

## CURRENT EVENTS PRESENTATIONS ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Social Studies 10  
Mr. Tyldesley

Pinetree Sec.

One person presents their controversial topic to the class, and another member of the class questions and debates him/her when the presentation is over.

(30 marks for the presenter; 10 marks for the questioner)

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My sample presentation:

1. Source- Newspaper article: "Baptism usually calls for some parental commitment." By Lasha Morningstar in Edmonton (Saturday Review Section of the Vancouver Sun).

Presentation(30 marks)

a) *Overview of the main points of the story:*

Main idea: -Do non-religious parents who get their newborns baptised really have a commitment to religion?

-There is a dilemma that people now have-don't baptise their children, or baptise their children and then having to commit to institutional religion.

-People baptise their children because of feelings of mortality that they have once their child is born.

-Most 'baby boomers' have 'fallen out of' religion during their late teens or early twenties.

-A lot of churches refuse to celebrate the baptism rite without a religious commitment.

-Pastors want the parents to get to know the other churchgoers before they will baptise the children.

-This leads to a dilemma for the pastors because they want to attract people into the church, but they must remain faithful to their teachings.

b) *The story portrays the values of:*

-Faith in a Christian god

-Honesty and integrity

-Commitment

\*Whose values are portrayed in the story?

-The Church-goers mostly. Mainly, the article focuses in on the church leaders' values of faith, honesty, and commitment.

c) *Why the story is controversial now?*

-The story is controversial now because of the decline in religious commitment in Canada in general, and because a lot of people would agree that there must be commitment with baptism. On the other hand, other people would disagree and say that it is only a secular(non-religious) tradition and can involve personal (non-institutional ) religious traditions.

d) *Our society(B.C.) finds this issue hard to deal with. Why?*

-Our society finds this issue hard to deal with because it is one based on religious faith, freedom of religion and choice, and because baptism is such a traditional part of our heritage. Once again, religion clashes with secular society.

\*Either agree or disagree with the article.

e) *Disagree with article:*

-My point of view on this story is that this is not a problem. I think that people should have the right to baptism rites at churches in our secular society even if they don't commit to that particular church.

Churches receive tax breaks from all citizens and should be accessible to the general public.

-My own values of 'freedom of choice' and 'self-determination' lead my thinking on my decision on this issue. My morals of feeling responsible for my child's future lead my decision as well.

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## CHALLENGE FROM ANOTHER STUDENT OF THE PRESENTER'S DECISION

\*Agree with article. (10 Marks)

(Possible questions to ask and debate with the presenter) (Must ask at least two questions).

1. What about the faith that baptism represents? The parents have to model us faith for the baptised child, don't they? Otherwise, why get the child baptised?
2. Why do you think that this is not a hypocritical practice? Why do you want to have a baptised child if the institution of organized religion means nothing to you?

# Saturday Review

By LASHA MORNINGSTAR

EDMONTON

## Baptism usually calls for some parental

The mother gazes into her sleeping infant's face, and says: "I just want to know he has God's blessing." But what if that blessing, in the form of baptism, brings with it a commitment to institutional religion? It's a dilemma confronting more and more parents in today's secular society.

Mother and/or father either have no faith tradition or abandoned it in their youth. Yet once they cradle

their first born in their arms, they face their own mortality and discover that the compulsion to meet their child's every need — including spiritual — is overpowering.

But more than two of every three baby boomers raised in a spiritual tradition stopped attending church in their teens or early 20s. Without a religious commitment, many churches refuse to celebrate the sacrament

of baptism. At the very least, most want the parents to drop by and see what's happening — before asking the pastor to baptize their child.

"We'd like the parents to develop some sort of personal relationship with the people in the parish," explains Rev. Leo Floyd. "God does not act through magic wands. He acts through people, so people must have a relationship with others to know

commitm

God's love. It's not a magical happening — it's a human happening."

Baptism is also the first step toward church membership. And traditionally children are baptized into the parish they belong to, says Floyd.

Anglican Canon Donald Gray says some people "are almost offended" when it's pointed out they need to be committed to the main points of the Christian faith if their child is to be

baptized. This means Anglican clergy tread a delicate pastoral path. "On one hand, we must be affectionate and welcoming to the parents and godparents, while at the same time remain faithful to our teaching."

*Edmonton Journal*