

## Peter Nagy: "Helmet for Life" - Christian Life Strategy Program

### Review

The development of the *Program* was started in September 2010 at St. Margaret Elementary School of the Cistercian Educational Center of Pécs with the aim of helping children with social-emotional deficits to integrate into school, supporting acquiring of community norms and the affirmation of their acceptance, as well as promoting their academic progress through personality development. The extension of the *Program* to all public education institutions of the Diocese of Pécs was marked by the invitation of Bishop Dr. György Udvardy in 2014.

The volume contains theoretical and practical experiences of this period, with the aim of helping all institutions to educate their students to be both smart and wise.

The *Program* is based on the innate human needs of *being self-identified and being loved*, and the inner needs of *being in contact and being free*. The *Program* is adjusted to the educational schedule of public schools. The main topics recur annually, are hierarchically built up grade by grade and can be easily integrated into the 45-minute-long classes. As a result, the *Program* has received positive feedback not only from diocesan and monastic-order run institutions, but has also been invited to an increasing number of foundation and school district financed institutions.

This increased demand has necessitated to make the *Program* more widely available, not only in person, but also indirectly.

As constantly reflecting on changes during the development of the *Program*, it is important to note that it is not a closed and static program, but rather a basic structure that needs to be continuously developed and expanded, with new case studies and practices.

However, we cannot ignore the fact that there is a set order of things in the world. Without recognizing and respecting this order, the *Program* cannot successfully transmit basic ideas and guide the next generation.

The '*Helmet for Life - Christian Life Strategy Program*' is based on a nearly 15-year-long theoretical and practical experience.

### What does the title mean?

Many young people leave home without knowing even the most basic rules of life, having no basic protective equipment for life that is not a safe journey. It would be a good idea to have at least a *helmet* to put on before setting off. Unfortunately, a "*post-event helmet*" is not worth much anymore...

*Strategy* means that you have to allocate your - otherwise limited - resources (money, time, energy, etc.) if you want to have enough of them available to complete the task. And life is not a sprint - that you can run with one breath - you have to plan ahead...

*Life* is a bit more complicated because defining the start and end points also defines the distance to consider. Expectations like having not only long but meaningful and substantial life would further complicate things...

*Christian*, on the other hand, needs a more profound explanation as it does not primarily refer to the theological content. Although the world and the human concept of the *Program* is based on this, it indicates a kind of "minimum normality" which is the basis of European civilization and culture. (For example, it does not seem good to cheat and steal from each other, to do harm to the health or lives of others, to think in terms of castes rather than

democracy. Taking care of children, the sick, the elderly at a societal level, creating a strong and productive society based on stable families etc. is not true of all cultures and is not always self-evident.)

#### Topics in upper years of primary school

Subject	5th class	6th class	7th class	8th class
<i>First community experience – the family</i>	<b>Role of the family</b> – roles within the family	<b>Types of families</b>	<b>Fundamentals and types of communication</b> - situational exercises	<b>We need a plan!</b> - dreams and goals
<i>Self-awareness – who am I?</i>	<b>My properties - who did I inherit from?</b>	<b>Learned behaviour in the family</b> - how does it work for you?	Conflicts in the family <b>Rules for arguing</b>	<b>What kind of person do I want to become?</b> - self-criticism and role models
<i>Extra-familial communities - rules, habits</i>	<b>Concept of the community -The importance of rules</b>	Community and society - <b>rule-making in practice</b>	Facts, opinions, assumptions - <b>practicing reasoning</b>	<b>Unknown environment</b> -exercising an exam position
<i>Valuable life - my goals</i>	<b>Rules for learning</b>	<b>You are valuable!</b>	Debate day - <b>Rules of debate in practice</b>	<b>What kind of family do I want to live in?</b>
<i>Basic values</i>	<b>Friendship rules</b>	<b>Trust</b> - who can I trust in? The dangers of social media	<b>Glasses for thinking</b> - decision-making aspects	<b>To be a man, a father a woman, a mother</b>

#### Topics in secondary schools:

Topic	9th class - basic concepts	10th Class - the structure and "functioning" of man	11th Class - self-awareness	12th Class - contact
<i>Basic principles</i>	Introduction to Life Strategy - <b>Science and Wisdom</b>	<b>Centres of decision-making</b> - What is man?	Construction of personality - <b>EGO or CHARACTER</b>	Structure and function of the male and female reproductive systems; <b>Sex or pornography</b>
<i>Goals: plans, dreams</i>	<b>You need a plan!</b> - Existence and relationships	<b>Centres of decision-making</b> - <b>Basics of spirituality</b>	Self-awareness - <b>inherited characteristics and personality types</b>	<b>Procreation, conception, fetal development</b>
<i>Life Strategy</i>	Concept of <b>freedom</b> and consequences	<b>Glasses for thinking</b> - theory and practice	Self-awareness - <b>socialization</b>	<b>Concept, nature and consequences of abortion;</b>
<i>Risks</i>	<b>Factors affecting freedom</b>	<b>Consequences of early sexuality</b>	<b>Male archetypes</b>	<b>Alternative options: contraception, raising or adopting an unwanted child, responsible sexuality and chastity</b>
<i>Couples relationship</i>	Stages of getting acquainted - <b>the place of sexuality in the couple relationship</b>	<b>The essence of courtship and the arc of the relationship</b>	<b>Female archetypes</b>	<b>Cohabitation vs. marriage</b>

The aim of the program is to combine the most basic moral norms and the natural human needs, starting from a sense of "normality", to educate the next generation to be mutually understanding, supportive, cooperative and community-building. This book intends to help educators and readers interested in the subject feeling responsibility for the next generation.

The author is a teacher, public education officer of the Diocese of Pécs, the developer and coordinator of the *Program*, vice president of the Family Science Alliance until March 2024. He also contributed to the compilation of the nationwide *Family Life Education Program* of Family Friendly Country Nonprofit Ltd. furthermore in the training of trainers. Married for 35 years, father of four, grandfather of six. E-mail address: bukosisakazelethez@gmail.com

*A handbook of the Program was published in private publication in 2022. László Bíró, military ordinary emeritus and former bishop of the Hungarian Catholic Bishop's College in charge of family pastoral care, described the book as the only document that is not only Christian in its approach but also anthropologically based.*

*The Program was recently accredited – it will be used as state-approved training material for the further training of primary and secondary school teachers.*

*To the author's knowledge, there is currently no methodological publication on Christian Life Strategy available in English. An English translation of the book or some parts of it could help determine how useful it could be in other countries and other contexts, after language and location-specific adaptation.*