 100 osób. Z przeprowadzonych badań wynika, że uczniowie dość pozytywnie oceniają realizację lekcji religii w Polsce. Wskazują, że wśród metod kształcenia dominują metody podające, natomiast cenioną formą aktywności uczniów jest praca zbiorowa. Wśród istotnych dla badanych środków dydaktycznych znalazły się filmy i prezentacje multimedialne. Respondenci podkreślili również znaczenie podręczników do religii wskazując ich mocne i słabe strony. Artykuł wieńczy wnioski wynikające z badań oraz rekomendacje do dalszej pracy pedagogicznej.

Słowa kluczowe: **Lekcje religii, metody kształcenia, formy aktywności uczniów, środki dydaktyczne.**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Since the return of religious instruction to schools, a turn can be noted towards didactics in order to search for solutions that "according to the principles of faithfulness to God and man – can be adapted in the teaching of religion" (Zellma, 2013, p. 103). It is important to find opportunities to make the best use of and adapt the achievements of general didactics in the implementation of religious education in schools.

C. Kupisiewicz defines didactics "as the science of teaching and learning, systematic and intentional, organised consciously and planned both inside and outside school" (Kupisiewicz, 2005, pp. 14–15). According to F. Bernicki, didactics is defined as the general knowledge of teaching and learning (Bernicki, 2018, p. 12). It should be emphasised that teaching and learning should be a deliberate and planned process, complementing each other. From the principles of teaching and learning developed by general didactics, specific didactics, i.e., the methods of teaching individual subjects, including the didactics of religion, are derived. The basic elements of the educational process worked out by didactics, such as, among others, planning lessons, educational content, methods, forms and didactic means, play an important role in the process of designing and implementing religion lessons in kindergarten and school. As A. Zellma emphasises, "It is especially about embedding the analyses in the contexts of a contemporary school, as well as the training to prepare theology students for the profession of religion teacher and the didactic challenges to the authors of new series of textbooks for the study of religion and those responsible for the permanent formation of catechists" (Zellma, 2013, p. 104).

Special attention is paid in this article to such structural elements of the educational process as the methods of education, forms of student activity and didactic means. They serve the implementation of the content and, through them, the achievement of the objectives of religion lessons. They also make it easier to understand the content communicated, motivate students to undertake assignments and activities, overcome difficulties, work on themselves, increase the attractiveness of the classes, and, perhaps above all, to achieve the main goal of religious education, which is communion with Jesus (DOK 80). Since the study of religion takes place at school, it is affected by the same laws and tasks as other school subjects. It is therefore worth looking at how it is implemented in the school setting.

### **1. Theoretical frameworks of the methodics of religious education**

There are various didactic phenomena in the teaching process: the way the content is conveyed, the type of work performed by the teacher and the pupils during the lesson, the organisational forms of the lesson, the course of teaching, i.e., the inner current, psychological and logical arrangement of the content, as well as the methods and means of teaching that condition the course of the didactic work. In connection with this, the following terms are used in didactics: teaching form, teaching flow, teaching methods, teaching means. However, there is no unified terminology in this field. Different authors of the 20th century applying their own criteria adopt different terms and even use these terms interchangeably. The situation is similar in religious education.

The working methods used in religious education during religion lessons at school are important, as they play the role of serving the Word of God. The message proclaimed in religious education methodically conveys the revealed content, the teachings of the Church, familiarises learners with the testimony of Christian life, binds them to God. The task of religion lessons, as the evangelical presence of the Church in school, is also to link the experience of faith with everyday life, so that through this not only is knowledge imparted, but a proper attitude is formed of man to God, the Church, morality and Christian culture.

Religious education should therefore choose such a "tool", such a way of working, that pupils, through active participation, cooperate not only in exploring the mystery of the world, but also and above all, the depth of the message of salvation. The methods used will then have the effect not only of awakening, but also of sustaining the activity and the results of the work.

The term "method" means a way of proceeding, a way of searching on the path to truth. Polish didacticians (inter alia W. Okoń, C. Kupisiewicz, F. Bereźnicki) unanimously emphasise that it is a way of working chosen by the teacher, a system of pedagogical and didactic procedures, which constitutes the shortest and most effective way to achieve the intended goal. It also indicates which means and activities to choose in order to achieve the desired learning results. The method is thus a didactic tool used by the teacher during lessons and by the catechist during catechesis.

It is important to bear in mind the specificity of religion lessons at school. The selection of methods to make lessons more attractive and to activate pupils is insufficient. As P. Małkosa stresses, "such a criterion is insufficient, it impoverishes and even depletes from the content of not only one of the school subjects, but a special subject, which is for children and young people the only contact with the Gospel and the Church, not to mention parish catechesis" (Małkosa, 2006, p. 2).

Drawing on the work of general didactics, the selection of educational methods should therefore be guided primarily by the objectives of religion classes. The general principles formulated by didacticians for the selection of educational methods should also be taken into account and considered.

W. Okoń makes the selection of methods dependent on the age of pupils, the characteristic features of individual school subjects, the goals and tasks of didactic-educational work, and the organisation and means that the teacher intends to use during a given lesson (Okoń, 2003). On the other hand, J. Półturzycki points out that "the choice of teaching methods in the didactic process depends on the aims, content and didactic tasks and the level of education of the group. This does not mean that particular methods should be used only for specific content. Passing on ready-made information is just as inadvisable as underestimating practical methods. Thus, the criteria for the selection of methods have a guiding character, indicating the most appropriate ways, but not absolutely certain, since the selection can only be made by the class teacher" (Półturzycki, 2000, p. 180).

The dominant component of any teaching method is a certain system of actions of the teacher and the pupils, because the teacher, by his/her way of acting, influences the pupils and determines their actions. It is a system developed on a scientific basis, on the principles of psychology, logic, pedagogy and, as far as religious education is concerned, also on the principles of the theology.

In summarising the above, it should be noted that it is not enough to take into account psycho-physical features, to contribute to independent cognition, to stimulate experience to ensure comprehensive mental development, to shape the will and character. The aim of religion lessons is to form man in the image of Christ and to shape a proper attitude toward values in order to contribute to the growth of faith and to provide motives for Christian action (Słotwińska, 2004).

The term "form" is not used unequivocally in the didactic literature and some authors use it interchangeably with the term "method" or "course" as a term for the type of religious education. However, the term "form" is better suited to describing the external, organisational side of teaching, and this understanding of form is becoming more common. In the study presented here, special attention is paid not to organisational forms but to forms of student activity during religion lessons.

Three basic forms of organisation of learning, also known as forms of student activity, can be identified in students' work during lessons. These are individual, group and individual work. As F. Bereźnicki emphasises, each of these forms influences the formation of certain personality traits in pupils. Collective work favourably influences the socialisation of students, group work – implements skilful co-existence and cooperation, while the individual form influences the development of individual activity and independence (Bereźnicki, 2018, p. 189). It is important that there are three forms of student activity in the learning process. By alternating between them, it is not only possible to harmonise the content and methods with the forms of work, but it also allows learning activities to be varied (Bereźnicki, 2018, p. 189).

Teaching aids are material objects that provide the pupils with specific sensory and motor stimuli which, by acting on sight, hearing and touch, facilitate direct and indirect cognition of reality. These objects include both original specimens and their model, pictorial, verbal or symbolic designations. Although didactic aids do not determine the final results of didactic-educational work, they nevertheless enrich the applied teaching methods by skilfully applying the principle of the demonstrative approach and contribute to increasing the effectiveness of the entire educational process. In traditional didactics, they had mainly an illustrative function – they illustrated the content conveyed verbally by the teacher (Korgul, 2014, p. 154).

The selection of teaching resources is decided by the teacher. The basic criteria for the selection of means are the developmental characteristics of the pupils, the didactic tasks, the type and features of the subject being taught, the teacher's own pedagogical experience and belief in their effectiveness. Didactic means make it possible to learn about reality, provide knowledge about it, facilitate the formation of an attitude towards reality, develop activity that transforms reality. It should be emphasised after F. Bereźnicki that "saturating the educational process with many didactic means does not yet guarantee an

increase in the effectiveness of the teacher's and students' work. For the results are determined not only by the means themselves, but by their rational use in a correctly organised and implemented teaching-learning process aimed at achieving the set goals" (Bereźnicki, 2018, p.197). Teaching resources consist of both the teaching aids used by the teacher and items for the pupils' individual equipment: textbooks, notebooks, writing utensils, etc. In summarising the above analyses, it should be emphasised once again that the choice of educational methods, forms of student activity and didactic means depends mainly on the religion teacher. He/she should be guided by pupils' abilities and needs, the educational contents chosen for implementation and, above all, the main objectives of religious education. The above indications are also confirmed by the research and analysis of religion didacticists, for example H. Słotwińska (1998), W. Sadłoń (2016), P. Małosa (2018, 2014, 2009), J. Bagrowicz (2000).

## **2. Empirical research methodology**

The purpose of the study was to learn about the opinions of secondary school students about the ways religion lessons are implemented in Polish schools. The main research problem was contained in the question: Which methods of work, forms of activity and didactic means are used in religion lessons in Polish secondary schools?

In order to obtain answers to the question posed above, some results of empirical research were used from the project entitled "Religious education of Polish youth – current state, opportunities and challenges", coordinated by the authors of this article. Within the framework of the aforementioned project, a quantitative study was conducted between November 2022 and January 2023, involving 1670 secondary school students of years 1 and 4 (875 female and 785 male) from all over Poland. In line with the research objectives, a minimum of 100 people were surveyed in each of the 16 provinces.

The research was conducted with the help of a specialised company using the auditory method, based on a survey questionnaire constructed by theologians, sociologists, educators and psychologists. The survey questionnaire contained a total of 53 dichotomous, closed single-choice, closed multiple-choice, semi-open-ended, scale and open-ended questions. Closed single-choice questions were mainly used in the section of the questionnaire addressing the issues of this article. One question was open-ended. During the construction of the research tool and the conduct of the research, it was assumed that all pupils could participate, including those who were not currently attending religion lessons, although they may have done so in the past.

Pearson's chi-square test with Cramer's V effect size measure was used for the statistical analyses.

The majority of respondents declared a formal affiliation to the Roman Catholic Church (73.6%). Quite a large percentage of young people did not identify with any religion (12.8%) or could not give a clear answer to the question on religious affiliation (7.5%). The remainder (6.1%) represented other religions and faiths, e.g., Judaism, Buddhism or Orthodoxy. Although a total of about 80% of the students surveyed declared a formal affiliation to a religion, only 46% of them described themselves as believers (38% – believers; 7.7% – firm believers). One in five students (21.4%) considered themselves to be religiously undecided but attached to a religious tradition. In addition, 11.4% of respondents described themselves as religiously indifferent and 13.3% as non-believers. It is noteworthy that 8.2% of respondents found it difficult to clearly define their attitude toward faith. It is worth noting that among the surveyed inhabitants of rural areas, only 9.3% declared themselves as non-believers, while in the largest cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, the percentage of non-believing youth was 28.6%.

The results analysed in this article do not relate to objective criteria defining the quality of the entire teaching process, but present the opinions of young people attending religion lessons on selected elements of the process.

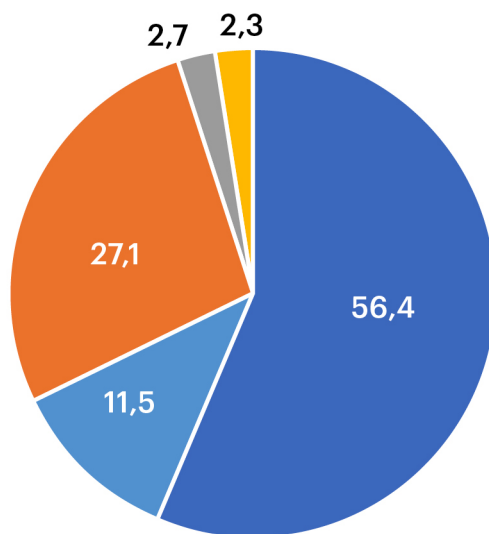
## **3. Results of the empirical research**

The following is an analysis of the survey results on pupils' opinions about the implementation of religion lessons in secondary schools. For this purpose, the following questions were posed to the respondents:

- Which working methods are used in religion lessons?
- Which forms of activity do religion teachers use most often?
- Which teaching resources do religion teachers use most often?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of religious education textbooks?

Of the different working methods used in religion lessons, according to the young people, the most common methods used are administration methods, e.g., description, story, lecture, work with text – book). More than half of the young people indicate these methods. In second place are problem-based methods, e.g., didactic games, problem solving, enactments, didactic discussion, indicated by more than 1/4 of the students. The remaining methods, according to the young people, have a rather marginal function – they are indicated by 2-3% of respondents. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Methods of work used most frequently in religion lessons according to young people, N=1268\*, in %*



- The expository methods, e.g. description, story, lecture, work with text-book
- Problem-based methods, e.g. didactic games, problem solving, enactments, didactic discussion
- Exposing methods, e.g. role play/drama, exhibition, show
- Practical, e.g. practical exercises, measurement
- No answer

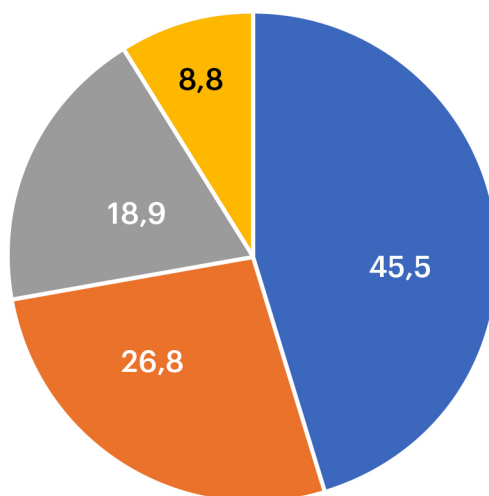
\* Attendees of religious education classes.

Source: own study.

Which of these methods are mentioned more often and which less often by young people does not differ statistically significantly according to the independent variables (Figure 2).

When asked about the most common forms of activity used by teachers, pupils indicate the collective form first and foremost (nearly half of the pupils), followed by team (more than 1/4 of the pupils) and individual (slightly less than 1/5). Nearly 1/10 of the students were unable to answer this question.

Figure 2 *Forms of work used most frequently in religion lessons according to young people, N=1268\*, in %*



- Collective
- Collaborative (group)
- Individual
- No answer

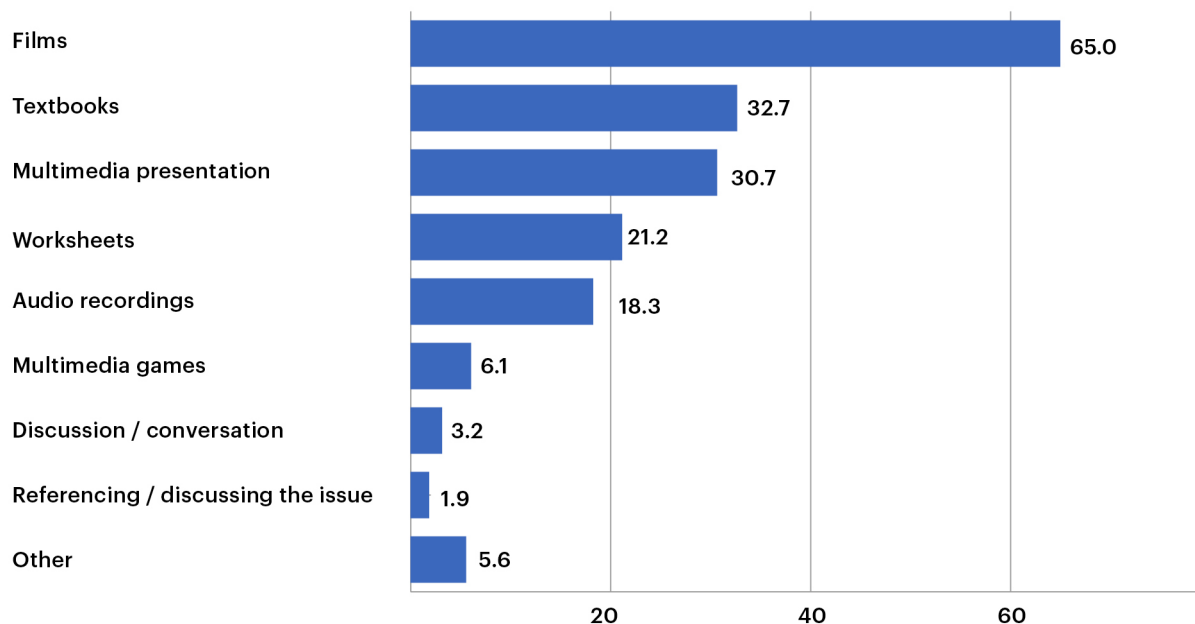
\* Attendees of religious education classes.

Source: own study.

The frequency of adolescents' indications of the different forms of work used in religion lessons did not differ statistically significantly due to the independent variables, with one exception. Girls are more likely than boys to indicate a team form of activity during religion lessons. Nearly one-third of the girls mention this form, while just over one-fifth of the boys do so. The strength of this relationship should be assessed as being weak ( $\chi^2 = 10.543$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ;  $\Phi = 0.093$ ).

Respondents were presented with a list of teaching resources and asked to indicate the ones that religion teachers use most often. Young people most often indicated films (2/3), textbooks and multimedia presentations (about 1/3 each), followed by worksheets and audio recordings (about 1/5 each). This is illustrated in Figure 3.

Figure 3 *Teaching resources used most often by teachers, N=1268\*, in %*



\* Attendees of religious education classes.

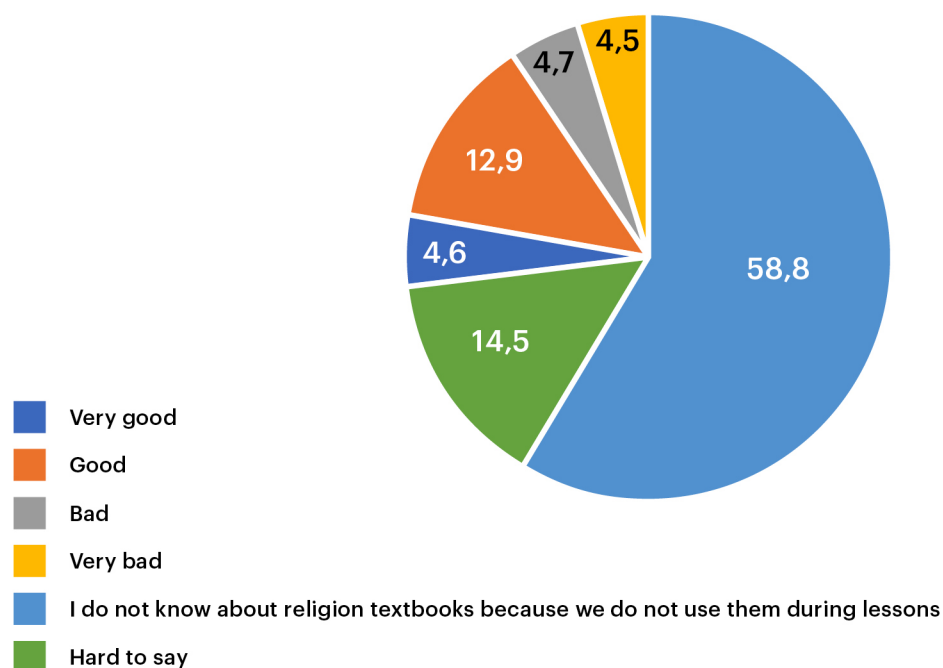
Source: own study.

The frequency of indicating information about the teaching resources used by teachers differs primarily due to the variable describing the regularity of attendance at religion lessons – consequently, this relationship says more about students' awareness of what happens in religion lessons and less about the actual state of affairs.

Thus, pupils regularly attending religion lessons are more likely than pupils attending irregularly to indicate that teachers use worksheets, videos and multimedia presentations most often. These relationships are not strong, but statistically significant (worksheets:  $\chi^2 = 12.786$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; Kramer's  $V = 0.103$ ; videos:  $\chi^2 = 25.867$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; Kramer's  $V = 0.143$ ; multimedia presentations:  $\chi^2 = 17.303$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; Kramer's  $V = 0.117$ ).

Pupils who use textbooks in lessons overwhelmingly evaluate them positively (Figure 4). However, the majority of pupils are not familiar with religion textbooks as they do not use them in lessons – this is nearly 60% of those attending religion lessons. Those who do use textbooks are more likely to rate them positively than negatively – nearly 1/5 of pupils rate the textbooks as very good or good, and about 1/10 rate them as bad or very bad. More than 1/10 of the respondents were unable to assess the quality of religion textbooks.

Figure 4 Evaluation of the quality of religion textbooks, N=1268\*, in %

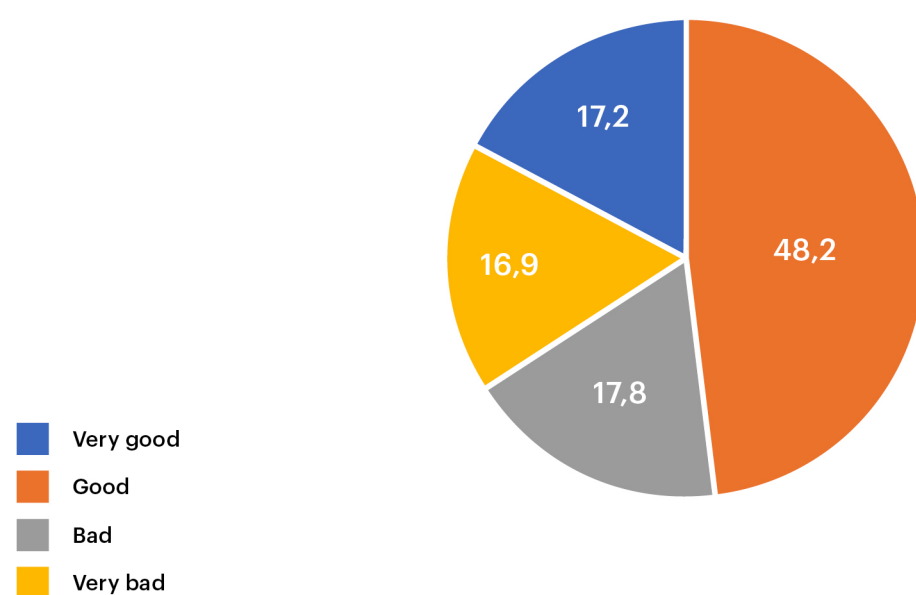


\* Attendees of religious education classes.

Source: own study.

The positive assessment of textbooks becomes even more pronounced when limiting the analysis to only those pupils who have experience with them (because they are used in religion lessons). Two-thirds of the pupils who have experience with textbooks in religion lessons rate them more or less positively (Figure 5).

Figure 5 Evaluation of the quality of religion textbooks, N=368\*, in %



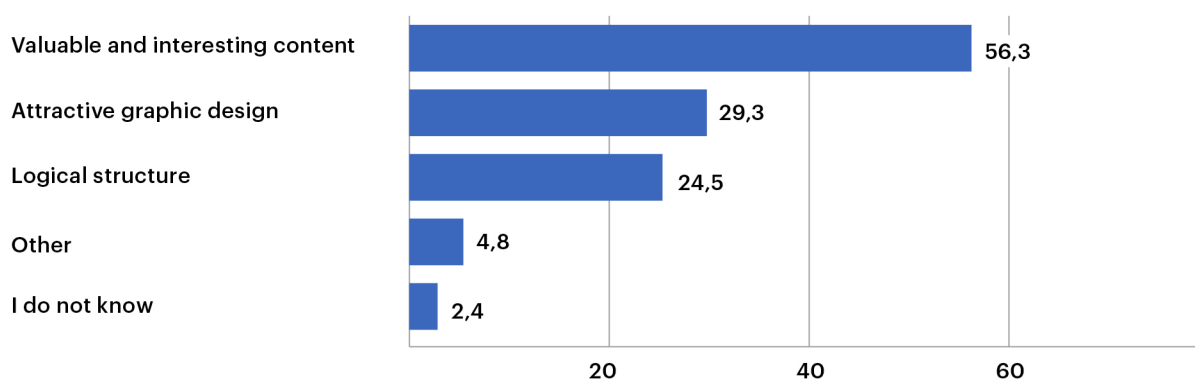
\* Attendees of religion classes where religion textbooks are used.

Source: own study.

The evaluation of the quality of religious textbooks varies due to four independent variables. The first is the origin of the pupils. The larger the locality of origin, the more critical the assessment of textbooks – 3/4 of students from rural areas assess textbooks more or less positively, an opinion shared by less than half of students from cities with a population of 100,000 or more. Conversely, 1/4 of students from rural areas assess textbooks more or less negatively, while the same assessment is made by more than half of young people from the largest cities. This relationship is statistically significant and its strength is close to moderate ( $\chi^2 = 24.296$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ; tau-b = 0.185;  $p < 0.001$ ). The positive evaluation of textbooks is also supported by regular attendance at religion lessons and attending catechesis in a faith community. More than two-thirds of the students attending religion lessons evaluate textbooks more or less positively, while the group of positive evaluators of textbooks among those attending religion lessons irregularly comprises about two-fifths of the young people. Similarly, in the case of catechesis – more than 2/3 of those attending catechesis in a religious community assess textbooks positively. About 3/5 of those who do not attend catechesis have a similar opinion. The above correlations are not strong, but statistically significant (regularly attending religion classes:  $\chi^2 = 20.516$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Kramer's V = 0.246; attending catechesis in a faith community:  $\chi^2 = 12.825$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Kramer's V = 0.196). A factor that contributes to the positive perception of the textbook is regular attendance at church for Mass. More than two-thirds of the young people attending Mass at least every Sunday rate the religion lesson textbooks more or less positively. The same opinion is held by less than half of the young people who attend religion lessons, but do not attend church at all or just occasionally. Again, the correlation is not strong, but statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 31.514$ ;  $p = 0.025$ ; Kendall's tau-c = -0.106;  $p = 0.039$ ).

The students surveyed also identified the strengths and weaknesses of the religion textbooks. Their opinions are presented below (Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6 **Strengths of religious education textbooks, N=208\*, in %**



\* Attendees of religion classes where religion textbooks are used and who answered the question.

Source: own study.

When pointing out the strengths of the textbook, the respondents most often emphasised their valuable and interesting content – this is the opinion of more than half of the students (well communicated knowledge, lots of information, rich content, interesting content). Other strengths of the religious education textbooks are attractive graphic design, indicated by more than 1/4 of the students (interesting graphic design, interesting cover, interesting pictures) and logical structure – about 1/4 of the students (very well written out content, interestingly structured). The frequency of the indications of the two most frequently mentioned positive features of religious education textbooks varies by the three independent variables – attendance at religion lessons, frequency of Mass attendance, and year of secondary school attendance.

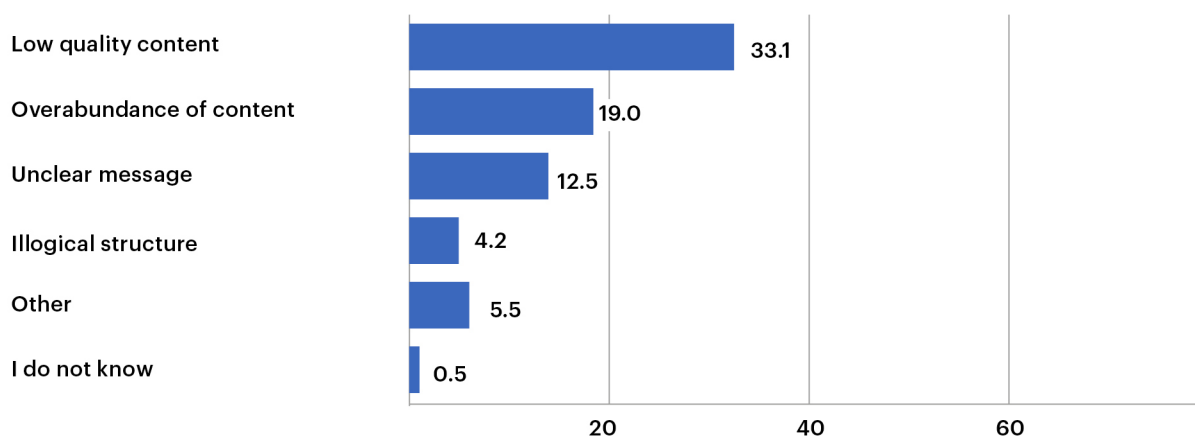
First, those who attend religious education lessons regularly are more likely than those who attend irregularly or do not attend at all to emphasise the textbooks as having valuable and interesting content. This feature is indicated by more than half of the pupils who attend religion regularly, while the same opinion is held by slightly more than 1/4 of the pupils who attend religion irregularly or do not attend at all. This relationship is weak but statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 8.794$ ;  $p = 0.012$ ; Kramer's V = 0.206). Second, the frequency of mentioning such features of the textbooks that emphasise their valuable and interesting content increases with the frequency of attending Mass. While just over 1/4 of those attending Mass occasionally or not at all indicate that the textbook has valuable and interesting content, similar statements are found for about 3/5 of the students attending Mass every Sunday or more. This relationship is statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 14.750$ ;  $p = 0.022$ ) and, in terms of its strength, close to the moderate level (Kramer's V = 0.281). Third, the frequency of statements relating to the attractive graphic design of the textbook varies according to the year of the students in secondary school – this feature



is indicated more frequently by fourth-year students than by first-year ones. Almost 2/5 of the fourth-year students gave answers relating to the attractive graphic design of the textbook, while this was the case for 1/4 of the first-year students. In terms of strength, this relationship is weak but statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 3.704$ ;  $p = 0.054$ ;  $\Phi = -0.145$ ).

Overall, less than one-fifth of the students using religious education textbooks mentioned at least one weakness of the texts.

Figure 7 Weaknesses of religious education textbooks, N=263\*, in %



\* Attendees of religion classes where religion textbooks are used and who answered the question.

Source: own study.

Students most often gave answers that thematically related to a problem with the low quality of textbook content. Such shortcomings were perceived by 1/3 of the students who had any experience with them (some things are boring, uninteresting content, there is also unnecessary information, difficult and unnecessary knowledge, little interesting and important information). Other shortcomings of the religious education textbook were its excessive content, indicated by 1/5 of the students (there is too much information there, sometimes monotonous and long content, packed with everything, a lot of unnecessary text), and an unclear message – more than 1/10 of the students (poor presentation of the faith, not very clear, strange content). About 1/20 of the pupils perceive shortcomings in the textbooks which can be described as an illogical structure.

The occurrence of indications of the two most frequently mentioned negative features of religious education textbooks differs in only one case due to the variable of attendance at religion lessons – this is excess content – attending religion lessons:  $\chi^2 = 7.564$ ;  $p = 0.023$ ; Kramer's  $V = 0.170$

Those who attend religion lessons are more likely than those who do not to mention such shortcomings of religious education textbooks, the common denominator of which is excessive content. This problem is pointed out by about one-fifth of the pupils who attend religion (regularly or irregularly), while the same opinion is held by about one-third of the pupils who do not attend religion at all. The relationship is weak but statistically significant ( $\chi^2 = 7.564$ ;  $p = 0.023$ ; Kramer's  $V = 0.170$ ).

## CONCLUSIONS

In summarising the theoretical analyses and results of the conducted research, it should be emphasised that the selection of methods and forms of education as well as the didactic means used in the religion lessons should be guided primarily by the main goals that are set for these lessons, namely, union with Christ. The methods, forms and means have a servient role to this. Making classes more attractive, activating pupils, motivating them to undertake assignments and making the content easier to understand are also important, although not the most important functions of the above elements. Their selection is always decided by the religious education teacher, taking into account the needs and abilities of the pupils.

The most frequently used methods in religion lessons are the administration methods (description, story, lecture, work with text) – they are indicated by almost 3/5 of the young people attending religion lessons. These are complemented by problem-based methods (indicated by 1/4 of the students). The remaining methods are basically not used or used occasionally. Making religion lessons more varied by introducing a variety of methods, such as, for example, activating or problem-based methods, would create an opportunity for better understanding the content being taught, motivating students to work

on themselves, involving them in achieving goals, motivating them to participate in religion classes as well as better understanding the need to do so.

The most common form of student activity used by religion teachers is group work, indicated by almost half of the students. Using a variety of forms of pupil activity would provide an opportunity to involve as many pupils as possible in the lesson, integrate them around key objectives, help them develop responsibility for themselves and others, and build community.

Among the didactic means used by religion teachers, the largest group of young people indicated films (2/3), followed by textbooks and multimedia presentations (about 1/3 each). The teacher's choice of means is not without significance. Attention should be paid to their quality, value and relevance to the content being taught. The choice of didactic means should not be made only on the basis of what is in "fashion", the trends and methodological novelties appearing in the lessons on other subjects. The religious education teacher should always bear in mind the specificity of religion lessons at school.

Among the important and quite frequently used didactic means during religion lessons is the textbook. The majority of young people do not use textbooks in religion lessons (3/5). Those who do use them mostly evaluate them positively. Their strengths include their valuable and interesting content and attractive graphic design. Speaking about the weaker sides of the textbooks, students noted the low quality of the content and its excess amount.

The opinions provided by secondary school students on the implementation of religion lessons encourage reflection and action to improve and take even greater care of its quality. Based on these opinions, recommendations can be made for educational practice in this area:

- more frequent use of problem and activation methods;
- use of the project method in religion lessons;
- use of various forms of student activity, with particular emphasis on group work during classes;
- select a variety of didactic means taking into account the needs of modern youth and the specifics of religion lessons;
- raise the competence of religion teachers (courses, workshops, training) in their methodics preparation.

They should be a reason for discussion among religion teachers and those responsible for their education.

## FUNDING

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DOK - (2020). *Dyrektorium o katechizacji [Directory for Catechesis]*. Papieska Rada ds. Krzewienia Nowej Ewangelizacji [Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization]. Jedność.