

The Use of Picture Media in Christian Religious Education Learning in Grade III at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the use of visual media (images) in Christian Religious Education lessons for third-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, and to identify the factors supporting and hindering its implementation. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The research subjects consisted of the Christian Religious Education teacher and third-grade students at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya. Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and documentation, while data analysis involved the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the use of visual media in Christian Religious Education lessons has been implemented effectively. The teacher integrated visual media with audiovisual media—such as YouTube Kids and Superbook—making the learning process more engaging and interactive; this helped students grasp the material, particularly by rendering abstract Bible stories into more concrete concepts. The use of visual media also boosted student attention, interest, enthusiasm, and active participation in answering questions and engaging in discussions during the lesson. Supporting factors included the availability of adequate learning facilities and infrastructure, the teacher's creativity in selecting and utilizing learning media, and the students' enthusiasm for the lessons. Meanwhile, a hindering factor identified was that some students still lacked the confidence to ask questions or express their opinions independently, requiring the teacher to continuously provide motivation and foster a conducive learning environment. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the use of visual media has a positive impact on the Christian Religious Education learning process, as it enhances student understanding, attention, and active participation

Keywords

Visual Media, Learning Christian Religious Education, Supporting Factors, And Inhibiting Factors



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INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Education (CRE) at the elementary school level plays an important role in helping students develop not only religious knowledge but also attitudes, values, and

behaviors that reflect Christian teachings in everyday life. At the elementary level, learning should be designed according to students' developmental characteristics, particularly their need for concrete experiences, simple explanations, and meaningful learning activities. Religious concepts may sometimes be abstract for young learners because they involve theological ideas, moral values, biblical stories, and spiritual experiences that cannot always be observed directly. Therefore, teachers need to select learning strategies and instructional media that can translate abstract concepts into forms that are easier for children to understand. Learning media can function as an intermediary between teachers, learning materials, and students so that information becomes more accessible, interesting, and meaningful (Arsyad, 2017). In this context, the use of picture media is relevant because pictures can provide concrete visual representations of concepts, events, characters, and situations discussed during Christian Religious Education lessons.

Picture media refers to visual instructional materials that present information through photographs, illustrations, drawings, diagrams, or other visual representations. For elementary school students, visual representations can help connect new information with things that are familiar to them. Mayer (2009) explains through the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning that learners can construct meaningful understanding when verbal and visual representations are appropriately combined. Pictures provide learners with opportunities to develop visual mental models and connect them with verbal explanations. Thus, the use of pictures in learning is not merely intended to make classroom activities more attractive, but can also support students' cognitive processes in understanding and organizing information. The multimedia principle further suggests that learning from words and pictures can produce deeper understanding than learning from words alone, particularly when the visual material is directly related to the learning content (Mayer, 2009).

The importance of visual media is particularly relevant in Christian Religious Education because many learning materials are presented through narratives and symbolic representations. Biblical stories, for example, contain characters, places, events, moral situations, and relationships that can be represented through carefully selected pictures. When teachers explain a biblical story only through verbal narration, some students may have difficulty imagining the events being discussed. Picture media can help overcome this limitation by providing students with a visual reference that supports their understanding of the narrative. In this way, pictures can facilitate students' attention, stimulate their curiosity, encourage questions, and support classroom interaction. Arsyad (2017) emphasizes that instructional media can clarify the presentation of messages, overcome limitations of space and time, and increase students' motivation to participate in learning. These functions make picture media particularly suitable for elementary education, where students often benefit from concrete and visually supported learning experiences.

Previous research also indicates the potential of visual media in religious education. A study conducted in Palangka Raya found that instructional media specifically developed for elementary religious education could be presented through an illustrated storybook containing

themes related to students, community, and church life (Wahyuningrum, 2022). Research involving Grade III students in Catholic Religious Education also reported the use of picture media as an instructional intervention to improve students' learning outcomes (Pranyoto & Edmunda, 2024). Similarly, research on Christian Religious Education among Grade III elementary students demonstrated that combining a picture-and-picture learning model with PowerPoint media could contribute to improved learning outcomes (Rame & Supit, 2024). These findings indicate that visual media has considerable potential to support religious learning among elementary school students. However, the effectiveness of picture media depends on how teachers select, present, explain, and integrate pictures with learning objectives and student activities.

In the context of SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, the use of picture media in Grade III Christian Religious Education is therefore worthy of attention. Grade III students are at a stage where concrete and visually observable representations can help them understand learning materials more effectively. Pictures can be used to illustrate biblical stories, Christian values, examples of good behavior, forms of gratitude, love, forgiveness, responsibility, and relationships with others. The teacher can also encourage students to observe pictures, describe what they see, connect visual information with biblical teachings, and express their understanding through discussion or simple assignments. Such activities can transform students from passive recipients of information into active participants in the learning process.

Furthermore, picture media can support the affective dimension of Christian Religious Education. CRE is not solely concerned with students' ability to memorize biblical information but also with the development of attitudes and behaviors based on Christian values. Meaningful visual representations can help students recognize moral situations and relate religious teachings to their daily experiences. Consequently, the learning process can become more contextual and relevant to students' lives. Nevertheless, the use of picture media should remain purposeful; excessive, irrelevant, or poorly designed visuals may distract students rather than improve understanding. Mayer (2009) stresses that instructional visuals need to be relevant and appropriately integrated with explanations so that they support, rather than overload, learners' cognitive processing.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education (CRE) learning for Grade III students at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the learning process, particularly how teachers utilize picture media, how students respond to the media, and how the media supports students' understanding of Christian Religious Education materials. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, with the teacher and Grade III students serving as the main sources of information. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted during the CRE learning process to identify the

teacher's use of picture media, students' attention and participation, classroom interaction, and students' responses to the learning materials. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the CRE teacher to obtain information concerning the preparation, selection, implementation, advantages, and challenges of using picture media in learning. Documentation was used to complement the observation and interview data, including photographs of learning activities, lesson plans, learning materials, and other relevant school documents. The collected data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification as proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Data triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation to enhance the credibility of the findings. Through this method, the study sought to provide a comprehensive description of how picture media is implemented and its role in supporting an engaging and meaningful Christian Religious Education learning process for Grade III students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Use of Picture Media in Christian Religious Education

The findings of this study indicate that the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education (CRE) has a positive impact on the learning process of students. The use of visual media not only supports the delivery of instructional materials but also increases students' attention, interest, participation, and understanding of the subject matter. The findings show that students demonstrated greater concentration when picture media was incorporated into the learning process. Their attention was directed toward the pictures presented by the teacher, enabling them to understand the teacher's explanations more easily. This finding is consistent with Magdalena (2021), who stated that the use of picture media can increase students' interest in learning because it makes the learning process more attractive and less monotonous. Picture media can stimulate students' interest and encourage them to focus more carefully on the material being taught.

The findings are also consistent with Ahudulu (2020), who explained that picture media is one of the most commonly used instructional tools because it is easy to understand, relatively easy to obtain, and capable of helping students comprehend learning materials in a simpler manner. Through pictures, students obtain a more concrete learning experience, making the material easier to understand and remember. The use of picture media therefore does not merely increase students' attention but also encourages greater involvement in the learning process. Students become more active through activities such as observing pictures, answering questions, expressing opinions, and discussing the material with their classmates. Visual media can also encourage active participation through drawing and coloring activities, allowing students to become directly involved rather than functioning merely as passive listeners (Setiyawan, 2020).

The use of picture media also facilitates students' understanding of Christian Religious Education materials. Topics related to biblical stories, biblical characters, and Christian

principles can be understood more easily when students are provided with pictures that reinforce the teacher's explanations. This finding supports Setiyawan (2020), who argued that visual media can help connect learning materials with students' real-life experiences, thereby making complex or abstract concepts easier to understand. Previous research reported by Baunsele (2023) likewise demonstrated that the use of picture media can improve students' learning outcomes and participation. This improvement was reflected in students' increased enthusiasm during learning activities and their enhanced ability to understand the material presented by the teacher.

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that some students were still reluctant to ask questions independently. This condition may be associated with the developmental characteristics of elementary school students. According to Mustikhatul et al. (2022), children at the elementary school level are still developing socially and emotionally, and some students may experience shyness, lack of confidence, or fear of making mistakes when speaking in front of the class. Therefore, teachers need to continuously encourage students and create a supportive learning environment that enables them to ask questions and express their opinions. Teacher encouragement is important because attractive media alone does not automatically guarantee that every student will participate equally in classroom communication.

Furthermore, the findings show that picture media assists teachers in explaining Christian Religious Education materials related to Christian values, including love, forgiveness, concern for others, honesty, and responsibility. When pictures portray situations from students' everyday lives, Christian values become easier for them to recognize and understand. Students do not merely listen to the teacher's instructions but also observe visual illustrations that help them interpret the values being discussed. The combination of verbal explanation and visual representation therefore creates a more concrete learning experience for elementary school students (Kustandi, 2020).

Interview findings further reveal that several students found it easier to remember biblical stories when teachers used pictures. This indicates that picture media can strengthen students' memory of learning materials. Pictures provide strong visual impressions compared with verbal explanations alone, enabling students to recall the content of stories and the moral messages contained within the materials. This aspect is particularly important in Christian Religious Education because many learning materials involve biblical narratives that students are expected to understand and remember. Safitri (2020) explained that picture media is a two-dimensional visual medium capable of conveying information clearly to learners, thereby supporting the process of understanding instructional content.

Students also demonstrated better recall when they were able to answer teachers' questions concerning topics that had previously been learned. This suggests that picture media not only supports students' immediate understanding during classroom activities but can also help retain information in their memory for a longer period. Lubis (2020) emphasized that picture media is relatively easy to understand and can create an enjoyable learning experience,

thereby contributing to meaningful learning. Similarly, Istiqlal (2020) stated that the use of picture media can help students understand learning materials more effectively.

The study also found that picture media provided students with opportunities to develop their critical-thinking skills. When the teacher presented a particular picture, students were not immediately given the answer. Instead, they were encouraged to observe the picture and explain what they saw. Through this activity, students learned to analyze information presented visually, connect it with the learning material, and formulate conclusions based on their observations. Such activities gradually encourage students to develop higher-order thinking skills. Triaski (2021) noted that visual attractiveness can stimulate students' attention and encourage them to respond actively to learning materials through observation, questioning, discussion, and interpretation.

Picture media also contributes to students' communication skills. During the learning process, students have opportunities to explain the content of pictures, answer teachers' questions, and communicate with their classmates. These activities provide students with experience in expressing their opinions orally in front of others. The use of picture media can make students more confident in speaking because they have a concrete object that serves as a basis for expressing their ideas. However, some students may still require additional encouragement because their levels of confidence differ. Baunsele (2023) similarly reported that picture media can increase students' participation by encouraging them to respond to visual learning materials.

The findings further demonstrate that the use of picture media increases teacher–student interaction. Teachers can formulate questions based on the pictures more easily, while students can understand the questions more clearly because they can directly observe the objects or situations being discussed. This condition facilitates more active two-way communication during the learning process. Effective communication also enables teachers to identify the extent to which students understand the material. Isnaeni (2021) explained that visual and audiovisual media can be combined to support learning activities and provide students with richer learning experiences.

Based on the findings, the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education provides substantial benefits for Grade III students. Picture media can increase attention, interest, participation, understanding, memory, communication, and interaction during the learning process. It can also make learning more attractive, effective, and meaningful. Therefore, picture media can be considered an appropriate instructional strategy for supporting Christian Religious Education at the elementary school level. The effectiveness of this medium is particularly evident when teachers select pictures that are relevant to the learning objectives and actively involve students in observing, interpreting, discussing, and responding to the visual materials (Magdalena, 2021; Ahudulu, 2020).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Use of Picture Media

The findings indicate that adequate learning facilities and infrastructure constitute an important supporting factor in the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education in Grade III at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya. The school provides various learning facilities, including illustrated textbooks, educational posters, LCD projectors, and audiovisual media such as *Superbook* and YouTube Kids. These facilities make it easier for teachers to select media appropriate to the learning materials. The availability of diverse instructional media contributes to a more attractive learning process and enables students to understand the material more easily. Therefore, adequate instructional facilities represent one of the important conditions supporting the successful implementation of picture media.

This finding is consistent with Mulyani (2021), who emphasized that the availability of adequate picture media is an important factor supporting the implementation of visual learning. Kustandi (2020) also explained that instructional media functions as a tool for teachers to communicate learning messages clearly so that learning objectives can be achieved more effectively. With adequate facilities, teachers have greater opportunities to utilize picture media appropriately and creatively in Christian Religious Education.

Another supporting factor is the teacher's enthusiasm and creativity in using picture media. Interview findings indicate that the teacher does not rely solely on pictures available in textbooks but also combines them with audiovisual media to make the learning process more engaging and easier for students to understand. This finding is consistent with Setiyawan (2020), who argued that picture media should be relevant to the learning materials, clearly presented to students, and accompanied by teacher explanations that encourage students to observe and discuss the pictures. Such an approach allows picture media to function more effectively as a learning resource.

The combination of visual and audiovisual media is also relevant to the classification of instructional media proposed by Isaeni (2021), who distinguished visual and audiovisual media as complementary resources that can be used to support the learning process. Teacher creativity in combining these forms of media provides students with varied learning experiences and prevents learning activities from becoming monotonous. Thus, the teacher's ability to select and integrate different media represents an important factor in maximizing the benefits of picture media.

Students' enthusiasm toward picture media also supports its implementation. Based on observations and interviews, students appeared more focused when teachers used pictures. They paid greater attention to the visual materials, responded more quickly to teachers' questions, and interacted more actively with their classmates. This indicates that pictures can increase students' attention and engagement during learning activities. Triaski (2021) emphasized that visual attractiveness is one of the supporting factors of picture media because attractive images can increase students' attention toward learning materials. Visual media can also help transform abstract concepts into more concrete representations and encourage active participation through questions, discussions, and responses.

Baunsele (2023) further strengthens this finding by explaining that picture media can increase students' participation in learning. Various forms of visual and audiovisual media, including textbook illustrations, YouTube Kids, and *Superbook*, can provide students with attractive learning stimuli. Such media can encourage students to participate more actively and develop greater enthusiasm during lessons.

The findings also show that picture media helps students understand biblical stories that may otherwise be abstract. Students can visualize characters, events, and Christian values through pictures, making the materials easier to understand and remember. Interview results indicate that students found learning materials easier to understand when teachers used pictures rather than relying exclusively on oral explanations. Safitri (2020) stated that picture media is a visual medium that can communicate information clearly, while Lubis (2020) explained that pictures can provide enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences. Istiqlal (2020) similarly emphasized the contribution of picture media to students' understanding of instructional materials.

Despite these supporting factors, the study also identified several obstacles. Interviews revealed that some students were still reluctant to ask questions independently. Some students preferred responding to teachers' questions rather than asking about concepts they did not yet understand. This condition suggests that although visual media can increase attention and understanding, differences in students' confidence levels can influence their participation in learning activities. Mustikhatul et al. (2022) explained that elementary school students may experience shyness, insecurity, and fear of making mistakes, which can affect their willingness to communicate in classroom situations.

The findings are also consistent with Triaski (2021), who identified limitations in active interaction as one of the potential obstacles to the effective use of picture media when teachers are unable to maximize its instructional potential. Mulyani (2021) similarly noted that students' conditions may become a factor inhibiting the effective use of picture media. Therefore, teachers need to provide continuous motivation, create a supportive and enjoyable learning environment, and provide opportunities for all students to ask questions and express their opinions.

Overall, the study demonstrates that the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education is supported by adequate instructional facilities, teacher creativity in utilizing visual and audiovisual media, and students' increased attention, interest, and understanding. The principal inhibiting factor is the limited confidence of some students in asking questions and expressing their opinions. Nevertheless, these obstacles do not diminish the educational value of picture media. The findings support the view that the effectiveness of picture media is influenced by the availability of appropriate facilities, teacher creativity, and students' active participation in the learning process (Triaski, 2021; Mulyani, 2021; Baunsele, 2023). Consequently, picture media can serve as an effective instructional medium for improving the quality and meaningfulness of Christian Religious Education learning among elementary school students.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the use of picture media in Christian Religious Education learning for Grade III students at SD Negeri 1 Panarung, Palangka Raya, provides significant benefits in supporting the learning process. Picture media helps increase students' attention, interest, participation, understanding, memory, critical-thinking skills, communication, and interaction with teachers and classmates. Through visual representations, biblical stories, biblical characters, Christian values, and moral teachings become more concrete and easier for students to understand and remember. The successful use of picture media is supported by the availability of adequate learning facilities, teacher creativity in combining visual and audiovisual media, and students' enthusiasm during learning activities. However, some obstacles remain, particularly the limited confidence of several students to ask questions and express their opinions. Therefore, teachers need to provide continuous encouragement and create a supportive, enjoyable, and interactive learning environment. Overall, picture media can be considered an effective and meaningful instructional medium for supporting the achievement of Christian Religious Education learning objectives at the elementary school level..

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