

Renata Jasnos
ORCID: 0000-0002-4954-3634
Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

In a Culture of Freedom and Consumption: The Role of Contemporary Christian Education in Overcoming the Crisis of Values

ABSTRACT

The study addresses the issue of experiencing values as well as the role of Christian education in overcoming the contemporary crisis of values in terms of materialism and the value of freedom. The main research problem was the role of Christian education in overcoming the problems of the crisis of values. The main aim of the study was to define the role of Christian education in overcoming conflicts of values associated with materialism and freedom. Attempts have been made to answer the following question: to what extent (and how) does the Church support individuals in reflections upon their own materialism and their attempts to overcome it? An auxiliary aim was to investigate the experience of value among the respondents. The initial study took the form of a short survey, in which students of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow were asked about their experience of values. The second stage of the study was carried out using the focus group method, involving two groups of pedagogy students.

The research distinguished four dimensions of experiencing values, identifying the most important values according to female students in contemporary Christian education and defining the role of Christian

KEYWORDS

values, experience of values, Christian education, consumerism, freedom, cultural change

SPI Vol. 23, 2020/1
ISSN 2450-5358
e-ISSN 2450-5366
DOI: 10.12775/SPI.2020.1.004

Submitted: 10.01.2020
Accepted: 7.04.2020

education in overcoming the problems of materialism and the realization of freedom, both positive and negative aspects of it. The most important postulates in terms of supporting young people in experiencing and choosing values are changing priests' communication methods and attitudes towards young people, changing educational goals in preparing young people for axionormative experiences, and initiating activities in various forms of experiencing values.

Introduction

The topic of values has already been studied and published across various academic disciplines. Surveys are also periodically published which show the directions and tendencies of changes in preferred values and confirm the problem that modern culture has with values. The focus of this study is the experience of values from the point of view of Christian education. After presenting a study on the ways values are experienced, I will discuss the question about the role of Christian education in overcoming the crisis of values in individual experience. I will concentrate on two values which are key for the modern value crisis: material values and the value of freedom, understood as getting rid of limitations and refusing to take responsibility.

The basis of this discussion is a study conducted among students of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. The subject of the research was the experience of values and the role of Christian education in overcoming the problems of the crisis of values in terms of materialism and freedom. Focus interviews were conducted in two groups of the Jesuit University students in December 2019. The groups consisted of eight and nine women, all students of full-time MA pedagogy studies. The focus interviews were preceded by a short survey carried out among randomly selected students, in which 38 people were asked about their experience of values.

Experiencing values

There are many ways to define values, and the rich world of values does not facilitate the task of exhaustively describing what they are (Chafas, 2003, p. 18). Usually, the definition is related to the

particular theory adopted by the particular researcher. The practice of social sciences, and especially pedagogy, posing questions about the possibility of experiencing values, offer an interesting angle.

Values in human life are related to one's choices, to the quality of one's existence (Chalas, 2003, p. 29). For many, the experience of values seems to be an abstract concept. It is not an easy experience. The value itself is also important, because the way the value can be experienced depends on what type it is. Experiencing beauty, which belongs to the category of aesthetic values, is different from experiencing justice, which is a moral value. A survey of students at the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow revealed different understandings of what values are and different approaches to them. The respondents' intuitive understanding of what values are and how they can be experienced coincides with the theoretical approaches of ethicists, philosophers, or educators who define or classify various types of values or write about their function in human life.

When asked about how one can experience values, the respondents talked about the difficulties in naming or recognizing values and about the conditions that must be met for such an experience to occur: "Values cannot be experienced, they are too subjective." "I guess you can experience them in some way." A conscious reflection, or deep thought, is needed: "There are some experiences in which this aspect of value can be seen. But only when we begin to describe it in a meaningful way. This is a difficult topic." The fact that there are various degrees of difficulty—as expressed by the subjects of the survey—aligns with Czesław Matuszewicz's observation. According to him, values "differentiate people's aspirations: they are one of the determinants of the diversity of mental structures and individual pursuits and ambitions" (Matuszewicz, 1975, p. 44). Thus, the method and the intensity of experiencing values varies from person to person.

The respondents referred to everyday choices as connected with experiencing values. However, the assessment of this experience varied. Some said it is unique and unusual: "I don't really experience them every day. Only when a difficult choice comes and I don't know what to do. Then I start to think more deeply. This is when, in my opinion, values begin to enter my decision-making." Others thought they made choices, but they do not contemplate values more deeply:



We don't think in such terms every day. We experience them, but don't think about values as such, about experiencing them. Only then does such a question make me stop and think about what is the value in my life, what ultimately counts.

Still others said it was their everyday experience:

I constantly experience them, these are my everyday choices, even the simplest ones—whether to go to a friend's, to the library, or to the store. These are everyday small choices and little clashes of values ... after all, I am the one who decides what is more important for me.

It can be assumed that these are more reflective people who may participate or used to participate in some kind of a formation. In the end, there were also respondents who openly claimed that human life is shaped by the values that they choose, and that choice determines the type of involvement and efforts. This realization is also a form of experiencing values, as are human ambitions.

Human life goals define values. It could be family or God. Or someone wants to devote themselves to volunteering, ... or similarly—to teacher's work. Someone else chooses an athlete's career, that's also a certain value that they live by and experience.

Stanisław Kowalczyk wrote in a similar vein about living by and experiencing values: "value is what is the object of desire, what is desired by man, what is the purpose of his efforts" (2006, p. 67). Mieczysław Łobocki voiced a similar view on values, or "everything that is considered worthwhile and valuable for the individual and society and is worthy of desire, that entails positive experiences and is at the same time the goal of human pursuits" (1993, p. 125).

The respondents noted the social influence of others and the learning of values. Someone's choice, protest, or action can become a sign, a testimony, or an attractive example. One student explains, "in relationships with others, when someone chooses the good and I witness it, it's a real experience, because it makes an impression, I get such a signal, a sign Then I think about what's important." Similarly, the influence of others may pose a threat to values in the social domain and this is also a way of experiencing them, by recognizing the threat or loss: "This experience can be positive or negative. Because I can experience that my values are under threat. As it is now, for example, when democracy is under threat."

Some respondents referred to specific values, noting that how we experience them may differ depending on the specific value: “I think some values are experienced once in a blue moon. I experience beauty when I go to a gallery, to an exhibition.” Another subject noted,

the question should probably be formulated differently. There are many, many different values. You have to ask about a specific value. For example, freedom—the value of freedom. Do I experience it? I don’t think about it because I have it, I guess. Nobody is taking it away from me, I have the basic means to live, so I can study. If this freedom were taken away from me, I would probably experience it strongly as something missing.

According to the students, different forms of experiencing values can be pieced together into a more complete picture, which consists of reflections and thoughts in the context of different experiences, observations, and inspiration from others, experiencing the hardships of one’s own choices in the context of values, as well as a sense of threat or even loss. The ways of experiencing values indicated by the respondents were collected and systematized. Figure 1 schematically depicts various dimensions of experiencing values according to the respondents.

Figure 1. Dimensions of experiencing values according to the respondents

The subjective world of experiences – values



- subjectivism
- reflexivity
- inner experience
- experiences as an inner aspect

Action in the context of values and for values – the hardship of choice



- pursuit of a specific value in one's life
- daily choices
- difficult choice
- conflicts of values experienced

The choices of others as a sign and pattern



- someone's choice as a sign
- someone's testimony of a fight for value
- good example

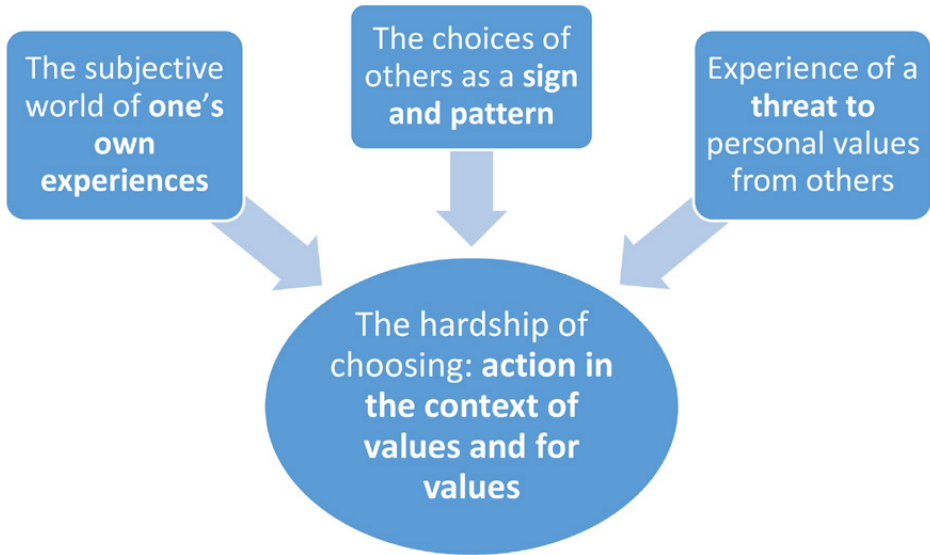
Experience of values under threat



- recognition of a threat to certain values by others
- loss of values
- awareness of the decrease in the importance of a value

The relationships between these different ways of experiencing values seem to be clear: the realization of values occurs mainly in the choices and the actions that are their natural consequence, and these flow from the subjective world of experience and meditation, inspired by the action of others, both positive (sign, example, or testimony) and negative, interpreted as a threat to values (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Different dimensions of experiencing values and the relationships between them



A person in a culture of freedom and consumption

A CBOS poll published in February 2019 on the values that Poles follow in their lives shows “family happiness” at the top of the hierarchy (80% of the respondents), before “maintaining good health” (55%) and “peace” (48%) (CBOS, 2019, p. 2). There is nothing surprising in the first of these values, because the family invariably enjoys the greatest credit, regardless of age group and the passage of time, although significant changes take place within it. It seems symptomatic that the wording included not only the family itself, but also personal happiness by association. The third chosen value, meaning “peace,” however, is significant. A survey conducted by TNS Polska

in 2013 also showed a consistently high-ranking value of the family, but also an increase in the importance of material values, money, and success at work, recognition from other people, health, and “a large number of stimuli” (TNS Polska, 2013, p. 3). In December 2019, respondents were asked to confirm the proverbial saying “money can’t buy happiness.” Only 7% of the respondents completely agreed with the statement, and there was a balance between affirmative and negative judgments (47%:46%; KANTA, 2019, p. 6).¹

The world which is changing before our eyes is not conducive to the permanence of culture, tradition, norms, and values. Although the family has always been the supreme value, the significance of material and “libertarian” values that are changing it is increasing. A more in-depth analysis shows that such “freedom” which seems to be a denial of value has become desirable. Andrzej M. de Tchorzewski, based on Tadeusz Ślipka’s categorization, presented three dimensions of freedom: psychological, natural, and social. Achieving or sticking to each of these values is concomitant with the kind of effort that contemporary popular culture does not provide for or anticipate (de Tchorzewski, 2017, pp. 206–207).² An important goal for a modern person is self-fulfillment, understood as achieving financial security (Zawadzka, 2006, p. 64). This security is connected with the second key value today—freedom, looked on as liberation from all restrictions. Janusz Mariański has noted that “the most critical problem in civil and democratic society is the concept of freedom, autonomy, and self-realization in the context of unlimited exercise of choice” (1998, p. 85). The author has recalled Zygmunt Bauman’s statement that post-modern culture glorifies freedom, but that the cost is high. A person free from restrictions pays the price of “tor-
 ture of uncertainty, of being lost” (Mariański, 1998, p. 85). Zbyszko Melosik and Tomasz Szkudlarek have observed that the sense

¹ 7% – I strongly agree; 40% – I agree to a certain extent; 12% – I totally disagree; 34% – I disagree to a certain extent

² Psychological freedom is understood as “the autonomous power of man guiding him to get to know himself and the world around him”; natural freedom “concerns the personal dignity of man, which is built on the objective moral order inscribed in his rational nature”; and social freedom consists of forms such as “the freedom of conscience and religion, the freedom of thought and expression, and civic freedom” (de Tchorzewski, 2017, p. 207).

of freedom of modern man has not changed at all, that the human being still dreams of freedom and still does not feel free (2010, p. 91). As Mariański has remarked, “privatized freedom” wants to be self-sufficient, but it cannot give meaning to human life nor justify its purposefulness (Mariański, 1998, p. 86).

The value of this concept of freedom goes hand in hand with material values. George Ritzer, describing the economically and pop-culturally transformed *Magical World of Consumption*³ (2004, pp. 23–24), “cataloged” new forms of consumption. Near the top of this list, he placed “temples of consumption,” large shopping “malls,” and “amusement parks” offering not only all commodities, but also services and ways to spend free time.

The revolution in the means, methods, and various forms of consumption changed the Polish reality long ago. Five years ago, when one of the graduate students of the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow analyzed different ways junior high school students were spending their free time, the respondents would add “Shopping” to the “Other” category, implying that the researcher did not include this form of leisure in the questionnaire.

Ritzer concluded that consumerism brought profound changes in social relationships. He described buyers as “zombies” who roam around shopping centers, not paying attention to other people despite the crowds (2004, pp. 302–303). In such places, the deepest relationship that moves a person is between the consumer and the goods they purchase. It is the acquired objects that evoke desire, joy, emotion, contentment, and happiness. People come here to practice the “consumer religion” (Ritzer, 2004, pp. 23–24). Scheler’s division into hedonistic, utilitarian, vital, spiritual, and religious values seems to be dominated by consumption and, consequently, by materialism. All levels of that hierarchy have “gained” a new materialized dimension, receiving a consumerist extension and consumer service. Some even talk, as noted by Mariański, about “the market of moral values and norms” (2004, p. 333).

³ The original English edition was entitled *Enchanting and Disenchanted World: Revolutionizing the Means of Consumption*.

The most important values in contemporary Christian education

Speaking of Christian upbringing and education, one may be referring to religious education carried out in the form of catechesis, education based on the Christian concept of upbringing or the broadly understood (apart from catechesis) influence of the Church. Special institutions which provide Christian education are the family, churches, and Catholic school. Although the family is the most important of those, as Maria Miczyńska-Kowalska has claimed, “primary groups other than the family as well as secondary groups are increasingly participating in the transmission of values to the younger generation” (2010, p. 76). In this study, I will focus on the impact of the Church. The mission of the Church, understood in terms of teaching and upbringing, has always been strategically treated as the key one (Niewęglowski, 2005, p. 21; Dziekoński, 2000, p. 11). Since the beginning, the church has played an educational role in shaping the “moral attitude of man,” notes Alina Rynio (2017, p. 377). Moreover, according to the Second Vatican Council’s *Gravissimum educationis* [*Decree on Christian Education*], its mission extends to all people and the world in which they live (Paul VI, 1965/2002, no. 3; cf. Wajsprych, 2009, p. 14).

In a focus interview, I discussed values in the context of Christian education with two groups of pedagogy students. The respondents’ answers to the introductory general question about what values are missing in today’s world were very similar. They did not repeat the same words, but they listed those values that define relationships between people: empathy, understanding, respect, kindness, compassion, tolerance, love, sacrifice for another person, family, and time. The values that they indicated as especially desirable today illustrate the problems in interpersonal relationships. One reason may be the contemporary issue of materialism, which causes interpersonal relationships to suffer. Another factor may be the deep political conflict that antagonizes Polish society and thus take its toll on social ties.

The key values in upbringing, according to the students of pedagogy participating in the study, are family, love, love and care, love and understanding, showing love and giving security, religious values, God, respect and tolerance, and dialogue. The respondents emphasized the importance of the family as an institution of education,

which was classified as one of the most important values. At the same time, the family was also enumerated among the values whose presence is insufficient or whose lack is felt most. It can be seen that the values mentioned as missing in today's world largely coincide with those that are fundamental in education. They relate to interpersonal relationships. This signals the problem of young respondents experiencing deficiencies in values which matter in interpersonal relationships.

The question about which values are vitally important in Christian education sparked reflection and discussion. The values and comments given as responses can be classified into three groups (Figure 3). The first group includes those values that are insufficiently present: love for God and other people, love and forgiveness, and faith. The second group consists of two endangered values: respect for life from conception to death and responsibility for the endangered environment. Finally, the third group, the values that are indispensable in Christian education, turned out to be the most numerous. It includes those values that seem to be missing: respect for others, tolerance, deep conversation, openness to the world and to the authentic values of other people, courage in confronting the problems of today's world, wisdom, knowledge and wisdom, and the ability to discern between what is good and what is evil.

We engaged in an interesting conversation on the value defined as "knowledge and wisdom." The subjects wondered what knowledge was important and unanimously came to the conclusion that we need "wise knowledge and professionalism, so that a Christian does not repeat banalities or prejudices, that he or she looks deeply at reality, social reality, and ... the world in general."

Figure 3. Values that Christian education must not neglect - in the opinion of the surveyed students



insufficient:

- **love**, love for God and others
- love and **forgiveness**
- **faith**



endangered

- respect for **life** from conception to death
- responsibility for the endangered **environment**



missing

- **respect** for other **people**
- **tolerance**, deep conversation
- **openness** to the world and to the authentic values of other people
- **courage** in confrontation with the problems of today's world
- **knowledge** and **wisdom**
- **discernment** of what is good and what is evil

The role of Christian education in overcoming the problems of materialism and the actualization of freedom

The question directly pertaining to the role of the Church in inculcating values was preceded by a discussion about the problems of the modern world in understanding and realizing the value of freedom and in the issues related to materialism. Due to the limited scope of this study, this discussion will not be summarized here. To inquire about the role of the Church in the transmission of values, the sentence completion technique was used. The respondents were asked to complete the statement starting with the words “In terms of values, the Church ...” This provoked a lively discussion; the respondents gave various examples of the Church’s involvement in instilling values, but also pointed to the inconsistencies in priests’ actions. The next question was to show the role of Christian education conducted by the Church in addressing the challenges related to the realization of freedom and to contemporary materialism. The opinions of the students and the debate that ensued were a continuation of the previous conversation, so they will be discussed together.

By addressing the role of the Church and Christian education in passing on values and overcoming the contemporary value crises, the respondents formulated very different opinions. Their statements were divided into those that appreciate and highly value this role, neutral and ambivalent statements, and critical statements—perceiving the role of the Church in this matter as negative.

The statements which positively assessed the role of the Church in transmitting values and overcoming contemporary crises of values pointed to the Church as a “the fundamental source,” a source, and a signpost. They described the Church as one who “carries values,” “preserves in tradition,” “indicates true values and testifies of them,” is a guide, is “Jesus’s witness,” and “is the living enactment of the gospel, which is a treasury of values.” The subjects specified the key values that the Church embodies: “In terms of values, the church focuses primarily on showing love to God and to other people.” They also highlighted the Church’s method of counteracting the crisis of values: “The law of the love of God and one’s neighbor that is practiced in the Church opposes materialism.”

The respondents also commented on general cultural influences:



The Church is certainly such a guide; it's difficult for me to even imagine what kind of society we would be, were it not for the Church. Faith and Christian tradition is everything that we carry somewhere deep inside, even if we are not especially religious. This is a certain culture, a certain attitude, a certain behavior. I think the church gives us a lot.

The influence of selected people, guardians of formation groups, instructors at seminars and religious retreats, and clerics who run blogs were also cited. The current pope is an important witness and guide for some: One of the respondents said,

For me, Pope Francis is such a guide. I like to listen to him because he is so real, natural, he preaches the gospel, the Good Tidings for different people. It even reminds me a bit of Jesus: he doesn't exclude, like Jesus, but he criticizes hypocrisy and a lack of sensitivity to others. When he once said that a true Christian cannot not know his or her neighbors, I took this advice to heart. This is a testimony and it is a signpost. Yes, in this sense the Church is a guide, it brings values closer to people.

The opposite opinions were highly critical of certain behaviors of priests. The subjects claimed that "priests speak irresponsibly, they comment on political issues, they divide instead of uniting, they label people, they don't respect people (e.g., those who vote for another political party or if someone has a tattoo)". Separate statements concerned materialism. The respondents noticed that this is a broader problem which also affects some of the clergy: "The church seems to have a problem with materialism, there are too many examples of such behavior." In the middle, there were ambivalent, neutral statements, or those just trying to understand the problems.

Inconsistencies

The respondents pointed out that "in terms of values, the Church sometimes delivers contradictory messages" (direct quote). They cited examples of the Church simultaneously preaching the doctrine of the dignity of each human being and showing a lack of respect for certain groups of people, for example, towards LGBT people. The respondents came to the conclusion that the Church's activities are sometimes inconsistent.

The Church, through its efforts for the benefit of the poor, those in difficult situations, shows what is the real value—the human being, not

objects. Although, on the other hand, there are clergymen who are also materialistic, they bear an anti-testimony.

According to the respondents, the Church is sometimes inconsistent, as it teaches about poverty and spiritual values, but clergymen value material goods and demand money from the faithful.

It depends on the individual

How the Church helps overcome the problems of values is largely dependent on the person, “on a specific priest.” The respondents noted that the situation varies widely and depends on the place and the people:

It depends who you listen to, for example here in Krakow there are parishes such as the Dominicans or the Jesuits; you can say that they are guides, but in small towns, somewhere in the countryside, people simply don't have such guides. They find priests who are sometimes not good teachers.

In addition to evaluating the role of the Church, the students also attempted to explain the Church's support or lack of support. The determinant of the Church's influence in terms of values were pointed out. It was remarked that “the church helps if you are a believer”; therefore, the factor of personal faith is of great importance here. They discussed the causes and argued about the extent of the phenomenon, and evaluations of it. The attempts to characterize their own attitude and the influence of believers themselves on these situations were interesting.

We are all materialistic

There were also efforts to look deeper into the problem. Some students tried to understand priests, not to judge them more harshly than other people, and even noticed that being materialistic can also help.

I think that today's world, this materialism of ours, which we all experience in some way ... well, we are materialistic, who doesn't like to go shopping and buy something nice? Everyone, and priests see it the same way However, I think there are many clergymen who help with their



testimony, with their attitude, even because they have sacrificed their lives, that they serve others, this is true testimony and this is a sign.

You cannot judge superficially

Others have noted that you cannot judge superficially or stop at negative examples, even if they repeat.

We are accustomed that the Church preaches the highest values, such as God, love, humanity, life, and truth, and that's why we don't see this anymore, because it seems so obvious, we only see deficiencies and disgraceful cases, because they are offensive.

A postulate was also formulated that "it's necessary to separate the Church and its official 'thought-out' teaching from the statements of some clergymen who are irresponsible or too immature for the role they play."

The faithful consent to inappropriate behavior

One of the respondents postulated that the believers should assume greater responsibility for the Church and the clergy. According to her, some priests would not act improperly if they did not feel it was accepted and condoned—not only by their superiors, but also by the believers: "The cause [of some priests' behavior] is that we accept it and don't try to counteract it somehow ... when I was in church and heard this sermon, I just left ... but no one [else] left the church." The sermon in question, which in the respondent's opinion called for a protest, concerned a lack of respect for other social groups and was "too political."

Different dimensions of experiencing values in Christian education

In our analysis of the students' opinions on the ways of experiencing values in human life (Fig. 1), we can try to determine how Christian education and the Church's activities reinforce the experience of values. First of all, the values taken into account were those that

constituted the subject of the respondents' discussion and which were connected with the problem of materialism and the understanding of freedom. As outlined earlier, values can be experienced in various dimensions of human life and activity. In this study, based on the students' statements, four such dimensions were distinguished: the subjective world of experiences, action in the context of values and for values—the hardship of choosing, the choices of others as a signpost and a role model, and the experience of endangered values (Fig. 1).

The subjective world of experiences relating to values

The most important thing in experiencing values is the inner, subjective world of the individual. A person's choices come after rumination, after recalling previously internalized values, and their hierarchy. Christian upbringing helps in reflection, provides a rich resource of content, values, and models—from the sources in the Bible and tradition, through the saints to contemporary role models—it forms the moral attitude of the believer, and sets standards. Through various forms of teaching and formation, it inspires and supports the subjective world of experiences as the basic form of experiencing values.

This space also suffers from a negative impact and sometimes the absence of expected impact. Negative influences can occur when priests introduce conflicts of value in their sermons (e.g., defense of the family by maligning LGBT people). An absence of the expected impact may appear through presenting an outdated picture of the world and an incorrect analysis of contemporary phenomena, which may make the Church's message less convincing. The impatience of priests revealed by the way they stress commands and prohibitions and stigmatize people is perceived negatively in the contemporary culture of freedom and democracy. This absence is also the inability to carry out a deep analysis and the simplified representation of the problems related to excessive materialism and a consumer lifestyle.

Action in context of values and for values—the hardship of choice

The realization of values and their deepest experience is constituted by the choices, decisions, and actions of the individual. The



Church supports people in these choices, especially those who expect such support and seek spiritual advice. Charity events, communities, and groups united around “valuable” goals are an important place for experiencing values. Cooperation in achieving goals is an important form of support in experiencing values and in resolving conflicts of values and overcoming crises.

The choices of others as a signpost and role model

The church has a rich treasury of role models and signs. Clergymen who exercise their calling are such a sign. Participants in communities or groups that provide help for the needy, for example, are signs of professed values and a role model for others. They help with reflection on the value of freedom (I can help, so I should) and on material values (by helping others, I am promoting personalistic values that are in opposition to material values). There are also negative signs and role models in this influential space, such as priests who pursue material goods or who do not respect other people.

Experience of values under threat

Christian education constitutes support in the situation of experiencing a threat to such values as health, peace, or security, which is constantly taking place in the modern world. Christian education can help in the search for meaning in life by promoting intangible values. However, some clerics, by voicing irresponsible opinions, may contribute to the individual’s sense of values such as social and national unity being endangered.

Cultural changes and supporting the experience and choice of values

Values inscribed in culture are relatively stable. As Grzegorz Żuk has claimed, they have “the power to connect people—they give them a sense of community and it is difficult to imagine educational processes without shared values that form the basis of group identity” (2016, p. 93). The value system, however, is “strongly influenced by

social time,” which is why it is important in what social circles and in what time a person is brought up (Oleszkowicz & Senejko, 2013, p. 242).

Change is a feature of culture. Since the end of the 19th century, changes have been taking place at a fast rate. In the 1960s, in the United States, a “philosophy of life” was important to 80% of students, while material wellbeing as a value was in 5th or 6th place. In the 1990s, this value system was reversed (Oleszkowicz & Senejko, 2013, p. 242). The moral orientation of Poles at the beginning of the new century were studied by Janusz Mariański. He diagnosed “a significant aversion of the younger and older generation towards permanent, unchanging moral values and norms, and, on the other hand, relatively widespread attitudes of compromise” (2004, p. 326).

In the postmodern culture of freedom, “values compete with each other and none of them are completely safe” (Mariański, 1998, p. 85) because the principles of efficiency and pragmatism and the criteria of profit and money are not coupled with a different “logic of faith”—faithfulness to God and love of one’s neighbor—which requires selflessness (Mariański, 2004, p. 323). The social values of pluralism, tolerance, and democracy have become significant in Western culture. The so-called personalistic values dominate: health, success, and pleasure. Absolute values that would constitute fixed points of reference are becoming depleted (Żuk, 2016, pp. 94, 116). Meanwhile, the lack of universal norms and values means that “the foundations for value judgments have been shaken” (Mariański, 2004, p. 327). That is why today the human being is “the supreme authority for himself or herself,” simultaneously experiencing axiological chaos (Żuk, 2016, pp. 107–108).

Changes related to globalization and technologization of life often lead to conflicts experienced by young people in the processes of molding their personal value system and building their identity. Oleszkowicz and Senejko have noted, however, that studies on changes in the youth’s value system are inconsistent and difficult to interpret (2013, pp. 244, 251).

Bogusław Żurkowski has drawn attention to the “rudimentary antinomy” between the hierarchy of values of the world of children and youth and the values of adults and the culture at large. Such is the peculiar nature of human development that “children’s axiological

structure prefers pleasure values. In a child, the value of play/pleasure is located at the highest level of the axiological hierarchy, that is, where we usually place the *sacrum* value” (2005, pp. 279, 286). However, research shows that focusing on material goals does not bring happiness: materialistic people are often less happy and have a “reduced level of satisfaction from life,” and young people who live in the most prestigious districts and regions are the least happy (Zawadzka, 2006, p. 62; Oleszkowicz & Senejko, 2013, p. 131).

Oleszkowicz and Senejko have characterized two different systems of human motivation. The first is oriented towards the pleasure that a person achieves through consumption, relaxation, and rest. The second motivation system encourages us to reach satisfaction which may require effort, time, and even bearing difficulty. However, the experience of such satisfaction is much deeper and more happiness-generating, and the road to it leads to inner development (Oleszkowicz & Senejko, 2013, p. 130). Knowledge of a child’s motivation systems is an important reference point. It is important to wisely support a child to allow and help them to “grow out of materialism” and out of seeking pleasure, and to introduce them to the path of achieving satisfaction. The key thing here is that youths experience values in various ways.

The role of upbringing is strategic in the implementation of this task. Żuk believes that in a situation where there are ongoing struggles in the world to win people over to specific ideas, upbringing should have a special role. It should be impartial and should assist the young person in learning and internalizing universal, timeless values (2016, p. 114).

The Church plays a considerable role in this process. Although it is marred by contemporary crises (materialism and political involvement), it retains and conveys not only religious but also universal values, deeply entrenched in tradition, such as human life, truth, freedom, love, and solidarity. Alina Chyczewska discerns an important role and task of the Church in surmounting these crises and bestowing meaning (2010, pp. 246–248).

The upbringing process in relation to values begins with “recognizing values” (Marek, 2014, p. 123). It is necessary to change the system of education and upbringing, though, because—as noted by Krystyna Ostrowska (2005)—information on values alone will not be

effective. “Reaching the student’s ‘world’ of values is a difficult task, with the problem of pedagogical communication emerging from it” (Żurakowski, 2005, p. 287).

Therefore, we need changes in educators’ way of thinking. Mariański has drawn attention to sociocultural changes: a re-evaluation of the values that took place “in moving away from obligatory values to self-fulfillment values” and to a social evolution “from the morals of injunctions and prohibitions, towards the morality of individual judgments (the morality of freedom)” (2004, p. 332). It is for this reason that in the education of young people, it is important to “provide criteria that enable the use of information in order to creatively ‘build oneself’ and the world” (Ostrowska, 2005, p. 303). That is why the Church cannot fruitfully shape characters through the “old” methods. Different forms of experiencing values are needed for people to identify with them. Young people must be guaranteed the conditions to acquire knowledge and to gather initial experiences, so that they can be encouraged towards their own reflections, and live through more complex axiomatic experiences, as described by Zofia Majewska. They must face the necessary life choices, dilemmas in which there is no good choice, in which—as Majewska emphasized—“the universal rules of morality” of the choice between good and evil “are suspended” (2010, p. 94–95), not because they have ceased to be valid, but because it is impossible to put them into practice, as they are incompatible with the situation. Only the realization of values through different choices, preceded by deep thought, forms the attitude to life, shapes a person, and can even “predetermine their inner development,” as noted by Janusz Homplewicz (1996, p. 142).

Conclusion

There is a serious challenge for Christian education. Clerics and catechists face the task of learning how to talk to people who value personal freedom and independence. Due to the hierarchical structure of the Church, which chiefly defines the relationships between the clergy, sometimes priests transfer these relationships to their interactions with the believers. However, they collide with other expectations of the faithful, who demand dialogue and respect for their opinions. Without changing this attitude, it is impossible in

today's culture to educate young people (or adults) who will probably leave the Church, and the Church will lose the opportunity for educational influence. During the focus interview, a student spoke about the irresponsible words of a priest from a rural parish. She listed some of the issues that he had raised, and then stated that she did not know what he was talking about, "because I'd already left his church". They are symbolic words.

It appears that young people have an incoherent, partly consumerist attitude. On the one hand, they expect high-quality "religious services," being treated "with respect" and the removal of everything that is uncomfortable, difficult, and unpleasant, which is a typically consumer attitude (Ritzer, 2004, pp. 296, 299), on the other hand, they protest against the materialism of the priests and the consumer lifestyles among the clergy.

We are all affected by consumerism and materialism, and we all want to be free from all restrictions: both students and educators. The real challenge for a more conscious educator is to overcome one's materialism in order to be a role model to the students. Together with the students, the teacher can undertake acts of overcoming materialism through pro-social and cultural activities and can explore the negative, personal, and social consequences of consumerism. Discussions about difficult choices and related emotions and experiences, joint efforts to take even symbolic actions in defense of endangered values—these are the basic endeavors that can introduce young people into the world of values through the various ways they are experienced.

Nobody can deny that values are extremely important in building an individual and social identity. The problem today is the rapidly changing world, culture, and civilization, which requires searching for quick methods of adaptation; as a consequence, values may suffer. However, values cannot be "protected" by loudly protesting that they are being rejected: this will only be an expression of powerlessness. We need to find new spaces and new forms of actualizing them in the changing culture. To "protect" values, we must find a place, role, and meaning for them in the new reality, contemporary ways of following them in our lives. Only in this way will they survive and be able to be passed on to future generations.

References

- CBOS. (2019). *Announcement from the Survey: Rodzina – jej znaczenie i rozumienie [Family: Its meaning and understanding]*, no. 22, pp. 1–9. Retrieved December 20, 2019 from https://cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2019/K_022_19.PDF
- Chałas, K. (2003). *Wychowanie ku wartościom. Godność, wolność, odpowiedzialność, tolerancja [Education towards values: Dignity, freedom, responsibility, tolerance]* (Vol. 1). Kielce: Jedność Publishing House.
- Chałas, K. (2018). Edukacja aksjologiczna i wychowanie ku wartościom podstawą budowania szkoły jako wspólnoty życia, pracy i służby [Axiological education and education towards values as the basis for building a school as a community of life, work, and service]. *Prima Educatione*, 2, 11–22.
- Chyczewska, A. (2010). Rodzina a przezwyciężanie kryzysów wartości związanych z sensem życia w okresie adolescencji, [Family and overcoming crises of values related to the meaning of life during adolescence]. In W. Muszyński (Ed.), *Wartości w rodzinie: ciągłość i zmiana [Values in the family: Continuity and change]* (pp. 243–256). Toruń: Adam Marszałek Publishing House.
- Dziekoński, S. (2000). *Wychowanie w nauczaniu Kościoła. Od wieku XIX do Soboru Watykańskiego II [Education in the teaching of the Church: From the nineteenth century to the Second Vatican Council]*. Warsaw: UKSW Publishing House.
- Homplewicz, J. (1996). *Etyka pedagogiczna [Pedagogical ethics]*. Rzeszów: Higher Pedagogical School Publishing House.
- KANTAR. (2020). *Polacy o oszczędzaniu grudzień 2019 [Poles on saving: December 2019]*. Retrieved January 1, 2020 from http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2019/12/K.059_Stosunek-dopieni%C4%99dzy_O011a-19.pdf
- Kowalczyk, S. (2006). *Człowiek w poszukiwaniu wartości. Elementy aksjologii personalistycznej [A human being in search of values: Elements of personalist axiology]*. Lublin: KUL Publishing House.
- Łaciak, B. (2011). Komercyjne przemiany współczesnego dzieciństwa [The commercial transformations of modern childhood]. In B. Łaciak (Ed.), *Nowe społeczne wymiary dzieciństwa [New social dimensions of childhood]* (77–112). Warsaw: Żak Academic Publishing House.
- Łobocki, M. (1993). Pedagogika wobec wartości [Pedagogy and values]. In B. Śliwerski (Ed.), *Kontestacje pedagogiczne [Pedagogical contestations]*. Krakow: Impuls Publishing House.
- Majewska, Z. (2010). *Problemy doświadczania i istnienia wartości. W kręgu myśli Edmunda Husserla i Romana Ingardena [Problems of experiencing and the existence of value: The thoughts of Edmund Husserl and Roman Ingarden]*. Lublin: UMCS Publishing House.

- Mariański, J. (1998). *Kościół katolicki w społeczeństwie obywatelskim* [*Catholic church in civil society*]. Lublin: Editorial office of the KUL Publishing House.
- Mariański, J. (2004). *Religijność społeczeństwa polskiego w perspektywie europejskiej. Próba syntezy socjologicznej* [*Religiosity of Polish society in the European perspective: An attempt at a sociological synthesis*]. Krakow: Nomos Publishing House.
- Marek, Z. (2014). *Religia – pomoc czy zagrożenie dla edukacji?* [*Religion: A help or a threat to education?*]. Krakow: WAM Publishing House.
- Matuszewicz, C. (1975). *Psychologia wartości* [*Psychology of values*]. Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Melosik, Z., & Szkudlarek, T. (2010). *Kultura, tożsamość i edukacja. Migotanie znaczeń* [*Culture, identity, and education: Flickering meanings*]. Krakow: Impuls Publishing House.
- Miczyńska-Kowalska, M. (2010). Rodzina w procesie przekazywania wartości [The family in the process of imparting values]. In W. Muszyński (Ed.), *Wartości w rodzinie: ciągłość i zmiana* [*Values in the family: Continuity and change*] (pp. 74–84). Toruń: Adam Marszałek Publishing House.
- Niewęglowski, J. (2005). Kościół i wychowanie. Zarys problematyki [Church and education: Outline of the problem]. *Seminare*, 21, 453–460.
- Oleszkowicz, A., & Senejko, A. (2013). *Psychologia dorastania. Zmiany rozwojowe w dobie globalizacji* [*The psychology of adolescence: Developmental changes in the age of globalization*]. Warsaw: PWN Scientific Publishing House.
- Ostrowska, K. (2005). Wychowywać do urzeczywistniania wartości [Educating into realizing values]. In F. Adamski (Ed.), *Personalistyczna edukacja* [*Wychowanie personalistyczne*] (pp. 291–306). Krakow: WAM Publishing House.
- Pope Paul VI. (2002). *Declaration on Christian education Gravissimum educationis*. [Polish text of *Konstytucje. Dekrety. Deklaracje* (Constitutions. Decrees. Declarations)] (314–324). Poznan: Pallottinum (Original work published 1965).
- Ritzer, G. (2004). *The magical world of consumption* (L. Niedzielski, Trans.). Warsaw: Muza S.A. Literary Publishing House.
- Rynio, A. (2017). Tradycyjne i współczesne środowiska wychowania chrześcijańskiego [Traditional and contemporary circles of Christian education]. In A. Walulik & J. Mółka (Eds.), *Septuaginta pedagogiczno-katechetyczna. Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana Księdzu Profesorowi dr. hab. Zbigniewowi Markowi SJ w siedemdziesiątą rocznicę urodzin* [*Pedagogical and catechetical Septuagint: Jubilee book dedicated to Father Professor Dr. hab. Zbigniew Marek SJ on the seventieth anniversary of his birth*] (369–388). Krakow: Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow.

- Tchorzewski, A.M. de. (2017). Autorytet i jego struktura aksjologiczna [Authority and its axiological structure]. *Studia Paedagogica Ignatiana*, 20(5), 187–212.
- TNS Poland. (2014). *Świat się zmienia* [The world is changing: May 2013]. Retrieved January 1, 2020 from http://www.tnsglobal.pl/archiwumraportow/files/2014/03/K.033_Zmiana-swiata_O04a-13.pdf
- Wajsprych, D. (2009). Wychowanie chrześcijańskie w świetle literatury i dokumentów Kościoła u progu trzeciego tysiąclecia – perspektywy rozwojowe [Christian education according to Church literature and Church documents at the beginning of the third millennium: Perspectives for future development]. *Paedagogia Christiana*, 23(1), 11–25.
- Zawadzka, A.M. (2006). Wartości osobiste tłumaczące orientację materialistyczną jednostki [Personal values that explain the materialistic orientation of the individual]. *Roczniki Psychologiczne*, 9(2), 61–80.
- Żuk, G. (2016). *Edukacja aksjologiczna. Zarys problematyki* [Axiological education: An outline of the issues]. Lublin: UMCS Publishing House.
- Żurkowski, B. (2005). Wychowywać do urzeczywistniania wartości [To educate into choosing values]. In F. Adamski (Ed.), *Personalistic education* [Wychowanie personalistyczne] (279–289). Krakow: WAM Publishing House.

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE

Dr. hab. Renata Jasnos, Prof. AIK
 Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow
 Faculty of Pedagogy
 Institute of Educational Sciences
 e-mail: renata.jasnos@ignatianum.edu.pl

Jakub Adamczewski
ORCID: 0000-0002-0152-3159
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Let the Values Ring Out: Christian Education in English Lessons in a Catholic Primary School in Belfast

ABSTRACT

Christian education at school is not only carried out during religion lessons. This article deals with the issue of Christian education using the valuable musical repertoire in early childhood education based on the experience gained from a primary school in Belfast. At an early stage of education, when students have an integrated education, it is easy to refer to Christian values during everyday school activities. Is it possible to combine Christian education when teaching English lessons?

The article will present studies on language learning and using musical works that refer to spiritual values as they are understood by Max Scheler. Referring to the assumptions of Finnish music education and religious education, the values resulting from this solution will be presented. The examples presented will be discussed using references to literature that outlines the broader shape of Christian education in early childhood education. It will also be helpful to refer to the following categories: Catholic pedagogy, religious education, Christian education, spiritual values, or eurhythmics, which are the theoretical foundations of this article.

Keywords: Christian education, teaching English, singing, teaching music, religious education

KEYWORDS

Christian education,
teaching English,
singing, teaching music,
religious education

SPI Vol. 23, 2020/1
ISSN 2450-5358
e-ISSN 2450-5366
DOI: 10.12775/SPI.2020.1.005
Submitted: 4.01.2020
Accepted: 3.04.2020

Introduction

The title of the article, which refers to the act of singing, is not coincidental. As an early childhood teacher, I know that you can sing not only musical notes, but also the multiplication table, the alphabet, or a cake recipe. Music has been present in human life since its inception and it has always played a major role in the comprehensive education of a child. In today's early childhood teaching, with sparse music education, we should not forget about its beneficial effect on a child's development. Early musical training helps to develop positive character traits (optimism, humor, and joy) and awakens sensitivity to esthetic experiences. The fact is that music activates our brain and facilitates the acquisition of the principles of spelling, grammar, mathematics, and physical education (Kisiel, 2007, p. 35). Thanks to music education, we learn to read faster, we have better memory and pronunciation, and we think more logically. It has also been proven that it helps children communicate more quickly and efficiently in a group or in a school class (Kisiel, 2007, p. 69). But can one sing about the values which are important in Christian education? What songs may be suitable for early childhood schoolchildren? How should we talk about what has already been sung with childish joy? These activities are part of the principles of Christian pedagogy, which—owing to its empirical nature—mainly deals with “researching practical forms of implementing Christian education in various informal and formal learning contexts by various people who undertake non-institutionalized and institutionalized educational work” (Olbrycht, 2013, p. 124).

The article will aim to hone in on a formal learning context—primary school—in which educational activities are predominantly institutionalized. The task of Christian pedagogy is also to verify whether the activities proposed by teachers are methodically and organizationally effective in the matter of Christian education. Its source is Christian doctrine, Church documents, and the anthropology and axiology that refer to the Christian religion. On the other hand, its benchmark values are best defined by normative pedagogy, at the core of which lies the Christian concept of man, values, and

culture, and which defines the goals and principles of actions geared towards comprehensive Christian education. It is also worth adding that Christian pedagogy can be divided into educational theories of individual Christian denominations, of which Catholic pedagogy is the most developed. In this article, I would like to report on the education practice that took place at a Catholic primary school in Belfast. In 2016, as a trainee teacher, I had the opportunity to observe and conduct music classes at one of the local primary schools in Northern Ireland. These experiences became the main motivation to write this article, which is to show an atypical approach to musical Christian education.

The principles of religious education and the meaning of Christian education

In addition to comprehensive elementary education, there is also religious education, which is very important in the life of a young person. In the literature, we find numerous examples of interconnections between education and religion, because the religious dimension is “the main factor motivating man to the effort of building his identity” (Nowak, 2012, p. 324). It is worth emphasizing, citing Katarzyna Olbrycht (2013), that the purpose of this education is to convey knowledge about religion as a cultural phenomenon, knowledge about one’s own and other religions, especially those that are worshipped locally. Religious education, however, is only one of three areas of religious upbringing. Apart from it, it is also upbringing to religiousness and upbringing for and in a particular religion (2013, p. 126). It is worth remembering that religious education in early childhood should serve to deepen children’s knowledge about their own religion, to nurture respect for other people and for their religion and culture. For me, the upbringing to religiousness described by Katarzyna Olbrycht is the essence of the activities that I will describe in detail later in this article. It is an education that prepares a child to sensitively interpret, understand, and respect the religiosity of each person, but at the same time it is an education that teaches the need to search for truth, goodness, and beauty, to be open to transcendence, to contemplate the world, to search for meaning, to be in awe of the world, which should lead to the discovery God revealing

himself in it. Religious education is connected with endorsing one's own humanity (Olbrycht, 2013, p. 128).

What should constitute the foundation of all these activities is upbringing in the Christian faith, which, based on the love of Christ, translates into the attitude of a person who understands the need to teach personal values. Christian education, to which I am alluding, can be perceived in both anthropological and personalistic terms (Cichosz, 1997, p. 177). The former one, based on the tradition of Aristotelian–Thomist philosophy, envisions education as a natural development of the human being, which is a continuous process guided by educators, leading through a series of actions to comprehensive development. According to Cichosz, the essence of this approach is to emphasize that education involves unleashing human potential for growth and supports a person in doing good deeds (1997, p. 180). On the other hand, the personalistic theory says that “the central moment of the educational process should be the human being as a person” (Cichosz, 1997, p. 180). Of course, this perspective is associated with the philosophy of existentialism and the final Christian interpretation. Literature often claims that every human being is on the path to becoming a person who is open to goodness, truth, and beauty, and to choices rooted in a hierarchy of values which sets the spiritual and absolute sphere as the highest priority. These values are understood in Christian education as God's love (Gadacz, 1993, pp. 108–109). Nevertheless, in all concepts of Christian education, the importance of a relationship based on dialogue between an educator, who is a personal authority, and a student, who develops by assimilating the value of social relationships, is widely reiterated (Buber, 1968, p. 460). According to Cichosz (1997), we can even differentiate two levels of Christian education, which are illustrated in the table below.

Table 1. Two levels of religious education

Level of education	Characteristics
Natural	Associated with an existential notion of the human being – the task and purpose of this education is to properly develop a human being, taking into account their innate abilities (physical, mental, and spiritual). It is a universal level of education, which stresses the inviolable right to education according to one's own predispositions, but focused on fraternal coexistence, unity, and peace on earth.
Religious	The right to religious education for the baptized and believers for whom the ultimate goal is reconciliation and union with God – the dimension of moral attitudes concerns the achievement of theological virtues (faith, hope, and love) through contact with God in the process of internal transformation.

Source: Based on Cichosz (1997, p. 183).

The mutual complementation of these levels leads to the full development of the human being, who, thanks to the gradual learning of Christ's teachings, becomes more perfect every day.

Christian values in early childhood education

The issue of values was discussed even in ancient philosophical thought. Plato developed a philosophical understanding of the concept of Ideas, the knowledge of which is a condition for the proper valuation of the things that surround us. On this basis, he distinguished three values—Truth, Beauty, and Goodness—which he considered the most important. Marian Nowak writes,

values express what should be and what we wish to be; they inscribe an ultimate sense into reality, show what is truly significant and what is worth pursuing. They are the pillars on which social, personal, and community life rests. Chief human behaviors are motivated and regulated by values. (Nowak, 2001, p. 393)

The German philosopher Max Scheler posited an order of five ranks of values that I have decided to refer to in the context of my experience in early childhood education. His hierarchy is made up of five types of values: absolute (the most important) values, spiritual (cultural) values, vital values, utilitarian values, and hedonistic values (Wołoskiuk, 2011, p. 186). I would like to devote my attention to spiritual (cultural) values, which can be broken down into the following

groups: esthetic values, cognitive values, such as knowing the truth, and moral values (good). I used to refer to this group most often in conversations with children about the songs that we sang together. However, it is difficult to list all Christian values, because, according to Marian Nowak, they are basically all human values enriched by the depth and meaning that God himself has breathed into them, and bearing upon the dignity and rights of the person.

Values in education, therefore, are viewed as signposts or tips or are simply demonstrated in human attitudes. At the stage of early childhood education, it is the latter viewpoint that is the most illustrative for children. On a specific example of child or adult behavior, they can understand the essence of a given value and relate it to their own behavior. Nowak (2001, pp. 423–424) also proposed interesting strategies for communicating values when talking to students. First of all, it is a strategy of dissonance that involves confronting the student with divergent ways of thinking and evaluating. The second one is the strategy of testimony, which aims to stimulate and trigger the identification mechanism in students, i.e., unconsciously incorporating another person's qualities and attributes. The last one is the simulation strategy, in which the teacher's task is to concretize the values to which the student may already be sensitive. These methods may be useful in the context of spiritual values, which we want to reinforce in everyday education.

Music education

The music classes that I conducted in English at the school were held once a week, every Thursday. Each week, the students listened to one new song and repeated the already familiar song that they had learned the previous week. My goal was for each student to master two songs fluently within a month. In every class, in addition to listening and singing, we used the song to talk about our moods and interpreted it together. These songs usually contained short, often repetitive phrases that children could learn quickly and easily. In most cases, we also put together a simple choreography to make singing even more enjoyable. In another article, I discussed the objectives of the music education which I had the opportunity to observe at a Finnish elementary school. Let me just point out that many of

these objectives are also carried out by Irish teachers. I think that they should also guide Polish teachers, who could supplement the teaching of other subjects with music classes. The Finnish core curriculum includes the following goals: interpreting the ambiguity of music in different cultures and in the activities of the individual and the local community; strengthening the positive experience of music and laying the foundation for interest in music, which can last a lifetime; developing critical thinking about musical reception and enhancing the students' expressiveness (Adamczewski, 2018, p. 259). In addition, our students should be aware of why we teach them this particular song and who wrote it. At the initial stage, i.e., when listening to the song for the first time, the teacher's task is to make sure that the students properly understand the song which they are singing/listening to, see its written form, and correctly pronounce the lyrics individually and in groups. It is also important that they can start and end the song themselves, with or without the help of the teacher. The next stage, which takes place in the following class, is preparation for conscious singing. At this point, the students already know the text, the title, and the author, and most of them can already articulate the lyrics correctly. In this part, I often use the methodology of Rudolph Steiner, who introduced eurhythmics to Waldorf education as an intermediary between word and movement. According to Jadwiga Wasiukiewicz, eurhythmics is nothing more than visualizing speech and sound through beautiful movement and color.

The combination ... is about the harmony of experience, action, and behavior. It transposes the speech of words into the speech of rhythm and gesture. When singing, we can externalize our inner experiences by means of visible forms of movement. The teaching objective of this subject, in addition to exercises which enhance the smoothness and gentleness of movement, is learning about one's body, expressing oneself better and more fully by movement, gesture, facial expressions, and improving spatial orientation—in short, “the spirituality of physical education.” Later, it is used to express the content of musical pieces and songs: it is a “visible language” and “visible singing” and it performs a refining and socializing function. (Wasiukiewicz, 1998, pp. 30–31)

The teacher's task, therefore, is to draw the students' attention to the meaning of the lyrics, to their message, and to test whether the students understand it. For example, do we all hear the joy or sadness in this song? Do we all understand why we are thanking God

in this song and not Santa Claus? We will need this so that later, when singing and acting out the songs with movement, students can think about the Christian values conveyed by the song and try to apply them to examples from their own lives. Below, I will present a few songs that we sang together during my teaching internship in Belfast. I will also mention the children's interpretation, which has repeatedly shown the cognitive maturity of children at this stage of development.

The musical repertoire that either I or the children chose was never arbitrary. The song should reflect children's vocal abilities and relate to their interests. It is also important that the song is lively, joyful, and musically diverse. A variety of instruments, clapping, and tempo changes all have a motivating effect on children. Most of the songs were created by people who are believers or who deal with religious education of children in English-speaking countries. A teacher seeking such songs will find hundreds of them on popular music websites. However, the teacher's role is to make a choice (sometimes together with the children) and prepare them earlier for recapping the song and singing or playing it on a musical instrument.

Valuable songs in English lessons

In this section of the article, I will present songs that refer to the three spiritual values mentioned above: esthetic values, cognitive values of knowing the truth, and moral values (knowing good). In addition to Scheler's classification of values, it is worth quoting the definition of spiritual values formulated by Józef Tischner, who regards as the penultimate ones in his hierarchy

values among which it is easy to recognize the Platonic triad: Truth, Good, and Beauty. In this triad, Truth is the guiding value because it enables one to evaluate the situation and act ethically. (Tischner, 1982, pp. 68–77)

In the literature, we also find the theory of Natalia Zhyhaylo, who defines spiritual values as the incorporation of faith, desires, ideals, and the spirit of a nation into the worldview of a human being, which sets the direction of personal needs and desires and determines our direction in life. It is the human being's realization of the humanistic

opportunity, the purpose of his or her human activity (Zhyhaylo, 2016, p. 293).

I will start by discussing a song connected with students' perception of esthetic values. The song was written by Raffi Cavoukian, a Canadian songwriter for children. His music has been appreciated all over the world, and his 13 albums of children's music have not declined in value despite the passage of time. One of the songs is *Thanks a Lot* (1980), which talks about the wonderful world around us. Due to the lyrical nature of the song, children eagerly sing it lying down, with their eyes closed, imagining everything that was created by God. In the excerpt below, we can see how the author of the song tried to arouse in children a sense of esthetics and gratitude for the surrounding world.

Thanks a lot, thanks for the Sun in the sky. Thanks a lot, thanks for the whispering wind. Thanks a lot, thanks for the birds in the spring. Thanks for the animals, for the land, for the people everywhere. Thanks for all I've got.

[Polish translation: Dziękuję bardzo, dziękuję za słońce na niebie. Dziękuję bardzo, dziękuję za szepczący wiatr. Dziękuję bardzo, dziękuję za ptaki przylatujące wiosną. Dziękuję za zwierzęta, za ziemię i ludzi dookoła niej. Dziękuję za wszystko, co mam.]

The song does not mention the name of the creator of all beautiful things, but the very content encourages children to ask questions about the creation of the world. At this point, I talk with the students about the things and people without whom we cannot imagine life. It is also an interesting idea to sing this song at the end of each week before the children leave for home. Then we give thanks for the whole week we spent together and for the things we learned or had the opportunity to see.

Values of knowing the truth

The song *Honestly Be Honest* (2015), created by the Christian organization INCKids, not only persuades children to tell the truth, but also to make music. The melody is simple enough for students to play accompaniment on their own instruments while singing along. The song is about the joy that God and human beings feel when we