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The Role of Catholic Religion Teachers in Faith Character Education of Grade VII Students through Audiovisual Catechesis at SMPS Mimbar Budhi Manufui

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Abstract

Catholic Religion Teachers are members of the laity who participate in the prophetic mission of Jesus Christ within society. In the context of formal education, Catholic Religion Teachers play a strategic role in shaping and developing students' faith character. This responsibility is not limited to the transmission of religious knowledge but also includes the formation of students' faith, moral values, and Christian attitudes within the school environment. Faith character education is a crucial aspect of the educational process because it guides students to cultivate positive life habits such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, love, and concern for others. Students who possess strong faith character demonstrate it through their behavior, morality, mentality, and life attitudes that are in harmony with Christian values. Therefore, faith character education needs to be implemented in an integrated manner and in line with Catholic Religious Education in schools. The consistent internalization of faith character values is expected to form a generation of young people who are faithful, morally upright, and well-charactered, and who are able to live out Gospel values in their daily lives.

Keywords: Role of Catholic Religion Teachers, Faith Character Education, Students.

Introduction

In contemporary Indonesian society, various forms of social deviation that disregard ethics, morals, and human character are increasingly evident. Numerous issues, ranging from social problems to crises of personal identity, often culminate in conflicts and uncontrolled confrontations. This situation reflects the weakening of moral values in social life. One of the contributing factors is the declining role of parents in educating children within the family, the strong influence of social environments, and the lack of attention to moral education and character

formation in schools.

Observations conducted by the researcher at SMPS Mimbar Budhi Manufui indicate that the cultivation of faith character values at the school has not yet been optimally implemented. This condition is reflected in the presence of students who show a lack of responsibility, low discipline, dishonest behavior, and minimal involvement in spiritual activities. This reality confirms that faith character education has not yet become an integral part of the learning process and school life.

Based on interviews conducted with a Catholic Religion Teacher identified by the initials Y.T.L., it was emphasized that the role of Catholic Religion Teachers in schools is crucial as role models for students. Catholic Religion Teachers not only deliver academic content but also guide students to read and reflect on Sacred Scripture and to emulate the attitudes of Jesus Christ in their daily lives. Attitudes such as politeness, honesty, responsibility, and love for others—including those who act unfairly or engage in bullying—must continually be instilled through consistent guidance. Moreover, Catholic Religion Teachers are called to act as shepherds who provide spiritual advice and guidance to students without discrimination.

As proclaimers of faith, Catholic Religion Teachers are expected to understand their missionary vocation to proclaim Jesus Christ as the center and foundation of Christian life, both within the school environment and in society. The mission of the Church is closely related to the work of human salvation that flows from faith in Christ. Therefore, the proclamation of faith must be carried out not only through words but also through exemplary living and concrete actions that reflect Gospel values.

Faith character education is essentially a conscious and planned effort to shape students' moral sensitivity and responsibility in upholding Christian faith values. These values include good behavior, honesty, responsibility, mature personality development, strong mentality, and noble character in relationships with God and others.

Faith character values in relation to God are reflected in a religious attitude—namely, patterns of thought, speech, and action that are consistently based on faith teachings and divine values. In relation to oneself, faith character values are manifested through honesty, responsibility, discipline, hard work, healthy living, self-confidence, independence, and the ability to think logically, critically, creatively, and innovatively. In relationships with others, faith character values are expressed through awareness of rights and obligations, obedience to social norms, respect for others, politeness, and democratic attitudes. Meanwhile, in relation to the environment, faith character values are realized through care for environmental preservation, efforts to prevent

environmental damage, and social sensitivity in helping those in need.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the role of Catholic Religion Teachers in students' faith character education. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore meanings, processes, and dynamics that occur in the field through direct observation and interaction with research subjects. Through this approach, the researcher sought to develop a theoretical understanding based on repeated observations and empirical experiences.

The type of research used was descriptive qualitative research, focusing on systematically describing and explaining the role of Catholic Religion Teachers in shaping students' faith character. The data obtained were analyzed to identify various issues related to students' morality, behavior, personality, and mental attitudes. Subsequently, the analysis was used to identify relevant and contextual efforts to enhance students' faith character in the school setting.

The research was conducted over approximately three months, from March to May 2024. The study took place at SMPS Katolik Mimbar Budhi Manufui, located in Upfaon Village, South Biboki District, North Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. This location was selected because it provided a relevant context for examining the role of Catholic Religion Teachers in faith character education for Grade VIII students through audiovisual catechesis.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants through interviews, while secondary data were collected from supporting sources such as notes, school documents, and archives related to educational and faith formation activities.

Data collection techniques included interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain in-depth information regarding perspectives, experiences, and roles of Catholic Religion Teachers. Observations were carried out to directly examine learning practices and faith character formation in the school environment. Documentation was used to complement interview and observation data.

The main research instrument was the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, field notes, and audiovisual tools for documentation. Data analysis involved data reduction, data presentation, and data verification. Data validity was ensured through triangulation by comparing data from different sources and techniques.

Result and Discussion

SMPS Katolik Mimbar Budhi Manufui is located in Upfaon Village, South Biboki District, North Central Timor Regency, East Nusa Tenggara Province. As a Catholic junior high school under a Catholic foundation, the institution plays an important role not only in academic development but also in the faith and character formation of students.

Catholic Religion Teachers hold a strategic role in school life, particularly in shaping students' faith character. Their role extends beyond classroom instruction to include the proclamation of the Gospel, spiritual accompaniment, and pastoral care. Through religious instruction, spiritual guidance, and exemplary conduct, Catholic Religion Teachers foster Christian values in students' lives.

Faith character education, although not taught as a separate subject, is integrated into Catholic Religious Education and school activities. Observations reveal ongoing challenges such as indiscipline, truancy, lack of respect, and limited parental support. Consequently, continuous guidance from teachers—especially Catholic Religion Teachers—is essential for character development.

School regulations support faith character formation by promoting discipline, cleanliness, respectful communication, and courteous behavior. These rules help cultivate habits of responsibility, discipline, and good character among students.

Conclusion

Being a Catholic Religion Teacher is a noble vocation, as teachers serve not only as educators but also as moral and faith role models. Catholic Religion Teachers play a vital role in guiding students toward holistic growth in faith character through continuous formation and lived example.

As shepherds, Catholic Religion Teachers lead students toward moral and spiritual maturity, helping them develop their potential and live according to Christian values. Through teaching, guidance, and example, Catholic Religion Teachers significantly contribute to the formation of students who live out the example of Jesus Christ in their daily lives.

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