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**MUSIC IN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF
RELIGION IN PRESCHOOL EDUCATION**

ABSTRACT

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE THESIS

The education and training of preschool children is a comprehensive pedagogical process, which takes place throughout the child's stay in the preschool institution in all types of activities and directions and is aimed at solving the tasks of his/her versatile development and preparation for school.

Religious education in preschool is interrelated with other activities, because religion includes everything in itself to give more. It gives a much deeper meaning to all compulsory areas of education because it is connected to music, songs, constructive-technological activities, literature, etc.

Music, in turn, as part of the compulsory educational directions in preschool corresponds with all of them. It presents and summarizes information, bringing it closer to children through the emotion, feelings and thoughts that are embedded in it, choosing another more direct path to their souls. It occupies a large share of children's daily life, accompanying all educational activities of the compulsory directions, present, as a separate discipline and sounding everywhere in the child's life.

Music is in tune with children's emotionality, it finds a more direct route to children's hearts, and is a bridge to religious content, bringing it closer to young learners through the feelings and thoughts that are embedded in it.

This study focuses on this aspect of the interaction of religion with other educational fields, namely music.

Relevance of the problem

Bringing complex religious content to young learners through the syncretic power of music reflected in core music activities. Enriching the means of learning. Applying a

successful propedeutic approach using the emotional impact of music.

In connection with digitalization and the electronic environment in which children grow and develop, a complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation through audio and audio-visual means is applied.

The problem of the role and use of music in the educational process of religion in preschool has not been considered in this connection and kind. Therefore, the study draws attention to important aspects of music and religious education in preschool within the framework of comprehensive preschool education.

Historically, religious education contains many musical exemplars that are analyzed, classified, and related to contemporary religious education.

The research **hypothesis** is that children develop a better sense of faith with the help of music.

The subject of the study is music in preschool religious education.

The field of the study is the teaching of religion in preschool.

Task

To consider and explore the main musical activities in the context of pre-school religious education.

Objectives

A study of the historical development of religious education, music, and religious songs in particular.

Study of the main components of preschool education - approaches, means, forms and directions.

Exploring the physiological and psychological aspects of religious and music education in preschool.

An overview of the major musical activities in preschool and their consideration in the context of religious education.

Presentation of basic thematic units used in pre-school religious education with a musical element - themes, open lessons and celebrations. Presentation of new possibilities for practical application based on modern interactive technologies and tools.

Methods

A general retrospective analysis of religious education using music and song.

Structural analysis and synthesis of the individual elements of preschool religious and music education - psychological and physiological prerequisites.

An empirical experimental method of musical activities and their complex use with music, sound, speech, image and animation, through modern audiovisual and information technologies in preschool religious education.

A case method based on years of teaching experience with kindergarten children in music and religious preschool education.

The historical overview of religious education in Bulgaria is traced on the basis of the works of Ivan Denev and Andrian Aleksandrov, who examine it from the very beginning of its emergence to the present day. The works of Metropolitan Boris of Nevrokop (1928) and Polina Spirova are also used to illuminate the development of religious education, revealing the preconditions for the rift that gradually grew and became the cause of its determination by our educational system.

Magdalena Legkostup's research is used to present the state of the problem after 10.11.1989, when it became possible again to carry out legitimate religious upbringing and education.

The examination of Orthodox church music is based on the writings of Fr. Ivan Ivanov, Stoyan Malinov and Lyubomir Ignatov. Some basic aspects of Eastern singing and polyphonic church music are based on the writings of Peter Dinev, Elena Toncheva and Ivaylo Borisov.

A look at the development of musical culture and the main currents that emerged in it after the Liberation can be found in the works of Dobri Hristov, Lilia Kracheva, Ivan Hlebarov, Nikolai Kaufman and Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva.

Numerous song collections were used, mostly by Dobri Hristov, Petar Dinev, Nikolai Kaufman and D. Boychev, which are associated with contemporary religious education. The relationship of musical models to religious education after the Liberation is revealed in Genyo Dochev's Guide for Initial Teachers (1938), and the influence of different types of music on the youth of the time is described by Protopriest Stefan Ganchev (1924).

Sources of information on the peculiarities of modern preschool education and upbringing are the works of Elka Petrova, Boncho Gospodinov, Stavrophorian iconoclast Zachary Dechev, Svetlana Kozlova and Tatiana Kulikova.

The interactive training is described by Vyara Gyurova, Vanya Bozhilova, Veronika Valkanova and Greta Dermendizhieva. Related methods are explored based on the works of Magdalena Legkostup and Dimitar Kirov. The interactive tools are based on the works of Bozhidar Andonov, Yuri Todorov, Stoyanka Georgieva-Lazarova, Lachezar Lazarov and Antonia Krasteva.

Various scholars have examined and periodized children's religious development. Bozidar Andonov and Rositsa Todorova cover and analyze the theories of Eric Erickson, Jean Piaget, Laurence Kohlberg, James Fowler and Fritz

Ozer. On the other hand, children's spiritual development is traced in the authors' texts by Ivan Panchovsky, Vasily Zenkovsky and Rositsa Todorova.

A collection of works by Dimitar Penov, Ivelina Nikolova and Ivaylo Borisov is used as a starting point for the relationship between religion and music.

Children's musical development has been addressed in a multifaceted way by many researchers - Boris Teplov, Edwin Gordon, Graham Welch, Cynthia Briggs, David Hargreaves, Alexandra Lamont, Penka Mincheva, Keith Swanwick, June Tillman and Anastasia Atanasova-Vukova.

The main musical activities in pre-school religious education are analyzed, drawing on the works of Anastasia Atanasova-Vukova, Emilia Nikolova, Ivan Peev, Gencho Gaytandjiev, Georgi Torbov, Nevena Diamandieva, Radka Krachmarska, Savka Nedelcheva, Tsonka Sheitanova, Elisaveta Katerinova, Rositsa Kojamanova, Natalia Vetlugina and Christy Kijlu.

The basis of the content of the pre-school religious education with a musical element is borrowed from the Stavrophoric iconoclast Zachary Dechev, Stefka Stefanova (Rabadjieva) and Maya Milenova. The overall content is developed from Stefka Stefanova's (Rabadjieva) sample annual distribution of Religion instruction for 5-6 year old children.

The complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation through audio and audio-visual means has been refined and illustrated on the basis of Yuri Todorov's developments.

The religious pedagogical situation with a musical element is constructed using the reference points described in the "Methodological guide for the implementation of the

educational content in the third and fourth preparatory group in kindergarten and school", borrowing elements from religious and musical preschool education.

The religious content is presented in a way that is consistent with the author's texts by Archimandrite Serafim Alexiev, nun Valentina Drumeva, Bozhidar Andonov, Magdalena Legkostup, Emilia Vassileva, Stefka Rabadzhieva, Dimitar Kirov, Zahariy Dechev and Maya Milenova.

The formulation of the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element is borrowed from Anastasia Atanasova-Vukova who defines the musical pedagogical situation and from the descriptions of the Stavrophorian iconoclast Zachary Dechev on religious preschool education.

Approbation of the results and conclusions of the study was carried out through the publications that are related to the research problem and work with children in several kindergartens in the city of Sofia (No. 77 "Magnolia", No. 63 "Sun" and No. 82 "Gianni Rodari")

The significance of the study lies in the integration of musical activities in the educational process of religion in preschool and their practical application.

Structure and volume

The dissertation is 306 pages in length, consists of a preface, introduction, three chapters and conclusion, literature used of 175 titles, including 2 sacred theological sources, 153 studies in Bulgarian and Russian and 20 in English, a reference for scientific contributions and a list of publications related to the topic of the dissertation. The work is accompanied by 80 appendices with author's contribution.

Applications include:

- 13 international religious animations.

- 5 combinations of dynamic pictures, music, sound and speech.

- A PowerPoint presentation that presents the complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation through audio and audio-visual means.

- Example development of an open pedagogical situation in religion on the theme "Veneration of Holy Icons" using interactive methodology and modern audio-visual tools (PowerPoint presentation).

- Example development of an open pedagogical situation in religion with a scripted element on the theme "Nativity" (large video clip).

- Religious education scenario with musical elements, celebration type on the theme "Resurrection of Christ" (Prezi presentation).

- 17 children's songs - common and religious (instrumental, and with voice) and 3 church chants.

- 2 music games, 1 religious music didactic game and 4 religious didactic games.

- 14 music examples, 11 tables, 5 diagrams, 3 figures and 2 photo images.

- 6 descriptions, problems, practice examples and exercises.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

In the **INTRODUCTION**, the reasons for the choice of the topic and its relevance, the hypothesis, the subject, the aim and the tasks that determine the structure of the essay and the methods of the research are presented.

CHAPTER ONE of the study "The Teaching of Religion in Preschool" includes the following points: 1. Musical models used in religious education before 1945 and their relationship to contemporary preschool religious education; 2. Features of modern preschool education and upbringing; 3. Interactive methods and tools used in preschool religious education.

1. Musical models used in religious education before 1945 and their relationship to contemporary pre-school religious education

Musical models are diverse and have accompanied religious education since its earliest periods. Like religious education, they trace their origins to the founding of the Church, becoming an indispensable component of both liturgical life and catechesis.

1.1. Historical overview of religious education in Bulgaria

The Church lies at the heart of both religious training and education and of education as a whole.

In the Church, man's religious sense is most fully realized and satisfied through worship and the sacraments, guided by the invisible presence of Jesus Christ.

Religious pre-school education is only an aid for the little learners to find the True Way, which is the Lord Jesus Christ, as He Himself testified when He said, *"I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me"* (John 14:6).

1.2. Church chants and religious education in preschool

In pre-school religious education, young pupils receive a basic knowledge of our Orthodox faith, learn about the lives of some saints and are introduced to the main Church holidays.

The pre-school teacher of religion needs to use the temple in his work, "as a link" where learning is "enlivened" through the icons, murals, candles, chants, pictures, services, sacraments and rituals.

In this sense, Deacon Ivan Ivanov very accurately emphasizes that *"the use of Christian art, hymnography and church music, in the liturgical and extra-liturgical life of man, enables him to discover the way to God"*¹.

Orthodox church music, which is inextricably linked to the liturgical life, and hence to religious education and formation, is a bridge between heaven and earth, bears its imprint from heavenly, angelic music and sounds similar to it.

Although the tonal volume of some of the church chants corresponds to the musical abilities of the children of the given age, they are difficult for them to learn and perform precisely because of the different sound, which overlaps, generally speaking, on the one hand with the ancient modes - Doric, Phrygian, Ionic, and on the other hand with the modern modes - major and minor and some of their varieties.

As young Christians, children need Orthodox music because, as Deacon Ivan Ivanov writes, it gives "wings to the soul" and transcends the reality of existence, with the faithful finding themselves co-glorifying with the angels.

1.3. Folk songs

¹ Иванов, И. Дякон. *Евхаристията. Mysterium fidei - Mysterium vitae*, София, УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2020, с. 53.

Peter Dinev writes that our folk songs contain many elements in common with our church singing. One of these elements are the old tunes, which are valid for both church singing and folk singing, and also the rhythm, which is not divided into even bars.

In the folk songs with religious content, one can observe lyrics that are related to folk traditions and beliefs mixed with pagan elements that sometimes do not overlap with the Church teaching and its correct understanding and interpretation.

For the teaching of religion in preschool, such specimens should be selected that support learning and do not confuse it with invented superstitions.

1.4. Renaissance Songs

The most popular and widespread genre throughout the Bulgarian Revival period was the song in which new melodies were formed containing various influences Greek, Turkish, Romanian, Russian, etc.

Preschool children perform with desire and pathos renaissance songs on various occasions - theme, holiday, celebration (third of March). In the teaching of religion in preschool it is possible to use Renaissance songs that are related to the religious theme, directly or indirectly.

1.5. Religious songs after the Liberation

In the crucial period after the Liberation (post-Liberation period), characterized by many contradictions, song samples were created bearing the spirit of their time. Religious song, which reflects all these processes, excitements, aspirations, through music and text, is present in all strata of society. Unfortunately, it is understudied and neglected due to the limited interest associated with the period of atheistic communist rule .

The school songs in the first years after the Liberation were analogous in sound to the town songs. According to Agapia Balareva, the creativity of town and school song in this period was influenced by "the 'new' European music.

1.6. Song collections

Some song collections published in this period are examined, pointing out musical samples that are appropriate for contemporary preschool religious education.

The collections contain many songs, varied in theme and melody, and a valuable musical and pedagogical wealth, more or less forgotten today. The religious songs from them are classified into six groups, according to some common features.

The songs-church, religious, folk and common, created before the atheist regime, contain a rich range of emotions, feelings and thoughts of our people who went through many difficulties and peripeteia, but did not lose faith, hope and love for our Creator, but on the contrary, trusted in Him and through Him remained Bulgarian until today!

2. Features of modern preschool education and upbringing

The education and training of preschool children is a holistic pedagogical process that takes place throughout the child's stay in the preschool institution in all types of activities and directions and is aimed at solving the tasks of his/her all-round development and preparation for school.

The pre-school teacher of religion should be an educator and an educator at the same time, because teaching and education go hand in hand, education being of fundamental importance. He must be familiar with the whole life of the preschool institution, whether kindergarten or school, in order to be able to "embed" his subject in this organizational system and to perform his work fully.

The pre-school teacher of religion must be able to combine traditional and interactive learning, which in turn implies the possession of a complex system of knowledge, skills and competencies through which to successfully use and apply in their work innovation - modern information technology.

3. Interactive methods and tools used in pre-school religious education

Contemporary pre-school religious education, as part of comprehensive education, requires the implementation of various innovative approaches. Interactive learning opens many and extensive possibilities for their realization.

3.1. Interactive methods

Magdalena Legkostup classifies interactive methods into several important sections depending on their use in different parts of the lesson. Based on these, it identifies those methods that are applicable in pre-school religious education, while giving specific examples of some of them.

3.2. Interactive tools

Interactive means in pre-school religious pedagogy are all means of education (traditional and modern) that are used in an interactive mode by the teacher. Some teachers recognize them rather only, as modern audiovisual and information technologies. To a large extent these are multimedia, audio-visual aids and music, which is the main subject of this dissertation.

Interactive methods and tools are an opportunity to convey religious content in a different and engaging way that will impact not only the thoughts, but the souls and hearts of young learners, so that they can approach and love the Lord and their neighbors with their whole being, as He Himself commands us: *"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy*

heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: this is the first and greatest commandment; and the second like it is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt. 22:37-39).

CHAPTER TWO discusses the main musical activities in the context of religious preschool education in the following points: 1. Physiological and psychological aspects of music and religious education in preschool; 2. Perception of music; 3. Performance of music; 4. Composing music.

1. Physiological and psychological aspects of music and religious education in preschool

This section discusses the religious and musical development of children, which are in direct relation to their overall psycho-physical development.

1.1. Religious development

The study draws attention to the following theories:

- Eric Erikson's theory of psychosocial personality development.

- Jean Piaget's theory of the child's cognitive and moral development.

- Laurence Kohlberg's theory of moral personality development.

- Stages of faith development according to James Fowler.

- Fritz Ozer's theory of religious development.

The spiritual development of the child is also considered, as a striving towards God, which is a natural need of the human soul.

In every child there is present the aspiration to the Creator, every child's soul is drawn to Him, though not fully consciously. St. St. Silouan of Athos says that "*when the soul knows God's love through the Holy Spirit, then it feels clearly*

that God is our Father, the most begotten, the nearest, the dearest, the best"².

The unawareness of the spiritual essence in human existence, which is inextricably linked to the Creator of all, leads to disastrous consequences, justified by the free choice of the child, which is a modern trend and a fruit of religious ignorance. The Lord Himself points out the great responsibility that lies before every adult concerning the care of the bodily and spiritual development of the "little ones" (Matthew 18:5-6; Mark 9:42; Luke 17:2), the preservation of their faith in Him, the purity of their souls and the love in their hearts.

1.2. Musical development

Children's musical development is an integral part of their overall development. Music is a mediator between the spiritual and the physical in human beings as it is elusive, intangible, yet vividly present. It flows through time like a tape that projects emotions, feelings and thoughts for which words are inadequate, due to the poverty of vocabulary, to be able to express them, but are recognized by the soul and stir the heart.

Music is most deeply connected to religion, as it can most vividly reflect the human being's yearning, longing and nostalgia for God.

The psychological prerequisites and mechanisms of perceiving, performing and composing music in preschool are related to musical features, which are in direct relation to the features of general development.

² Архимандрит Софроний. *Свети Силуан Атонски*. София, Фондация „Покров Богородичен“, 2008, с. 396.

All the models of children's musical development reviewed highlight some common patterns, despite the different factors influencing children's musical skills.

Musical ability is key to the development of musical skills, which reflect the harmonious coordination between physical and mental components. Generally speaking, they help the body and mind work together. Musical skills are developed through the basic musical activities of perceiving, performing and composing music.

2. Music perception

Perceiving (listening to) music is the first of the basic musical activities and is always present in the initial stages of their realization. It can be said to be the foundation on which they are built.

Music appreciation takes place both as a stand-alone activity and in combination with other basic musical activities, and even with other arts. This is due to the fact that children have a greater capacity for perceiving music than for performing it, which is confirmed by the methodology of music education.

2.1. The perception of music in pre-school religious education

In preschool religious education, music appreciation should be based on a broad and rich musical palette of *sacred, folk, classical, contemporary, popular, and children's* music. In this way, children will enrich their musical culture and, together with their musical and auditory perceptions, develop their imagination and associative abilities, which in turn will support their cognitive abilities.

Religious educational content will become closer to them through church music, which will involve them in church life; folk music, which will touch the innermost recesses of

their Bulgarian selves; classical music, which will enrich them spiritually; and children's music, which will bring religion closer to their childlike world.

3. Music performance

Music performance is a leading, active and fundamental activity in music education and training. Its application is wide-ranging because it includes **singing, musical-rhythmic movements and playing with children's musical instruments**".

3.1. Singing

Singing is a leading activity in the musical education and training of adolescents, which is a tradition in Bulgarian music pedagogy for kindergarten and school.

Singing is the most accessible and closest to children, as song creates a mood and has an immediate impact on children's soul.

The child feels an inner need to materialize the language of his soul, and the various emotional states within him are transmitted and reflected in his voice. Through song he can express his moods, thoughts, feelings and experiences quite directly.

In the performance of songs in the teaching of religion in preschool, many elements are included - text, melody, mimicry, dance, game, rhythm performance. The song is empathized by being acted out and performed by the children with the help of the teacher. The songs attract the children and they perform them with great desire and inspiration if they are properly chosen, directly influencing their sensitivity, contributing to and enriching their cognitive abilities .

The range of melodies should match the vocal capabilities for the age specified. Namely - for the third preparatory

group the tonal volume of the total range is e^1-h^1 and respectively for the fourth preparatory group - up c^1-c^2 ($h-c^2$, $a-c^2$ - for some children).

- Types of music suitable for performance in pre-school religious education.

A variety of song forms can be used in pre-school religious education to suit both the age characteristics of the children and the aims and objectives of the particular religious topic. Generally speaking, in the process of work, one should gradually move to the performance of more complex elements in musical and textual terms.

These are: *church hymns* suitable for performance by preschool children; *religious children's songs*; *children's songs used* in general music education and *co-authored* and *original children's songs*.

The songs used for a given religious theme not only cheer, cheer up and soothe the children, but also immerse, activate and motivate them for its lasting assimilation. While singing, they memorize some basic and essential points of the religious theme, not only with their mind but also with their heart.

3.2. Musical-rhythmic movements

Musical and rhythmic movements develop children's musical abilities and through motor reactions reflect their emotions arising during music making. They respond in the highest degree to the child's nature, which develops in play activity.

They are divided into *motor improvisations*, *motor reflection of the lyrics*, *musical movements*, *musical games and dances*.

In the implementation of musical-rhythmic movements in the teaching of religion in preschool, their multifacetedness

and multifunctionality are revealed. Connected to music, physical education and dance art and expressed through movement, play and dance, they complement and enrich the emotional, aesthetic and physical religious content.

3.3. Playing with children's musical instruments

The most commonly used children's musical instruments in preschool music education are percussion instruments, because of their accessibility, their rhythmic qualities, and their great timbral variety.

In the teaching of religion in preschool, children's musical instruments can be used: in the perception of a musical play; in the performance of songs; in the performance of musical-rhythmic movements and musical games; to illustrate a specific moment of a biblical event or an element of educational content.

The performance of music in the teaching of religion in preschool opens up numerous possibilities for use in different parts and aspects of the educational process. The performance of different types of songs, the wide variety of musical and rhythmic movements and the extensive use of children's musical instruments provide opportunities for the development of creative potential in the context of religious education. They support and enrich the pedagogical situation in every part, contributing to the interesting and light presentation of the religious content in a way that is close to the young learners - through music, play and movement.

4. Composing music

Musical creativity provides an opportunity to develop children's overall creative abilities.

The joy of creativity, regardless of the results achieved, exalts man, gives him freedom, brings him closer to the Creator, Who created him in His Image and Likeness.

Musical creativity in preschool is rather reduced to musical improvisation - motor, musical-rhythmic or singing. In this regard, in every musical activity opportunities for creativity in children are revealed, which arise in most cases spontaneously.

In teaching religion in preschool, it is possible for children to improvise parts of a song, a musical conversation with questions and answers, characteristic movements when listening to music or rhythmic accompaniment with children's musical instruments, dance movements, etc.

The third main activity, composing music, is characterized and considered on a much broader scale, involving children's creativity and originality in all aspects that are related to it. It provokes the unfolding of the creative potential that the Creator has laid down in each person. The creative process frees the child from limitations, brings him joy and satisfaction, bringing him closer to his true purpose and mission in this life dedicated to the service of God and people.

CHAPTER THREE is entitled "Practical Application of Music in Contemporary Preschool Religious Education." It summarizes, applies, and frames all aspects of religious and music education in preschool in three points: 1. Prerequisites for choosing music as an auxiliary tool in preschool religious education; 2. Content of preschool religious education with a musical element /inclusion of musical activities; 3. Analysis of the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element in the practical-applied environment.

1. Prerequisites for the choice of music as an auxiliary tool in preschool religious education

Through an empirical experimental method, a child with attention deficit was observed to be impressed and focused in Orthodox Religious Education classes only when music was perceived and performed on a given religious theme. The following musical works were included in the study: the song "Prayer" on the text by Iv. I. Karadimchev, which is used in connection with the theme of "The Feast of the Epiphany - the Feast of the Christian Family" and the song "With Rainbow Paints" on the text by M. Vazov. Dulgacheva and music. M. Shoselova, related to the theme "The Flood".

Another case from the practice is related to a whole preschool group (6-7 years old), and the occasion for the creation of the co-authored song "With Joy We Sing". It was the idea of Diana Tsacheva, who at her practical state exam in kindergarten No. 77 "Magnolia", performed it with guitar accompaniment in connection with the theme "Ascension". Thus, a new children's religious song was created to connect the Feast of Feasts - Resurrection with Ascension.

Note example 1

С радост пеем



1. С ра-дост пе-ем та-зи пе-сен Христос въз-кре-се и се въз-не-се! Въз-кре-се и (пласкане с ръце)

2. С ра-дост пе-ем та-зи пе-сен Христос въз-кре-се и се въз-не-се! Въз-не-се се (пласкане с ръце)

жи-вот ни да-ри! (пласкане с ръце) Въз-кре-се и (пласкане с ръце) спа-си ни Той!

при Бог О-тец! (пласкане с ръце) Ще дой-де пак (пласкане с ръце) със сла-ва и чест!

In addition to supporting religious education, music also helps to build the spiritual and moral foundations that are the primary goal of religious education.

The songs that are used for a given religious theme activate and motivate children for its lasting assimilation. While singing, they will memorize some basic and essential points of the religious content. Music is particularly suitable for the application of the propaedeutic approach, defined by Emilia Vassileva as relating to more difficult to understand religious terms and concepts, which will be learned by children at a later stage.

2. Content of pre-school religious education with a musical element /inclusion of musical activities

The basis of the content of the pre-school religious education covers five global themes and a number of basic themes, which were developed by Zachary Dechev, Stefka Stefanova and Maya Milenova in the "Manual for Religious Education in Kindergartens". There is also a sample yearly distribution which indicates one topic per week. Stefka Stefanova (now Rabadjieva, who is the former director of kindergarten No. 77 "Magnolia", town of Sofia and current director of the larger Kindergarten No. 18 "Children's World"), developed a more extended version, with two topics per week that are more developed, some of them covering new and interesting aspects. Six global themes and sixty-three core themes were finalised and modified slightly from their original versions.

Each topic is developed theoretically and then used in practice when working with children in a preschool group from kindergarten No. 77 "Magnolia", Sofia and kindergarten № 63 "Sun", Sofia. In the process of pedagogical interaction, the content was supplemented and enriched with musical material, part of which was practically applied in kindergarten No. 82 "Gianni Rodari", Sofia. The project was developed in cooperation with.

Emphasis is placed on the use of music in preschool religious education, not as an end in itself, but as a means to an end, which is for children to acquire religious knowledge, to have faith awakened in their hearts, and to find their way to the Creator.

As musical material are proposed both numerous musical works for performance and perception, sounds, musical didactic games, musical rhythmic movements, and multimedia, which also includes the complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation through audio and audio-visual means.

The complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation through audio and audio-visual means in preschool religious education is formulated on the basis of the methodological descriptions of Yuri Todorov and recognized through them. It is graded according to the elements that constitute it.

The practical application of music in preschool religious education takes place in a particular form, which can be said to be synthetic, since it combines religious and musical education, within the framework of comprehensive preschool education.

Based on the content of preschool religious education, sample music material has been added that is different for each topic. I would like to point out that this was done in order to have more variety and individual choice on the part of the religion teachers, but from a methodological point of view it is good, for example, for a song to be performed in several consecutive lessons in order to consolidate, serve as a bridge to the different topics and contribute to the positive emotional background of the educational process.

3. Analysis of the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element in the practical-applied environment.

The pedagogical situation is not so strictly regulated in terms of duration, organization and structure, but it is built on the basis of basic pedagogical principles and methods, techniques and approaches. Moreover, it should meet the modern educational requirements by combining traditional and modern (interactive) methodology and the corresponding teaching tools.

On the basis of all the aspects outlined so far, the structure of the pedagogical situation is formed, which contains the following main points: topic, leading objectives, expected results, keywords, pedagogical technology - methods, means and musical material, summary and description of the implementation of the topic. Although the musical material is a type of medium, it is separated in order to distinguish it from other means of learning.

The pedagogical situation takes place in a stricter form in the pre-school educational establishment - kindergarten and school, and in a freer form in the parochial school. The greatest variability is related to the different parameters contained in its basic structure. The integration of musical activities in religious education in preschool, highlighted the following varieties of religious pedagogical situation:

1. Regular pedagogical situation in religion - once or twice a week.

2. Pedagogical situation in religion, built on the principle of music lesson.

3. Open pedagogical situation on religion, held in the preschool institution - two, three times a year.

4. Open pedagogical situation on religion held in the Orthodox temple - two, three times a year.

5. An open pedagogical situation on religion with a scenario element, held in the preschool institution - once or twice a year.

The open pedagogical situation in religion with a scenario element can be defined as an intermediate or transitional type, as it borrows elements from the main form of pedagogical interaction - the pedagogical situation and from the additional form of pedagogical interaction - the learning scenario.

The learning scenario can be divided into two types: a "Concert" structure, which involves the performance of songs, poems and children's musical instruments with music playing in parallel, static from the spot, as at a real concert; a "Celebration" structure, which is more dynamic and involves more movement and dance, borrowing elements from theatre, film and dance.

The considered variants of the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element and the religious teaching scenario with a musical element reveal numerous possibilities for their use by teachers of religion depending on their preferences, means and possibilities. On this occasion, Zachary Dechev, Stefka Stefanova and Maya Milenova point out that *"the different organizational forms are flexible and dynamic, so using only a certain model can make the work of the teacher more difficult, who has the right to preferences"*³.

Here are indicated varieties of mainly one form, which is the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element.

The formulation of the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element is borrowed from Anastasia Atanasova-Vukova who defines the musical pedagogical

³ Дечев, З., Стефанова, С., Миленова, М. *Помагало за обучението по религия в детските градини*. Бургас, Диамант, с. 9.

situation and from the descriptions of Zachary Dechev on religious preschool education.

The religious pedagogical situation with a musical element is a form of religious education, of specifically organized pedagogical interaction in the process of spiritual-cognitive and musical activity.

Pedagogical situation in religion, built on the principle of music lesson, in turn, is a **synthetic form of religious education, of specifically organized pedagogical interaction in the process of spiritual-cognitive and musical activity.**

These forms reveal the diversity and complex "simplicity" through which religious education in preschool is carried out. The music presented in the musical activities supports and enlivens the religious matter (content) because it is connected to the child's mental, spiritual and physical world. And the "bricks" with which it will be built depend on its construction as a person - sanctified by the *"Light of the world"* (John 9:5) and following the true path (cf. John 14:6).

The CONCLUSION summarizes the whole study, denoting that, music in the educational process of religion, which is represented by the basic musical activities and in the context of religious education, is dressed in the basic form of pedagogical interaction - the religious pedagogical situation with a musical element.

A religious pedagogical situation with a musical element provides a rich range of opportunities for children to engage with religious matter in a way that is intrinsic to them - with emotion, movement and voice and involves a form of communication and correspondence that is close to them - through music, sound, speech, image and animation.

All these means have one main purpose, which is to awaken faith in our Creator in the hearts of the little learners, that they may follow Him, and have hope, not only in this life, but also in the life to come (cf. Titus 1:2).

For we teachers of religion are called, as helpers of the apostles, to follow with faith, hope, and love the directions and promise of the Lord to them, and at the same time to us all: *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen* (Matt. 28:19, 20).

REFERENCE FOR MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS

1. Providing a rich base for practical application with descriptions, methodological instructions and author's participation - music examples, audio files, videos, sample developments, etc.

2. Formulation and clarification of new aspects related to the use of music in the contemporary educational process of religion (music-image movements, religious pedagogical situation with musical element and complex use of music, sound, speech, image and animation with the help of audio and audio-visual means).

PUBLICATIONS ON THE DISSERTATION TOPIC

1. Изпълнение на разнородни песни в обучението по религия в детската градина. Хармония в различията. Сборник с доклади. София, Академично издателство За буквите – О писменехъ, 2020, с. 84-98.

2. Възприемането на музика в обучението по религия в детската градина. Свидетелство, служение и богослужение на църквата. Сборник статии. София, Университетско издателство „Св. Климент Охридски“, 2021, с. 79-94.

3. Религиозните песни след Освобождението и съвременното обучение по религия в детската градина. Хармония в различията. Сборник с доклади. София, Академично издателство За буквите – О писменехъ, 2021, с. 211-221.