

Tematyka religijna  
na łamach polskich czasopism  
dla dzieci i młodzieży  
w latach 1863–1918

**Religious Themes  
in Polish Press  
for Children  
and Adolescents  
in the Years  
1863–1918\***

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**ABSTRAKT**

Przedmiot rozważań stanowi tematyka religijna obecna na łamach polskojęzycznej prasy dla dzieci i młodzieży o profilu ogólnym wydawanej na ziemiach dawnej Rzeczypospolitej w latach 1863–1918 przez redakcje nie związane bezpośrednio z kościołami czy związkami wyznaniowymi. W przeprowadzonych rozważaniach uwzględniono treść kilkuset czasopism, niemniej jednak szczegółowej analizie ilościowej i jakościowej poddano następujące, reprezentatywne tytuły z 3 zaborów: „Przyjaciel Dzieci” (1863–1915), „Wieczory Rodzinne” (1880–1914), „Towarzysz Pilnych Dzieci” (1876–1883), „Mały Świątek” (1888–1918), „Wiek Młody” (1893–1904), „Jutrzenka Polska” (1904–1914), „Anioł Stróż” (1895–1909) oraz „Przyjaciel Działwy” (1898–1914). Treści religijne odgrywały w poszczególnych pismach niebagatelną rolę zajmując od 3,4% do 11,1% zadrukowanej powierzchni.

**ABSTRACT**

The subject of discussion are religious themes present in the Polish-language general profile press for children and young people published on the area of the former Commonwealth in the years 1863–1918 by editors not directly connected with churches or religious associations. The considerations include the contents of several hundred magazines, nevertheless, detailed qualitative analysis was carried out on the following representative representations from the three partitions: “Przyjaciel Dzieci” (1863–1915), “Wieczory Rodzinne” (1880–1914), “Towarzysz Pilnych Dzieci” (1876–1883), “Mały Świątek” (1888–1918), “Jutrzenka Polska” (1904–1914), “Anioł Stróż” (1895–1909) and “Przyjaciel Działwy” (1898–1914). The religious content played a significant role in these periodicals, ranging from 3.4% to 11.1% of the printed area.

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## Summary

In view of the specific socio-political situation, the Polish press projected a smaller degree of the worldview debate between science and religion present since the Enlightenment, expressed in the negation of the Positivist philosophy on the basis of certain religious convictions (eg. relating to the creation of the world, including man). Due to widespread parallels between Polishness and Catholicism, theological arguments were not reflected in the press texts addressed to young readers.

In some periodicals, cultural elements relating to non-Catholic denominations were popularized as well. This type of religious polyphony was particularly true of Galicia, where the Judaic press was developing and associated with the Eastern Greek or Orthodox Rite (usually Cyrillic-type Ukrainian press). Definitely the largest number of magazines for young readers published in the Polish language was directed to a population culturally associated with the Roman Catholic religion. Religious subjects generally occupied between a few and a dozen percent of the printed area.

Attention is drawn to concentration of this type of content in the issues appearing during periods around major church holidays. The religious content clearly highlighted the liturgical year in the Catholic Church. The need to properly celebrate holidays as a legacy of a centuries-old tradition was emphasized.

The religious message was also connected with various events in the life of the universal Church. Many local anniversaries were often mentioned, whether regional or global ones — such as a bishop's ingress or a change to the throne of Peter. Hagiographies were also readily available. The characters presented in this way were most often associated with Poland. St. Adalbert, St. Stanislaus, St. Casimir or St. Andrzej Bobola were often presented.

Attention was also paid to prayer that was to accompany work and play. It was associated with certain seasons and the rhythm of agricultural work. Religious themes appeared commonly also in statements about secular matters, such as in various novels and short stories, acting as a natural image of the customs prevailing during the period considered. Religious motifs were also conveyed in graphical form.

The Catholic faith was, in the period considered, equivalent to our national identity. As part of the Kulturkampf policy, and also, to a lesser degree, russification, state authorities took various steps to limit its impact on the society. Polish magazines appearing under the Partitions, especially those addressed to young readers, were a particularly important element in strengthening of traditional values associated with patriotism and national culture.

The purpose of this article is to present the presence of religious content in periodicals for young readers with a general profile published in Polish on the area of the former Commonwealth in the years 1863–1918 by editors not directly related to any churches or religious associations. Although the evidence presented here is based on the analysis of several hundred such periodicals published during the period considered, only a few representative, relatively long-lived titles appearing in various partitions have been reported. These were the Warsaw magazines: “Przyjaciel Dzieci” (1863–1915) and “Wieczory Rodzinne” (1880–1914), the Lviv “Towarzysz Pilnych Dzieci” (1876–1883), “Mały Świątek” (1888–1918), “Wiek Młody” (1893–1904), and “Jutrzenka Polska” (1904–1914), the Gdansk “Anioł Stróż” (1895–1909) and the Grudziądz “Przyjaciel Działwy” (1898–1914). In each case, random sampling was used (analyzing every third number from each year), taking into account both the number of references and the space occupied by the topic. The whole material was also subjected to qualitative analysis by attempting its critical, interpretative and synthesizing evaluation.

The promotion of Catholic values was consistent with the mainstream of contemporary Polish pedagogical thought. The thinker, educator and literary historian Piotr Chmielowski, who was active in the post-Uprising period, was involved in shaping the character of children with teaching of religion, which, in his opinion, best addressed the young generation through the ideals of loving one’s neighbors and obedience<sup>1</sup>. In view of the specific socio-political situation, the Polish press projected a smaller degree of the worldview debate of science and religion present since the Enlightenment, expressed in the negation of the Positivist philosophy on the basis of certain religious convictions (eg. on the creation of the world, including man). Due to widespread parallels between Polishness and Catholicism, theological disputes were limited rather to the issue of individual conscience and were not

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<sup>1</sup> J. Wnęć, *Wychowanie religijne w polskiej myśli pedagogicznej XIX wieku*, „Nasza Przeszłość” 2012, vol. 118, p. 171–182.

reflected in texts addressed to young readers. Thus, information related to science and religion coexisted without interfering with one another<sup>2</sup>.

Some magazines popularized non-Catholic denominations. The religious polyphony especially concerned Galicia, where Judaic press was developing<sup>3</sup> along with that associated with the Eastern Greek Catholicism or the Orthodox Rite (usually these included Cyrillic-typed Ukrainian periodicals). Elements of Lutheran spirituality were found, in turn, in “Przyjacieli Dzieci”, which was a free addition to the “Przyjacieli Ludu” (1906–1909). Jewish communities emphasized their distinctiveness through references to Judaism. In the periodicals of this circle, ideas related to the Haskalah or the Jewish Enlightenment and Zionism aiming to create a separate Jewish state in Palestine were expressed<sup>4</sup>. Although both of these trends were rooted in secular culture, they often referred to religious themes linked to the history of the chosen people. In the longest-running periodical, “Haszachar”, religious festivals such as Passover, Purim, or Hanukkah were commonly cited while describing biblical or apocryphal stories of certain traditions<sup>5</sup>. The biweekly also published religious texts recorded in Hebrew. Some editors tried to create magazines addressed to the universal recipient in religious terms. An example of such a strategy may be the Warsaw “Świat”:

Believing that one God rules all peoples and denominations, that there are the same morals of the office, the editorial department avoids any confession and operates the magazine in such a manner that Catholic and Protestant Christians, as well as the Jewish people of Poland, can read it without finding offense to their beliefs therein. Other tasks we do not have ... That is why all parents can put this magazine into the hands of their children without reservations<sup>6</sup>.

The vast majority of magazines for young readers published in Polish was, however, directed to a population culturally associated with the Roman Catholic religion<sup>7</sup>. The headings of some magazines referred to Christian symbols in their style,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Z. Mocarska-Tycowa, *Chrystus w literaturze pozytywizmu*, [in:] *Chrystus w literaturze polskiej*, ed. P. Nowaczyński, Lublin 2001, p. 281–306.

<sup>3</sup> Detailed information on the Jewish press for young readers appearing in Galicia between 1867 and 1918 is presented in the article: S. Kwiecień, *Kartka z dziejów żydowskiej prasy dla dzieci i młodzieży w okresie autonomii galicyjskiej*, „*Annales Universitatis Paedagogicae Cracoviensis. Studia ad Bibliotecarum Scientiam Pertinentia*” 2015, vol. 13, p. 137–156.

<sup>4</sup> N. Davies, *MDL. Wielkie Księstwo, które miało królów*, [in:] same author, *Zaginione królestwa*, Kraków 2010, p. 305.

<sup>5</sup> R.P.M., *Purim*, „*Haszachar*” 1910, no. 6, p. 88–92; *Pesach*, „*Haszachar*” 1910, no. 8, p. 113–114; H.A., *Zburzenie Świątyni*, „*Haszachar*” 1910, no. 14, p. 193–194; H., *Rosz-Haszana*, „*Haszachar*” 1910, no. 16, p. 225–226 itd.

<sup>6</sup> *Od Redakcji do Szanownych Rodziców i Opiekunów*, „*Świat*” 1879, no. 24, p. 277.

<sup>7</sup> It is noteworthy that the Catholic Church and its numerous organizations played an important role in the publishing market. Hence many titles addressed to young readers were added to the Catholic press (eg. the Lviv “Anioł Stróż” was added to the Catholic weekly “Niedziela” and the Bytomian

incorporating a cross or religious figures such as the Virgin Mary or Jesus Christ in the illustrations. The graphic aspect was an important element of the transmission of religious content. The theme of the Guardian Angel was very popular in iconography as well as in children's literature presented in the analyzed periodicals.

In the titles of poetry and short stories published, the figure of an angel appeared often. He usually acted as the earthly guardian who interfered with the reckless behavior of children and thus saved them from various dangerous oppressions<sup>8</sup>. There were also reports of real events intended to show divine providence<sup>9</sup>. There were suggestive descriptions of angel figures referring to the folk tradition and imagination:

Ich oblicze jasne jak słońce gdy wiosna  
W oku błyszczą myśl radosna  
Czoło ma z kwiatków koronę  
Skrzydła — księżycą blaskiem osrebrzone

[Their faces bright as the Sun, as the spring comes  
Gleeful thought sparkling in their eye  
The forehead is wreathed in little flowers  
And the wings are lined with moonshine]<sup>10</sup>

There were also more controversial images — in terms of the intentional audience<sup>11</sup> — of an angel of death leading the child's soul into the afterworld<sup>12</sup>. These representations refer to religious symbolism and were probably a kind of euphemistic preparation for a premature transition into postmortem reality, which at that time was far more common than today: "They came to Heaven, where they welcomed by joy and perpetual happiness. There God held the dead child close to His heart and at that moment, wings appeared on him and he soared up high; hand in hand with the Angel he flew away"<sup>13</sup>.

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"Dzwonek" came out as a monthly addition to the "Katolik"). The issue of the religious press for young readers appearing in the period of interest was discussed in detail by Sabina Kwiecień and presented at the meeting of the PAN Press Studies Commission in Krakow (March 8, 2017). As stated in the introduction of the article, this type of press is not a subject of research interest of the author.

<sup>8</sup> M.B., *Anioł Stróż*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1895, no. 24, p. 185; S. Kossowska, *Anioł Stróż*, „Mały Świątek” 1893, no. 34, p. 268; *Anioł Stróż*, „Wiek Młody” 1896, no. 19, p. 149–151.

<sup>9</sup> Ojciec Bogumił, *Jak anioł stróż nad dziećmi czuwa*, „Anioł Stróż” 1904, no. 29, p. 116. 'Father Bogumił' is the pseudonym of the teacher, publisher (also of children's press) and folk writer Piotr Paliński (1853–1950).

<sup>10</sup> S. Jachowicz, *Aniolkowie*, „Anioł Stróż” 1901, no. 28, p. 109.

<sup>11</sup> The topic of a child's death in literature directed at a young audience is sometimes considered taboo.

<sup>12</sup> Witold S., *Anioł śmierci*, „Mały Świątek” 1893, no. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Anioł*, „Anioł Stróż” 1895, no. 13, p. 99–101.

Another important iconographic reference was the image of Christ, often depicted as surrounded by children. Such an image in symbolic scenery represented the equality of all people in the face of God and faith<sup>14</sup>. Jesus was shown as a spiritual guide, but also a comforter. The presentation of the teacher and pupils was symbolic enough to be placed on the title page of the Warsaw “Przyjaciel Dzieci”. The iconographic images of Christ appeared also in reference to the works of ancient or contemporary art<sup>15</sup>.

A universal element of religious references was published in the various contexts of prayer. They were considered as an important element of Christian life, according to the Benedictine maxim “Ora et labora”:

Kto pilność pracy o władnie  
Kto się także szczerze modli  
Ten na duchu nie upadnie  
Zły uczynek go nie spodli

[Whoever masters the diligence of work  
And also, sincere prayer,  
Never his spirit shall fall  
Evil deed shall never affect him]<sup>16</sup>.

The readers were urged to pray daily<sup>17</sup>. Prayer was to accompany work and play, to be linked to specific seasons and to the rhythm of agricultural work<sup>18</sup>. Through it, God was asked for good yields and to prevent crop failure<sup>19</sup>. An important element of prayer poetry were works devoted to the Virgin Mary, who was treated with great reverence in Poland. These aspects of the Polish faith associated with the first cathedral church in Gniezno and the knightly song “Bogurodzica” [Mother of God], being a kind of a national anthem, were reminded of by the “Mały Świątek” magazine in connection with the national Constitution Day celebrated in May<sup>20</sup>. In the context of the feast of May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Mary was also presented blessing the Polish states<sup>21</sup>. Our Lady was paid homage to and she was asked to help in temporal matters<sup>22</sup>. Of course, there

<sup>14</sup> *Chrystus i dzieci*, „Przyjaciel Działy” 1902, no. 45, p. 178.

<sup>15</sup> „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1885, no. 49, p. 577 (painting by Ludwik Wiesiołowski); H.K., *Pocałunek Judasza*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1879, no. 2, p. 13 (sculpture by Veit Stoss); B.K., *Chrystus uśmierający burzę*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1890, no. 14, p. 161–162 (painting by Henryk Siemiradzki).

<sup>16</sup> *Módl się i pracuj*, „Przyjaciel Działy” 1907, no. 7, p. 25.

<sup>17</sup> *Pacierz*, „Przyjaciel Działy” 1900, no. 3, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> M. Chełmońska, *Siewna*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1907, no. 36, p. 422.

<sup>19</sup> G. z Załęskich Jasińska, *Modlitwa w buźliwe lato*, „Wiek Młody” 1893, no. 15, p. 115.

<sup>20</sup> *Królowa korony polskiej*, „Mały Świątek” 1899, no. 14, p. 113–114.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., *Matka Boska błogosławiąca stany polskie*, „Mały Świątek” 1889, no. 15, p. 422.

<sup>22</sup> *Na cześć Matki Najświętszej*, „Anioł Stróż” 1898, no. 15, p. 113; I. Nowicki, *Hold Królowej Nieba*, „Wiek Młody” 1901, no. 9, p. 65; Z. Krasiński, *Hymn*, „Anioł Stróż” 1904, no. 9, p. 193.

are also folk images of the Mother of God fitting into the narrative characteristic of children's literature, as a kind of religious roadmap referring to the feelings of the child<sup>23</sup>. The call to Our Lady of Gate of Dawn or Our Lady of Czestochowa was combined with patriotic messages<sup>24</sup>. It is worth noting that the fate of the homeland was surrendered to God<sup>25</sup>. In such a context, there are allegorical images showing Christ freeing Poland from the bondage of slavery<sup>26</sup>.

The level of saturation of the magazines with religious content showed quite a large variability in the various partitions. Most often, such themes were referred to in the Prussian partition (Tab. 1), which was connected with the foremost mission of the editors of Polish periodicals such as the promotion of national values and the defense of the Roman Catholic faith from Protestantism supported by the state institutions. The periodicals such as "Przyjaciół Działy" and "Anioł Stróż" devoted more than 10% of their volume to religious texts. In their direct address to the reader and in the published fiction, there are also numerous references to Christ or the Virgin Mary. An important part of the first of these titles was a recurring cycle called "Request for prayer", usually opening consecutive issues. It resembled a classical prayerful intention most often associated with the fate of individual people or their posthumous support:

This week, dear Loved Children, Hail Mary once a day and Eternal Rest 3 times for the soul of the lately deceased faithful reader of "Gazeta Grudziądzka", late Jan Gabrych from Wielka Komorza and all the readers of this newspaper who died this year<sup>27</sup>.

Such requests were frequently accompanied by prayers for good weather during agricultural work associated with successful harvest and abundance in the following year. It seems that "Przyjaciół Działy" referred to the romantic idea of the child as a mediator between the people and the deity — the child's innocence, but also the specific potential and unlimitedness of being predestined the child to such a role<sup>28</sup>. Special attention was given to the children approaching their First Communion, who were usually addressed in an additional<sup>29</sup> message. Several competitions related to religious topics were organized on its pages. In 1903, readers were to describe churches they saw and then to present an image of Christmas<sup>30</sup>. In 1910, prizes

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<sup>23</sup> D. Michułka, *Ad usum Delphini. O szkolnej edukacji literackiej — dawniej i dziś*, Wrocław 2013, p. 55–58.

<sup>24</sup> *Modlitewka do Matki Boskiej Ostrobramskiej*, „Towarzysz Piłnych Dzieci” 1879, no. 12, p. 89; W. Wołski, *Do Matki Bożej*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1910, no. 9, p. 108.

<sup>25</sup> M. Majchrowiczówna, *Modlitwa za ojczyznę*, „Mały Świątek” 1917, no. 3, p. 19.

<sup>26</sup> „Jutrzenka” 1905, no. 8/9, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> „Przyjaciół Działy” 1905, No. 29, p. 113.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. A. Kubale, *Dziecko romantyczne. Szkice o literaturze*, Wrocław 1984.

<sup>29</sup> „Przyjaciół Działy” 1906, no. 46, p. 181.

<sup>30</sup> *Zadanie*, „Przyjaciół Działy” 1903, no. 51, p. 202.

a published quiz concerning Polish language and history were prayer books<sup>31</sup>. The Gdansk “Anioł Stróż” would usually place a poem concerning an anniversary or one of moral-ethical character on the front page as an introduction to the content of the issue. Sometimes the subject matter of such poetry was directly related to a religious motif<sup>32</sup> or at least its fragments referred to some extent to the Christian tradition<sup>33</sup>. There are also many catechetical articles that presented the principles of faith and ethics through the prism of good and bad examples<sup>34</sup>. Religious topics had a definitely smaller significance in the periodicals issued in the Russian partition (Tab. 1).

Table 1

Religious topics in selected Polish periodicals for children and adolescents in the years 1863–1918

Title	Town/city	Period	Average number of publications per issue	Average number of pages (area) occupied by topic	Average percentage of space occupied by subject
“Przyjaciół Dzieci”	Warsaw	1863–1880	0.43	0.29	2.7
		1881–1900	0.48	0.38	3.2
		1901–1915	0.71	0.62	4.6
		<b>1863–1915</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>3.5</b>
“Wieczory Rodzinne”	Warsaw	1880–1900	0.29	0.32	3.2
		1901–1914	0.56	0.39	3.8
		<b>1880–1914</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.35</b>	<b>3.4</b>
“Wiek Młody”	Lviv	<b>1893–1904</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>0.53</b>	<b>6.5</b>
“Mały Świątek”	Lviv	1888–1900	0.40	0.40	4.7
		1901–1913	0.45	0.40	4.5
		1914–1918	0.62	0.41	4.5
		<b>1888–1918</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>4.6</b>
“Towarzysz Pilnych Dzieci”	Lviv	<b>1876–1883</b>	<b>0.52</b>	<b>0.68</b>	<b>8.0</b>
“Jutrzenka Polska”	Lviv	<b>1904–1914</b>	<b>0.78</b>	<b>0.49</b>	<b>4.4</b>
“Przyjaciół Działwy”	Grudziądz	<b>1898–1914</b>	<b>1.35</b>	<b>0.45</b>	<b>11.1</b>
“Anioł Stróż”	Gdansk	1895–1900	0.90	0.88	12.2
		1901–1909	0.86	0.34	8.6
		<b>1895–1909</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>0.51</b>	<b>10.2</b>

Source: Own findings based on the analysis of the contents of individual magazines.

<sup>31</sup> „Przyjaciół Działwy” 1910, no. 52, p. 205.

<sup>32</sup> *Na cześć Matki Najświętszej*, „Anioł Stróż” 1898, no. 15, p. 113; M. Konopnicka, *O co się modlić?*, „Anioł Stróż” 1902, no. 18, p. 69; *O cierpliwości chrześcijańskiej*, „Anioł Stróż” 1908, no. 27, p. 105.

<sup>33</sup> *Naucz mnie piosenki*, „Anioł Stróż” 1898, no. 23, p. 177; J. Chmielewski, *Matka do dziecka*, „Anioł Stróż” 1902, no. 23, p. 89.

<sup>34</sup> *Pogadanki katechizmowe*, „Anioł Stróż” 1908, no. 43, p. 171.



The long-operating Warsaw weeklies “Przyjaciół Dzieci” and “Wieczory Rodzinne” took the form of multi-disciplinary compendia of knowledge, and in their formula there was room for religious content. Much less, at least in the earlier period, they referred to the calendar of religious holidays throughout the year<sup>35</sup>. Religious topics were not subject to any substantive evolution, but their presence in the periodicals under Russian occupation increased slightly over the years. In turn, “Towarzysz Pilnych Dzieci” appearing in Galicia in the 1870s and 1880s was much more oriented towards presenting religious issues than the more “modern” magazines from the turn of the century or early twentieth century.

In the children’s press analyzed, there is a clear concentration of the subject matter in certain issues appearing in periods around the most important religious holidays. The end of the nineteenth century was a period of crystallization of a certain pattern of a children’s magazine based on the order set by a specific time frame. The content evolved from an encyclopedic system to a calendar system, in which the rhythm of religious holidays played a very important role. This type of a structural template, although subject to certain adjustments, however, was based on the cycle of the year, to which changing elements could be added<sup>36</sup>. The religious content clearly highlighted the liturgical year in the Catholic Church. The need to properly celebrate holidays as a legacy of a centuries-old tradition was emphasized. It was appealed to young readers:

Dzieci rady mej słuchajcie  
Ojcowski rząd zachowajcie  
Święto niechaj świętem będzie  
Jak bywało przedtem wszędzie

[Children, ye hear my advice  
To keep the rule of forefathers’ times  
Let a holiday stay a holy day  
As it used to be everywhere]<sup>37</sup>.

The most numerous references to religious themes appeared around Christmas and Easter. The periodicals that appeared at that time were usually characterized by a slightly altered content and occasional vignettes referring to the religious feast. Texts related to the event were mainly published on the first pages.

The subject of the Nativity usually appeared in two or even a number of consecutive issues, which was often the result of the weekly or longer publishing

<sup>35</sup> For example, in the December edition of the Warsaw “Przyjaciół Dzieci”, an article on Easter Monday tradition was published, *Śmigust*, “Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1877, No. 51, p. 601–603.

<sup>36</sup> B. Olszewska, *Literatura na łamach „Płomyczka” (1945–1980)*, Opole 1996, p. 9.

<sup>37</sup> M. D. z K., *Szanujmy święta!*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1903, no. 21, p. 82.

cycle. Usually, occasional poems were published<sup>38</sup>, on top of Christmas carols<sup>39</sup>, stories related thematically with Christmas Eve and introducing the reader into festive mood. Christmas crèches were mentioned<sup>40</sup>, the custom of sharing the Christmas wafer<sup>41</sup> and the star of Bethlehem<sup>42</sup>. In the Russian partition already in the 1980s there were descriptions of decorating the Christmas tree<sup>43</sup>, which was spreading quickly in Polish cities, despite the connection with the German Protestants. The family character of the holiday was highlighted by frequent publication of stories about lonely people returning home<sup>44</sup>. Often, editors sent holiday wishes to their readers. During the Christmas period, short dramatic works reminiscent of folk Nativity plays were printed<sup>45</sup>. Even in these types of literature, some socially important subjects related to the situation of the homeland were taken up:

Przy tym pomnij też na dzieci  
Biednej Wrześni i Poznania  
Którym Prusak zły po polsku  
Modlić się do Boga wzbrania

[Remember the children, too  
Of the hapless Września and Poznan  
Forbidden to pray to God  
In the Polish tongue]<sup>46</sup>.

Sometimes, the holidays were presented in a wider perspective by publishing articles describing Christmas traditions in other countries<sup>47</sup>. With the Christmas season, the character of Saint Nicholas would appear. According to tradition, he was presented as the Bishop of Myra, distributing gifts to children<sup>48</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> W. Karoli, *Pokłon Dzieciątku Jezus*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” Warszawa, 1901, no. 1, p. 8–9; *Pax Mundi*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1905, no. 52, p. 585; The work was published during the bloody Russian-Japanese war and related to revolutionary occurrences in the Tsarist Russia and the Kingdom of Poland.

<sup>39</sup> *Kołęda*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1900, no. 52, p. 208.

<sup>40</sup> Artur Oppmann (Or-Ot), *Wigilia*, „Wiek Młody” 1900, no. 24, p. 190–191.

<sup>41</sup> A. F., *Oplatek*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1882, no. 51, p. 606.

<sup>42</sup> *Gwiazda Mesjasza*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1896, no. 2, p. 14.

<sup>43</sup> E. Ł., *Drzewko wigiliowe*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1893, no. 51, p. 805–809; L. Niemojowski, *Choinka*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1881, no. 52, p. 723.

<sup>44</sup> *W Wigilię*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1890, no. 50, p. 394–396.

<sup>45</sup> N. (adapted from German), *Wieczór wigilijny*, „Wiek Młody” 1904, no. 2, p. 14–15, no. 3, p. 19–20, no. 4, p. 29–31, no. 5, p. 33–35; Z. Morawska, *Za gwiazdą*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1901, no. 51, p. 804–805; A. Oppmann, *Szopka polska*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1902, no. 26–36. Nativity plays were also described in the Christmas period in the press, eg. *Jaselka*, „Mały Świątek” 1894, no. 3, p. 20–22.

<sup>46</sup> F. Barański, *Święty Mikołaj*, „Mały Świątek” 1907, no. 35, p. 281–283.

<sup>47</sup> *Uroczystość Bożego Narodzenia w Londynie*, „Przyjaciół Dzieci” 1869, no. 8, p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> *Ognista szabla dar świętego Mikołaja*, „Mały Świątek” 1889, no. 35, p. 584–585.

Already in 1878, during the Easter period, the Warsaw "Przyjaciel Dzieci" published a drawing depicting the Last Supper carved for the church of St. Sebaldus in Nuremberg by Veit Stoss, well known in Poland and associated with it<sup>49</sup>. Easter was present in the analyzed periodicals mainly through descriptions of the sacrum itself, associated with the resurrection of the Son of God<sup>50</sup>. An interesting reference to the history of our nation was the Easter legend about the Polish king Boleslaw the Bold, whose sins were forgiven by Christ<sup>51</sup>. In the last decades of the period considered, more and more descriptions of folk customs associated with the Easter period appeared. They concerned, among others, Easter eggs<sup>52</sup>, pastries<sup>53</sup> and Easter Monday<sup>54</sup> customs. Occasionally, various trivia related to the celebration of the Easter liturgy would be published<sup>55</sup>. The symbolism used often resorted to natural elements associated with the spring. The reasons for which the Resurrection Day is a moving feast were explained, referring to the death of Christ on Friday, but in different Christian churches celebrated according to another calendar<sup>56</sup>. At Easter, pilgrimages to the Lord's Tomb were mentioned<sup>57</sup>, and also various topics related to the Christian religion were discussed<sup>58</sup>.

Religious feasts were also often present in the texts do not strictly devoted to faith, but that related in a metaphorical or folkloristic manner to a religious event<sup>59</sup>. An important moment of the liturgical year was All Saints Day. It was usually signaled by occasional poems<sup>60</sup> as well as drawings<sup>61</sup> or photographs<sup>62</sup> from cemeteries. The

<sup>49</sup> *Wieczera Pańska*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1878, no. 16, p. 163.

<sup>50</sup> *Chrystus zmartwychwstał*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1899, no. 13, p. 101; Z. Zacharkiewiczówna, *Zmartwychwstanie*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1908, no. 16, p. 182; Z. D., *Na Rezurekcyę*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1902, no. 13, p. 98.

<sup>51</sup> Z. Bukowiecka, *Legenda o Bolesławie Śmiałym. Aleluja! Alleluja!*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1901, no. 14, p. 106, (drawing on page 109).

<sup>52</sup> *Jajka wielkanocne*, „Mały Świątek” 1905, no. 13, p. 104.

<sup>53</sup> *Mała gosposia. Pieczywo wielkanocne*, „Mały Świątek” 1896, no. 11, p. 83–84. A specific article on culinary recipes for Christmas was a First World War “Easter table” in which, due to scarce supplies, recipes were given for rye buns and rye gingerbread without honey. „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1917, no. 7, p. 55.

<sup>54</sup> *Śmigust*, „Mały Świątek” 1902, no. 11, p. 81–83.

<sup>55</sup> *Kosztowne jajko wielkanocne*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1902, no. 15, p. 120; *Jakie bywało święcone u dawnych Polaków*, „Anioł Stróż” 1907, no. 14, p. 54.

<sup>56</sup> *Data Wielkijnoy*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1913, no. 14, p. 166.

<sup>57</sup> *Z pielgrzymki do Ziemi Świętej. U grobu Pańskiego*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1908, no. 16, p. 182–184; *Jerozolima*, „Mały Świątek” 1896, no. 11, p. 80.

<sup>58</sup> *O miłosierdziu Bożym. Z nauk ks. Gralewskiego*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1902, no. 13, p. 98–99.

<sup>59</sup> E. Polko, *Boże Narodzenie w lesie*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1881, no. 52, p. 726–728.

<sup>60</sup> Z. Mrozowicka, *W Dzień Zaduszny*, „Wiek Młody” 1897, no. 21, p. 161; Jadwiga z Z. S., *Za mogiłą*, „Mały Świątek” 1906, no. 32, p. 249.

<sup>61</sup> *Lampy życia*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1901, no. 44, p. 349.

<sup>62</sup> „Anioł Stróż” 1899, no. 31, p. 245.

beginning of November brought together religious relations with the saved souls and patriotic memories deceased or fallen Poles<sup>63</sup>. Sometimes it was also a time of particular concern about the fate of orphans<sup>64</sup>. Children were reminded that fast was once practiced before the All Saints Day (1 November)<sup>65</sup>.

The presence of religious themes in children's magazines was not limited to the most important holidays of the year. There were also mentions and occasional poems relating to other days of the liturgical year. Thus, such celebrations as the Corpus Christi were mentioned<sup>66</sup>, along with Ascension<sup>67</sup> (40 days after Easter), Annunciation<sup>68</sup> (March 25), St. Anne's<sup>69</sup> day (July 26), or St. Cecilia's<sup>70</sup> day (November 22). In addition to individual feasts, longer liturgical periods such as the Advent<sup>71</sup> or Lent were also<sup>72</sup> promoted. The month of May was often referred to as the month of Marian devotion<sup>73</sup>.

The religious topics present in the periodicals were also connected with various events in the life of the universal Church. Many local anniversaries were often mentioned<sup>74</sup>, whether regional or global ones — such as a bishop's ingress<sup>75</sup> or a change to the throne of Peter<sup>76</sup>. Bishops were always written about positively (especially on the occasion of their more significant anniversaries or posthumously). There were also hints on how to behave in the presence of the clergy<sup>77</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> J. L., *Wieczne odpoczywanie*, „Mały Świątek” 1901, no. 32, p. 252.

<sup>64</sup> Hajota, *Dzień Zaduszny Adamka*, „Mały Świątek” 1890, no. 32, p. 251–253.

<sup>65</sup> *Na listopad*, „Anioł Stróż” 1907, no. 44, p. 175.

<sup>66</sup> Artur Oppmann (Or-Ot), *Boże Ciało*, „Wiek Młody” 1899, no. 11, p. 81.

<sup>67</sup> J.R., *Na Wniebowstąpienie Pańskie*, „Przyjaciel Działwy” 1903, no. 21, p. 83. The same poem see: „Przyjaciel Działwy” 1911, no. 21, p. 82.

<sup>68</sup> E. Lejowa, *Na Zwiastowanie*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1905, no. 12, p. 128.

<sup>69</sup> She was the patroness of raising children. *Święta Anna*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1906, no. 29 (addition for children), p. 113.

<sup>70</sup> *Św. Cecylia patronka muzyki*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1893, no. 46, p. 547.

<sup>71</sup> On the occasion of the Advent, mention was made of morning masses called “roraty” from the first words of the Latin hymn. Wujcio Julo, *Roraty*, „Mały Świątek” 1888, no. 38, p. 299; Wielisław, *Roraty*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1889, no. 5, p. 38.

<sup>72</sup> The Grudziądz “Przyjaciel Dzieci” referred to this period in the retreat convention asking for prayer and meditation on the history of salvation: “Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1911, no. 11, p. 41.

<sup>73</sup> *Wianeczek majowy*, „Przyjaciel Działwy” 1909, no. 18, p. 70; Z. Mrozowicka, *Modlitwa majowa*, „Mały Świątek” 1907, no. 15, p. 119.

<sup>74</sup> *Uroczystości w Chelmie i Zamościu*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1905, no. 30, p. 453.

<sup>75</sup> *Uroczystość ingresu nowego arcybiskupa*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1913, no. 39, p. 465–466.

<sup>76</sup> After the death of Leo XIII, his last poem was published. „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1903, no. 31, p. 250. By the way the conclave, the rules governing the election of the Bishop of Rome Cardinals were discussed. *Obiór papieża*, „Wiek Młody” 1903, no. 15, p. 116–117.

<sup>77</sup> Such indications appeared in various periodicals, although it seems that a special form of reverence was given to the clergymen in the Poznan's “Gazetka dla Dzieci”, which appeared as an addition to the “Przyjaciel Ludu” (1905–1909).

A significant increase in religious-patriotic texts was caused by the strike of children in Greater Poland (1901–1902), who protested against the compulsory teaching of religion in German. In the magazines, mainly the Galician ones, occasional prayers and voices of condemnation for the persecution were printed. The news of the tower fire in the monastery of Jasna Góra became an occasion to remind the readers of the importance of this place for the Polish statehood and spirituality<sup>78</sup>. The legendary defense of the Czestochowa fortress against Swedish troops came back from time to time in connection with anniversaries, historical memories and references to the various characters that visited the monastery in the course of history. Attention was given also to popes on the occasion of anniversaries<sup>79</sup> of their papacy and various gestures the popes performed with respect to the Polish nation<sup>80</sup>. In 1905, the Warsaw “Przyjaciel Dzieci” published a report on the pilgrimage of Galician children to Rome led by Cardinal Jan Puzyna, during which they were presented to the Holy Father (also photographed)<sup>81</sup>.

Religious content was also conveyed in the form of hagiography. Biographies of saints were treated, on the one hand, as a biographical lecture, which played an educational role in the press for children and young people. On the other hand, they were an opportunity to show various virtues of character and to solve ethical issues. Many of the characters represented in this form were associated with Poland. St. Adalbert was often remembered and presented as a co-founder of Polish Catholicism<sup>82</sup>. The procession of historical figures also included St. Stanislaus Bishop, St. Casimir<sup>83</sup> or St. Andrzej Bobola. Sometimes, texts were devoted to local characters, especially if they were associated with an interesting legend<sup>84</sup>. There were

<sup>78</sup> *Z Jasnej Góry*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1900, no. 35, p. 548.

<sup>79</sup> On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leo XIII’s pontificate, he briefly presents his official biography and several important events in his life that influenced his subsequent election and career in the Church hierarchy. M. Synoradzki, *Jego Świętobliwość Papież Leon XIII*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1902, no. 10, p. 146–147.

<sup>80</sup> In 1910, after the theft of the crown of the famous painting of Our Lady of Czestochowa, Pius X donated new insignia to the monastery of Jasna Góra and a coral dress. *Dar papieża dla Czestochowy*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1910, no. 19, p. 222–223.

<sup>81</sup> *Hold dziatwy polskiej*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1905, no. 20, p. 799–801.

<sup>82</sup> A fictional cycle “Męczennicy” (*Martyrs*) by Paulina Krakowska devoted to her was published in “Wieczory Rodzinne” in episodes, in 1881. M. Synoradzki, *W dziewięćsetletnią rocznicę męczeństwa św. Wojciecha*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1897, no. 19–29; although the recognition of the Prague missionary as a hierarch of the Gniezno church in the rank of archbishop was, of course, a historical error. The archicathedral in this city of Wielkopolska was established only after 1000 AD. *Św. Wojciech Arcybiskup Gnieźnieński*, „Wieczory Rodzinne” 1897, no. 17, p. 129–130. Also cf. *Św. Wojciech*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1912, no. 35, p. 138.

<sup>83</sup> *Św. Kazimierz*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1912, no. 36, p. 141.

<sup>84</sup> *Pięciu męczenników kazimierskich*, „Przyjaciel Dzieci” 1898, no. 34–37. Characters associated with Kazimierz Biskupi — a town in Wielkopolska near Konin.

also stories of other saints of the universal Church, who were not directly related to the history of Poland<sup>85</sup>.

Attention was drawn to a large variety of theme and genre in the presentation of religious content. Biblical stories and the lives of the saints were the subject of popular science texts as well as short stories or fictitious cycles. The moral message referring to religious sentiments appeared in the poems — both occasional related to the most important church holidays as well as ones encouraging prayer. Short dramatic works based on religious motifs referring to the tradition of popular nativity scenes were published, too. Homiletic statements were also often addressed to young readers as to follow the rules of faith and live according to God's commandments. They often dealt with difficult moral concepts related to the body and soul, mercy<sup>86</sup>, and the mystery of existence<sup>87</sup> (especially in Ludwik Niemojewski's poetry). Religious themes appeared commonly also in statements about secular matters, such as in various novels and short stories, acting as a natural image of the customs prevailing during the period considered. Wherever the question of faith was threatened, religion became a kind of a weapon and was associated with the issues of patriotism, independence and self-determination.

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<sup>85</sup> *Święty Olaf. Patron i męczennik Norwegii*, „*Przyjaciół Dzieci*” 1897, no. 36, p. 425.

<sup>86</sup> L. Niemojewski, *Milosierdzie*, „*Przyjaciół Dzieci*” 1878, no. 26, p. 303.

<sup>87</sup> *Czem jesteś*, „*Przyjaciół Dzieci*” 1909, no. 48, p. 199.