

Christian Religious Education Teachers' Strategies In Incumbing Bible Literacy In Grade Iv Students At SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the strategy of Christian Religious Education teachers in instilling Bible literacy in grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung Palangka Raya. This research is motivated by the low interest in reading the Bible among students, the lack of understanding of the content and message of the Bible, and the lack of optimal learning strategies applied by teachers in instilling Bible literacy. The research method used is a qualitative approach with a descriptive type of research. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the strategies used by Christian Education teachers include interactive storytelling methods, regular Bible reading habits, assignments through spiritual activity books, and assistance to students in understanding and applying biblical values in daily life. The cultivation of Bible literacy is carried out through the habit of reading the Bible before the study begins, providing an understanding of the content and message of the Bible, and the assignment of spiritual activities that support the habit of reading the Bible at home

Keywords

Teacher Strategy, Christian Religious Education, Bible Literacy, Grade IV Students.



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INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a strategic role in shaping students' spiritual, moral, and character development from an early age. At the elementary school level, Christian Religious Education is not only intended to transfer biblical knowledge but also to cultivate biblical literacy, enabling students to understand, interpret, and apply the teachings of the Bible in their daily lives. Biblical literacy encompasses students' ability to read, comprehend, remember, and practice biblical values, which serve as the foundation for Christian faith and ethical decision-making. In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, children are increasingly exposed to diverse sources of information that may not always align

with Christian values. Consequently, Christian Religious Education teachers are expected to employ innovative and contextual instructional strategies that encourage students to engage deeply with Scripture while nurturing their spiritual growth (Estep et al., 2022; Groome, 2020).

Teachers serve as facilitators, mentors, and role models in the process of developing biblical literacy. Effective instructional strategies involve not only delivering biblical content but also creating meaningful learning experiences that enable students to connect biblical narratives with real-life situations. Various pedagogical approaches, including storytelling, cooperative learning, discussion, memorization of Bible verses, reflective learning, and project-based activities, have been recognized as effective methods for increasing students' engagement with Scripture. These strategies foster critical thinking, spiritual reflection, and active participation, helping learners internalize biblical principles rather than merely memorizing religious facts. Furthermore, teachers who integrate biblical values into everyday classroom interactions contribute significantly to students' holistic development and faith formation (Anthony, 2021; Hull, 2021).

Biblical literacy has become an increasingly important concern within Christian education because numerous studies indicate that children's familiarity with biblical teachings is gradually declining due to changes in learning habits, digital distractions, and reduced family involvement in religious instruction. Elementary school students often possess limited understanding of biblical stories despite attending Christian Religious Education classes regularly. This condition suggests that conventional teaching methods may not sufficiently stimulate students' interest or comprehension. Therefore, teachers are challenged to design engaging learning environments that accommodate students' developmental characteristics, particularly those in Grade IV, who are transitioning from concrete operational thinking toward more analytical reasoning. Interactive and student-centered learning strategies are expected to enhance students' biblical understanding while encouraging meaningful spiritual experiences (Barna Group, 2021; Powell, 2020).

The success of biblical literacy programs is also influenced by the teacher's pedagogical competence, communication skills, and ability to contextualize biblical messages within students' daily experiences. Christian Religious Education teachers are responsible for helping learners recognize biblical truths as practical guidance for their personal, social, and spiritual lives. Effective instruction emphasizes active learning, collaborative dialogue, and reflective practices that allow students to explore biblical concepts independently while receiving appropriate guidance from teachers. Moreover, integrating technology, visual media, games, and experiential learning activities into Christian Religious Education has been found to improve students' motivation and participation, particularly among elementary learners who generally respond positively to interactive educational approaches (Richards & Bredfeldt, 2020; Yount, 2021).

SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, represents a unique educational context in which Christian Religious Education teachers are responsible for fostering biblical literacy among Grade IV students with diverse learning characteristics and backgrounds. Understanding the

instructional strategies implemented by teachers in this setting is essential because these strategies directly influence students' interest in reading the Bible, understanding biblical narratives, and applying Christian values in everyday life. Investigating teachers' experiences and classroom practices provides valuable insights into the factors that support or hinder biblical literacy development, including instructional methods, learning resources, classroom interactions, and students' responses during the learning process. Such findings may contribute to improving the quality of Christian Religious Education, particularly in elementary schools where character formation constitutes a primary educational objective (Knight, 2020; Pazmiño, 2021).

Despite the growing emphasis on character education and religious literacy in Indonesia, limited empirical research has specifically examined teachers' strategies for inculcating biblical literacy among elementary school students in public schools. Most previous studies have focused broadly on Christian character education or religious instruction without exploring the pedagogical approaches used to strengthen biblical literacy. Consequently, there remains a significant research gap concerning how Christian Religious Education teachers design, implement, and evaluate learning strategies that effectively foster biblical understanding among young learners. Addressing this gap is important because biblical literacy serves as a foundation for lifelong Christian faith development, moral reasoning, and responsible citizenship. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the strategies employed by Christian Religious Education teachers in inculcating Bible literacy among Grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, while identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the implementation of these instructional practices..

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the strategies implemented by Christian Religious Education teachers in inculcating Bible literacy among Grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya. The research focused on understanding teachers' instructional practices, classroom interactions, and students' responses within their natural educational setting. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of Christian Religious Education teachers, Grade IV students, and the school principal as key informants. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, including lesson plans, teaching materials, students' assignments, and school records. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and method triangulation were employed. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with continuous verification throughout the research process. This method enabled an in-depth understanding of how teachers designed, implemented, and evaluated instructional strategies to foster biblical literacy while identifying the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing the learning process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Christian Religious Education Teachers' Strategies for Inculcating Bible Literacy Among Grade IV Students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya

The findings of this study indicate that Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya implemented a variety of well-planned and continuous instructional strategies to inculcate Bible literacy among Grade IV students. One of the primary strategies was the establishment of a daily Bible-reading habit through a spiritual activity workbook completed by students throughout one semester. This routine encouraged students to read the Bible consistently, transforming Bible reading into a regular part of their daily lives. In addition, teachers employed diverse instructional methods, including shared Bible reading, storytelling, question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, and contextual explanations of biblical passages to ensure that students could easily understand the message of God's Word. Students were also assigned reflective tasks, such as summarizing Bible passages or identifying their moral lessons, enabling them not only to read Scripture but also to comprehend its meaning and apply biblical principles in their everyday lives. Interviews with Christian Religious Education teachers revealed that this reading habit was established through a learning agreement at the beginning of the semester, requiring students to read one Bible section consisting of one title and five verses each day. Meanwhile, interviews with students demonstrated that these strategies made classroom learning more engaging, increased their motivation to read the Bible, and enhanced their understanding of biblical teachings and spiritual messages. These findings suggest that systematic and consistent instructional practices effectively foster Bible literacy while promoting students' spiritual growth and character development (Anthony, 2021; Estep et al., 2022).

The findings are consistent with contemporary theories of Christian Religious Education emphasizing that Bible literacy should be developed through structured, consistent, and student-centered learning experiences. According to Parapasan (2023), effective Bible literacy programs require continuous and engaging activities that cultivate students' habits of reading and understanding Scripture as the foundation of Christian life. Similarly, Manurung (2022) argues that teachers should actively guide students in interpreting biblical messages and connecting them with real-life situations so that learning extends beyond cognitive achievement toward the internalization of Christian values. Likewise, Telaumbanua (2020) emphasizes that the role of Christian Religious Education teachers is not limited to transmitting biblical knowledge but also includes facilitating character transformation through meaningful learning experiences. These perspectives support the instructional approaches observed in this study, where shared Bible reading, storytelling, classroom discussions, reflective questioning, and spiritual assignments promoted active learning and contextual understanding. Such strategies align with constructivist and faith-based pedagogical principles that encourage students to engage personally with Scripture, reflect on its relevance, and demonstrate Christian values through their behavior. Previous studies have

likewise reported that active participation, reflection, and repeated exposure to biblical texts significantly improve students' biblical understanding, spiritual maturity, and moral decision-making (Groome, 2020; Pazmiño, 2021; Yount, 2021).

Based on the empirical findings and the theoretical framework employed, it can be concluded that the strategies implemented by Christian Religious Education teachers at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya have effectively promoted Bible literacy among Grade IV students through habitual Bible reading, diverse instructional methods, reflective spiritual assignments, and continuous guidance in understanding God's Word. These instructional strategies not only enhanced students' ability to read and comprehend biblical texts but also encouraged them to internalize and practice Christian values in their daily lives. Furthermore, the findings reinforce the theoretical perspective that systematic, consistent, and developmentally appropriate teaching strategies are fundamental to successful Bible literacy instruction in elementary education. By integrating cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions of learning, teachers contribute significantly to students' faith formation, character development, and lifelong engagement with Scripture. Consequently, this study provides further evidence that well-designed Christian Religious Education strategies can effectively cultivate biblical literacy while strengthening students' moral character and spiritual identity within the context of primary education (Knight, 2020; Richards & Bredfeldt, 2020).

2. Inculcating Bible Literacy Among Grade IV Students at SDN 1 Panarung

The findings of this study demonstrate that Bible literacy has been successfully inculcated among Grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya through structured, consistent, and meaningful learning activities implemented in Christian Religious Education classes. The Christian Religious Education teacher not only encouraged students to read the Bible regularly but also guided them to understand biblical teachings, retell Bible stories, and identify moral values that could be applied in their daily lives. These instructional activities were conducted through daily Bible-reading routines, Bible storytelling, simple group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and reflective spiritual assignments. Interviews with the Christian Religious Education teacher revealed that students were required to complete a daily Bible-reading journal as a means of developing consistent reading habits while allowing the teacher to monitor students' progress in Bible literacy. Furthermore, interviews with students indicated that these activities increased their enthusiasm for reading Scripture, improved their understanding of biblical narratives, and motivated them to practice Christian values such as honesty, love, respect for parents, obedience to teachers, kindness, and responsibility in their everyday interactions. These findings suggest that systematic Bible literacy instruction contributes not only to students' cognitive understanding of Scripture but also to their spiritual formation and moral development (Anthony, 2021; Barna Group, 2021).

The findings support contemporary perspectives on Bible literacy, which define biblical literacy as a multidimensional process involving the ability to read, understand, interpret, and live according to the teachings of Scripture. Bible literacy extends beyond the acquisition of biblical knowledge by encouraging learners to integrate biblical principles into their attitudes,

behaviors, and daily decision-making. Within Christian Religious Education, teachers are expected to facilitate learning experiences that nurture students' faith while promoting critical reflection on biblical messages. Through guided reading, storytelling, dialogue, and reflective learning, students gradually develop biblical understanding alongside Christian values that shape their personal identity and relationships with others. Such an approach corresponds with holistic Christian education, which integrates cognitive, affective, spiritual, and behavioral dimensions of learning to cultivate mature Christian discipleship. Previous studies have consistently emphasized that repeated engagement with Scripture, supported by meaningful teacher guidance and reflective practice, significantly strengthens biblical understanding, moral reasoning, and spiritual commitment among elementary school students (Estep et al., 2022; Groome, 2020; Pazmiño, 2021; Richards & Bredfeldt, 2020).

Another important finding of this study is that students demonstrated observable behavioral changes after participating in regular Bible literacy activities. Besides showing improved reading comprehension of biblical passages, students began to practice Christian virtues more consistently in their daily lives, including honesty, compassion, responsibility, obedience, and respect toward others. This finding indicates that Bible literacy functions not merely as an academic competency but also as a process of faith formation and character development. The integration of Bible reading with reflection, storytelling, discussion, and practical application enables students to internalize biblical truths rather than simply memorize scriptural content. Such learning experiences support transformational education, where knowledge is translated into attitudes and behaviors reflecting Christian teachings. These results reinforce previous educational research asserting that Christian Religious Education should foster lifelong spiritual growth by helping students develop biblical worldviews, ethical sensitivity, and Christ-centered character through continuous engagement with Scripture and authentic learning experiences (Knight, 2020; Yount, 2021; Wilhoit & Dettoni, 2021).

Overall, the study concludes that Bible literacy among Grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya has been effectively cultivated through continuous Bible-reading habits, guided interpretation of Scripture, Bible storytelling, reflective learning activities, and the practical application of Christian values in everyday life. The findings demonstrate that students not only improved their ability to read and understand the Bible but also exhibited positive changes in their attitudes and behaviors consistent with biblical teachings. Consequently, this study strengthens the theoretical perspective that Bible literacy is a lifelong process of nurturing faith, character, and spiritual maturity through systematic Christian Religious Education. By implementing consistent, student-centered, and developmentally appropriate instructional practices, teachers play a fundamental role in enabling students to regard the Bible as the primary guide for their personal, social, and spiritual lives (Hull, 2021; Naidoo, 2020).

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the strategies employed by Christian Religious Education teachers to inculcate Bible literacy among Grade IV students at SDN 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya were implemented through systematic and comprehensive instructional practices. Teachers established a daily Bible-reading routine through a learning contract that encouraged students to develop consistent reading habits. Various teaching methods were utilized, including shared Bible reading, storytelling, question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, and reflective assignments to enhance students' understanding of biblical teachings. Instructional media such as illustrated Bible stories, educational videos, the Bible, and the whiteboard were incorporated to facilitate comprehension and make learning more engaging. Teachers also motivated students through praise, personal guidance, encouragement, and collaboration with parents to reinforce Bible-reading habits both at school and at home. Students' Bible literacy was evaluated through oral questioning, written assignments, and activities requiring them to retell Bible stories, enabling teachers to assess their understanding and progress. Furthermore, Bible literacy was cultivated through daily reading habits supported by routine assignments and diverse reading activities, including individual reading, shared reading, alternating reading, and group discussions. The findings revealed that students demonstrated a good understanding of biblical stories and their moral messages, were able to retell biblical narratives accurately based on their comprehension, and increasingly applied Christian values in their daily lives. Nevertheless, the study also found that while Bible-reading habits had developed successfully within the school environment, they had not yet become consistent practices at home, indicating the need for stronger collaboration between teachers and parents to foster continuous Bible literacy and spiritual growth beyond the classroom..

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