



# INFORMATION LITERACY IN FAITH-BASED EDUCATION THROUGH TECHNOLOGY- ENABLED PEDAGOGIES: PERSPECTIVES FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

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**Abstract:** This paper looks at how information literacy works in faith-based education through technology-driven teaching methods, focusing on insights from Sunday school settings. In a digital world filled with information, faith educators need to promote critical thinking, ethical judgment, and responsible use of information based on spiritual values. The paper reviews existing studies on the use of digital tools and multimedia in religious teaching. It points out the chances for interactive and relevant learning, as well as difficulties with digital skills, information trustworthiness, and theological consistency. It stresses the importance of a tailored information literacy framework in faith-based education that encourages both technology use and moral growth. The review also finds gaps in teacher training and support from institutions, suggesting areas for future research and practice.

**Keywords:** Information Literacy; Faith-based Education; Sunday School; Sunday School Teachers; Technology-Enabled Learning.

## 1. Introduction:

Over the last few decades, human knowledge has witnessed an unprecedented surge, leading to remarkable technological advancements transforming our lifestyles, work ethics, and social interactions. The digital age of today has made technology an indispensable part of our day-to-day routines, encompassing activities such as learning and knowledge acquisition. Because of the rapid technological advancements, both teachers and learners now have access to unprecedented opportunities to enhance their learning experiences. Although the job of a teacher has existed since the dawn of time, it has evolved significantly throughout the years due to these advancements. To tackle the challenges facing modern-day children, teachers need to upskill and use different modes of teaching, such as online, offline, and blended learning, to facilitate effective learning in the present world we inhabit. Sunday school ministry has been a crucial aspect of Christian education for many years. It has served as a foundational element in the growth of Churches, as emphasized by Massengale (Massengale, 2017). The work of a Sunday School Teacher is among the highest ranks of educational work as it encompasses both intellectual and spiritual aspects (McKamy, 1902). It aims to promote spiritual growth, foster a feeling of community, and teach children about faith. The success of Sunday school as a mission field is positively influenced by the competence of its teachers (Rop et al., 2021). However, the absence of training and development programs may hinder their ability to contribute to the accomplishment of the Sunday school mission. Consequently, it is necessary to establish robust training and development

initiatives for Sunday School Teachers to assist them in carrying out their responsibilities effectively and contribute to the accomplishment of the Sunday school mission.

The inclusion of technology in Sunday school setups can establish a captivating learning experience for children in heavily technology-driven societies. By utilizing technology, Sunday school teachers can engage and associate with their students in innovative ways. However, it is important to highlight that many churches tend to overlook Sunday schools, leading them to persist in utilizing conventional teaching approaches. This has contributed to a widespread disinterest among Christian children, who find Sunday school to be lacklustre and unstimulating. Given the changing societal landscape, Sunday school teachers must adjust their teaching methodologies accordingly. To that end, they must cultivate a strong foundation in Information Literacy, which will empower them to be effective and competent teachers. In this way, they can construct an impactful and successful Sunday school ministry.

### **1.2 What is a Sunday School and what is the responsibility of a Sunday School Teacher?**

Sunday schools were first established in the 1780s by Robert Raikes in Gloucester, England. These schools are meant to provide Bible studies for children and youths who are associated with the Church. The role of a Sunday School Teacher encompasses planning and supervising Sunday School classes. They are usually employed by churches, appointed coordinators, boards, or committees. The selection of a Sunday School Teacher depends on their character and ability to effectively impart the lessons of the Bible systematically, with an emphasis on transforming lives. Some Sunday School Teachers have an educational background, while others are volunteers who possess a creed and a desire to teach.

Sunday School Teachers are an integral component in achieving the objective of Christian education within the Sunday School setting. Their influence and guidance are of paramount importance to imparting the values and principles of Christianity to their students. As Mambo points out, Christian education for children holds significant importance. This is because the foundational period of childhood is instrumental in shaping their basic personality structure, habits of life, and character (Mambo, 2019). Sunday School Teachers are tasked with providing the essential guidance for their students to lead a fulfilling life. It is therefore essential to recognize the crucial role that Sunday School Teachers play in accomplishing this goal.

### **1.3 Objective:**

1. To enhance the information literacy competency among the Sunday School Teachers
2. To conceptualize information literacy competency within Sunday school teaching in relation to digital and faith-based information environments

## **2. Information Literacy and Competency in the Context of Sunday School Teachers:**

Information literacy involves being able to identify information requirements, acquire access to information, assess its reliability and relevance, and appropriately apply information ethically in problem solving and decision making. As used in relation to Sunday School, information literacy would involve identifying spiritual/theological questions (concerning biblical stories, ethics, doctrine, etc.). Identifying appropriate sources of information in print or electronic format (various Bible versions, commentaries, videos, lesson plans, etc.). Assessing the information in terms of faithfulness to biblical teachings, sound doctrine, and appropriateness. Applying the information in one's own life of faith, in moral decision-making, and Christian service, observing issues of copyright protection, privacy, and ethical sharing of information in cyberspace. Information literacy frameworks that tie information literacy concepts to technology focus on three interconnected environments: the information process environment, technology itself, and the demands and purposes of the learner in his/her real-world environment. In religious education, discipleship, community, and mission play specific roles in these demands and purposes.

Information literacy is an essential skill in today's fast-paced world, where information is abundant and readily available. Being information literate entails possessing the skill to distinguish between credible and unreliable sources, utilizing various search strategies to find pertinent information, and analyzing and synthesizing information to make informed decisions. The ability to be proficient in information literacy is vital for success in any field and requires continuous development and refinement. In today's digital age, information is readily available at our fingertips, and being informed is crucial to making sound decisions. Information literacy empowers both Sunday School

children and teachers in Sunday School ministry. For students, it equips and prepares them to be active, analytical thinkers who can evaluate biblical texts, discern the reliability and authority of various sources and apply this knowledge to their lives. It encourages students to ask questions, seek answers, and engage in impactful and meaningful discussions. With Information literacy skills, students can connect all the more profoundly and delve into the religious material, strengthen their faith, and become responsible, educated and knowledgeable members of the congregation. For teachers, Information literacy skills are equally essential as they allow them to effectively evaluate and select appropriate resources to enhance their Sunday School lessons. Teachers must stay up-to-date with current biblical research, resources, and pedagogy to provide accurate and relevant information to students. Having these abilities will permit teachers to plan engaging lessons and effectively guide students in their spiritual journey.

As per Burton's observations, a Sunday School ministry necessitates a well-informed instructor who is a proficient speaker and capable of managing the class (Burton, 1899). In other words, for the success of Sunday School Ministry, it is paramount that the teacher possesses the necessary skills to deliver the material effectively, while also being knowledgeable enough to address any inquiries that might emerge. To this end, a teacher's ability to productively communicate with their students is indispensable, as it permits them to convey their message clearly and concisely and engage their students in a meaningful way. Thus, Sunday School Teachers must possess the requisite competency to create an environment conducive to learning and growth for their students. In the realm of education, it is incumbent upon teachers to cultivate the minds of young students. In doing so, they ought to impart not only the tenets of Christian teachings, but also furnish the children with the skills requisite for analytical thinking, focused study, and the conduct of research. By doing so, teachers can imbue their students with a broadened and more advanced knowledge that will enable them to perform effectively in their studies and professional pursuits (Woodger, 2020). Christian Religious Education Teachers must possess a range of skills and competencies to be effective in their roles. These competencies include effective communication skills, biblical literacy, technological literacy, and time management skills, along with proficiency in assessment and evaluation. Additionally, the ability to teach students how to apply concepts is considered a crucial skill set for such educators. Therefore, it is recommended that Christian Religious Education Teachers acquire and develop these competencies to enhance their effectiveness in the classroom Lase et al. (2021).

### 3. Technology-enabled learning in Sunday Schools:

In this era of technology, almost every human activity requires the utilization of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to be carried out effectively, including church-related activities (Kathambi et al., 2021) The incorporation of technology has proven to be an immensely effective tool in various aspects of work and academia. Utilizing technology has enabled individuals to perform their tasks with greater efficiency, accuracy, and speed (Wyche, 2006). The implementation of ICT in churches is an indispensable tool that cannot be dismissed. In today's world, where connection and communication are vital, the use of ICTs has become crucial for the growth and prosperity of any organization, including churches. Therefore, churches must recognize the advantages of implementing ICTs to enhance their outreach and engagement with their members and the community (Omotayo, 2017). Dyikuk suggested that church pastors and leaders use ICT to engage with their congregation and take advantage of new modes of communication (Dyikuk,2017).

The integration of digital technology into the realm of religious education has been observed to have a beneficial effect on the comprehension and appreciation of Christian beliefs. This phenomenon can be attributed to the fact that digital technology permits educators to employ various engaging and interactive teaching approaches that can greatly improve the learning experience of students. In addition, integrating digital technology into religious education can help students explore Christian teachings in a more convenient and accessible manner, which can ultimately foster a more informed and respectful understanding of the faith (Telaumbanua, 2020). Christian educators should adapt to include technology in their teaching practices, as technology is a valuable tool in facilitating the learning process (Tafonao&Purba, 2021)

Nowadays, children are well-versed in technology and expect lessons that are interactive and engaging. Making use of technology, and digital tools, and involving the students will not just enhance the effectiveness of lessons, but will also enable the students to have a fun and exciting learning experience. Digital Sunday School can be a great tool to enhance the quality of your Sunday School and make it more interesting for children to develop a lifelong love for learning. It helps the

children as well as makes life simpler for the teachers as they can access lesson plans, materials, and resources, that will allow them to plan and organize their lessons more efficiently (Kummer, 2023).

Sunday School can be revitalized by adopting multimedia presentations, interactive apps, and online resources. One example is the use of Bible apps that are equipped with interactive study guides, which can be incorporated into the curriculum (Kubie, 2024). According to Martin children in Sunday School typically find learning enjoyable when they can use their senses and participate in lessons. When Bible lessons go beyond just lectures, children tend to remember and understand the lessons even better. Interactive methods such as hands-on activities, object lessons, and reenactments have a considerable effect on young learners (Martin, 2024), utilization of visual media such as television, movies, and the internet can facilitate a more profound comprehension of the gospel in contemporary times (Hoffman, 2011).

The integration of technological tools within Sunday School is an effective strategy for enhancing students' learning and comprehension, surpassing that of conventional pedagogical approaches. By leveraging the benefits of technology in a structured learning environment, students can experience a more immersive and interactive education, improving their engagement and retention of material. Compared to traditional methods, the use of technology tools can provide a more dynamic and personalized learning experience, catering to the individual needs and preferences of each student. As such, the integration of technology in Sunday school holds tremendous potential for advancing educational outcomes and facilitating the acquisition of knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts.

#### 4. Technology-Enabled Strategies

i) Digital Bibles and reference tools: Bible apps and other online media allow learners to look at various translations, maps, cross-referencing, commentaries, and audio versions, which will help learners delve deeper into the Bible. Some of the activities that teachers may undertake include guiding the learners to do the are- Comparing various translations in order to understand what they mean, using a concordance in order to follow specific topics or particular words, looking at maps and pictures from the areas referred to in the Bible (Chaliha et al., 2024).

ii) Multimedia presentations: Video tools and presentation applications can be employed in order to showcase biblical stories, doctrine topics, and moral scenarios via visual media, animation, short films, or interactive quizzes. Visual examples such as animated stories and videos help convey abstract concepts or difficult situations and motivate discussion among students. Interaction quizzes may encourage students to look for additional information from the Bible or other sources. Thus, learning goes beyond passive listening and becomes an activity where students can check facts, interpret visuals, and express their own opinions (Ashton, 2018).

iii) Digital inquiry projects: Inquiry-based learning can prompt students to pose such questions as, "What is the biblical teaching on forgiveness?" or "How should Christians respond to online misinformation?" using curated digital resources (Lucey, 2026). Students can form teams and search through authorized websites, digital copies of the Bible, and other online articles. They can use a checklist in deciding which sites to use and which are aligned with Biblical truth. Students can later present their findings using easy-to-use technology such as slides, posters, or short video clips, as well as provide reasons why certain sources were considered credible.

iv) AI-enabled learning resources: In addition to providing age-appropriate and spiritually enriching learning activities, some emerging technologies enabled by AI include the ability to provide personalized learning, the generation of questions for practice, the identification of helpful reading passages, and simulation activities that require the integration of spiritually infused decision making. Teachers can utilize AI to assist in the creation of age-appropriate and spiritually enriched lesson material, including reflective questions, while cross-checking such content using reliable doctrine. Students can make use of proven AI-powered applications to engage in the study of the Bible, help develop vocabulary skills, and practice the analysis of explanation. This must be done under adult supervision and with the explicit recognition of AI limitations. Lucey, 2026).

## 5. Challenges and Ethical Considerations

- a) Digital divide and teacher readiness: Studies on digital divides show significant differences in the digital environments and digital literacies of urban and rural teachers, which impact the use of technology in teaching. In many instances, the lack of resources and infrastructure, together with the absence of adequate training on using technology in teaching, affects teachers' ability to utilize digital technologies effectively. Studies about teacher education show that just having access to technologies does not suffice; rather, they need some level of preparation so they can determine when and how to use technology to improve learning outcomes. This knowledge is applicable to Sunday school teachers, especially volunteer teachers who may lack pedagogical expertise and training on digital technologies (Sara et al., 2023). Rural congregations and low-income communities may lack reliable internet access, devices, or technical support, limiting the feasibility of technology intensive approaches.
- b) Teacher preparedness: Many Sunday school teachers receive little or no training in digital pedagogy, making it difficult to design technology-integrated lessons that genuinely enhance information literacy.
- c) Distraction and dependence: Inappropriate use of the device itself can become a distraction for the learner, and the over-reliance on technology might hamper their engagement directly with the Word of God and their community.
- d) Ethical and theological issues: Given that the internet is unfiltered, it can expose students to misinformation, false teachings, and even harmful material; the instructor should demonstrate theological discernment by using filters, and other safeguarding tools and modelling Christian ethics online.

## 6. Benefits of Information Literacy for Sunday School Teachers:

- a) Better decision-making: Sunday School Teachers who are well-informed and have access to reliable information are better equipped to make sound decisions.
- b) More effective leadership: Sunday School Teachers who are information literate are more effective in their role. They can all the more effectively engage better with their students and other church members, pinpoint areas for growth and plan strategically for their church's future.
- c) Better problem-solving skills: The ability to locate and use information effectively allows Sunday School Teachers to analyze problems and find appropriate solutions.
- d) Enhanced credibility: Sunday School Teachers who are knowledgeable and informed are viewed as credible sources of information. They can confidently communicate essential information to their congregation and respond to any questions with greater assurance.
- e) Personalized learning: Digital tools can adapt materials to differing learning styles (visual, auditory, reading/writing), making biblical content more accessible and memorable.
- f) Increased engagement: Engaging lessons, games, and multimedia presentations ensure that learners are involved actively in class.
- g) Building of critical discernment skills: Learners gain experience in assessing various types of digital information, cross-referencing data, and recognizing misleading information.
- h) The above advantages assist in both spiritual development and general competency within the digital information environment.

## 7. Practical Recommendations

Based on the literature and conceptual analysis, the following recommendations can guide Sunday school leaders:

- i) Provide targeted training for Sunday school teachers on basic digital skills, safe and ethical technology use, and inquiry-based pedagogy, drawing on available teacher education resources and church-based workshops.
- ii) Use less advanced but context-appropriate technologies like projection of pictures of Biblical locations, quiz games, and a good Bible app as initial steps before advancing to more sophisticated technologies.
- iii) Develop church-level guidelines for vetting digital and AI resources, including criteria for doctrinal soundness, age-appropriateness, and data privacy, and review these periodically.
- iv) Intentionally design lessons that link digital activities to clear information literacy outcomes, such as evaluating a website, cross-checking a claim with Scripture, or reflecting on how to share biblical content responsibly online.

- v) Address problems related to access by sharing equipment when necessary, saving content for offline access, and blending low tech and high tech techniques to guarantee inclusion. These steps will help churches adopt technology pedagogically, spiritually, and contextually.

## 8. Conclusion:

The decline of Sunday school ministries in recent decades is a concerning trend that can be reversed through the integration of technology. Technology, when understood and used for righteous purposes, need not be a threat but rather an enhancement to spiritual communication (Ashton, 2018). By embracing and effectively utilizing technology, Sunday Schools can reach a wider audience, engage younger generations, and adapt to the changing landscape of education. To be successful in implementing technology in Sunday School ministries, Sunday School Teachers must be Information Literate in order to effectively navigate and utilize digital resources. Sunday School Teachers need to prioritize Information Literacy to revitalize and sustain these important religious education programs for future generations. To promote effective leadership, Information Literacy among Sunday School Teachers is the key. By remaining informed and having access to reliable sources of information, Sunday School Teachers can make informed decisions, resolve problems, achieve their objectives, and construct thriving churches. Therefore, it is essential to invest in training programs, resources and workshops to equip Sunday School Teachers with the necessary Information Literacy skills.

Technology-supported learning provides a promising way forward for developing skills related to information literacy competence in the teaching of Sunday School through a combination of inquiry-based education, technological means, and reflective spirituality. If used appropriately, such an approach could aid the acquisition of both biblical and theological information and the critical application of such knowledge with discernment and moral integrity within the digital environment. It is important, however, to consider the problem of the digital divide, proper teacher training, and moral considerations for the effective use of technology for the sake of the Gospel and the development of believers within the church.

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