



Discussing religion

-discourses in plans for thoughtful dialogues

Philosophy of Education Society of Iran: Shaid Bahonar University of Kerman
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Thoughtful dialogues

- 🌱 Methods for philosophizing with students:
 - 🌱 P4C/PwC
 - 🌱 Socratic (Paideia) seminars
 - 🌱 Socratic dialogues
 - 🌱 Deliberative dialogue
- 🌱 Open ended questions
- 🌱 Investigative, critical analysis
- 🌱 Collaborative dialogue
- 🌱 Ultimate goal is to enhance and develop students'
 - 🌱 democratic competence
 - 🌱 participation in “the Great Conversation of Mankind”

Research questions

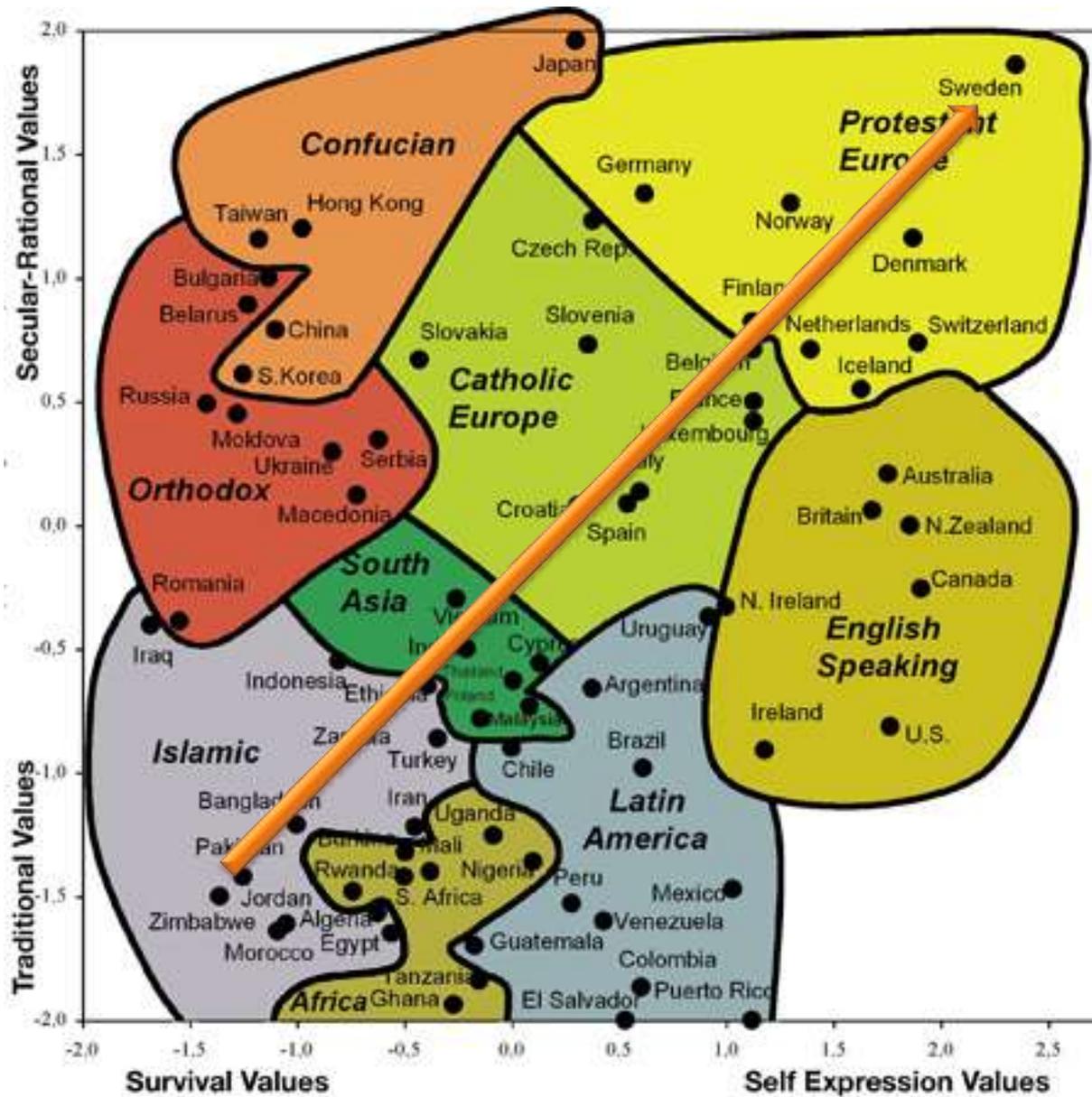
- ❶ What discourses can be found in methodological materials for thoughtful dialogue addressing the subject religion?
- ❷ Are questions in the materials used to address faith, morality, and teaching? If so, how?
- ❸ How are the discourses found in the methodological materials related to the discourses in religious education in a highly secularized country (using Sweden as an example)?

Fairclough's (2013:73) three-dimensional conception of discourse



Three nodal points: Faith, morality, teaching

The World Value Survey Cultural Map 2005-2008



Traditional /secular-rational values

- 🕯 Religion considered very important or not
- 🕯 Traditional pole:
 - 🕯 Importance of parent-child ties and deference to authority
 - 🕯 Absolute standards
 - 🕯 Traditional family values
 - 🕯 High levels of national pride, and a nationalistic outlook
- 🕯 Societies with secular-rational values:
 - 🕯 Opposite preferences on all of these topics
- 🕯 A shift from traditional toward secular-rational values in almost all industrial societies

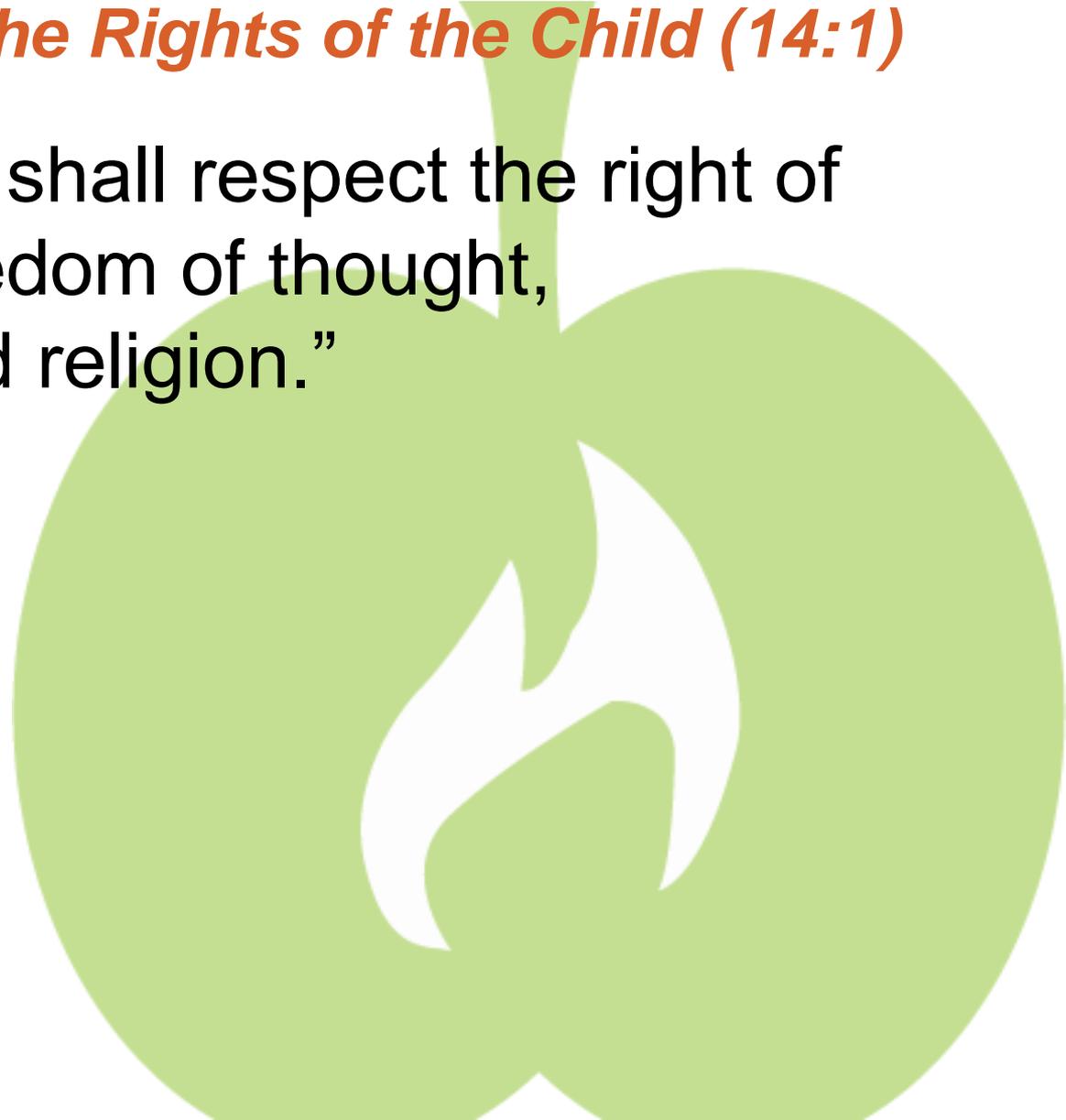
Survival/ self-expression values

- 🌱 Linked with the transition from industrial society to post-industrial societies
 - 🌱 From economic and physical security towards self-expression and quality of life
- 🌱 Self-expression values:
 - 🌱 High priority to environmental protection
 - 🌱 Tolerance of diversity
 - 🌱 Demands for participation in decision making
- 🌱 High ranking on self-expression values tends to rank high on interpersonal trust
 - 🌱 Research defines this as crucial to democracy
- 🌱 Theologies shift from religious truths towards a personal relation to God found in dialogue with others

United Nations:

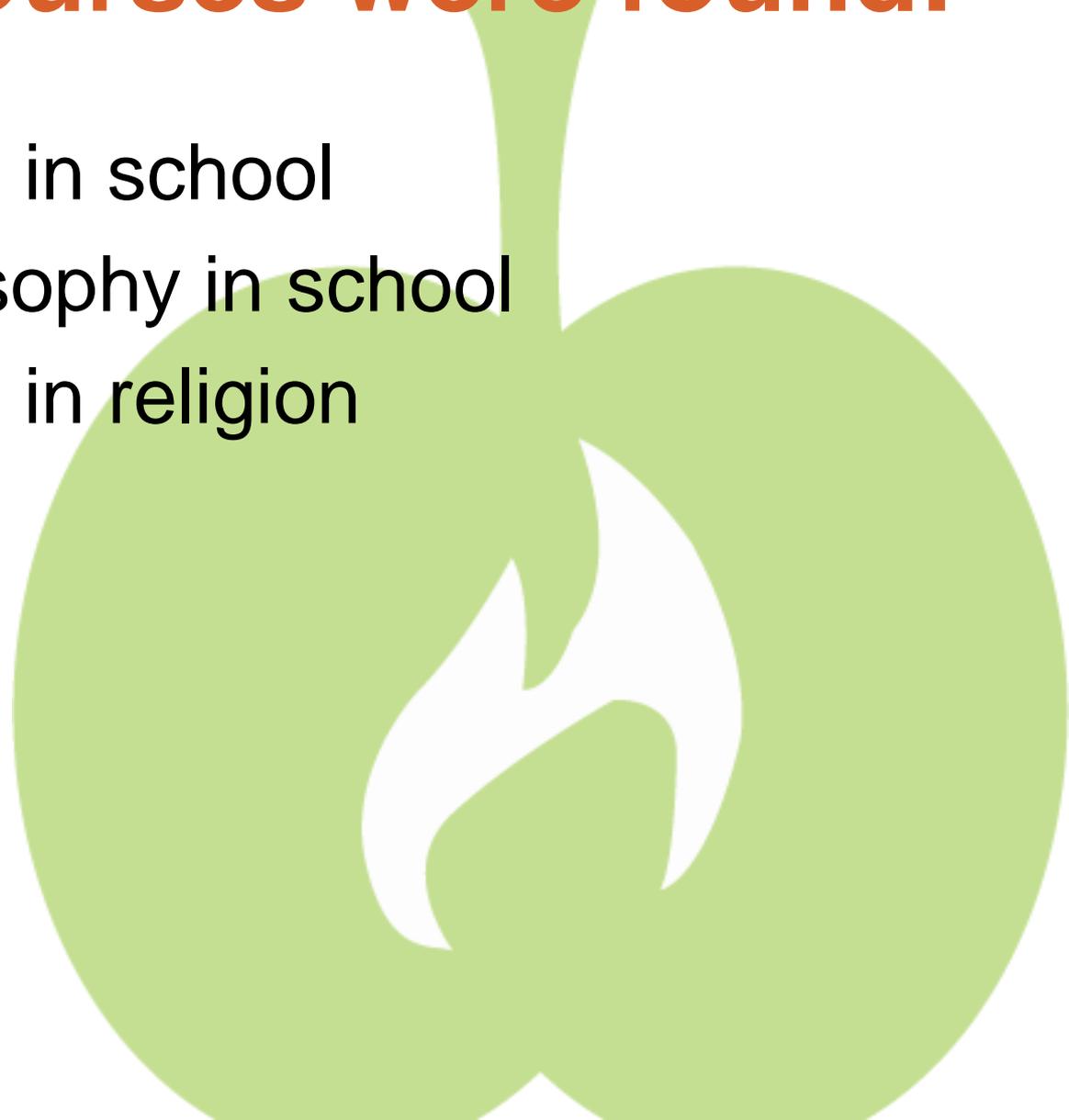
Convention on the Rights of the Child (14:1)

- 🍏 “States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.”



Three discourses were found:

- 🍏 Critical thinking in school
- 🍏 Teaching philosophy in school
- 🍏 Critical thinking in religion



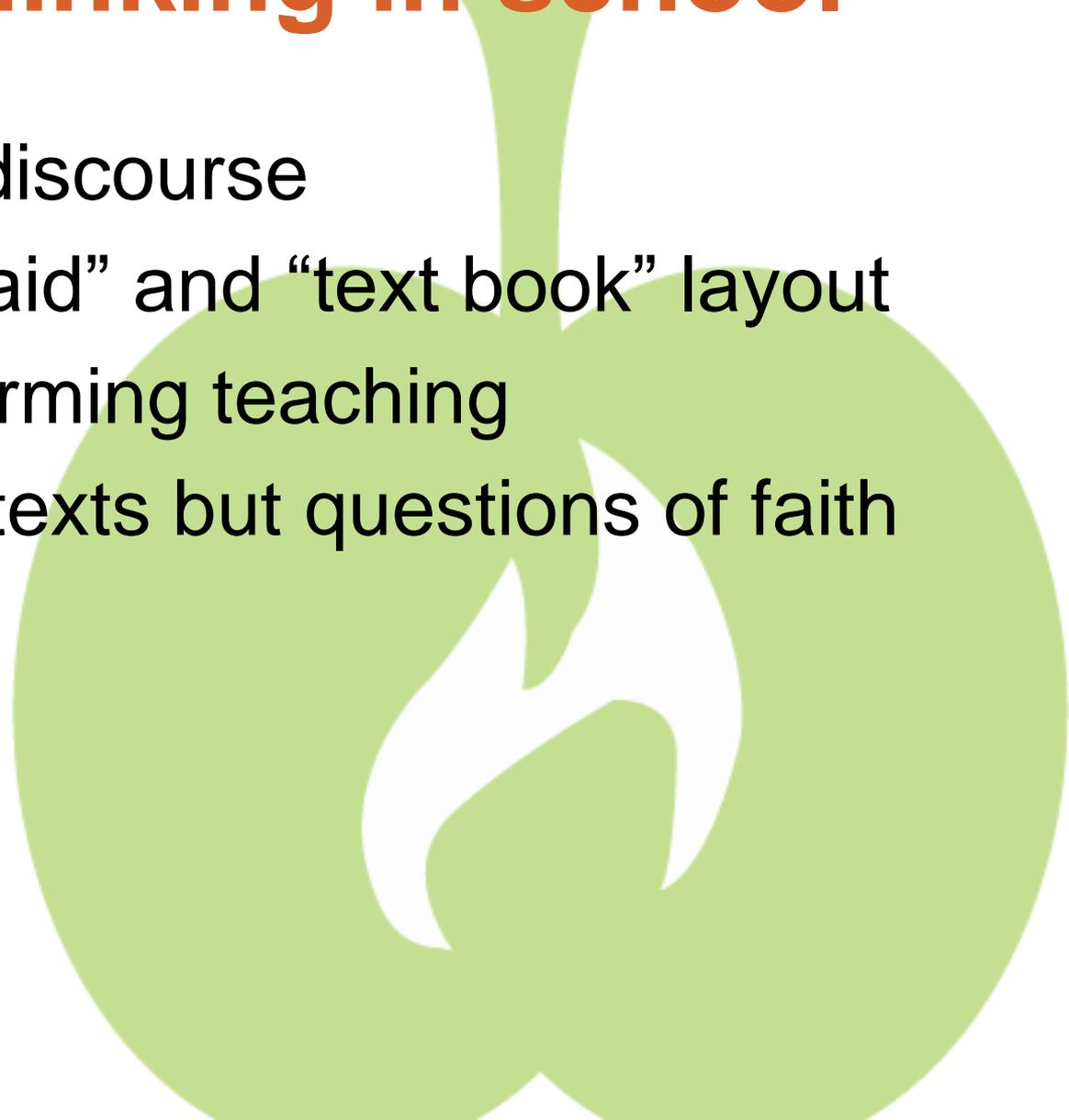
Allah will provide

A North African folktale from Great Books, grade 4



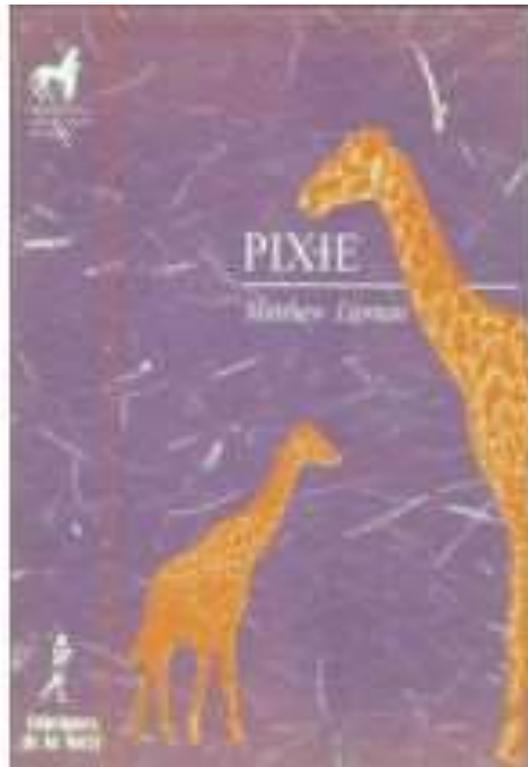
Critical thinking in school

- 🍏 Most frequent discourse
- 🍏 Uses “teacher aid” and “text book” layout
- 🍏 Aims at transforming teaching
- 🍏 Uses religious texts but questions of faith are avoided



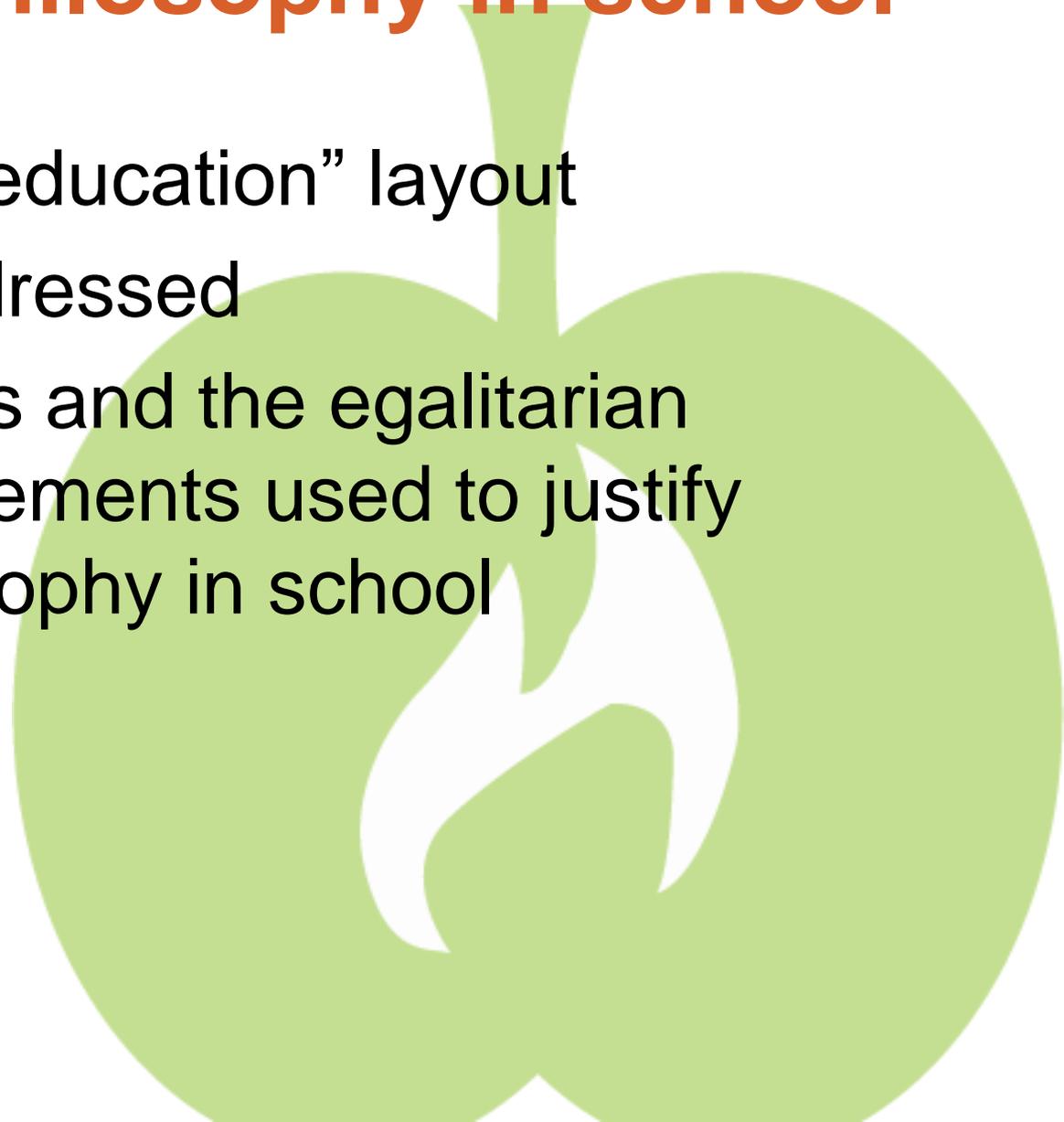
Nous

A Pixie story from Matthew Lipman, grade 5-6



Teaching philosophy in school

- 🍏 Uses “teacher education” layout
- 🍏 Faith is not addressed
- 🍏 Moral questions and the egalitarian dialogue are elements used to justify teaching philosophy in school



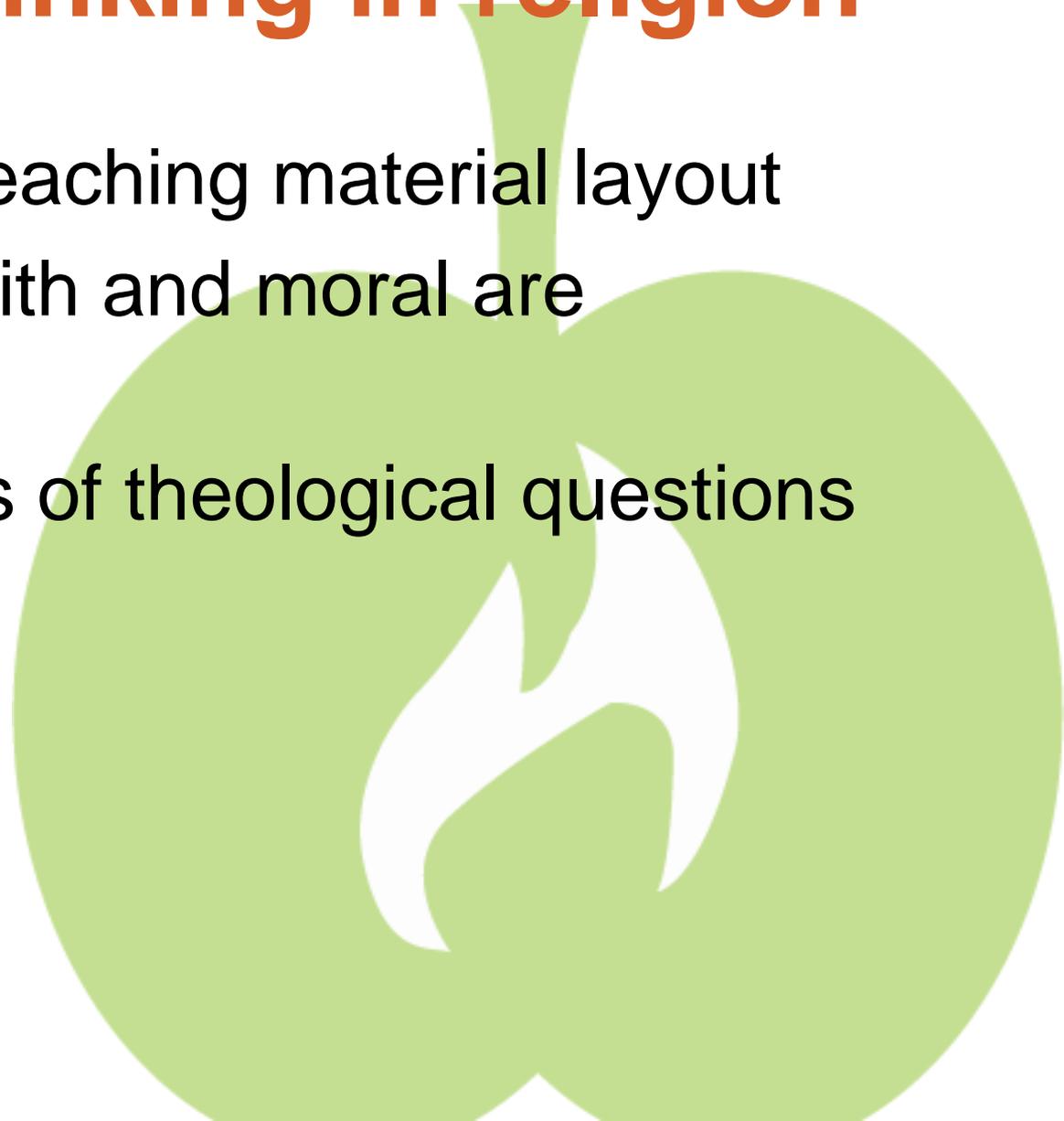
Jacob and Esau

A Bible text from *Våra bästa samtal*, grade 5->



Critical thinking in religion

- 🍏 Does not use teaching material layout
- 🍏 Questions of faith and moral are addressed
- 🍏 Critical analysis of theological questions



Four approaches to religious education in school

		The attitude towards questions of faith	
		Addressing questions of faith	Avoiding questions of faith
The approach to knowledge	Fundamentalist approach	<p>A. DOGMATIC RELIGION FAITH: Religious faith is seen as true dogma and right/wrong way to believe. MORALITY: True moral values based on a certain religion, are taught. TEACHING: The teacher mediates the material to the students.</p>	<p>B. DOGMATIC ATHEISM FAITH: Religious faith is seen as superstition and is not seen as worth exploring. MORALITY: A set of fundamental values, based on societal agreements are taught. TEACHING: The teacher mediates the material to the students. Religious education focuses on teaching facts about different religions.</p>
	Critical examination approach	<p>C. EXAMINING THEOLOGY FAITH: Rational critical theological examination of questions of faith is encouraged. MORALITY: Moral questions are examined, analyzed, and discussed. TEACHING: Scaffolded, dialogic and critically examining methods are used.</p>	<p>D. EXAMINING PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION FAITH: Religion is seen as a personal matter or as superstition and cannot be analyzed, or all views are accepted, encouraging relativism. MORALITY: Moral questions are examined, analyzed and discussed. TEACHING: Scaffolded dialogic and critically examining methods are used. Religious education focuses on teaching facts about different religions.</p>

Swedish curriculum – transition

Present Swedish curriculum



We argue that

- ❁ Questions of faith and religion need to be discussed with others
- ❁ The methodological materials for thoughtful dialogues tend to focus on moral questions when exploring religious texts
- ❁ Thoughtful dialogue could be used for dialogues about faith, and religious and theological questions, and thus helping the individual to form a relationship to God or a grounded base on which he or she can reflect on matters of faith and belief or disbelief
- ❁ This approach is in accordance with the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child*

**You find the paper and the
slideshow at:**

 www.ingniteresearch.org/library

