

Strengthening Children's Christian Religious Education to Improve Intellectual Abilities According to Bloom's Taxonomy Domain for Sunday School Children at GKI Eden Anggaduber Biak Timur

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Abstract

The main problem in this service is the low intellectual abilities of children at the GKI Eden Anggaduber Sunday School in East Biak regarding Christian religious education. The aim of Community Service (PkM) is to strengthen Christian religious education by increasing children's intellectual abilities based on Bloom's Taxonomy. The methods used include lectures, demonstrations and interactive discussions. As a result, children experience improvements in cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects through a deeper understanding of Bible teachings and their application in everyday life. They demonstrate the ability to memorize, analyze, and apply Christian values. In conclusion, this program succeeded in strengthening Christian religious education while improving children's intellectual abilities in accordance with the principles of Bloom's Taxonomy, creating a strong foundation for sustainable spiritual and intellectual growth at GKI Eden Anggaduber.

Keywords: Christian Religious Education, Sunday School Children, Intellectuals, Bloom's Taxonomy, GKI Eden Anggaduber East Biak

INTRODUCTION

Children's Christian religious education is an important aspect in forming children's character and personality. Through Christian Religious Education, children are taught about moral and spiritual values that are essential for their development as complete human beings [1]. Apart from that, Christian religious education also helps children understand the world around them better and fosters a sense of love for others.

By teaching the principles of Christian life, moral values such as love, forgiveness, justice, and brotherhood are instilled in children, promoting inclusive attitudes, tolerance, and respect for religious differences) [2]. Through Christian Education, children are given a foundation of Christian values that guide their attitudes and socio-psychological development, helping them grow in knowledge of behavior that aligns with these values [3].

However, in reality, children's Christian religious education is often faced with various challenges. One of the main challenges is the lack of children's interest in the content of Christian religious education

material. This is caused by various factors, such as teaching methods that are less interesting, learning material that is too abstract, and lack of involvement children in learning

Children's intellectual abilities are one of the main goals of education. Children's intellectual abilities can be measured using various tools, such as IQ tests. Understanding the cognitive profile of children with high intellectual abilities is critical, as it reveals patterns of strengths and weaknesses that can inform instructional programming and identify twice-exceptional children [4].

Bloom's Taxonomy categorizes intellectual abilities into six domains: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. This domain includes various cognitive processes important for learning and development [5]. Knowledge includes the ability to remember and understand information; comprehension includes the ability to explain and interpret information; application includes the ability to use information to solve problems and make decisions, analysis includes the ability to break down problems into smaller parts and analyze them systematically; synthesis includes the ability to combine information from various sources to produce something new; evaluation

includes the ability to assess information and make decisions based on those assessments.

Children's Christian religious education can play a crucial role in improving children's intellectual abilities. This can be done by applying creative and interesting teaching methods. Utilizing interesting activities such as spiritual games can increase children's understanding of religious teachings and morality. Apart from that, Christian religious lesson material can also be packaged in a way that is easier for children to understand, such as using stories, songs and pictures [6].

GKI Eden Anggaduber Biak Timur is one of the churches in Papua that has Christian teaching for Sunday school children. The main objective of community service activities by the team of lecturers and education staff at the STAKPN Sentani Christian Religious Education Department is to strengthen the Christian religious education of children at GKI Eden Anggaduber, East Biak. Because, this church is already known as one of the churches in Papua which is committed to teaching Sunday school children. Through this program, it is hoped that children can gain deeper and structured religious knowledge in accordance with the principles of Christian education.

This program is designed to improve children's intellectual abilities. By using Bloom's taxonomy, teachers can create teaching methods that are more effective and appropriate to children's cognitive development, so that they not only receive information passively but are also able to understand and apply it in everyday life. Through this method, it is hoped that children can learn in a more fun and effective way, so that they can remember and understand the material better.

Apart from that, this community service activity also aims to establish close collaboration between lecturers, education staff and the local community. Through this collaboration, teaching programs can be adapted to local needs and context, so that the results achieved are more relevant and have a positive impact on the intellectual and spiritual

development of children at GKI Eden Anggaduber, East Biak.

METHOD

Implementation of GKI Eden Anggaduber East Biak Community Service activities. This activity was carried out using several stages of methods, namely lecture and demonstration methods. The lecture method is used to convey the essence and principles of Christian Religious Education. The next stage is for the PkM team to challenge the material. At the end of the activity the team carried out an evaluation using a questionnaire to determine their level of understanding or response to the material that had been distributed to Sunday school children.

PkM activities will take place on May 3 2024 at 09.00-15.00 WIT. The participants consisted of 30 Christian Religious Education teachers who served at GKI Eden Anggaduber, East Biak. PkM activities are based on programs directed by the STAKPN Sentani institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presentation of material in PkM activities is divided into three sessions, including:

Strengthening Children's Christian Religious Education

Strengthening children's Christian religious education involves a multifaceted approach that integrates teaching strategies, family involvement, and community support to foster a deep understanding of and commitment to Christian values. This comprehensive approach is critical in addressing children's spiritual needs and ensuring their growth in faith amidst modern challenges. The following sections explore key strategies and considerations for improving Christian religious education for children.

Christian religious education teachers can help Sunday school children overcome spiritual crises by using interactive teaching, empathetic relationships, and encouraging reflection and application of Christian values in daily life [7]. Christian religious education teachers must also be able to deal with

children's questions and doubts wisely, and develop a deep understanding of children's spiritual and developmental needs (Salome Salome & Lisna Novalia, 2023). Early childhood is a critical phase for instilling knowledge about God and Christian values. Creating an environment that encourages spiritual growth through age-appropriate methods and engaging activities is essential. This includes integrating a supportive community to build a strong foundation for children's understanding of God [8] .

Churches play an important role in providing Christian education to children. It is important for churches to focus on children's spiritual needs and offer various ways to introduce Christian teachings. This ensures that children, as the future of the church, are committed to living according to Christian principles from an early age [9] . Christian religious education at the GKI Eden Anggaduber Sunday School focuses on introducing basic Christian values such as love, forgiveness and obedience to God, which are the foundation of children's faith from an early age. To attract children's interest, teaching uses interactive methods such as games, Bible stories told through visual media, and small dramas, which help children understand God's word in a fun way.



Figure 1. PAK Department Lecturer, STAKPN Sentani while explaining Christian Religious Education material to GKI Eden Anggaduber children

Through education at Sunday School, children are taught to build Christian characters such as honesty, sincerity, and

respect for others, which helps them live their daily lives with integrity. Sunday School is also a means of strengthening the sense of togetherness among children as part of a church community, with joint activities such as group worship and social service that develop a spirit of brotherhood. Strengthening spiritual education is not only carried out in the church, but also involves the active role of parents at home. Parents are expected to continue to support and guide their children in the practice of faith in everyday life.

The lecturers ensure they have a good understanding of the Bible, appropriate teaching techniques, and the ability to guide children in the faith. In the digital era, strengthening Christian education also utilizes media such as videos and spiritual songs to attract children's attention, and help them memorize Bible verses and understand Christian stories. Children are encouraged to practice their faith through concrete actions, such as sharing with less fortunate friends, showing love in their environment, and being active in church services.

The main focus of this education is to form a strong foundation of faith from an early age so that children have a good understanding of the Lord Jesus Christ and can develop a personal relationship with Him. Children are taught the importance of prayer and worship as part of everyday life. They are taught how to pray privately, attend worship services devoutly, and understand the meaning of worship in church. This strengthening helps children become individuals who are strong in their faith and ready to face life's challenges with a solid Christian foundation. The Christian religious education provided also emphasizes the formation of children's character based on Bible teachings. Children are taught values such as honesty, discipline, sacrifice and love for others, which are expected to form the basis of their future behavior.

Children's Intellectual Abilities GKI Eden Anggaduber

The intellectual strengthening of Sunday school children involves a

multifaceted approach that integrates a variety of educational strategies to enhance their cognitive, emotional, and spiritual development. This process is critical in nurturing children to think critically, empathize with others, and maintain a strong spiritual foundation. The intellectual ability of children at GKI Eden Anggaduber is an important aspect in their development, apart from strengthening their faith and character. This intellectual ability is developed through creative and integrative religious education, which pays attention to various dimensions of children's development.

The development of children's intellectual abilities begins with Bible teaching delivered in the form of stories. Bible stories help children develop listening skills and understand important messages. They are invited to process information, recognize the characters of Bible figures, and understand the values contained in each story [10]. The narrative structure of Bible stories helps children understand complex concepts and moral values, encouraging cognitive and emotional development. This is in line with the idea that early childhood is a critical period for cognitive development, where experiences significantly shape intellectual capacity [11]. Utilizing interactive stories, animated cartoons, and educational games can effectively communicate Biblical messages to preschool children, holding their attention and positively influencing their behavior [12].

Bible stories are a powerful tool in Christian education, especially in a postmodern context. It helps in forming identity and strengthening community by integrating personal narrative with Christian faith. Teachers can use storytelling to engage children on a spiritual journey, nurturing their faith through relevant and transformative stories. Storytelling can be adapted to different cultural contexts, making it an inclusive and effective method for teaching children about faith [13].

In addition, to improve critical thinking skills, children are given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss after class. Through this session, they can practice analytical thinking

skills, explore more deeply about Christian teachings, and relate them to everyday life. These discussions also help them develop good argumentation skills. Training children in specific thinking roles (task setter, strategist, monitor, and challenger) through small group discussions significantly improves their critical thinking, retention, and problem-solving abilities [14]. Using the question-and-answer method in early childhood education can develop language, speaking skills and social-emotional learning. This method encourages two-way communication, making learning more interesting and effective [15].



Figure 2. PAK Department Lecturer, STAKPN Sentani while explaining Christian Religious Education material to improve the intellectual abilities of GKI Eden Anggaduber children

Discussion and questions and answers are one of the effective methods of religious education implemented at GKI Eden Anggaduber. Through these sessions, children are given space to ask questions after each lesson. This not only increases their understanding of Christian teachings, but also helps train critical and analytical thinking skills. Children are invited to think more deeply about the religious concepts they learn, such as love, forgiveness, and faith, and how these values are relevant in their daily lives.

The discussion process allows children to explore different points of view about Christian teachings. In discussions, they are given the opportunity to express their own thoughts and listen to the views of others. This enriches their insight, and encourages intellectual and spiritual development. Through these interactions, children learn how to construct good arguments, support their

opinions with facts or logical insights, and respect differences of opinion with their peers.

Argumentation skills that develop through discussion and question and answer are also useful in building self-confidence. Children are taught not only to receive information passively, but also to actively seek answers and solutions to questions or problems they encounter. Thus, this activity plays an important role in forming a critical and independent mindset, which is very important in their intellectual development.

Bloom's Taxonomy Domains

Bloom's main taxonomic theory, known as Bloom's Taxonomy, was developed by Benjamin Bloom in 1956 and later revised in 2001. The taxonomy is divided into three domains:

1. Cognitive Domain: This domain focuses on mental skills and knowledge acquisition. It includes six levels, from low-level to high-level thinking:
 - Remembering: Remembering basic facts and concepts.
 - Comprehension: Explain an idea or concept.
 - Apply: Use information in new situations.
 - Analyze: Draw connections between ideas.
 - Evaluating: Justifying a decision or action.
 - Create: Produce new or original work.
2. Affective Domain: This domain discusses emotional aspects and attitudes. It includes five levels:
 - Receiving: Awareness and willingness to hear.
 - Respond: Active participation and engagement.
 - Valuing: The value or worth given to an idea or behavior.
 - Organizing: Integrating values into a coherent system.
 - Characterize: Acts consistently with values.
3. Psychomotor Domain: This domain involves physical skills and the use of motor skills. It includes levels such as:
 - Perception: Using sensory cues to guide motor activity.
 - Set: Readiness to act.

Guided Response: Early stages of learning complex skills.

Mechanism: Intermediate stage of learning a skill.

Complex Overt Response: Skilled performance of a motor action.

Adaptation: Modifying skills to suit new situations.

Origination: Creating a new movement pattern.

The revised version of Bloom's Taxonomy, known as revised Bloom's Taxonomy, updates the cognitive domain to include more dynamic verbs and emphasizes the importance of creating and evaluating in the learning process [16].



Figure 3. The PkM team takes a photo with GKI child Eden Anggaduber

In the context of Sunday School children at GKI Eden Anggaduber, the application of Bloom's Taxonomy can be used to design teaching programs that include the development of their intellectual, emotional and physical skills. The following is a description of how each domain of Bloom's Taxonomy is applied to Sunday School children at GKI Eden Anggaduber:

1. Cognitive Domain

Focus on developing thinking abilities and religious knowledge. The levels in this domain can be applied as follows:

- a. Knowledge (*Knowledge*): Children memorize Bible verses, prayers, and names of Bible characters and stories. This builds a foundation of basic knowledge.

- b. Understanding (*Comprehension*): They are asked to explain the meaning of Bible stories, understand concepts such as God's love and forgiveness.
 - c. Implementation (*Application*): Children are invited to apply Bible lessons in everyday life, such as sharing, being kind, and praying.
 - d. Analysis (*Analysis*): At this level, they learn to break down Bible stories to understand the motivations and character of the characters, and compare them to real life.
 - e. Synthesis (*Synthesis*): Children can be invited to compose new stories or create plays based on Bible teachings, showing creative understanding.
 - f. Evaluation (*Evaluation*): They are taught to evaluate the actions of Biblical figures and make moral decisions in accordance with Christian teachings.
2. Affective Domain
- This domain focuses on children's emotional and spiritual development, particularly how they respond to religious teachings. The levels of application include:
- a. Acceptance (*Receiving*): Children are invited to open their hearts and ears to the word of God, by listening to the teaching with full attention.
 - b. Response (*Responding*): They are actively involved in Sunday School activities, such as singing, praying, and participating in discussions.
 - c. Evaluation (*Valuing*): Children begin to value values such as love, truth, and forgiveness, and try to apply them in relationships with family and friends.
 - d. Organization (*Organization*): Christian values are starting to become organized in their lives, as can be seen from their consistent attitude in doing good and practicing God's teachings.
 - e. Characterization (*Characterization*): Christian values become part of their character, for example showing sincere love in everyday actions.
3. Psychomotor Domain

This domain involves physical skills that are often developed through practical activities in Sunday School. In the context of GKI Eden Anggaduber children, this can be implemented through:

- a. Perception (*Perception*): Children learn to recognize religious symbols, such as crosses, Bibles, and other elements of worship.
- b. Readiness (*Set*): They are ready to participate in physical activities such as movement in songs, praying together, or creative activities such as drawing Bible scenes.
- c. Guided Action (*Guided Response*): Under the guidance of the teacher, children carry out activities such as making Bible-themed crafts or acting out stories in spiritual dramas.
- d. Coordinated Action (*Mechanism*): With practice, children can perform tasks such as memorizing and reciting prayers or Bible verses automatically.
- e. Complex Actions (*Complex Overt Response*): They can lead prayers in front of friends or actively participate in drama with practiced skills.
- f. Adaptation (*Adaptation*): Children learn to adapt worship activities to new situations, such as praying at home or worshipping in another place.
- g. Creation (*Origination*): They can develop new activities, such as creating songs or spiritual games based on their Bible knowledge.

The application of Bloom's Taxonomy helps children at GKI Eden Anggaduber not only to understand religious teachings intellectually, but also to instill Christian values in daily life and develop practical skills relevant to worship activities.

CONCLUSION

Community Service Activities (PkM) carried out by lecturers and employees of the Christian Religious Education department at GKI Eden Anggaduber, East Biak, focus on strengthening Christian religious education for Sunday School children. This program aims to

improve children's intellectual abilities based on Bloom's Taxonomy, covering cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. With interactive methods such as Bible stories, discussions, and the use of visual media, children are invited to understand Christian values, such as love, forgiveness, and obedience, which can be applied in everyday life. This approach also strengthens children's faith foundations from an early age, shaping their character based on Bible teachings.

In addition, a holistic approach to developing physical skills through creative activities such as drama and Bible-themed crafts enriches their learning experience, ensuring that they can put their faith into practical practice. Implementation of Bloom's Taxonomy helps children understand religious teachings comprehensively, fosters Christian values, and encourages the development of intellectual skills and character.

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