



## Strengthening Students' Trust in God: Theological Reflections on Exodus 14:31 in the Context of SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examines the theological and pedagogical significance of Exodus 14:31 in strengthening students' trust in God within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) at SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo. Trust in God is a foundational element of faith formation, particularly at the elementary level where students are in a critical stage of spiritual and moral development. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, this research synthesizes scholarly works in biblical theology, child faith development, and Christian pedagogy to construct an integrative framework for classroom application. The analysis highlights that in Exodus 14:31, Israel's belief in the Lord emerged from witnessing God's redemptive action at the Red Sea, demonstrating that trust is shaped through experiential encounter, communal interpretation, and faithful leadership. The findings further indicate that children's trust in God develops through narrative engagement, relational modeling, reflective practice, and contextualized instruction. Teachers play a mediating role in faith formation, as their spiritual authenticity and pedagogical strategies significantly influence students' perceptions of God. In the context of SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo, strengthening trust in God requires intentional integration of theological reflection with transformative teaching methods that connect biblical truths to students' lived experiences. The study concludes that Christian education must move beyond cognitive instruction toward holistic spiritual formation, fostering a resilient and experiential faith grounded in the recognition of God's faithfulness.*

**Keywords:** *Trust in God, Exodus 14:31, Christian Religious Education, faith formation, theological reflection, elementary education.*

### INTRODUCTION

Trust in God constitutes a foundational dimension of Christian faith formation, particularly within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in elementary schools. At the primary education level, students are in a formative stage of cognitive, moral, and spiritual development, where foundational beliefs and attitudes toward God are gradually shaped through instruction, experience, and example. In this regard, the

role of Christian Religious Education is not merely the transmission of biblical knowledge but the cultivation of a living faith characterized by trust, obedience, and reliance on God. Developing students' trust in God is especially crucial in contemporary contexts where children are exposed to various uncertainties, social challenges, and competing worldviews that may influence their understanding of faith. The concept of trust in God in the Old Testament is closely related to faith, reverence, and recognition of God's mighty acts in history. Exodus 14:31 presents a significant theological moment: "And Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses" (ESV). This verse describes the transformation of the Israelites' perception of God after witnessing His deliverance at the Red Sea. Their belief was not abstract but rooted in concrete experience of God's saving power. The narrative demonstrates that trust in God grows through encountering His faithfulness and recognizing His sovereignty in times of crisis. Theologically, Exodus 14:31 reveals that trust emerges from divine revelation, redemptive action, and pedagogical experience within the community of faith. This biblical reflection provides a framework for understanding how students' trust in God may be strengthened. Just as Israel's faith was reinforced through experiential learning of God's deliverance, students today require meaningful engagement with biblical narratives that connect theological truths with personal and communal experiences. Christian Religious Education teachers therefore function not only as instructors but as mediators of faith experiences, guiding students to interpret biblical events as relevant to their own lives. The integration of theological reflection and pedagogical practice becomes essential in fostering authentic trust rather than superficial religious compliance. SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo, as an educational institution situated within a specific socio-cultural context, provides a unique setting for exploring the strengthening of students' trust in God. Elementary students in this school context may encounter various personal and environmental challenges, including family economic conditions, social influences, and developmental transitions. These realities make it increasingly important for CRE instruction to address faith not merely as doctrinal content but as a source of spiritual resilience and moral grounding. A contextual theological reflection on Exodus 14:31 allows educators to examine how the biblical narrative of deliverance can speak meaningfully to students' lived experiences. Current educational discourse emphasizes holistic development, encompassing cognitive, affective, and spiritual dimensions. In Christian education, spiritual formation is inseparable from academic growth. Trust in God influences students' attitudes toward learning, relationships, and ethical decision-making. When students develop a deep sense of reliance on God, they are more likely to demonstrate confidence, perseverance, and moral responsibility. Strengthening students' trust in God is not only a theological concern but also an educational imperative. This study seeks to explore how theological reflections on Exodus 14:31 can contribute to strengthening students' trust in God within the context of SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo. By examining the biblical text and its pedagogical implications, the research aims to bridge theology and classroom practice. Through this integrative approach, the study aspires to provide both theological insight and practical guidance for Christian Religious Education teachers in nurturing a faith that is experiential, reflective, and transformative among elementary students.

## METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to explore theological and pedagogical perspectives related to strengthening students' trust in God through reflection on Exodus 14:31 within the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE). The SLR approach was chosen to ensure a structured, transparent, and comprehensive synthesis of relevant scholarly literature concerning biblical theology, faith formation, and pedagogical practices in Christian education. Rather than collecting primary empirical data, this study systematically examined existing academic sources to construct a coherent theological-educational framework applicable to SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo. The review process followed several systematic stages: identification, screening, eligibility, and synthesis. During the identification stage, relevant literature was searched through reputable academic databases such as Google Scholar, ATLA Religion Database, ERIC, and peer-reviewed theological and educational journals. Keywords used in the search process included "trust in God," "Exodus 14:31," "faith formation in children," "Christian Religious Education," "biblical theology of trust," and "spiritual development in elementary education." The search was limited to publications in English and Indonesian from 2000 to 2024 to ensure contemporary relevance while still allowing inclusion of foundational theological works. In the screening stage, duplicate and non-scholarly sources were removed. The inclusion criteria consisted of peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and credible theological commentaries; studies addressing biblical theology related to Exodus or themes of trust and faith; research discussing pedagogical strategies in Christian Religious Education; and literature focusing on children's spiritual or faith development. Sources that lacked academic credibility, clear authorship, or relevance to the topic were excluded. The eligibility process involved a critical appraisal of each selected source to assess methodological rigor, theological soundness, and relevance to the research focus. The selected literature was then categorized into three analytical themes: theological interpretation of Exodus 14:31 and the concept of trust in the Old Testament, theoretical frameworks of faith development in children, and pedagogical models for strengthening spiritual formation in elementary education. In the synthesis stage, the findings from various sources were analyzed using a thematic approach. The study integrated theological insights with educational theory to formulate a contextualized understanding applicable to SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo. Through this systematic process, the SLR method ensured that the conclusions drawn in this study were grounded in credible scholarship and provided a solid theoretical foundation for strengthening students' trust in God within Christian Religious Education practice.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exodus 14:31 states, "When Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses." This verse stands at the climax of the Red Sea narrative and encapsulates the theological transformation of the Israelites. Prior to the crossing, the Israelites exhibited fear, doubt, and even resistance toward Moses (Exod. 14:10-12). After witnessing God's decisive intervention, their fear was redirected from anxiety toward reverential awe, and their disbelief was transformed into trust. The Hebrew term often translated as "believed" (*'aman*) carries the sense of firmness, reliability, and trustworthiness. Faith in

this context is not merely intellectual assent but relational dependence grounded in experienced divine faithfulness. Theologically, Exodus 14:31 reveals that trust in God emerges from encountering His saving action in history. Divine revelation is not abstract; it is embodied in redemptive acts that invite response. Israel's trust was shaped by witnessing God's power, which demonstrated His covenant loyalty. Scholarly literature on Old Testament theology emphasizes that faith in Israel's tradition is communal and experiential. The Red Sea event became a foundational memory in Israel's identity, repeatedly recalled in psalms and prophetic writings. This indicates that trust in God is nurtured through collective remembrance and narrative transmission. The act of "seeing" God's power (v. 31) suggests that experience and perception are central to faith development. Trust grows when God's actions are interpreted meaningfully within the community of believers. From a theological-educational perspective, this insight implies that students' trust in God cannot be reduced to memorization of biblical facts. Rather, it involves guiding learners to perceive and interpret God's faithfulness in both biblical narratives and personal experiences. Just as Israel's belief was strengthened after a transformative encounter, students today require pedagogical approaches that allow them to internalize the significance of God's saving work.

#### ***Trust in God as an Element of Faith Formation in Children***

Literature on spiritual development in children highlights that faith formation is a gradual process influenced by cognitive maturity, relational environment, and instructional practice. Developmental theorists argue that elementary-aged children are capable of understanding concrete biblical stories and forming relational concepts of God. At this stage, children often perceive God in personal and protective terms. Therefore, narratives such as Exodus 14 provide powerful frameworks for shaping their understanding of divine protection and faithfulness. Research in Christian education consistently underscores the importance of relational trust. Children tend to develop trust in God in correlation with trust in significant adults, particularly teachers and parents. If educators model consistency, integrity, and faith, students are more likely to internalize similar attitudes toward God. This relational dynamic parallels Exodus 14:31, where belief in the Lord is mentioned alongside belief in His servant Moses. Trust in God was mediated through trust in a faithful leader. Thus, teacher credibility and spiritual authenticity become crucial factors in strengthening students' faith. Faith formation involves affective and experiential dimensions. Studies indicate that spiritual growth is fostered not only through doctrinal instruction but also through reflection, worship practices, storytelling, and guided discussion. When students engage emotionally and imaginatively with biblical narratives, they are better able to connect theological truths with their lived realities. The Red Sea story, for instance, can be explored as a narrative of fear, crisis, deliverance, and gratitude, experiences that children can relate to in age-appropriate ways. Another key finding from the literature is that trust in God contributes to resilience and moral development. Children who develop a secure sense of divine presence often demonstrate greater perseverance, hope, and ethical awareness. Trust functions as a stabilizing force in uncertain circumstances. In contexts where students may face economic limitations, social pressures, or personal insecurities, nurturing trust in God can provide psychological and spiritual grounding. Therefore, strengthening trust is not solely a doctrinal objective but a holistic developmental necessity.

### ***Pedagogical Implications for Christian Religious Education***

Integrating the theological insights of Exodus 14:31 with educational theory yields several pedagogical implications. Biblical narratives should be taught as transformative stories rather than isolated historical accounts. Teachers may employ narrative pedagogy, encouraging students to enter the story imaginatively, reflecting on how the Israelites felt at the sea, what fear means, and how deliverance changes perception. Such methods enable students to move from cognitive understanding to personal appropriation. Experiential learning plays a significant role in cultivating trust. While students cannot physically witness miracles like the Red Sea crossing, they can be guided to recognize experiences of help, protection, or answered prayer in their own lives. Classroom activities such as testimony sharing, reflective journaling, or group discussion can function as modern parallels to Israel's communal remembrance. Through structured reflection, students learn to interpret their experiences theologically. Modeling and relational engagement are essential. Teachers serve as living examples of faith in practice. Consistency between teaching and behavior strengthens students' confidence in both the message and the messenger. In the same way that Israel's trust extended to Moses as God's servant, students' perception of God may be influenced by their perception of their teachers. Therefore, pedagogical effectiveness is inseparable from spiritual integrity. Contextualization is necessary. In the context of SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo, local cultural values and communal dynamics may shape students' understanding of authority, fear, and trust. Educators should connect the Exodus narrative with culturally relevant illustrations that resonate with students' daily experiences. For example, parallels may be drawn between crossing the Red Sea and facing personal challenges such as examinations, family difficulties, or peer conflicts. By contextualizing biblical themes, teachers help students see faith as applicable and practical.

### ***Toward a Contextual Framework at SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo***

The SLR findings suggest that strengthening students' trust in God requires an integrative approach combining theological depth, relational authenticity, and pedagogical intentionality. Exodus 14:31 provides a paradigm in which divine action, human response, and communal testimony intersect. Trust is born from recognizing God's power, interpreting experience within faith, and witnessing faithful leadership. Applied to SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo, this framework implies several strategic steps. Teachers should present biblical narratives as living testimonies of God's faithfulness, create classroom environments that encourage reflection and dialogue, model consistent faith and moral integrity, and guide students to connect biblical truths with their personal realities. Through these integrated practices, trust in God can move beyond theoretical affirmation toward lived conviction. This study highlights that theological reflection and educational practice must remain interconnected. When biblical exegesis informs pedagogy, and pedagogy facilitates spiritual encounter, students are more likely to develop enduring faith. Exodus 14:31 demonstrates that belief follows revelation; in educational terms, understanding and experience precede deep trust. CRE instruction should intentionally design learning experiences that reveal God's character and invite responsive faith. The research and discussion affirm that strengthening students' trust in God is both a theological mandate and an educational responsibility. The Red Sea narrative provides a

powerful model of transformative faith shaped by divine action and communal interpretation. By integrating this theological insight with contemporary theories of child development and Christian pedagogy, educators at SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo can cultivate a faith that is experiential, resilient, and grounded in the living memory of God's faithfulness.

## CONCLUSION

This study has explored how theological reflections on Exodus 14:31 can contribute to strengthening students' trust in God within the context of Christian Religious Education at SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo. Through a Systematic Literature Review, the research integrated biblical theology, theories of faith formation in children, and pedagogical principles in order to construct a contextual framework for spiritual development in elementary education. The findings affirm that trust in God is not merely a doctrinal concept but a relational and experiential reality that must be intentionally nurtured in the classroom. Exodus 14:31 reveals that trust emerges from encountering God's redemptive action and interpreting that experience within the community of faith. The transformation of Israel, from fear and doubt to reverence and belief, demonstrates that faith deepens when individuals recognize God's power and faithfulness in concrete situations. This biblical paradigm provides a foundational model for Christian education: students' trust in God grows when they are guided to understand, experience, and reflect upon God's work both in Scripture and in their own lives. The review underscores that faith formation in children involves cognitive understanding, emotional engagement, relational modeling, and contextual relevance. Teachers play a pivotal mediating role, as their spiritual authenticity and pedagogical strategies significantly influence students' perceptions of God. Just as Israel believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses, students' trust in God may be strengthened when they encounter consistent, faithful, and credible Christian educators. In the specific context of SDN 071223 Orahili Gomo, strengthening trust in God requires integrating biblical narrative teaching, reflective activities, experiential learning, and culturally relevant applications. Christian Religious Education must move beyond information transmission toward transformative formation. By intentionally designing learning experiences that highlight God's faithfulness and invite personal response, teachers can cultivate resilient and grounded faith among students. Strengthening students' trust in God is both a theological calling and an educational mission. When biblical reflection and pedagogical practice are harmoniously integrated, Christian education becomes a space where faith is not only taught but lived, experienced, and internalized for lifelong spiritual growth.

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