

Summary

What kind of school religious instruction would lead towards establishing a religious identity

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In the Croatian educational system it has happened that the “oldest” school subject, the one with the longest educational tradition, has become the most recent. The confessional Catholic religious instruction was returned to Croatian school in the school year 1991/92, forty years after its forced removal in 1952. Therefore, it is not surprising that Croatian Catholic Church has permanently considered the profile and contemporary curriculum of “religious instruction in school”. Internal church views are even today divergent regarding that subject – ranging from claims that its place is “in the church courtyard” to the elation because of its return to the Croatian school system in which it should represent a basic pedagogic subject. On the other side, in the profane area, even the educational one, the need and justification of including that subject into the school system is frequently questioned, or it is being underrated, marginalized and left completely to the Church institutions to avoid any possible responsibility, or compared to the subject of Marxism from the past times. This article tends to systematize some scientific premises for better understanding and further development of “religious instruction in school”; to show its theological-educational foundation; to present its profile in the national school systems in the European Union countries; to document the obvious contribution of this subject to the integral education in Croatia, which is especially evident from the national educational survey, (partially) presented here for the first time; and to point out the actual and possible reasons for crisis and/or contemporary challenges for this subject.

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