

## Catechism Guidance for Adolescents at Rehoboth Ebenhaezer Congregation Bandung

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Catechesis,  
Education, Faith Adolescents

*Received :* 13, August

*Revised :* 15, September

*Accepted:* 17, October

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### ABSTRACT

Catechetical guidance is one form of Christian education service provided by the church. One of the primary functions of the church's ministry is to prepare adolescents to enter a new phase in their faith journey, beginning with repentance toward Christ, with the hope that they may mature in the Lord. The objective of conducting catechesis is to determine whether or not catechetical instruction has an influence on the behavior and life transformation of adolescents at the Rehoboth Ebenhaezer Church in Bandung. By providing catechetical guidance to adolescents, it is hoped that they will be able to actualize their faith and service in the world. It can also be stated that the purpose of catechesis for adolescents is to build their identity as future missionary members of the congregation.

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## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence or commonly called puberty, comes from Latin, which is from the word puberty. A period where physical changes related to gender maturity are seen. Thus puberty will be followed by adolescence. Adolescence is a unique time of every phase of human life. This is a time of responsibility. They are not called children anymore, but they cannot be said to be adults. Early adolescence, also known as pre-adolescence, ranges from 12-15 years old. This time is also a very interesting and colorful time. This condition makes adolescents need to get guidance and assistance from parents or mentors so that adolescents can get through this period well. Their inability to be able to manifest themselves as adults is a serious problem. With dementia, teenagers need friends to deal with and the best fit for that are parents and spiritual guides. Adolescence comes suddenly and often shakes the lives of teenagers. By this time teenagers have begun to develop new minds, where they already have the ability to understand abstract things perfectly.

Adolescence is a time that is vulnerable to the influence of the rapid development of the times in this era. According to Kompasiana, the fast digital era, in addition to being able to have a positive influence, can often cause negative influences, especially for teenagers, the use of gadgets has the potential to open wide access to various information for teenagers. The number of digital platforms such as Facebook, Tik Tok, Instagram, Telegram and others tends to have a more negative impact on teenagers, especially information that leads to pornography, cyberbullying which results in today's teenagers ignoring the surrounding social environment and tending to be lazy due to gadget dependence. The participation of parents in the family is absolutely necessary as the main pillar to set an example both in terms of behavior and life values. The Church today is required to provide a good foundation of Christian faith as the basis for the seeds of the word to lead youth to an understanding of Christ and as a spiritual provision for youth to take root, grow and bear fruit in their lives in the future.

Catechism is a form of Christian educational ministry guidance carried out by the church. The term catechization comes from the Greek verb: catechhein which means: to preach, to inform, to explain, to teach. Teaching according to the catechin is not only emphasized in the sense of intellect, but rather in the practical sense, that is, teaching or guiding a person, so that he does what he is taught. The Bible clearly says that spiritual guidance should be done continuously, at Deuteronomy 6:6-7.

*"What I have commanded you this day you shall observe, you shall teach it again and again to your child and speak of it when you sit at home, when you are traveling, when you lie down and when you get up".*

In this verse it is clearly said that teaching is carried out tirelessly both in the family and in the community without knowing the place, the time that is being faced, so that they know and believe in the true God, namely Jesus Christ the Savior of mankind. So that they want to do their duty, which is to be filial and do what God commands to their fellow humans. Furthermore, it is said in the Book of Proverbs 22:6 that it reads:

*"Educate the young man according to the teachings that are proper for him, so that in his old age he will not deviate from that path".*

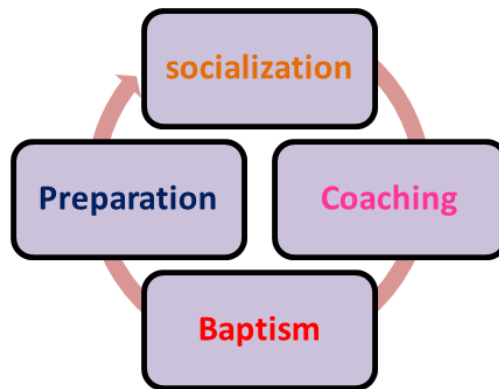
From this verse, it can be concluded that catechism guidance is necessary for adolescents, namely as a guideline or guide throughout life until they reach adulthood. For this reason, the church needs to equip and build its congregation with the continuous teaching of God's Word. So catechism contributes to shaping Christian character and values. Catechism plays an important role for youth as a preparation to enter a life of service. Youth can understand salvation through Jesus' crucifixion in its entirety. Salvation is redemption from sin, that is, salvation that frees man from God's judgment and judgment obtained only through faith and confession of the gospel that brings man to Christ.

According to the author's observation, adolescents' understanding of catechism at the Rehoboth Ebenhaezer church in Bandung is still relatively minimal and even seems to fail to understand. Many teenagers think that catechism is a church program only a condition for marriage. With such an assumption, they seem as if what they have received from the church tends to be interpreted only as knowledge without applying it in daily life. Therefore, catechism guidance is indispensable for building good Christian youthful character. Some of the things that need to be prepared in terms of catechism guidance are as follows:

- a. Prepare a schedule for the catechization guidance period.
- b. Open catechism registration for youth or congregation who longs to be baptized.
- c. Catechism guidance is carried out by teachers who have received validation from the pastor of the church.
- d. Catechism teachers prepare teaching materials in accordance with Christian doctrine and faith.
- e. Catechism programs that aim to prepare youth to participate in ministry.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND METHODS**

The implementation methods and stages carried out in this PKM start from preparation, socialization, coaching, and baptism of church water. The implementation of catechization lasted 10 meetings held every Sunday after morning worship with a duration of one and a half hours. The implementation of this PKM activity uses a participatory method where the target partners are directly involved in receiving materials and discussions. In addition, catechism participants began to be involved in church services under the guidance of mentors.



**Figure 1. The Process of Implementing Community Service Activities at Rehoboth Ebenhaezar Church, Bandung**



**Figure 2. Location of Rehoboth Ebenhaezar Church Bandung**



**Figure 3. Implementation of Teaching for 14-year-old Teenagers by Mr. Yusak Sanjaya**

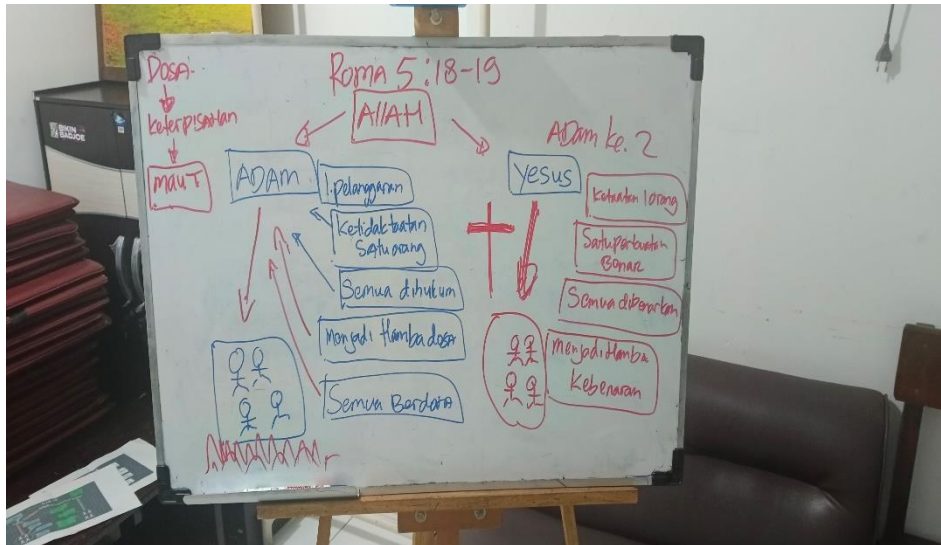


Figure 4. Catechism Teaching Materials



Figure 5. Sharing the Teaching of Teenagers Aged 15 years by Ayu Nirmala Laia



Figure 6. Sharing Teaching for Teenagers aged 16-17 Years by Catherine Fidelia

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Catechism is a process of faith education carried out by the church to prepare a person, both children, adolescents, and adults, to understand and live the teachings of the Christian faith. This process aims to equip participants with knowledge of the doctrines, morals, and practices of Christian life, so that they can live according to gospel values and become active and responsible members of the church. Catechism is usually done before a person receives the sacrament of baptism (for those who have not been baptized) or confirmation (for those who have been baptized). The age requirements of catechization participants vary depending on local church traditions and policies. However, in Rehoboth Ebenhaezar Bandung church in general, catechism can be divided based on adolescent age group (14-17 years). Catechism for youth is more in-depth and involves discussions about doctrine, morals, and challenges of faith in daily life. Youth are invited to understand their faith more critically and responsibly. While the adult category (21 years and above) catechization is usually more intensive and in-depth, especially for those who have just decided to become Christians or want to deepen their faith. The material provided includes a more complex theological understanding, the history of the church, and the application of faith in adult life.

Catechism is carried out to form catechism participants into believers, rich in knowledge of God's Word, and integrity in Christian life so that through catechism participants are invited to develop Divine values such as love, honesty, humility, and responsibility. Catechism can also be a means to train adolescents not to fall into deviant behaviors. In the context of catechism, it is very important to foster the interest and attention of adolescents so that they can focus more on the material being taught. In addition, catechism teachers need to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods and the extent to which students are successful in understanding the material. To achieve this, the church must provide effective, relevant, and engaging programs for youth. Teachers must also consider the development and changes that adolescents experience toward adulthood, including issues such as school socializing, sexuality, family life, friendships, as well as global issues such as war and the economy. It is also important to discuss what it means to be a mature disciple of Jesus. The Church must be able to provide the best programs and materials available, that are appropriate to the needs and understanding of the youth, and that are able to capture their attention. Adolescents should also be trained in leadership, so such programs should ideally be designed by, from, and for the adolescents themselves. The Church needs to provide side catechization materials that are relevant to the development of the times and deliver them in a method that is not boring in order to attract the interest of teenagers. In addition, the church must motivate young people to come to catechism of their own volition, because often boredom arises because the material presented is less attractive. There are at least several factors that affect the lack of interest of adolescents in participating in catechism, including: meeting places that are not suitable, the material provided by the teacher is less relevant to the needs of today's adolescents, the teacher is less active in discussing with the participants, there are activities that attract more

attention to them at the same time, the teacher does not master the material, and parents who do not support the church program.

Baptism is a crucial step for Christian youth, where they express a willingness to take responsibility for their faith and Christian life. The activeness of youth participants in catechism depends heavily on their willingness to plan directed and motivated learning. Similarly, the church must ensure catechism teachers carry out their duties well, according to the mandate of Matthew 28:19-20: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And know that I am with you always, even unto the end of the age." Catechism teaching is not enough just to test Bible knowledge or theory. More than that, youth must understand and realize the significance of this confession of faith for their personal lives.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The youth catechization activity at the Rehoboth Ebenhaezar church in Bandung aims to form a good Christian character in teenagers. Based on its implementation, it is concluded that this success depends heavily on the competence of catechism teachers. Teachers are not only required to have a deep understanding of Bible knowledge and church history, but more importantly, they must also be able to form the character of youth through the material presented. This means teachers must have the ability to not only transfer information, but also inspire and guide youth toward positive behavior change and strong Christian values. Currently, in the Rehoboth Ebenhaezar church congregation in Bandung, there are two catechism teachers who are responsible for guiding teenagers. The teaching schedule is arranged every Sunday. This division of schedules allows the two teachers to take turns delivering material. Each teacher brings their own expertise and perspective, enriching the learning experience of the youth. The material delivered is tailored to the shared and mutually defined theme, ensuring that all important aspects of catechism education are comprehensively covered. This collaborative approach to theme determination also creates harmony in teaching and allows for continuity of topics from one session to another.

What is interesting about this catechization program is its emphasis on practical learning in addition to theory. Teaching is not only limited to the presentation of concepts in the classroom, but also involves practical activities designed to strengthen the understanding and application of faith in the daily lives of youth. Some of the practical activities carried out include leading worship, which provides opportunities for youth to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility in church service. In addition, retreat activities are held to provide an immersive spiritual experience, where youth can reflect, interact, and grow together in an intense atmosphere. Finally, family events or joint hangouts are also integrated into the program, which not only serves as a means of recreation, but also as a method to teach the values of cooperation, togetherness, and problem-solving in a fun and interactive context. This combination of theory and practice is very effective in ensuring that adolescents

not only understand Christian teachings intellectually, but also be able to live them out in real life in every aspect of their lives.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The author would like to thank all colleagues in the implementation team of catechism guidance activities at Rehoboth Ebenhaezar Church, Bandung who have provided opportunities and support in the process of implementing catechism guidance activities to these teenagers. Gratitude was also conveyed to Mr. Yusak Sanjaya and Mr. Dennis Limarwan as facilitators who have contributed directly in delivering and preparing the necessary supporting materials. The author also expressed his appreciation to the Rehoboth Ebenhaezar Church Bandung for providing a place and facilities. A big thank you to all the youth participants who were extraordinarily enthusiastic about participating in every meeting session so that this service process could run smoothly and have a real impact on the youth of the church.

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