

An approach to teaching Religious Studies

By Bosco Chan,
Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College,
Hong Kong



Three parts in this sharing

- Is religious instruction important?
- What did De La Salle do?
- An approach to Religious Studies

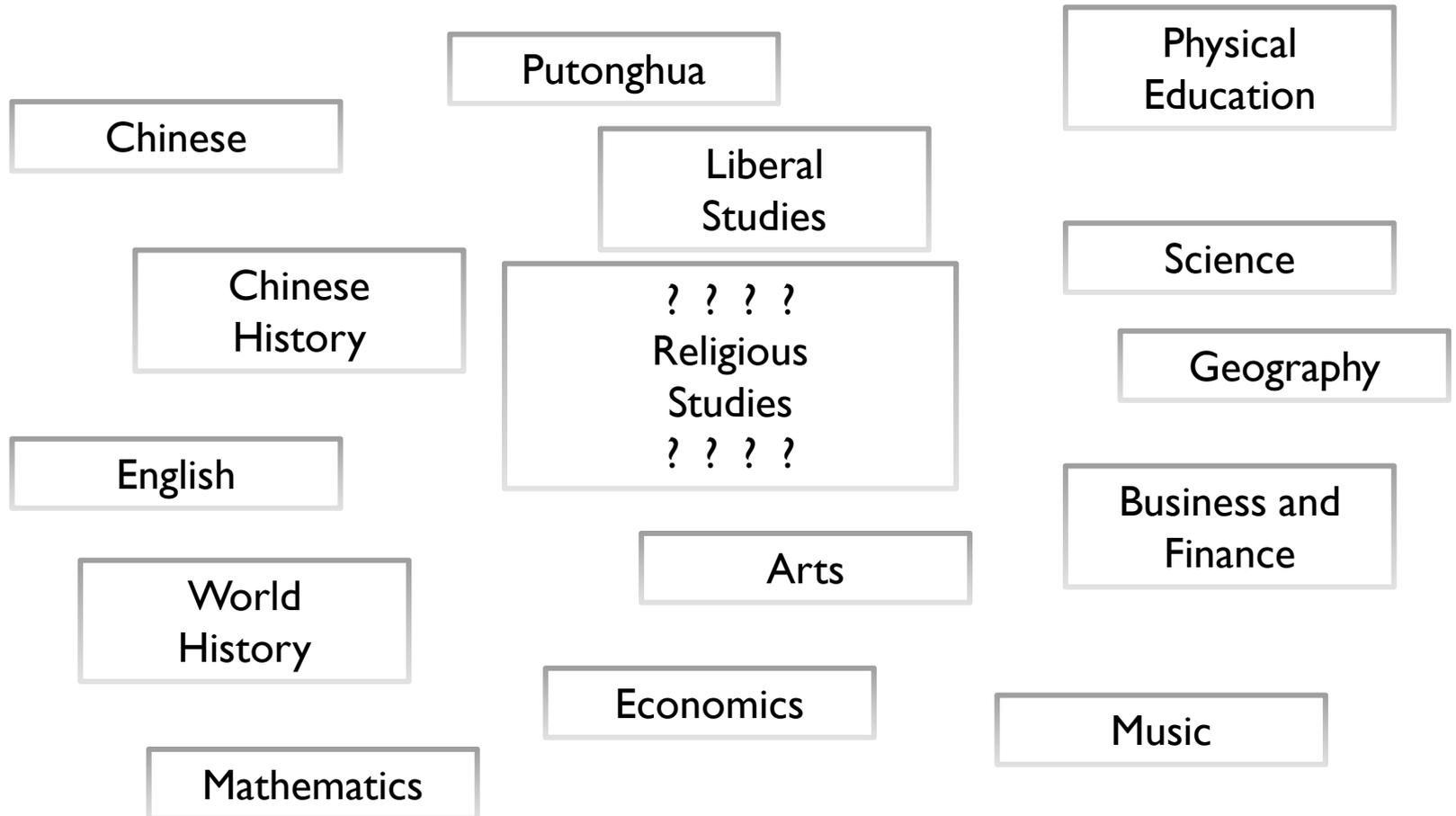
First Part



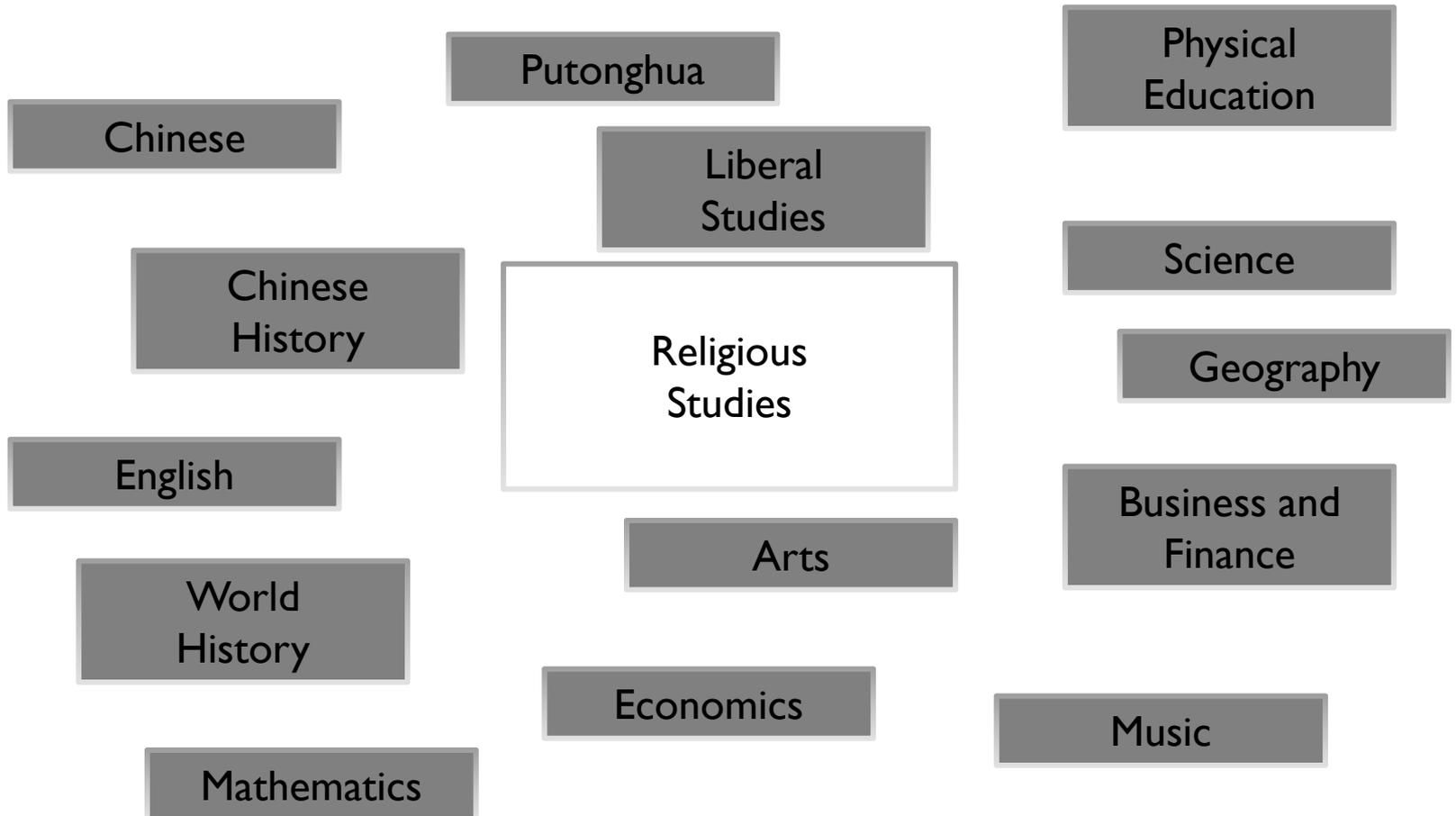
IS

**RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION
IMPORTANT?**

“What place does religious instruction have in the overall education of the child?”



“What place does religious instruction have in the overall education of the child?”



“But I am not a Christian...”



“For the Founder,
all knowledge, especially religious knowledge, is integrally related in the formation of the true Christian.

Although Baptism is the minimal requirement for being called a true Christian, this does not guarantee that a person is a true Christian—baptized heretics also bear the name of Christian.”

- *Duties of a Christian to God, De La Salle*



The question is...

Is our Lasallian institution
developing true Christians?

Are we simply educators of skills and good
ideas, or educators of children of God?

Is religious instruction playing its important
part?

Second Part



WHAT DID DE LA SALLE DO?

De La Salle's Christian School!

Hourly Schedule

7:30-8:30

School Activity

open school building;
preparation for lessons,
alone or in student-directed groups

8:00-8:30

morning prayer and breakfast;
lesson review

8:30-10:30

lessons in reading
lessons in writing
lessons in arithmetic
lessons in spelling

De La Salle's Christian School!

10:30-11:30	reflection; prayer Mass in parish church
1:00-1:30	preparation for lessons, alone or in student-directed groups
1:30-2:00	prayer and snack; lesson review
2:00-3:30	continue lessons in reading writing, arithmetic, spelling
3:30-4:00	lesson in catechism
4:00-4:30	examination of conscience; evening prayer; singing, dismissal, close building

Catechism and Prayer

“Catechism will be taught every day. . . .The teacher will question all of the students each day. . . .A special effort will be made to question, much more often than the others, those whose minds are slow and dull and who have difficulty in remembering.”

- *Duties of a Christian to God*, De La Salle

“When a student is admitted to the school, the students and the parents must have all the necessary books, including a prayer book if the student knows how to read; and if not, a rosary, so that the student can pray during holy Mass.”

- *The Conduct of the Christian Schools*, De La Salle

Third Part



AN APPROACH TO RELIGIOUS STUDIES



I. To pray well is to understand the holy presence of God

Before teaching students in the class of religious studies,
the teacher gives witness to how to find the holy presence of God in prayers.

“Remembering that God is with you will help and inspire you in all that you do.”

- St. John Baptist de La Salle



I. To pray well is to understand the holy presence of God

Examples:

- “Let us close our eyes before we pray. Hold our hands together, and let ourselves go into our hearts, the places where God dwells.”
- “Have we planted this tree outside? Look at how beautiful it is to our eyes! Let us praise the Lord just because of this tree.”

2. A holy love of God before religious knowledge

- Before passing on religious knowledge, the teacher gives witness to how the teacher himself experiences the love of God first.

“The intellect must seek that which it loves: the more it loves, the more it desires to know.”

– from St. Anselm, *“Fides et Ratio”*

2. A holy love of God before religious knowledge

Examples:

- “Whenever I think of my birth, I cannot stop thinking of why I was not born into nothingness. A beautiful world was prepared for me!”
- “Because I am baptised, I know that I can call the Father in heaven, ‘My Father!’ and Jesus, ‘My Brother!’”

3. Faith in the Church is more effective than the Bible stories at the beginning

Many of our children are learning how the faith was lived in the Bible, but very little about how the faith is lived in the Church (here and now).



“Because the Church has the same authority as Jesus Christ and is our mother, she can command us as her children.”

- *Duties of a Christian to God, De La Salle*

3. Faith in the Church is more effective than the Bible stories at the beginning

La Salle taught:

- This same grace makes us children of God because it gives us a share in the holiness that belongs to God; in giving us this grace, God adopts us as his children and assures us that if we preserve this grace, we will be heirs of his glory in heaven.
- Baptism also opens for the soul of the recipient the gate of heaven, which was previously shut before it. Baptism expels the demons that up to then possessed it.
 - *Duties of a Christian to God, De La Salle*

3. Faith in the Church is more effective than the Bible stories

Examples:

- How do we become children of God through baptism? Through baptism, we share in the divine nature, and our Father in heaven will call us every moment, “My son!”
- How does God feed us? Unlike manna, a kind of food God gave Moses and the Israelites, today he gives us food that will last forever! What is this food? His flesh in the appearance of bread! Do you see this in the Mass each month?

In an ordinary lesson...

1. The teacher prays very well with the students. (presence of God)
2. The teacher begins with a little story of himself. (a holy love of God)
3. The teacher teaches how to live out the Catholic faith to guide students to live in the love of God (faith in the Church)

After an ordinary lesson...

1. The student writes a prayer each week as an assignment. (presence of God)
2. The student writes a reflection on questions related to catechism/ his life of faith/ his stage of life/ Bible characters taught. (a holy love of God)
3. The student shares how he is able to live out the Catholic faith by developing characters of good Christians, by going to catechism class asking for baptism into the Church, or by bringing back more questions about the Catholic faith/ the Bible/ virtues and sins/ life and death. (faith in the Church)

After three parts of this sharing,

- Is religious instruction important?
- What did De La Salle do?
- An approach to Religious Studies



A little wish to you all...

(John 10:24-28, NAB)

- The Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”
- Jesus answered them, “I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify to me. But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep. My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand.”



**THANK
YOU!**