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Strengthening the Values of Independence Within the Perspective of Christian Faith to Build a Paradigm of Holistic Church Growth: A Study at GSJKI Muarafajar Congregation

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Abstract
This Community Service (PkM) activity was carried out based on the need to strengthen the congregation's understanding of the values of independence from the perspective of Christian faith and to connect them with the life of the church and social responsibilities. The activity aims to contribute to strengthening the understanding and initial awareness of the congregation, children, adolescents, and young adults of GSJKI Muara Fajar regarding the relationship between Christian faith, the values of independence, and responsibility toward society. The method employed is a participatory-educative approach through seminars, Bible study, discussions, reflection, and evaluation. The activity was conducted on August 23, 2026, involving 50 participants. Evaluation was carried out through a questionnaire covering six indicators: material comprehension, material relevance, presenter quality, activity benefits, participant interaction, and readiness for implementation. Evaluation results showed that 85 percent of participants stated they understood the material, while material relevance reached 98 percent, presenter quality 96 percent, activity benefits 98 percent, interaction 94 percent, and readiness for implementation 95 percent. These findings indicate that the activity made a positive contribution to participants' understanding and initial awareness of the values of independence from the perspective of Christian faith. This activity can also serve as a foundation for the development of congregation guidance, discipleship, and social service that integrates Christian faith with national responsibility.

Keywords: christian character; citizenship; discipleship; social transformation; social responsibility

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INTRODUCTION

The church does not only function as a worship community but also has a responsibility to form congregation members who are capable of bringing the values of faith into social life. In the pluralistic context of Indonesia, church life needs to be directed toward the formation of character, social responsibility, concern for others, and the ability to build communal life. The implementation of Pancasila values in church life demonstrates that Christian faith can be manifested through attitudes of love, respect for others, communal life, and participation in community development (Samarenna, 2020). GSJKI Muara Fajar, Pekanbaru, is one church community situated within a society characterized by diverse social backgrounds and generational compositions. The congregation is not only composed of adults but also children, adolescents, and young adults who are an essential part of the continuity of church ministry. This condition provides the church with an opportunity to develop programs that are not only oriented toward the internal life of the congregation but also toward forming a generation that understands its responsibilities in both faith and nationhood. However, one of the challenges faced is the continuing need to strengthen the congregation's understanding of the relationship between Christian faith, the values of independence, and responsibility as citizens.

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Independence tends to be understood primarily as a historical event and national commemoration, while its implications for the life of faith, character, ministry, and social responsibility have not always been developed as part of church formation. This situation indicates a gap between religious knowledge and its application in social life.

This problem is also related to understandings of church growth. Church growth should not be measured solely by an increase in the number of members or internal activities, but also by the quality of spiritual life, congregational maturity, involvement in ministry, and the church's ability to make an impact on society. Discipleship is one important strategy because the process can improve spiritual quality, ministry engagement, and members' readiness to become servants and witnesses of Christ (Elia et al., 2024). Research on the relationship between discipleship and church growth also shows that congregational involvement in the discipleship process is associated with the growth and continuity of church life (Elia et al., 2024). This need is increasingly important for children, adolescents, and young adults. The younger generation needs to receive guidance that helps them connect Christian faith with life as citizens. Christian civic education can serve as a means to form a generation capable of understanding social responsibility, valuing diversity, and integrating faith with social life (Widianing, 2022). In the Indonesian context, the church also needs to build an understanding that national life is a space for believers to carry out their social responsibilities without losing their faith identity (Taneo, 2025). Widianing even views the existence of Pancasila in the Indonesian context as part of the historical space that enables Christianity to fulfill its calling in the midst of the nation (Widianing, 2022).

Based on these conditions, there is a need for a community service program that is educational, participatory, and contextual. The program must go beyond providing knowledge about the history of independence; it needs to connect the values of independence with the principles of Christian faith, discipleship, character, ministry, and social responsibility. The approach through seminars, Bible study, discussions, reflection, and evaluation was chosen so that participants not only receive information but also have the opportunity to connect the material with their lived experiences. Programs of guidance and discipleship in the church context show that participatory approaches can be used to strengthen understanding, engagement, and spiritual growth among congregation members (Rompis et al., 2023). Values such as unity, justice, responsibility, caring, mutual cooperation, and respect for others have relevance to Christian values of love, service, integrity, and justice. This connection can serve as a foundation for the church to form congregation members who are able to live constructively in a pluralistic society. Studies on the harmony between Pancasila values and Christian values show that love for one's neighbor has implications for respect for humanity and communal life (Samarenna, 2020). Therefore, the social task of the church can be understood as one concrete form of the practice of faith through concern for social life (Siahaan, 2021).

This activity offers a solution in the form of strengthening the values of independence through the perspective of Christian faith, integrated with church growth development. This approach is directed at building the awareness that a growing church is one that produces disciples who are mature in faith, of good character, capable of service, and making a real contribution to society. Discipleship-based programs for children and adolescents also demonstrate the importance of contextual methods in building the involvement of the younger generation in ministry (Saudale et al., 2022). The novelty of this activity lies in the integration of civic values education, Christian character formation, discipleship, and church growth strategy with social impact in the context of the local congregation.

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With this approach, the commemoration of independence is not positioned as merely a ceremonial activity, but as a momentum for faith formation and the shaping of church members who are responsible toward the nation. Based on these problems and needs, this Community Service activity aims to: (1) enhance the congregation's understanding of the values of independence from the perspective of Christian faith; (2) connect those values with the responsibilities of church members in social life; (3) strengthen understanding of church growth through discipleship and ministry; and (4) encourage the congregation, children, adolescents, and young adults of GSJKI Muara Fajar to become church members with integrity who make a positive impact on society and the nation.

METHODS

This Community Service (PkM) activity uses a participatory-educative approach through seminars, Bible study, discussions, reflection, and evaluation. This approach was chosen so that participants not only gain knowledge but are also able to connect the values of independence with Christian faith, church life, and social responsibility. The model of formation through material presentation, discussion, and evaluation is relevant in activities for training church members to improve understanding, character, and involvement in ministry (Harita, 2024). The activity was conducted on Sunday, August 23, 2026, from 13:00 to 16:00 WIB at GSJKI Muara Fajar, Pekanbaru, Riau, with 50 participants consisting of congregation members, children, adolescents, and young adults. The activity was carried out by lecturers and students of STT Sidang Jemaat Kristus Batam. The stages of the activity include: identification of partner needs, preparation of materials and instruments, material presentation, discussion and reflection, and evaluation and follow-up. The materials were contextually developed by connecting the values of independence, such as unity, justice, responsibility, caring, service, and respect for others, with the principles of Christian faith. Delivery was carried out interactively through seminars, Bible study, question and answer, discussion, and reflection. Participants were directed to connect the material with family, church, and community life. This type of interactive approach is relevant to programs for building the capacity of church members that emphasize participant involvement in the learning process (Elia et al., 2024).

Evaluation was conducted for all 50 participants using a structured questionnaire administered after the activity. The evaluation aimed to determine the achievement of learning objectives and participants' responses to the implementation of the program. The instrument covered six indicators: material comprehension, material relevance, presenter quality, activity benefits, participant interaction, and readiness for implementation. These six indicators were used to assess aspects of knowledge, reception, learning process, benefits, and the likelihood of applying the activity's outcomes. The use of indicators of comprehension, relevance, benefits, presenter quality, and commitment to implementation is also used in evaluating capacity-building activities for church ministers (br Sembiring, 2025).

In addition to the questionnaire, the evaluation was supported by observation, question-and-answer sessions, discussions, and participant reflection. Questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages, while observation and reflection data were used to clarify participants' responses during the activity. The achievement percentage was calculated by comparing the number of positive responses with the total number of respondents. The activity was deemed successful if at least 80% of participants gave positive responses on each predetermined indicator. The evaluation results were used as a basis for identifying aspects that had been achieved

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and aspects that still needed strengthening. The evaluation also served as a basis for developing follow-up plans together with the partner, such as Christian civic education, cross-generational discipleship, social service, and programs for children and young adults. This approach is consistent with the understanding that discipleship can improve spiritual quality, commitment to ministry, and engagement of church members, so that church growth is not only measured by the number of members but also by faith maturity and social contribution (Darmawan & Ayub, 2019). Thus, the evaluation does not only function as a final measurement but becomes part of the process of quality improvement and program sustainability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The activity lasted three hours and was attended by 50 participants. Participant engagement was relatively active during the material presentation, discussion, question-and-answer, and reflection sessions. The composition of participants, which included several age groups, created its own dynamic, as understandings of independence and social responsibility could be discussed from different perspectives. In the opening session, participants were invited to distinguish between independence as history and independence as responsibility. Indonesian independence was not positioned merely as something achieved in the past but as a responsibility that continues to be carried out in present-day life. The discussion was then directed to the question: What does it mean to be a free Indonesian Christian? This question became a starting point for bringing together faith identity and civic identity. From a Christian perspective, human freedom cannot be separated from responsible freedom. Christian freedom is not the freedom to do anything, but the freedom to serve and to love. Paul states that believers are called to serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13). Thus, freedom has an ethical dimension. This concept is important for the church because freedom without responsibility can produce individualism. Conversely, freedom understood as an opportunity to serve will produce a more caring society.

Implementation and Activity Achievements

The PkM activity at GSJKI Muara Fajar was carried out through seminars, Bible study, discussion, reflection, and evaluation involving 50 participants comprising congregation members, children, adolescents, and young adults. The activity was directed at addressing the partner's need to strengthen the understanding that the values of independence are not only related to historical events but can also be lived through Christian faith and expressed in character, service, unity, caring, and social responsibility.

Table 1. Summary Evaluation Results from 50 Participants

No.	Evaluation Indicator	Positive Response (%)
1	Material Comprehension	85%
2	Material Relevance	98%
3	Presenter Quality	96%
4	Activity Benefits	98%
5	Participant Interaction	94%
6	Readiness for Implementation	95%
	Overall Average	94.3%

The evaluation results showed a positive response from participants toward the implementation of the activity. A total of 85% of participants stated that they understood the material presented. The

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assessment of material relevance reached 98%, presenter quality 96%, activity benefits 98%, interaction during the activity 94%, and readiness to implement the material 95%. These data indicate that the activity succeeded in achieving its direct objectives at the level of understanding, reception, learning experience, and initial readiness of participants. The 85% achievement on the comprehension indicator is a significant finding because it shows that most participants were able to understand the material connecting Christian faith with the values of independence. Nevertheless, this figure does not mean that all participants have experienced behavioral change or have applied the material in their daily lives. The data obtained are the result of an evaluation conducted immediately after the activity and are therefore more appropriately understood as an indication of strengthened understanding and initial awareness, rather than as evidence of long-term change.

Interpretation of Evaluation Data

Overall, the average for the five quality implementation indicators other than comprehension is 96.2%, while if all six indicators are combined, the average evaluation achievement is approximately 94.3%.

Table 2. Average Evaluation Analysis

Scope of Analysis	Average Score
Five quality implementation indicators (excluding comprehension)	96.2%
All six indicators combined	94.3%

An average of 94.3% indicates that the program received a very positive response. However, the evaluation must not rest solely on figures. The comprehension score of 85% indicates there is room for further strengthening, particularly in helping participants translate understanding into action. The difference between 85% comprehension and 98% benefits shows that participants felt the value of the activity even though not all participants reached the same level of understanding. This may occur because participants came from different age groups and educational backgrounds. Therefore, follow-up activities should employ a more differentiated approach. Children need visual media and simple activities; adolescents need case studies and discussions; young adults need space to design social projects; while adults need discussions related to family, work, ministry, and community.

Key Changes in Participants

The primary changes that can be identified from this activity are at the level of understanding and initial awareness. Prior to the activity, the values of independence were potentially understood primarily in the context of history and national celebrations. Through this activity, participants were directed to view independence in relation to Christian faith, particularly through the values of love, unity, justice, responsibility, service, and concern for others. The evaluation data supports the existence of these learning outcomes. The comprehension rate of 85% shows that most participants received and understood the material, while the relevance rate of 98% indicates that the material was considered appropriate to the needs and lives of participants. The high assessment of activity benefits (98%) also demonstrates that participants saw a connection between the material provided and their lives of faith and service. Thus, the change that can be substantiated by the data is not long-term behavioral change, but rather an increase in participants' understanding and initial awareness regarding the relationship between Christian faith, the values of independence, and social

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responsibility. This finding is consistent with programs for training church members showing that a process of guidance through teaching, discussion, and discipleship can strengthen awareness, spiritual life, and ministry engagement (Harita, 2024).

This activity addressed the needs of GSJKI Muara Fajar through an approach that integrates faith formation with social life issues. The material does not stop at theological explanations of independence but is directed at practical questions about how church members can demonstrate responsibility as part of society. This approach is important because church growth is not only related to internal activities but also to the quality of spiritual life, ministry engagement, and the congregation's ability to bear witness in society. The high relevance score of 98% is an indicator that the material provided was appropriate to the needs of participants. Likewise, the benefits score of 98% shows that the program was perceived as beneficial to participants. Thus, the partner's initial needs were addressed through a model of guidance that is contextual, interactive, and applicable. Participants not only received material but were also given space to discuss and reflect on its application in family, church, and community life. This approach is consistent with research on discipleship that places the guidance process as a means to improve spiritual quality, commitment, and engagement of church members in ministry (Elia et al., 2024). Therefore, this activity can be viewed as a form of capacity building for the congregation that connects faith formation with social responsibility.

Potential Contribution to Church Growth

The term 'church growth' in this activity is used in a holistic sense, not as a numerically measured quantitative growth. The activity's evaluation data does not yet provide evidence of an increase in the number of members, worship attendance, the growth of ministry groups, or other quantitative indicators. Therefore, this activity cannot yet conclude that the program has produced church growth in an empirical sense. Nevertheless, there are several indicators that show the potential contribution to church growth. First, participant comprehension reached 85%, indicating learning achievement. Second, the relevance and benefits of the activity each reached 98%, indicating participant acceptance of the material. Third, readiness for implementation reached 95%, indicating initial readiness to connect learning with real life. Fourth, participant engagement in the interaction process reached 94%, indicating that the activity proceeded participatorily. These indicators are important because healthy church growth requires congregation members who not only attend church activities but also grow in their understanding of faith, have good character, are involved in ministry, and are able to fulfill social responsibilities. Barron demonstrates the existence of a relationship between discipleship and member engagement with church growth in Indonesia, while Elia, Herman, and Prihanto affirm the importance of discipleship in improving spiritual quality and ministry engagement (Elia et al., 2024). Thus, the results of this activity are more appropriately understood as an initial foundation with the potential to support church growth, rather than as evidence that such growth has already occurred. The model of relationship that can be formulated from this activity is that the strengthening of faith understanding can drive awareness and readiness for implementation; subsequently, if continued through sustained discipleship and service, this process has the potential to strengthen the quality of congregational life and ultimately support healthy and impactful church growth.

Based on the activity's results, the most realistic follow-up action is to integrate the themes of independence, Christian citizenship, and social responsibility into regular congregation development

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programs. The church can continue development through small groups, discipleship classes, Bible study, and special activities for children, adolescents, and young adults. These follow-up actions do not require complex programs but can be carried out by leveraging the existing guidance activities already running in the church. The second follow-up action is to develop simple social service activities that directly involve participants. The values of independence can be translated into concrete actions such as concern for those in need, mutual cooperation, service to vulnerable groups, environmental cleanliness activities, and other forms of social service. In this way, the material received does not stop at knowledge but is directed into service experiences. The third follow-up action is to build a cross-generational discipleship pattern involving adults, young adults, adolescents, and children. This pattern is important so that the values of faith and social responsibility can be passed on in a sustainable manner. Discipleship carried out consistently can become a means to strengthen spiritual quality and ministry engagement among congregation members. The fourth follow-up action is to conduct simple periodic evaluations. The church can re-evaluate participants' comprehension and implementation after several months through a brief questionnaire, interviews, or observation of ministry engagement. These follow-up evaluations are important to determine whether the initial awareness observed after the activity has truly developed into changes in attitudes, behavior, and involvement in ministry.

Program Lessons and Implications

One of the important lessons from this activity is that national themes can become part of faith formation when communicated contextually. The values of unity, justice, responsibility, caring, and respect for others share common ground with Christian values. Studies on the harmony between Pancasila values and Christian values also demonstrate a congruence in the principle of love for God and one's neighbors and respect for communal life (Samarenna, 2020). Therefore, education regarding independence can be developed not merely as a ceremonial activity but as part of the formation of character and social responsibility among church members. Another implication is the importance of involving all age groups in the development process. Activities involving the congregation, children, adolescents, and young adults open up opportunities for cross-generational learning. This can serve as a foundation for the church to develop service patterns that are not only oriented toward worship activities but also toward character formation, discipleship, service, and social engagement. However, the activity's results also have limitations. The evaluation was conducted immediately after the activity and therefore cannot yet measure behavioral change or the sustainability of material application. Moreover, the data obtained primarily describe the perceptions and initial comprehension of participants. Therefore, subsequent research or activities need to conduct post-activity evaluations over a defined period to determine whether increased understanding and readiness for implementation have truly developed into service practice and social engagement.

Taking these limitations into account, the main contribution of this activity can be formulated as the initial capacity strengthening of congregation members in understanding and internalizing the values of independence from the perspective of Christian faith. This achievement serves as a foundation that can be developed through discipleship, social service, cross-generational development, and ongoing evaluation. Thus, the relationship between this activity and church growth is potential and prospective in nature, not a claim that church growth has been empirically demonstrated.

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Independence as Faith Education

One important finding from this activity is the emergence of an awareness that independence can be part of faith education. Faith education does not only address the relationship between humans and God, but also how humans live together with one another. In Matthew 5:13–16, Jesus uses the metaphors of salt and light to describe the function of disciples in the world. Disciples are called to exert influence. In the Indonesian context, this principle can be applied through the life of church members who are honest, responsible, tolerant, caring, and actively building community. This understanding encourages a paradigm shift from a church that only ministers inwardly toward a church that ministers outwardly. The church still needs worship, fellowship, teaching, and internal development, but all of these are directed toward producing disciples who are capable of being witnesses of Christ in society. Tahalele asserts that the church has a responsibility to implement the value of social justice through respect for human dignity and the active involvement of Christians in national life (Tahalele et al., 2024). Thus, healthy nationalism can be one form of social responsibility for church members.

The Values of Independence and Christian Values

This activity developed a mapping between the values of independence and Christian values.

Table 3. Integration of the Values of Independence and Christian Values

Value of Independence	Corresponding Christian Value
Unity	Fellowship / Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12)
Justice	Justice and righteousness (Mic. 6:8)
Responsibility	Stewardship and accountability (Matt. 25:14–30)
Caring	Love for neighbor (Matt. 22:39)
Service	Servanthood (Mark 10:45)
Respect for others	Human dignity / Image of God (Gen. 1:27)
Mutual cooperation (Gotong Royong)	Bearing one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2)

This integration does not mean making the church a political institution, but rather forming church members who are capable of carrying out social responsibilities. In a pluralistic society, the church needs to develop a mode of presence that respects diversity without losing its faith identity. Studies on the exclusivism of evangelical churches in Indonesia and the spirit of Pancasila pluralism show that evangelical faith and the spirit of living together in diversity need not be placed in opposition (Tjandra & Deswanto, 2023). This provides an important foundation for the church to develop witness that respects a pluralistic society.

Holistic Church Growth

In this activity, church growth is understood holistically, that is, growth measured not merely by the increase in the number of members but also by growth in faith, maturity of character, involvement in ministry, healthy relationships, and the church's presence contributing to society. This understanding is important so that the term 'church growth' is not used excessively, since the PkM activity conducted does not yet have longitudinal data that can prove increases in the number of members, improved worship attendance, or long-term behavioral changes among the congregation. Based on the evaluation results, the contribution of this activity is more appropriately positioned as the strengthening of a foundation that supports holistic church growth. The achievement of 85%

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comprehension, 98% material relevance, 98% activity benefits, 94% interaction, and 95% readiness for implementation shows that the activity succeeded in building participants' understanding and initial awareness. These achievements cannot yet be called evidence of church growth, but they represent an important initial condition for subsequent guidance and ministry development processes.

First, this activity strengthens the foundation of discipleship. Participants did not only gain knowledge about the values of independence but were invited to connect them with faith, character, responsibility, and communal life. This learning can serve as material to be developed in a more sustained discipleship process. Elia, Herman, and Prihanto affirm that discipleship plays a role in improving spiritual quality, commitment, and engagement of church members in ministry (Elia et al., 2024). Thus, this PkM activity can serve as one starting point for developing more systematic guidance. Second, this activity builds service awareness. The values of independence discussed through the perspective of Christian faith were directed not only toward understanding but also toward the responsibility to serve, to care for others, to maintain unity, and to contribute to social life. The 95% readiness for implementation indicates an initial readiness among participants to connect the material with real life. However, because this data was obtained immediately after the activity, this finding should be understood as initial readiness and cannot be used to state that service behavior has undergone change.

Third, this activity supports the formation of character among church members. The values of love, justice, unity, responsibility, caring, and respect for others can become part of the formation of Christian character expressed in social life. The relationship between Pancasila values and Christian values also demonstrates a congruence in the principle of love for one's neighbor and communal life (Samarenna, 2020). Therefore, education regarding independence can be developed into a means of character education and Christian citizenship in congregational life. Fourth, this activity can serve as an initial model for the development of church ministry that integrates faith formation with social responsibility. The high assessment of the relevance and benefits of the activity shows that this approach is acceptable to participants. This model can be developed through discipleship classes, programs for children and young adults, social service, Christian citizenship discussions, and cross-generational activities.

Thus, the relationship between the PkM and church growth in this study is contributive and prospective in nature, not causal and empirical. The activity conducted has not proven that the church has experienced growth quantitatively or has undergone long-term change. However, the activity has provided a foundation in the form of increased understanding, initial awareness, readiness for implementation, and learning experience that can be developed through sustained discipleship and ministry processes. On this basis, the holistic church growth model offered in this activity can be understood as a process: strengthening of faith → character formation → discipleship → service awareness → social engagement → development of congregational life. If this process is carried out consistently and evaluated periodically, development activities of this kind have the opportunity to contribute to healthy and impactful church growth. To prove this impact, follow-up evaluation is needed that measures behavioral change, ministry engagement, development of congregational life, and church growth indicators over a defined period.

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Discipleship as a Sustainability Strategy

The results of the activity show that a one-time seminar is not sufficient to produce long-term behavioral change. Therefore, the main output of the program needs to be continued through a discipleship system. Discipleship is important because the material that has been understood needs to be internalized. Participants not only need to know that Christians must be good citizens, but also need to be trained to live this out.



Figure 1. Discipleship Program, see original document

The discipleship model consists of six progressive stages. The first stage is learning: participants receive biblical and civic material. The second stage is comprehension: understanding the relationship between faith and life. The third stage is reflection: examining personal life in light of the material. The fourth stage is practice: applying learning through service. The fifth stage is sharing: communicating the experience with others. The sixth stage is multiplication: making disciples of others. This model enables church growth to proceed in a multiplicative manner.

Children, Adolescents, and Young Adults as Agents of Transformation

One of the strengths of this activity is the involvement of the younger generation groups. The younger generation should not be viewed only as recipients of guidance but as agents of change. Children need to be introduced to the values of love, unity, responsibility, and caring through age-appropriate methods. Adolescents can be involved in social activities and service projects. Young adults can be given space to design and implement community service programs. This approach is consistent with the principle of discipleship that places the younger generation as subjects of service. Programs for children's and youth ministry workshops based on contextual learning and discipleship demonstrate the importance of context-appropriate methods for more effective faith formation (Saudale et al., 2022). Thus, the commemoration of independence can be developed into a learning project. Children can organize church environment cleanliness activities. Adolescents can create anti-

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bullying campaigns. Young adults can carry out social activities. Adults can serve as mentors.



Figure 2. Group Photo with GSJKI Muarafajar Congregation, see original document

The Church as an Agent of Peace and Unity

Indonesia is a pluralistic society. Therefore, the church needs to develop a spirituality of peace. Unity does not mean eliminating differences but building the capacity to live together amid differences. This activity helped participants understand that Christian love has a social dimension. Christians are called to be peacemakers. This principle is relevant to national life because social conflict is often exacerbated by prejudice, discrimination, and the inability to engage in dialogue. A study on interfaith dialogue among Indonesian youth shows that dialogue can contribute to social cohesion, civic participation, and the ability to live together in diversity (Kusmayani, 2023). Therefore, the church can play a role through open social activities that build positive relationships with the surrounding community. Social service, environmental cleanliness, assistance to those in need, educational activities, and social cooperation can become forms of Christian witness.



Figure 3. Material Presentation, see original document

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Program Effectiveness

Based on the evaluation data, the program can be categorized as effective. The relevance and benefits indicators that reached 98% demonstrate that the activity's theme was appropriate to the needs of participants. Presenter quality at 96% shows that the material delivery process ran well. The interaction indicator at 94% indicates high participant participation. However, the comprehension indicator at 85% warrants attention. The effectiveness of an activity should not be measured solely by participant satisfaction; comprehension must be followed by changes in attitude and action. Thus, subsequent evaluations need to include post-tests, implementation observations, follow-up interviews, and measurement of social activities after the program. In this way, long-term impact can be measured more objectively.

Several challenges that could be identified include differences in participant age, educational background, ability to understand theological terms, and time constraints. An activity lasting only three hours means that not all concepts could be discussed in depth. Age differences also meant different learning needs. Material that can be understood by adults may not be immediately grasped by children or adolescents. Therefore, cross-generational learning strategies need to be developed into small groups based on age. Another challenge is the limitation of long-term evaluation. A questionnaire administered immediately after the activity primarily measures initial perceptions and comprehension. Follow-up evaluation is needed to determine whether participants are truly applying the material.

To address these challenges, the church can develop follow-up programs through four strategies. First, civic discipleship classes: independence and Christian faith material can be incorporated into regular discipleship classes, not necessarily as a formal subject, but as a discussion theme. Second, social service projects: each age group can carry out a simple social project that becomes a means of practicing love and responsibility. Third, cross-generational mentoring: adults can guide young adults, young ad ults guide adolescents, and adolescents assist children, so that the church builds a learning ecosystem. Fourth, periodic evaluation: the church can conduct evaluations every three or six months regarding comprehension, ministry engagement, social activities, and discipleship growth.



Figure 4. Diagram of Faith Growth and Church Impact, see original document

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This model shows that church growth begins with personal transformation. Personal transformation produces character. Character is formed through discipleship. Discipleship produces ministry engagement. Ministry brings the church outward to engage with society. Social engagement produces community transformation. Ultimately, the church grows not only in number, but in quality and impact. This model is one of the activity's practical contributions because it can be used by the church as a framework for evaluating ministry.

Theologically, this activity affirms that the church is called to be present in the world. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:19–20 does not only speak of conversion but also of discipleship. Discipleship means teaching believers to do all that Christ commanded. Therefore, a church that makes disciples must produce church members who are capable of applying faith in family, work, education, community, and national life. Jeremiah 29:7 provides an important principle about seeking the welfare of the city where God's people reside. Although this text has a specific historical context, the principle of social responsibility can serve as a point of reflection for the church today. Believers are not called to live separately from society but to seek the common good. Likewise, Matthew 5:16 affirms that the good deeds of believers can be a witness that glorifies God. Thus, social impact is not merely humanitarian activity but can become a form of witness of faith.

Implications for GSJKI Muara Fajar

For GSJKI Muara Fajar, the results of this activity can serve as a basis for developing more systematic ministry. The church can incorporate the values of independence and national responsibility into educational programs for children, adolescents, young adults, families, and adult congregation members. The church can also set broader growth indicators, for example, not only counting worship attendance, but also the number of congregation members involved in discipleship, the number of leaders being prepared, the number of families involved in ministry, and the number of social activities carried out. This approach enables the church to view growth in a more comprehensive manner.

Implications for Community Service Programs

For theological colleges, this program demonstrates that community service (PkM) can be a space for the integration of theological education and community needs. Lecturers and students not only transfer academic knowledge but translate it into programs that are beneficial to the church and society. This model also provides space for students to learn to conduct needs-based ministry. Students are not only academic participants but become part of a team that designs, implements, and evaluates activities. Similar activities can be developed at other churches by first mapping their needs. Themes can be adapted to the local context, such as family education, youth leadership, digital literacy, contextual evangelism, congregational economics, children's ministry, or environmental stewardship.

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Figure 5. Enthusiasm of Participants During the Activity, see original document

Lessons Learned

There are several important lessons from this activity. First, the theme of community service must originate from the real needs of the target community. The theme of independence became relevant because it was positioned within the context of faith and social responsibility. Second, interactive approaches are more effective than one-way lectures; participants need to be given space to ask questions and reflect. Third, church growth needs to be understood holistically: numerical growth must go hand in hand with spiritual growth, character, ministry, and social impact. Fourth, discipleship is the key to sustainability; seminars can increase understanding, but discipleship is needed to form habits and character. Fifth, the younger generation must be given space as agents of service, they are not only objects of guidance but can be agents of transformation. Sixth, quantitative evaluation needs to be combined with qualitative evaluation: the figure of 85% provides a general picture, but interviews and observations can explain deeper changes.

CONCLUSION

The Community Service activity at GSJKI Muara Fajar contributed to the strengthening of understanding and initial awareness among the congregation, children, adolescents, and young adults regarding the values of independence from the perspective of Christian faith. Evaluation results from 50 participants show positive achievements: 85% of participants understood the material, 98% assessed the material as relevant, 96% assessed the quality of presenters as good, 98% felt the benefits of the activity, 94% assessed the interaction as running well, and 95% demonstrated initial readiness to implement the material. These achievements indicate that the activity met its direct objectives in terms of comprehension, reception, and readiness for implementation.

In the context of holistic church growth, this activity cannot yet be concluded to have produced church growth or social transformation because the evaluation was conducted immediately after the activity and has not yet measured long-term change. The contribution of the activity is more

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appropriately understood as the strengthening of the foundation of discipleship, formation of Christian character, increased service awareness, and development of awareness of social responsibility. Discipleship carried out on a sustained basis can support the improvement of spiritual quality and the engagement of church members in ministry. Thus, this activity can serve as an initial model for the development of church ministry that integrates faith formation with the values of independence and social responsibility.

Recommended follow-up actions include the development of cross-generational discipleship, programs for children and young adults, social service activities, and periodic evaluation to determine the progress of material application. Follow-up evaluation over a defined period is needed to determine whether the strengthened understanding and initial awareness develop into behavioral change, increased ministry engagement, or broader social impact. Therefore, the potential contribution of this activity to healthy and impactful church growth should be viewed as a direction for program development, not as a result that has been proven.

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Author Contributions

Yohanes Nduru: contributed to the conceptualization of the activities and research, formulation of objectives and methodology, development of activity materials, coordination of community service implementation, analysis and interpretation of evaluation results, manuscript preparation, as well as substantive revision and approval of the final version for publication.

Herbin Simanjuntak: contributed to the development of the activity concept, preparation and review of materials, coordination of activity implementation, provision of input on result analysis, and review and revision of the manuscript.

Yustini Laia: contributed to the technical implementation of activities, participant coordination, collection of evaluation data, activity documentation, preliminary data processing, and provision of input on manuscript preparation and revision.

Listari Halawa: contributed to the administrative and technical preparation of activities, participant data recording, collection and verification of questionnaire data, activity documentation, assistance with evaluation data processing, and provision of input during the manuscript refinement process.

All authors have read, approved the content of the manuscript, and consented to the final version for

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest with respect to the conduct of the activities, data processing, preparation, or publication of this article.

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