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## ***Domownik Workbook. A Resource for Shaping Children’s Cultural Identity in Grades I–III***

### *Domownik. Źródło kształtowania tożsamości kulturowej dzieci w klasach I–III*

**Abstract:** The cultural identity of an individual – a child – a pupil and its formation is a crucial matter in times of globalisation, cultural fusion, interaction with others, and merging into intercultural, transcultural structures. In a school setting, the children can have new, broader experiences constituting belonging to a given cultural community. In the first three grades of primary school, this is done through early childhood education and (importantly) through school religious education in the form of catechesis and the tools and textbooks used during it. It combines the cultural identity conferred in the family with the identity naturally conveyed through religion. This paper presents a qualitative analysis of the secondary source in the form of the workbook *Domownik – a supplement for the family*, which accompanies the school catechesis textbooks of the Catholic Church in the first educational stage. It was concluded that the workbook includes features leading to ethnos, which is recognised as a determinant for cultural identity formation. These features guide the pupil towards the knowledge and education of language (linguistic codes), customs (communal celebrations), history (collective memory) and being rooted in religion. They also mobilise them to explore the values and principles characteristic of the Catholic Church community in Poland and to open up to the experiences that make up the structure of an individu-

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al's identity embedded in the reality of affiliation and identification with a particular social community. *Domownik* is a tool for working with the pupil through collaboration with his/her most immediate cultural group – the family. It is designed to be used as an optional extra task for children in grades I–III in their home environment. In school, on the other hand, it is sometimes used alongside – on a par with – instead of the textbook.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; ethnos; school catechesis; culture; cultural identity.

**Abstrakt:** Tożsamość kulturowa jednostki – dziecka – ucznia i jej kreowanie jest istotną kwestią w dobie globalizacji, przenikania się kultur, stykania z innymi, łączenia w międzykulturowe, transkulturowe struktury. W przestrzeni szkoły dziecko ma szansę na przeżywanie nowych, szerszych doświadczeń konstytuujących jego przynależność do danej wspólnoty kulturowej. W klasach I–III szkoły podstawowej dzieje się to za pośrednictwem edukacji wczesnoszkolnej, a także (co ważne) katechezy szkolnej i stosowanych w jej trakcie narzędzi oraz podręczników. Ona to w naturalny sposób łączy tożsamość kulturową nadawaną w rodzinie z tożsamością przekazywaną za pośrednictwem religii. W artykule przedstawiono analizę jakościową źródła wtórnego, jakie stanowi *Domownik – dodatek dla rodziny*, który dołączany jest do podręczników katechezy szkolnej Kościoła katolickiego na pierwszym etapie edukacyjnym. Stwierdzono, że w skład *Domownika* wchodzi elementy prowadzące do ethnos, uznanego za determinant kształtowania tożsamości kulturowej, kierujące ucznia ku poznaniu i wykształceniu języka (kodów językowych), obyczajowości (wspólnego świętowania), historii (pamięci zbiorowej) oraz zakorzenienia w religii, mobilizujące go do odkrywania wartości i zasad charakterystycznych dla wspólnoty Kościoła katolickiego w Polsce/grupy kulturowej oraz otwierania się na doświadczenia składające się na strukturę tożsamości jednostki osadzonej w realiach przynależenia i identyfikacji z określoną zbiorowością społeczną. *Domownik* to narzędzie do pracy z uczniem poprzez współpracę z jego najbliższą grupą kulturową – rodziną, wykorzystywane jako dobrowolne dodatkowe zadania dzieci w klasach I–III w ich środowisku domowym, natomiast w szkole stosowane obok – na równi – czasami zamiast – podręcznika.

**Słowa kluczowe:** edukacja wczesnoszkolna; ethnos; katecheza szkolna; kultura; tożsamość kulturowa.

## 1. Introduction

The objective of the study was to identify and characterise the elements leading to ethnos: language, history, morality, and religion in *Domownik*, which is a supplement for the family accompanying the religious education textbooks in grades I–III. The focus has been on determining the significance of these elements as criterial and subjective attributes forming children's cultural identity at the early childhood education level. Consideration was given to the workbook's potential – the possibility of using it in the educational process – in the course of ingraining pupils in cultural symbols.

The ethnos was thus recognised as the foundation for constructing each individual's cultural identity from the very beginning of its existence. *Domownik*, as a source that conveys substance, outlines values and explains their meaning while introducing the cooperative dynamics of the family environment – oriented towards the acquisition of the various elements of ethnos by pupils in grades I–III.

*Domownik* constitutes a complementary resource to the textbooks used by the Catholic Church in Poland in the delivery of catechesis in grades I–III, pursuant to:

- the core curriculum approved on 8 June 2018 during the 379th Plenary Meeting of the Polish Bishops' Conference;
- the Act of 14 December 2016 – Education Law (Journal of Laws, item 59);
- the Act of 14 December 2016 – Provisions enacting the Act – Education Law (Journal of Laws, item 60).

The study relied on the *Domownik* workbook that accompanied the textbooks published by the Archdiocese of Warmia in 2020–2022, i.e.: *W imię Ojca i Syna, i Ducha Świętego* – 1<sup>st</sup> grade; *To jest mój syn umiłowany* – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade; *Kto spożywa moje ciało ma życie* – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. When creating the content for the textbooks, the Archdiocese considers the region's cultural specificity: important religious buildings, pilgrimage routes, figures and saints permanently inscribed in the history of the local community, meaningful stories with socio-religious themes and aspects of regional traditions.

## 2. Research assumptions

The study addressed the following questions: What elements leading to ethnos (seen as the fundament for the cultural development of the human identity) can be found in *Domownik*, and what are their characteristics? How can *Domownik* be used in the educational process to acquaint pupils with cultural symbols? – practical indications.

The method used in the course of the study was a secondary source analysis, understood as the search of existing data sets that constitute tangible traces of human activity. It was also acknowledged that data extracted from secondary sources produce texts with messages that are subject to analysis. Messages are revealed in the form of observable/explicit variables and unobservable/latent variables (Rubacha, 2016).

*Domownik* – a supplement for the family (three parts for three grades) that comes with religious education textbooks for grades I–III – is a secondary source in the study presented here. Explicit variables are elements of the supplement that enable students to develop: language, which may contain implicit cultural codes that are also specific to a particular region, customs, history, and religion. Latent variables, on the other hand, are the elements of the *Domownik* leading to children's acquisition of cultural codes found in the language and recognition of their meaning (with regard to the particularities of the cultural area) as well as the need to celebrate, enshrined in customs, historical knowledge and an awareness of its role in developing collective memory and values conveyed by religion and understanding their function in human life.

The choice of the study sample was intentional and consisted of finding *Domownik*, a supplement to religious education textbooks for grades I–III. In view of the studies concerning cultural identity, it was decided to focus on the supplement used in one archdiocese – the area of didactic influences – i.e. a more specific field of identification of selected explicit and latent variables, which enabled the research objective to be achieved.

The raw text collected following the analysis was subjected to data reduction, representation and verification using a circular approach – truncation according to analytical categories in line with the research problems, taking into account the stratified sampling. This made it possible to identify the elements that comprise the context of the data. The verification process

involved the use of analytic induction, which consists of juxtaposing the hypotheses with any cases found in the study area (Rubacha, 2016). A system for coding and categorisation was introduced with the theoretical codes formulated as follows:

- the elements leading to ethnos in the conveyed content include: all manifestations of cultural codes, descriptions of church festivals and the ways in which they are celebrated, also in a regional context, attesting to the introduction of morality, stories of Saints, Jesus Christ and accounts of local events (associated with temples and regional characters) contributing to the development of collective memory and community values contained in religious principles, prayers and commandments;
- the elements revealed in the study can be constitutive for the formation of the pupils' cultural identity since they structure the identity development process if they are recognised as triggering experiences and living them together with other members of the cultural group;
- *Domownik* serves as a tool to ingrain children in cultural symbols by building community: celebrating, experiencing, assigning meanings to both past and present events and receiving oral and written messages.

### 3. Cultural identity and ethnos

Identity represents an open-ended process of 'becoming,' during which the individual may experience failures and encounter difficulties but also experience self-reflection, uniqueness and continuity. The precariousness of human existence, its wavering nature, and the limitlessness of all forms of life are subject to changing/dynamic values and cultural and personality patterns (Bauman, 1994). Therefore, identity is a necessity from which there is no escape – it is a task to be performed – a specific way of constructing. This consciousness – a kind of certainty – when constructing the identity and the responsibility for its form attests to the essence of human development and expresses a sense of security (Nikitorowicz, 2015).

Functioning in the social space, human beings experience increasingly new obligations that shape his/her individual structure. In a way, they en-

slave us, although they also give further meaning to our existence and make it possible to view ourselves from multiple angles. In the concept of symbolic interactionism, the formation of individual identity takes place through reference to the group. The individual is subject to external and internal dialogue: 'interactional self'/objective self and 'subjective self' (Mead, 1975; Nikitorowicz, 2014).

Lev S. Vygotsky (1978) points out that initially the child's functions form interpsychic categories during cultural development and then locate themselves internally as intrapsychic categories. This means that every higher internal psychic function is preceded by a social/interpersonal relation. Identity is a process that begins when the child begins to grow up in the domestic culture. Unwitting inheritance then takes place, which plays a significant role in 'ways of reading the world, choosing content, searching for it, interpreting it, giving it meaning in understanding oneself and others' (Nikitorowicz, 2014; Veresov, 2009).

A human being is a subject of identity, which must engage in dialogue for the sake of understanding and comprehension, as it is constantly construed in social relations. Hence, a collective identity conditions human existence in the world (Gadamer, 2004) and in multiple communities. It creates various identities: family, regional, religious, cultural, etc. (Nikitorowicz, 2015).

The core of the structure of identity remains the same. It includes, among other things, cultural heritage, cultural canon, language, history, customs, symbols, myths and everything that defines a given social space. In contrast, the identity peripherals have the capacity for dynamic modification. By entering into relationships, people develop their adaptation skills, acquire new experiences and embrace values. Everyone is subject to (un)intentional communication and the need to be part of a larger community: to be rooted in it or to dominate it. Identity is, at the same time: given, changeable and construed. This is exactly how cultural identity should be viewed (Jeszka, 2022).

Cultural identity depends on ethnos, which consists of language, customs, history, and religion. These are separate systems, and their order depends on the correlations at the interpretive level. According to Halina Mielicka-Pawłowska (2018):

Religion is particularly important in this structure, as it emotionally colours the other elements with beliefs in the existence of a non-empirical reality, and

makes the judgements and beliefs of an ethnic or national group fundamental to the concretisation of cultural identity (p. 193).

When we approach culture holistically – recognising it as a structure that systematises reality – it is necessary to identify the elements of ethnos as mutually dependent separate interpretative systems of cultural phenomena. The language introduces a community of communication using specific cultural codes. Not only does it serve to communicate, but it also conveys cultural symbols that help to explore and categorise reality. It is a marker of cultural distinctiveness and a verbal representation of thoughts – conceptual schemes communicated to others (Whorf, 1982).

Customs constitute ‘communitas,’ i.e. a specific type of bond that brings the collective together during rites of passage, where symbols of cultural belonging are linked directly to cultural identity (Turner, 2004). The members of such a group are then characterised by bonds described as a ‘community of celebration’ (Mielicka, 2006, p. 272).

Ethnos is established by history, concerned with events of significance to a particular community, i.e., wars, revolutions, natural disasters, etc. They engage all members of the community emotionally, regardless of how long ago the event took place. A ‘collective experience’ is then formed, manifested in people’s attitudes towards reality. This leads to the formation of a collective memory within the community, which is reflected in the constructed cultural identity in both subjective and objective ways. On the other hand, tradition applied in transgenerational messages, despite the diversity of everyday life, leads to community integration creating a distinctive cultural code (Mielicka-Pawłowska, 2018).

Religion, constituting a system of beliefs in the existence of God and non-empirical reality, enables the affirmation of cultural identity: shaped by shared celebrations, worship practices, and religious organisation. It initiates the process of merging and interpenetrating customs, history and linguistic codes with aspects of faith (Mielicka-Pawłowska, 2018).

Two planes of cultural identity can be distinguished based on ethnos: criterial and correlative. Paweł Boski (1992) identifies their attributes, suggesting using them to analyse both individual and social space. In terms of criteria, he recognises:

- individual unique properties that are somewhat resistant to the course of time, i.e. elements of corporeality and autobiographical memory;
- social, which locates the individual in a particular cultural system of the group, in which symbols play an important role, i.e. knowledge, familiarity, personal meaning, evaluation, and group membership.

Correlative attributes are defined as specific adjectival traits, e.g. honesty, seriousness, and aspects of personality such as extraversion and intelligence, some of which can be attributed to any individual. From a social perspective, they concern cultural values (socialisation and internalisation) as well as the congruence of the Self with prototypes (Boski, 1992).

Scientific studies have concentrated on the perspective of the formative elements of ethnos in criterial terms in an objective perspective, which contributes to the formation of identity in subjective terms. This is possible when the external sphere of symbolism and values is acknowledged by the individual as their own – to which one becomes attached.

#### 4. *Domownik* – general characteristics

The three parts of the *Domownik* follow the structure that corresponds to the content breakdown of the school catechesis textbooks: 1<sup>st</sup> grade – *W imię Ojca i Syna, i Ducha Świętego* (2020); 2<sup>nd</sup> grade – *To jest mój Syn umiłowany* (2021); 3<sup>rd</sup> grade – *Kto spożywa moje Ciało ma życie* (2022).

Table 1. *Domownik* structure in grades 1–3

1 <sup>st</sup> Class	2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class
Part I		Units
Let us meet in community	Jesus, the beloved Son of God the Father	Jesus wants to talk to me
God created me	Jesus is my Friend	Jesus guides me
God loves me		Jesus heals me
Part II		Jesus invites me to the feast
God looks after me	Jesus is my King	Jesus is with us
We are God's family	Kingdom of Jesus – kingdom of love	



Table 1. (cont.)

1 <sup>st</sup> Class	2 <sup>nd</sup> Class	3 <sup>rd</sup> Class
	Jesus invites me to work in His kingdom	
	Jesus gives the Holy Spirit	
Special occasion catechesis		
Christmas in Warmia; Old Warmian customs of Holy Week	Summer holidays – God's Kingdom in our midst. Marian shrines in the Archdiocese of Warmia	Eucharistic Shrine in Głotowo; Thank you, Lady of Gietrzwałd, for the gift of Holy Communion

Source: Own study.

In *Domownik* for 1<sup>st</sup> grade, there is an introductory word on the topics covered in the lessons. Questions and issues are developed to stimulate reflection in pupils and families, and assignments are also to be done in the home environment.

The supplement for the family in Grades II–III points to the student's greater independence in the process of deepening and exploring the values of the Catholic faith. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, the tasks relating to the individual topics are accompanied by prayers, testimonies of faith and works according to the commandments of God and the saints, as well as persons connected with the Warmian cultural milieu, explanations of individual elements such as the Eucharist, the church commandments, etc. Part two of the *Domownik* workbook includes a detailed description of the liturgical year, the sacrament of penance and reconciliation, the examination of conscience for children and adults and a description of first confession intended for parents.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, the topics discussed in the textbook are followed up with a summary in the format of *Remember!* sections, with specific tasks assigned accordingly. The other features of the supplement:

- tips for parents on how to teach their child to participate in Mass more and more attentively are given;
- a description of the importance of a blessing in the life of a child is introduced; an account of parental conscience is given;
- a small catechism is provided;

- there are reflections on learning prayers by heart, before and after Mass and on behaviour during Mass;
- awareness is raised of the importance of White Week.

*Domownik* for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade provides an explanation of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sacrament of reconciliation as a place of healing of the memory, as well as texts for parents about the aid of the Holy Spirit in life and parenting.

*Domownik* workbooks feature eye-catching layouts, making use of bright and contrasting colours to highlight meaningful informational messages, the subjects of individual lessons, prayers to pay attention to, and issues to be discussed in the family environment. In *Domownik*, the content is conveyed in a clear, straightforward, uncomplicated manner. At the same time, they are enriched by illustrations, reprints of photographs depicting the life of Jesus Christ, as well as temples, saints and maps. The graphic and linguistic message used means that the supplement for families at each stage of education encourages them to discuss the topics covered during both religion lessons and at home.

The supplements are a kind of extra resource covering the issues dealt with in the catechesis textbooks for grades I–III. They are meant to foster a family-oriented, communal search for the presence of God in everyday life, to determine the link between life and faith, and at the same time to enable a deeper religious reflection on human existence. They serve as an extension of school catechesis in the domestic environment and at the same time as a tool to activate all members of the family to participate consciously/fully in the community.

## 5. Elements of the *Domownik* workbook leading to ethnos

Meanings are passed on from generation to generation through language, the spoken and written word, conferring certain interpretations on every possible phenomenon and every possible thing (Table 2). *Domownik* lets us find messages/codes focusing on:

### **Raising children's awareness of the importance of the family in the life of an individual**

The family is understood here both in a narrower sense, as the primary source of values, reactions to specific experiences, and the formation of identity individually, but also in a broader sense. It opens the pupil to the God's Family/Catholic community, which follows specific principles. It takes root in love, a sense of the purpose of human existence, truth and good works, yet requires renunciation of sin and evil and it requires devotion and respect.

### **Raising pupils' awareness of the value of marriage**

Marriage is a cultural symbol of stability, fidelity, and belonging, and the meaning of life – the social path most people choose. It is also a guarantee that the children will be brought up with specific values in mind and that the spouses will associate themselves with the tradition of the family home and create new rules and norms. It is a symbol of permanence and the potential to build one's self through the prism of an inseparable relationship with another individual. Marriage and the family provide a pathway to the Lord.

### **Showing children the role of Father and Mother in the acquisition of values in each person's life**

Each community is headed by a Father and accompanied by a Mother. Through their will and actions, the child grows and learns the fundamentals of functioning in society and recognises and organises the core values that govern a person's life. Father and Mother are also the child's best friends, guides through new, emerging experiences. All Catholics share one common Father and Mother: God and Mary. It is they who, together with Jesus Christ, show young people the way they should follow in their individual and social lives: what to consider right and how to interpret various situations and phenomena.

### **Demonstrating to pupils the importance of conversation as the best form of establishing family relationships**

Conversation allows for the exchange of thoughts and experiences, shapes everyone's worldview, and helps them perceive the situations they face in their lives. It is an identity polemic with another person and thus the constitution of one's own identity core with its periphery, dependent on the interaction and coexistence within a family/group/community. Conversation with God's Family (Father, Mother, Jesus Christ) should occur through prayer, which accompanies the young in all daily life stages. Prayer becomes a form of development of the spiritual sphere. Another crucial step in establishing an understanding of God's Family is the Mass, where pupils meet their loved ones at the Sunday table – filled with love and openness. The Liturgy of the Word is a feast at the Table of the Word/Table of God. God feeds man with His word – nourishes and strengthens people. God also expects a response – an interaction – a conversation – implementation in the realities of life – reflection in deeds – in everyday functioning.

Table 2. Language and the cultural codes hidden within

Type of code	<i>Domownik workbook</i>		
	I	II	III
Family as the key cultural unit	+		
Marriage as the most common way of social life	+	+	
Father and Mother as the source of the most important values in every person's life	+	+	
Conversation as an integral part of establishing a relationship with the family	+	+	+

Source: Own study.

*Domownik* is a source of elements that contribute to the formation of customs by conveying images of particular church festivals linked to the liturgical year and the life and death of Jesus Christ (Table 3). These are manifestations of God's Kingdom in heaven and on earth, which in the Christian community are introduced in family life by the very first teachers – the parents. By the time the child starts school and is introduced into the wider cir-

cle of the cultural group, a greater awareness of the significance of each stage of the church festivals is required. These have become a permanent fixture in social tradition, taking root in the cultural life of cities and local communities. At the same time, there has been a peculiar fusion of elements of folk celebrations (originating in popular culture) with festivities embedded in the tradition of the Catholic Church.

Customs have taken on the character of being a combination of local beliefs and customs with what is national and global. The reception of individual church festivals in the Warmian Archdiocese is linked to Warmian culture, in which symbolic roles are attributed to: the saints and their influence on the fertility of the land and happiness in households; holy water and ash, which protects against illness and pain. The content of the *Domownik* workbook, including the forms of celebration, leads to the formation of a sense of shared cultural community that is both regional and national in scope. They offer a way to raise awareness of affiliation and being part of a particular group.

Every family living in the Christian culture ascribes meanings to different stages of the transition/ordination/community initiation marked by the Holy Sacraments. The pupil, on the other hand, mainly discovers in the first three grades the value of baptism and First Holy Communion, culminating in White Week – the symbol of the child's full-fledged entry into the world of Christian culture. These are essential elements in the life of the pupil, the family and the entire community. This conviction is reinforced by the message given in *Domownik*, which points to ways of experiencing these events and to the importance of waiting, diligent work and preparation for significant experiences in one's life. White Week, which stands for the joy of receiving Christ's Body, is a celebration in which the symbols of cultural belonging are linked directly to cultural identity. Joining the Eucharistic Table (through First Communion) is not only a significant socio-religious event but also an educational process.

Table 3. Customs – introduced through celebrations

Customs and forms of celebration	<i>Domownik workbook</i>		
	I	II	III
Solemnity of All Saints	+		
All Souls' Day	+		+

Table 3. (cont.)

Customs and forms of celebration	<i>Domownik workbook</i>		
	I	II	III
Advent			+
Christmas Day and Christmas Eve	+		+
Christmas in Warmia – past customs and traditions	+		
Old Warmian customs of Holy Week	+		
Ash Wednesday and Lent			+
Palm Sunday			+
Maundy Thursday and Good Friday			+
Solemnity of the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ			+
Pentecost			+
May Devotion			+
Corpus Christi		+	+
June Devotion			+
Sacraments		+	+
First Communion			+
White Week			+

Source: Own study.

In the content of *Domownik* we also find elements that facilitate the formation of collective memory – a collective experience – among pupils by making them aware of the importance of events that were also meaningful to previous generations (Table 4). Pupils learn the story of Abraham, the common patriarch of Judaism, Christianity and Islam: marking a turning point in the history of the Christian people and the formation of God's Kingdom on earth. Abraham is a symbol of God's actions leading towards the modern existence of God's Family.

Another figure is John the Baptist, associated with purification and renewal. By being washed in water (getting rid of sin), an individual becomes a full member of the church community. Baptism is a ceremonial admission

to the collective enshrined in the culture context of celebration, just as much as it is an emotionally engaging, value-laden event that sets the course of human identity.

The central elements determining the formation of collective memory are the issues surrounding the life and death of Jesus Christ (including His earthly family), whose history is reflected in the liturgical year of the Catholic Church. The testimony of Jesus Christ and the events involving Him recorded in the New Testament serve as the starting point for analysing the life stories of saints such as St. Stanislaus Kostka. In this way, children in primary school can learn about their patron and gain an understanding of the values his attitudes and choices have introduced into the culture.

Pupils gain knowledge of saints and clergymen whose deeds have contributed to the development of the Catholic Church, ascribed to attitudes worthy of imitation, and who have a place in human history. These include John Paul II and Sister Stanisława Samulowska. Pope John Paul II – a Pole and a great man – symbolised Eucharistic renewal, the development of the youth movement and multicultural tolerance. His story is part of modern human history – these are key events recorded in the consciousness of members of the Catholic Church community. As such, John Paul II creates a sense of belonging, of being rooted in a particular culture.

Sister S. Samulowska and the Gietrzwałd Revelations associated with her have become a permanent part of the regional tradition of the Archdiocese of Warmia as well as of the international route of Marian shrines. Both the awareness of the proximity of the revelations and the significance of the place of the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Gietrzwałd for Christian culture, as well as for local Warmian culture, provide an opportunity for pupils in grades I–III to develop their individual and collective identity, including cultural and religious identity as well as a chance to find meaning in life by recognising individual elements of history as meaningful, enriching values and experiences together with other members of the group of belonging.

The content of the *Domownik* sensitises readers to the cultural heritage of Warmia, whose tradition can be traced back to the Prussian tribes and the Dominion of Warmia, an ecclesiastical principality. Catholic Warmia (as it has come to be known in cultural accounts) is a place full of testimony to the presence of God and Jesus Christ on earth. It is a place where shrines and wayside shrines delight with their splendour. This not only constitutes

a form of sacred architectural monuments but also acts as a witness to past events recorded in the consciousness of the local population. This is the space where significant regional events have taken place, as well as those identified nationally and globally in culture. Remembering them is passed on from generation to generation.

In *Domownik*, tasks that deepen the knowledge of Jesus Christ, the characters and saints described above and the most prominent Christian cultural sites located in the area of the Archdiocese of Warmia are used to shape the collective experience, the history, of our collective memory.

Table 4. History making up the collective memory

Elements of tradition and history	<i>Domownik workbook</i>		
	I	II	III
Abraham		+	
John the Baptist		+	
Jesus Christ	+		
St. Joseph		+	
St. Stanislaus Kostka – patron saint of children and the young	+		
St. John Paul II	+		
Sister Stanisława Samulowska		+	
Marian shrines in the Archdiocese of Warmia		+	
Wayside shrines in the Archdiocese of Warmia			+

Source: Own study.

Elements leading to religion, which constitutes a component of ethnos and translates into the formation of the cultural identity of the human individual, are present in all the spaces of the *Domownik* workbook discussed above. Religion guarantees the usefulness of the issues communicated in the supplement for the family and the belief system that constitutes cultural identity.

The values and principles (Table 5) enshrined in *Domownik* stem from messages oriented towards:



- language and cultural codes within it that introduce the Decalogue supported by God's mercy and the love and friendship of Jesus Christ;
- customs linked to the sacraments as a source of forgiveness and amends and striving to shape generosity and the sharing of faith;
- history (and collective memory within it) bringing the human individual closer to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, imbued with the greatest values, enabling the confession of faith through which one sees that the Holy Spirit is a gift from Jesus Christ.

Table 5. Religion and the values embodied in its fundamental principles

Values and principles	<i>Domownik workbook</i>		
	I	II	III
God's mercy	+	+	
Sacraments as a source of forgiveness and amends		+	+
Love and friendship spread by Jesus Christ	+		
Sacrifice and sharing the faith	+		
The Kingdom of Jesus Christ imbued with the greatest values	+	+	
The Holy Spirit as a gift from Jesus Christ		+	
The Decalogue			+
Creed			+

Source: Own study.

## 6. How can *Domownik* be used in the educational process to ingrain cultural symbols in pupils? – practical indications

When analysing the potential use of *Domownik*, it is important to take into account the changes to homework assignments introduced by the Regulation of the Minister of Education of 22 March 2024, *amending the Regulation on the assessment, classification and promotion of pupils and students in public schools*. Pursuant to the aforementioned document, from April 2024, teachers in grades I–III no longer give homework to be completed by the pu-

pils during their free time. They can only assign fine motor skills improvement tasks.

Simultaneously, we have to ask the question – how do we use the analysed supplement for the family in the educational process, which should be part of the construction of an individual identity structure and the sense of belonging and being rooted in a certain community?

The study shows that the catechist has the following possibilities:

- introduce *Domownik* as a form of voluntary home assignment to be carried out entirely within the family environment;
- use the supplement for the family as a supplementary task, but devote part of the lesson to discussing what the willing pupils have done and how such a task could be used in the future by the other children – should they feel they need to do so;
- apply the assumptions of the workbook and its contents in selected school catechesis, combining them with additional issues requiring a home environment to be implemented (homework for those who wish to do so) and make full use of the time allocated in the lesson for this form of school catechesis.

As far as the first proposal is concerned, there is no certainty whatsoever that the catechist will be able to determine whether the tasks set out in the supplement for the family have enabled the pupil to become rooted in the cultural symbols, assuming, of course, that the teacher assigned this type of activity to the children over a longer timeframe, e.g. half term/school year. In contrast, the other way of using the workbook in question fully engages only part of the class. It does not result in an exchange of experiences between children – members of the same cultural community. Working together, exchanging and sharing experiences, and giving meaning to events all lie at the heart of cultural identity formation. It is difficult to say that such a process will happen or be initiated.

Given pupils' acquisition of cultural symbols and thus becoming rooted in the perspective of a given cultural community, the latter option seems most constructive. In this case, a class/group of children should be treated as a family in a learning setting. Experiences and reflections on the issues addressed at school will be complemented by conclusions from additional homework assignments. In this way, all students will be involved in a process of dialogue, discussion and the creation of collective memory underpinned

by specific linguistic codes, established festivals and ways of celebrating them and, most importantly, values coming from religious assumptions. This will become possible if:

- children complete the tasks given in *Domownik* at school and they can discover the elements of reality that make up their cultural community;
- topics for discussion are raised during catechesis, with the active participation of pupils and conclusions presented in the form of summaries;
- outdoor lessons are realised through visits to shrines and places of worship important to the region in person or online.

## 7. Conclusions and discussion of the findings

*Domownik* – the supplement for the family, or more precisely, its content – texts, tasks, source texts, graphic elaborations (maps, photographs and drawings) – constitutes a set of elements leading to the formation of ethnos, which has been recognised as a criterion and subjective reference for the creation of an individual's cultural identity throughout his or her life.

The analysis carried out revealed that there are spaces in the *Domownik* aimed at raising awareness and instilling the following in pupils in grades I–III: cultural linguistic codes, customs examined through shared celebrations, history identified through collective memory, and how religion constitutes values and principles and guarantees interaction between the elements of ethnos.

These spaces may enable pupils to experience reality and to receive and evaluate cultural messages. Through these, children have the opportunity to develop awareness and a sense of the need to experience uplifting and important community moments together. They are given the tools they need to define and describe significant events in the history of the cultural group (to which they belong). They establish and adopt values and their functions in human life in partnership with others. By doing so, they open up to the formation of cultural identity based on processes of being, accompanying, co-participating, and co-defining all aspects of human existence. They learn to accept or reject the experiences they encounter along their life path.

*Domownik* is a resource for familiarising children from grades I to III with cultural symbols. The message conveyed in this supplement becomes stronger when educational activities are combined with the implementation of its tasks both at home and in school settings.

Therefore, a concept for the use of the *Domownik workbook* should be prepared and a pilot study should be carried out to ascertain the correctness and feasibility of the designed activities. At the same time, a complete picture of the significance of the elements leading to ethnos (contained in *Domownik*) in the formation of the cultural identity of children in grades I–III will be obtained after examining case studies of Catholic families.

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