

Ten Reasons to request an exemption from Ethics and Religious Culture for your child

1. This course trivializes religion by placing all religions, spiritual teachings, religious movements, and views of life on an equal footing. For example, in giving an account of the origin of the earth, the story of Creation in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Yin and the Yang, and the story of the primordial frog are all treated as if they were equivalent. This approach may lead a child into rejecting religion which may seem to be invented by human beings, without any value of truth.
2. This course misrepresents religion, without the dimension of transcendence. For example, among the “names of the divine”, there is no mention in this course of Jesus Christ who is, in the Christian teaching, the incarnation of God. It is, therefore, likely that the child will not grasp the deeper meaning of religion, and so will come to consider it as mere folklore or myth. The child will also tend not to adhere to any religion at all and will not have an adequate basis from which to evaluate whether one religion is true compared to another.
3. This course does not permit an understanding of each religion, because no religion is taught in its entirety. Only part of each religion is taught across a spectrum of themes alongside parts of other religions. For example, the course teaches side by side the celebration of Christmas (the Christian feast of the birth of Christ), Sukkoth (the Jewish feast of tabernacles), Wesak (the Buddhist feast of the full moon), and Diwali (the Hindu feast of lights), and Mothers’ Day (a secular custom, and not a religious feast at all). At the end of the course, the child will understand neither his or her own religion, nor the religions of others, and will have great difficulty unraveling one from another.
4. This course introduces the child to many religions. For example, the child must learn the sacred writings of the Koran (from Islam), the Vedas (from Hinduism), the Tripitaka (from Buddhism), and the (Judeo-Christian) Bible, also the methods of different religions for prayer and meditation. In being introduced to the practices and beliefs of different religions, the child might well be drawn away from his or her own religion and attracted to the novelty or other characteristics of some other religion.
5. In this course there is an invasion of the individual privacy of the child, because he or she is required to share with others the religious beliefs and practices of his or her family or religious community. It is also an invasion of family privacy.
6. This course interferes with parental authority over, and relationship with, the child, for the child is expected to question the beliefs and convictions which he or she has received from his or her own family or religion. The child is expected to justify whether he or she will or will not modify his or her thoughts after having encountered the thoughts of others. This puts the child in a precarious situation: if he or she is unable to justify his or her positions, he or she will be vulnerable to group pressure for adoption of the most popular position, which may well not be the best.
7. In this course, the child does not learn what is right and wrong, but only that different individuals have differences in the way they view moral questions, and he or she is required to question the convictions which he or she has received from his or her family or religion. This can eradicate or weaken the relationship between the child and his or her parents, family, or religious community, because this approach creates doubt about the value of the teachings of his or her parents.
8. In this course, the child is required at the beginning of adolescence to develop independence in deciding moral questions before his or her thought processes are fully developed and before he or she has sufficient experience to make mature judgments about the impact of his or her ethical decisions. This can encourage the youth to reject what he or she has been taught by his or her parents, church, or culture.
9. This course teaches the child to favor tolerance more than other values such as truth and a sense of personal identity. More than tolerance of other individuals, this course teaches youth to tolerate all points of view which is contrary to the teachings of a good number of religions. Every point of view is not acceptable in dealing with moral and religious questions. The effect will be to diminish the child’s adherence to his or her convictions and beliefs.
10. This course identifies the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms as a point of reference to develop common public values. It encourages the child to adopt these common public values which are frequently less demanding on the moral plane than religious values. The effect is to deprive the child of a strong moral standard to sustain him or her in growing up.