

Children's Theology: Learning Media for Sunday School Children Using Book Creator in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research wants to develop learning media for Sunday school children who seem conventional towards digital by using Book Creator. This development arose due to the need to keep up with the times, create child-friendly churches, and maintain the quality of teaching to Sunday school children. However, churches tend to be lacking in preparing the quality of Sunday school learning media. The author observes that these problems can be overcome by developing learning media that suit the needs of Sunday school children. By paying attention to the needs of Sunday school children inseparable from the principles of theology in it, book creators are very appropriate in assisting educators to prepare quality learning. The hypothesis proposed is the basis of children's theology on Sunday school teaching materials and developing book creator-based Sunday school children's learning media so that they can produce ready-to-use digital products. The results show that teaching materials tend to be good theologically, and teaching materials need to be developed into book creators, so that educators can improve competence and students can understand God's Word through the use of technology. In the development stage, product validation results based on material, media, and language experts showed an average of 87.6% with the category "very feasible". The methodology used is Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation (ADDIE) using qualitative and quantitative research in each specified stage.

Keywords: media development; sunday school learning book creator

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I. INTRODUCTION

The development of technology affects the times, thus leading today's generation to always update so as not to miss information. But some churches have not utilized technology, sometimes looking anti. In fact, the development of congregations, especially young people or children, can be hampered, because their world tends to be

technologically literate. It can be regarded as the gap between technology and the spiritual.

In preventing the gap between technology and spirituality, let us discuss the background starting from children having an important role in society, theological struggles with children, the purpose of teaching children according to the Bible, problems and solutions in service to

children, innovative programs as a form of supporting the world of children in ministry, and book creators as technology platforms in serving children. This can show that the church also cares about the child's world, so as to realize a child-friendly church.

The struggle of child theology is to understand the Lord Jesus' intent in viewing the identity of the child (Matthew 18:3-5). This verse evokes a romantic nuance between God and man, God's concern for children being the foundation and support of justification for children's ministry. It is known that the Bible is intended for adults. Then the story of the child in the Bible is addressed to adults.¹ It can be understood that God's love for children is the same love for adults.

One of the places of children's ministry is Sunday school. Its purpose is to teach children in Bible truth, and to serve growing children.² Sunday school is a place to develop according to age, and a mediator in conveying the knowledge of the truth of God's Word. Church leaders have an obligation to design and support development programs within the Sunday School division. Then Sunday school educators or teachers must be ready to receive training aimed at improving the

quality of education to Sunday school children.

Previous research conducted by K. Elise Leal in a journal entitled "*All Our Children May be Taught of God*": *Sunday Schools and the Roles of Childhood and Youth in Creating Evangelical Benevolence*" in December 2018 concluded that service to children is very important, children can be used in the mission of nurturing God's church. By caring for children, American *Sunday School Union* (ASSU) missionaries were able to establish more than 70,000 new Sunday schools in 1832, and in the span of no more than fifty years the movement spread from the rocky shores of Maine to the golden shores of California and taught thousands of children about how to live and toward salvation.³ Thus, churches that pay attention to Sunday school will experience growth in quantity and quality.

The solution is to recruit young people and students to deal with the Sunday school educator crisis.⁴ It seems that this solution solves the problem of educator crisis, but the church still has to think about meeting the welfare of educators and the needs of activities. From another perspective, the church has the opportunity to collaborate with students in the

¹ Tri Budiarto, *Knitting Children's Theology* (Yogyakarta: Andi Offset, 2022), 3.

² Michael J Anthony and The Christian Education Faculty of Biola University Talbot School of Theology, *Foundations of Ministry An Introduction to Christian Education for A New Generation* (Michigan: Foundations of Ministry by Baker Academic, 2012), 147.

³ K Elise Leal, "'All Our Children May Be Taught of God': Sunday Schools and the Roles of Childhood and Youth in Creating Evangelical Benevolence," *Church History* 87, no. 4 (December 2018): 1088–89, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0009640718002378>.

⁴ Tatiana S Komashinskaia and Grigori P Tcurkan, "About Education In Russian Sunday Schools," *Obraz. Nauka*, no. 10 (January 2016): 154, <https://doi.org/10.17853/1994-5639-2016-10-151-169>.

development of innovative Sunday school programs at an affordable cost for the church.

The way of education in Sunday school still uses many directions. This is inseparable from the quality of Sunday school teachers and the programs designed. The Church pays little attention and always says "the important thing is high commitment."⁵ This attitude has an impact on the quality of education to children. Given that children live in an all-digital era, one way to stimulate child development is to use digital learning media. Because for children listening to audio, visual, and interactive is a fun activity.

Innovative Sunday school programs that the church can develop include; development of Sunday school guidebooks into digital ebook format, *One type of digital ebook format is book creator*. This media aims to provide alternative learning media selection to Sunday school children. In Sunday school, learning media is an intermediary or tool used to convey messages to Sunday school children. The media used can be guidebooks, props, and stories from the Bible. So that it becomes an alternative solution in developing Sunday school guidebooks into interactive educational books based on *book creators*.

Book creator is a digital book creation platform supporting users to create

books easily and creatively. Book creator's vision is to empower learners of all ages and abilities to actively engage in the joy of learning.⁶

The advantages of *book creator* are that there are so many features that can be used such as book creator templates, import capabilities, design options, and systematic. Users can design stunning digital books in minutes or spend hours creating through multimedia. The work starts from blank pages, comic pages, and theme templates that are well planned and graphically striking.

Educators can decide whether students can read each other's books, edit books, and work collaboratively. Libraries can be published online for a limited audience as well as more widely discoverable, and downloaded for print. *Book creator* has features for drawing, typing, recording, importing, embedding, and more making the possibilities endless. *Book creator* works on devices with Safari, Chrome, or Edge browsers, including laptops, tablets, iPads, and Chromebooks. So that book creators *with rich features, and unlimited creative potential, book creators are highly recommended for all circles.*⁷

Previous research on the use of *book creators* by Sri Wulan Anggraeni, et al in the

⁶ Tools for Schools, "About Tools for Schools," <https://bookcreator.com/press/about-tools-for-schools/>, n.d.

⁷ Maggie knapp, "Book Creator Reference Database Review," *Schoollibraryjournal*, August 2022, <https://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/story/book-creator-reference-database-review>.

⁵ Netti Aritonang et al., "Suara Methodist Indonesia Parsemonanta (motto: for fellowship and formation), Church and Children," *Indonesian Methodist Church* (Medan, 2023), 15.

context of community service with the title "Interactive Teaching Materials for Elementary School Teachers" in 2022 brought benefits and increased knowledge in the use of technology in learning media. With 100% results in improving interactive teaching materials used and created by teachers during learning.⁸ When applied in the context of Sunday school, it is hoped that Sunday school educators can prepare education attractively so that God's intentions for children are conveyed in Galatians 1:15-16 with the meaning that children are God's strategy in achieving His overall goals and purposes for the world and all of His creation.⁹

II. METHODS

The research model used is the ADDIE research and development model (*Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation*) which is a model in which it represents the stages systematically (orderly) and systemically in use aimed at achieving the desired results. The main purpose of this development model is used to design and develop an effective and efficient product.¹⁰

III. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Children's Theology

⁸ Sri Wulan Anggraeni et al., "Interactive Teaching Materials for Elementary School Teachers," *UNIMED National Seminar on Community Service*, 2022, <http://digilib.unimed.ac.id/id/eprint/50385>.

⁹ Budiarjo, *Knitting Children's Theology*, 41.

¹⁰ B A Personal, *Design and Development of Competency-Based Training Programs ADDIE Model Implementation* (Kencana, 2016), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=m_PDDwAAQBAJ.

The discussion of child theology examines the Bible's view of children. In the Old Testament we find the child being a gift of God (Genesis [33:5), the son as the address for the preaching of God's word (Deuteronomy 6:4–9), the son being the inheritance of the LORD (Psalm 127:3), and in the New Testament the son heir of the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16). The broad outline of the topic is to know children from a biblical perspective and to support education for children to know God's word. With the aim of being able to find reasons why learning for children really needs to be developed, and why children really need to be taught better.

According to Budiarjo, theology is something that lives and continues to greet contemporary reality (*current*) and is relevant to his struggles, and is a pilgrimage that increasingly leads to God's purposes and purposes for the whole order.¹¹ Children's theology is an attempt to explain God's intentions for His will toward humans through children.

The Nature of the Child According to the Old Testament

Children are gifts of God, as written in Genesis 33:5. Children were gifts from God, the proper attitude reflected by Jacob to give education to his descendants. Sons meant hereditary status, with the gift of

¹¹ Budiarjo, *Knitting Children's Theology*, 3.

proving that it was a gift from God, and servants were the attitudes Jacob applied in explaining his position before God and man.

The Son as the address for the preaching of God's word, Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Children are God's gifts entrusted or entrusted to parents not only physically but also psychologically. In the implementation of all education it cannot be separated from the role of the family. Parents become the main educators in the family by using the time when at home sitting, standing, traveling. From this it is known that the task of educating is the main duty of parents, since parents are seen as representatives of God in daily life, then the role of parents as primary educators should not be replaced by others.¹²

The Son is the inheritance of the Lord, Psalm 127:3. The meaning of the word heirloom is a precious treasure and its nature is passed down from generation to generation, so children are seen by God. The context of inheritance in Psalm 127:3 is an inheritance from God to man, children are gifts from God, so they are God's inheritance. This inheritance cannot be equated with a gift but more than that, because man is essentially given breath by God and will return to him. So that children are given by God to be the successors of continuous offspring. children are God's

inheritance given for the passing on of the name of descendants who are also part of God's heritage. Although using the word gift, it is emphasized more as a deposit that must be cared for because in essence humans will return to God.

The Nature of the Child According to the New Testament

Heir to the Kingdom of God, Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:14; Luke 18:16. *παιδία* Neutral accusative nouns (nouns) common plural of *παιδίον* which means little child, and has the root of *παῖς* means that children are usually used for a group.¹³ Thus God gives a two-way example to us as readers, namely first the child as an example to obtain the kingdom of heaven sincerely. Second, God sets an example for adults to value children, treat children appropriately, be friendly to children, and teach adults how to be liked by children.

Children's theology is expected to bridge the discussion of God through different perspectives. Sometimes because often education and parenting to children are underestimated, as a result children's behavior tends to be impolite. By understanding children's theology, parents or educators can understand how important it is to pay attention to education and parenting to children.

¹² Ibelala Gea, "Theological Education in the Christian Family as a Foundation for Preventing Radicalism," *Voice of Wesley, j. Ilm. Music. And. Religion* 4, no. 2 (May 2021): 5, <https://doi.org/10.36972/jvow.v4i2.95>.

¹³ G Kittel, G Friedrich, and G W Bromiley, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume*, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1985), 681, https://books.google.co.id/books?id=ltZBUW_F9ogC.

The Relationship between Child Theology and Learning Media

If child theology is an attempt to know the will of Jesus through children. The Old and New Testaments make a lot of clear information about who children are on interesting topics such as children are gifts, preaching the word, heirlooms, and heirs to God's Kingdom. The explanation of all of this refers to one of the missions, namely service to children through the Sunday school program.

In Sunday school is attached the study of God's word to children. Learning requires media in delivering material. The development of technology supports learning media to be an opportunity for Christians to develop various forms of ministry, and theology must also intersect with technology, because technological developments make it easy to disseminate information, especially for education about theology. Therefore, the development of technology through learning media is expected to support children's theology and carry out the great commission delivered by the Lord Jesus Christ.¹⁴

Indonesian Methodist Church's View on Children

In the Indonesian methodist church environment considers the importance of education of children so that the idea of a child-friendly church was built. A child-

friendly church is one of the efforts to fulfill children's rights in the church.¹⁵

Children are the pearls of the family, worthy of loving care as a gift from God the Owner. Just as tree buds require maintenance and attention which just as tree buds require sufficient care and attention to grow properly, so children deserve enough attention, affection, happiness and security.¹⁶

The church has an important role to play in educating parenting in families. The Indonesian Methodist Church continues to improve itself in serving children, developments continue to be carried out starting from the regional level-district-local churches whose actions include: Sunday School Children's Jamboree in Region I in 2016, online Sunday School Children's Jamboree in 2021, GSM workshops at the district level, Sunday School Pelita books, some churches already have Sunday school buildings, but all of this is still not enough to be called a Child Friendly Church.¹⁷ So the Methodist Church invites and accepts the efforts made in actualizing a child-friendly church.

Learning Media

Media is a Communication Tool. Providing opportunities for students to express themselves using media can have an impact in improving communication and

¹⁴ Asaf Kharisma Putra Utama, Dedy Katarso, and Sari Saptorini, "Digital Media in Learners of the Young Christian Generation in the Industrial Era 4.0," *Magnum* 3, no. 2 (July 2022): 143, <https://doi.org/10.52220/magnum.v3i2.143>.

¹⁵ Aritonang et al., "Suara Methodist Indonesia Parsermonanta (Motto: For Fellowship And Formation), Church And Children," 14.

¹⁶ Aritonang et al., 12.

¹⁷ Aritonang et al., 16.

better quality of learning. In addition, learners who express themselves fluently tend to do more in school, and frankly those skills are fundamental to lifelong success.¹⁸

The availability of information in the form of printed text has a major impact on literacy and learning. Printing press technology led to text becoming the primary method for recording and communicating information. Today, however, new technologies are once again changing the essence of communication in transformative ways.¹⁹

Understanding Learning Media. Media is a plural form of medium that comes from Old Latin and means an intermediary in the throat or stopping place of sound, located between *tenuis* and *aspirates*.²⁰ Understanding media is growing with the times, media is an intermediary of communication or expression. The main purpose of the media is to convey information with its own unique language and sentences.²¹ Thus the media as a unique intermediary in the delivery of information.

Learning has a definition of learning information that aims to have knowledge, skills, and attitudes.²² Based on this

understanding, researchers define learning media as intermediaries used by educators to convey information or education to students by following the learning design developed in order to provide the best results.

Formal and non-formal educational institutions including churches tend to still prioritize writing in learning. In its development, writing and listening are not enough, so creative expression is needed in the delivery of learning. In education, learning preparation is needed, as well as in making videos, good script packaging and attractive *editing* quality are needed, and audio recording requires structured narration. This activity is very dependent on expression skills that must be trained in a structured manner.

Book Creator as a Learning Media

Book creator is a very simple and popular application for creating multimedia ebooks. For example, creating children's picture books, schoolwork, family history, cookbooks, textbooks, and more. *Book creator* is a simple way that can be used by young students and is free to use for professional publication.²³

With this application, you can create your own electronic book or combine it with student tasks into electronic book collaboration. Once done, it includes the option to share privately with parents and friends or publish in ePub format so that

¹⁸ Sam Glikman, *Creating Media for Learning: Student-Centered Projects Across the Curriculum* (2455 Teller Road, Thousand Oaks California 91320: Corwin, 2016), 2, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483395203>.

¹⁹ Glikman, 3.

²⁰ Merriam Webster, "Media," <https://www.Merriam-Webster.Com/Dictionary/> (<https://www.merriam-webster.com>, n.d.), <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/media>.

²¹ Glikman, *Creating Media for Learning*, 5.

²² A Januszewski et al., *Educational Technology: A Definition with Commentary* (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2008), 4, <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=rJafQgAACAAJ>.

²³ Glikman, *Creating Media for Learning*, 98.

everyone around the world can download and enjoy.²⁴

Sunday School Children's Learning Media Based on *Book Creator*

Analysis. Based on the survey results at GMI resort Tarutung district 10 region 1, it becomes a guideline and consideration in compiling Sunday school learning media. The analysis carried out includes an analysis of needs and characteristics.

In the needs analysis, it was found that the teaching materials used generally tend to be theologically good, each church has continuous teaching materials. Educators tend not to meet academic competence so that educators are less creative in teaching Sunday school children. Then in the use of conventional media such as props and charts so that they are not familiar with the use of *book creators*. So it requires the development of learning media to increase the creativity of educators in teaching.

Based on that there are characteristics of Sunday school children from each church. The average student is in elementary school. Located in a mountainous area with the theme of nature and cultural patterns. Of course, you already understand Indonesian, so you can understand reading and writing. In terms of material, you can use the Sunday school lamp book as a source of material content. The design aspect is adjusted to the visuals known by students such as nature and

cultural patterns. In terms of language, it is adjusted to the ability of children to understand, so that the material will be adjusted back to use Indonesian good and correct.

Design. In the development of Sunday school learning media, designing a design format is carried out. The cover contains a Sunday school theme that is tailored to the theme of teaching materials from each church book. While the content consists of images according to the material, methods, and explanations. The method in question can be in the form of stories, learning to sing, and play so that children can choose the method they like. The explanation section contains the content of the story, learning to sing, and playing.

The story has a plot in the form of a theme, introduction, content, and closing. The story content is filled with images, audio, and color writing that varies but does not contrast. Learn to sing contains links or videos related to the learning theme. Children learning singing and movement can promote quality learning. In play children are given options such as puzzles, guess the name of the character, guess the Bible verse, and even be trained to role-play the character.

Implementation. First Assessment of the use of teaching materials *Book Creator*. The quality is excellent and supports the study of God's Word in Sunday school. But it needs improvement in the originality of the

²⁴ Glikzman, 98.

images and videos listed. Furthermore, the team needs to improve the quality of learning media. The response and interest of students is very good, when telling stories students listen and listen, most favorite when collaborating students with educators, not only the material is understood but there is a good chemistry relationship between educators and students and vice versa.

Second, the desire to use book creator teaching materials. The desire exists to apply with frequent intensity to Sunday school. Training is a good idea, it takes the collaboration of the synod of the Indonesian Methodist Church Resort Tarutung District 10 Region I with IAKN Tarutung, to realize it is possible to start from a willing church.

Third, Assistance in the use of teaching materials. It really helps Sunday school children understand God's word. The interest of students increased and there was an initiative to ask questions from children.

Fourth, Advantages and disadvantages of teaching materials. Advantages, the cost is not too large, the media can be used repeatedly, is flexible, not complicated to use, fun learning methods such as playing, making learning media can be adjusted to the Sunday school lamp book. Disadvantages, if the internet connection is problematic media *book creator* cannot be used, supporting tools such as infocus and laptops are still expensive, the use of links is still doubtful in sharing works because of the rampant fraud cases.

The impression of teaching and learning is like in a luxury school, feeling happy when students understand learning. Learning media advice *Book Creator* Being able to attend Sunday school again intensively, an even more creative way of teaching.

Evaluation. After implementation, the researcher evaluates. From the aspect of design it needs to be developed from the images used, the colors are adjusted to attract the attention of children. From the material aspect, it is in accordance with the reference to the Sunday school children's lamp book. From the language aspect, it needs to be adapted to a language that is easy for children to understand because there are levels / classes in Sunday school, even developed in regional languages such as batak, karo, and angkola. In general, Sunday school educators are not familiar with *Book Creator* But once implemented, they welcomed and hoped for training in their respective churches.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research analysis, it can be concluded that: The teaching materials in Sunday school are good and meet the criteria theologically because GMI Resort Tarutung District 10 Region I already has a Sunday school guidebook. But the language in material books tends to be general. So that the material is improved through expert validation of material and

language. Furthermore, the material is developed into digital products using book creators and validated by media experts.

So far, the media used by Sunday schools is still conventional and not continuous. With the existence of learning media, book creators are very helpful in improving mastery of teaching materials. The results of the development of school children's learning media after being validated by material, media, and language experts get very decent results.

The response of Sunday school educators was very good to receive book creator-based learning media. Educators asked for training to design similar media.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusion, there are several things that need to be suggested as follows: For churches that already have material, it is recommended to use simpler and understandable language, even recommended to use regional languages.

Educators are advised to adapt to the times, so in learning it is recommended to use digital learning media more massively.

The church is advised to be responsive and facilitate Sunday school educators by opening up to technology and inviting experts in accordance with their fields in improving the quality of Sunday school educators.

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