

Utilizing Storytelling to Instill Positive Values in Children in Aek Muara Pinang Village

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the use of storytelling methods in instilling good values in children in Aek Muara Pinang Village. This activity was carried out by KPPM students of the Religious Extension Education Study Program through the formation of child foster groups who routinely attend spiritual service sessions. One of the materials used in storytelling is the Bible story of David and Goliath. This study uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of participant observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques are carried out by means of data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of the study showed that the storytelling method proved effective in building children's understanding of good values such as loving each other, helping each other, and obedience to parents. The children showed high enthusiasm for the stories told, and consistently began to show behavioral changes in everyday life. This study suggests that the storytelling method be applied more widely as a tool for children's spiritual education in Christian communities, especially in areas with limited access to formal character education.

Keywords

Storytelling, values of kindness, children, spiritual education

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1. INTRODUCTION

Spiritual education for children is an important foundation in the formation of character, morals, and spirituality from an early age. The formation of early childhood character is the main foundation in the education and development of individuals. In this golden age, moral and spiritual values can be instilled effectively, but the challenges of the modern era such as technological advances and moral degradation are serious threats (Tea and Rangga, 2025). Understanding children's spirituality is important in designing spiritual service programs. James Fowler (1981) in his theory of "Stages of Faith" states that children are at an imaginative and intuitive stage in understanding faith. They are not yet able to grasp complex doctrines, but are very responsive to symbols, stories, and emotional experiences.

The values of goodness in Christian teachings come from the word of God contained in the Bible and the example of the life of Jesus Christ as the center of Christian faith. Some of the main values of goodness that must be instilled in children from an early age include, 1) Love (1 Corinthians 13:4–7) which emphasizes the importance of loving others selflessly, 2) Obedience (Ephesians 6:1–3): children are taught to obey their parents and authorities, 3) Courage (2 Timothy 1:7): children do not need to be afraid to face challenges, because God gives them strength, 4) Honesty (Proverbs 12:22): honesty is a reflection of spiritual integrity. In the context of Christian society, values such as love, honesty, obedience, and social concern are not only instilled through formal teaching in church or Sunday school, but also through informal approaches that are contextual and touch the emotional aspects of children. According to Johnson (2002), a contextual approach makes it easier for students to understand the meaning of learning because they can relate it to personal experiences.

One approach that has proven effective in children's spiritual development is the storytelling method. Storytelling is not just a means of entertainment, but a powerful educational tool. In the process of children's learning, stories play a major role in shaping their way of thinking, instilling moral messages, and stimulating their imagination and emotions. Children tend to remember and understand values more easily through stories than through conceptual explanations. If the story is based on a Bible story, such as the story of David and Goliath, then the impact is not only on the moral aspect, but also strengthens faith and belief in God.

The storytelling method is a pedagogical approach that has been used since ancient times in conveying values, norms, and moral teachings indirectly but effectively. In the world of children's education, especially spiritual education, storytelling is an effective medium because it is narrative, imaginative, and touches the affective aspects of children. According to Miller & Pennycuff in Gultom's research (2025), storytelling helps students process information in a more meaningful and contextual way. Stories can create a bridge between abstract concepts and children's real-life experiences. Especially in a religious context, Bible stories are an important tool in conveying divine truth in a language that children understand. In the practice of spiritual service, stories from the Bible such as the story of David and Goliath, Joseph, Moses, or Jesus are very rich in moral and spiritual lessons. Lickona in Basith's research (2022) emphasized that values are not sufficiently taught explicitly, but must be instilled through emotional experiences, and storytelling is an effective means of achieving this.

Storytelling in the context of children's spiritual ministry not only teaches the content of the story, but also links moral messages to the reality of children's daily lives. This approach is known as a contextual approach, as learning is delivered by connecting the material to the child's environment, culture, and experiences. Through Bible stories, these values are not only explained, but also visualized in characters and events that make it easier for children to remember and emulate.

The instillation of good values through creative spiritual services can be done to children in Aek Muara Pinang Village. As in the observations made by researchers during community service activities, it shows that the character of children in Aek Muara Pinang Village, Sibolga City needs to be formed into foster groups in order to create the instillation of good values in a complex manner. Research on the application of the storytelling method was conducted in Aek Muara Pinang Village, Sibolga City with the aim of determining the extent of the relevance of the storytelling method. Based on the background above, this study is very important to determine the application of the storytelling method in children's spiritual services, the values of goodness instilled through Bible stories in storytelling activities, and the effectiveness of storytelling in shaping children's understanding and behavior towards good values in Aek Muara Pinang Village.

2. METHODOLOGY

The type of research uses a qualitative method with a storytelling approach that aims to describe the extent to which the storytelling method can instill good values in children through data obtained directly from field activities. This approach allows researchers to observe changes in children's understanding, attitudes, and behavior systematically but still in accordance with the social context that occurs. The storytelling method is used as one of the spiritual service strategies that is not only communicative, but also educational, where moral messages and spiritual values are instilled through Bible stories such as the story of David and Goliath. This research was conducted in Aek Muara Pinang Village with data collection techniques in the form of participatory observation, interviews and documentation studies. The purposive sampling technique was used in determining the research informants (Sugiyono 2013). In this study, the informants were 17 children who were members of the spiritual service foster group formed by KPPM students. After the data was collected, data analysis was carried out. The data analysis technique was carried out by data reduction, as in this stage it will focus on important categories from the research results and then themes and patterns. Data presentation is done by making graphs, matrices and charts in addition to narrative text. And conclusions are drawn to formulate research findings, such as temporary conclusions or general conclusions or conclusions.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

3.1.1. Storytelling Implementation and Children's Responses

Observations conducted by researchers explain that in carrying out the meeting, it was opened with a friendly greeting, praise, and prayer. After that, the counseling students told stories interactively. The story was delivered not only with verbal narration, but also with facial expressions, body movements, and changes in voice intonation to attract the children's

attention. When telling the story of David and Goliath, the children showed a positive response. They seemed enthusiastic and involved, even before the session ended, some children started asking who would win and commented on David's courage.

Participatory observation conducted by researchers in the storytelling method in the next step, as researchers asked light questions, such as; In your opinion, why did David win? If you were in David's position, would you be brave or afraid? What can we learn from the story? The children's responses varied, but most were able to capture the main message of the story such as; because David believed in God!, "David was small, but he was brave because of God!", "if we believe in God, we can also be brave." Some children even began to relate the story to their own lives, such as their desire to help their younger sibling so that God would be happy, and namely not being afraid of their angry friend. This was done by the researcher with the aim of concluding from several opinions obtained from the children's answers when the storytelling was running.

Based on the results of the observation, it showed that storytelling was not only effective in attracting attention, but also in transferring moral and spiritual values into children's daily lives. The results of the interviews conducted directly at the end of the session with open interview techniques were conveyed to the children in a relaxed atmosphere. This was done so that the atmosphere remained conducive and the children did not feel interrogated with questions that made them uncomfortable. The children's responses were described by the researcher in positive and negative forms. In this section, author is presented and explained the results of research and at the same time is given the comprehensive discussion. The result can be presented in form of figures, graph, table, etc.

Table 1. Children's responses to questions about the storytelling content

Question	Number of Children's Responses		Total
	Positive	Negative	
What did you learn from Daud story?	14	3	17
Do you want to help a friend after hearing this story?	12	5	17
Do you believe in God like Daud?	16	1	17
Who is your favorite character in the story?	17	0	17

3.1.2. Effectiveness of Storytelling on Children

A children's spiritual service activity carried out by KPPM students of the Christian Counselor Education Study Program in Aek Muara Pinang Village. This activity was carried out as a form of community service in the field of children's spiritual development. Storytelling, as one method of retelling Bible stories to convey good values. The stories used include the story of David and Goliath which was chosen because it has a strong message about faith, courage, and obedience to God. This activity is carried out routinely every Saturday during the KPPM period, with the number of children attending varying from 10 to 17 people in each session. The children come from around the Aek Muara Pinang Village area and participate in the activity voluntarily.

The results of observations on participation carried out by researchers obtained several findings that provide an overview and relevance to the storytelling practices practiced in the activity, namely: (1) Full Attention When the Story is Delivered. Children generally show full attention during the session. They rarely look bored or play alone. This shows that storytelling is very effective in maintaining children's focus; (2) Positive Emotional Response. When the story reaches its climax (for example when David throws a stone at Goliath), children react emotionally: clapping, shouting "yay!", or laughing. This is a sign that they are emotionally involved in the narrative; (3) Better Social Interaction After the Session. After the session, children showed more cooperative behavior, such as sharing food, holding hands when going home, or helping younger friends. This shows the influence of values that are beginning to be reflected in actions.

Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted with children who are members of the coaching group, it is explained that the storytelling method gives them a new experience. As with this method, they train their abilities and courage in giving an opinion. In addition, other informants also explained that by being involved in activities or implementing the storytelling method, they became more familiar with the characters in the Bible. Then from the characters they know, according to Piaget (1952), children aged 7-11 years are at the concrete operational stage, meaning they think logically about real and concrete things. This is in line with storytelling that involves them. Therefore, stories that are real and relevant will be more effective than stories that are too rigid or theoretical. Storytelling fits this stage of development because the results of observations or observations show that children internalize moral values concretely through the narratives of characters they admire, such as David who dared to face Goliath because of his faith in God.

This finding is also reflected in the results of Sari's research (2020), as children's character education through folklore found that children who routinely listen to moral stories show an increase in empathy and cooperation. This is what is seen in children who follow the storytelling method. However, this study focuses more on spiritual characteristics in Christian teachings. The characteristics of children from the results of the interviews conducted are more instilling spiritual values such as love for each other, obedience to Jesus Christ and also the commands of their parents, courage in all their activities, and honesty in words and deeds.

3.2. Discussion

The implementation of the storytelling method in children's spiritual development activities in Aek Muara Pinang Village shows that this approach is very effective in creating a fun and meaningful learning atmosphere. This study illustrates concretely how stories, especially Bible stories such as David and Goliath, can be a means to instill moral and spiritual values contextually according to the stages of child development. The results of the study explained that the meeting when doing storytelling began with a friendly greeting, praise, and prayer, which created a positive emotional atmosphere and made children feel accepted and appreciated. This approach is important to build children's openness to the messages conveyed during the storytelling session. Interactive storytelling, by combining facial expressions, body movements, and voice intonation, has proven effective in attracting attention and keeping children focused throughout the session. This is in line with the characteristics of children aged

7-11 years according to Piaget, who tend to absorb information through things that are real, concrete, and visually and emotionally attractive.

In relation to the children's response to the story of David and Goliath, it shows high emotional involvement. They are not only enthusiastic about following the story, but also respond with questions and comments that indicate a process of thinking and reflection. The light questions asked by the researcher after the story function as an exploration tool to determine the extent of the children's understanding of the moral message contained. Children's answers such as "because David believes in God" or "if we believe in God, we can also be brave" reflect an understanding of the spiritual message and courage. Therefore, it can be concluded that children are comfortable with the storytelling method applied to them.

One of the important findings in the study was the tendency of children to relate the contents of the story to their own life experiences. Some children expressed a desire to help their siblings, or felt unafraid to face angry friends, as a real form of absorbing the values told. This indicates that storytelling is not only a method of conveying stories, but also a means of internalizing values through self-identification with the characters in the story or is usually said to be a tool used to find out how far children recognize themselves or their characters.

After the storytelling activity, there was a change in the children's social interactions. They became individuals who were willing to help or cooperate, show empathy or deep concern for something, and help each other. This strengthens the finding that storytelling not only provides stimulation to the cognitive (thoughts) and emotional (attitudes/characteristics) aspects, but also has an impact on children's social behavior. This is in line with Sari's research (2020) which states that regular moral stories can increase children's empathy and cooperation.

The suitability of the storytelling method to the stages of child development is an important basis for why this approach is effective. Thinking logically about real and observable things such as the story of David and Goliath provides a true picture of courage, faith, and obedience that can be used as role models. Children learn not only through hearing, but also through emotional involvement and reflection on the actions of the characters in the story. In the context of spiritual activities, storytelling has succeeded in becoming an effective medium for shaping children's character according to Christian teachings. Values such as love, courage, obedience to God, and honesty are the core of the stories told and are proven to be reflected in children's thoughts and behavior. Strengthening of these spiritual values was also obtained from open interviews conducted by researchers, which showed that children began to have the courage to express their opinions and get to know more about Bible characters.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the storytelling method in children's spiritual services implemented by KPPM students in Aek Muara Pinang Village is a very effective approach in conveying moral and spiritual values in a fun, contextual, and age-appropriate manner. Bible stories such as David and Goliath have been proven to be able to attract children's full attention, arouse positive emotions, and encourage active involvement. Children not only understand the core of the story cognitively, but also begin to internalize values such as courage, faith in God, love, honesty, and obedience, and begin to connect the story to their own life experiences.

This method also has an effect on increasing children's social interactions after activities, such as cooperation, empathy, and concern between friends. Children become more open in expressing opinions and showing understanding of the spiritual messages conveyed. In accordance with Piaget's cognitive development theory, storytelling is effective because it presents information in a concrete and emotional form that is easily understood by children aged 7-11 years. In this context, storytelling is not only a means of conveying stories, but also as a means of character formation and strengthening children's spirituality according to Christian teachings.

Thus, storytelling can continue to be the main method in children's spiritual development because it has a real influence on children's thoughts, attitudes, and behavior in everyday life. This storytelling method is expected to be the direction of development in character development and spiritual values in children. However, the storytelling method does not rule out the possibility of being applied to other ages previously explained by Piaget. It's just that the context of the story conveyed is more and more real with life and the goals are more specific and focused. The storytelling method is expected to be the basis for the formation of attitudes and spiritual values in Aek Muara Pinang Village as a whole by considering the explanation of this study.

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