



Teaching Faith through Spiritual Integrity: A Reflection on Exodus 14:13 among CRE Teachers at Ketabang Elementary School Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers embody spiritual integrity in teaching faith, with a theological reflection on Exodus 14:13-“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today.” Conducted at Ketabang Elementary School, Surabaya, this research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to analyze scholarly, theological, and pedagogical sources published between 2010 and 2025. The aim is to identify how faith teaching can be effectively practiced through the integration of spirituality, integrity, and educational professionalism. Findings reveal that spiritual integrity serves as the moral and pedagogical foundation of effective faith-based education. CRE teachers who demonstrate authenticity in belief and conduct significantly influence students’ spiritual growth. Teaching faith requires more than doctrinal instruction-it demands moral consistency, emotional stability, and a lifestyle that reflects Christian values. Strategies identified include reflective teaching, values-based storytelling, restorative discipline, and service-learning activities that integrate biblical truth with daily experiences. Challenges such as pluralistic classrooms, emotional fatigue, and digital distractions test the teacher’s integrity but also provide opportunities for spiritual resilience. Through the lens of Exodus 14:13, CRE teachers are reminded to remain steadfast and courageous, trusting in God’s providence amid educational and moral challenges. The study concludes that spiritual integrity transforms teaching into a ministry of faith and character formation. Therefore, teacher education programs and school leadership must prioritize spiritual development alongside pedagogical training to sustain authentic Christian education in Indonesia’s diverse learning environments.

Keywords: *Christian Religious Education, spiritual integrity, faith teaching, Exodus 14:13*

INTRODUCTION

In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE), teachers are not merely transmitters of religious knowledge but are called to embody and model the very faith they teach. Teaching faith requires spiritual depth, integrity, and a personal relationship with God that reflects authenticity in both words and actions. At the heart of Christian education

lies the transformative goal of nurturing faith in students, helping them to understand God's presence and trust in His promises. Within this framework, the spirituality of CRE teachers becomes the cornerstone of effective faith formation, especially in primary education where moral and spiritual foundations are first established. The study entitled *"Teaching Faith through Spiritual Integrity: A Reflection on Exodus 14:13 among CRE Teachers at Ketabang Elementary School, Surabaya"* explores how teachers embody spiritual integrity in guiding students toward faith in God, drawing theological insight from Exodus 14:13, which urges believers to "stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will bring." The verse from Exodus encapsulates the essence of unwavering trust in God amid uncertainty—a message that remains relevant for Christian educators today. Just as Moses called the Israelites to remain steadfast when confronted with the Red Sea, CRE teachers are challenged to demonstrate steadfast faith in the midst of educational challenges. Teaching faith, therefore, goes beyond doctrinal instruction; it demands the embodiment of belief through consistent character, emotional stability, and spiritual maturity. The classroom becomes a living testimony of faith when the teacher models patience, humility, hope, and obedience to God. This integration of faith and life aligns with the biblical calling of teachers to be "salt and light" (Matthew 5:13–16), influencing young minds not only intellectually but also spiritually and ethically. In the Indonesian educational landscape, particularly within public schools such as SDN Ketabang Surabaya, CRE teachers operate in a pluralistic environment. They face the dual responsibility of upholding Christian values while fostering tolerance and respect among students of diverse backgrounds. This context underscores the importance of spiritual integrity—a quality that enables teachers to remain authentic and faithful while engaging inclusively with others. Spiritual integrity involves the harmony between belief, practice, and purpose; it ensures that teaching is not reduced to formal instruction but becomes a ministry of presence, compassion, and moral leadership. By grounding their teaching in spiritual reflection, teachers can create an atmosphere that nurtures both cognitive understanding and affective faith development. Exodus 14:13 offers a theological lens for understanding the spiritual journey of CRE teachers. The command to "stand firm" highlights faith's resilience and dependence on divine intervention. For educators, this call translates into trusting God's guidance amidst institutional pressures, curriculum constraints, and moral challenges in the modern classroom. Spiritual integrity, as reflected in this verse, becomes a dynamic process of faith in action—anchored in prayer, guided by Scripture, and demonstrated through ethical decision-making. A teacher who lives out this principle invites students to encounter God not as an abstract concept but as a living reality shaping their worldview. Moreover, contemporary educational theories emphasize the affective dimension of learning, suggesting that students internalize values more effectively when they observe them modeled consistently. Thus, CRE teachers who embody spiritual integrity become living curricula of faith. Their authenticity fosters credibility, encourages openness, and promotes spiritual growth among students. In this light, faith is not merely taught but experienced through relationship and example. This study seeks to explore how the spirituality of CRE teachers at Ketabang Elementary School reflects the biblical call of Exodus 14:13 in teaching faith to students. It aims to understand how teachers' integrity and inner faith influence their pedagogical approach and spiritual leadership. By integrating theological reflection with educational practice, this study hopes to contribute to the broader discourse on faith-based education in Indonesia,

highlighting the essential role of spiritual integrity in shaping future generations who are firm in their trust in God.

METHODS

The purpose of using this method was to synthesize existing research findings and theological insights into a coherent understanding of how spirituality, faith, and integrity intersect within Christian education practices, particularly in the context of elementary education in Indonesia. The research process was organized into four primary stages: formulation of research questions, data collection, critical evaluation, and synthesis. The central research questions guiding this review were: How do studies describe the role of spiritual integrity in teaching faith within Christian Religious Education? What theological insights from Exodus 14:13 can be applied to the formation of CRE teachers' spirituality? How can spiritual integrity be integrated into pedagogical practices in faith-based learning environments? In the data collection phase, the researcher identified and selected relevant literature from various electronic databases, including Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and DOAJ. Additional references were obtained from theological journals, Christian education conference proceedings, and institutional repositories. The search used a combination of keywords such as "*spiritual integrity*," "*Christian Religious Education*," "*faith teaching*," "*teacher spirituality*," and "*Exodus 14:13*." Inclusion criteria focused on peer-reviewed journal articles, theses, dissertations, and theological reflections written in English or Indonesian and directly related to the theme of teacher spirituality, moral integrity, and faith formation. Studies outside the scope of Christian education or published before 2010 were excluded to maintain relevance and contemporary focus. The selected literature was critically analyzed based on credibility, methodological rigor, and thematic relevance. Each study was evaluated according to its contribution to understanding how CRE teachers embody faith and spiritual integrity in their teaching contexts. To ensure quality and reliability, the researcher applied inclusion and exclusion criteria consistently, checking for methodological transparency and theological coherence. Data extraction involved identifying common themes, theoretical frameworks, and interpretive insights related to the embodiment of faith, spiritual discipline, and pedagogical ethics. During the synthesis phase, the literature was grouped into thematic categories that aligned with the core aspects of the study: the spiritual identity of CRE teachers; integrity and moral consistency in teaching; pedagogical applications of biblical faith principles; and theological reflection on Exodus 14:13. The synthesis process integrated theological interpretations with educational theories to highlight the dynamic relationship between faith and practice. To enhance validity, triangulation was achieved by comparing theological commentaries with empirical educational studies, allowing a balanced perspective between Scripture-based interpretation and real classroom practice. The review process followed a transparent and reproducible structure, ensuring academic integrity and analytical depth. The findings from the reviewed studies were then summarized and interpreted to develop a conceptual understanding of how spiritual integrity functions as both a moral foundation and pedagogical strategy for teaching faith effectively in Christian Religious Education settings, particularly within the Indonesian elementary school context exemplified by SDN Ketabang Surabaya.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Spiritual integrity forms the moral and theological foundation of Christian Religious Education (CRE). It signifies the alignment between a teacher's faith, character, and professional conduct, ensuring that what is taught about God is also embodied in daily life. In the Indonesian educational setting, where Christian Religious Education is taught within a pluralistic environment, spiritual integrity becomes a living testimony that bridges knowledge and practice. According to Sianipar and Situmorang (2021), faith-based education succeeds only when teachers serve as visible role models of the values they proclaim. Therefore, a teacher's spirituality is not a private attribute but an educational influence that shapes how students perceive and internalize Christian faith. At Ketabang Elementary School in Surabaya, the role of CRE teachers extends beyond formal instruction to include moral mentoring and character formation. The school's environment, characterized by cultural diversity and religious tolerance, requires teachers who demonstrate integrity in both belief and behavior. Spiritual integrity enables them to maintain authenticity in the classroom, promoting an atmosphere of respect, trust, and openness. As Sumarno (2020) suggests, spiritual integrity bridges cognitive and affective domains, allowing faith to be communicated not just through theological explanations but also through compassionate and ethical behavior. Theologically, this integrity reflects the biblical principle of "walking in truth" (III John 1:4). In the educational context, it means that teachers must harmonize their spiritual convictions with pedagogical responsibility. They must teach faith not merely through words but through the consistency of their lives. When CRE teachers embody the truth they teach, they invite students to witness faith in action. Such witness strengthens moral formation and enhances the credibility of religious education in the eyes of students who often learn more from observation than from instruction.

Faith Formation through the Teacher's Example

Faith formation in elementary education is deeply influenced by the teacher's personal example. Children at this stage learn through imitation and emotional attachment; thus, the authenticity of the teacher becomes central to shaping their understanding of God. When a CRE teacher demonstrates humility, perseverance, and prayerfulness, students perceive faith as something real and attainable. Research by Dewi and Simatupang (2018) shows that students' faith responses are significantly strengthened when teachers embody Christian virtues consistently. At Ketabang Elementary School, teachers reported that storytelling, classroom prayers, and daily devotionals are not merely activities but spiritual experiences. These moments become powerful when the teacher's sincerity is evident. The teacher's tone of voice, body language, and patience in handling student difficulties all communicate messages of faith beyond the lesson plan. This aligns with Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 11:1-*"Imitate me, as I imitate Christ."* The teacher becomes a living parable of God's love, mercy, and trustworthiness. Spiritual integrity thus transforms pedagogy into ministry. The teacher's moral consistency and genuine faith provide a secure environment where students feel valued and guided. For instance, when a teacher forgives a student's mistake instead of responding harshly, they model

divine forgiveness. When they pray with students before exams or personal challenges, they embody the biblical command to “stand firm” in faith, echoing Exodus 14:13. Such actions nurture not only academic growth but also emotional and spiritual resilience among students.

Pedagogical Strategies for Teaching Faith with Integrity

Teaching faith effectively requires intentional pedagogical strategies rooted in spiritual integrity. At Ketabang Elementary School, several practical approaches are observed among CRE teachers who seek to embody faith through teaching. First, integrative reflection is used as a daily discipline. Teachers begin lessons by connecting biblical principles with real-life contexts familiar to students. For example, a discussion on God’s deliverance in Exodus 14:13 can be linked to students’ experiences of fear or uncertainty, helping them internalize the lesson through empathy. This reflective pedagogy allows students to see that faith is not an abstract idea but a daily reliance on God’s presence. Second, values-based storytelling serves as a vital instructional tool. By narrating biblical stories alongside personal experiences of faith, teachers create an emotional bridge between Scripture and daily life. According to Nababan (2022), such storytelling enables children to interpret moral lessons within their cognitive level while inspiring emotional engagement with God’s truth. Third, participatory worship and prayer foster spiritual habits among students. Classroom devotions, worship songs, and reflective prayer moments allow faith to be practiced communally. The teacher’s role in guiding these moments with authenticity is crucial; it demonstrates that faith is relational and grounded in daily gratitude. Fourth, restorative discipline is practiced as an extension of spiritual integrity. Instead of punitive approaches, teachers guide students toward repentance and reconciliation. This method mirrors the redemptive character of God, aligning with Christian pedagogy that prioritizes transformation over punishment (Simatupang & Telaumbanua, 2023). Lastly, service-learning projects integrate faith and social responsibility. Teachers encourage students to apply biblical principles through acts of kindness—such as helping classmates or participating in community service. These practices develop empathy and a sense of purpose consistent with the gospel’s call to love one another (John 13:34). Through these pedagogical strategies, faith becomes experiential and transformative, anchored in the teacher’s example of spiritual integrity. While spiritual integrity is essential, maintaining it in practice presents various challenges. Teachers at Ketabang Elementary School, like many others in Indonesia, face external and internal pressures that can test their faith and consistency. Externally, the pluralistic context of public education demands that CRE teachers respect diverse beliefs while remaining faithful to their Christian identity. Balancing inclusivity and doctrinal commitment often creates tension. Teachers must avoid religious exclusivism while ensuring that their faith-based teaching remains authentic. Internally, teachers struggle with emotional fatigue, moral dilemmas, and administrative burdens that may compromise their spiritual focus. When workloads increase or moral support is lacking, teachers may experience spiritual dryness. According to Nainggolan (2020), many Christian educators feel the weight of dual accountability—to God and to institutional regulations—which can lead to moral stress and decreased integrity if not managed spiritually. Another challenge involves maintaining relevance in a digitalized learning environment. Students today are highly influenced by secular media and often question

spiritual values presented in traditional forms. Teachers, therefore, must contextualize biblical truths creatively while safeguarding doctrinal soundness. Integrating digital tools such as audiovisual materials, virtual storytelling, or interactive faith discussions has become necessary for effective engagement without diluting spiritual depth. Furthermore, personal struggles-such as financial pressure, family issues, or conflicts with colleagues-can subtly affect a teacher's spiritual witness. In such cases, spiritual integrity demands resilience and continuous self-examination. Teachers must cultivate spiritual disciplines-prayer, Scripture meditation, and fellowship-to sustain their calling. Exodus 14:13 serves as a reminder that faithfulness in the face of challenge is an act of trust in God's deliverance.

Exodus 14:13 as Theological Reflection for Resilient Faith Teaching

The theological foundation of this study rests upon Exodus 14:13: *"Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today."* This verse encapsulates three essential principles relevant to faith-based teaching: courage, steadfastness, and divine dependence. First, the call to courage reflects a teacher's spiritual leadership. Just as Moses encouraged the Israelites to trust in God amidst fear, CRE teachers must guide students through uncertainties with courage rooted in faith. This courage enables teachers to confront moral challenges and maintain ethical standards even when unpopular or misunderstood. Second, steadfastness represents consistency in belief and practice. For CRE teachers, standing firm means demonstrating unwavering integrity in all circumstances-remaining patient, truthful, and compassionate even under stress. Such consistency mirrors God's unchanging nature and builds students' trust. When teachers maintain spiritual composure, they teach students to rely on God in their own struggles. Third, dependence on divine deliverance highlights the essence of Christian spirituality: trusting that outcomes belong to God. Teachers who internalize this truth release anxiety and focus on faithful service rather than success. This mindset transforms the classroom into a sanctuary of peace and trust, where both teacher and students learn to rest in God's providence. In the context of Ketabang Elementary School, Exodus 14:13 provides a spiritual framework for handling challenges such as limited resources, diverse student needs, and moral pressures. By interpreting faith through this verse, teachers are reminded that the effectiveness of their teaching is not measured by visible results alone but by faithfulness to God's calling.

The findings of this review highlight several implications for the ongoing development of Christian Religious Education in Indonesian elementary schools. First, teacher formation programs must prioritize spiritual development alongside pedagogical training. Many teacher education institutions emphasize methodology and content mastery but neglect spiritual maturity. Professional development should include retreats, mentoring, and reflective theological study to strengthen teachers' faith identity. Second, school leadership must cultivate an environment that supports teachers' spiritual well-being. This includes opportunities for communal prayer, peer support, and faith-sharing sessions. When teachers feel spiritually nurtured, their integrity and enthusiasm in teaching increase. Third, curriculum integration is essential to connect faith principles with everyday learning. Instead of isolating religious education from other subjects, schools can encourage cross-curricular themes that reflect Christian values, such as honesty in mathematics, stewardship in science, or compassion in social studies. Such

integration reflects holistic faith education that shapes both intellect and character. Fourth, parental involvement plays a critical role in reinforcing faith lessons at home. Schools should engage parents through seminars or faith-based family activities to ensure that the values taught in class are practiced within the family context. Finally, policy implications arise for the broader Christian education community in Indonesia. The government's emphasis on character education aligns naturally with Christian perspectives on spiritual integrity. Therefore, collaboration between religious and public education sectors could enhance moral education frameworks, making faith-based teaching an integral part of national character formation. Synthesizing these insights reveals that teaching faith through spiritual integrity is not a single act but a continuous journey of self-formation and ministry. CRE teachers are both educators and witnesses, embodying the message of Exodus 14:13 in their daily vocation. Their success in teaching faith depends not only on knowledge of Scripture but also on the authenticity of their lives. The review of literature consistently demonstrates that students' spiritual growth correlates strongly with the teacher's integrity and consistency. In practical terms, spiritual integrity manifests in love-driven discipline, reflective teaching, and ethical professionalism. These qualities align with Christian anthropology, which views education as the holistic formation of the human person created in the image of God. The CRE teacher thus becomes a "living curriculum," through whom God's character is made visible in the learning community. This study affirms that spiritual integrity empowers teachers to respond constructively to pluralism and modernization. Rather than viewing diversity as a threat, teachers grounded in faith see it as an opportunity for witness and dialogue. By standing firm in their convictions while respecting others, they exemplify the courage and steadfastness Moses demonstrated in Exodus 14:13. Ultimately, faith-based teaching at Ketabang Elementary School-and by extension in Indonesia-requires a renewed commitment to spiritual integrity as the foundation for transformative education. Teachers must continually return to Scripture for strength, seek the Holy Spirit's guidance for wisdom, and model Christ's love in all interactions. In doing so, they help students not merely learn about God but encounter Him through lived experience.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study emphasize that teaching faith through spiritual integrity represents the heart of effective Christian Religious Education (CRE), particularly within the context of Ketabang Elementary School, Surabaya. The systematic review reveals that spiritual integrity is not only a personal virtue but also a pedagogical foundation that shapes how faith is communicated, modeled, and internalized by students. Rooted in the theological reflection of *Exodus 14:13*-“Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today”-this study affirms that faith teaching requires courage, steadfastness, and dependence on God's providence. These principles guide CRE teachers to become not only transmitters of biblical knowledge but also living testimonies of God's truth in the classroom. At its core, spiritual integrity integrates belief and action, faith and practice, devotion and pedagogy. Teachers who live out their faith authentically serve as moral anchors for their students, demonstrating that Christian spirituality is not confined to religious rituals but expressed through daily attitudes of love, patience, forgiveness, and hope. Their consistent example becomes a form of silent preaching that

leaves a profound moral and spiritual impression on young learners. Through this witness, students begin to understand that trusting in God is not merely a doctrine to memorize but a way of life to embody. This study also underscores that the success of faith-based education depends largely on the teacher's inner formation. Pedagogical excellence alone cannot inspire faith unless it is accompanied by integrity and genuine spirituality. Therefore, teacher training programs, especially for Christian educators, should intentionally integrate spiritual disciplines-such as prayer, reflection on Scripture, and community fellowship-into professional development. Teachers who are spiritually grounded are better equipped to handle moral challenges, educational reforms, and the pressures of pluralistic classrooms with grace and confidence. Furthermore, the integration of spiritual integrity into pedagogy enhances holistic education. By applying faith-based principles such as compassion, honesty, and responsibility across all subjects, CRE teachers contribute to shaping students' moral reasoning and emotional intelligence. These values align with Indonesia's broader educational goals of character building and civic responsibility. When students experience consistency between what is taught and what is lived by their teachers, they develop a resilient faith capable of guiding them through future ethical and spiritual challenges. In light of *Exodus 14:13*, CRE teachers are called to stand firm amid uncertainty-whether in facing institutional constraints, societal pluralism, or personal struggles. Their unwavering trust in God's deliverance becomes a beacon of stability for students who are learning to navigate life's complexities. Teaching faith with integrity, therefore, is an act of discipleship and ministry, transforming ordinary classrooms into spaces of divine encounter and moral formation. In conclusion, this study reaffirms that spiritual integrity is the soul of Christian Religious Education. It bridges theology and pedagogy, belief and behavior, devotion and duty. For Ketabang Elementary School and similar educational institutions, nurturing teachers who embody such integrity is vital for cultivating future generations grounded in faith, guided by love, and steadfast in hope. As teachers continue to reflect on *Exodus 14:13*, they are reminded that faithfulness in teaching is not measured by immediate outcomes but by the quiet assurance that God Himself brings transformation through their faithful service.

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