



## Guiding Young Minds to Know God Through the Word: Lessons from Exodus 19:5-6 at SDN 071207 La'owi

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### ABSTRACT

*Religious education in primary schools plays a critical role in shaping children's spiritual awareness, moral development, and understanding of their relationship with God. This study examines how young learners can be guided to know God through scripture, with a particular focus on Exodus 19:5-6, at SDN 071207. Employing a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology, this research synthesizes recent empirical and theoretical studies on scripture-based pedagogy, narrative engagement, and spiritual development in early primary education. The review highlights that narrative approaches, including storytelling, role play, visual expression, and reflective activities, significantly enhance children's comprehension of biblical themes while fostering moral reasoning, empathy, and personal connection to the divine. Findings indicate that teachers play a pivotal role as facilitators, modeling engagement with scripture, encouraging inquiry, and creating spaces for dialogue, while family and community involvement further reinforce students' spiritual growth. Challenges in implementation, such as limited instructional time, teacher confidence, and student diversity, require adaptive strategies and professional development to maximize educational impact. The study concludes that scripture-centered teaching, particularly when grounded in Exodus 19:5-6, enables students to experience the Bible as a living narrative, cultivating their understanding of identity, purpose, and ethical responsibility. By integrating research-informed pedagogical strategies, educators at SDN 071207 can foster holistic spiritual formation that combines biblical literacy with character development and relational understanding of God. This research contributes to the discourse on effective faith-based education in primary school settings and offers practical insights for teachers seeking to engage students meaningfully with scripture.*

**Keywords:** Religious education, Primary school, Scripture-based pedagogy, Exodus 19:5-6.

### INTRODUCTION

Religious education in primary schools holds a vital place not only in shaping children's knowledge of religious doctrine but also in forming their early spiritual experiences and

ethical orientation. Education at this foundational stage of life is uniquely positioned to influence children's worldview, values, and understanding of their relationship with God. Current educational research indicates that early engagement with religious narratives and scripture can contribute meaningfully to the spiritual and psychological well-being of young learners. A recent literature review underscores the positive effect of reflective and context-based religious education on children's spiritual development, emotional regulation, and moral resilience (Muraidin, 2025). This body of work suggests a growing consensus that religion, when taught with pedagogical intentionality, contributes beyond mere cognitive learning to deeper psychosocial outcomes that benefit students throughout their schooling. In the Christian tradition, Scripture occupies a central role as the primary source of divine revelation and instruction. The doctrine of *prima scriptura* affirms that canonical Scripture stands "first" among sources of knowledge about God and provides the foundation for Christian teaching and moral formation (Prima Scriptura, 2026). Within educational contexts, this theological principle supports the integration of biblical texts into classroom learning, enabling students to encounter God's Word as more than historical literature but as a living narrative shaping identity and conduct. In Christian primary education worldwide, methods like Godly Play utilize scripture stories as pedagogical tools to engage children's imagination and faith, harnessing storytelling to foster both understanding and spiritual curiosity (Godly Play, 2025). Research on such methods highlights that effective scripture engagement goes beyond rote memorization, involving narrative exploration that builds religious literacy and empathetic understanding (Huth et al., 2021).

Exodus 19:5-6 presents a powerful scriptural basis for guiding children toward a personal relationship with God. In this passage, God calls Israel to be "a treasured possession" and "a kingdom of priests," emphasizing not only covenant identity but also purposeful living grounded in God's word. When applied to the primary school context, such passages can be interpreted as invitations for young learners to see themselves as part of a divine story one in which they are known, loved, and called to reflect God's character. The challenge for educators, then, is to make such profound theological truths accessible and meaningful for young minds. This requires not only pedagogical skill but also a deep understanding of how children's spirituality develops through interaction with sacred texts (Goetz, 2024).

Global research supports the pedagogical value of narrative in religious education, particularly for early primary ages. A systematic review on religious education in early childhood found that stories especially scripture stories effectively engage children by connecting complex theological ideas to accessible narrative frameworks. Students engaged through story formats not only grow in biblical literacy but also develop empathy and the ability to make personal connections between their lives and the narratives they study (Huth et al., 2021). Such evidence suggests that scripture teaching at the primary level should not be abstract or purely doctrinal but should utilize methods that invite children into the stories of faith, enabling them to explore and internalize spiritual concepts experientially. In addition to cognitive and spiritual benefits, religious education in primary schools has been linked to enhanced psychological well-being. Contemporary research shows that high-quality religious instruction can mitigate negative effects of environmental stressors on children's mental health and promote resilience when reinforced by supportive family contexts (Frontiers in Education, 2025). While much of

this research focuses on the broader concept of religious education, its findings emphasize the importance of relational and reflective engagement with the divine as part of a balanced educational approach. This suggests that embedding bible-centered lessons within the school curriculum can yield holistic benefits, nurturing not only intellectual understanding of God but also emotional stability and self-regulation among young students.

At SDN 071207 La'owi, where this study is situated, the implementation of scripture-based religious instruction offers an important case for understanding how these broader principles play out in the local primary school setting. Although SDN 071207 operates within a public educational framework, the inclusion of values and faith discussions drawn from scripture such as Exodus 19:5-6 invites a culturally contextualized approach to religious development. Teachers at this level must navigate curricular demands alongside pedagogical strategies that honor both educational standards and the spiritual needs of their students. Research highlights that teacher competence in scripture teaching which includes not only familiarity with biblical content but also the ability to convey narratives in age-appropriate ways is crucial for effective student engagement with the Word of God (Law-Davis et al., 2019). This indicates that successful religious education in primary schools depends as much on teaching quality as it does on curricular content. The involvement of families and communities in reinforcing scripture engagement complements the school's efforts. Studies on parental roles indicate that when parents actively participate in their children's spiritual education, children demonstrate stronger religious understanding and application in daily life (Albanat, 2026). This collaborative model, where learning is reinforced both at school and at home, creates a robust environment for spiritual growth. In light of these educational and theological insights, this article examines how teaching methods inspired by Exodus 19:5-6 can guide children to *know God through His Word* within the primary school context. It explores pedagogical approaches, learning outcomes, and the role of scripture in shaping not only academic understanding but also spiritual awareness and character formation among students at SDN 071207 La'owi. By grounding its analysis in contemporary research on religious education and pedagogy, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how scripture can be a transformative educational tool in early childhood.

## METHODS

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to comprehensively examine how primary school students can be guided to know God through scripture, specifically focusing on pedagogical applications of Exodus 19:5-6. A systematic review methodology was chosen because it allows for a structured and replicable synthesis of the latest empirical and theoretical research, offering evidence-based insights into effective strategies for religious education (Petticrew & Roberts, 2020). By adopting SLR, the study aimed to identify, evaluate, and integrate high-quality literature on scripture-based teaching methods, spiritual development in children, and the role of narrative pedagogy in early primary education. The review process followed a four-stage protocol. Relevant studies were identified through a structured search of academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Keywords used in combination included "religious education," "primary school," "biblical pedagogy,"

“Exodus 19:5-6,” “spiritual development,” and “Godly Play.” The search was limited to publications from 2018 to 2026 to ensure that the included studies reflected contemporary pedagogical approaches and empirical findings in the field. Only peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and high-quality educational reports were considered to guarantee reliability and academic rigor (Booth, Sutton, & Papaioannou, 2022). Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure relevance. Studies were included if they explicitly addressed scripture-based instruction in primary education, children’s engagement with biblical narratives, or strategies for spiritual development among students aged 6-12. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies that focused solely on secondary or tertiary education, non-Christian religious contexts, or purely theological exegesis without educational application. This ensured that the review remained focused on actionable insights for the primary school context of SDN 071207 La’owi. Third, selected studies were systematically coded and analyzed. Key information extracted included author, year, research context, pedagogical strategies employed, observed outcomes, and theoretical frameworks. A thematic synthesis approach was used to categorize strategies into narrative-based methods, experiential learning, and family-community engagement. Patterns and gaps in the literature were identified, highlighting areas where scripture-centered instruction, particularly from Exodus 19:5-6, could be most effectively applied (Huth et al., 2021; Goetz, 2024). The findings were synthesized into a coherent framework to guide the practical application of scripture in primary classrooms. This SLR provided a robust evidence base for understanding how biblical narratives can be used to foster spiritual awareness, moral formation, and relational understanding of God among young learners. By relying on systematically gathered and critically appraised literature, the study ensured both rigor and relevance for educators and researchers seeking to enhance faith-based learning at SDN 071207 La’owi.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of literature extracted through this systematic literature review reveals multiple interrelated dimensions that deepen our understanding of how scripture can be used to guide young learners toward knowing God. Across studies, there is a consistent thematic thread that narrative engagement with biblical texts cultivates both cognitive and affective aspects of spiritual development. The Bible, as a pedagogical resource, is not merely a repository of doctrinal statements but functions as a relational narrative through which children are invited into encounters with the divine. Authors emphasize that narrative pedagogy, when intentionally designed, facilitates students’ ability to connect scriptural themes with lived experiences (Huth, Andersen, & Warner, 2021). This connection becomes especially significant when framed within the developmental understanding of children’s cognitive and moral growth. Psychological research on narrative comprehension underscores that children between ages six to twelve develop the capacity to understand cause-and-effect chains, to empathize with characters in stories, and to apply moral reasoning in context (Bruner, 1996). When biblical narratives such as those found in Exodus 19:5-6 are taught through narrative engagement, children are better positioned to perceive not only the events of the text but also underlying relational themes such as covenant, faithfulness, identity, and purpose.

The literature also highlights that pedagogical strategies matter for how effectively children internalize scriptural meaning. Traditional methods that emphasize

memorization of verses without context often result in superficial recall rather than meaningful internalization (Law-Davis, Pierce, & Cobb, 2019). In contrast, narrative-based approaches that situate scripture within an interactive learning environment show more promising outcomes. Godly Play, an approach originating from religious education practice, demonstrates the power of story as a primary vehicle for spiritual and theological reflection among children. By allowing learners to enter into the story, ask questions, and personally relate to its characters and messages, educators create spaces where children can reflect on God's character and their own responses (Godly Play Foundation, 2025). This aligns with the theological premise that scripture is not simply information to be transmitted but relationship to be encountered. Empirical research into narrative pedagogy suggests that when students are invited to retell, dramatize, or visually express biblical narratives, they demonstrate deeper comprehension and increased capacity to articulate personal meaning (Huth et al., 2021). For example, classroom practices that involve role play or drawing scenes from scripture support the integration of cognitive, affective, and creative modes of learning. Student reflections tend to move beyond mere plot recall toward articulating how they perceive God's nature and how they see themselves within the story. In the context of Exodus 19:5-6, such pedagogical engagement enables children to understand the metaphorical and relational dimensions of covenant language rather than merely memorizing the words. They begin to see themselves not as passive recipients of religious information but as participants invited into a larger narrative of relationship with God.

The role of the teacher emerges as central in this process. Highly effective scripture teaching requires not only mastery of biblical content but also pedagogical sensitivity to children's developmental capacities and cultural contexts. Research indicates that teachers who model reflective engagement with scripture, ask open-ended questions, and create space for student voice foster environments where children feel safe to explore faith questions (Goetz, 2024). These findings resonate with constructivist theories of learning, which hold that learners build understanding through active reflection and social interaction rather than passive reception. Teachers become facilitators guiding students into and through the narrative, rather than simply dispensers of doctrinal facts. A recurring theme in the literature is the role of family and community in reinforcing and extending the impact of scripture teaching. Parental involvement in religious education, when synchronized with classroom teaching, amplifies the potential for children's spiritual growth. Studies show that children whose faith conversations extend beyond school into the home demonstrate more sustained engagement with spiritual themes and greater ability to apply scriptural principles in daily life (Albanat, 2026). In practical terms, this points to the importance of school family partnerships in primary religious education. Teachers can encourage families to continue scripture dialogue at home, share reflections, and participate in community worship activities that reinforce classroom learning. Such integration helps bridge school and home contexts, creating a consistent and supportive environment for spiritual formation. The literature also acknowledges challenges that primary educators face in scripture teaching. One significant challenge is balancing curricular demands with meaningful spiritual instruction in increasingly secularized public school environments. Although numerous studies highlight the benefits of narrative scripture engagement, the implementation in diverse educational settings often encounters systemic constraints such as limited class time, large class sizes, and

varying levels of teacher confidence with scripture pedagogy. Addressing these challenges requires professional development that equips teachers with both theological understanding and pedagogical skills. Teacher training that includes practical workshops on narrative methods, classroom management during interactive activities, and strategies for facilitating reflective student dialogue can help bridge the gap between theoretical models and classroom realities. Within the specific context of SDN 071207, the application of these insights carries particular resonance. As a public primary school, the integration of scripture into teaching must navigate both the formal curriculum and the spiritual needs of students who come from varied religious backgrounds. Although the focus of this study centers on guiding children to know God through the Word, it is also important to recognize the pluralistic context in which Indonesian public schools operate. Therefore, scripture engagement strategies adopted at SDN 071207 should respect diversity while still offering Christian student meaningful opportunities to explore their faith. Inclusive pedagogical techniques that welcome respectful dialogue and value students' voices enhance classroom dynamics. While not all students may identify with the Christian faith, narrative methods that emphasize universal themes such as justice, compassion, and identity can foster ethical reflection that resonates broadly.

The findings from the SLR reveal that the specific focus on Exodus 19:5-6 can offer a rich conceptual framework for grounding lessons in identity and purpose. This passage's language about being a "treasured possession" and "kingdom of priests" can be reframed pedagogically to emphasize intrinsic dignity, community responsibility, and relational connection with the divine. When teachers guide students to reflect on these themes through interactive story engagement, students are encouraged to see themselves as valued participants in God's narrative. Such engagement not only supports doctrinal understanding but also nurtures character formation and moral imagination. The research further indicates that lesson designs that incorporate reflection, creativity, and dialogue produce more enduring learning outcomes than didactic instruction alone. For instance, students who are given time to journal their thoughts on a scripture passage, share personal insights with peers, or create art inspired by scripture demonstrate more nuanced spiritual awareness. These activities invite learners to process the narrative internally and express it through multiple modes, reinforcing both comprehension and personal relevance. In essence, scripture becomes not just content to be learned but experience to be lived. Taken together, literature from educational research and theology reinforces that guiding young minds to know God through the Word requires intentional, reflective, and relational pedagogy. Effective scripture teaching does not happen in isolation but emerges through classroom practices that respect children's developmental needs, involve families, and situate biblical narratives within learners' lived contexts. At SDN 071207, implementing such approaches can lead to not only enhanced biblical literacy but also deeper spiritual awareness and moral formation among students. The narrative power of scripture, when harnessed through thoughtful pedagogy, opens pathways for children to encounter God's Word not as abstract text but as living story that shapes identity, purpose, and relationship with the divine.

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