

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

WHAT IS RELIGIOSITY?

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RELIGIOSITY

Religiosity is a complex concept and difficult to define for at least two reasons. The first reason is the uncertainty and imprecise nature of the English language. Colloquially, in *Roget's Thesaurus* (Lewis, 1978), religiosity is found to be synonymous with such terms as religiousness, orthodoxy, faith, belief, piousness, devotion, and holiness. These synonyms reflect what studies of religiosity would term as dimensions of religiosity, rather than terms that are equivalent to religiosity.

A second reason for this complexity is that current interest in the concept of religiosity crosses several academic disciplines, each approaching religiosity from different vantage points, and few consulting one another (Cardwell, 1980; Demerath & Hammond, 1969). For example, a theologian would address religiosity from the viewpoint of faith (Groome & Corso, 1999), while religious educators could focus on orthodoxy and belief (Groome, 1998). Psychologists might choose to address the dimensions of devotion, holiness, and piousness, whereas sociologists would consider the concept of religiosity to include church membership, church attendance, belief acceptance, doctrinal knowledge, and living the faith (Cardwell, 1980). This use of different terms across academic disciplines to identify what could be thought of as like dimensions of religiosity makes it difficult to discuss without an explicit definition from the viewpoint of religious education and the application of that knowledge to the lived experience.

DIMENSIONS OF RELIGIOSITY

Glock and Stark (1965) have been influential in defining religious orientations, origins, and dimensions. In doing so, Glock and Stark identified five dimensions of religiosity: experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, and consequential. The experiential dimension focuses on the personal faith experience, perhaps a transcendent encounter, while the ritualistic domain involves the worship experience that is involved in community. The ideological dimension is "constituted by expectations that the religious will hold to

certain beliefs” (i.e., professed doctrines), and the intellectual dimension “has to do with the expectation that the religious person will be informed and knowledgeable about the basic tenets of his faith and sacred scriptures” (i.e., history, sacraments, morality; p. 20). Glock and Stark admitted that these latter two dimensions are closely related, “since knowledge of a belief is a necessary condition for its acceptance” (pp. 20-21). However, they also acknowledged that belief does not necessarily flow from knowledge, nor does all religious knowledge accompany belief.

Fukuyama (1960) examined four dimensions of religiosity that he identified as cognitive, cultic, creedal, and devotional, which are summarized in Cardwell (1980):

The cognitive dimension is concerned with what individuals know about religion, i.e., religious knowledge. The cultic dimension makes reference to the individual’s religious practices, i.e., ritualistic behavior. The creedal dimension is concerned with a personal religious belief, and the devotional dimension refers to a person’s religious feelings and experiences, i.e., the experiential dimension. (p. 6)

Once again, it is possible to exemplify religiosity through religious knowledge but still be lacking in the other three dimensions: cultic, creedal, and devotional. And again, acquisition of one dimension of religiosity, perhaps the cultic dimension, does not guarantee the acquisition of any of the others. As with Glock and Stark (1965), religiosity in one dimension does not necessarily flow into all dimensions of religiosity.

Allport and Ross (1967) identified two basic dimensions of religiosity: extrinsic and intrinsic. They interpreted extrinsic religiosity as a self-serving and utilitarian outlook on religion that provides the believer with comfort in salvation. These individuals are disposed to use religion for their own ends, such as status, sociability, and self-justification, and often selectively shape a creed to fit their own ends. A person with intrinsic religiosity is one who internalizes the total creed of his or her faith and moves beyond mere church attendance. These individuals find their master motive for life in religion, and their other needs are brought into harmony with their religious beliefs: “The extrinsically motivated person uses his religion, whereas the intrinsically motivated person lives his religion” (p. 434). Again, this finding is similar to previously reported research.

Lenski (1963) identified four different ways in which religiosity might be expressed: associational, communal, doctrinal, and devotional. In agreement with Glock and Stark (1965), Lenski felt that it is possible to be religious in one way without being religious in other ways and found data to support this claim. A person could be highly visible within a church community but not truly accept its doctrines; or one could be extremely devotional

in private. A religious person may not allow some dimensions of religiosity to invade daily life; a person may know or believe, but not live accordingly.

Attempting to describe the broadest range of religiosity, Bergan and McConatha (2000) defined religiosity as a number of dimensions associated with religious beliefs and involvement. In arriving at this definition, they pointed out that early research associated with religiosity focuses primarily on the unidimensional concept of religious attendance. These researchers noted that reliance on religious attendance alone as a measure of religiosity could lead to incorrect conclusions, especially in studies with older adults for whom attendance might pose a physical problem. For this population, the aspects or dimensions of religiosity, such as private devotions and religious belief systems, may serve as more accurate measures of religiosity (Ellison, 1991; Ellison, Gay, & Glass, 1989; Kristensen, Pedersen, & Williams, 2001).

Other recent studies of religiosity stressed a multidimensional focus of religiosity that encompassed such concepts as the subjective, cognitive, behavioral, social, and cultural dimensions (Chumbler, 1996; Ellison, 1991; Ellison et al., 1989). Aspects of religiosity such as private devotion are also accepted as important, going beyond the emphasis merely on church attendance. Interest in the measurement of religiosity has led to an exploration of the relationship among multiple dimensions of religiosity. Ellison et al. (1989) examined three dimensions of religiosity: private devotion, religious attendance, and denominational connection. Ellison's later study (1991) expanded on and examined four dimensions of religiosity: denominational ties, social integration, personal sense of the divine, and existential certainty.

Similarities exist in the dimensions of cognitive and intellectual; communal is similar to denominational ties and religious attendance; social integration is similar to the dimensions of intrinsic/extrinsic religiosity. Many researchers placed an emphasis on the dimension of religiosity that deals with religious knowledge (Chumbler, 1996; Fukuyama, 1960; Glock & Stark, 1965; Lenski, 1963), while only a few focused on the application of that knowledge (Allport & Ross, 1967; Ellison, 1991).

There has been disagreement regarding the importance of this link between the cognitive dimension of religiosity and behavior. Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) wrote

religious knowledge, that is, the knowledge of a religion's scripture and tradition, is not considered a good measure of religiosity, simply because the majority of believers surveyed, in Western countries at least, seem to be quite ignorant of what are considered basic elements of (their own) religious tradition. (p. 109)

Conversely, Stark and Glock (1968) wrote, "it is obvious that some min-

imum knowledge is necessary for religious commitment; the tenets and rituals of a religion must be known if they are to be believed and practiced" (p. 141). Many authors (Allport & Ross, 1967; Cardwell, 1980; Glock & Stark, 1965) agreed that beliefs and religious participation can be practiced in virtual ignorance, yet they also acknowledged that all religious institutions expect their members to know doctrine, to participate in ritual, and to have comprehension of both.

MEASUREMENT OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE

Because the term religiosity is widely used, but difficult to define in a manner that is agreed upon by all researchers, there is a wide variety of measurement tools being developed to examine the individual dimensions of religiosity. Approaching religiosity from different academic disciplines affects both the focus and the content of the measurement tool.

Intellectual Dimension/Orthodoxy

The intellectual dimension of religiosity involves the expectation that the religious person will be informed about the chosen faith; the measurement of this dimension would be with a test of faith knowledge. For example, Glock and Stark (1965) suggested that religious literacy tests be constructed that would include a wide range of questions on the origin and history of the religion. The intent of Glock and Stark was to assess a view of Christianity over many different religious traditions using a four-question measure of religious knowledge designed and administered to adults that covered the basic knowledge of the Ten Commandments, Scripture, and Old Testament prophets.

Extrinsic/Intrinsic Dimension

Approaching religiosity from the lived perspective, Allport and Ross (1967) originally designed the Religious Orientation Scale (ROS), which was composed of an 11-item extrinsic scale to measure the extent to which individuals use their religion for their own ends and a nine-item intrinsic scale to measure the extent to which individuals live their religion. Batson and Ventis (1982) revised the ROS measure by adding a third dimension, one of quest, which measures the degree to which an individual's religion involves an open-ended responsive dialogue with six items. A revised 12-item measure has been produced by Batson and Schoenrade (1991) and the authors have now developed four new questionnaire scales that combine versions of the above three with an orthodoxy scale (Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993) to measure what they now term means, ends, and quest dimensions of religiosity.

CONSEQUENCES OF RELIGIOSITY

The positive effects of religiosity, in both the social and educational realms, are attracting the attention of many researchers. The application of a variety of the dimensions of religiosity to specific situations in everyday life is the subject of much research. Bergan and McConatha's (2000) study of adolescents, young adults, and adults in later life, demonstrated a small positive relation between religiosity and happiness across all three age groups: "Overall, the results of studies examining religiosity and life satisfaction generally indicate that people who express stronger religious faith and involvement also report fewer stressful life events and greater life satisfaction" (p. 25). Religious affiliation was found to be a significant predictor of general life satisfaction and a sense of belonging and purpose in life, as is indicated in a number of studies, including recent studies regarding the benefits of religiosity by Dezutter, Soenens, and Hutsebaut (2006), Walker (2003), and Fontaine, Duriez, Luyten, Corveleyn, and Hutsebaut (2005).

Religiosity affects not only specific demographic groups, but individuals as well. Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) wrote extensively about the individual effects of religiosity, which include: developing a sense of compassion, honesty, and altruism as well as happiness and quality of life, health, and mental health. Walker (2003) analyzed extensive research which involved many aspects of the intersecting of religion and morality, concluding that the religious experience is important in moral functioning. A study by Roccas (2005) concluded that there is a high correlation between religiosity and values.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION OF RELIGIOSITY TO BEHAVIOR

By measuring altruism and empathy, several researchers (Batson et al., 1993; Watson, Hood, Morris, & Hall, 1984) found a link between religiosity and behavior. A study investigating volunteerism among adults, measured in a Gallup poll, found that 46% of "highly spiritual" people were committed to working with the poor (Beit-Hallahmi & Argyle, 1997). A study among 142 high school students (Hardy & Carlo, 2005) identified religiosity as a significant predictor of kindness, as well as anonymous and altruistic prosocial behavior. They based their research on recent advances in which multiple types of prosocial behavior have been identified: compliant, public, anonymous, dire, emotional, and altruistic.

Focusing on the cognitive dimension of religiosity, a study by Dezutter et al. (2006) found that religious orientation and social-cognitive approaches to religion were significantly related to well-being. A review of the effect

of formal religious training on moral development in Beit-Hallahmi and Argyle (1997) referred to a study by Kedem and Cohen (1987), which found positive effects of formal religious education at school, especially for older children. However, Rest (1986) chronicled conflicting evidence regarding the link between moral behavior and moral judgment resulting from moral education. In outlining the conflicting results of several studies, Rest wrote that the "impact of formal religious education depends on the quality of that education" and that the "success of religious education programs in promoting moral judgment development is perhaps best understood as an interplay of the educational environment and student characteristics" (p. 57). Rest found that "religious education shows an unclear, mixed relationship; and religious knowledge tends to correlate significantly with moral reasoning, but both may be related in part to cognitive ability" (p. 130).

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Recently, there has been a focus on moral development in particular within the context of the school environment. An increase in social problems with school-aged youth since the mid-1950s has resulted in demands that schools address moral issues and assume the responsibility of instilling a commitment to basic social values. Such values as honesty, hard work, and social responsibility are being identified as traditional values that should be advocated.

Current approaches to moral education tend to focus on different aspects of social and moral functioning based on differing theories of moral development and socialization. "Socialization refers to the development process through which individuals learn" sociomoral values and acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively and meet their own needs within the social community (Battistich, Schaps, Solomon, & Watson, 1991, p. 94).

One method for assessing the effectiveness of moral education involves the application of moral judgment or moral reasoning. Kohlberg (1969) revised and extended Piaget's theory of developmental stages by providing a detailed outline of moral development describing a sequence of distinct stages of cognitive organization. Through the use of an interview instrument that offered hypothetical situations, Kohlberg determined that an individual's moral orientation progresses from one that operates in conformity with authority, through one of identification with the norms of society, to morality in which the individual holds to, and acts upon, self-chosen and abstract principles of justice. These principles of personal justice may or may not be formed by knowledge of one's faith or the cognitive dimension of religiosity. Kohlberg posited that the goal of moral education is not only the acquisi-

tion of the cognitive knowledge of a faith tradition, but also the stimulation of the natural development of the individual child's own moral judgment capacities allowing him or her to use moral judgment to control his or her behavior (Kohlberg, 1981).

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The behavioral goal of school programs that foster sociomoral development is behavior that is commonly termed prosocial (Solomon, Watson, Schaps, Battistich, & Solomon, 1990), which includes helping, sharing, and other seemingly intentional and voluntary positive behaviors for which the motive is unspecified, unknown, or not altruistic (Eisenberg, 1982). The common foundation of these behaviors is that an individual's actions are oriented toward protection, maintenance, or enhancement of well being of an external social object.

Interest in the development and maintenance of prosocial behaviors "increased dramatically in the 1960s and early 1970s" (Eisenberg, 1982, p. 2) and continues to expand, indicating an increasing interest in prosocial behavior, its study, and methodologies. The literature focuses on the roots and determinants of prosocial thought and behavior, the "emergence of prosocial behaviors in childhood" (p. 3).

Current educators approach prosocial behavior from different theoretical perspectives (Battistich, Watson, Solomon, Schaps, & Solomon, 1991). Philosophers, such as Aristotle (Frankena, 1965) and Kant (1959), have taken the position that in order for behavior to be classified as moral it must be motivated by rational cognitions that are related to duty and responsibility. Other philosophers argued for an affective as well as a cognitive basis for moral actions (Blum, 1980). Yet another major theory is rooted in social learning theory and emphasizes overt and observable behavior. Current researchers have increasingly examined the relation between the cognitive and the behavioral domains of morality, developing prosocial behavior (Eisenberg, 1987).

Efforts to outline the factors involved in the acquisition of prosocial behavior were studied by Eisenberg (1987). Such factors include: the internalization of humanistic values and patterns of prosocial behavior; modeling; and moral reasoning. She wrote of the interrelatedness of these factors, stating that "socialization experiences undoubtedly affect cognitive functions" and that the cognitive factors "undoubtedly influence the child's reactions to socialization experiences" (p. 34). More recently, Eisenberg (2004) examined the input of genetic inheritance as well as the family environment in the development of prosocial behavior.

LEARNING PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR: MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Much is written regarding the conceptualization and socialization of prosocial behavior within the larger context of moral development (Eisenberg, 1982, 2004; Eisenberg & Valiente, 2002). Approaches to moral development are of great interest in contemporary education, as attempts are made to develop methods of moral learning that will produce positive behavioral outcomes (i.e., prosocial behavior). Research centers around which method of moral development will lead to prosocial behavior, particularly in the elementary school setting.

Internalization of social norms and values is often labeled as sociomoral development. Since sociomoral development has become a major area of theoretical interest during the last 20 years, there is a focus on creating a more comprehensive model of moral education that can guide education in these areas. Two general models have developed: the societal-transmission perspective (Bandura, 1977; Durkheim, 1925/1961; Freud, 1923/1976) and the self-construction model (Kohlberg, 1969, 1976; Piaget, 1932/1965).

The societal-transmission proponents see socialization as a unilateral process in which adults pass on the values and norms of society in an attempt to shape children's behavior. Many theories of socialization are based on the societal-transmission model of sociomoral development, including Bandura's (1977) social learning theory and Freud's (1923/1976) psychoanalytic theory as well as Durkheim's (1925/1961) sociological theory of social integration. The societal-transmission point of view focuses on socialization as a unilateral process in which adults communicate societal norms and values to children, thereby shaping their behavior through instruction. This is a precursor to formal classroom moral education.

The self-construction proponents favor the concept that sociomoral development is achieved through interaction in which the student develops a commitment to social norms through experience (Battistich, Schaps, et al., 1991). The self-construction model is associated with cognitive developmental theory (Kohlberg, 1969, 1976; Piaget, 1932/1965). Sociomoral values are actively constructed by the individual through interaction with others and through participation in social groups. According to Piaget, a definition of socialization emphasizes the child's developing awareness of the conditions that lead to cooperation with peers. Through this interaction in problem solving and negotiation, the child comes to realize that the values for operating in society are motivated by mutual respect and working for the benefits of all. "With advances in social cooperation and the corresponding operatory progress, the child arrives at new moral relationships based on *mutual respect* which lead to a certain *autonomy*" (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969, p. 127).

The contemporary contention is that neither model is complete in its own right, and that neither offers a complete account of the processes that accompany sociomoral development. Some of the noted theorists (Bandura, 1977; Kohlberg, 1969) recognized the interdependence of both traditions and the interconnectedness of the individual and the group in this development. Researchers (Gibbs & Schnell, 1985; Rest, 1986) saw the complementary perspectives of the societal-transmission and self-construction models.

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL: PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH MORAL EDUCATION

Eisenberg (1987) wrote that “American educators have traditionally claimed that ‘moral education’ is one of their primary objectives” but that current teaching of morality in schools has been restricted to preaching on virtues (p. 97). Eisenberg lamented the fact that for years there were very few “concerted efforts to integrate prosocial values, ideals, and behaviors into the curriculum in American elementary schools” (p. 98).

The purely cognitive emphasis of education during the 1950s fostered a strong emphasis on academic achievement. The social climate from the 1950s to the 1970s “was one of increasing concern for the rights of the individual and a declining emphasis on obligations to the community, and these social trends were reflected in educational practice” (Battistich, Schaps, et al., 1991, p. 93). The school setting switched from one of shaping character and developing traditional values to one of promoting personal growth. Criticism of that educational system has led to calls for reform and demands are being voiced for the school system to once again address moral and social issues.

Current theory in education has led to a return to advocacy of traditional values. The last 15 years have witnessed a focus on moral development, in particular within the context of the school environment (Battistich, Schaps, et al., 1991). Boyatzis (2005) chronicled a “conspicuous surge” of interest in research on child development and religion, explaining how this trend “exploded in the 1990’s” (p. 124) and continues through the present day. An increase in social problems with school-aged youth since the mid-1950s has resulted in demands that the schools address moral issues and assume the responsibility of instilling a commitment to basic social values. Such values as honesty, hard work, and social responsibility are being identified as traditional values that should be advocated.

Contemporary approaches to moral education tend to focus on different aspects of social and moral functioning based on differing theories of moral development and socialization. “Socialization refers to the developmental process through which individuals learn” sociomoral values and acquire the

knowledge and skills necessary to function effectively and meet their own needs within the social community (Battistich, Schaps, et al., 1991, p. 94). This socialization process is facilitated by providing the students with opportunities to experience positive relationships, and to develop the skills and knowledge to function competently in school and in the larger society.

Battistich, Schaps, Solomon, and Watson (1991) felt that socialization “is a constructivist process of active accommodation to the social environment that is pursued by the child in order to become increasingly autonomous and effective” (p. 98). This suggests that schools can best develop sociomoral values when they provide students with opportunities to experience positive relationships with adults and peers while they develop the knowledge and skills necessary to function in the school and societal environment.

If children are intrinsically motivated to establish and maintain attachments to others, and if adherence to the norms and values of the group is instrumental to social adaptation, they will naturally come to accept and adopt as their own the norms and values of those with whom they are attached. (p. 99)

The role of the teacher is to be a socializing agent by providing a supportive environment within the educational setting. In general, the implications for education and sociomoral development center on a model of the ideal school environment as a caring community that is characterized by a clear commitment to fundamental prosocial values. Eisenberg wrote, “the weight of the evidence clearly indicates that children are likely to imitate the altruistic actions of models they observe and thus enhance their own prosocial behavior” (1987, p. 69). Thus, the implications of the research on moral development point to the conclusion that many factors are involved in acquiring morality and that could lead to prosocial behavior.

Since the early 1970s, Rest (1986) has described a number of educational programs and interventions aimed at developing moral values or moral development in the school setting. Although some of the studies reported a level of success, the duration of all of the interventions was too short to effect a permanent change in individual lifestyle. These studies ranged from 32 hours to the length of a semester, with ages ranging from elementary school through graduate programs. The net result is that these studies have produced meager or conflicting results. Rest indicates that no “studies have demonstrated directly that changes wrought by these moral education programs have brought about changes in behavior” (p. 131). Each of the programs described in the meta-analysis may have been effective within a small setting for a short period of time.

A recent study by Ji (2004) examined the association between religiosity and moral development. The results showed that education does play a role in shaping that relationship and that intrinsic religiosity is an important predictor of moral reasoning.

Although the general conclusion is that religiosity leads to good consequences in life, few studies find a correlation between the cognitive dimension of religiosity and prosocial behavior, or the connection between knowledge and moral behavior.

PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR THROUGH AFFECTIVE EDUCATION

Walker and associates (Walker, Pitts, Hennig, & Matsuba, 1999) are concerned with what they call “gappiness,” or the fact that moral action does not always flow from moral thought and that morality has both intrapersonal and interpersonal components. Eisenberg was also concerned with the relationship between moral judgment and moral conduct, opining that although they are associated, “there is not a one-to-one correspondence between them. An individual with mature sophisticated concepts and judgments about moral issues may or may not ordinarily *behave* in prosocial ways” (Eisenberg & Mussen, 1989, p. 6).

Contemporary educators have become increasingly aware of the importance of providing students with educational opportunities that develop characteristics and skills in the cognitive, and behavioral aspects of moral judgment, as well as the affective domain (Graczyk et al., 2000). Today’s schools are the setting in which affective education is advanced and promoted in an effort to go beyond the quest for purely academic achievement. It is within the school setting that opportunities for students to develop, practice, and receive recognition for emotionally appropriate and socially competent behaviors can be addressed and nurtured. By educating children in how to cope with stressful situations and assisting children in feeling that they are in control of their emotions and actions, children develop skills that will be useful for a lifetime, including increased social and academic competence. “Effective efforts to address students’ social and emotional needs can promote academic performance and citizenship, and decrease the likelihood that students will engage in maladaptive and risky behaviors such as violence, substance use, and early and unprotected sexual activities” (Graczyk et al., p. 391). This educational process takes place within a positive environment, an affective school setting, where students’ emotional education is a part of the curriculum.

Educators are in a position in which they are faced with a variety of theoretical perspectives and programs that claim to reintroduce sociomoral learning to the classroom in an effort to foster prosocial behavior. Although

the goal is similar—the socially and emotionally balanced student who will be an asset to society—the focus of each program is slightly different, each built on a slightly different foundation. Some approach this goal from the direction of values and morals, while others focus on the end point of a specific behavior, prosocial behavior.

THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: MORAL EDUCATION + AFFECTIVE EDUCATION

The goal of religious education is to produce religious persons who are capable of acting in Christian (prosocial) ways in everyday life (Groome, 1998). The General Directory for Catechesis (GDC) states that “the aim of catechetical activity consists in precisely this: to encourage a living, explicit and fruitful profession of faith” (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §66). While the goal remains to teach people a sound knowledge of their faith, “knowledge alone is not enough: our primary intent is that people choose to live it.... We must explicitly invite people—as part of the curriculum—to make choices that are Christian, encouraging them to practice their faith” (Groome & Corso, 1999, p. 13). The goal of religious education is to combine moral education with affective education, through religious education (i.e., the study of faith values) in an attempt to produce Christian behavior.

Many of the aspects of the programs and projects described earlier reflect the goals and structure of religious education. A basic component of education that takes place within a religious setting is the development of values and norms that mirror the tenets of the faith, most significantly, prosocial behaviors. The goal is to “create an environment that promotes the nurturing of the faith and its practice” offering samples of community building activities for the students: senior citizen pen pal, clothing collection, nursing home visits, community service projects (Schuttloffel, 2000, p. 112). Creation of this vital Christian community marked by “the observance of Jesus’ new commandment to love each other as he has loved us is not an optional or unimportant part of the Catholic school, but central to its purpose” (Hoffman, 1985, p. 3). Further, a central theme of religious education is that it occurs within the context of a caring community that stresses the value, worth, and potential of each individual student. Catholic education is focused on the development of social skills that reflect moral values in a Christian faith community (Groome, 1980).

The cognitive dimension of religiosity, religious education, is “not just one aspect of education but is the binding force in education and is central to the educational process as a whole” (Sealey, 1985, p. 41). Sealey writes that this is so because a sense of religious understanding provides an insight into every other way of thinking. This religious foundation becomes a vehi-

cle of communication within the location of living that spiritual dimension, and involves the overt teaching and strengthening of the Christian faith through inculcating doctrine and a way of life.

Groome (1998) wrote that religious education in the Catholic school provides communities that prepare students to be citizens who care for the common good. Their faith identity, being committed to the reign of God in the world, leads to their ability to function as one who has a social commitment enlivened by faith. Groome also outlined aspects of religious education that encompass the relational aspect of the faith, the affective dimension, the behavioral dimension, the lifelong process as well as the cognitive dimension involved in believing. Hyde (1990) described religious education as “gaining information and, to some extent, understanding Christian discourse” (p. 361). Hyde also posited that “adequate religious learning in childhood arises only from the spontaneous religion which children create for themselves out of religious material which they are taught, and only by their own religious activity can full religious understanding be achieved” (p. 364).

The religious school has always been involved in the internalization of norms and values, that being its purpose from the outset (Lee, 1985). By developing a community setting in which the student feels welcome, the socialization process serves as the foundation of religious education. Further, all three categories of learning—cognitive, behavioral, and affective—have been interwoven within religious education as students address cognitive development in the academic setting, behavioral development in the practicing of faith rituals, and affective development in the building of social relationships. Schlutloff (2000) describes the tenets of a Catholic educational philosophy as: (a) an opportunity to learn faith knowledge; (b) a community where the faith is lived; and (c) a holistic approach to the student. Religious education provides the context in which the components of the caring community, the emotional competence, and the development of prosocial behaviors can be freely developed and related to a cognitive foundation.

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