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“Employability - Mobility - Flexibility.

European demands challenging

Religion and Education”

Situation of Orthodox RE in Europe from a Finnish Perspective

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Education in Finland

- Children start compulsory school at the age of 7
- Finland has nine years of compulsory schooling
- Local authorities primarily run comprehensive schools
- The government contributes the financing of all of the schools
- After nine years further education could be done in two major ways i.e. vocational training or secondary level in Gymnasium
- Both vocational and gymnasium studies are giving possibilities to study more in polytechnic school or at university.

Underlying values of Basic Education

The underlying values of basic education are human rights, equality, democracy, natural diversity, preservation of environmental viability, and the endorsement of multiculturalism....

The basis of instruction is Finnish culture, which has developed in interaction with indigenous, Nordic, and European cultures. In the instruction, special national and local attributes, the national languages, the two national churches, the Sami as an indigenous people and national minorities must be taken into consideration. The instruction must also take into account the diversification of Finnish culture through the arrival of people from other cultures...

(National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. Finnish National Board of Education 2004)

The Orthodox Church of Finland

The Christian faith spread to eastern Finland from Novgorod in the 12th century through the activities of monks and traders. When Finland gained its independence as a consequence of the Russian Revolution, the Orthodox Church acquired the status of a national church alongside the Lutheran Church. The Finnish Orthodox Church became an autonomous archbishopric of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1923.

In the years preceding the Second World War the focus of activities was on Karelia, where the majority of the parishes were, but after the war, with the resettlement of the population of the ceded territories of Karelia over the rest of Finland, a new, comprehensive network of parishes was created and new churches were built. Today the church is divided into three dioceses, those of Karelia, Helsinki and Oulu. The Diocese of Karelia is headed by the Archbishop and the other two by metropolitans. There are 24 Orthodox parishes in Finland, a monastery and a convent. The church observes the New, or Gregorian calendar.

Legal basis

- General instruction in religion is rendered in the creed of the majority
- In the Finnish situation it is Lutheran. All pupils may take part in this instruction, if their guardians so request
- Instruction in other religions, pupils own religion, will be organized if there is a minimum of three pupils, who belong to that religion which is registered in Finland.

Criteria for Finnish RE:

- A part of general education
- A compulsory subject
- Taught according to one's own religion

All religious groups

The objectives of the instruction are to

- familiarize the pupil with his or her own religion
- familiarize the pupil with the Finnish spiritual tradition
- introduce the pupil to other religions
- help the pupil understand the cultural and human meaning of religions
- educate the pupil in ethical living and help him or her understand the ethical dimension of religion

(National Core Curriculum for Basic Education. Finnish National Board of Education 2004)

The Orthodox religion

Grades 6-9

In the sixth through ninth grades, the core task of instruction in the Orthodox religion is to deepen and broaden the pupil's understanding of his or her own religious tradition, and of the nature and importance of other religions. In this fashion the instruction supports the formation of the pupil's own world-views and ethical viewpoints.

OBJECTIVES

The pupils will

- strengthen and deepen their Orthodox identity and understand life's sacred dimension
- familiarize themselves with liturgical life, church art, and the Orthodox Church and its history and conception of faith
- become aware of the factors bearing on the formulation of their world-views and understand the importance of religion and personal view in the life of the individual and community
- familiarize themselves with the Bible as a collection of human and sacred writings

- know the basic concepts of ethical thought and the foundations of Orthodox ethics, and be able to apply these in their ethical deliberation and activity
- become acquainted in general terms with the main world religions
- know how to respect people who think and believe differently

CORE CONTENTS

- The Bible
- Church history
- World religions
- Liturgics and dogma
- Ethics



TO THINK AND TO DISCUSS:

1. What is different compared to your own country and it's RE tradition?
2. How do these objectives and contents promote employability, mobility and flexibility in Europe?
3. What do you think is missing or is too much?