

Youth Pastoral Document No. **6**

RESOURCE MATERIAL AND GUIDELINES FOR AN EDUCATIONAL AND PASTORAL PLAN IN **SALESIAN SCHOOLS**

DEPARTMENT FOR YOUTH PASTORAL WORK-ROME

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SALESIAN SCHOOLS**

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FOREWORD

This Aid

- focuses on our schools, viz. on those schools whose management,
- administration and inspiration lie in the hands of Salesians;

It recognizes that we run school:

- of different kinds: elementary, middle, high, technical, trade, etc.
- in a variety of juridical and socio-cultural situations.
- and in different contexts from the stand-point of evangelization: Catholic environments, post-Christian societies and mission territories.

It is meant to:

- assist us in the elaboration of the Salesian Educational and Pastoral Plan of our schools;
- help us to maintain our originality in all our efforts of rethinking and planning;
- offer us that common nucleus of values, attitudes and criteria which ought to be the hall-mark of all our schools. As for the inevitable differences that exist from school to school, these are matters to be considered locally.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS

We Salesians and our Schools

- We consider EDUCATION to be one of the keys to the development and liberation of man, both as an individual and as a community. For the human person, education is a very important need, because it determines the quality of his life. And as for society, especially today, education constitutes the mainspring of his transformation.
- Education extends beyond the school. It cannot be reduced to a matter of 'attending classes', nor can it be confined to the early period of one's life.

On the contrary, making use of a variety of means, opportunities and environments, education takes place as an ongoing process of maturation throughout the course of one's existence.

Nonetheless, the SCHOOL remains a crucial element in the formation of one's personality and one's subsequent development, because it offers a fundamental and systematic response in an experiential way to the needs of a growing person. The School is, in fact, "a centre in which a specific concept of the world of man and of history, is developed and conveyed" (The Catholic School= CS, 8).

- In order to carry out her mission, the CHURCH deems it proper and useful to set up, administer and animate a particular type of school that makes for GOOD EDUCATION and EFFECTIVE EVANGELIZATION. It is from the fusion of these two elements that there arises within the pluralism existing in society, the alternative of the Catholic School, well known for its basic outlook and its overall plan.
- We SALESIANS enter to form part of this educational and evangelizing work that takes place through the Catholic School. To it we bring that pedagogical heritage which has been handed down by Don Bosco and enriched by subsequent tradition (cf. GG21, 131).

1. THE FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF A SALESIAN SCHOOL

" Salesian schools... must provide an education which promotes the development of the young person in the socio-cultural milieu in which he lives" (Const. 1972; Reg. 8; GC21, 422)

1.1. AIMS

A Salesian school wishes to offer a young person not only a professional qualification, but also an integral human education, the possibility of building up his life in a mature Christian way and an opportunity to collaborate in bringing about a more just and human society.

It therefore, strives to be three things at one and the same time:

- a GOOD SCHOOL, that is to say, an efficient centre of education;
- a CATHOLIC SCHOOL, viz. a school that draws its inspiration from the faith;
- a SALESIAN SCHOOL, that is, a school imbued with a special spirit and pedagogy.

1.1.1. As a GOOD SCHOOL, a Salesian school aims at the integral formation of a person, by bringing him to an encounter with his cultural, humanistic and technical heritage. In this encounter the young person must assimilate, critically evaluate, develop and inject the perennial values of culture within his actual situation (cf. CS 26 & 36; GS 53).

To this end, the Salesian school:

- is more concerned with education than with the mere imparting of information;
- is ever attentive to the changes taking place in culture;
- reflects with a pedagogical mind on how to transmit culture and how to avoid the risk of dependence that such transmission entails;
- ensures "professional seriousness" by qualifying and updating its personnel (cf. CS 79);
- tries to set aside cultural formation and teaching methods that are based on mere repetition;
- seeks to lead each youngster to plan his own life;

1.1.2. As a CATHOLIC SCHOOL, the Salesian school functions in the light of a Christian concept of life centred on Jesus Christ (cf. CS 33). The principles of the Gospel become its inner driving force; they inspire its method of education and define its goals (cf. CS 34).

To this end, the Salesian school:

- maintains a clear awareness of its own identity, both in its internal functioning and as an institution, vis-a-vis other educational plans and establishments (cf. CS 66);
- rethinks the "Gospel message" as it faces the language and the questions of today's culture;
- endeavours to build itself up into a community of faith, "whose aim is the transmission of values for living" (CS 53);
- keeps in communion with the Church and follows her guidelines in a creative manner.

1.1.3. As a SALESIAN SCHOOL, it attains its goals through the style, spirit and educational method of Don Bosco (cf. GC21, 131).

To this end, the Salesian school:

shows itself to be as a family which educates, and where the young, on whom the school is focused, feel at home;

attaches great importance to personal relationships in the task of education (cf. GC 21, 132);

takes in the whole life of the youngster, offering him even leisure-time activities and constructive ways to encounter others and collaborate with them;

educates by evangelizing and evangelizes by educating, that is to say, links together inseparably human development and the Christian ideal of holiness (cf. GC21, 131; AGC, 290, 4.2 & 4.3).

1.2 THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE SCHOOL

The Salesian school has its contribution to make to the building up of a more just and human society. This it does not only by forming individual persons but also by sharing in the life of its neighbourhood and by facing up to the educational and cultural problems to be found in society.

The school therefore, tries to become:

- a centre of animation and service for the betterment of the neighbourhood in what concerns education and culture (cf. GC21, 129 & 131; SGC, 68, 72, 182, 384);
- a place for getting the locality involved in pursuing those objectives and activities that are in keeping with its aims

Accordingly, the Salesian school:

- prefers programmes, curricula and courses that respond to the needs of the youth of the area;
- establishes contacts with the neighbourhood by making its personnel and facilities available, providing means for adult education, and conducting community activities that are open to all;
- adopts a "style" of approach to and solidarity with the poor and with those movements that strive to promote a more human life (cf. SGC, 70).

1.3 THE PLACE OF THE SCHOOL: AMONG THE COMMON PEOPLE

Our schools also have a contribution to make towards resolving some of the problems of education obtaining in different countries; we bring culture within the reach of more and more people, and at the same time we seek to improve its quality.

Within the framework of a "democratization" of education and to afford a greater equality of opportunity, our schools:

- are situated in the more populated areas;
- are open to all classes of society (cf. GC21, 131);
- accord a preference to localities and to youth that are in need, in the broadest sense of the word (cf. SGC, 252- 255, 353, 383, GC21, 133; CS 47, 53, 85);
- eschew every kind of discrimination, and require only an openness to the values offered by our Educational Plan;
- prefer the advancement of all rather than catering to only the best; in consequence of this policy we direct the boys to different kinds of schools, we follow methods and programmes suited to their capacity and at their pace and we take pains to follow up with love those who are at the bottom of the class;
- run the finances in such a way, as to give equal opportunities to all;
- and to this end, our schools
 - avail themselves, wherever possible, of the grants allotted by the State or by funding agencies;
 - ask for financial subsidies from public and private bodies, without however compromising their policies and their freedom;

- encourage the establishment of "student burses" and other initiatives to provide financial aid to those who are not so well off;
- intervene in policy-making to uphold the equality of rights and duties of every school.

2. THE EDUCATIVE COMMUNITY IN THE SALESIAN SCHOOL

The preventive system" ... brings together in a single dynamic experience both educators and pupils... (GC 21, 96)

2.1. GUIDELINES

To implement the educational Plan in a Catholic school there is need of a unity or purpose and conviction of all its members (cf. CS 59). The school therefore directs its efforts towards forming an educative and pastoral community which is at one and the same time a responsible subject and an environment of education.

The Salesians school builds up the SCHOOL COMMUNITY as a

Family in which educators have an animating role, the parents have their own part to play and the young are the focus of attention (cf. GC21, 131; AGC, 290, 5, 1).

For this reason, the school carefully chooses collaborators from among "those who wish to express Christian values in education" (cf. CS 53; GC21, 69,72,73,78).

Beginning with this core group, the educative community of the school embraces:

all those who work sincerely for the formation and development of the young (cf. "Guidelines for a Salesian Educational and Pastoral Plan - Aid 2, 4.3.3);

the past-pupils who still feel a sense of solidarity with the school;

the young and the adults of the locality to whom it offers its service of education.

2.2 THE SITUATION

The goals and lines of action that are given here presupposes a knowledge of the principles of an educative community, and constitute a response to the present-day situation which is marked by the following characteristics:

- An ideological and religious pluralism is to be found even in our own educative communities when, for instance, we are unable to choose the teachers we want, or the jobs in our school are of a permanent nature, or the members of the community come from different religious persuasions.

- A decentralization in the making of decisions affecting the school and in the effective participation of all in the decision-making process can apparently thrust the Christian and Salesian identity of the school in hands that are unable to safeguard it; hence the need for new forms and methods of management.
- To have an educator constantly present among youngsters - this is our Salesian characteristic - has become very difficult today because of
 - the reduced number of Salesians;
 - the increased complexity of administration;
 - the presence of lay teachers confined to class hours only and with no possibility of other rapport with the pupils;
 - the scant knowledge and limited experience of the educational system of Don Bosco;
 - the commitments of the youngsters to other activities elsewhere.
- The involvement of the school in the parish and in the neighbourhood has emerged as a topic and a need in recent times. Notwithstanding the efforts made to involve themselves suitably in the human and Christian community, several of our schools in many places today, run the risk of remaining isolated, that is, of finding their work restricted to the school compound.

2.3 GOALS

To forge a basic unity of direction in the school;

To foster the participation of everyone in building up the community and in defining and attaining goals;

To create a family atmosphere Through the friendly presence of the educators among the pupils;

To bring about an active involvement of the educative community in the wider ambit of the local Church and of society

2.4 LINES OF ACTION

2.4.1 In order to achieve the first of these goals, namely, to forge a basic unity of direction in the school, we intend to implement the following lines of action:

A. Consider the educative community as a means to help its members grow and not to obtain total agreement

Hence,

- create a "common vision "among the members of the educative community, beginning from a consensus on basic human values and leading up to explicitly Christian values and goals;
- strengthen the sense of belonging and co- responsibility in the formulation and execution of the educative Plan;
- see to the on-going formation of the members of the educative community.
 - by helping them grow in their Christian outlook;
 - by seeing to their professional updating along both general and specific lines;
 - by reviewing in common all that is done in the school and the results thereof;
 - by leading them more deeply into our own system of education

B. Take a new look at the figure of the layman who works together with us in Christian education (GC21, 78)

When it comes to choosing collaborators, we prefer, as far as possible, who have little or no difficulty in sharing in our apostolic mission and in the first place Salesian Co-operators and those Past- Pupils "who have chosen to be evangelizers" (GC, 21 69).

We ensure that their dealings with us are based upon a respect for and openness to the values underlying our educational Plan.

We take pains to see that the planning in each sector of activity goes beyond the mere assigning of roles to different persons and seeks to objectively impart values and attitudes deriving from a religious and Christian view of life.

We try to get our collaborators to give of their best on the job assigned to them; moreover, we seek their inner concurrence with the specific aims of the school, considering with the level of consensus they have reached.

- C. Give a more “central role” to the community of faith within the educative community.

In a pluralistic society, the educative community does not always coincide with the community of faith. The latter comprises those who have made a choice for Jesus Christ and live it.

So, within the educative community, those who have chosen Jesus Christ

- explicitly present the Gospel and their experience of Jesus Christ;
- communicate to those who ask them or are searching with them the vision and the motivation arising from their faith;
- live their faith as Christian believers and carry out a work of religious animation in the wider community.

2.4.2. In order to achieve the second goal, viz. to foster the participation of everyone in the building up the community, we intend to implement the following lines of action.

- A. Impart Information.

Adequate information is indispensable to obtain participation in decision-making and to guarantee the exercise of co-responsibility.

We intend to maintain a regular flow of information between the management and the educative community and within each of the different sectors.

Before a decision is made, we present the data and the reasons for all those who share co-responsibility for the decision; in this way, each one can make his contribution and the decision that emerges is seen as reasonable and acceptable.

- B. Spell out the specific duties of each one and the space for decision making allotted to the various components of the educative community.

Because of the Christian and Salesian orientation of the school and because of the professional nature of educational work, there are different areas and levels of participation in decision-making:

- The educative community in the complementarity of its members, functions and structures, has as its common task the elaboration and periodical revision of the educative and pastoral plan and the drawing up of the annual programme.
- The Salesian religious community, insofar as it represents the Salesian Congregation:
 - wields ultimate responsibility for the management and the spirit of the school;
 - animates and coordinates those who share in the decision-making;
 - ensures that, as a court of last appeal, every choice that is made is in harmony with the basic principles of the Salesian school.

The Salesian religious community therefore:

- appropriating to itself the key-roles in animation and decision-making,
- chooses the personnel of the school,
- reserves to itself the final approval of the educative and pastoral plan which, according to the directives of the management, can also be deferred to the provincial level.
- The teachers /educators, through various bodies or structures, take part in drawing up and carrying out, as well as in evaluating and revising the educational Plan of the school.
- The parent's carry out their role, particularly by:
 - taking part when the overall educational thrust of the school is being determined and its effectiveness evaluated;
 - supporting, assisting and enriching with their experience the efforts of the educators;
 - helping out in the administration of the school and offering financial support and equipment;
 - ensuring for the school a favourable atmosphere and support in society.
- The young:
 - collaborate in a conscious and active way and according to their level of development, in the implementation of the educational plan and in its day to day programming;

- take up in a creative manner the initiatives and suggestions offered by them;
 - play their part in planning courses, groups and various activities and in evaluating them
- The past pupils, through their association provide for the continuation of their education after they have passed out of school (ongoing formation) and contribute towards projecting a good image of the school in society.
- The "social forces" in the environment can create conditions favourable for the existence of the school and the attainment of its objectives.

C. Assign responsibility (1)

The ultimate responsibility in each area or at each level of decision-making falls on the roles and functions of persons established in a certain hierarchy.

- The educational plan should therefore clarify the functions of:
- The Rector
- The Principal/headmaster
- The Coordinators for Youth Pastoral
- The animators of groups and class teachers
- Other animating roles in the educative community.

D. Set up the various participating bodies

Participating bodies are vehicles of expression for kindred experiences and complementary viewpoints; they make for genuine sharing in discussion; and they do away with having to consult persons one by one.

In our schools we have managing, administrative and consulting bodies, such as the following:

- Governing Bodies which comprise those ultimately responsible for the different sectors (Rector, Principal/Headmaster, Coordinator of Youth Pastoral, Administrator, Secretary...);

(1) the roles of persons and bodies vary from country to country; hence a lot of flexibility could be shown here by modifying existing roles or even creating new ones

- The School Council which comprises representatives of the teachers, parents, pupils and past-pupils;
- The Pastoral Team which looks after and coordinates whatever pertains to education to the faith;
- Scholastic Departments which see to a particular area, in which they coordinate various efforts and initiatives, and engage in detailed planning and execution;
- Councils in various sectors, such as the Administrative Council, the Teachers' Council, the Students' Council;
- Associations, such as the Parents' Association and the Past-pupils' Association

2.4.3. In order to achieve the third goal, viz., to create a family atmosphere through the friendly presence of the educators among the pupils, we intend to implement the following lines of action.

Promote as much as possible, meetings between adults and the young; such meetings should go beyond merely official and disciplinary matters and take place with a constructive frame of mind on both sides.

- A. Encourage teachers and educators to develop familiarity and confidence in their relationship with the young (cf. Aid 2, 3.2.2)
- B. Every meeting between educator and pupil should seek, in the spirit of evangelical charity, to build up a communion of persons.
- C. Resolve in a positive way by means of dialogue those "conflict situations" that inevitably arise from a youngster's unstable psychology, the daily rhythm of the school and the presence of a large number of pupils within a complex institution.
- D. Encourage adults to take part in the activities of the youngsters, whether they be organized by the youngsters themselves or by the educative community. For example, games and sports; cultural, formative and apostolic initiatives; extra-curricular activities.

2.4.4. In order to achieve the fourth goal, viz, to bring about the active insertion of the educative community in the wider ambit of the local Church and of society, we intend to:

- A. intervene in civil society according to the spirit of the Gospel.

The educative community, as a cultural body and a public service, rightfully occupies a place in civil society and makes its voice heard on educational matters, on the strength of its plan and professional competence.

The educative community, therefore, carries out an animation according to the spirit of the Gospel, in larger bodies for the purpose of:

- defending common rights,
- representing an institution,
- promoting the interest of the teachers
- seeking financial benefits
- engaging in discussion on matters of culture

In this way educative community does bring a Christian leaven to the field of culture and thus shares in the mission of the church

B. Join hands with the local Church in its pastoral action.

The Catholic School is an expression of the local and national Catholic community's ability to educate (CS 77).

From this there arises the need:

- to situate the educational Plan of the school within the pastoral plan of the diocese or region;
- to coordinate our work with that of other Christian bodies which also work for the education of the young (Religious Congregations, Christian Teachers' Guilds, etc.);
- to make our own the educational criteria laid down by the local Church or the Bishops' Conference;
- to belong to bodies that are concerned with animating the school apostolate;
- to give community expression to our belonging to the Church by means of gestures appropriate for the level of faith of the educative community and consonant with the pastoral orientations of the local Church.

C. Make a specific contribution to the ecclesial community (CS 72; GC21, 132).

The qualified contribution of those who are involved in education certainly constitutes an enrichment to the ecclesial community.

The educative community, through some of its members:

- Participates in the Pastoral Council where action plans are studied and drawn up by the community or the parish or of the zone;
- collaborators in those sectors where its professional expertise is requested: ongoing formation, means of social communication, orientation programmes for youth etc.

NB. The bases and criteria for the establishment and functioning of the educative community have already been given in the Aid from the department for Youth Pastoral, entitled: "Guidelines for a Salesian Educational and Pastoral Plan"- Aid 3: October 1978.

3. THE DIMENSION OF "EDUCATION AND CULTURE" IN THE SALESIAN SCHOOL.

"Our schools should be distinguished for their high cultural values and recognised technical and teaching capacity"(cf. Const. 1972, Reg. 9; GC21, 423).

3.1. GUIDELINES

Our schools are conceived and organized as places of HUMANIZATION, that is, the development of the person. We strive to build up man from within, freeing him from those conditionings that could prevent him from fully living out his vocation and enabling him to expand his creative abilities.

The development of man as a PERSON necessarily takes place through CULTURE, which is understood as the objective heritage or knowledge, goods and values and as a personal process of assimilating, re-elaborating and enriching that heritage.

The school mediates culture by bringing the aspirations and actual situation of today's youngsters face to face with mankind's experience expressed in its cultural heritage.

The Salesian School is governed by a set of VALVES which derive from a particular concept of man and are bound up with the personal and social development it promotes.

These basic values on which the school strives to build a truly human existence are:

- the formation of a CONSCIENCE capable of searching for the truth and adhering to it interiorly;
- the growth in a responsible and creative FREEDOM that knows and chooses what is good;
- the capacity for RELATIONSHIP, solidarity and communion based on the dignity of the person;
- the training to assume RESPONSIBILITIES flowing from a sense of justice and peace.

In the encounter with the heritage of culture, the school stresses and aims at developing the ETHICAL AND RELIGIOUS DIMENSION, which it considers to be the deepest and most dynamic element in the process of human growth. Thus, the school seeks to open its pupils to the transcendent being and prepares them to receive Christ's message in all its originality.

The systematic and critical encounter with culture and with the flowering of human values, is alone and the same time, an act of mediation on the part of the school and a matter of living. We conceive the school as a COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love where the youngster can have a joyous experience of all the values that are offered him.

3.2. THE SITUATION

Because we are better able to analyse culture today, the question arises about the KIND of culture that is offered in the school, especially in relation to the social situation which gives rise to particular systematic elaborations. When cultures are described as dominant or feudal, elitist or popular, reactionary or progressive, Christian or atheistic, it shows that every systematic elaboration of culture is guided by a different point of view.

The very concept of the TRANSMISSION of culture is questioned today, especially when it is not accompanied by a process of re-elaboration. Political and social forces bring pressure on the school to ensure that the individual conforms to the group and assumes without resistance the way of thinking and evaluating that is being foisted on him.

Scientific and technological developments have increased the volume of INFORMATION which plays an indispensable role in society. The effort to assimilate INFORMATION seems to be far more demanding than the possibility of elaborating a frame of values.

We elaborate culture today by means of a CONFRONTATION with global views of life. The school has therefore to face up to a number of cultural and educational influences that often induce a debilitating relativism in the youngsters. On the other hand, insofar as the school mediates culture, it cannot close itself to the stimuli that are an integral part of the cultural scene.

While there takes place a RENEWAL IN TEACHING AND PEDAGOGY with regard to the content's methods and the basic concept itself of education in relation to teaching, it is not possible to keep abreast of these developments except at the cost of considerable effort at updating on the part of teachers and the institution. Of course, this presupposes that the functioning and cultural contribution of the school structures are understood in a more dynamic way.

3.3. GOALS

Our school focuses its cultural-educational function primarily on the following goals:

- imparting knowledge (values, meaning, demands) to make the youngsters;
 - aware of the problems of today's world, and in the first place, of their own surroundings,
 - sensitive to the values involved,
 - constructively critical about the explanations given and solutions proposed.
- Forming attitudes or relatively stable structures in the personality of the youngsters to enable them to act as free persons and to orientate them to the meaning of life and a communion of persons;
- Helping youngsters acquire those technical and professional skills that make them competent and effective;
- Enabling to understand different languages to make use of the means and forms of expression on which communication is based, and to enrich themselves in the process of culture while contributing to its development.

3.4. LINES OF ACTION

The environment and the daily routine

In order to accomplish a process of humanization in the school, it is necessary about all to ensure the quality of the educational rapport and to create a favourable environment

Our relationships and the environment are based on a reasonableness in the demands we make and on a charity that becomes an educative method of accompaniment and growth. Thus, we promote a way of living and working together that facilitates the sharing of ideals and experiences and fosters solidarity in the common enterprise.

In and through the environment, we attach an importance to and motivate the experiences of the daily routine at school in such a way that the youngsters perceive its meaning and positively appreciate the advantages accruing therefrom for the realisation of their own life-plan.

The experiences which form the warp and woof of the daily routine are:

- the duties of study, research and work;
- the meeting of persons and the sharing in common initiatives;
- personal discipline and the discipline required by the school set-up;
- a respect and care for the equipment and facilities of the school;
- a sense of belonging to an educative community.

3.4.2. Teaching and training activities

The systematic contents of the various disciplines are offered as learning to be acquired, truths to be discovered, skills to be developed and questions and values to be assimilated.

Culture is presented in a way so as to favour critical reflection. Thus, we avoid the danger of experience being lived in a passive way and learning remaining abstract, distant, and at the level of pure information.

Such arrangement implies:

- reorganizing the mass of information around certain nuclei so that there emerge the fundamental questions that science and culture have to grapple with and the problems arising therefrom;
- constantly confronting the learning acquired especially in the sciences about man and nature, with the perceptions the youngsters have of life, both personal and social;
- helping the youngsters grasp, appreciate and assimilate human values through what is presented to them and gone into in depth (CS 42);
- accepting and prompting questions about the meaning of things and reflecting on them to the extent possible;
- opening the youngsters to a universal culture by putting them in touch with the ways of different peoples and with the heritage of values shared by humanity;
- drawing their attention to the kinds of human experience underlying their various disciplines:
 - the experience of the universe which is got through an exploration of things and of their own surroundings (geography, natural sciences): they open us up to a sense of mystery;
 - the experience of history which throws into relief the religious impulse of every culture and enables us to understand man as an evolving being and life as a mission;

- the experience of language, which enables us to communicate, to understand one another and so to transmit our inner world, thus highlighting the social vocation of man;
- the experience of art, which reveals the human resources of creativity and contemplation, and sets before us the deepest reactions of man to other beings, to the world and to mystery;
- the experience of technology, seen as a discovery of the possibility of acting upon reality in order to modify it for the service of man;
- the experience of philosophical and religious thought, seen as a search for ultimate meaning and as an emancipation from humdrum preoccupations, utilitarian attitudes etc. (2)

3.4.3. The method of teaching and educating

As our method we choose to personalize all our educational work and to foster mutual collaboration.

Hence,

- We encourage a certain complementarity and integration between the work of the individual person and the work of the group;
- We adopt an active method of teaching which serves to develop in the pupils the capacity of discovery and cultivates habits of creativity and self-growth in culture;
- We promote interdisciplinary collaboration so that the contribution from each science is complementary;
- We make the best possible use of total language (word, image, sound, audio-visual, bodily expression etc.).

3.4.4. Other activities

Integral education requires that the school programme be completed with the help of other activities of a correlated supplementary or supportive nature. The Salesian school affords ample opportunity for free time activities. "It does

(2) The objective perception of reality as something existing and being a value is a factor in the growth to maturity. In this Aid we have only sketched the general idea of this perception; but the idea needs to be explicitly treated according to the level of each school and its pupils.

not restrict itself to the hours of class, but combines study with training in art, sports, cultural, religious and social activities" (GC21, 131) and thus it tends to become more and more a "full-time school".

3.4.5 Professionalism

In our present-day situation we consider it important to lay down the roots of professionalism (3) already in the school itself.

The environment the teaching and free-time activities and the method employed, all aim at leading up to:

- the execution of one's work with increasing competence and real satisfaction;
- a sense of one's limitations and a respect for another's abilities;
- an awareness of a complementarity arising out of working together;

To mature in professionalism, our Plan offers the following stimuli;

- the dedication and professionalism of the educators and their openness to and respect for the competence of their colleagues;
- the cultivation of the first signs of particular professions in the youngsters, by which they begin to play an active role in social and in cultural life;
- the encouragement given to progressive attitudes which combine theory with practice, and learning with actual realization;
- training to honesty in research, clarity in exposition, and precision in sizing up causes, proofs, statements and impressions.

3.4.6. Orientation

In all our work of education we strive to help a youngster develop and live out a personal life-plan that is realistic, geared towards others and capable of overcoming whatever alienates him from his vocation or reduces his potential

(3) By PROFESSIONALISM, we mean that way of life, work and corresponding attitudes, typical of our present culture, by which:

- one endeavours to carry out one's task with competence, as a rule;
- one recognises one's limitation & competence of others;
- one is aware of the complementarity of working together.

A Life-plan needs orientation and decision

- in regard to one's affective-sexual life (state of life);
- in regard to one's professional status (work);
- in regard to one's social and political leanings (line of action in society);
- in regard to one's ultimate and total meaning of existence (vision of the world and man, religion and faith).

The school organizes an explicit programme of orientation to help youngsters build up their personal and social identity and to assist families and teachers in their work or education. Therefore, the school,

- makes use of the possibilities for orientation inherent in educational contents and experiences;
- offers a specific help in the most delicate stages of growing up
- makes available specialized services of psychological counselling and professional orientation.

4. THE DIMENSION OF "EVANGELIZATION AND CATECHESIS" IN THE SALESIAN SCHOOL.

"Evangelization in and through the school" (GC 21, 128)

4.1. GUIDELINES

The Salesian school is a setting for evangelization. There a youngster can approach God with joy; he can come to know and love Jesus Christ and advance along the path of faith (GC21, 131) with the help of:

- the Christian witness of a community (cf. GC21, 65),
- religious instruction joined with education (cf. GC21,131; Catechesi Tradendae 69; CS 15),
- initiatives expressly aimed at fostering Christian maturity.

At the same time, we cannot forget that the Salesian school is:

- **CATHOLIC:** its educational policy and activity must aim at forming Christian men who will show non-Christians something of the mystery of Christ (cf. CS 470),
- **MISSIONARY:** the practical ways of leading a youngster to the faith depend on his free acceptance; they must take the youngster from the present stage of his faith and accompany him at his pace of growth.

The central preoccupation of the Salesian school is to identify and lay down the conditions necessary for it to fulfil its evangelizing mission (cf. CS 64).

Fundamental among these conditions are the following:

- the Christian quality of the PERSONS, who engage in the work of education (cf. GE 8; CS 43, 78);
- CLIMATE or atmosphere in which the pupil opens himself to the faith and lives it more maturely (cf. CS 47);
- the WAY in which particularly religious instruction is imparted and other forms of education to the faith are carried out.

4.2. THE SITUATION

- The differing wavelengths of youth and adults and a certain neutral stance adopted by some teachers, create obstacles for a work of education thoroughly inspired by a Christian vision of man and of reality. Thus, the activities of explicit evangelization are sometimes

carried out side by side with educational activities and so do not permeate the latter or link up with them.

- Faced with different degrees of openness to the faith in youngsters and different levels of development in their religious consciousness, many teachers want to know today what shape their religious instruction should take; whether it should be a catechesis in a strict practical sense, or a religious culture and Christian information.
- The requirements of the time-table, the amount of scholastic material to be gone through and the difficulty for the pupils to remain after school hours and leave very few possibilities for supplementary religious activities and even set limits on initiatives in the field of liturgy and the sacraments. (cf. also Aid 2, 6.3.1)

4.3. GOALS

The goal of evangelization in the school is to assist a person to form a **SYNTHESIS OF FAITH, CULTURE AND LIFE**.

We therefore, intend to present, awaken and cultivate the faith by means of an **ITINERARY OF CONVERSION AND CHRISTIAN MATURITY**, in which everyone will be able to have an individual and community experience:

- an encounter with Christ in His various forms of presence (Word, Sacraments, the Church),
- fraternal communion,
- service to others (cf. Aid 2, 6.4.1, 6.4.6).

4.4. LINES OF ACTION

Through a variety of means and according to the level of the youngsters, the school offers in successive and cyclic fashion:

- a witness and a proclamation of the mystery of Christ;
- a grounding and a progressive initiation in the Christian life;
- a growth in the sense of belonging to the Church and in one's apostolic commitment.

4.4.1. The Community as a point of reference

We aim at creating in the school community "an atmosphere permeated with the Gospel spirit of freedom and love". In this setting, the pupil will experience his dignity as a person, even before he has a clear notion about it and will talk

consciously with God (cf. CS 55), because he perceives His presence and action in the witness and example of Christians.

One in charity, committed to the work of education and at the service of everyone, the community or faith finds in the Eucharist, in daily prayer and in listening to the Word of God, a way to express its relationship with God and its response to Christ's invitation to work for the liberation of man.

It is above all, in those persons who engage in dialogue with them on matters of faith, such as the catechists and religious teachers, that the youngsters will come to grasp the Christian dimension of the community in a still more tangible way.

The educative community thus, gives the youngsters an experience of the Christian life as a continuation and complement of what they receive in their families.

4.4.2. Evangelizing the activity of teaching and educating

The Salesian school seeks to establish with its youngsters a dialogue about their lives and an integration of their knowledge, education and faith. In the midst of conflicting concepts and behaviour, the school makes Jesus Christ a point of reference and a sound criterion "to discern the values which enable from those which degrade (man)" (cf. CS 11; GC2 I, 120,91,102; SGC, 416).

In the work of teaching, the imparting of knowledge comes to be illumined by the light of faith, without its being diverted from its proper objective.

To this end, the school:

- helps the youngsters discover the profound coherence between their faith and the values promoted by culture;
- highlights the role of the Gospel in the world of culture; the Gospel elevates whatever is authentic and regenerates and transforms whatever is less human;
- shows youngsters how to appreciate the value of culture in relation to the gospel message which needs to be incarnated and understood deeply.

In the work of education, the school:

- Endeavours to turn the individual's culture into an aid towards communion and an understanding of men and events; culture is not to

be a means of getting power and prosperity, but a call to serve and be responsible for others (cf. CS 56)

- Fosters attitude in the young that predispose them to understand the gospel deeply and to respond to it generously.

4.4.3. Religious Teaching

Religious teaching has a place in the school curriculum and is imparted in a systematic manner in “religion classes”, even if it is not confined to them (cf. CS 50).

The school considers religious teaching to be a fundamental element in the educational process, for it guides the pupils to discover the ultimate meaning of life and helps them to make a conscious choice of living a responsible and coherent way of life (CS 49).

No doubt, religious teaching does provide a religious culture and honest information about the historical event of Christ and Christianity; but it is also a real evangelization, a proclamation of salvation on the part of the Church (cf. CS 49,50 & 37,67,69), even if such a proclamation has certain limitations and peculiarities because of its connection with the school.

The contents of the "religion classes" are developed with an eye to the level of the pupils and their openness to the Gospel. While making allowances then for different places and pupils, religious instruction becomes:

- deeper study of the religious dimension of man and of how it comes to be manifested in experiences, including the Christian experience of the educator;
- an explicit proclamation of the mystery of Christ;
- a form of systematic catechesis that helps one advance in the faith and live as a good Christian.

Presented in this way and showing due respect for everyone's conscience, religious instruction aims at assisting

- the non-believing youngster to confront his situation of unbelief with the viewpoints of faith;
- the enquiring youngster to reflect and clear his doubts;
- the believing youngster to integrate his faith and his culture.

Religious teaching imparted in the school can be instrumental in awakening in a person the desire for a further education to the faith in the bosom of the Christian community.

4.4.4 Other means and activities

Since man moulds himself on the Gospel through a process of continual conversion, the Salesian school offers other opportunities to re-examine one's reasons for believing, to listen again to and penetrate the Gospel message and to try out the Christian way of living. Such opportunities are:

- a short meeting every day, either for all together, or for a group (such as the "good-morning talk");
- peak moments of the liturgical year and times of preparation for the sacraments;
- meetings, retreats and recollection days
- catechumenate programmes to re-initiate a person to a free and conscious living in Christ.

The school also teaches how to celebrate the faith. The youngsters are invited to take part in celebrations either all together as a community or in special groups, due consideration being given of course, to the form of the celebration and the level of the youngsters.

The Eucharist and the sacrament of reconciliation are seen as signs of salvific power of Christ and moments of exceptional value for education (cf. GC21, 93) (4)

4.4.5. Groups and Christian commitment

In our schools we make place for and promote GROUPS for formation and for apostolic and social action. Through them the faith experience of our youngsters is able to mature; at the same time, groups can respond more adequately to the needs of individual.

(4). A more ample treatment of how to achieve this, as well as some particular aspects of and the Salesians emphasis in, a catechesis of these two sacraments is to be found in AID 2, 6.1 ff

Groups are open to all our youngsters and are freely chosen.

The school prepares and places animators at their disposal who, through their competence and experience, accompany the youngsters in their life and growth in the groups (5)

4.4.6. The discernment of vocations

All through their duration in our school and with a particular assistance offered them according to their age and level of faith, we help our youngsters to discern the signs whereby God calls to a specific state of Christian life (cf. CS 45).

The Salesian school seeks to accompany the first flowering of a vocation through appropriate initiatives, such as: vocation groups, community experiences, apostolic experiences and spiritual direction. (6)

4.4.7. The Pastoral team

To ensure effectiveness in the work of evangelization and to promote well-planned initiatives, the school has a PASTORAL TEAM, whose duty it is to animate and make the whole community co-responsible.

The PASTORAL TEAM is made up of several members religious and lay-persons, teachers, parents and youngsters.

Its tasks are:

- to keep alive in the ambient of the school an openness to the message of the Gospel;
- to collaborate in a special way with religion teachers in order to coordinate their endeavours and improve their religious teaching;(7)

(5) For ideas and suggestions concerning youth groups, cf. Aid 2,8.1 ff

(6) For more ample treatment of this subject cf. Aid 2,7.1 ff

(7) One of the very positive experiences in many schools has been the selling up of Department for Faith-Education, comprising religion teachers and pastoral animation. This Department has sometimes been identical with the Pastoral Team. At other times instead, it has concerned itself with the teaching of religion only, while the Pastoral Team has assumed wider responsibilities of animation; of course, in such cases, there has been a close working relationship between these two bodies.

- to engage the personnel of the school and the pupils in different experiences of Christian living, and to see that such experiences complement each other;
 - to keep parents informed about the Christian life in the school and to enlist the participation of Christian bodies in educating the pupils to the faith;
 - to assist youngsters in the discovery and first flowering of their Christian vocation.
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