



Modeling Godly Character through Teaching Respect for Parents by Christian Religious Education Teachers at SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh

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ABSTRACT

Respect for parents is a fundamental moral and spiritual value in Christian teaching, explicitly rooted in Exodus 20:12. In the context of elementary education, the cultivation of this value requires more than cognitive instruction; it demands authentic modeling from educators. This study aims to explore how Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers model godly character in teaching respect for parents, with particular relevance to the context of SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, this research synthesizes scholarly works in the fields of Christian education, biblical theology, character education, and teacher modeling. Literature was systematically identified, screened, and analyzed based on predefined inclusion criteria to ensure academic rigor and thematic relevance. The findings reveal that the piety of CRE teachers plays a decisive role in shaping students' moral understanding and behavior. Teacher modeling emerges as a central pedagogical strategy through which biblical values are internalized by students, especially at the elementary level where learning is strongly influenced by observation and imitation. The reviewed literature indicates that when teachers consistently embody virtues such as respect, humility, patience, and integrity, students are more likely to practice respect for parents as a lived value rather than a formal rule. Furthermore, modeling godly character strengthens the credibility of Christian instruction and bridges biblical principles with daily educational practice. This study concludes that CRE teachers' personal spirituality is a critical foundation for effective character education in public schools. Modeling godly character enables respect for parents to be taught as an expression of faith and obedience to God, contributing to students' holistic moral and spiritual development.

Keywords: *godly character, Christian Religious Education teachers, respect for parents, Exodus 20:12, character education, teacher modeling*

INTRODUCTION

Christian education plays a strategic role in shaping students' moral and spiritual character, especially in the formative years of elementary schooling. At this level,

education is not merely oriented toward cognitive achievement but is deeply concerned with character formation that reflects ethical values, social responsibility, and spiritual maturity. One of the most essential moral values that must be cultivated from an early age is respect for parents. In Christian teaching, respect for parents is not only a social norm but a theological mandate grounded in Scripture. Exodus 20:12 explicitly commands, "Honor your father and your mother," positioning this value as a foundational principle for human relationships and societal harmony. Consequently, Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers bear a significant responsibility to transmit this biblical value in ways that are both pedagogically meaningful and spiritually transformative. The erosion of respect toward parents and authority figures has become an increasingly visible concern. Rapid social change, technological advancement, and shifting family dynamics often weaken traditional value transmission within the home. As a result, schools are frequently expected to compensate for these gaps by reinforcing moral and character education. For students in public elementary schools, such as SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh, Christian Religious Education functions as a vital space where biblical values can be contextualized and internalized. Within this setting, CRE teachers are not merely instructors of religious knowledge but moral exemplars whose personal piety and conduct significantly influence students' attitudes and behaviors. The concept of modeling godly character is central to effective Christian pedagogy. Educational theory and biblical theology alike emphasize that values are more effectively learned through example than through instruction alone. Students tend to imitate behaviors they consistently observe, especially from authority figures whom they trust and respect. Therefore, the personal piety of CRE teachers, manifested in attitudes of humility, patience, integrity, and respect, becomes a living curriculum. When teachers demonstrate respect for parents through their words, actions, and classroom interactions, students are more likely to internalize this value as a meaningful and applicable principle rather than as abstract moral instruction.

The command to honor parents carries profound theological and ethical implications. Exodus 20:12 links obedience to parents with the promise of well-being and longevity, indicating that respect for parental authority is integral to God's design for human flourishing. In the context of Christian education, this command is not taught merely as a rule to be obeyed but as an expression of gratitude, love, and faithfulness to God. CRE teachers are thus called to interpret this command contextually, helping students understand its relevance to their daily lives, family relationships, and spiritual growth. The effectiveness of teaching respect for parents is closely tied to the authenticity of the teacher's character. When there is a discrepancy between what teachers teach and how they live, students may experience confusion or disengagement. Conversely, when teachers consistently model godly character, moral values become credible and compelling. This is particularly important at the elementary level, where students' moral reasoning is still developing and heavily influenced by observable behavior. In this regard, CRE teachers serve as moral agents whose personal spirituality directly contributes to the success of character education. Despite the acknowledged importance of teacher modeling, empirical and reflective studies focusing specifically on the piety of CRE teachers in public elementary schools remain limited. Many studies emphasize curriculum design, instructional strategies, or student outcomes, while fewer explore the teacher's spiritual character as a pedagogical force. This gap is especially evident in studies that

integrate biblical reflection with educational practice in local school contexts. Therefore, examining how CRE teachers at SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh model godly character in teaching respect for parents provides both academic and practical significance. This study seeks to contribute to the discourse on Christian character education by exploring the role of CRE teachers' piety in modeling respect for parents based on Exodus 20:12. By situating the discussion within a real educational context, this research highlights how biblical values are embodied and transmitted through teacher behavior. The findings are expected to offer insights for CRE teachers, school administrators, and Christian educators more broadly, emphasizing that effective moral education begins with educators who live out the values they teach. Ultimately, modeling godly character is not an optional supplement to Christian Religious Education but its very foundation, shaping students who honor their parents as an expression of faith and obedience to God.

METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to examine the role of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers in modeling godly character through teaching respect for parents, as reflected in Exodus 20:12. The SLR approach was chosen to ensure a structured, transparent, and comprehensive analysis of relevant scholarly works that integrate biblical theology, Christian education, and character formation. By synthesizing findings from previous studies, this method enables a deeper understanding of how teachers' piety functions as a pedagogical model in cultivating moral values among elementary school students. The review process followed several systematic stages. First, the formulation of research questions focused on three key aspects: the concept of godly character and teacher piety in Christian education, pedagogical approaches to teaching respect for parents based on biblical principles, and the role of teacher modeling in elementary-level character formation. These questions guided the selection and analysis of relevant literature to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Second, literature identification was conducted through searches in reputable academic databases, including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus-indexed journals, and national accredited journals relevant to education and theology. Keywords used in the search process included "Christian Religious Education teachers," "godly character," "teacher piety," "respect for parents," "Exodus 20:12," and "character education." To maintain academic rigor, the search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and conference proceedings published primarily within the last ten years, while allowing the inclusion of classical theological sources when necessary to support biblical interpretation. Third, inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to refine the literature corpus. Included sources were studies that discussed teacher character, moral or religious education, biblical foundations of parenting respect, and modeling theory in educational contexts. Excluded materials consisted of non-scholarly publications, opinion-based articles without empirical or theoretical grounding, and studies unrelated to Christian education or character development. This screening process ensured the relevance and quality of the reviewed literature. Fourth, data extraction and analysis were conducted through thematic analysis. Each selected source was examined to identify recurring themes related to teacher piety, modeling behavior, biblical ethics, and student character outcomes. The extracted data were then categorized and synthesized to construct a

coherent framework explaining how CRE teachers' godly character contributes to teaching respect for parents. Special attention was given to literature that emphasized the alignment between teachers' personal spirituality and their instructional practices. The results of the SLR were contextualized within the setting of SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh. Although the study did not involve direct field data collection, contextual reflection was used to connect the synthesized findings with the realities of Christian Religious Education in a public elementary school environment. This approach allows the study to offer theoretically grounded and practically relevant insights, highlighting the significance of CRE teachers' piety as a central element in effective character education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this Systematic Literature Review reveal that modeling godly character by Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers is a decisive factor in the successful transmission of moral values, particularly the value of respect for parents. Across the reviewed literature, teacher piety consistently emerges as a central element in character education, functioning not merely as a personal spiritual quality but as a pedagogical force that shapes students' attitudes, behaviors, and moral reasoning. In the context of elementary education, where students learn primarily through observation and imitation, the moral character of teachers significantly influences the internalization of values taught in the classroom. One finding identified in the literature is the inseparability of teacher piety and effective Christian teaching. Several studies emphasize that in Christian education, instructional content cannot be divorced from the spiritual integrity of the teacher. Teacher piety is reflected in daily practices such as respectful communication, consistency between words and actions, fairness in discipline, and genuine care for students. When CRE teachers demonstrate these qualities, students perceive religious instruction as authentic and trustworthy. This finding aligns with biblical pedagogy, which emphasizes living out faith as a testimony rather than merely teaching doctrine. In relation to Exodus 20:12, teachers who embody respect in their own relationships implicitly reinforce the commandment to honor parents, making the value tangible for students. The literature also highlights modeling theory as a foundational framework for understanding moral learning. Drawing on social learning theory, many scholars argue that children acquire moral values primarily through observing significant role models. In the elementary school setting, teachers occupy a position of authority and emotional significance, making their behavior a powerful source of moral learning. CRE teachers who consistently show respect toward parents, colleagues, and school authorities provide students with concrete examples of how respect is practiced in real-life situations. This modeling process is particularly effective when teachers explicitly connect their behavior to biblical teachings, helping students understand the theological meaning behind moral actions.

Another significant finding concerns the biblical understanding of respect for parents as a holistic value encompassing obedience, gratitude, care, and responsibility. Studies rooted in biblical theology emphasize that Exodus 20:12 is not limited to childhood obedience but reflects a lifelong attitude of honoring parental authority as part of one's relationship with God. In Christian education, this commandment is often introduced at an early age as a foundational moral principle. However, the literature suggests that teaching this value effectively requires more than cognitive explanation. CRE teachers must

contextualize the commandment within students' lived experiences, such as family interactions, daily routines, and emotional relationships with parents. Teacher modeling plays a crucial role in this process by demonstrating how biblical values are lived out in ordinary life. The reviewed studies further indicate that teacher piety strengthens the moral credibility of instruction. When teachers display humility, patience, and self-discipline, students are more likely to accept moral guidance without resistance. Conversely, inconsistencies between teaching and behavior can undermine the moral authority of educators. This finding underscores the importance of spiritual formation for CRE teachers themselves. Several scholars argue that teachers who engage in regular spiritual practices, such as prayer, Scripture reflection, and ethical self-examination, are better equipped to model godly character authentically. Such practices enable teachers to teach respect for parents not as a moral obligation imposed externally, but as a joyful response to God's command.

In the context of public elementary schools, the literature acknowledges unique challenges faced by CRE teachers. Unlike faith-based schools, public schools often require teachers to navigate diverse religious backgrounds, institutional regulations, and limited instructional time. Nevertheless, the reviewed studies suggest that teacher modeling remains effective even within these constraints. CRE teachers can demonstrate godly character through universally accepted values such as respect, kindness, and responsibility, which resonate across cultural and religious boundaries. By grounding these values in biblical teaching during CRE lessons, teachers provide students with a coherent moral framework that supports both religious and civic education. The findings also reveal that respect for parents is closely linked to broader character outcomes, such as discipline, empathy, and social responsibility. Several studies report that students who internalize respect for parents tend to exhibit more positive behavior in school, including respect for teachers, peers, and school rules. This suggests that teaching respect for parents serves as a foundation for wider character development. CRE teachers who model godly character contribute to this process by reinforcing the interconnectedness of moral values. In this sense, respect for parents becomes a gateway to understanding respect for authority, community, and ultimately God.

Discussion of these findings highlights the relevance of this study to the context of SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh. As a public elementary school, the institution represents a setting where Christian values must be taught in a manner that is both faithful to Scripture and sensitive to the broader educational environment. The SLR findings suggest that CRE teachers in such contexts can effectively teach respect for parents by prioritizing personal piety and consistent modeling. Rather than relying solely on instructional strategies or curricular materials, teachers' daily interactions with students become the primary medium through which biblical values are conveyed. The discussion emphasizes that modeling godly character is not an incidental aspect of teaching but a deliberate pedagogical strategy. CRE teachers are encouraged to consciously align their teaching practices with their spiritual convictions. This includes using language that reflects respect, addressing students' mistakes with patience, and acknowledging the role of parents positively in classroom discourse. When teachers speak respectfully about parents and encourage students to appreciate their parents' efforts, they reinforce the biblical message of Exodus 20:12 in a relational and meaningful way.

Another important discussion point concerns the role of reflective practice in sustaining teacher piety. The literature suggests that teachers who regularly reflect on their teaching experiences and spiritual growth are more effective role models. Reflection allows teachers to evaluate whether their behavior aligns with the values they teach and to make necessary adjustments. In the context of Christian education, reflective practice often includes theological reflection, where teachers consider how biblical teachings inform their professional responsibilities. This process supports continuous growth in godly character and enhances the effectiveness of moral instruction. The discussion also addresses the implications of teacher modeling for character education policy and practice. Several studies advocate for greater emphasis on teacher character development in professional training programs. For CRE teachers, this includes integrating spiritual formation into teacher education curricula. By equipping teachers with theological understanding and opportunities for spiritual growth, educational institutions can strengthen the capacity of teachers to model godly character effectively. This approach aligns with the findings of this SLR, which underscore the centrality of teacher piety in teaching respect for parents. The synthesis of findings and discussion affirms that modeling godly character through teaching respect for parents is a dynamic and relational process. It involves the interaction of biblical teaching, teacher character, student observation, and contextual factors within the school environment. At SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh, this process can contribute to the formation of students who not only understand the biblical command to honor their parents but also practice it as an expression of faith and moral responsibility. The literature reviewed in this study collectively supports the conclusion that CRE teachers who live out the values they teach play a transformative role in shaping students' character, making godly modeling an indispensable dimension of Christian Religious Education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that modeling godly character is a foundational and indispensable element in teaching respect for parents within Christian Religious Education, particularly in the context of elementary schools. Through a Systematic Literature Review, this research demonstrates that the piety of Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers significantly influences the effectiveness of character education. Teaching respect for parents, as commanded in Exodus 20:12, cannot be reduced to cognitive instruction alone but must be embodied through the personal character and daily conduct of teachers. The findings affirm that CRE teachers serve not only as transmitters of biblical knowledge but also as living examples of Christian values. When teachers consistently demonstrate respect, humility, patience, and integrity, students are more likely to internalize these virtues as meaningful and applicable to their own lives. In elementary education, where students learn largely through observation and imitation, teacher modeling becomes a powerful pedagogical approach. Respect for parents, when modeled authentically by teachers, is understood by students as a relational value rooted in faith rather than as a mere moral obligation. This study highlights that teacher piety enhances the moral credibility of Christian instruction. Alignment between teaching and behavior strengthens students' trust in religious education and fosters a learning environment conducive to character formation. The biblical foundation of honoring parents, as articulated in Exodus 20:12, gains practical relevance when teachers contextualize the commandment through

their interactions with students and their affirmation of parental roles within the educational process. In this way, godly character modeling bridges biblical theology and educational practice. In the context of SD Negeri 101951 Sei Buluh, this research underscores the relevance of CRE teachers' personal spirituality within a public school setting. Despite institutional limitations and diverse student backgrounds, CRE teachers can effectively cultivate respect for parents by embodying universally recognized values grounded in Christian faith. Modeling godly character allows biblical principles to be communicated in a manner that is both theologically faithful and socially constructive, contributing to students' moral development and harmonious family relationships. This study also implies the need for greater emphasis on teacher character development in Christian education. Professional development programs for CRE teachers should integrate spiritual formation alongside pedagogical training, recognizing that effective character education begins with educators who live out the values they teach. Future research is encouraged to complement this literature-based study with empirical investigations that explore students' perceptions and behavioral outcomes related to teacher modeling. Modeling godly character is not an optional dimension of Christian Religious Education but its core strength. By embodying the command to honor parents, CRE teachers play a transformative role in shaping students who practice respect as an expression of faith, obedience, and moral responsibility.

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