



Chats

Chat 4
Tuesday, 23 April 2002 - English
Religion at your school



[Download this script .rtf file 565 Kb](#)

Participating Schools:

Borgsmoskolan, Norrköping Sweden
Cebtro Risorse Territoriale, Italy
Ciril Kosmac Primary School, Piran, Slovenia
Kincsesház, Hungary
Klasicna Gimnazija, Zagreb, Croatia
Krylbo skola, Sweden
Pod Goro Primary School, Slovenia
Royal Masonic School, UK
Scoala Aurel Vlaicu, Constanta, Romania
Stjerneskolan, Torsby, Sweden

All the religions are fascinating to study. Learning about them is part of the joy of discovering what it means to be human.

[EUN-Petru] What does religion mean for you?

[Klasicari] The lessons are mostly boring because teenagers are not really interested in learning about religion. Priests make political connections, they take money that should be given to those more in need.

[Viorela] They seem more interesting when a priest teaches them.

[Kikilee] I think they focus too much on the religion that our country represents.

[Tanga_Babes] Well it depends in what way you are reading and learning it, of course it is boring if you have to listen to the teacher all the time, maybe it is more fun to learn it when you make a variation in the lessons.

[Cinglin] I think it is fun and that it actually is interesting learning about other religions.

[Krylbo Skola, Sweden] In our school we have had a lot of refugees from Somalia, Bosnia, Serbia, Iran, Iraq, Chile and so on. In Sweden we have free lunch for the pupils. It means that days when it is for example ham or other meat from pigs the Muslims often pick up some other meat from the school kitchen. It is something that we have to explain to the others - and so we can go on and at the same time talk about other differences. Often it works out very good.

[Marjeta-Slovenia] There are many religious dealing with supernatural beings or heroes that serves as a fundamental type in the world' view of a people, as by explaining aspects of the natural world. Man has always imagined another world, even if he feels that the great 'beyond' is more a state than a place. What is supernatural or myth for one person is reality for another.

[Viorela] Do you think students should be graded in religion classes?

[Bengt] What do all French believe in today, Brigitte?

[Radu] Of course a lot of people who are humanists say that, if ethics is based upon either fear of God or love of God and his punishment and reward, then one is not really ethical, that ethics must grow out of human experience.

[EUN-Brigitte] The French are mainly catholic, some regions are protestant. I was brought up as a catholic

[Cinglin] Viorela, haven't you got grades in religion?

[Radu] I feel that I couldn't bring myself to condemn anyone to eternal punishment. I am opposed to punishment.

[Klasicari] Everything we do should be based on how we want to be treated, not on whether God will punish us or not.

[Radu] Maybe some people even get a great deal of comfort out of knowing that all the people they don't like are going to go straight to hell. These are all comforts. Personally, they don't comfort me. I'm not interested in having anyone suffer eternally in hell, because I don't believe that any crime is so nearly infinite in magnitude as to deserve infinite punishment.

[Marjeta-Slovenia] I stress and support this idea by great ancient Roman and Greek Gods, people and civilisation that constitute a fundamental basis for humanity. How many centuries ago Cicero said: 'It is through religion that we have conquered the world'?

[EUN-Petru] What is the best age to start learning about religion?

[Krylbo Skola, Sweden] I think the best age to start learning about religion is very low? The 5 and 6 years are filled up with thinking. Learn them when they or some of their friends ask or show that they want answers. The start of teaching religion is higher but they ought to know at least the main things about different religions and how much they have in common.

[Swedish_pupil] In a young age, so we can learn respect that others are different.

[Anca] When you are mature enough to understand what spirituality means.

[Tanga_babes] My mother thought me a lot about my religion when I was a little child, but when I grow up she told me that I could choose of that I wanted to believe.

[Sophia] When you're little it's good to have some kind of introduction to all the religions, but when you're a bit older you get a greater understanding towards what religion is really about.

[Viorela] I believe that religion should be thought in the family from a very early age

[Kikilee] I think that's how it should be, religion should not be forced upon you.

[Klasicari] I think that pupils in primary school are too young for learning about religions because they just don't understand it.

[Cinglin] Don't you learn about other religions than your own? Just wondering..

[Anca] Unfortunately, no

[Swedish_pupil] When you are very young the stories can be more like fairy tales and exciting.

[Sophia] What's your religion then?

[Tanga_babes] I think that when you are little you should learn about your religion, but not all together. It can be a big confusion then, I mean if my brother was going to learn about Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam, he would just be confused over what our religion in our family is.

[Klasicari] In our country you can choose between Religion, which is primarily Christianity, you can't choose other religions in school, and Ethics.

[Kikilee] Yes, we learn about the other world religions.

[Viorela] In Romania there are many minorities and each student chooses a religion, which suits him or her, according with the religion of his/her family.

[Bengt] I don't think age is important. It depends on the stuff and how it's taught.

[Cinglin] Anca, what is your religion then?

[Anca] I am orthodox. I believe that the history of religions should be thought instead.

[Kikilee] How do you mean, Anca?

[Tanga_babes] What history are you talking about?

[Anca] It means studying about Hinduism, Buddhism, etc....

[Tanga_babes] I think that with time, you can learn about other religions but not when you are just a little child, but there are other ways to learn about religion too, like 'The Prince of Egypt, then you get to learn Christian religion.

[Cinglin] Do you believe in God?

[Krylbo Skola, Sweden] We are very tolerant, but even if we are open, there are in our school some difficulties. One is when you celebrate a birthday in the class, or Christmas, or Eastern and if there are children from a Jehovah's Witness family, what are you supposed to do? Their parents don't allow their children to take part.

[Marjeta-Slovenia] The Romans had a very elevated idea of what divinity was and would not dedicate a cult to a God until he had shown himself to them. The Greek and Roman Gods represented, expressed and gave form to that which for these people constituted the sacred, essential and tangible. I want to stress the importance of myths, because they are the source of many diverse faiths, they bear witness to history and show links between generations and regions of the world.

[Radu] Do you take the Bible primarily as a human document or do you think it was divinely inspired?

[EUN-Petru] Have you heard about 'History of Religions' written by Mircea Eliade?

[Anca] Yes!

[Viorela] Of course

[klasicari] Yes

[Bengt] No, I haven't!

[kikilee] Tell me more

[Anca] You all must read this book Bengt!

[Cinglin] What so good about the book?

[Klasicari] It's extremely interesting and highly informative. It gives you a deep insight into the history of spirituality.

[Viorela] It's about more religions of the world and about the way they appeared.

[Bengt] History of religion is what we study in Sweden

[EUN-Petru] This is a referential book about all religions of the world and it has been written by Mircea Eliade, a Romanian who worked as teacher in University of Chicago. The book was originally published in English and then in French. Now it is available in many, many languages. Anca, could you check please which the original title in English?

[Kikilee] How? How does the book differ from other books that deal with the backgrounds (history) of religions?

[Klasicari] Because other books could be too subjective.

[Kikilee] Our history books I mean?

[Klasicari] Because it gives view on every religion.

[Anca] 'The History of Religions'

[Sophia] Doesn't other history books give that kind of aspects?

[Viorela] It is based on historical documents.

[Radu] In my opinion, the biblical account of the creation of the universe and of the earth and humanity is wrong in almost every aspect.

[Radu] You don't think there is sufficient evidence that there was a cosmic egg?

[Marjeta-Slovenia] Please teach and discuss the Greek and Roman Gods, who are not only the characters of the great universal religions, but they are, in every sense, 'marvellous'. They have never died. They only changed their form. A person can conquer the world only with his mind. There's the network between man's mind and the world of Gods. If one enters it, he will receive all the assistance to make new paths and develop this planet.

[Klasicari] If you write a book it depends on you what will you put in it.

[Radu] That shattered and that God created this cosmic egg?

[Kikilee] What was the cosmic EGG?

[Viorela] The cosmic egg is the one that contained Pantageali who was an androgin, which means that it was a mixture between ying and yang.

[EUN-Petru] In Sweden, is religion taught in school together with history, geography and civics?

[Radu] I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time. Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent.

[EUN-Petru] Thank you for your participation. Have a good day!

[Krylbo Skola, Sweden] Bästa hälsningar från Sverige!