

GUIDE FOR CONDUCTING AN INFORMATION SESSION

THE SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE

A complementary educational service. . . essential to success
for Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World

Québec 

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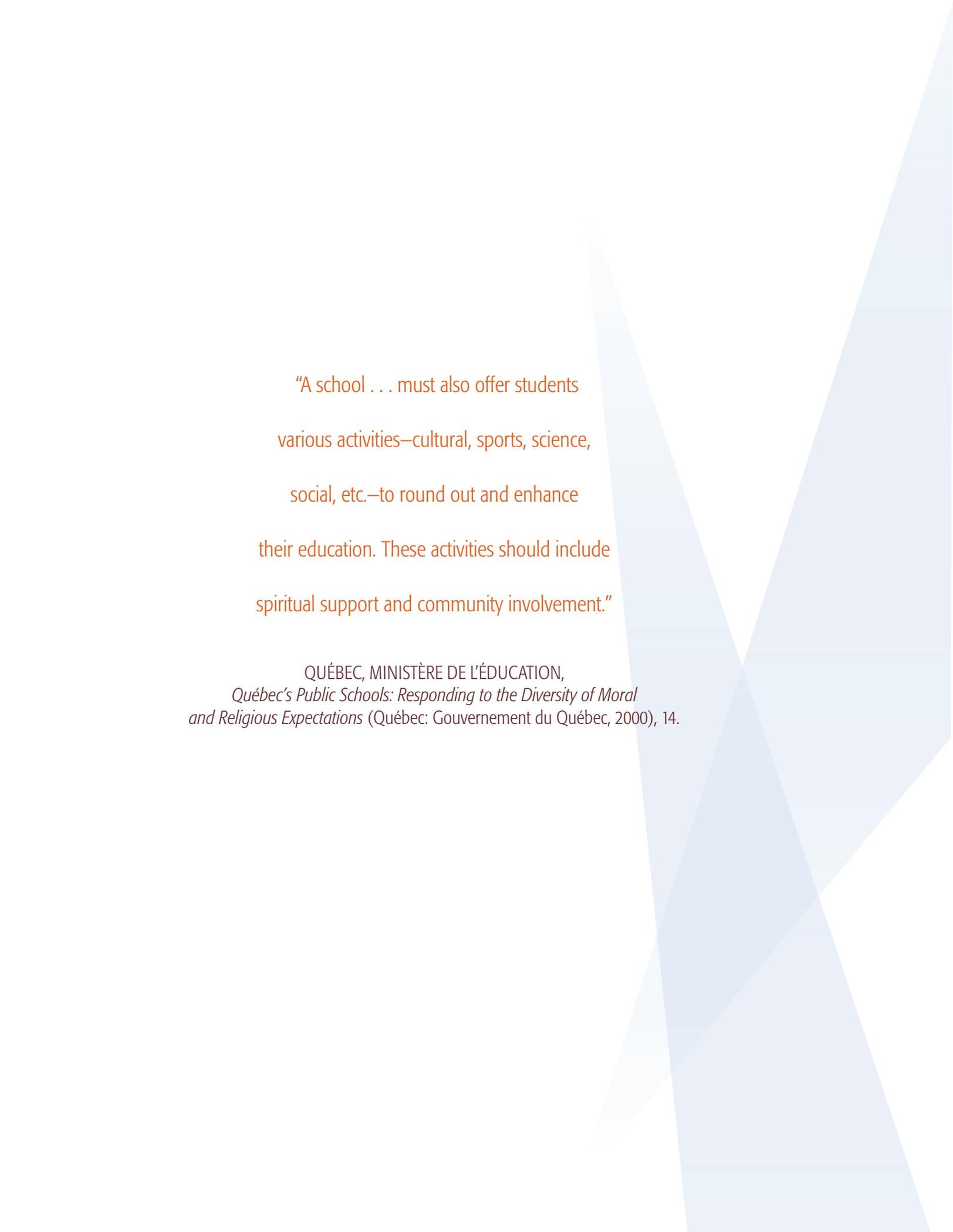
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“A school . . . must also offer students various activities—cultural, sports, science, social, etc.—to round out and enhance their education. These activities should include spiritual support and community involvement.”

QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION,
*Québec's Public Schools: Responding to the Diversity of Moral
and Religious Expectations* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2000), 14.

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INTRODUCTION

REASON FOR THIS GUIDE

The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service (SCGCIS) was first implemented in secondary schools in 2001 and in elementary schools in July 2002. It was created following a government decision in June 2000 outlining new orientations regarding the place of religion in schools (see Appendix 2). Despite numerous efforts by the Ministère, schools and school boards to publicize this service, the fact remains that school staff, administrators, parents and community partners still do not fully understand the nature of this service or the role that animators play.

As stipulated in the Education Act and the Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education, SCGCIS is one of twelve complementary educational services to which students are entitled. These services must meet certain objectives and are grouped together in four programs designed by the school boards. Given its integrative approach, this service is ideally positioned to contribute to the students' overall development. As a complementary educational service that acts in cooperation and in concert with other complementary services, with preschool, elementary and secondary instructional services as well as with parents and community partners, SCGCIS helps schools fulfill students' desire to succeed on both a personal and social level.

Schools and school boards have developed many strategies to help school staff and community partners better understand this service. Most animators have shown much creativity and ingenuity in trying to shed light on the service. However, dealing with such extensive change requires time, and staff turnover sometimes means that information sessions must be offered more than once. This guide should help schools and school boards better understand this new service so that they can fully benefit from it.

As requested by various schools, two posters summarizing essential information about the service were prepared and distributed at the regional meetings on the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service organized for school administrators between January and May 2007. These materials were also given out to animators who participated in the Congrès de l'Association professionnelle des animatrices et animateurs de vie spirituelle et d'engagement communautaire du Québec (APAVECQ) in June 2007. These posters should round out the information presented in this guide.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The need for information concerning the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service differs depending on a person's role in the education system.

Parents and community partners need to be aware of this new service and its role in order to fully understand how its activities affect their child and young people in the community. Once informed, parents will be able to follow or contribute to reflection or activities undertaken by the service animator with their child, if they so desire. It may also help forge partnerships with individuals and organizations in the community.

Teachers and complementary educational services staff must be adequately informed in order to understand the strengths and competencies of the service animators and know when and how their expertise can help promote the school's mission. Collaboration and concerted action will be established more easily if everyone respects the area of competence of each stakeholder involved.

School administrators play a decisive role in the successful implementation of this service. They must be highly familiar with the nature of the service and the role that spiritual care and guidance and community involvement service animators play in the educational success of students. Their interest in, and positive view of, the service can help make it more effective.

Having an accurate grasp of the role and nature of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and recognizing its effect on student success will also allow school board administrators to make informed decisions and help ensure that the service is offered in all of the schools in a school board's territory, as stipulated in the Education Act (s. 226).

The Board of School Trustees and the school board's parents' committees, as well as governing board members, are also influential decision-makers. It is important for them to have a clear picture of the nature and role of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service as well as the social choices that have led to its creation, so that they too can make informed decisions.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service animators should find this guide easy to use. The information activity suggested is relatively straightforward and may also be undertaken by the school principal or the person in charge of the service at the school board. Although in-depth knowledge of the pedagogical aspects of the service is not required to lead the activity, it will no doubt be advantageous to include the service animator, as he or she can provide numerous examples and clarifications about the service. As the activity is based on the personal search for meaning in life, it should help participants become aware of the relationship between such a quest and the way individuals orient different spheres of their lives.

Certain elements have been added to help further reflection. Whether or not they are used will depend on the aim of the activity, the participants and the time available. The appendixes included at the end of this guide may be photocopied and distributed. Once again, the

decision whether or not to use them will depend on the person leading the session. The activity may be conducted in a single session or divided up according to theme over several meetings.

Because of its simplified format, this activity is not in itself sufficient for training individuals to provide spiritual care and guidance and community involvement. Given the risk of ideological drift and of non-adherence to respect for freedom of conscience and religion, which could have serious consequences for students and school life, it is important that the individuals assigned to this service have the required university training, as described in the ministerial framework and the school boards' Classification Plan for Professional Personnel.

PREPARING THE INFORMATION SESSION

The person leading the session should begin by familiarizing himself or herself with the activity and take into account the time available and the number of participants to choose the relevant elements. It may be appropriate to plan several short meetings or incorporate certain elements into school staff or administrative meetings.

MATERIALS NEEDED

For the session leader

The session leader should read the ministerial framework for the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World*, before the activity and have a copy on hand.

The two posters on the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service should also prove useful. One contains the two oval diagrams that describe the particularities of spiritual life and of community involvement; the other outlines the aim and objectives of the service and illustrates the action-centred approach.

If these posters are not available, appendixes 4, 5, 6 and 7 may be used instead.

For each participant

Depending on the elements covered, the session leader should provide each participant with a copy of the relevant appendixes.

APPENDIX 1: STARTER ACTIVITY AND REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK

This appendix contains questions that can spark reflection at the beginning of the activity as well as a worksheet for providing reflective feedback on the information session.

APPENDIX 2: SOCIETY'S CHOICE

This appendix illustrates the social choices that led to the creation of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service.

APPENDIX 3: LINKS WITH THE EDUCATION REFORM

This appendix shows how the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is anchored in the education reform.

APPENDIX 4: A LABORATORY FOR LIVING

This appendix makes a comparison with a laboratory for living and illustrates the action-centred approach.

APPENDIX 5: AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

This appendix reiterates the aim and objectives of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and defines what is meant by spiritual life and community involvement.

APPENDIX 6: PARTICULARITIES OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

This appendix illustrates the particularities of spiritual life.

APPENDIX 7: PARTICULARITIES OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This appendix illustrates the particularities of community involvement.

APPENDIX 8: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PASTORAL ANIMATION SERVICE AND THE SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE

This appendix compares the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and the former Pastoral Animation Service. Although no time has been allocated specifically to this appendix, it may help explain how these two services differ.

APPENDIX 9: EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION SESSION

This appendix can be used to evaluate the session. It is up to the session leader to determine whether it is appropriate to do so and whether to use the approach suggested in this appendix.

CONDUCTING AN INFORMATION SESSION

WELCOME

- ▶ After greeting the participants, the session leader states the objective of the activity, and then determines or explains how it will be conducted and the amount of time required.

Objective of the information session

To understand the specific nature of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and its role in the educational success of students.

Time allotted for the information session

Although the session was designed to be conducted in a minimum of 30 minutes, 60 minutes might provide time for more meaningful discussions and allow participants to explore some of the aspects suggested under the heading "For further reflection."

- ▶ The session leader asks the participants to reflect on three questions that will help them better understand the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service (see Appendix 1). Three to five minutes should enable the participants to come up with personal answers.

It is not necessary for participants to engage in a group discussion after this exercise, unless time permits and the participants seem inclined to do so.

Participants' answers may pertain to the lives of partners, family, friends, or to work, volunteering, beliefs, values, ideology, religion, etc.

Appendix 1

What gives life meaning?

What gives my life meaning?

How do I preserve, nourish and maintain the things that give my life meaning?

- ▶ The session leader concludes this exercise by helping participants recognize that the very things which give meaning to their lives affect different aspects of their lives: relationships, work, spiritual life, or various commitments. Often, these elements are sources of motivation that shape our lives.
- ▶ Personal involvement in society provides opportunities for us to become aware of what gives meaning to our lives, or to ask ourselves questions.

This exercise allows participants to recognize that the meaning they attribute to their lives is a source of motivation for involvement. This involvement is translated into concrete actions that nourish and transform their spiritual lives.

Some participants may find it relatively easy to see the links between their beliefs or values and their involvement.

These questions encourage participants to reflect on what unifies their being in a vision of existence and how they develop a social conscience.

The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service was created to help students in their desire to be successful on both a personal and social level.

Excerpt

“Individuals develop a vision of existence that explains why and how they have decided to contribute to social life. Conversely, their involvement in society enriches and transforms their spiritual life. As a result, a person’s spiritual life and community involvement are symbiotically related.

“Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 11.

CONTEXT

Brief History

- ▶ Using Appendix 2, the session leader explains the historical context that led to the creation of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service.

It is important to underline that the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service was created as a result of major changes brought about by the Estates General on Education.

For further reflection

With administrators: it would be interesting to review the ministerial orientations set out in Québec Public Schools: Responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations. These orientations led to the adoption of Bill 118 on June 16, 2000, modifying various legislative provisions with respect to confessional matters in education. (To obtain copies of these documents, see the Web site addresses listed in the bibliography).

Or

The session leader could ask administrators to pay particular attention to the wording of section 36 of the Education Act, reproduced in Appendix 2. A discussion could follow on how to “facilitate the spiritual development of students” and how this relates to the promotion of self-fulfillment. Participants could also consult a February 2007 brief presented by the Comité sur les affaires religieuses to the Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports entitled The Spiritual Development of Students: A Challenge for Secular Schools. See www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/affairesreligieuses/CAR/PDF/AvisCheminementSpirituel.pdf.

A Complementary Educational Service In Keeping With the Education Reform

- ▶ Using Appendix 3, the session leader illustrates the connections between the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and the education reform.
- ▶ He or she helps the participants recognize that this service can serve as a tool to promote student progress and success in their diverse learning.

The ministerial framework that defines this service explains this point in greater detail on pages 14 to 18. A table on page 16 highlights the aspects shared by the Québec Education Program and Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service.

Excerpts

The school's mission is fulfilled through the three aims of the Québec Education Program, which "provide a common direction for all educational measures and convey the sense that schools do more than give students academic tools; they also enable them to set goals for their lives and prepare them to contribute to society.

"QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, Québec Education Program, Secondary School Education, Cycle One (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004), 6.

The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service helps students "mobilize their various competencies in order to discover and recognize their inner sense of being, and to adopt it and make it a well-spring of growth and a basis for self fulfillment for both themselves and the community."

QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, du Loisir et du Sport, Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 15.

PRESENTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE

A Laboratory for Living

- ▶ The session leader explains how the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service may be compared to laboratory for living.
- ▶ He or she specifies that this service is not a spiritual or ideological training ground, but rather a place where students can explore and determine the progress they wish to make in terms of their spiritual life and community involvement.

Appendix 4 outlines certain elements of this analogy. A more detailed explanation of this analogy can be found on pages 12 and 13 of the ministerial framework.

It is important to understand that, in planning this service, schools must not impose compulsory requirements or standard instructions in matters of spiritual life or social conscience.

Excerpt

*"The analogy of a 'laboratory' highlights the idea that **the service is not a spiritual or ideological-training ground** as, for instance, a Church, a spiritual group or social movement may be. In the spirit of complementary educational services, it is, rather, a place where **students can explore**, by experiencing and reflecting on various situations, the different facets of spiritual life and community involvement without, however, being required to act in predetermined ways or to follow standard instructions. The service therefore **encourages** students to develop their own visions of life and social conscience but **without imposing any belief system or cause** on them.*

"Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 13.

An Approach Centred on Action

- ▶ The session leader explains the action-centred approach on which the service is based, using the poster entitled *The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service*, which contains a diagram of the approach, or Appendix 4.
- ▶ He or she briefly describes each of the three phases, emphasizing the importance of the “reviewing” phase in promoting the students’ progress.

It should be noted that, to a certain extent, this approach is what distinguishes this complementary service from an instructional service. Here, the students take action, experiment, look back over their experience and choose to apply elsewhere what they have learned. The animator guides and supports them in this process by proposing activities or projects, and by helping them further examine or pursue their interests. The goal is to help students explore different facets of spiritual life and community involvement without requiring them to act in predetermined ways or follow standard instructions.

For further reflection

With school staff or administrators: participants may be asked to give examples of possible joint activities conducted with the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service in each phase of the action-centred approach. A document containing examples of such activities is available at: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFI/csc/asec/pdf/joint_activities.pdf.

Aim and Objectives

- ▶ The session leader presents the aim and objectives of the service, using the poster entitled *The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service* or Appendix 5.

Participants should understand that the first objective of the service deals with the students’ spiritual life; the second, with their community involvement; and the third, with the links between these two components.

Spiritual Life

- ▶ The session leader asks the participants: “In your opinion, what is spiritual life?”
- ▶ After a brief discussion, he or she explains that spiritual life can take different forms, depending on a person’s beliefs.
- ▶ A presentation of the Ministère’s definition then follows.

While moderating the discussion on how to define spiritual life, the session leader should not seek a consensus. Attention should be drawn to the fact that people have different perceptions, and that this diversity exists in the school community and should be taken into account in a secular context. The definition presented in the ministerial framework is not universal; it defines the meaning of spiritual life in the Québec school system.

Excerpt

Spiritual Life

*“Spiritual life is **an individual quest within the context of a community**, a quest focused on the fundamental questions of the **meaning of life** and tending toward the construction of a **consistent, motivating and continually evolving vision of existence**.*

*“Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005),10.*

- ▶ Using the oval diagram illustrating the particularities of spiritual life, the session leader asks the participants to pay particular attention to the basic idea **“To unify one’s being”** and to its components.
- ▶ This diagram can be found in the poster entitled *The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service*, as well as in Appendix 6.

The diagram summarizes the meaning of the expression “spiritual life” as presented on pages 32 to 34 of the ministerial framework.

These pages should help the session leader fuel the discussion and allow participants to better understand the concept.

- ▶ The session leader reads out one area of operation and asks the participants to give examples of activities that could be used to explore facets of spiritual life, or provides a few examples.
- ▶ The same process is repeated with other areas of operation.

A document entitled “Acting” Linked to Spiritual Life and Community Involvement is available at: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/csc/asec/pdf/acting.pdf

It lists various approaches to develop students’ spiritual life and community involvement.

Excerpt

*“The areas of operations are **avenues or facets** to explore and to experiment with as well as **sources of inspiration** for determining **themes or target activities**.”*

*“Québec, Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 24.*

For further reflection

With participants from the school community (e.g. teachers, administrators or complementary educational services staff): participants may be asked to name concrete ways of helping students reflect and experiment in situations that allow them to progress freely in their spiritual lives.

With parents: participants may be asked to name family or community events that allow their children to progress in their spiritual lives.

Community Involvement

- ▶ The session leader asks the participants: “In your opinion, what is community involvement?”
- ▶ After a brief discussion, he or she explains that community involvement can take different forms, depending on a person’s beliefs and values.
- ▶ This is followed by a presentation of the Ministère’s definition.

Involvement, as it is defined in this context, is based on the recognition of the value and dignity of individuals. Although it may often resemble other social activities conducted in the school, it is different in that it aims to promote the development of a social conscience in students.

Excerpt Community involvement

"A contribution of the individual to community life based on the recognition of the value and dignity of human beings and oriented toward the construction of a more harmonious and supportive society.

*"Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World, The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service, A Complementary Educational Service: Ministerial Framework* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005), 10.*

- ▶ Using the oval diagram illustrating the particularities of community involvement, the session leader asks the participants to pay particular attention to the basic idea "To develop one's social conscience" and to its components.
- ▶ This diagram can be found in the poster entitled *The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service*, as well as in Appendix 7.

The diagram summarizes the meaning of the expression "community involvement" as presented on pages 34 to 36 of the ministerial framework.

These pages should help the session leader fuel the discussion and allow participants to better understand the concept.

- ▶ The session leader reads out one area of operation and asks the participants to give examples of activities that could be used to explore facets of community involvement, or provides a few examples.
- ▶ The same process is repeated with other areas of operation.

A document entitled "Acting" Linked to Spiritual Life and Community Involvement is available at: www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/csc/asec/pdf/acting.pdf.

It lists various approaches to develop students' spiritual life and community involvement.

For further reflection

With participants from the school community (e.g. teachers, administrators or complementary educational services staff): participants may be asked to name concrete ways of helping students undertake individual and group projects likely to improve their community and the society around them, with a view to developing a social conscience.

With parents: participants may be asked to name opportunities for community involvement where their children can develop their social conscience.

REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK

- ▶ Objective of the information session
 - To understand the specific nature of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and its role in the educational success of students.*
- ▶ The session leader reviews the objective of the session.
- ▶ The participants are given three to five minutes to answer the last question in Appendix 1.
- ▶ They are then asked to share some of their thoughts about the way they see the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service.

If time permits, the session leader could ask the participants to develop a strategy to help others better understand the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service. This type of exercise will highlight what participants understand.

For further reflection

School administrators could discuss the school's needs in terms of spiritual development or community involvement and how the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service can help meet these needs.

With school administrators and managers: the discussion could focus on ways of fostering cooperation between the spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animator, teachers and other complementary educational services staff in the school.

With teachers and complementary educational services staff: it might be interesting to develop joint projects and identify links between the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and various components of the Québec Education Program (broad areas of learning, cross-curricular competencies, all the subject areas).

EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION SESSION (SEE APPENDIX 9)

It might be worthwhile to ask participants to evaluate both the content and procedure of this information session.



APPENDIX

STARTER ACTIVITY AND REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ACTIVITY

As a situational exercise, please answer the following questions:

- ▶ What gives life meaning?
- ▶ What gives my life meaning?
- ▶ How do I preserve, nourish and maintain the things that give my life meaning?

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REFLECTIVE FEEDBACK

The objective of this session was to help you understand the specific nature of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and its role in the educational success of students.

At a social gathering, a friend asks you what this new Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service that is offered at his son's school is all about. What do you say?

SOCIETY'S CHOICE

THE ESTATES GENERAL¹

One of the priority actions identified in the final report of the Estates General on Education was to “continue moving towards a non-confessional system.”

From the outset, the Commission for the Estates General recognized the schools’ role in teaching values as well as individuals’ needs for spiritual growth. Discussions at the conferences did not change these convictions. Deconfessionalizing the school system did not seek to exempt schools from their obligation to teach values and take into account the spiritual development of individuals, but rather encouraged them to do so in a non-confessional system that is open to all.

THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

In the spring of 1999, the Task Force on the Place of Religion in Schools, chaired by Jean-Pierre Proulx, published its report. Following up on the Estates General, this report fuelled a far-reaching debate and led to the creation of a parliamentary committee on the matter².

GOVERNMENT ORIENTATIONS ON THE PLACE OF RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

In the spring of 2000, the Québec government published new orientations on the place of religion in schools in a document entitled *Québec’s Public Schools: Responding to the Diversity of Moral and Religious Expectations*³. Among other things, these orientations recommended that the pastoral animation service offered to Catholic students and the religious animation service offered to Protestant students be replaced with a spiritual care and guidance and community involvement service offered to all students.

These new orientations led to major changes in the *Education Act*.

- ▶ **Students** other than those enrolled in vocational training or adult education are **entitled to student services in spiritual care and guidance and community involvement**. (s. 6)
- ▶ **A school** is an educational institution whose object is to provide to the persons entitled there to under section 1 the educational services provided for by this Act and prescribed by the basic school regulation established by the Government under section 447 and to contribute to the social and cultural development of the community. **A school shall, in particular, facilitate the spiritual development of students so as to promote self-fulfilment**. (s. 36)
- ▶ **Every school board shall ensure that schools offer to all students student services for spiritual care and guidance and community involvement**. (s. 226)

1. The final report of the Commission for the Estates General on Education, *Renewing Our Education System: Ten Priority Actions*, is available at: <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/etat-gen/finalrep/tmat.htm>.

2. The report of the Task Force on the Place of Religion in Schools is available at: <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/REFORME/religion/inter.htm>.

3. The full text of this document is available at: <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/REFORME/place_rel/index.htm>.

LINKS WITH THE EDUCATION REFORM

The following is a brief presentation of certain elements of the education reform and their relationship with the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service (SCGCIS).⁴

EDUCATION REFORM	SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE
Construction of world-view	The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service (SCGCIS) exposes students to human experiences and universal truths that form a particularly rich world of knowledge to be acquired and constitute a veritable training ground for the mind. It helps them gradually develop their ability to exercise critical judgment about increasingly diverse beliefs.
Construction of identity	The SCGCIS promotes the development of a true social conscience. It helps students learn to live in community with others and fosters a feeling of belonging to a community. It affords opportunities to assimilate the fundamental values required for living in society and a democracy. It prepares students to become autonomous and responsible citizens, and reduces the risks of exclusion. It contributes to self-fulfillment and to the establishment of a supportive society. It helps students become aware of their uniqueness and assert themselves.
Empowerment	The SCGCIS is offered to all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, cultural or other situations. By providing students with time for reflection, discussions or involvement, it helps open their minds to other dimensions in their lives and develops their creativity in a variety of areas. Thus, the students will be better able to deal with the complexity of current issues and major ethical and existential questions, which in turn will empower them in their lives.
Competency development	The SCGCIS helps students mobilize their various competencies in order to discover and recognize their inner sense of being, and to adopt it and make it a well-spring of growth and a basis for self-fulfillment for both themselves and the community. It provides opportunities for them to realize what constitutes their world-view, to use their strengths and talents for their own personal development and that of the community.
Complementary Educational Services - Support services program	The SCGCIS contributes to improving conditions that are conducive to learning by sharing information with students, school staff, parents and the community and offering expertise regarding the spiritual development and community involvement of students.
Complementary Educational Services – Student Life services program	The SCGCIS helps students explore the world of the prime universal values and develop the ability to understand and unify their being, through its activities and opportunities for involvement and cooperation with other school team members.
Complementary Educational Services – Assistance services program	The SCGCIS offers individual and group care and guidance activities that help students better understand particular issues concerning spiritual life or community involvement.
Complementary Educational Services – Promotion and Prevention services program	The SCGCIS creates opportunities for students to stop and define what is important to them in their life, examine their values and those of society and make choices in keeping with their vision of existence.

4. The elements presented above were taken from the following documents:
 QUÉBEC, MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉDUCATION, DU LOISIR ET DU SPORT, *Québec Education Program, Secondary Cycle Two* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2006);
 Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Complementary Essential Services: Essential to Success* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002).

A LABORATORY FOR LIVING

The Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service may be compared to a laboratory for living, that is:

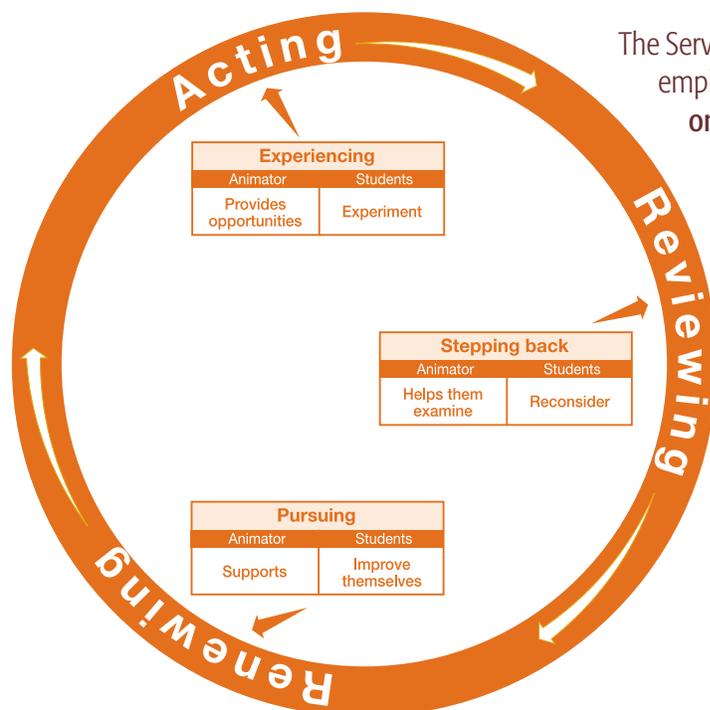
- ▶ a place for research and experimentation
- ▶ where students are researchers
- ▶ where concrete action is paramount
- ▶ under the supervision of a spiritual care and guidance and community involvement animator
- ▶ with the contribution of various members of the school team

Thus, the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is a place:

- ▶ where meaning and a sense of solidarity are developed
- ▶ of discovery and creation
- ▶ to learn to express oneself and think critically
- ▶ of dialogue between people of various origins and with different points of view
- ▶ of cooperation

This analogy with a laboratory places greater emphasis on the process rather than on expected results, which cannot be determined ahead of time. .

THE ACTION-CENTRED APPROACH



The Service has been compared to a laboratory in order to emphasize that the type of learning it offers is **centred on action**. The approach presented here consists of three phases: **acting, reviewing and renewing**. The respective roles of the animator and students change with each phase.

For more information on this diagram and each phase, please refer to pages 21 to 23 of *Developing the Inner Life and Changing the World* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2005).

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SERVICE

Although an integral part of the complementary educational services programs, the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service has its own specific aim, which is to:

“foster the **development of an autonomous and responsible spiritual life** among students and their contribution to the **building of a harmonious and supportive society.**”

The objectives of the service proposed to the students are:

- ▶ to reflect and experiment in situations designed to help them progress freely in their spiritual lives, with a view to unifying their being in a vision of existence
- ▶ to undertake individual and group projects likely to improve their community and the society around them, with a view to developing a social conscience
- ▶ to build links between their spiritual life and community involvement, with a view to developing greater personal unity and social coherence

DEFINITION OF SPIRITUAL LIFE

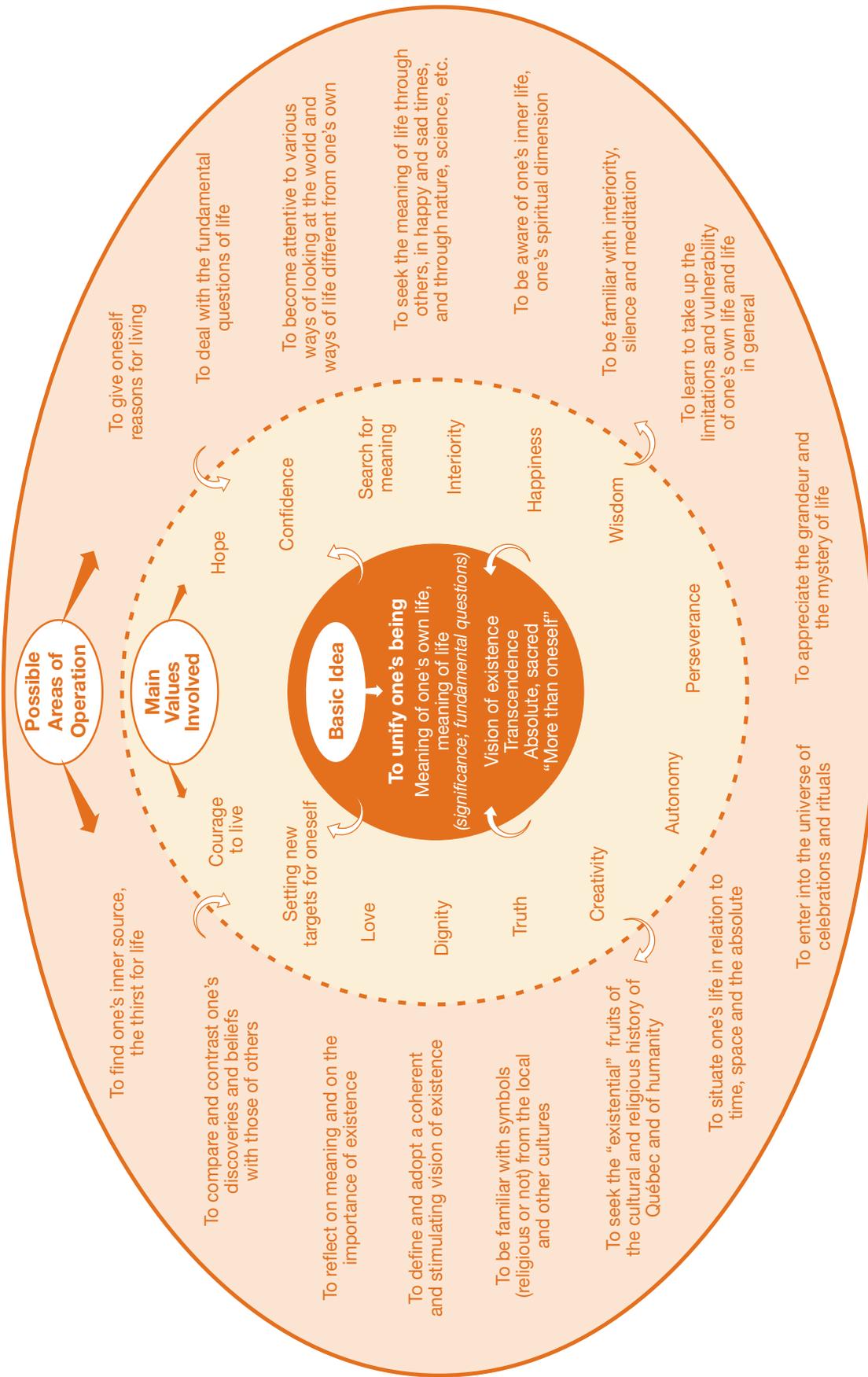
Spiritual life is an **individual quest within the context of a community**, a quest focused on the fundamental questions of the **meaning of life** and tending toward the construction of a **consistent, motivating and continually evolving vision of existence**.

DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

A **contribution of the individual to community life** based on the **recognition of the value and dignity of human beings** and oriented toward the construction of a **more harmonious and supportive society**.

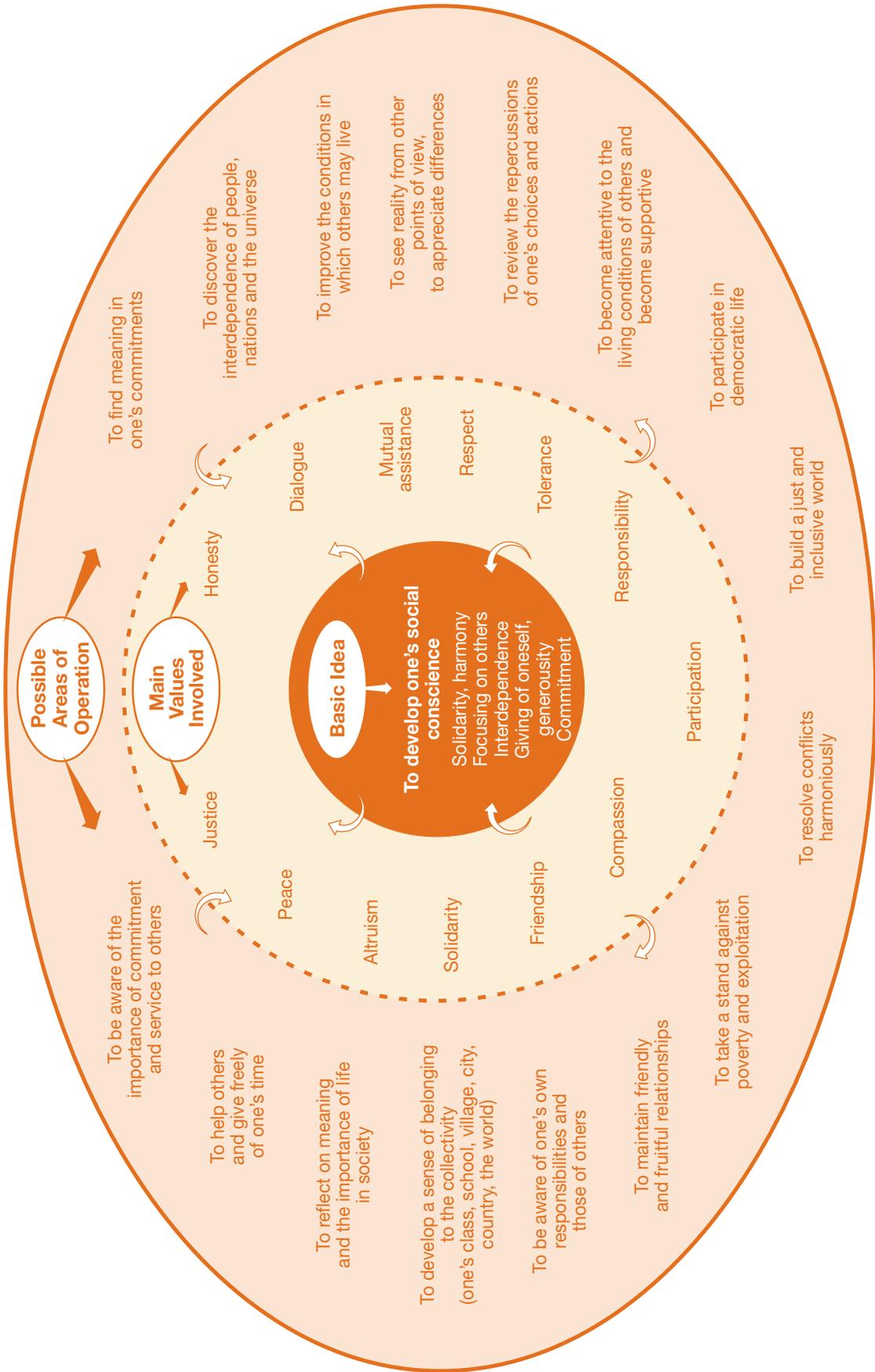
Particularities of Spiritual Life

An individual quest within the context of a community, a quest focused on the fundamental questions of the meaning of life and tending toward the construction of a consistent, motivating and continually evolving vision of existence.



Particularities of Community Involvement

A contribution of the individual to community life based on the recognition of the value and dignity of human beings and oriented toward the construction of a more harmonious and supportive society.



COMPARISON BETWEEN THE PASTORAL ANIMATION SERVICE⁵ AND THE SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE

PASTORAL ANIMATION SERVICE (PAS) (FORMER SERVICE)	SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCGCIS)(NEW SERVICE)
<p>According to the former <i>Basic school regulation</i>: Catholic pastoral care and guidance service is designed to enable students to discover the meaning that their faith gives to their personal and community experiences, in an environment conducive to learning about gospel values and life. They were also designed to ensure that students continue their moral and spiritual development.</p>	<p>According to the <i>Basic school regulation</i>: One of twelve services that must be included in four complementary services programs (support services, student life services, assistance services, and promotion and prevention services). The purpose of these services is to help students progress in their various types of learning.</p>
<p>The aim of PAS was to help students discover the meaning that their faith gives to their personal and community experiences.</p>	<p>The aim of the SCGCIS is to foster the development of an autonomous and responsible spiritual life.</p>
<p>Community involvement projects tended to deepen and give expression to the students' faith.</p>	<p>The SCGCIS aims to develop the social conscience of students and promote greater personal unity and social coherence.</p>
<p>PAS had to be offered to Catholic students in a school.</p>	<p>The SCGCIS is offered to all students, regardless of their religious affiliations.</p>
<p>Individuals assigned to this service had to be of the Catholic faith and have authorization from the bishop of the diocese in which the school was located.</p>	<p>Individuals assigned to this service must be open-minded and have critical thinking skills and a positive personal view of spiritual life.</p>
<p>These individuals had to have a university degree in theology or in pastoral animation: a certificate, for elementary schools, or a bachelor's degree, for secondary schools.</p>	<p>These individuals most hold an undergraduate degree that consists mainly of courses in spiritual or religious life and social life.</p>
<p>Public schools were denominational. PAS was offered to Catholic students in Catholic schools, even if, in practise, there was little discrimination.</p>	<p>Schools are no longer denominational. They are common, open, inclusive and democratic.</p>
<p>There were close connections between Catholic moral and religious instruction and PAS, since their aims were similar.</p>	<p>The SCGCIS is called upon to work with all members of the school team. Connections can be made with all the subject areas and broad areas of learning.</p>

5. We have chosen not to include the Protestant religious animation service in this comparison because it was a relatively new feature in Protestant schools and not as widespread as the Catholic pastoral animation service. Even though these two services were significantly different, both valued faith and maintained close ties with the respective moral and religious instructions programs.

EVALUATION OF THE INFORMATION SESSION

THE SPIRITUAL CARE AND GUIDANCE AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SERVICE

REGION :

CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT CORRESPONDS TO YOUR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION.

	DISSATISFIED			SATISFIED		
The questions at the beginning of the session were useful for reflection.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I now have a better understanding of the reason for the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I understand the connections between the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service and the education reform.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a better understanding of the "spiritual life" component.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I have a better understanding of the "community involvement" component.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I understand when and how this service can be useful to students and the school community.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I found this session and the discussions interesting.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Comments:

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Three documents were developed during pedagogical explorations workshops on the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service. They were then used during training sessions, as part of the three-year professional development plan for the service. They include:

- ▶ *“Acting” linked to Spiritual Life and Community Involvement*
- ▶ *The Reviewing Process*
- ▶ *Possible Joint Activities Between the School Team and the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Animator Using the Action-Based Approach*

These documents can be used by anyone interested in this service, particularly to sustain the professional creativity of the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement animators. They are available at: <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/csc/asec/sessions.html>

A slide show presentation on the Spiritual Care and Guidance and Community Involvement Service is also available at: <www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/DGFJ/csc/asec/pdf/diaporamaSCGCISanglais.pps>.

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