



# Varying curricular responses to children’s existential questions in RE syllabi from Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg

Karin Sporre<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

In which ways do curricula recognize existential questions of compulsory school students, and what direction is given regarding how to address them? By asking these two questions, this study analyses syllabi for the school subject of religion education and its equivalents in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and in the two German regions of Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg. The study forms part of a research project based in Sweden where, in 1969, the theme of ‘*livsfrågor*’—translated here as ‘existential questions’—was introduced into the curriculum. A qualitative content analysis of the use of the word ‘question’ in the respective languages is the basis for the comparative study of the current syllabi. The Berlin-Brandenburg and Danish syllabi recognize and, in integrated ways, address students’ questions, while the other syllabi do so considerably less. Significant variations in the relationship between the child and the curriculum are exemplified. The results of the study raise both religion educational and general didactic questions of how existential dimensions and subjectification (cf. Biesta in *World-centred education*, Routledge, 2022) can find their expression in curricula. Additionally, the question is addressed of whether students’ questions can be understood as crucial in their orientation in the world and responded to responsibly, for example in a *Bildung* context.

**Keywords** Existential questions · ‘*livsfrågor*’ · Subjectification · Curricular comparison · ‘*Bildung*’

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✉ Karin Sporre  
karin.sporre@umu.se

<sup>1</sup> Department of Applied Educational Science, Umeå University, 901 87 Umeå, Sweden

## 1 Introduction

The introduction in 1969 of the '*livsfrågor*' (literally meaning 'life questions' and translated here as 'existential questions') concept in the Swedish syllabus for the subject of religion education<sup>1</sup> (RE) was internationally unique. It took place in a thorough process of change when the former school subject 'knowledge of Christianity' (Sw. *kristendomskunskap*) was replaced by 'knowledge of religions' (Sw. *religionskunskap*), leaving the former Christian, Lutheran, confessional approach behind (cf. Hartman, 2000). The change took place in response to encompassing discussions in Swedish public debate<sup>2</sup> during the 1950s, and during 1960s demands for a non-confessional teaching at compulsory school were articulated, based on neutrality and objectivity. The introduction of *livsfrågor* in the syllabus as part of the transformation also represented an effort to increase students' interest in the RE subject, which was regarded as boring (Lindskog & Ronnås, 1969). Thus, the change came as a response to the demands for more plurality in RE teaching at compulsory school, and in an effort to make students enjoy the subject more. Studies of RE then, and today, include all Swedish school children, irrespective of the faith or beliefs of the children or their parents. It is taught throughout the nine years of compulsory school.

The curricular change stimulated research interest in the actual questions and thinking of Swedish children and youth, as empirical studies were lacking regarding which questions children and young people actually posed. This has developed into a Swedish research tradition of studies of children and youth and their questions. For studies from the latter part of the twentieth century see e.g. studies by Hartman (1986a, 1986b) and Hartman and Torstenson-Ed (2007), and for more recent studies see e.g. Gunnarsson (2008) and Risenfors (2011), as well as a collection of research studies, including international ones, by Ristiniemi et al. (2018).

The presupposition that students, like all other human beings, ponder about existential matters and express existential questions was characteristic of the RE curriculum adopted in 1969. In the next curricular reform, which took place in 1980, *livsfrågor* was given a central place and became the integrating underlying structure, or the hub of the RE subject. Additionally, it was also prescribed as a pedagogical approach to be applied in other school subjects. However, in the curricular reforms of 1994 and 2011, the role of *livsfrågor* was drastically changed and the curricula had considerably less focus on students' own existential questions. Instead, *livsfrågor* were to be studied via their expressions in religions and worldviews. Additionally, their curricular space was reduced and their integrative role was lost (Sporre, 2022; Sporre et al., forthcoming<sup>3</sup>). Thus, variations can be seen over time, not least in the space for and role of students' own existential questions.

<sup>1</sup> In international research, the school subject is called both religious education and religion education. As the Swedish subject has been non-confessional and plural since the 1960s, religion education can be seen as appropriate and is used here, abbreviated as RE. Religion education is also used and argued for by South African researchers (cf. Chidester, 2003; du Preez & Simmonds, 2021), to form a contrast with the former confessional, pro-apartheid religious education. There are also researchers who argue for the school subject to be named worldview education (cf. Bråten, 2021; Valk et al., 2020), in response to demands for plurality.

<sup>2</sup> The debate was initiated already in 1949 by the philosopher Ingemar Hedenius who in the book *Tro och vetande* [Faith and Science] from an atheist point of view argued against Christian influence in society and critiqued the role of confessional Christian theology in the academy. The extensive debate engaging many actors came to powerfully influence the societal climate (see e.g. Jansson, 2018; Girmalm, 2006) and led to demands for a new RE subject during the 1960s.

<sup>3</sup> In a forthcoming manuscript '*Livsfrågor*'—a Swedish narrative from the 1960s. What about its status in the 2020s and into the future? Sporre, K., Kärnebro, K., Lilja, A. & Osbeck, C. discuss these matters.

In this Swedish-based study, being part of the research project *The Child and Curriculum. Existential Questions and Educational Responses*,<sup>4</sup> curricula in use in 2021 in Sweden, Norway and Denmark, and in the two German regions of Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg, have been studied to explore how children's existential questions are recognized and what directions are given regarding how to respond to them. In a pre-study, the three Scandinavian curricula for RE in use in 2019 were studied, as were the Swedish RE curricula from 1969 to 2011 (Sporre, 2022). Regarding the role of *livsfrågor* in Sweden's neighbouring countries, Denmark and Norway, the three Scandinavian curricula in use in 2019 showed varying levels of interest in students' existential questions, with the Danish one demonstrating the most active interest, followed by the Norwegian curriculum which allowed for dialogue with students as part of the teaching, and finally the Swedish one with the least interest. In the Swedish syllabus, attention was focused on how existential questions form part of—and are expressed in—popular culture, religions and other worldviews, but are not stated to be students' own questions. However, the Danish syllabus clearly presupposed that students have existential questions, while the Norwegian and Swedish syllabi did not. In the Danish syllabus students' questions also had an integrating function. The Norwegian syllabus provided opportunities for dialogue in situations of plurality but without explicitly mentioning students as bearers of existential questions, and the Swedish syllabus positioned existential questions as something for students to study through culture or worldviews (Sporre, 2022).

In the present study two syllabi from two German regions have been added, as have new syllabi for Sweden and Norway due to curricular revisions in these two countries. This means that RE curricula *in use in 2021* in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg are compared. In Germany, curricula are not national but vary between regions. Additionally, RE has an explicit confessional basis in Bavaria, which is not the case in Berlin-Brandenburg; these two regions were chosen to represent additional variation beyond what could be expected between the Scandinavian countries.

In view of the above, the *aim* of this study is *to explore the ways in which existential questions of children are recognized, and what kind of direction is given regarding how to address them in the current RE syllabi in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Bavaria and Berlin-Brandenburg, with the purpose of characterizing the relationship between the child and the curriculum.*

Following the distinctions by Goodlad and Su (1992) between various levels of curricula this study limits itself to a study of curricula at the institutional level, i.e. of RE syllabi at the national or regional level, leaving the societal, instructional and experiential levels aside. Such a delimitation could raise questions, not least regarding the relevance of societal processes leading up to the formulation of curricula or syllabi or the actual enactment of curricula on the instructional and experiential level, but resources for more extensive studies have not been available.

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<sup>4</sup> In the research project we have repeated some earlier empirical studies of children's existential questions to be able to make comparisons over time with newly gathered data. The findings are summarized in a forthcoming article by Osbeck, C., Kärnebro, K. Lilja, A. & Sporre, K. In another study, children's drawings and thoughts about space beings from the 1980s are analysed as an example of Cold War spirituality (Buchardt et al., 2022). Based on eleven interviews with teachers from 2019–2020, discourses have been analysed regarding strategies and the actual scope for working with students' questions during lessons (Kärnebro, accepted).

The pre-study had a similar but slightly differently formulated aim,<sup>5</sup> and adapted its analytical tools from Hartman (2000) and Biesta (2009a, 2009b). In this analysis, the more recent work by Biesta (2022) has influenced the analysis and the interpretive process. In both the pre-study and this study, qualitative content analysis has been used. This is described in more detail below, when the material is presented and methodological concerns are discussed. In the results section, analyses of the syllabi are followed by a separate comparative section, and the article ends with a concluding discussion.

## 2 Research overview

The research overview starts with perspectives from John Dewey regarding relationships between students and curricula in line with the research interest stated in the aim. Next follows a summary of the theoretical work of Gert Biesta of relevance for the analysis in this article. Finally, reference is made to the ongoing discussion on powerful knowledge, of relevance also for research regarding RE and for this study, as it has implications for relationships of students and curricula.

### 2.1 Either the child or the curriculum?

In *The Child and the Curriculum*, Dewey (1902/1906) warned against posing a dichotomy between the child and the curriculum and favouring **either** the child **or** the curriculum. Instead, Dewey underlined the need to see the complexity of the relationships between the two parties. Later on, in *Experience and Education* (1938/1963), Dewey demonstrated within his own theoretical framework a way to negotiate various aspects of an educational process, i.e. how students' experiences and the activities prepared by a teacher could connect meaningfully. In line with Dewey's warning against either/or positionings, the focus of this study is on *the relationship between the child and the curriculum*, recognizing variations in such relationships.

### 2.2 Subjectification and an existential dimension in education

Important contemporary discussions of relevance for curriculum construction have been initiated and further developed by Gert Biesta. He has argued for the need to rethink the purposes of education, identified as qualification, socialization and subjectification (Biesta, 2009a). In relation to the present study, which deals with students' existential questions and responses to them, it is interesting to note how Biesta has elaborated on the dimension he has called 'subjectification (e.g. Biesta, 2009b, 2017). The way his discussions on 'subjectification' elaborates on students' possibilities of at depth accessing the education they are exposed to is in line with the interest in this study of children's existential questions, and their role in RE education. In his recent work *World-centred education: A view for the present*, Biesta (2022) has summarized and further developed his discussion on subjectification, as well as other aspects of his educational philosophy. Regarding subjectification (i.e.

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<sup>5</sup> 'The aim is to study and analyse how students' existential questions are mentioned in the curricular texts and how such questions are to be met through teaching, thus focusing on the relationship between the child and the curriculum' (Sporre, 2022, p. 368).

the personal dimension of education), Biesta denotes it 'the existential dimension of education' (Biesta, 2022, p. 40 f.; see also chapter 4, pp. 40–57). Biesta regards this dimension as essential for education but describes such a dimension as often being missing from today's discourses of education. However, for education to be truly educational, Biesta regards this as fundamental (2022, pp. 6–9). At the core of this existential dimension of education is the capacity of education to become (or not become) an existential challenge to a student. When elaborating on this aspect of his work, Biesta draws on the work of Dietrich Benner (2015) (see Biesta, 2022, pp. 33–36; 46–47). Subjectification can be said to express educational processes where students are summoned and challenged to come into an agency of their own; this can be named an 'Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit' (the German concept proposed by Benner and used by Biesta; in English: prompt for self-activism). Through such processes, education can be understood as being existential.

Next, when addressing the role of the teacher in his elaboration of the challenges of education today, Biesta uses the term 'pointing',<sup>6</sup> thereby framing the task of the teacher as directing the student's attention in a certain direction. Additionally, Biesta makes the point that the educational process, and 'subjectification' as part of this process, is not about the students becoming self-centred, but about them becoming persons who are existentially challenged to agency in the surrounding world, assisted by an education that is world-centred, and where the teacher points to the world (Biesta, 2022, pp. 75–102). In summarizing the analyses to follow, Biesta's theoretical perspectives are taken into consideration.

### 2.3 Powerful knowledge

Another discussion that has stimulated a strong interest in the construction of curricula during the past decade is the discussion on 'powerful knowledge' (cf. Muller & Young, 2019; Young, 2013; Young & Muller, 2013). It has raised questions, both more generally and in relation to specific school subjects like history (Nordgren, 2017) and RE (e.g. Franck, 2021; Franck & Thalén, 2023; Osbeck et al., 2023; Stones & Fraser-Pearce, 2021, 2022), regarding what could constitute the best possible knowledge—so called 'better knowledge'—and how this knowledge can be made accessible to all young people through their education. Critical voices have articulated concerns about the limitations that a focus on powerful knowledge might involve for curricular construction. It has been argued that a focus on knowledge cannot be enough when goals for education are formulated; the forming of citizens or personal development, i.e. the flourishing of a person, also needs to be taken into consideration (cf. White, 2018). Additionally, there is the matter of how the knowings of a child can develop at school when understood as a generative practice with the capacity to provide new experiences, as an alternative to viewing curricular practice as primarily being about transferring knowledge—as articulated by Carlgren (2020).

Keeping in mind Dewey's warning against taking an either/or approach towards the child and the curriculum, while also noting how his theory focuses an instructional encounter between the child and the curriculum, such perspectives serve as openings into the research interest behind the study reported on in this article. His warning sustains the effort to understand variations of relationships between the child and the curriculum comparatively, as expressed in contemporary national or regional syllabi, in a search for

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<sup>6</sup> Here, Biesta draws on another of the German pedagogues, Prange (2012), who has elaborated on 'zeigen' (Eng. show, point) as the crucial didactical activity.

variations in these relationships, building on analyses of the extent to which students' existential questions are recognized and how they are addressed in curricula. For the analysis Biesta's theoretical discussion on 'subjectification' is the crucial grid as articulated above.

### 3 Material and methodological concerns

The Swedish transformation during the 1960s from a confessional 'knowledge of Christianity' subject to one emphasizing a study of religions and other worldviews, including students' existential questions and studies of ethics in the same syllabus, demonstrates a width in terms of how a school subject can be organized. Schreiner (2013) gives an overview of the variations within today's Europe regarding what constitutes RE subjects. In his overview, Schreiner points to various ways of constructing RE subjects and summarizes the complex dependency as being related to (a) the religious landscape in a given country; (b) the image of religion in society; (c) the relationship between state and religion; and finally, (d) the education system.

As indicated, the material for this explorative study consists of RE syllabi and their equivalents in use in Bavaria, Berlin-Brandenburg, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. All syllabi are available electronically, and were downloaded in April 2021 when the analytic work began.<sup>7</sup> In addition to syllabi from the three Scandinavian countries—where certain similarities and differences could be found, given the fairly similar but still different cultural and historical backgrounds—two German regions were also included in this study. In Germany, the curricula and school systems vary between the regions, and the subject of RE can take on a confessional form in cooperation between faith communities and school (which is not the case in Scandinavia), although other forms of organization can also be found. Adding two German regions provided more variation in the possible relationships between the child and the curriculum, which is of value in this qualitative study. The chosen syllabi, the school systems they operate within and the studied texts are introduced below, followed by methodological concerns relating to the qualitative content analysis used.

#### 3.1 Five curricular contexts

##### 3.1.1 Bavaria

In Bavaria, there is a single school system for the first four years (*die Grundschule*), after which several different school forms exist up until the tenth or eleventh school year. The subject of RE is split up into various confessional RE subjects representative of several faith traditions, and for those who do not study RE a non-confessional ethics subject (*Ethik*) is compulsory.<sup>8</sup> To limit the number of studied syllabi, a decision was made to study six syllabi: *Evangelische Religionslehre* ('Protestant RE'), *Katolische Religionslehre*

<sup>7</sup> The syllabi were downloaded on 13 April 2021. Links to the websites applicable at that time are listed in Attachment 1. The information given in the downloaded documents forms the basis for the descriptions and analyses included in this article.

<sup>8</sup> At the time of downloading the syllabi, April 2021, syllabi were available for *Evangelische Religionslehre*, *Katolische Religionslehre* and *Ethik*, and also for *Alt-Katolisch*, *Orthodox* and *Jewish Religionslehre*. In January 2022, Muslim teaching (*Islamischer Unterricht*) was also accessible.

(‘Catholic RE’) and *Ethik* (‘ethics’) for both the first four school years and for secondary school in preparation for further studies (*das Gymnasium*), grades five to eleven. The curriculum for Bavaria was adopted in May 2014, and was gradually introduced from the 2014/15 school year onwards.

The main documents for analysis were the ‘*Fachprofile*’ for the six syllabi, consisting of 10 to 11 pages each. Two additional documents—‘*Lehrplan PLUS*’ (340 pp.) for the first four years and ‘*Bildungs- und Erziehungsauftrag für die Gymnasium*’ (12 pp.) for grades five to eleven—gave an overview and placed the subject of RE and its equivalents within the wider curricular context. It should be noted that all six syllabi began with a paragraph about the self-understanding of the subject and its contribution to ‘*Bildung*’, which is formulated as an overall goal for German schools.

### 3.1.2 Berlin-Brandenburg

In Berlin-Brandenburg, school starts with four initial years (*die Grundschule*) followed by secondary ‘*Gymnasium*’ studies in grades 5–10 for all students. The documents assessed include the overall document (*Teil A, Bildung und Erziehung in den Jahrgangsstufen 1–10*, 8 pp.), which gives an overview of the education for the 10 years of school, and its counterpart, part B (*Teil B, Fachübergreifende Kompetenzentwicklung*, 36 pp.), which provides an educational overview and describes interdisciplinary competence development. However, for the analysis in this study, two other documents are of particular interest: a) *Teil C, Sachunterricht, Jahrgangsstufen 1–4* (43 pp.) (Part C, General Education) for the first four years, and b) *Teil C, Lebensgestaltung—Ethik—Religionskunde, Jahrgangsstufen 5–10* (28 pp.) (Part C, Lifestyle/Way of life—Ethics—Religious Studies) for grades 5 to 10. These two documents form the main texts for study, and the web versions were made available in November 2015.

### 3.1.3 Denmark

The Danish syllabus for the subject of RE encompasses nine years of compulsory school. The document ‘*Kristendomskundskab’ Faghaefte 2019* (78 pp.) (Knowledge of Christianity, subject booklet 2019) has been used in the analysis. The goals for the subject were formulated in 2009 and have remained the same since then. The syllabus begins by listing the overall goals for the nine years of school, followed by competence goals for the subject of RE, while the second half of the document gives guidance for teaching. This is a considerably extensive curricular document compared to the documents used in the other two Scandinavian countries.

### 3.1.4 Norway

The Norwegian curriculum has undergone considerable revision in recent years. The present syllabus ‘*Læreplan i kristendom, religion, livssyn og etikk, KRLE*’ (9 pp.) (Syllabus for Christianity, religion, view of life and ethics, KRLE) for the subject of RE was introduced on 1 August 2020 and is valid for ten school years. The syllabus initially describes the relevance of the subject and its crucial values, lists core elements, interdisciplinary themes and basic skills, and concludes by stating competence goals and describing their assessment. Existential questions (*eksistensielle spørsmål*) are explicitly mentioned as a theme under core elements.

### 3.1.5 Sweden

New curricula for the nine years of Swedish compulsory school were adopted in August 2020, and have been in use since August 2022. The RE syllabus for *Religionskunskap* (Knowledge of religions) consists of six pages. It is structured in three parts: the purpose of the subject, core content and knowledge requirements. Three themes of core content are given for school years 4–9: religions and other outlooks on life; religion and society; and ethics and existential questions (*etik och livsfrågor*). For school years 1–3, the thematic structure is different and existential questions are mentioned once under the theme ‘living together’ (*leva tillsammans*).

## 3.2 Methodological concerns

### 3.2.1 Analytical focus

It is obvious that the studied syllabi for the RE subjects are not immediately easily comparable, as the subjects vary in content and have different names, the documents are not equal in length (i.e. they are not detailed to the same degree), and the syllabi cover varying primary and secondary school ages. Additionally, the syllabi are in different languages<sup>9</sup> and from different contexts. From a methodological point of view, these differences present difficulties and require reflection on the interpretive strategies to ensure that meaningful comparisons can be made. A thorough and close reading and re-reading of the texts forms the basis for such a study. Comparative schemas were developed during the analysis, including a number of quotations from the respective syllabi.<sup>10</sup>

In this particular case, the word ‘question’ in the respective languages has been the initial primary search term (the word for ‘question’ being ‘*Frage*’ in German, ‘*spørgsmål*’ in Danish, ‘*spørsmål*’ in Norwegian and ‘*fråga*’ in Swedish). I have searched the texts electronically for the specific word for question, but have also added the corresponding words ‘existential’ and ‘life’ (*liv/Leben*) to the search. I also came to tentatively search the texts for the word ‘answer’, as the word for ‘answer’ appeared in relation to the use of ‘question’ in some of the texts, and pointed in the direction of educational responses to students’ questions, which proved to be of interest.

The approach of searching in this way opened up the texts, and allowed me to see in greater detail how questions are used as part of the content of the syllabi, addressing analytical questions like “Whose are the questions?” and “What kinds of questions are mentioned, existential ones or others?” In the analysis, I was also able to study additional questions: “How should the questions be responded to?” and “What is the general role of questions in the syllabus?” In this manner, the way the word for ‘question’ was used in the texts became the analytical focal point. The use of these questions in the study of the

<sup>9</sup> Regarding possible difficulties when working with these four languages, it can be noted that the three Scandinavian languages are quite close to one another and can be mutually understood given some training. In terms of German, the author has five years of study. Where uncertainty arose on occasions, Google Translate was used and the author’s competence was sufficient to check the accuracy of Google translations compared to the author’s own translations.

<sup>10</sup> In addition to the pre-study (Sporre, 2022), the author has also compared curricula from varying contexts, searching for crucial curricular concepts in studies of ethics education (Sporre, 2020; Sporre, 2021a).



syllabi, plus the elaboration of the study's background in the Swedish context has been ways to clearly and openly handle the study's situatedness.

### 3.2.2 Existential questions—'livsfrågor'—and other questions

As a background to this search, it can be noted that when we formulated the aim of the research project *The Child and Curriculum. Existential Questions and Educational Responses* (the C & C project), of which the present study is a part, we avoided giving a narrow, content-oriented definition of what we mean by existential questions. Rather, we stated:

The aim of this study is to generate new knowledge on *children's existential questions as educational concerns*; both as expressions of their worldviews and as questions seeking knowledge that are calling for educational responses. (Project description, p. 1, italics in original.)

With this aim, we wanted to allow for an empirical, wide search for what can be of interest to children, namely both questions—expressions of what can be called their worldviews and questions where their general quest for knowledge is at stake—and for both kinds of questions to be regarded as being of existential significance to them.<sup>11</sup> By focusing the content analysis in this study on the word for question, supplemented by the words for 'liv', 'Leben', etc., the analysis has allowed for a broad search.

It can be noted that the definition from the application, written in 2018, presupposes children's questions to be of existential significance to them. In this sense, it touches on the theoretical work by Biesta (2022), described above, when he states a need for education to be *existential*, and when he develops his work regarding the subjectification dimension of education and its existential challenge to students, that asks for their own agency. Bringing the discussion of Biesta to the field of RE, a study of RE syllabi ought to be a place where existential dimensions could be a part, as a RE subject can be an arena where existential dimensions of human existence can find expression—perhaps more so than in other school subjects.

However, given the wider understanding of questions as acknowledged in the definition of the C & C project it opens up also for a more general pedagogical discussion of the inclusion of students and their questions in education. One empirical study of RE that explicitly discusses the role of questions was conducted by Osbeck (2019), who notes a relationship between communicative patterns in school classes, where children's asking of questions when they are curious or do not understand enhance the class's overall results.

### 3.2.3 Qualitative content analysis

As with any qualitative content analysis of texts, this analysis presupposes a narrow study of the texts, taking note of the expressions as well as the structure of the syllabi. This involves reading the texts with both an open attitude and a critical eye, in terms of the way the texts are constructed. For example, which overall statements are made and how do they balance with the more detailed aspects of the texts? It also requires familiarity with

<sup>11</sup> A question illustrating the difficulty of designating a question as existential or not is when a student today asks questions of a factual character relating to climate change. Is such a question to be characterized as not existential because it asks for facts?

the educational contexts of the studied syllabi. In a discussion on what characterizes content analysis and thematic analysis in qualitative studies, Vaismoradi et al. (2013) discuss the matter of these forms of analyses and lean towards content analysis as having an element of quantifiability connected to it. As this study has an initial interest in the frequency of the use of the word ‘question’, I chose to call what is undertaken a content analysis, although the focus is not merely on the quantity but more on the contexts of the texts, the expressions, what is emphasized, etc. In that sense, this is a *qualitative content analysis* that searches for variations in the relationship between the child and the curriculum.

Limitations include the fact that the enacted curriculum of classrooms is ignored, which of course is true for all studies that limit themselves to studies of curricular texts. Another limitation of this study of five different contexts is that the overall societal curricular context is not elaborated on (cf. Goodlad & Su, 1992). Time and resource constraints are the main reasons for this.

Given that this study compares texts from various contexts, in different languages and in syllabi for more or less similar school subjects, the study requires a certain degree of humility in its interpretations, while quotations from the syllabi are used in the results section to reinforce the interpretations and conclusions. As translations are offered in English here, the original wording appears in the footnotes in most cases.

To summarize the methodological approach, a number of electronically available RE syllabus texts from the three Scandinavian countries and two German regions have been studied by using the search term ‘question’ in the respective languages to examine whether children’s existential questions are addressed and, if so, which directions are given for dealing with them in the education. This allows variations in the relationship between the child and the curriculum to be identified.

## 4 Results—existential questions, responses to these questions, and relationships between the child and the curriculum

### 4.1 Five contexts

First, the five different contexts are reported on, followed by the comparative analysis. Finally, the concluding discussion follows. When studying these curricula, adjusting for the varying lengths of the texts and the repetitions that may arise due to competence goals being repeated, for example, it becomes obvious that students’ questions are recognized and addressed most frequently in the syllabi for Berlin-Brandenburg and Denmark.

#### 4.1.1 Bavaria

When analysing the role played by students as bearers of existential questions in the six studied Bavarian syllabi, this role is mentioned—albeit not particularly frequently—in the syllabi for both Protestant and Catholic RE.<sup>12</sup> In the ethics syllabi, students’ questions are primarily connected to ethical and moral issues, such as the environment, medicine

<sup>12</sup> For references to syllabi for the respective region or country in the following sections, please see Attachment 1. When stating more general conclusions I do not refer explicitly to the relevant documents, which I do when quoting or describe more detailed observations.

and working life, but are not characterized as being existential. When evaluating whether students' questions are a driving force in the educational processes this is not the case in either ethics or Catholic RE; instead, it is the content of the subject that is emphasized and attention is drawn to students' encounters with the content. This tendency can also be seen in the syllabi for Protestant RE, albeit to a lesser degree, and more of an engagement with students' own questions is expressed. For example, it is stated regarding the subject of RE at upper secondary school that:

It gives children and young people space to address, reflect on and repeatedly clarify questions about life, meaning and the question of God.<sup>13</sup> (*Fachprofile, Evangelische Religionslehre, Gymnasium*, p. 3) [Author's translation.]

Here, the subject of RE is described as providing a space for the existential questions of children and young people and can be seen to offer them more space for agency than when they encounter a particular content. As indicated, questions in general are ascribed an educational purpose in the Protestant RE syllabi, with some questions being problematized as exposing secondary students to ambivalences and contradictions, with the syllabus also stating that there are some questions that cannot be answered with any degree of finality (p. 3).

As noted above, it is stated in Protestant RE and Catholic RE that the existential questions of students in grades 1–4 and 5–11 include questions about God. According to the syllabi, these questions should be responded to by connecting to the knowledge that the tradition offers, including answers about God and Jesus Christ. Here, the Protestant RE also includes perspectives from other Christian traditions and other religions. In the case of the ethics subject, what is offered in response to questions are understandings from the philosophical tradition, its argumentative approach and critical distancing, and an understanding of crucial contemporary questions as being of an ethical or moral kind. Regarding the question of meaning and a value-oriented life, the syllabus for the ethics subject regards it as giving a good foundation and describes this as a priority. When it comes to questions about religion, exchanges with RE teachers are suggested.

In summary, the studied Bavarian syllabi generally demonstrate more interest in the educational responses to students' questions than in the questions themselves. The Protestant and Catholic RE syllabi recognize that students have existential questions, with questions about God being given particular attention. Regarding Catholic RE and the syllabi for the ethics subject, the responses offered by the respective traditions are emphasized and students' questions are given little attention. It is in the Protestant RE syllabi that the relationship between the child and the curriculum is more balanced and various questions, including students' questions, play a general role.

#### 4.1.2 Berlin-Brandenburg

In the two studied syllabi from Berlin-Brandenburg, students' questions play a central role. When the subject goals are introduced, a number of questions are articulated, including "Who and how am I?" (*Teil C, Sachunterricht, 1–4*, p. 3), "Who am I?", "What should I do?" and "How should I live?" (*Teil C, L-E-R, 5–10*, p. 3).

<sup>13</sup> In German: *Er gibt Kindern und Jugendlichen Raum, Lebens- und Sinnfragen und die Frage nach Gott zu thematisieren, zu reflektieren und immer wieder neu zu klären. (Fachprofile, Evangelische Religionslehre, Gymnasium, p. 3).*

In the general syllabus for the foundational four school years (which are not split up into different subjects), questions are understood to be part of the communication through which children develop. Children's questions, and also their answers, for example after processes of searching for educational knowledge, are seen as integral parts of education. Furthermore, the syllabus is thematically constructed, with the themes being *Erde* ('earth'), *Kind* ('child'), *Markt* ('market'), *Rad* ('bicycle'), *Tier* ('animal'), *Wasser* ('water'), *Wohnen* ('living') and *Zeit* ('time'). There are no special RE themes, and a search for words like 'existential', 'religion' and 'faith' do not give any results in the syllabus. However, a search for the word 'life' (*Leben*) reveals community aspects of humans living together, like environmental and global questions.

The syllabus for lifestyle, ethics and religion (L-E-R) for school years 5 to 10 explicitly names existential questions. When explaining how the subject connects to the first four school years and the content of L-E-R is expressed, it states that:

The development of the content of L-E-R primarily serves key problems relevant to young people and fundamental questions of life. The phenomena of the lifeworlds of the students thus form the starting point for the L-E-R lessons.<sup>14</sup> (*Teil C, L-E-R, 5-10*, p. 3) [Author's translation.]

Underlining the relevance of the subject content to youth and foundational life questions, it is also explicitly emphasized further on in the syllabus that students' questions are not to be *Anknüpfungspunkte* ('points of connection'), but are rather to be *the content* of the teaching (p. 3), thereby pointing to the crucial role of young people's questions. This goes hand in hand with *Partizipationskompetenz* ('participation competence'), which is described as the core competence through which a student interacts with the subject (pp. 4–7).

While weight is explicitly given to the role of students' questions in the syllabi, both syllabi also suggest themes and content, thereby suggesting ways to concretize the various themes. In such a way, material for students to interact with in their education is systematically developed (*Teil C, Sachunterricht, 1–4*, pp. 21–43; *Teil C, L-E-R, 5–10*, pp. 17–28). The educational responses to students' questions are thereby elaborated on through the way they form content and should be engaged with throughout the education. From a content point of view, the L-E-R syllabus is centred around various aspects of human existence. In sum, the syllabi of Berlin-Brandenburg provide a wide curricular space for existential questions within an integrated curriculum that both recognizes students' questions and elaborates on how they can be expanded through the content of the syllabi.

### 4.1.3 Denmark

When analysing whether students' existential questions are recognized, it is important to note how the Danish syllabus articulates a particular thought construct that undergirds the whole of the RE syllabus. This is called *den religiøse dimension* ('the religious dimension'), and is expressed in the first of the main goals for the subject of RE. It states that students should acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to understand the religious dimension and its significance for people's life interpretations (*Kristendomskundskab*,

<sup>14</sup> In German: *Der Erschließung der Inhalte in L-E-R dienen primär jugendrelevante Schlüsselprobleme und lebensrelevante Grundsatzfragen. Die Phänomene der Lebenswelten der Schülerinnen und Schüler bilden somit den Ausgangspunkt des L-E-R-Unterrichts.* (*Teil C, L-E-R, 5–10*, p. 3.).

*Faghefte*, 2019, p. 7).<sup>15</sup> When the religious dimension is elaborated on later in the syllabus, it is described as referring to the idea that all human beings pose existential questions in their lives. The syllabus also states that, in the subject of RE, human beings are understood to be searching for the foundational conditions of existence and this search is defined as the religious dimension (*Kristendomskundskab*, *Faghefte*, 2019, p. 25).<sup>16</sup> Based on this, the subject of RE should equip students to reflect on basic human life conditions relating to human existence. Religions and other worldviews are furthermore constituted by such basic questions and can be understood as answers to them. The subject of RE has four competence areas, with philosophy of life and ethics (*Livsfilosofi og etik*) occupying a central position. Regarding this area, the syllabus states that:

In the work with the religious dimension, the competence area of philosophy of life and ethics can ideally integrate the other competence areas, so that the students can raise questions based on their own experiences of existence, and can also encounter questions and answers, as expressed in Christianity and other outlooks on life.<sup>17</sup> (*Kristendomskundskab*, *Faghefte*, 2019, p. 27) [Author's translation.]

Here, it is articulated—and, thus, recognized again—that students raise questions. However, it is also made clear that in Christianity and other outlooks on life, students can encounter answers to questions about existence, while the competence area of philosophy of life and ethics has an integrative function in relation to the other areas: Christianity, Biblical stories, and non-Christian religions and other conceptions of life (p. 27). When the syllabus describes how to develop philosophy of life and ethics teaching, it states that this should be organized in order to address the students' openness and curiosity about life (*spørgelyst*), and should be based on the students' immediate experiences and interests (p. 31). To summarize, the Danish RE syllabus presupposes that children and youth, like human beings in general, pose existential questions, and that students pose questions out of curiosity. The teaching offers them answers to existential questions from religions and other outlooks on life.

#### 4.1.4 Norway

In the new Norwegian KRLE syllabus, 'existential questions' (*eksistensielle spørgsmål*) are included in the RE syllabus for the first time as a new core element (cf. Sporre, 2022). Regarding the exploration of existential questions, it is stated that:

The subject [RE] is about different ways human beings have approached questions about meaning and identity, and have viewed the world through religions, worldviews, ethics and philosophy. The subject should provide space for reflection, philo-

<sup>15</sup> In Danish: *Eleverne skal i faget kristendomskundskab tilegne sig viden og færdigheder, der gør dem i stand til at forstå og forholde sig til den religiøse dimensions betydning for livsopfattelsen hos det enkelte menneske og dets forhold til andre.* (*Kristendomskundskab*, *Faghefte*, 2019, p. 7.).

<sup>16</sup> In Danish: *Begrebet den religiøse dimension fortolkes som, at alle mennesker stiller spørgsmål til deres liv. Det betyder, at i faget opfattes mennesket som et væsen, der søger en mening med tilværelsen, og at det er denne spørgen ind til tilværelsens grundvilkår, der defineres som den religiøse dimension i fagformålet.* (*Kristendomskundskab*, *Faghefte*, 2019, p. 25.).

<sup>17</sup> In Danish: *Kompetenceområdet livsfilosofi og etik kan i arbejdet med den religiøse dimension med fordel integrere de øvrige kompetenceområder, så eleverne kan stille spørgsmål ud fra deres egne erfaringer med tilværelsen, men også kan møde spørgsmål og svar, sådan som de kommer til udtryk i kristendommen og andre livsopfattelser.* (*Kristendomskundskab*, *Faghefte*, 2019, p. 25.).

sophical conversation and wonder by exploring existential questions. Students should also be able to relate to issues on which there is deep disagreement.<sup>18</sup> (KRLE, 2020, p. 3) [Author's translation.]

The syllabus indicates that human beings have approached questions about meaning, identity and reality via religions, other outlooks on life, philosophy and ethics in various ways, and that this should be part of KRLE education. Questions where there is great disagreement are also mentioned as something that students should be able to handle. Space should be provided for reflection, conversation and wonder in the exploration of existential questions, although these are not explicitly described as being students' questions.

Next, as part of the curricular structure, explicit connections are made between existential questions and two of three cross-cutting, or interdisciplinary, themes: 'public health and life skills' and 'sustainable development'. These themes are described as cross-cutting as they are present within the various subjects of the curriculum, and so are addressed from the KRLE point of view as being existential questions. When 'existential questions' are connected to life skills (*livsmestring*), knowledge about human dignity and its foundation in religions and other outlooks on life is highlighted. Regarding sustainable development and its exploration as an existential question, the syllabus mentions ethical reflection on nature and the place of human beings within it.

Students' experiences—or, rather, the background in students' own experiences—are explicitly mentioned on one occasion in the KRLE syllabus. This is when students' competence to identify ethical dilemmas and discuss moral problems is referred to and their experiential background is described as something to draw on, in addition to their ability to empathize with others and use ethical models and concepts.

In sum, the insertion of the 'existential questions' theme in the KRLE syllabus means that it is connected to certain themes and issues. Basically, existential questions are understood as being present within religions or other worldviews or having their expression in actual themes or areas such as sustainable development or public health and life skills. The syllabus as a whole does not recognize students as bearers of their own questions—existential or otherwise—to any great extent, and the treatment of existential questions in the syllabus must rather be seen as providing direction for how these questions have been or could be dealt with in existing traditions or through future approaches. A relationship to students is not actively established.

#### 4.1.5 Sweden

In the new Swedish curriculum, Lgr 22, which has been shortened as part of the recent revision, the former role of existential questions as a fourth theme (together with matters of identity) has been changed and *livsfrågor* are now connected to ethics, under the theme 'Ethics and existential questions' (*Etik och livsfrågor*). In this revision, four themes have been reduced to three. The teaching of RE in relation to the third theme, ethics and

<sup>18</sup> In Norwegian: *Faget handler om ulike måter mennesker har nærmet seg spørsmål om mening, identitet og virkelighetsbilde gjennom religioner, livssyn, etikk og filosofi. Faget skal gi rom for refleksjon, filosofisk samtale og undring ved å utforske eksistensielle spørsmål. Elevene skal også kunne forholde seg til spørsmål det er dyp uenighet om.* (KRLE, 2020, p. 3.).

existential questions, should develop "... an ability to reason about ethics, moral issues and existential questions from various perspectives."<sup>19</sup> (Lgr 22, p. 1) [Author's translation].

It is not primarily the case that existential questions (*livsfrågor*) are regarded as belonging to children or young people, i.e. as being theirs, as in the two earlier syllabi from 1969 and 1980 when *livsfrågor* were introduced. Rather, the emphasis in the revised syllabus is on 'various perspectives'. However, the role of students' questions is somewhat strengthened in the most recent revision compared to Lpo 94 and Lgr 11 (cf. Sporre, 2022), in which students' questions and thinking were not addressed. The expression '*elevernas egna tankar*' ('students' own thoughts') (Lgr 22, p. 3) can now be found under the heading 'Core Content', as part of conversations and reflections on existential questions for school years 4–6 and 7–9.<sup>20</sup> However, 'students own thoughts' are mentioned together with interpretations within religions (also adding other worldviews for grades 7 to 9), while favouring knowledge about religions and worldviews might risk students' own thoughts being downplayed. In addition, it is not expressed anywhere in the syllabus that human beings formulate existential questions or that such a search forms part of human experience. Existential questions are generally understood as being connected to religions and worldviews, and as being expressed within them.

As existential questions are not primarily regarded as 'belonging' to the students and students' questions are not in themselves to be addressed directly, it is rather the interest that students are expected to have in them that should 'come into play'. This assumed interest can be said to be a means within the education, and students' questions can only be seen as being addressed indirectly.

Further direction regarding how to deal with or address *livsfrågor* can be traced in examples of what *livsfrågor* consist of: friendship, gender roles, death, identity, love, sexuality, what is important in life, and the meaning of life (Core Content for grades 1–3, 4–6 and 7–9). This means that some direction is given in terms of *which* content can be brought up when dealing with the more general existential questions, *livsfrågor*, and religions and worldviews together with children's and young people's own thinking can then be used. Looking at the knowledge requirements, the students are supposed to 'reason' (*resonera*) about *livsfrågor* or 'talk' (*samtala*) about them, so a verbal and argumentative approach is the competence that teachers should evaluate. Here, the overall purpose of *livsfrågor*—to contribute to *reflection* for the development of students' understanding of the surrounding world and personal development—becomes evident, and an argumentative approach to the education is a priority.

In sum, the revised Swedish RE syllabus vaguely recognizes students' existential questions, but mainly sees them as being present in the content of the subject. These questions should accordingly be addressed primarily through various examples from the content of the teaching. A capacity to approach these questions verbally via reasoning is suggested.

<sup>19</sup> In Swedish: "... förmåga att resonera om etik, moraliska frågor och livsfrågor utifrån olika perspektiv." (Lgr 22, p. 1.).

<sup>20</sup> For grades 1–3 in Lgr 22, the expression '*livsfrågor med betydelse för eleven*' ('existential questions of importance for the student') was also found in Lgr 11, while this does not constitute a strengthening.



## 4.2 Comparative analysis

### 4.2.1 Children's existential questions—recognized to what extent?

In the studied syllabi, children's existential questions are most clearly recognized in the Berlin-Brandenburg L-E-R syllabus and the Danish RE syllabus. They are also recognized to a lesser degree in the Protestant RE syllabus from Bavaria. In syllabi from Sweden, in Catholic RE and ethics from Bavaria, and in RE from Norway, any explicit recognition of existential questions as being students' questions is limited, if it exists at all.

### 4.2.2 Responses to children's questions—how?

When summarizing various responses to children's existential questions, three possible alternatives emerge from the syllabi. First, students' existential questions can be actively integrated into curricula, as in the L-E-R syllabus. However, they can also form part of a general didactical strategy as in the syllabus for the first four years of the Berlin-Brandenburg curriculum, in which children's questions, and the communication surrounding them, are seen as *the way through which they learn*. The Danish RE syllabus is another example of an integrated RE syllabus, with students' existential questions as a theme being regarded as having the capacity to integrate the whole subject of RE. Secondly, students' existential questions can be regarded as absent (or almost absent), but students are offered various responses to such questions. In this study, the responses from a faith tradition (Catholic RE), from the philosophical tradition (ethics, Bavaria) and from several religions and worldviews (Sweden and Norway) exemplify this. Thirdly, a position in between the two above can be identified, here exemplified by the syllabus for Protestant RE in Bavaria, where students' questions are recognized and are seen as an opportunity for dialogue with the curricular content.

### 4.2.3 Relationships between the child and the curriculum

In line with the discussion initiated by Dewey on the relationship between child and curriculum (Dewey, 1902/1906), and the research interest here of students' existential questions—or questions in general *the emphasis* placed on this in the Berlin-Brandenburg and Danish syllabi point to a crucial difference between the studied curricula. The syllabi from Sweden and Norway and Bavaria's Catholic RE and Ethics syllabi do not give clear indications about how to relate to the students' experiential world, which the Protestant RE syllabus from Bavaria does to some extent.

If the results are also evaluated against Biesta's (2022) discussion on subjectification as both an individual experience of being called to agency<sup>21</sup> and a crucial dimension of education (Biesta, 2022), the empirical results here indicate that an individual dimension of subjectification is strong in the Berlin-Brandenburg syllabi and the Danish one, but less so in the others. Regarding the opening up of the RE educational setting to existential dimensions, this can be said to be strong in Bavaria's Protestant and Catholic RE syllabi,

<sup>21</sup> Compare the expression '*Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit*', see footnote 1, and Biesta's discussion in chapter four of *Subjectification Revisited*, pp. 40–57 (Biesta, 2022), as briefly summarized earlier in this article.



in L-E-R in Berlin-Brandenburg and in the Danish RE syllabus, but less so in the Swedish and Norwegian RE and the ethics syllabi in Bavaria, where more cognitive approaches seem to downplay openings towards existential aspects of the issues at stake.

Taken together, the Berlin-Brandenburg and Danish syllabi have the most integrated and interwoven relationships between the child and the curriculum, but still do not favour one over the other. In the other curricula, the attention is very much on the content as expressed in the respective syllabi, and less attention is given to how to relate to and engage students, which can be seen also in some discussions in relation to 'powerful knowledge'. Protestant RE in Bavaria represents a position where this is somewhat less prominent, and more attention is devoted to students' questions and how to engage them.

## 5 Concluding discussion

Inspired by the inclusion of *livsfrågor* in the Swedish curriculum in the 1960s, this study started out with an interest in the role of and responses to children's existential questions in RE subjects, with the purpose of exploring how relationships between the child and the curriculum could be constructed differently. The results have shown variations in terms of the relationships between the child and the curriculum, with more or less integrated approaches emerging.

One limitation with the chosen approach is that so little of the contextual settings of the studied curricula are addressed. The questions of 'why' a syllabus has a certain emphasis remains. Additionally, any study and comparison of curricular texts only examine one part of the educational reality and what is enacted 'on the ground'; the actual teaching and the learning that take place do not emerge in studies of this kind. In other words, what teachers do and what students experience in the studied countries and regions might differ from what these steering documents indicate, although the active guidance of steering documents or mandated evaluative processes direct and limit what can be enacted. For example, the strong impetus to work with students' questions in the Berlin-Brandenburg and Danish syllabi indicates a direction and provides suggestions for those interested in working with students' questions, while the directions in other curricular systems may be experienced as not actively supporting this and therefore form possible limitations.

From an RE subject didactical perspective, it is interesting to note that the opportunities to deal with existential questions are addressed so differently, as exemplified in the varying positions in the study. These range from a confessional offering of one faith tradition to an offering of other faith traditions, and are further exemplified in schools being understood as an open, common space for existential searching. There is also a view of schools as arenas where, for the sake of neutrality and objectivity, existential dimensions seem to be downplayed. A further research dialogue about the contextual reasons behind the variations in curricular formation in the studied contexts would add additional knowledge probably also regarding possibilities for transformations and change.

In a more general educational, or didactical, approach early on in the Swedish research and in discussions on children's *livsfrågor*, their questions were seen as being part of their orientation in the world (Hartman, 1986a, p. 38; Hartman, 1986b, pp. 20–25). They could have various questions: "eternal questions", questions about knowledge, about good and evil, right or wrong, beautiful or ugly" (Hartman, 1986b, p. 23; cf. Hartman, 1986a, pp. 164–169). Imitating such a broad definition, the C & C project included children's various questions as part of its aim by not defining existential questions narrowly. In this particular

study, this inspired and sustained an open search for the role of questions (including various qualifiers, such as ‘*liv/Leben*’ (‘life’) or ‘*existentiell*’ (‘existential’)). This led to a discussion on the more general role of questions as a didactical approach in education, with the Berlin-Brandenburg syllabi clearly demonstrating such an approach, possibly reminiscent of the role played by *livsfrågor* in the 1980 Swedish curriculum, Lgr 80 (cf. Sporre, 2022). The use of questions, both then and now, can be connected to the discussion of children’s questions as part of their orientation in the world. This can be related to a discussion on *Bildung* figuring strongly in the work of Biesta (2022) and being discussed by Brinkmann (2022), the latter arguing that theories of *Bildung* must include aspects of uncertainty, freedom and transformation, articulate possibilities and “not be captured as competences, as facts or as outputs” (Brinkmann, 2022, p. 1).

Finally, taking the questions of today’s children and youth as a starting point, it is noticeable that *only* the Norwegian curriculum has raised issues of sustainability as an existential question to be dealt with at school by children and young people, not least given the way climate-related issues are expressed for example in *Fridays for Future*. In this respect, curricular reform seems to be absolutely essential in order to respond to the creativity of children and young people in articulating their concerns (cf. Kvamme, 2020; Sporre, 2021b; Sporre & Osbeck, 2022) and assuming moral authorship (Sporre et al., 2022). Recent policy documents underline the need to rethink education towards a common global good (UNESCO, 2015), and in the Sustainable Development Goals of Agenda 2030 education is urged to play a crucial role in promoting global justice.

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**Data availability** The studied curricular documents were published online and are listed in Attachment 1.

## Declarations

**Conflict of interest** There are no conflicts of interest.

**Ethical approval** The research project was granted permission by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority, Dnr. 2019–01828. The particular study reported on here is based on document studies, so there was no reason to obtain informed consent.

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## Attachment 1

### Bavaria

LehrplanPLUS Grundschule Lehrplan für die bayerische Grundschule, 338 pages: <https://www.km.bayern.de/epaper/LehrplanPLUS/files/assets/common/downloads/publication.pdf>

- Fachprofile Grundschule Ethik, 10 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/grundschule/ethik>
- Fachprofile Grundschule Evangelische Religionslehre, 11 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/grundschule/evangelische-religionslehre>
- Fachprofile Grundschule Katholische Religionslehre, 11 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/grundschule/katholische-religionslehre>
- Fachprofile Gymnasium Ethik, 10 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/gymnasium/ethik>
- Fachprofile Gymnasium Evangelische Religionslehre, 11 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/gymnasium/evangelische-religionslehre>
- Fachprofile Gymnasium Katholische Religionslehre, 11 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/fachprofil/gymnasium/katholische-religionslehre>
- Bildungs- und Erziehungsauftrag des Gymnasiums, 12 pages: <https://www.lehrplanplus.bayern.de/bildungs-und-erziehungsauftrag/gymnasium/katholische-religionslehre>

## Berlin-Brandenburg

- Teil A Bildung und Erziehung in den Jahrgangsstufen 1 – 10; 8 pages: [https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche\\_Fassung/Teil\\_A\\_2015\\_11\\_16web.pdf](https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche_Fassung/Teil_A_2015_11_16web.pdf)
- Teil B Fachübergreifende Kompetenzentwicklung, 36 pages: [https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche\\_Fassung/Teil\\_B\\_2015\\_11\\_10\\_WEB.pdf](https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche_Fassung/Teil_B_2015_11_10_WEB.pdf)
- Teil C Lebensgestaltung-Ethik-Religionskunde Jahrgangsstufen 5 – 10, 28 pages: [https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche\\_Fassung/Teil\\_C\\_L-E-R\\_2015\\_11\\_10\\_WEB.pdf](https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche_Fassung/Teil_C_L-E-R_2015_11_10_WEB.pdf)
- Teil C Sachunterricht Jahrgangsstufen 1–4, 43 pages: [https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche\\_Fassung/Teil\\_C\\_Sachunterricht\\_2015\\_11\\_16\\_web.pdf](https://bildungsserver.berlin-brandenburg.de/fileadmin/bbb/unterricht/rahmenlehrplaene/Rahmenlehrplanprojekt/amtliche_Fassung/Teil_C_Sachunterricht_2015_11_16_web.pdf) (retrieved also 22 01 17)

## Denmark

- Kristendomskundskab Faghefte 2019, 78 pages: [https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Gsk\\_fagh%C3%A6fte\\_Kristendomskundskab.pdf](https://emu.dk/sites/default/files/2020-09/Gsk_fagh%C3%A6fte_Kristendomskundskab.pdf)

## Norway

- Læreplan i kristendom, religion, livssyn og etikk (KRLE), 9 pages: <https://data.udir.no/kl06/v201906/laereplaner-1k20/RLE01-03.pdf?lang=nob>

## Sweden

- Lgr 11 (revised), 6 pages: <https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.5a061df817791f8257b7bb/1613978696675/Religionskunskap.pdf>
- Impossible to find 21-09-22—instead found at: <https://www.skolverket.se/download/18.645f1c0e17821fd15c2d95/1622621706171/Religionskunskap.pdf>
- Kommentarsmaterial till kursplanen i religionskunskap. Grundskolan: 35 pages: <https://www.skolverket.se/getFile?file=7845>

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