

# Trustees review samples from standardized religion test

By Tim Foran  
METROLAND WEST MEDIA GROUP

What's the best way to measure the effectiveness of a religion class without trying to pin a number to a student's faith?

That was the question discussed recently by Halton Catholic school board trustees during a review of sample questions for a

standardized test that will be rolled out to Grade 7 students across the region beginning with a pilot launch at some schools May 12.

The board's working group of curriculum experts has proposed a two-part structure to the test, which was mandated by trustees last year.

The first parts, standard multiple choice and matching question sections, would

assess knowledge of basic terminology and biblical stories. Sample questions reviewed by trustees included asking of which Jewish holiday was the Last Supper a part, and matching the correct definition to the word 'incarnation.'

The second parts would consist of written responses to a text.

The sample article reviewed by trustees was a 2007 newspaper article about Hamilton teenager and Ontario Junior Citizen of the Year Maddison Babineau.

Suffering from a rare form of bone cancer, Babineau passed up on an offer of a trip to Disneyland or shopping spree from the Children's Wish Foundation, instead asking for assistance in her fundraising efforts to build a school for poverty stricken children in Africa. Babineau died a few months after the article ran.

The first sample question asks students to describe how Babineau's life was a sacrifice in the Christian sense of the word. The second asks them to compare Babineau's story to that of an individual in the Bible, and to organize their thoughts under three sub-headings.

It was this open answer part of the assessment that elicited concern from Oakville trustee Anthony Danko, who said asking for subjective responses to a newspaper article seemed to be measuring faith, something trustees have clearly stated shouldn't be the purpose of the standardized test.

"Our position has been quite clear that we don't see that (measuring faith) as a goal or see that as a possibility," Director of

Education Michael Pautler responded to Danko.

The assessment practice in Ontario doesn't only test knowledge, but also looks at application of knowledge and critical thinking, Rick MacDonald, the board's superintendent of curriculum services, said later on.

One of the objectives of the board's Grade 7 religion curriculum is to allow students to reflect on the components of the Apostles Creed and apply these to their daily experiences, according to the board's website.

Oakville Student Trustee Chelsea Gray took the opposite position of Danko.

The St. Thomas Aquinas high school student questioned the multiple choice and matching questions portion of the test, which she felt to be designed for "textbook Catholics" rather than those who put their knowledge into action.

Danko also expressed concern the sample questions were not specific to the Catholic faith, but were simply about Christianity. He noted the board's vision describes itself as a "distinctively Catholic" model learning community. "We believe in scripture and tradition, not just scripture."

No final decisions were made by trustees during the review of the sample assessment. An update, taking into account the opinions expressed by trustees, will come forward in the future before the test is administered.

A list of sample questions can be found at [www.hcdsb.org/news/2010%2001/100119full.pdf](http://www.hcdsb.org/news/2010%2001/100119full.pdf).

Tim Foran can be reached at [tforan@miltoncanadianchampion.com](mailto:tforan@miltoncanadianchampion.com).

## TAXWIDE

:: Seeing Beyond Numbers

### Tax Services:

- ✓ We do all Kinds of Taxes
- ✓ Reasonable Rates - Check us First!
- ✓ 100% Satisfaction Guaranteed!

**GET YOUR MONEY NOW  
INSTANT TAX REFUND**

Laurier Medical Building • 6-497 Laurier Ave. (at Ontario St. S.)  
905-875-3726 • Head Office: 1-866-829-9433 Mississauga  
[www.taxwide.com](http://www.taxwide.com)

**15 Locations  
to Serve You  
Better!**

**Ask the Experts  
FREE**

- Personal
- Business
- Corporation
- USA & Estate

Reach out and claim yours.

# TAX CUTS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

**New**

### FIRST-TIME HOME BUYERS' TAX CREDIT

A non-refundable tax credit of up to \$750.

### PENSION INCOME SPLITTING

Split up to 50% of eligible pension income with your spouse or common-law partner.

**New**

### HOME RENOVATION TAX CREDIT

A non-refundable tax credit of up to \$1,350.

### TRADESPERSON'S TOOLS EXPENSES

Deduct up to \$500 from your net income.

### CHILDREN'S FITNESS TAX CREDIT

A non-refundable tax credit of up to \$75/child.

### PUBLIC TRANSIT TAX CREDIT

A non-refundable tax credit of 15%.

It makes sense to file your returns electronically and on time.

Find out what you can claim at:

[canada.gc.ca/taxinfo](http://canada.gc.ca/taxinfo)

1 877-959-1-CRA

Canada

Part of CANADA'S ECONOMIC  
**ACTION PLAN**