



Building a Healthy Christian Family: Reflecting on the Story of Joseph in Community Service in Kupang City

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Abstract

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The family as the smallest unit of the social environment of society, has an important role in shaping individual character. Kupang, located in East Nusa Tenggara, is a city with a majority Christian population. Instilling Christian values in families today is a common challenge amid the rise of technological developments and cultural exchanges. The purpose of this activity is to provide an understanding of Christian values such as love, honesty, and integrity as demonstrated by Joseph, one of the figures in the Bible. This community service activity involved 32 members of the Christian family who are members of the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan association based in Kupang. The methodology used in this community service activity follows a qualitative approach with an interactive and participatory method. This activity lasted for 1 day and included material delivery and group discussions. The results of this activity showed that the participants had a deeper understanding of the values contained in the story of Joseph, such as patience, forgiveness, responsibility, and integrity. By understanding these values, the participants are expected to be able to apply them in their daily lives.

Abstrak

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Keluarga sebagai unit terkecil dari lingkungan sosial masyarakat memiliki peranan penting dalam membentuk karakter individu. Kupang yang berlokasi di Nusa Tenggara Timur merupakan salah satu kota dengan penduduk mayoritas Kristen. Menanamkan nilai-nilai kekristenan dalam keluarga saat ini menjadi tantangan umum ditengah maraknya perkembangan teknologi dan pertukaran budaya. Tujuan dari kegiatan ini adalah memberikan pemahaman akan nilai-nilai kekristenan seperti kasih, kejujuran dan intergritas sebagaimana ditunjukkan oleh Yusuf, salah satu tokoh dalam Alkitab. Kegiatan pengabdian masyarakat ini melibatkan 32 anggota keluarga Kristen yang masuk dalam perkumpulan marga Sihombing Lumbantoran yang berdomisili di Kupang. Metode yang digunakan dalam

kegiatan ini mengikuti pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode interaktif dan partisipatif. Kegiatan ini berlangsung selama 1 hari meliputi penyampaian materi dan juga diskusi dalam group. Hasil dari kegiatan ini menunjukkan adanya pemahaman yang lebih dalam dari peserta kegiatan mengenai nilai-nilai yang terkandung dalam kisah Yusuf seperti kesabaran, pengampunan, tanggungjawab dan integritas. Dengan memahami nilai-nilai tersebut, peserta kegiatan diharapkan dapat menerapkannya dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.

1. INTRODUCTION

The family is the smallest unit in society and plays a very important role in efforts to improve the welfare of the community, which is further expected to reduce the incidence of social problems. As a city with religious and cultural diversity, Kupang is located in the province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), with a Christian majority. Amidst the rapid development and modernization that often changes people's lifestyles, the challenges for Christian families are getting bigger. Rapid social change, the influence of technology, and lifestyle changes that are not in line with Christian values can affect the character building of the younger generation. Therefore, it is important for Christian families to be able to instill and teach good and true Christian values in everyday life. If explored further, it can be said that the family as the smallest unit in society including in Kupang has never experienced smooth sailing. The small stones in the household bring color to the family. To face the colors in the household, mental, moral and faith readiness is expected. When the colors or in the sense of small stones cannot be faced with a good level of maturity and Christian faith, it is not uncommon for families to experience chaos (Sudirman 2011). According to Homrighausen (1991), "the Christian family is a gift from God that is priceless. The Christian family plays a very important role as well as all the other ways the church uses for education". Walshe (2021) also emphasized that a healthy Christian family is characterized primarily by the active presence of all its members—father, mother, and children. The family is united, free from discord between the parents or among the children. The family frequently congregates daily as a unit. The parent seldom departs alone from the family. The children predominantly engage in activities together, rather than socializing with peers or participating in events separate from the family.

In today's increasingly sophisticated world with the discoveries of science and technology, there is no reason for human beings to be ungrateful to God for all the positive impacts the science and technology offers. Technology helps humans perform their tasks more effectively and efficiently. As Lee (2024) mentioned that technology, as a cultural phenomenon, fundamentally serves the advancement of humanity. Although this characteristic is presently highlighted and specific, narrow objectives such as efficiency and convenience are portrayed as the primary focus of technology, it has been developed since its inception for the advancement of human society and the creation of a better world.

Nevertheless, technology can also lead to negative impacts especially among christian family. Talking about building a quality Christian family cannot be separated from the influence of today's rapidly developing science and technology. Almost all family members today have their own cell phones for their personal needs, both in terms of pursuing education and for work purposes. This situation often makes each family member busy with their own world or focus mainly on the social

phenomena that occur. Over time, this situation can lead to a decline in human morals and character. Gunarsa (1995:68) says: “Actually, the family has a function that is not only considered as a successor to the offspring, the family is also the main source of education, because all knowledge and intelligence is placed primarily in the family”.

From the negative side and as a challenge faced by Christian families in character building, the Christian family today is beginning to be influenced by various foreign and local cultures, which is often a factor that can shake the integrity of the household. As Gabe (2022) found in his previous study mentioned that one of the most common challenges faced by Christian family is multiculturalism. Living in a diverse environment does not only give opportunity to grow but also can drive people into worse life. Therefore, support and guidance from a family is fully required to equip children with their adaptive ability in socializing with their community or society. Beside that, mental readiness, good communication and spiritual life in every household are means in an effort to bring wholeness and harmony to the family. This can be seen from the growth rate of Christians, which is increasing everywhere, but their morality is also declining. Other factors can also be a personal problem to a family problem, there are several other factors as well, namely: physical condition, mental-psyche condition, socioeconomic and cultural condition, and environmental condition. Boland (2010) said that every Christian needs to take time to investigate the contents of the Bible. We also need to think together about the articles of faith such as the creed.

Referring to the background presented previously, it is necessary to provide guidance and motivation to the people of Kupang City, especially in the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan group in Kupang City, as a service to the community with the aim of providing an understanding of Christian values that can be applied in the family through reflection on the story of Joseph. Where the story of Joseph can be a motivation and a role model for family life so that it becomes a strong and steadfast family in facing every problem and struggle in life, because in the end it will obtain a great future and blessings.

The story of Joseph in the Bible has inspired the Christian community in Kupang, especially the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan, to become a family that is able to endure every problem and struggle in life. This dedication is considered important in fostering and guiding Christian families with character, strong faith, and the ability to forgive others, as Joseph did in his life. He experienced injustice from his brothers, but with steadfast patience and sincerity, he was able to become the greatest. Therefore, the purpose of this service is to improve the moral quality, faith and ethics of Christian families in Kupang city, especially in the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan group in Kupang city, through a reflection on the story of Joseph.

2. METHODS

The methodology used in this community service activity follows a qualitative approach with an interactive and participatory method. This approach was chosen to ensure active engagement and direct involvement of Christian families in Kupang City, particularly the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan, in the process of learning and reflecting on Christian values through the story, with the following details:

Table 1. Preparation Activities

No	Series of Activities	Descriptions
1	Coordination with the organization's management	The community service team met directly with the organization's management to coordinate whether they could provide guidance to members, and the community service coming were warmly welcomed by the management.
2	Material preparation	The community service team prepared the material to be delivered from the opening to the closing with the theme "The Story of Joseph".
3	Simulation and technical implementation	The community service team rehearsed the material presentation

Furthermore, the service team gave an explanation and conclusion to the story of Yusuf, which had been discussed, which is that by studying the story of Yusuf, it can provide strong motivation to shape the character of a Christian family that is patient and strong in experiencing trials. The story of Joseph is also a form of motivation in shaping children to continue to respect themselves and keep striving despite many obstacles, because behind the suffering experienced, God has prepared a beautiful wreath of life as long as they remain faithful and loyal, humble and capable of showing forgiveness.

The participants in this community service activity were Christian families in Kupang City, particularly married couples and parents, mainly from the Sihombing Lumbantoran clan in Kupang City. The number of the participants involved were identified as follows: married couples, around 15 families; and teenagers/young adults, around 17 people. The venue for this activity was at the home of one of the community service participants which is located in Kupang City, Nusa Tenggara Timur. The media used in delivering this material were the Bible, pictures and posters from the story of Joseph, and a short film watched via cell phones. This community service activity was conducted on Sunday, March 16th 2025.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This community service activity was successfully realized by involving more than 30 Christian family members based in Kupang. The community service team delivered material about the story of Joseph, who was harmed by his brothers until he was sold to Egypt. Through this event, Christian families learn to be able to forgive others and their brothers and to be patient and remain faithful in temptation, not to be easily discouraged and not to be easily tempted by the lusts of this world. Afterwards the community service team open discussion groups to facilitate participants in interpreting the values of Joseph story to their respective family lives. Then the participants were asked to do reflective practice which is applying the values of the Story of Joseph in the daily life of the family.

After the activities, participants are expected to have a deeper understanding of the importance of character building in Christian families in everyday life. They realize that the family is the first and foremost place in shaping the character of children, where Christian values such as love, honesty, and integrity must be taught and applied consistently. The formation of strong character in the family not only affects the relationship between family members, but also has a direct impact on the social and spiritual life of children who will one day become part of society.

Furthermore, the participants also understood that the character building of a Christian family does not only focus on the spiritual aspect, but also on the moral and social aspects. In a life that is increasingly developing with the influence of globalization and technology, Christian families must be able to be the first fortress to provide guidance on living based on Christian values. This includes teaching about responsibility, discipline, compassion, and respect for others, all of which are the basis for shaping individuals who have good character, are useful, and have high integrity.

After participating in this activity, participants also became more aware that shaping the character of Christian families is a long-term investment that will shape a harmonious and peaceful society. A quality family will produce generations that are not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and spiritually strong. Therefore, every Christian family in Kupang City is expected to prioritize Christian values in character building, so as to create an environment that supports healthy personal development, and to become agents of positive change for the progress of society as a whole.



Figure 1. Group Discussion Activity

During group discussion, participants showed eagerness and engagement in asking questions and participating in the discussion. One participant shared about how his mindset changed after listening to the story of Joseph. As a whole, the result obtained from this community service activity is an increase in the understanding of the participants (Christian families) regarding the importance of character building and strengthening the faith of Christian families in Kupang, especially in the Sihombing Lumbantoruan clan group in Kupang City. Families can also apply the values contained in the story of Joseph, and these values can be applied in their family life so that a Christian family is

formed that is strong, patient, responsible and able to educate and guide children in the right direction (Proverbs 22:6, Deuteronomy 6:6-8).



Figure 2. Documentation of Participants and Community Service Team

As one of the verses in the Bible said, “But from a distance, his brothers had seen Joseph coming and harbored evil intentions”. They conspired to kill Joseph. On the other hand, Reuben realized that the intention was evil. He proposed that Joseph not be killed but thrown into a well, so that he could bring Joseph back to his father Jacob. When Joseph was also in Egypt as ruler, he invited and gave life to his brother during the famine season and no one harbored resentment and was able to forgive. (HKBP Headquarters 2024). Thus, the Christian families in Kupang City should be able to forgive and love each other in their relationships and families so that they can face the challenges and situations of an increasingly developing world.

After following these activities, participants intended to implement the principles conveyed in the Story of Joseph through tangible acts within their familial relationships. One of the action plans established was to foster open and honest communication within the family and to cultivate an environment of mutual support, especially in the face of challenges. Furthermore, participants were dedicated to exercising greater patience while addressing differing opinions and errors among family members, as well as striving to forgive and refrain from harboring resentments. By emulating Yusuf, they were resolutely committed to prioritizing Christian ideals in the upbringing of their children, ensuring that these children develop into adults of integrity and robust character, prepared to confront life's problems with confidence and compassion.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This activity has given participants a deeper understanding of the importance of character building in a quality Christian family, especially in the context of family life in Kupang City. Participants realized that the family has a fundamental role in educating and shaping the character of children through the application of Christian values, which include love, honesty, forgiveness, and integrity. In addition, learning from the story of Joseph also provides insight into the importance of

patience, responsibility, and forgiveness in facing challenges in family life. These values are very relevant to be applied in interactions between family members to create harmony and strengthen better family relationships. Kupang, as the capital of NTT Province, has a central role in creating an environment that supports the character building of Christian families. Through family education based on Christian values, it is hoped that the younger generation will not only excel in academics or careers, but also have strong character, noble character, and can be agents of positive change for the surrounding community. Therefore, it is important to explore more deeply the strategies and steps that can be taken to form quality Christian families in Kupang City, so that they can make a major contribution to creating a better society.

And based on the results of this activity, it is suggested that the participants, especially Christian families in Kupang City, be more active in instilling and practicing Christian values in their daily lives. This can be started by building more open communication, getting used to forgiving each other, and maintaining integrity in every action. In addition, churches and other religious institutions are expected to hold more frequent activities that explore Christian values in the context of the family to support the process of shaping the character of Christian families. Thus, it is hoped that every family can become a strong foundation in shaping a quality next generation, not only in academic aspects, but also in moral and spiritual aspects. The importance of character building for quality Christian families is not only the responsibility of the church or religious institutions, but also a shared responsibility between the government, society, and individuals in realizing a more harmonious life based on the values of love and peace.

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