



Puppets for Blessings: Enhancing the Skills of Educators and Children's Ministry Workers Through Puppet

Vena Melynda Tiladuru¹, Nenny Natalina Simamora², Desmiyati Rambu Loda³, Alvionita Rambu Ngguna⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Sekolah Tinggi Teologi Studi Alkitab untuk Pelayanan Pedesaan Indonesia, Ciranjang

✉ authors@gmail.com; melitiladuru550@gmail.com, nennywan@gmail.com,
desmitha0231@gmail.com, alvionitarambungguna16@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article history

Received : 20-2-2026

Revised : 31-5-2026

Accepted : 31-5-2026

Keywords

Puppets for Blessings program; enhancing teaching skills; children's ministry workers; puppet stage method; Christian education for children.

ABSTRACT

This community service program titled "Boneka untuk Berkat" aimed to improve the teaching skills of Sunday school teachers and children's ministry workers through puppet stage training. The background of the program addresses the lack of creative teaching methods and inadequate training among child educators, which hampers the effective communication of biblical messages. Puppet theatre was introduced as a creative, interactive, and age-appropriate media to communicate God's Word to children. The method involved three main stages: (1) Theological foundation and principles of puppet ministry, (2) Practical session on creating hand puppets using simple materials, and (3) Simulation and stage performance guided by a puppet ministry team. The training was conducted on April 1, 2025, at STT SAPPI Cianjur, attended by 92 participants including Sunday school teachers, kindergarten teachers, and theology students. Evaluation results from 50 respondents indicated that 60% found the materials highly relevant, 54% said the goals were fully achieved, and 62% felt highly enthusiastic. The training proved successful in equipping participants with practical skills in puppet performance and script creation, enhancing their capacity to deliver biblical messages in an engaging manner. This initiative contributes to the integration of performing arts with Christian education and demonstrates the value of experiential learning in ministry contexts. Further development of curriculum-based modules and exploration of digital puppet shows are recommended for broader and sustained implementation. This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



A. INTRODUCTION

Previous research indicates that the development of a child's faith is significantly influenced by their educators. This is evidenced by the findings of Pandensolang et al., who



cited Mandagie's study on Sunday school ministry at the GMIM Immanuel Kamangta congregation in Manado. The study revealed that suboptimal ministry performance was attributed to the educators' educational backgrounds, lack of experience, and insufficient participation in teacher training programs (Pandensolang et al., 2016). Children are unlikely to place their faith in the Lord Jesus without a realization of their sinful nature. The Bible teaches that all individuals are sinners (Rom. 3:23), including children, and that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). However, Scripture also affirms that God does not desire sinful humanity to perish; rather, out of His love for mankind, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, so that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

As sinners, children require the Lord Jesus not only as a loving figure but also as their personal Savior. Consequently, adult believers who love the Lord must communicate His love and work accurately and in an age-appropriate manner. Nevertheless, not everyone possesses the ability to convey the gospel and Christ's work effectively to children. Special skills and creativity are required to ensure that the message is correctly understood. A lack of preparation and training for educators can render their ministry ineffective; in a Sunday school context, such ministry often defaults to merely singing and reading the Bible. Therefore, training for educators and children's ministry workers is essential to enhance their pedagogical capabilities (Sihombing et al., 2023). Regardless of the biblical truths being shared, educators must assist children in comprehending the message in accordance with their developmental stages. A crucial principle for educators is that regardless of the biblical topic addressed, focusing on Jesus is the most appropriate method for teaching Scripture (Klumpenhowe, n.d.). However, Christ-centered biblical messages are often poorly understood or received by children because educators lack the necessary skills for effective delivery (Siswoyo, 2018). If children can correctly grasp and receive biblical messages, it will facilitate their knowledge and experience of God within their own context, forming an integral part of their spiritual life. Children often struggle to concentrate when teaching is delivered solely through verbal narration; thus, appropriate methods are required. The emphasis here is on conveying the message of Jesus through methods that are engaging for children (Flesia Nanda Uli Boangmanalu, 2023).

One practical, effective, and efficient method for delivering biblical messages to children is through puppetry. Puppetry captures children's attention, making the message more accessible. Puppets can be utilized in various settings to teach biblical values, moral lessons, and to stimulate the imagination. This medium can be employed either with or without a puppet stage. Educators can master these techniques to maximize the impact and appeal of their teaching in alignment with established objectives (Karimah, 2022). The use of a puppet stage is generally more engaging for children than puppetry alone. Dramatic methods and puppet stages are highly favored by children due to their creative and attention-grabbing nature (Hasibuan, 2024). Specifically, the skills required for puppet stage performances necessitate specialized training to achieve optimal results. (Widiyaningtyas & Jundriwan Yalaling, Yudianto, 2024) citing Loy Chee Luen, state that the puppet stage serves as a multifaceted educational tool that not only entertains but also fosters imagination and creativity. Research highlights its significant role in enhancing communication, emotional expression, and social-cognitive development across various contexts, particularly for children with special needs. For instance, children with intellectual disabilities have shown improvements in learning and social interaction through puppet manipulation (Widiyaningtyas, Yalaling, & Yudianto, 2024). Richards also emphasizes that a child's faith grows through various developmental domains: cognitive (how children think), social (how they relate to and learn from others), and moral (how they integrate moral and abstract religious concepts). These factors must be carefully considered by educators (Richards, 2007).



Regarding the importance of puppet stage ministry, the PEPAK Team notes that well-packaged puppet ministry focuses on three domains (VonSeggel & Dale, 2010):

1. **Group Ministry:** Puppet teams consist of small groups. Regular rehearsals provide a platform for sharing prayer requests and personal concerns, fostering mutual care. Team members gain confidence, learn to reach out to others, and grow in their understanding of themselves and God.
2. **Church Ministry:** Puppetry is an effective tool for teaching and entertaining all age groups. It can unify various demographics within the church, from Sunday school classes and youth programs to post-service fellowships.
3. **Community Ministry:** Active puppet teams often gain access to venues that may be closed to other forms of ministry. Performances are generally well-received in public schools, community organizations, and areas that are otherwise difficult for evangelists or traditional drama groups to penetrate.

Based on the aforementioned points, puppets can be a significant blessing in children's ministry and education, particularly in spiritual contexts that require age-appropriate approaches. Children absorb information more effectively through visual methods, storytelling, and direct interaction (Sih Jami Rahayu et al., 2024). Therefore, creative media such as puppet stages serve as a potential alternative for delivering biblical values in a fun and comprehensible manner. However, many educators still lack innovative skills. This community service project (PkM) aims to address this need by equipping educators with the technical skills to use puppet stages as an effective medium for teaching.

STT SAPPI conducted this initiative to enhance the skills of children's ministry workers in utilizing puppet stages. The program provides creative, fun, and relevant teaching methods to increase children's engagement and understanding of the Word of God through interactive means. Through the "Puppets for Blessings" program, it is expected that educators will not only gain technical proficiency in puppetry but also understand how to draft scripts, construct spiritual messages, and create memorable learning experiences, thereby strengthening the relationship between educators and the children they serve.

B. METHODS

The training process was conducted through the following stages:

1. Preparation and Socialization

The initial phase involved disseminating information regarding the program through digital flyers on social media and physical posters distributed to churches and Christian schools involved in children's ministry. This socialization process commenced three weeks prior to the event. The primary objective was to recruit participants, specifically children's ministry workers, formal school teachers, Sunday school instructors, and individuals with a demonstrated interest in children's ministry.

2. Schedule and Venue

The program was held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at the STT SAPPI Cianjur campus. This date was strategically selected to maximize participation, as it coincided with a public holiday period (Eid al-Fitr holidays).

3. Training Sessions

The training program equipped participants through three progressive sessions:



Session I: "Theological Foundations and Principles of Puppet Ministry." This session provided participants with an understanding of the significance of creative communication in children's ministry, the educational value of puppet stages, and fundamental techniques for delivering spiritual messages through puppetry.

Session II: "Practical Hand Puppet Construction." Participants engaged in a hands-on workshop to create simple puppets using accessible materials. This session aimed to equip participants with basic skills in designing and constructing puppet properties tailored to specific narratives.

Session III: "Simulation and Performance." Under the guidance of instructors and the STT SAPPI puppet ministry team, participants practiced puppet manipulation through role-playing, dialogue delivery, and movement coordination on a designated puppet stage. Each group was given the opportunity to present a short performance as a practical rehearsal.

4. Program Evaluation

At the conclusion of the program, participants were required to complete an evaluation form to measure the success of the initiative. The implementation team utilized a written questionnaire as the primary evaluation instrument. The assessment covered several key aspects, including the clarity of training information, the achievement of program objectives, the participants' comprehension of the materials and skills acquired, as well as suggestions for future training themes.



Figure 1 Operational Steps of the Program

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the initial registration data, a total of 92 participants expressed interest in this training program, comprising Sunday school teachers, kindergarten teachers, and theology students.

1. Activity Preparation and Socialization Stage

Prior to the implementation date, the organizing committee held an online technical meeting with the speakers on Saturday, March 1, 2025. The objective was to align perceptions regarding the activity flow, task distribution, material readiness, and other technical requirements, such as equipment, time allocation for each session, and spatial arrangement. This stage served as a critical coordination phase to ensure that the activities were conducted smoothly and in an organized manner.



Figure 2 Technical Meeting



Figure 3 Flyers and Posters

2. Activity Class Implementation Stage

A) First Session: Theological Foundations and Principles of Puppet Ministry

The narration of Biblical content using puppets serves as a medium or auxiliary tool to facilitate children's understanding of the Word of God. The utilization of such media must remain subject to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In the Scriptures, God employed media to convey His Word, specifically through the Lord Jesus as the Mediator (Banamtuan et al., 2022). Furthermore, the Bible records numerous instances where Jesus utilized visual aids to convey His message, such as in the miracle of the five loaves and two fish. The following are several types of teaching aids that should be adapted to children's learning styles: 1) Visual aids are designed for children who absorb information more effectively by observing movement. 2) Auditory aids cater to children whose learning style is optimized through hearing. These aids

are used to produce music or sounds that support the delivery of God's Word. 3) Kinesthetic aids are suitable for children who learn best through physical activity (body movement) or by being directly involved in the narrative.



Figure 4 Presentation of Material in Session 1

B) Second Session: Steps for Hand Puppet Construction and Manipulation Techniques

The construction of hand puppets requires several essential tools and materials, including: socks, cardboard, a hot glue gun, foam/sponge, pom-poms, wool yarn, felt fabric, craft eyes or buttons, plastic spoons, plastic bottles, scissors, and permanent markers. The construction steps are as follows: 1) Cut the cardboard to fit the size of the hand. 2) Attach the pre-cut foam to the cardboard, positioning it at the top to resemble the upper part of a mouth. 3) Slit the toe end of the sock to form a mouth opening, then insert the cardboard and foam assembly. 4) Secure the cardboard and foam to the interior of the sock using adhesive to define the mouth structure. 5) Cover the interior mouth assembly with felt fabric to ensure a neat and professional finish. 6) Create and attach a tongue inside the mouth to enhance the puppet's appearance. 7) Construct the eyes (using the ends of plastic spoons), nose, hair, or other desired character features. 8) As an alternative to foam, a transparent plastic bottle may be bisected and attached to the upper part of the cardboard mouth assembly. 9) When utilizing a plastic bottle, the assembly can be inserted directly into the sock without additional cutting (Permana, 2015).

Hand Puppet Manipulation Techniques: Selection of Puppet Types: 1) The physical dimensions of the puppets must be proportional to the size of the audience. The types of puppets employed can be categorized into soft puppets and hard puppets (Joko Sulianto et al., 2014). 2) Voice Characterization: The process of vocal imitation follows a sequence of silence, listening, and replication. Three primary vocal ranges are utilized: low, medium, and high (often employing a musical scale for speech). The high-pitched range is typically used for child characters or female roles, whereas the low-pitched range is designated for large-statured figures or elderly characters (Muazar Habibi et al., 2022). The medium range is generally reserved for the narrator. Facial distortion by the storyteller is necessary to produce vocal qualities appropriate to the puppet's role. For instance, widening the mouth shape helps produce a child-like character voice, while protruding the lips facilitates the voice of an elderly character. To simulate the voice of a grandparent, the storyteller may tuck the lips inward (mimicking edentulous speech). Furthermore, dialects or accents are used to represent specific

regional identities or character traits, such as using a hesitant speech pattern to portray a stutter or emphasizing specific vowels to indicate a regional accent. Additionally, "nose voice" or nasal resonance can be utilized to imitate certain dialects. A critical aspect for the storyteller is lip-syncing – ensuring the synchronization of the puppet's mouth movements with the articulated speech (Anggraini, 2019).



Figure 5 Handpuppets Created by Participants

C) Third Session: Simulation and Performance

In the third session, participants were divided into several groups, each consisting of 8 to 10 individuals, and were supervised by three committee members from the puppet ministry team. Each group was required to present a short performance based on a pre-prepared script. The primary focus of this performance was on dialogue practice, the synchronization of vocal delivery with puppet movements, and team collaboration (Zendrato & Harapan, 2019).



Figure 6 Simulation & Performance of Each Group



3. Program Evaluation

The program evaluation was conducted by distributing and collecting feedback from participants via Google Forms. Based on the questionnaires completed by 50 respondents, the results of the training program evaluation were analyzed using several key indicators.

A) Relevance of Material to Participant Needs

The data shows that 60% of respondents (30 individuals) found the material highly relevant, 38% (19 individuals) rated it as relevant, and 2% (1 individual) considered it less relevant. This indicates that the majority of participants perceived the training content as well-targeted and effectively addressing their specific ministry needs.

B) Achievement of Activity Objectives

Approximately 54% (27 individuals) stated that the activity objectives were highly achieved, 44% (22 individuals) reported they were achieved, and 2% (1 individual) felt they were less achieved. Overall, these results demonstrate that the program successfully fulfilled its goal of enhancing participants' skills in children's ministry through the puppet stage medium.

C) Clarity of Material Delivery by Instructors

The evaluation revealed that 56% (28 individuals) found the delivery of material to be very clear, 40% (20 individuals) rated it as clear, and 4% (2 individuals) found it less clear. This level of clarity suggests that the instructors successfully established effective communication and delivered the material in a systematic and communicative manner.

D) Appropriateness of Implementation Timing

Regarding the schedule, 34% (17 individuals) found the timing highly appropriate, 50% (25 individuals) found it appropriate, while 16% (8 individuals) considered it less appropriate. Although the majority were satisfied with the schedule, the significant "less appropriate" figure (16%) indicates a need for improved time management in future sessions. This discrepancy occurred because the duration of activities exceeded the original schedule. The organizing committee should consider allocating more time for future sessions, particularly for simulations and puppet stage rehearsals, which often require more time than initially projected.

E) Enthusiasm Toward Activity Participation

A significant 62% (31 individuals) expressed high enthusiasm, 36% (18 individuals) were enthusiastic, and 2% (1 individual) were less enthusiastic. This high level of engagement suggests that the interactive and applied nature of the puppet stage training method is highly favored by participants and aligns with their ministry requirements for children.

F) Preparedness of the Organizing Committee

The evaluation showed that 54% (27 individuals) perceived the committee as highly prepared, 42% (21 individuals) as prepared, and 4% (2 individuals) as less prepared. These findings indicate that the committee managed the activity with thorough preparation. Nonetheless, there remains room for improvement to ensure even higher standards for future programs.

Based on the evaluation results from the participants, it can be concluded that the activity, overall, was implemented successfully and smoothly. This assessment encompasses the information disseminated by the committee to each institution, the achievement of program objectives, and the quality of the material delivered by the facilitators. Several proposed themes to be considered for future training programs include ventriloquism workshops, youth and adolescent ministry development, creative Sunday school teaching methods, leadership training, and engaging scriptwriting for puppet stages. Additionally, the following recommendations were noted for future implementation: ensuring each session adheres



strictly to the predetermined rundown, and establishing a more practical and organized system for registration and group distribution. Furthermore, it was suggested that registration deadlines should be clearly stated not only in official letters but also on promotional flyers

D. CONCLUSION

The "Puppets for Blessings" training program successfully enhanced the skills of educators and children's ministry workers in utilizing puppets and puppet stages as interactive, creative, and age-appropriate instructional media. Evaluation results indicate that the majority of participants found the program beneficial and felt motivated to implement these methods within their respective ministries, both in ecclesiastical and formal educational settings. This initiative contributes to the existing body of research in two significant ways: 1) the integration of performing arts (puppetry) with the teaching of the Word of God for children – an area often overlooked in conventional teacher training; and 2) the application of an experiential learning model involving theoretical, practical, and simulation stages, which enables participants to transcend information reception and develop concrete skills through direct experience.

This training model serves as a viable reference for other creative pedagogical methods aimed at equipping ministry workers to deliver Christ-centered biblical teaching. Further research may be conducted to measure the empirical impact of puppet stage utilization on children's comprehension levels of spiritual content. Additionally, there is a need for the development of curriculum-based training modules to ensure the broad and sustainable adoption of puppet stages in formal schools, Sunday schools, and other Christian children's ministries. Future explorations should also consider the integration of technology, such as digital puppet stage videos or hybrid performances (offline and online), as an adaptation to the digital era in children's.

E. REFERENCES

- Anggraini, V. (2019). Stimulasi Keterampilan Menyimak terhadap Perkembangan Anak Usia Dini. *Raudhatul Athfal: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 3(1), 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.19109/ra.v3i1.3170>
- Banamtuan, M., Saudale, J., Irnawati Pellokila, I., Yanti Nggeong, F., Sibulo, D., & Indriani Sesfao, M. (2022). Workshop Pelayanan Anak Dan Remaja Melalui Contextual Teaching Learning Berbasis Pemuridan Di Gereja Masehi Injil Di Timor Jemaat Gunung Zalmon Labuan Bajo. *PATIKALA: Jurnal Pengabdian Kepada Masyarakat*, 2(1), 489–496. <https://doi.org/10.51574/patikala.v2i1.527>
- Flesia Nanda Uli Boangmanalu. (2023). Tantangan Dan Strategi PAK Anak dalam Konteks Indonesia Masa Kini. *Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi Katolik*, 6(2), 01–15. <https://doi.org/10.58919/juftek.v6i2.64>
- Joko Sulianto, Mei Fita Asri Untari, & Fitri Yulianti. (2014). Media Boneka Tangan Dalam Metode Berceritera Untuk Menanamkan Karakter Positif Kepada Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(2), 94–104. <https://doi.org/10.33830/jp.v15i2.419.2014>
- Karimah, I. (2022). Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar Materi Bercerita dengan Alat Peraga melalui Penggunaan Media Boneka. *Artikulasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Dan Sastra Indonesia*, 2(2), 144–155. <https://doi.org/10.17509/artikulasi.v2i2.68498>



Klumpenhower, J. (n.d.). *Kenalkan Yesus pada Mereka*. Momentum.

Muazar Habibi, M., Kadir Jaelani, A., & Nilawati Astini, B. (2022). Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara Melalui Media Boneka Tangan. *Journal of Classroom Action Research*, 4(4), 123-130. <https://doi.org/10.29303/jcar.v4i4.2356>

Permana, E. P. (2015). Pengembangan Media Pembelajaran Boneka Kaus Kaki Untuk Meningkatkan Keterampilan Berbicara Siswa Kelas Ii Sekolah Dasar. *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*, 2(2), 133-140. <https://doi.org/10.23917/ppd.v2i2.1648>

Richards, L. O. (2007). *Pelayanan Kepada Anak-Anak*. Kalam Hidup.

Sih Jami Rahayu, Farida Nugrahani, & Benedictus Sudyana. (2024). Eksplorasi Potensi Boneka Tangan Sebagai Media Pengembangan Keterampilan Berbahasa Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Onoma: Pendidikan, Bahasa, Dan Sastra*, 10(3), 2423-2432. <https://doi.org/10.30605/onoma.v10i3.3789>

Sihombing, W. F., Widiastuti, M., Waruwu, L., Lubis, B., & Tamba, T. (2023). Peningkatan Kemampuan Mengajar Sekolah Minggu di GPKB Lumban Tongatonga Ressort Aek Mabar Distrik V Humbang Kec. Siborongborong Kab. Tapanuli Utara. *Jurnal SOLMA*, 12(1), 231-237. <https://doi.org/10.22236/solma.v12i1.9887>

VonSeggel, L., & Dale. (2010). *Puppet: Ministry Magic Pusat Elektronik Pelayanan Anak Kristen (PEPAK) Panggung Boneka dalam Sekolah Minggu*. PEPAK .

Widiyaningtyas, E., & Jundriwan Yalaling, Yudianto, M. C. K. (2024). "Peningkatan Kreativitas Anak Melalui Panggung Boneka di Sekolah Minggu Gereja Pantekosta Tabernakel Tuban." *Opus Deo Jurnal PKM*, 1(1).

Zendrato, J., & Harapan, U. P. (2019). *Di Jakarta Barat Art Skill Training for Kindergarten and Elementary Students in West Jakarta*. 2.