

EUROPEAN SCHOOLING HELSINKI

SYLLABUS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Primary school grades 1-5 and secondary school grades 1-5

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious studies is basically a multi-disciplinary subject in the field of humanities and social science, with its starting points in the ethics, science of religion, theology and social and cultural sciences. The teaching of religious studies deals with the philosophical and ethical dimensions of life, both from the point of view of the pupil's own growth and as social phenomena. Religions, philosophies and ideologies as well as non-religiousness are treated as parts of the basic factors affecting the human culture and the personal history of an individual. The teaching of religious studies stresses the importance of understanding different religions and views as well as the willingness to encounter different religions and views and to live in close interaction with them.

The teaching of religious studies is connected to multiculturalism, cherishing one's cultural heritage, human rights and citizenship education. The purpose of the teaching is to provide the pupil with all-round elements for growing up as an independent, unprejudiced, responsible and judicious member of the community. The teaching of religious studies provides the pupil with information, skills and experiences that help him or her gain substance for his or her identity and ideology.

Goals

The teaching of religious studies encourages the growth of the pupil's own awareness concerning questions of religions, philosophies, ethics and lifestyles. The goal of the studies is to promote the pupil's spiritual, ethical, cultural and social development and to enhance his or her capability for ethical thought and action. The teaching provides readiness for encountering the religious, philosophical and ethical dimensions in one's own life as well as in the life of the community. The teaching also guides the pupil to reflect on questions relating to religions, different philosophies and ideologies, enabling the analytical and critical examination of religions, non-religiousness and different views. The goal of the teaching is to provide an all-round education and literacy as regards religions, philosophies, ideologies and cultures.

1 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADES 1-2

1.1 Goals

The goals of the teaching in grades 1-2 in primary school include the following:

- to help the pupil identify his or her own thoughts about life and being a human, and to deliberate upon these
- to help the pupil understand that families differ as to their religion and views
- to get acquainted with the main features of different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- to teach ethicality, create a foundation for ethical thinking and help comprehend the ethical dimensions of religions, philosophies and ideologies
- to strengthen the pupil's cultural identity and provide readiness for living in a multicultural environment with different religions and ideologies

1.2 Main contents

1st grade (P1)

Humaneness, dignity and trust

- the human and his or her dignity and value
- questions relating to life arising out of pupils' experiences and circumstances
- differentiating between right and wrong
- awareness, respect and tolerance towards other human beings

Self-knowledge and cultural identity

- my roots, who I am, self-knowledge
- what I value and why
- values and traditions of my family and how they manifest themselves

The world of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the pupils' near vicinity, the culture and related stories

- preparatory look into the key characteristics of the religions, philosophies and ideologies of pupils' families
- religious, philosophical and ideological stories relating to the European cultural heritage
- celebrations relating to people's life cycles that the pupils encounter
- art and music of different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- mutual interaction of children and understanding dissimilarity

Growing to be ethical

- good and bad, true and false
- the ethics of human relations; for example, friendship, what it entails and means, one's own will
- questions relating to living together, encountering another person and understanding his or her position
- helping and being helpful, empathy
- various feelings and their meanings
- ethical instructions and stories originating with different religions, philosophies and ideologies

2nd grade (P2)

Humaneness, dignity and trust

- stories and teachings from different religions, philosophies and ideologies concerning the dignity of humans and human life
- silence and wonder, wordless and symbolic
- questions arising out of pupils' experiences and circumstances and relating to pupils' lives

Self-knowledge and cultural identity

- me and my life, how I am and what my future will be
- how the traditions of my community manifest themselves and impact my life and my everyday, and those of my family

The world of religion and philosophies in the pupils' near vicinity, the culture and related stories

- religious or philosophical stories relating to the European cultural heritage
- stories shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims
- celebrations relating to people's life cycles that the pupils encounter
- the religious holidays celebrated in the pupil's local vicinity, the related customs
- non-religious way of life
- visual arts and music connected to religions, philosophies and ideologies from the point of view of cultural dialogue
- religious buildings as space

Growing to be ethical

- justice, fairness and courage as ethical principles
- being different and encountering differences
- good manners
- bullying
- positive thinking
- various feelings and their meanings
- right and wrong
- ethical instructions and stories originating with different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- main features of children's rights (based on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)

1.3 Teaching methods

In the teaching of religious studies for grades 1-2 in the primary school, the most emphasised teaching and working methods are the experiential and interactive ones. The teaching utilises various narrative methods, pedagogical drama, role play, music, visual arts projects and visits to cultural heritage sites. The interaction of different religions, philosophies, ideologies and cultural traditions is presented in the teaching. The development of ethical thinking skills (deduction, research, concept formation, interpretation, assessment) is promoted by theoretical ethical test cases, discussion, posing questions and the narration of stories with ethical and philosophy-related themes. The teaching utilises various forms of art like visual arts, music and movies. The teaching always takes the age of the children into account.

1.4 Assessment**Assessment at the end of 2nd grade**

The pupil understands the key issues of religions, philosophies and ideologies affecting his or her local environment, in a manner expected of the age group, and is capable of ethical consideration.

The pupil:

- understands his or her cultural origins and some of the basic questions presented in the religious, philosophical and ideological traditions of his or her family
- knows tales told within the religious, philosophical and ideological spheres of his or her vicinity
- is capable of identifying ethical problems and values relating to social situations.

The pupil is able to view religion, philosophies and ideologies as phenomena**The pupil:**

- understands the language related to religions, philosophies and ideologies
- is able to identify symbols, concepts and terminology related to the religions, philosophies and ideologies in his or her local environment
- is able to see the effects of religions, philosophies and ideologies in his or her local environment.

The pupil is able to use religious, philosophical and ideological information**The pupil:**

- is able to study philosophical questions close to his or her heart
- is able to structure his or her philosophy and world-view in the manner expected of the age group
- understands the significance of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the lives of people and is able to respect religious, philosophical and ideological differences.

The pupil understands the grounds of ethical, responsible action

The pupil:

- understands the values related to ethical consideration
- is able to function according to the moral requirements presented by varied situations requiring ethical consideration
- knows the principles of children's rights
- is capable of presenting his or her own views and understands that it is necessary to present their grounds as well

2 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL GRADES 3-5

2.1 Goals

Primary school grades 3-5 give a more in-depth view to the subjects studied and treated before. As the pupil's experiences and spheres of life expand his or her viewpoints will expand similarly. In addition, primary school grades 3-5 provide a preliminary view to different world religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness. The purpose of the teaching is to strengthen the pupil's cultural identity and provide him or her with readiness for developing ethical thinking and the ability to act ethically. The teaching of religious studies provides the pupil with the opportunity of growing up an equal, judicious person leading a good life.

The goals of the teaching of religious studies in primary school grades 3-5 include the following:

- to become familiar with the basic questions of being a human, provide the pupil with the tools for building his or her own personal philosophy and worldview
- to make the pupil familiar with the essential ethical teachings of different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- to provide the pupil with a suitable background for understanding world religions and their basic features, as well as the non-religious worldview
- to get the pupil ready to understand the cultural impact of religions, philosophies and ideologies in society
- to provide the pupil with the opportunity of understanding the impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies on Western musical traditions, literature and visual arts

2.2 Main contents

3rd grade (P3)

Humaneness, dignity and trust

- stories and teachings from different religions, philosophies and ideologies concerning the dignity of humans and humanity
- relation of man to nature
- interaction of nature and life
- nature in different religions, philosophies and ideologies

Self-knowledge and cultural identity

- me and my life, what I can trust and put my faith in
- taking care of one's own well-being and that of those closest to us
- main characteristics of the Finnish culture
- world cultural heritage from the point of view of the pupil's local vicinity

The world of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the pupils' near vicinity, the culture and related stories

- religious or philosophical stories relating to the European cultural heritage
- stories shared by Christians, Jews and Muslims
- getting acquainted with the holy buildings of different religions, philosophies and ideologies (respect and customs related to visits) and their symbols
- getting acquainted with non-religious worldviews
- key personnel and working modes of religious, philosophical and ideological communities

Growing to be ethical

- foundation for living together; rules, agreements, promises
- ethical practices relating to pupils' families
- ethical instructions and stories originating with different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- children's rights, their contents and implementation
- responsibility, conscientiousness, commitment and perseverance as ethical actions

4th grade (P4)

The human, ethics and culture

- the basic questions of being a human
- ethical reflection - one's own opinion, belief, assumption, knowledge, understanding
- ethical problems and choices encountered by pupils
- wealth and poverty in the world, justice
- ethical teachings originating with different religions, philosophies and ideologies

Foundations of religions, philosophies and ideologies

- the role of writings in philosophies and ideologies
- the significance of the Bible within the European cultural heritage
- the Old Testament as the common foundation of Judaism and Christianity
- the New Testament as the portrayer of the births of Jesus and Christianity
- the Koran and suras
- the creation of Holy Writs, their interpretation and use in religions, philosophies and ideologies
- the human being as the reader and interpreter of Holy Writs

The cultural impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon the society

- cultural significance of religions, especially that of Christianity, to the European and Finnish societies
- European traditions and customs relating to names and celebrations
- impact of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon culture and fine arts

5th grade (P5)

The human, ethics and culture

- people's ethical choices
- pupils' life-related questions, one's own lifestyle, choices and values
- one's own opinion, giving grounds for it
- advancing sustainable development
- ethical teachings originating with different religions and philosophies
- cultural heritage

World religions and ideologies

- freedom of ideology as the foundation of the European way of life
- founders of religions and their lives
- the main world religions, preview of their geographical areas and key features
- preview of the different forms of Christianity and ecumenism in Europe
- the dialogue of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the everyday life of the pupil and his or her life in general
- non-religiousness as a philosophy
- encountering differences and reconciling conflicts

The cultural impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon the society

- impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon culture and social ethics, especially health care, schooling and social services in Finland and Europe
- impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon European culture and art
- religious buildings and graveyards

2.3 Teaching methods

The teaching of religious studies in primary school grades 3-5 deepens the experiential teaching and working methods. The key working methods include various narrative and life-story materials such as stories of lives and actions of people representing different philosophies, or stories involving choices that present themselves for people. Pupils are encouraged to search for information on their own. Introductions, presentations and group work are central to learning in religious studies. The teaching uses current materials such as the Internet and media. The development of ethical thinking is fostered by the use of the principles of, for example, learning through independent research. The teaching utilises visual arts, music and movies. The teaching aims at outlining the content of religious studies through aesthetic experiences and encounters. The key principle is the dialogue that forms between pupils representing different cultural traditions. Field trips are included in the teaching methods.

2.4 Assessment**Assessment at the end of 5th grade**

The pupil knows different philosophies and understands philosophical consideration to be an essential part of the human being. The pupil understands the basic principles relating to different world religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness and is aware of the cultural impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies upon society.

The pupil is able to view religion, philosophies and ideologies as phenomena**The pupil:**

- understands the character, significance and function of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the lives of individuals and society
- recognises symbols, buildings and practices relating to religions, philosophies and ideologies and knows the key writings and tales
- sees religious and ideological diversity as well as non-religiousness in society
- understands tentatively the key characteristics of different world religions and is aware of similar and dissimilar characteristics of religions
- understands the significance of dialogue in the interaction of people who think and act differently.

The pupil is able to use religious, philosophical and ideological information**The pupil:**

- is able to study philosophical questions
- structures his or her philosophy and world-view, in a manner expected of the age group
- understands religious and philosophical ways and non-religiousness as a means for conceptualising the human being and his purpose in the world.

The pupil is able to function in a way that is ethically responsible

The pupil:

- is able to identify issues behind ethical and philosophical considerations
- is capable of presenting ethical questions in his or her own life
- understands the responsibility and potential of an individual to exercise influence upon his or her own life and in that of the community
- knows the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and is capable of considering how it is being implemented in society.

3 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADES 1-3

The teaching of religious studies provides the pupil with readiness for applying his or her own philosophy and ethical thinking. The pupil acquires the basic readiness required for understanding the European religious traditions and the traditional European views. In religious studies, the pupils become familiar with the ethical thinking of mankind, especially from the points of view adopted by religions, philosophies and ideologies. The teaching nurtures the development of pupils' philosophies and ethical thinking as well as interaction between pupils representing different views and cultural traditions.

3.1 Goals

The goals of the teaching in the secondary school grades 1-3 include the following:

- to support the pupil's own ethical and philosophical thinking
- to fortify the pupil's factual base relating to religions, philosophies and ideologies
- to provide the pupil with a broad understanding for making his or her own judgments based on his or her own views
- to deepen the pupil's awareness of the European tradition of beliefs and views, and provide information on the Finnish traditions
- to ensure the pupil is prepared for living, making contributions and acting as an involved citizen
- to familiarise the pupil with the ethical activities and history of the humankind and the concept of human rights, and to provide the pupil with the tools for understanding the role of religions, philosophies and ideologies as the shapers of the ethical action and thinking of the humanity.

3.2 Main contents

1st grade (S1)

Ideological and ethical thinking

- relation of religion and knowledge
- meaning and duration of life, various interpretations of the meaning of life
- ethical development of a young person
- ethical questions relating to the life of a human being

The European tradition of beliefs and views

- the European tradition of beliefs and views, the major churches and other Christian communities, other religions, new religious and philosophical movements, non-religiousness
- overall view of the religious circumstances in Finland
- philosophies and ideologies as shapers of village communities, city spaces and architecture
- views into community life
- dialogue between cultures

Social ethics

- taking care of common affairs, politics
- justice and its ethical starting points
- authority and power, the ethics of using power

2nd grade (S2)

Ideological and ethical thinking

- building the pupil's own philosophy
- ethical questions relating to the life of a human being, stands taken towards these by different religions and philosophies

Social ethics

- the relation of society and citizens, rights and responsibilities
- making a contribution to the society
- views of religions, philosophies and ideologies concerning the society, e.g. the Lutheran idea of regiments, the Catholic idea of the Curia, the Muslim theocracy, social ethics and politics, neoliberalism
- communications and media

The European tradition of beliefs and views

- European folk beliefs, religions of aboriginal peoples
- history of European religions, philosophies and ideologies
- religious and ideological circumstances in the current European society, e.g. secularisation, pluralism, matters moving into the private sphere, multi-religious society and society religions
- freedom of religion and ideology in Europe, its history and present state
- religion in arts

3rd grade (S3)

Pupil's ideological and ethical thinking

- ethical questions relating to the life of a human being, stands taken towards these by different religions, philosophies and ideologies
- multiculturalism as an ethical subject
- one's own ethical choices and a society of many religions and cultures

The ethical activities of humanity

- overall view of the history of the ethical activities and thinking of humanity
- ethical questions of war and peace
- the freedom of the individual as a western right, UN human rights, the ethics of human rights, global ethics and environmental ethics
- freedom of opinion, freedom of speech and freedom of assembly
- justice as an ideal, the rich and the poor of the world
- ethical questions relating to the advancement of science
- stands taken by different religions, philosophies and ideologies towards questions on society, justice and peace
- individuals, international and social institutions and citizens' organisations as awakers of ethical awareness

3.3 Teaching methods

The focus in the teaching is on cooperative, interactive and stimulating approaches. The study of ethical questions preferably starts with the current questions the young have about their lives and their conceptualisation of them. The teaching utilises materials relating to the lives of the young. The teaching familiarises the pupils with authoritative sources from various religions, research done and current issues presented by the media. The focus in the teaching is on interactive learning and working methods that interconnect the contents of religious studies with the pupils' experiences and their empirical world. Various forms of art are used in the teaching. In addition, there are field trips to different cultural heritage sites and citizens' organisations. The work is based on pupils' own involvement and dialogue. The teaching also aims at integration with other humanistic and social subjects at school.

3.4 Assessment

Assessment at the end of 3rd grade

The pupil is capable of reflecting on philosophical and non-religious thinking of different kinds and is aware of the ethical principles behind the thinking. The pupil understands European religious, philosophical and ideological traditions and the potential of humankind for building a high-quality world in the ethical sense.

The pupil is capable of research into religions, philosophies and ideologies

The pupil:

- understands the character, significance and function of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the lives of individuals and society
- recognises the effects of religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness in the European and Finnish cultures and his or her own vicinity
- is able to conceive the significance of religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness as shapers of different ways of life.

The pupil is able to use religious, philosophical and ideological information

The pupil:

- is capable of reflecting on life-related questions regarding world-views
- structures his or her philosophy and world-view, in a manner expected of the age group
- understands the role of religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness in the construction of the future of mankind
- is capable of dialogue with people who believe and think differently.

The pupil is able to function in a way that is ethically responsible

The pupil:

- is able to reflect on issues at the back of ethical and philosophical considerations
- is capable of presenting ethical questions in his or her own life and in that of his or her community
- understands the responsibility and potential of an individual to exercise influence in his or her own life and in that of the community
- understands the significance of contracts and principles for guiding the activities of different people and society and can apply them to his or her own actions
- is capable of presenting well-grounded opinions on ethical and philosophical questions and of finding means for structuring the future.

4 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL GRADES 4-5

The focus of religious studies in the secondary school grades 4-5 is on deepening the previous knowledge and bringing up new points of view. The teaching explores philosophical thinking and building a good life. In teaching religious studies, these grades are used for studying religion from a research point of view and for providing pupils with information and opportunities for studying religion and philosophies from the points of view of religious science and cultural anthropology. Pupils in these grades study the manifestations of religions, philosophies and ideologies in the world and especially in Europe. On these grades future and futures studies are reflected on. The teaching stresses the building of the pupils' individual philosophies.

4.1 Goals

The goals of the teaching in the secondary school grades 3-4 include the following:

- to understand the main characteristics of the major world religions, philosophies and ideologies and master the cultural literacy relating to differing views, so that the pupil understands the significance of religion in the lives of individuals, in society and in culture
- to reflect on and analyse various questions relating to religions, philosophies and ideologies and provide the pupil with readiness for fruitful interaction with people who have different cultural backgrounds
- to provide the pupil with the tools for structuring, evaluating and valuing his or her own ideology and cultural identity
- to help the pupil to function in a society and world composed of different cultures, beliefs and views
- to understand the meaning of personal responsibility and be aware of the values and ideologies behind various ethical solutions
- to help the pupil to become aware of his or her opportunities of contributing to the world of the future, to society and nature, and to learn to understand the mental and material cultural heritage of his or her own environment

4.2 Main contents

4th grade (S4)

Philosophical thinking and building a good life

- main schools and theories of ethics
- contents and parts of a philosophy
- different philosophies and lifestyles
- significance of philosophical thinking to the management of one's life
- ethical phrasing of questions and skills of ethical thinking
- values and ethics related to various choices in a human's life
- pupils' own lifestyles, choices and values

Research into religions, philosophies and ideologies

- religions and views as objects of knowledge and subjects of study: nature of knowledge related to religions, philosophies and ideologies, research methods
- definitions and key questions of religion, philosophy and ideology
- religions, philosophies and ideologies as parts of culture and its way of defining experience (e.g. religious-anthropological point of view, concept of sacredness, symbols and rites)
- religions, philosophies and ideologies in the empirical world of the individual
- religions, philosophies and ideologies in communities
- religious statistics and religious geography of Europe and the rest of the world

Building the future

- studying the future, building visions and scenarios of the future
- the advancement of science: threat or opportunity for the future?
- the future of humanity, nature and society

5th grade (S5)**Philosophical thinking and building a good life**

- basic questions of the good life, individual ways of building a good life
- significance of philosophical thinking to the management of one's life
- community feeling, participation, individuality and alienation
- experiences of meaning and meaninglessness
- views of different religions, philosophies and ideologies concerning the meaning of life and the human being
- one's own cultural identity

Religions, philosophies and ideologies in Europe and in the rest of the world

- the general nature, main characteristics, main schools and teachings of the Asian cultures (Hinduism, Buddhism, religions of China and Japan) and the Middle-Eastern cultures (Judaism, Islam).
- religions, philosophies and ideologies in different continents (Africa, Asia, Latin America, North America)
- religions in Europe, their impact upon society
- the history of the varied religions, philosophies and non-religiousness in Europe
- fundamentalism and secularisation as social phenomena in Europe
- non-religiousness and atheism as European phenomena and tradition
- the rise and growth of new religions and new spiritualism
- dialogue between religions and their interaction at the level of individuals and societies in Europe
- impacts of religions, philosophies and ideologies on culture, especially on arts and architecture, in Europe

Building future

- the responsibility of a human being for transmitting the intellectual and material world heritage to the next generations
- opportunities of humanity for building a future that promotes justice, peace and mutual respect
- visions of individuals and various organisations of how to build a better and more just world
- dialogue between religions, philosophies and ideologies as the way to future
- the future of the young person himself of herself, that of his or her near vicinity and society
- the opportunities of a young person to influence the building of future at the individual and communal levels

4.3 Teaching methods

The teaching stresses different project-centred, stimulating, interactive learning and working methods. The pupils are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the defined issues by drafting introductions to the topics and presentations on them, as well as by doing projects both individually and in teams. Pupils can write papers for their diploma work on religious studies. The teaching utilises the authoritative sources of the different religions themselves, such as artefacts and authentic materials (videos, music) as well as any current materials available in the media. In this way, religious studies improve the pupil's media literacy. Pupils can keep a learning diary of their religious studies or compile a portfolio of them.

The teaching can be integrated into the teaching of different humanistic and social subjects. There are field trips included in the teaching. The teaching utilises the visual aspects, the analysis and interpretation of the arts through current works of art and architecture and pictures of news events, and the aural aspects, the analysis and interpretation of music. The main principles of the teaching are that it is to inspire pupils, to

encourage them towards genuine interaction with people representing different cultural traditions and help them to reflect on their own ways of life, religiousness, non-religiousness or worldviews.

4.4 Assessment

Assessment at the end of 5th grade

The pupil is capable of reflecting on various world views and is aware of the underlying ethical principles. The pupil understands the European religious traditions and the traditional European views and their multitudes. The pupil is capable of perusing religious, philosophical and ideological questions from a research point of view. The pupil understands one's responsibility in building the future and is aware of some means to construct a positive one.

The pupil is capable of research into religions, philosophies and ideologies

The pupil:

- understands the character, significance and function of world religions and especially that of European religions, philosophies and ideologies in respect to individuals and society
- is capable of presenting questions according to the principles of religious science when studying religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness
- understands the role of religions, philosophies and ideologies as the builders of the future and its various life-forms
- understands the significance of the dialogue between religions and cultures in the development of society.

The pupil is able to use religious, philosophical and ideological information

The pupil:

- is capable of reflecting on questions relating to religions, philosophies and ideologies
- recognises religious, philosophical and ideological phenomena and is capable of studying them from the point of view of what he or she has learned
- understands the role of religions, philosophies, ideologies and non-religiousness in the life of an individual and in the lives of communities
- is capable of assessing and using his or her information to present his or her views and giving well-structured grounds for them

The pupil is able to function in a way that is ethically responsible

The pupil

- is able to reflect on issues behind ethical and philosophical considerations
- is capable of presenting ethical questions in his or her own life and in that of his or her community
- understands the responsibility and potential of an individual to exercise influence upon the building of the future society.