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GOUVERNEMENT  
DU QUEBEC

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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GENERAL DIRECTORATE  
OF ELEMENTARY AND  
SECONDARY EDUCATION

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CURRICULUM SERVICE

## CURRICULUM FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

### PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT

### MORAL INSTRUCTION

815-110

815-210

815-310

815-411

815-511

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This programme is designed for students exempt from religious instruction in Catholic Schools.  
Approved by the Catholic Committee of the Superior Council of Education, May, 1969.



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## INTRODUCTION

It may seem presumptuous to present a program of moral education at a time when society is still in the throes of search and of change. It might be wiser to wait for the reestablishment of order and equilibrium before proposing a new standard and a new scale of values. When the very concept of "morality" is being questioned, the desire to establish the validity of the notion, and at the same time to show how to attain it, may appear illusory.

Nonetheless, in this age characterized by "its special kinds of uncertainty," (F. Dumont, in *Le Lieu de l'homme*), some certitudes, some identifiable factors authorize us to inaugurate a search for the meaning of morality today.

### Negative certitudes

We must admit, at the outset, that most of our certitudes are negative. The first of these is that it is no longer possible to have a single, stable and comprehensive vision of the world and of human nature. The reason for this lies, on the one hand, in the development of the various fields of human activity (industry, technology, service occupations, communications) and on the other, in the appearance of new sciences. Formerly our moral and philosophic vision was based on the perception of a common meaning; nowadays an increasingly sophisticated science and technology make us carefully circumscribe the fields of our action and investigation. We have moved from a system of linear thinking, in which all dovetailed perfectly, to a logic of comparison and of relativity.

A major consequence of this change has been the distinction set up between ethics and existence. The usual procedure was to put these two realities together and make them coincide: all life had a moral bearing and all morality was a bearer of life. But if ethics is to survive today, not only as a science but also as an effective guide of human conduct, it will have to find its proper place in relation to the other human sciences. It will have to accept the fact that it is no longer the only frame of reference by which to explain life.

### Change of aims

The second negative certitude which becomes evident upon reflection is that it is no longer possible to direct moral formation according to the aims of traditional morality. Our world is in the process of leaving behind what was formerly the principal stimulus of its activity, namely the necessity of survival, of self-preservation. The development of the means of production, the establishment of social security measures, the discoveries of medicine, have brought us to a point where we now take for granted health, food and work, — objects which formerly constituted man's principal preoccupations. These things, which have stimulated and determined human behaviour ever since man appeared on earth are no longer major concerns, but are becoming an integral part of the basic assumptions of the individual and of society.

Hence we find ourselves face to face with a veritable revolution in the goals of morality. We must look for the direction in which man will find it possible to orient his action with the support of motives more deeply human than those he is presently abandoning. At the moment, when change is the most striking

feature of our situation, we believe that the new aim of morality may be, for the time being, to encourage men to direct their action towards the transformation of nature and the maximum development of human powers. It remains to be seen what these powers are, and what they can really hope to accomplish.

### Values

The third negative element to be considered is the impossibility of referring to a scale of absolute values. We can certainly affirm that such values as freedom, love, work, and money will always be powerful incentives to human activity, but their concrete forms of expression will be more important than the values themselves, and this importance will vary from one society to another, from one person to the next. Hence a moral system which would present these values as absolute would risk being vague and utopian.

### Language

This brings us to a fourth consideration. The language which formerly expressed, and indeed codified and circumscribed, the moral domain is no longer capable of conveying man's present-day experience or his moral problems. This is partly due to the breakdown of philosophic systems, and partly due to the appearance of a new kind of sensory perception which upsets existing mental structures. If we put ourselves in a teaching situation, we are obliged to question the efficacy - or inefficacy - of the word as a pedagogical means.

A crisis in values, a crisis in language, a crisis in goals, a crisis in epistemology, in civilization and in culture: these are the realities which explain our distress and by that very fact lessen its pain. With an analysis like this as our starting-point, we can even establish certain positive criteria for a new morality.

### Positive certitudes

The first positive certitude which we must reflect upon is that our most important task as moral educators consists in delimiting the field of morality in the light of new goals.

If we set as the lower limit of this field the fact that morality consists in revealing the human and social exigencies which move men to make decisions and to carry them out, morality should concern itself with the goals of personal and community fulfilment. As a matter of fact, our world is replacing the demand for preservation and survival by the demand for development and achievement. It would seem that physical forces have grown to saturation point, and must make way for a more truly human kind of energy. Hence what was once the very structure of life must now become its substructure. Otherwise, we shall see the overdevelopment of some aspect of life result in a personal or social cancer capable of destroying mankind's cognitive and affective powers.

Our society, generally called the consumer society, already shows alarming symptoms: an accelerated growth-rate, the abuse of new discoveries, the pressure of uniformity and standardization, the ability to weaken and even to absorb just protest, the exploitation of cultural, artistic, political and even religious activities for utilitarian ends. Authentically human

aspirations find no place in such a world, and life progressively loses its meaning and coherence.

A renewed ethic must aim at promoting each person's self-knowledge, self-development, self-integration, so as to enable him to relate to the world and to his social, political and economic milieu. Only by making it possible for the individual to change and to give his own life a meaning can we hope to change society and its structures.

This transformation will undoubtedly be a slow process, but life itself will show us where to direct our efforts. Consequently our moral education will be effective and authentic insofar as it succeeds in establishing short-term goals, and in showing how to attain them. This moral education must be constantly looking ahead, turning to the near future, in order to show man the way to what he can recognize as goals.

### **Moral conscience**

The second positive certitude concerns the formation of moral conscience. It may have been possible in the past to educate people to think and act in a certain way based upon tradition, experience, and the social milieu. Today, respect for the person, as well as intellectual honesty, obliges us to form conscience and not to direct or condition it. Moral education consists essentially in bringing the individual to a realization of the many factors which may have a bearing upon his judgments and his actions. We cannot, therefore, overlook the findings of science: biology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and even physics and chemistry. The more a man is aware of the various influences at work upon him, the greater will be the likelihood of his thinking and acting objectively and effectively.

### **Conclusion**

Although the former world has passed away, and with it a certain stability in moral thinking and behaviour, nonetheless we believe that we have an adequate foundation for a new morality. We must however accept the fact that we will never again be able to build upon a stable and permanent set of principles, values, and behaviour-patterns. We have entered an era characterized by a capacity for incessant self-questioning, whether by individuals or by groups. This marks a long step forward in man's evolution towards a greater depth of self-awareness, a greater freedom from unreal anxiety.

Our task, then, as moral educators, will be first of all to make all our students take cognizance of this new situation, then to help them develop the power to make decisions and carry them out, and finally to discover with them whatever goals can be upheld as worthwhile and conducive to better and fairer human and social relations.

Such is the thinking behind this program in moral education. It is important that it be rightly understood. We are aware that it needs careful experimentation, and that it contains much that is

intuitive, much that is tentative. We believe nevertheless that on the whole it answers the needs and the hopes of today's youth.

## **I. A NEW AGE, A NEW SOCIETY**

We already know a good deal about the adolescent: his need for independence, his recklessness, his willingness to spend himself, his search for authenticity, his sensitivity to human need, his aspirations, his insecurity, his loneliness, his love of pleasure, his intolerance, etc. But we cannot understand him properly without adverting to a new and most important factor: his society.

We are all well aware that the ready availability of education, the long years spent in school, the increased longevity of mankind, have gradually brought about the formation of a new and well-defined social entity which has its own laws, its symbols, its autonomy, its rites, its sub-groups, its built-in structures. We may call it the "youth" society.

It is of course no new thing that youth should want to break with the adult world. The newness lies in the degree to which this young society is aware of itself, and in the seriousness and lucidity of its projects. Because young people today have a greater fund of knowledge and a greater power of consumption than in the past, and yet are far less sure of a place in the labour market, far less convinced of the values proposed to them by the generation in power, they demand the right to speak, the right to consideration and to participation. The many student demonstrations all over the world seem to be mainly celebrations of this society's sense of its own existence.

Larger than the "gang" or the team, less anonymous than the adult masses, more homogeneous than associations or social clubs, the youth society exemplifies a new kind of natural and massive grouping of individuals. Moreover, inasmuch as it is a society, youth offers the adolescent a solution to his yearning to leave the world of his family without having to adapt himself to the world of adults. Here he can find a life-style, strong pressures, a group with which to identify, a social code, in a word, an answer to his need to belong somewhere without having to lose his own personality.

This has immense bearing upon our educational policies. We can no longer prepare the young solely for the adult society in which they will eventually be absorbed; we must allow them to be integrated into their own society. As a matter of fact, the present scholastic renewal is partly due to the appearance of this new society.

## **II. THE SCHOOL, GENERAL LEARNING CENTRE**

Our schools have undergone far-reaching changes during the past few years. It is no exaggeration to say that the school is one of the most mobile elements in Quebec. Let us recall a few facts:

- The programs in all subjects have been revised, and the way

of communicating knowledge has undergone particularly radical changes. The student is expected to take an increasingly active part in his various classes. Yesterday's passive listener is now expected to be the agent of his own education.

— The former system of parochial high schools has rapidly given way to huge comprehensive schools which bring together the students of an entire region. Yesterday's closed system has been replaced by today's "open city".

— Individual liberty and personal responsibility are treated with growing respect; personal responsibility is involved in the choice of options, in students' associations, athletic teams, and social clubs.

— Concern for well-rounded education has led to the creation of new facilities such as libraries, work-centres for small groups, specialized laboratories, research centres, guidance centres, gymnasiums. The school whose role was merely to provide necessary information makes way for the school which is concerned with total formation and well-balanced education.

All these changes cannot but affect the high school student. He will feel their effect upon his own self-image as well as upon his relationships with others.

#### **a) Today's student in relation to himself**

In his school world, the student becomes increasingly aware of himself as a person. The whole material set-up gives him a chance to develop his physical, intellectual and spiritual resources. The very size of this organization of which he is a part, and which without him would have no reason to exist, should give him a sense of his personal worth, and of the hopes centred in him. But at the same he is in danger of feeling lost, swallowed alive by the system, deprived of personal identity. On the intellectual plane, the studies are necessarily more demanding, because of the complexity of the world for which they prepare. This can cause tensions in the keen student, over-anxious to succeed, or discouragement in the face of possible failure. There are new opportunities for the individual to open up and develop his personality; there are also new risks of withdrawal and of closing in upon self.

#### **b) Today's student in relation to others**

On the plane of interpersonal relationships, our present day students, coming as they do from many different backgrounds, and being in touch with a considerable number of teachers, have frequent opportunities for mutual contacts. These contacts, which help the students to adapt, are facilitated by the courses themselves, which frequently involve discussion, by the team approach to sports, by research projects which are carried out in groups, and by all kinds of meetings. All these offer the students countless opportunities to make new friends, widen their horizons, and become more sociable. But the fact that there are such vast numbers in the school may cause many to shrink back

within a small circle, where they can be comfortable among undemanding peers, or else to join a "gang" of possibly destructive tendencies. There are thus new possibilities of personal enrichment through social development, but also new dangers of impoverishment and of individualism.

#### **c) Today's student in relation to nature and to society**

Finally, the school gives access to an ever-increasing knowledge of modern progress and of new achievements, particularly in the fields of science and technology. The school introduces the student to a world in process of construction, and invites him to admire the discoveries being made there, and to learn the proper functioning of this complex machine which he will soon be called upon to control and to perfect. For many, such new awareness of this "many-splendored" world will induce a kind of exhilaration like that experienced by the mountaineer; for others, however, the reaction will be more like that of the dizziness caused by excessive height. One group feels its power, and the urge to push on to further achievement; the other has a sense of inadequacy, and is afraid to move.

#### **d) School and society today, in relation to common problems**

If we tried to list the questions facing contemporary society, we would see at once that they often closely resemble the problems confronting the school.

From the way the school is evolving it would appear that the frontiers which formerly separated it from the world of work - which used to be considered the only world of real importance - will become harder and harder to determine, and may practically disappear. This puts new demands upon the school. No longer can it be satisfied with handing on a set of abstract notions more or less cut off from real life; it must strive to form young people capable of living in growing harmony with themselves and with others, and able to contribute to the liberation and development of the earthly resources at their disposal.

### **III. THE COURSE IN MORAL EDUCATION**

The needs of the modern school require a course which, in connection with the various areas we have mentioned, strives to set up guidelines for the formation of the whole man, the man who is well-balanced, integrated, and equipped to make his way in a world in which he will soon have to assume various responsibilities. For if the youngster learns to interpret his life as a student, and to give positive meaning to the events he is living today, he will be able to make the best of whatever happens to him tomorrow.

#### **Ethics and moral education**

We might be tempted to think that this course in moral education is an unnecessary addition to the high school program. It might well be claimed that it is the task of each teacher to present the ethical aspect of his particular subject. The teacher, whether of physical education, science, literature or history, is certainly expected to show the special contribution which his discipline makes to the work of total personality formation

aimed at by the school.

If the course in moral education proposed nothing more than some such exploitation of the various school disciplines, it would certainly have no justification for its existence, since it would merely repeat what had already been done elsewhere. But its aims are much more ambitious and its demands much more fundamental.

It proposes to initiate the adolescent to the discovery of the meaning of the realities which make up his life. It is becoming increasingly evident to man that the meaning of what he lives is not something already made beforehand, not a mere transposition from one plane of reality to another, less solid, plane. "The search for meaning is pursued nowadays in a world where meaning no longer appears to be ready-made or given. Meaning is invented, rather than discovered; created, rather than revealed."<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, "simply to revise or adapt models and norms, and, under old forms, devise a new content better fitted to our changing mentality and to present needs, would be useless. It would be a feeble and inadequate effort. For every model, by its very nature, is open to criticism, and no norm can ever be identified with the absolute."<sup>2</sup>

This course in moral education proposes to help the student make an in-depth study of himself and of society. It hopes to encourage him to set about an evaluation of himself and of society, for a young person cannot make realistic commitments or engage in fruitful activity if he has not previously had the opportunity of examining the various demands on his energy and his creative powers.

This indispensable evaluation - a kind of exercise of the critical judgment - should not, however, be erected into a system. That would impede all progress and encourage an attitude which we could only call negative. This sort of attitude is often manifested when criticism comes from without. The criticism we speak of comes from within. It presupposes a certain commitment on the part of the critic. Its value can be reckoned by its results; when it is the real thing, it produces active participation whose effectiveness is all the greater for being enlightened. Criticism should be constructive, not destructive.

### Definition and aims

We believe that a course in moral instruction, understood in this way, could fulfil the role we would like to assign it. But how shall we define morality? Vanbergen offers an interesting suggestion:

"Morality may be defined as a life-style which man creates and imposes on himself; this life-style is determined by his understanding of his relationship with himself, of his relations with others, and of his place in the universe."<sup>3</sup>

This definition of morality suggests the aims to be pursued by the teacher giving this course.

### a) Morality is a life-style

Morality is concerned with human conduct. If moral education must be rooted in history, it should nonetheless produce a plant which can flourish in today's world and bear fruit for the present and for the future. This course will therefore aim primarily at meeting the student where he is, studying his real life situation, reflecting on its meaning, and helping him develop the faculty of critical judgment.

Since it deals with life, moral instruction should avoid that abstract and formal reasoning which is more concerned with elaborating theories and principles than with verifying them. However, it cannot overlook the important contribution which reason has to make, or it will remain on the level of first impressions and superficial appearances. One of its aims must be to extend to the study of human conduct the rational approach characteristic of all fields of serious research. We may, with Vanbrugen, speak of an "applied rationalism" which would exploit such subjects as philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, literature, etc. In this way, moral education can train young people to go to the bottom of things, and make them the enemies of ready-made, thoughtless and irresponsible solutions. Such young people should be aware of their problems, but able to go beyond them; strong enough to meet a high standard of personal morality, and capable of developing a political conscience and of awakening to a sense of world citizenship.

Since it is directed towards action, this course will not study the subject matter as if it were an end in itself. This matter is not an end, but a means; it gives an opportunity of presenting problems, of analyzing with the students real-life situations involving both individuals and society as a whole, in such a way as to form their moral conscience and their critical judgment, and to initiate them to the art of living, thinking and loving.

### b) . . . which man creates . . .

Moral education cannot consist in the sort of training one gives an animal, any more than moral life can consist in blind obedience to a rule of conduct imposed from without. There is no real morality unless the individual's autonomy is respected. This course will try to educate young people to act creatively, and to advance to the autonomy which makes men well-balanced, tolerant, ready to think for themselves, to do as well as to think, and to weigh the effects of their actions.

These efforts to assess situations with objectivity, to understand current problems, to seek reasons for action, to acquire strong convictions, and to build responsible principles, make such demands upon the heart and mind that no one person's aspirations and insights could cope with the task. We shall help the student attain autonomy by giving him a chance to consider the many answers, the various life-styles, which men have laboriously evolved for themselves down through the ages. Man's creative possibilities depend upon the choice and the abundance of the materials at his disposal. Hence this course will strive to make as much material as possible available to the student.

1. Cf. P. Antoine, *Sexualité humaine*, Lethielleux, 1966.

2. *Ibid.*

3. P. Vanbergen, revue *Journées d'études*, No. 13, December 1960.

**c) . . . which man imposes on himself**

Merely to teach about morality would be a shallow thing. Morality is meaningful only if it issues in action. It is in action that man attains fulfilment. The teacher should strive to develop in his students the desire to express this conviction in practical ways, both at school and beyond. This should be the first aim of his teaching.

Moreover, the teacher will not be satisfied with developing in his students the desire to act; with them he will seek out real opportunities for action.

**d) . . . a life-style which is determined by his understanding**

- of his relationship with himself
- of his relations with others
- of his place in the universe

Like everyone else, the student lives in three worlds: his own interior world, his world of interpersonal relationships, his human and cosmic environment. One aim of this course in moral science is to bring him to understand this aspect of his existence, and to estimate its influence upon his personal development and his moral decisions. For this reason these three realities will be studied at increasingly greater depth throughout the whole high school course.

#### IV. THE PROGRAM

##### General description

This program is planned to help the student acquire a series of insights according to a certain order based upon life itself. But although it is based upon life, this order is still the product of a mind, and obviously it will not necessarily coincide with the real concerns of any given class. Instead of being a hindrance - as any syllabus may be - this discrepancy will help both student and teacher to grasp the true nature of the program. This course aspires to be a reflection on the young person's life in a wide sense, and by that very fact it obliges us to set ourselves at a certain distance from the immediate and the everyday, in order that we may situate this everyday reality in a broader existential perspective. Only a study of the whole program will reveal its basic unity.

Besides, this program has a kind of dialectic structure. When we study relations with others, for example, the subject will not be treated as if it were an independent entity, but it will be considered in connection with the students' own feelings and opinions. This will give the young person a chance to break out of his pure subjectivism, not in order to become purely objective - which is equally undesirable - but to gain the power to make comparisons, to acquire a sense of relativity, and to perceive the interaction of things.

Finally, we have given a good deal of importance to the youngster's milieu: his present surroundings and his future sphere of action. Going beyond problems of a nationalistic or cultural kind, we must strive to lead the student to take his stand in the real world of time and space in which he actually lives, and help him to realize how important they are in building his personality.

#### SECONDARY I

##### THE ADOLESCENT AND HIS MILIEU

###### Aims

- To help the adolescent adapt successfully to his new surroundings
- To open his eyes to the scope of the human task for which he is presently preparing at school.

###### Some details of the program

- I. I am entering a new school. . . .
  - comparison between elementary school and high school
  - a) the spirit and methods of each
  - b) reason for the difference in spirit and methods
  - c) authority, discipline, regulations
  - d) relations between students and teachers
- II. . . . in order to prepare myself to take my place in a world which I am getting to know. . . .
  - list of the vital forces at work in the world
  - a) a world which is increasingly habitable
  - b) a world of many "faces"
  - c) a world still enslaved in many ways
  - d) a world which has undergone many changes
  - e) a world which must change still further
- III. . . . and which I am destined to transform
  - a) man is the master of the world
  - b) man must dedicate his physical and mental energy to the task of liberating the forces of nature
  - c) the meaning and the value of the many material and spiritual forces at work in building the world
  - d) the importance of asking myself even now what I would like to do and what I could best do to build a better world

## SECONDARY II

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### THE ADOLESCENT AND HIS PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### Aims

- Through a study of man's many powers, to make the student realize how much he can hope to do.
- To help the student attain a realistic self-knowledge and a just appreciation of his own possibilities.
- To teach him how to put meaning into his life.

#### Details of the program

- Natural resources have to be developed; so too my own personal gifts, such as

#### I. My body

- a) the millions of years required for the evolution of the human body
- b) adolescence and its physical changes
- c) what it means to be a man (or a woman)
- d) my body: its powers of perception, of development, of action and of expression.

#### II. My mind

- a) the intellectual progress which man has made in the course of evolution.
- b) the birth of intellectual curiosity
- c) creative intelligence
- d) happiness and knowledge

#### III. My own unique gifts

- a) individual differences of various kinds
- b) different character types
- c) how and why I should develop my personality

## SECONDARY III

### THE ADOLESCENT AND COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS

#### Aims

- To help the student understand the nature of his autonomy
- To encourage his basic yearning to relate to others
- To give him the opportunity of associating with persons of the opposite sex, at once so attractive and so profoundly different.

#### Details of the program

As I try to develop myself

- I ... I often feel lonely
  - a) childhood has been left behind
  - b) my personal responsibility comes home to me
  - c) I feel my insecurity, my indecision, my lack of self-confidence
  - d) I need to communicate
- II But I also discover my many ties with others

- a) my peer-groups
  - b) the teams I belong to
  - c) my family
  - d) my friends
- III ... and how I can strengthen these ties
- a) what characterizes genuine relationships
  - b) how my sex affects my capacity for communication

## SECONDARY IV

### THE ADOLESCENT AND HIS SOCIETY

#### Aims

- To help the student realize that he belongs to his own special society, - the "youth" society.
- To open him to national and international affairs, to the sense of unity, to the spirit of collaboration, all of which are needed by a world in process of reconstruction.
- To arouse in him a critical attitude in regard to the strong pressures to which he is subjected.

#### Details of the program

I belong to a particular society, that of Quebec youth.

As a member of this society, .

- I ... I ask myself what it is all about
  - a) youth as a social class
  - b) its aspirations
  - c) its achievements
  - d) its opportunities, and its chances of success
  - e) its relations with the youth of other countries
- II ... and I ask questions of
  - a) the professional world
  - b) the world of work, of technology, of progress
  - c) the world of money
  - d) the world of sex
  - e) the world of religion
  - f) the international world

## SECONDARY V

### YOUTH AND PARTICIPATION

#### Aims

- To lead young people to make a commitment to the renewal of the human community and of its sub-groups.
- To inculcate in them a taste for the serious study of basic questions and to develop their power to pursue such study.
- To make them realize that the building of a personality or of a society is an ongoing process, and a matter of constantly beginning again.

- To form them to the habit of dispassionately analyzing opinions which perhaps they do not share, but which can cast considerable light on the problems that they are trying to solve.

### Details of the program

In face of our world problems . . .

I . . . the only solution is to take part . . .

- a) what is meant by participation
- b) the conditions of genuine participation
- c) the importance of participation

II . . . in particular . . .

- a) in the renewal of business
- b) in the renewal of the professions
- c) in the renewal of the couple
- d) in the renewal of moral and spiritual values
- e) in the renewal of politics

### V. METHODOLOGY

This program is almost entirely dependent upon the teacher's ability to create an atmosphere conducive to class participation and discussion. The value of the subjects treated will be commensurate with the capacity of the students to discover for themselves profound incentives to a real change in their attitude and conduct.

The class, considered as period or as place, should reflect this spirit, and should in itself encourage a whole new approach to the various topics.

We recommend that this course in moral education be taught in a student-centred, non-directive way. The student, rather than the various themes, is the real centre of the discussion; he should consequently be the centre of the teaching methods employed.

For this reason, we also recommend that the course appeal to the students' sensory perception; in other words, that it make use of audio-visual materials, and be held in a place which lends itself to reflection and discussion.

### SUMMARY — GENERAL PLAN

AGE	GRADE	THEME
11 - 12 - 13	Secondary I	The adolescent and his milieu
12 - 13 - 14	Secondary II	The adolescent and his personal development
13 - 14 - 15	Secondary III	The adolescent and his communication with others
14 - 15 - 16	Secondary IV	The adolescent and his society
15 - 16 - 17	Secondary V	Youth and participation