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## Development of Teaching Materials for a Catholic Marriage Preparation Course for Prospective Married Couples

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### Abstract

This research uses a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of the Catholic Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi. With a focus on in-depth understanding, the research aims to identify and resolve the fundamental problems faced by course organizers. The research subjects consisted of a group of companions and participants in the Catholic marriage preparation course at St. Teresia Jambi. Data was collected through direct interviews and questionnaires, then analyzed using qualitative analysis techniques. The results of the research show that there is an urgent need for increased understanding and deepening of the teachings of the Catholic Church related to marriage preparation and formation at St. Mary's Parish, Teresia Jambi. Apart from that, the research results also reveal that the application of Catholic marriage principles which are in line with Church teachings can strengthen family ties and improve the spiritual well-being of the people. The novelty of this research lies in the qualitative approach used to gain an in-depth understanding of the problems of Catholic marriage preparation courses. It is hoped that the implications of this research will provide valuable input for course organizers in improving the quality and effectiveness of Catholic marriage preparation courses at St. Mary's Parish, Mary. Teresia Jambi.

Keywords: Catholic Marriage; Development; Teaching Materials

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## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is an important aspect of Catholic life. In the Catholic view, marriage is not just a fulfillment of instinct, but is a bond sacred to God (Fautngilyanan & Refo, 2018; Sukendar et al., 2021). Based on the Book of Genesis, marriage is understood as a union planned by God from the beginning, in which a man and a woman unite as one flesh. Fidelity in marriage is seen as a reflection of God's faithfulness to His people. For Catholics, preparation before entering marriage is very important (Mudjijo, 2017; Wahyu et al., 2020). This preparation includes understanding the meaning of marriage, the responsibilities of husband and wife, and readiness to form a family based on faith. The Marriage Preparation Course is an important means of providing provision and assistance to prospective couples before they enter into marriage.

Education plays a crucial role in preparing Catholics to understand the meaning and responsibilities of marriage (Medina, 2023; Tong et al., 2021; Wilcox & Lewandowski, 2018). Through various teaching materials and courses, Catholics are given in-depth knowledge and understanding of

the essence of marriage as a partnership of life that is sacred by God. This education also helps build a strong commitment to building a harmonious family based on the values of faith. The main principle in education is to help increase the efficiency of the learning process (Arjusi & Alfiana, 2023; Wickens & Norris, 2018). In the context of marriage preparation courses, this efficiency includes improving the quality of learning, saving time, increasing capacity without reducing quality, and reducing costs without reducing quality. With effective education, Catholics can be better prepared and qualified to enter the sacred bond of marriage.

With the creation of teaching materials, the author thinks and believes that a special book can be created which contains teaching materials/teaching materials for the implementation of the Marriage Preparation Course (Lon, 2020). This is intended to make it easier for supervisors to carry out their teaching duties, bearing in mind that not all of these officers have basic religious or theological education. This material can also be used by course participants to study materials that must be studied and understood as provisions for forming understanding and helping participants in making commitments related to how to form a good Catholic family.

This research is in line with research conducted by Fautngilyanan & Refo (2018), but there is still a lack of direct involvement from the community's perspective in the research process. In particular, the opinions and direct experiences of couples who have taken marriage preparation courses or received pastoral care are not fully reflected in the analysis. Thus, there is an opportunity for further research to further explore the perspectives of the faithful and evaluate the effectiveness of existing pastoral programs involving the active participation of Catholics in St. Mary's Parish. Teresia Jambi.

The aim of this research is to investigate the dynamics of Catholic marriages in the Parish of St. Teresia Jambi and understands pastoral practices related to the preparation and formation of couples before and after marriage. Through an in-depth analysis of the backgrounds of Catholics in the region, the research aims to identify the challenges faced by couples in maintaining loyalty to Catholic teachings in their married life. Apart from that, this research also aims to contribute to the development of more effective pastoral strategies in supporting the formation of strong and harmonious families in accordance with Catholic teachings.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

### ***Research Design***

This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore the implementation of the Catholic Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi. This approach allowed the researcher to explore in depth the complex issues related to the lack of adequate teaching materials in the course (Anif et al., 2020; Irmayanti et al., 2023; Marshel & Ratnawulan, 2020). With a focus on in-depth understanding, this research aims to identify and resolve the basic problems faced by course organizers (Hamdo, 2022; Muir et al., 2020; Mustofa & Hidayah, 2020).

### ***Research Target/Subject***

Research is carried out within a certain time span, which is determined based on the availability of resources and research needs. The research location is the Parish of St. Teresia Jambi, where Catholic marriage preparation courses are held. Research time was adjusted to the course schedule and respondent availability. The research subjects consisted of a group of companions and participants in the Catholic marriage preparation course at St. Teresia Jambi. The accompanying group includes people who are responsible for organizing and implementing the course, while the course participants are prospective couples who will marry in the Catholic Church (Novianti & Garzia, 2020).

### ***Research Procedures***

The research procedure involved several carefully planned steps. First, the researcher made initial contact with the party responsible for organizing the Catholic marriage preparation course at St. Mary's Parish, Teresia Jambi to explain the research objectives and framework. Then, the researcher determined a research time range that was appropriate to the course schedule and participant availability. After that, the researcher asked for the necessary permission and coordination before starting data collection. The next step involves identifying relevant respondents, such as mentor groups and course participants, and establishing appropriate data collection techniques, such as direct interviews and questionnaires. All stages of research procedures were carried out taking into account research ethics and the accuracy of the data required for in-depth analysis (Jumainah & Nurhayati, 2020; Ramadhanti et al., 2022; Simamora & Manurung, 2021).

### ***Instruments, and Data Collection Techniques***

The instruments and data collection techniques used in this research were designed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Catholic marriage preparation course at St. Mary's Parish, Teresia Jambi. The researcher used face-to-face interviews to gain in-depth insight from the mentor group and course participants, allowing them to express their experiences, views and hopes for the course. In addition, the researcher also implemented a questionnaire to collect data in a more structured manner from a small group of mentors and participants, which allowed for a more detailed analysis of their perceptions and responses to the course materials and learning approaches used. This combination of instruments and techniques allows researchers to obtain comprehensive and representative information necessary to paint an accurate picture of course implementation and the challenges faced by participants (Chusni et al., 2022; Lubis et al., 2022; Schallert et al., 2022).

### ***Data analysis techniques***

Data collected from interviews and questionnaires underwent rigorous qualitative analysis techniques. This systematic approach involved referencing pertinent learning theories and the design of teaching materials developed within the study. Through meticulous examination, the data yielded patterns, findings, and implications that are integral to this research endeavor. This methodical process ensured a comprehensive understanding of the data, facilitating the identification of significant insights and actionable outcomes.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In measuring the level of effectiveness, efficiency and attractiveness of the teaching materials for the marriage preparation course at St. Teresia Jambi, input, responses, suggestions and comments and expert assessments are needed, for the purposes of revising or improving the quality of developing teaching materials. Based on data in the field, this research will present the results of verbal interviews and written questionnaires from companions and participants in marriage courses at St. Teresia Jambi.

To obtain data in this research, researchers used a choice of interview and questionnaire instruments. To obtain data based on interviews given to 2 (two respondents) companions, and 4 (four respondents) participants in marriage preparation courses. Meanwhile, data collection was based on a written questionnaire given to 6 (six respondents) companions, and for small groups given to 10 (ten respondents) participants in the marriage preparation course at St. Teresia Jambi.

To improve the quality of education in the teaching and learning process cannot be separated from the teaching components, namely the preparation of teaching materials. Based on the results of data presentation from six (6) respondents, the opinion was obtained that the syllabus and teaching materials prepared as a complement to learning in the Marriage Preparation Course show that the

completeness, accuracy and quality of the design, as well as the components of the teaching materials developed can be declared very feasible. , good, logical, adequate, interesting and clear, and easy to understand by companions and participants of the Marriage Preparation Course.

From the results of the presentation delivered by the companion of the Marriage Preparation Course, the teaching materials used in the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi really helps teachers/instructors in carrying out teaching and learning activities. Likewise, the syllabus used is also in accordance with the components that have been determined. Syllabus for the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi consists of basic competencies, learning objectives, indicators, learning activities, student activities, time allocation and learning resources.

Based on data from respondents, 3 respondents stated that with the syllabus and teaching materials, it was very easy for companions to teach marriage preparation courses at St. Teresia Jambi, apart from that, having accompanying teaching materials is very helpful. Apart from that, 2 respondents stated that the syllabus is a guideline, direction in providing a course that is completely structured, detailed and clear, and the syllabus helps to control the entire course learning process. Apart from that, the existence of a syllabus can provide direction and goals to be achieved for the assistants effectively. With the availability of teaching materials, it is very helpful for teachers or tutors in implementing the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi.

Based on data from accompanying respondents in this research, the Marriage Preparation Course Teaching Materials presented were very helpful to the Kupeper tutors and assistants at St. Teresia Jambi. Kuperper Teaching Materials are all forms of teaching materials used to assist teachers/instructors in carrying out learning activities for participants in the marriage preparation course at St. Teresia Jambi. And the teaching materials in question are teaching materials that are prepared in the form of written modules.

Making the syllabus needs to be done by the teacher, instructor, a companion before the teacher or tutor makes a learning plan for each meeting. The syllabus contains an outline of what the teacher or tutor will do in carrying out learning in class, whether in formal or non-formal education. With the syllabus, teachers will easily see in a matrix the relationship between one component and another.

In general, in this research, it can be concluded that the Marriage Preparation Course syllabus designed for learning is quite interesting, and very clear, and can be easily conveyed to teachers and tutors in preparing learning. Technically the syllabus displayed in the Marriage Preparation Course includes the following components. Competency standards, basic competencies and achievement indicators, learning objectives, learning materials, steps for learning activities, learning tools and resources, learning evaluation.

Based on the description of the respondents, it can be stated that the Marriage Preparation Course Syllabus is a description or elaboration of competency standards and basic competencies in the main material, learning activities, and indicators of achievement, time allocation, and learning resources, so that with this Syllabus a description of what will be achieved in learning can be accomplished.

In this research, research results can be obtained, that according to the respondents, in this case the companion, tutor or teacher of the Marriage Preparation Course, that the syllabus is very important in implementing the course at St. Teresia Jambi. The presence of a clearly detailed syllabus can be useful as a guide in further learning development, such as creating a learning plan. Apart from that, according to respondents who filled out the questionnaire in this study, in general, the syllabus was useful as a guide for planning the management of learning activities in the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi, for example classical learning, small group learning. Apart from that, the syllabus is also very useful for developing an assessment system.

Marriage preparation course teaching materials are media and learning resources that have a strategic position, because the teaching materials presented provide relatively operational information or descriptions for managing the learning process in the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi. The argument underlying this is based on respondent data which generally states that teaching materials are a means to assist teaching and learning activities in the Marriage Preparation Course.

Apart from the data, respondents also stated that the teaching materials provide guidelines for course participants for the purpose of learning to prepare a household independently or in scheduled face-to-face meetings.

Teaching Materials for the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi is also equipped with methods and evaluations, guidelines for learning or course participants, companions and tutors. The argument underlying this is that teaching materials that are structured systematically and in detail will really help teachers or mentors, marriage course participants or prospective marriage partners in understanding the material discussed in the ongoing course process.

Based on research data from respondents in the field, information was gathered that the teaching materials presented were very easy to learn, comprehend and understand. Teaching Materials for the Marriage Preparation Course at St. Teresia Jambi can make things easier for mentors and study participants. Teaching materials that can facilitate learning are materials that have clear components in the form of: (1) general learning objectives, (2) specific learning objectives, (3) specific instructions for using teaching materials, (4) descriptions of lesson content that are arranged systematically, (5) pictures or illustrations to clarify lesson content, (6) summary, (7) formative evaluation, (8) reading list, and (9) answer key. The teaching materials that are arranged can be said to be simple because they are prepared using straightforward language and also the language of everyday communication. It is hoped that this condition will make it easier for mentors to understand and convey the content of the material in the learning course. Apart from that, it is not difficult for participants to study the diktats or textbooks that have been prepared by themselves.

Another problem that also needs to be considered is sometimes experiencing difficulty in taking notes or writing learning content. This difficulty is caused by many factors. First, not all participants who take part in marriage preparation courses can capture and record all the learning content well and in full. Second, not all teachers can communicate and explain learning content well, perhaps too quickly or other distractions. Third, limited learning facilities and infrastructure mean that teachers cannot provide good teaching. These difficulties can be overcome with the help of written notes in the form of teaching materials prepared by the teacher concerned (Arent et al., 2020; Petersburton & Stehle, 2019; Telegina et al., 2019). Teaching materials are learning content contained in books written by teachers or other authors for learning purposes.

The teaching material book contains material that will be discussed in the lesson. The aim is to help simplify the learning process for marriage preparation course participants, so its preparation requires special requirements (Fadlilah, 2022; Mirawati & Sikarni, 2023; Nursyamsiah, 2022). This teaching material has a limited function in order to provide a complete orientation regarding theory, understanding and application or implementation of teachings. The teaching materials contained in the marriage course preparation book are different from other books in general. Physical marriage preparation course teaching materials include readers, diktats, and textbooks.

Course teaching materials are prepared by collecting relevant writings (clippings) from various existing selected reading sources, and are oriented for learning purposes. Readers are the starting material for preparing diktats or modules. Marriage preparation modules or teaching materials are further developments from readers which have been repeatedly evaluated and refined. Further development of the marriage preparation module is continuously being refined to be used as a teaching material for marriage preparation courses in the Catholic Church in general.

Marriage preparation course participants are also more interested in studying the learning materials because the teaching materials have been arranged in an orderly manner (Fautngilyanan & Refo, 2018). This teaching material will be more valuable for those who are less able to record teaching content. The availability of teaching materials allows students to reduce their note-taking activities so that they can have more time to understand a lesson. The available teaching material products also enable marriage preparation course participants at St. Teresia Jambi to discuss further the teaching material. Finally, teaching materials really help teachers, tutors and marriage preparation course participants to carry out teaching and learning without wasting a lot of time, and the available teaching material products are also equipped with assignments and exercises for course participants. In

designing learning products or teaching materials for marriage preparation at St. Teresia Jambi in particular was developed with descriptions of various existing learning sources. The teaching materials for the marriage preparation course are intended specifically for marriage preparation course participants, or prospective couples who will enter into a Catholic marriage. However, it does not rule out the possibility that the available marriage preparation course teaching materials can also be used as reading material and information for anyone who needs information about marriage. The aims and benefits of preparing marriage preparation teaching materials are prepared with the aim of providing teaching materials that suit the demands of marriage preparation course participants or prospective Catholic couples by taking into account the needs of course participants, namely teaching materials that suit the characteristics and setting or social environment and the challenges of the times. . Apart from that, the available teaching material books can also help marriage preparation course participants in obtaining alternative teaching materials besides textbooks which are sometimes difficult to obtain.

Apart from that, the benefits of developing teaching materials for marriage preparation courses for teachers and course participants are: Obtain teaching materials that are in accordance with curriculum demands and in accordance with the learning needs of marriage preparation course participants at St. Teresia Jambi. No longer dependent on textbooks which are sometimes difficult to obtain. Enriching because it was developed using various references. Increasing teachers' knowledge and experience in writing teaching materials. Building effective learning communication between teachers and marriage preparation course participants because marriage preparation course participants will feel more trusting.

This research is in line with research conducted by Onyeator & Okpara (2019) however, the research process still lacks direct engagement from the community's viewpoint. Specifically, the insights and firsthand accounts of couples who have participated in marriage preparation courses or received pastoral care are not entirely considered in the study. This presents an opening for additional research to delve deeper into the perspectives of the faithful and assess the efficacy of current pastoral initiatives that involve active participation from Catholics in St. Mary's Parish.

The implications of this research are very important to consider in the development of educational and pastoral policies and programs in St. Teresia Jambi. The results of this research can be a basis for stakeholders to develop more effective strategies in providing pre-family education and marriage preparation courses. In addition, a deeper understanding of the meaning and values of Catholic marriage can make a significant contribution to strengthening family bonds and strengthening the spiritual foundations of the congregation. By paying attention to these implications, it is hoped that the people of St. Teresia Jambi can feel the real benefits of this research in improving the quality of family and spiritual life.

The novelty of this research lies in the holistic approach used in exploring the dynamics of Catholic marriages in the Parish of St. Teresia Jambi. By combining theological, social and psychological aspects, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the institution of marriage in the context of the religious and social life of Catholic society. In addition, the focus on pre-family education and marriage preparation courses as potential preventive measures against problems in marriage, adds a new dimension to pastoral strategies to strengthen family ties and improve the spiritual well-being of the congregation. Thus, this research can be a valuable contribution in the development of pastoral practices and ecclesiastical policies that are relevant to the social realities and spiritual needs of Catholics in St. Mary's Parish. Teresia Jambi.

## **CONCLUSION**

The syllabus/teaching materials for marriage preparation courses are a basic requirement for the proper implementation of the course. Based on the research results, the design of teaching materials is very adequate to provide training for course participants in building a responsible Catholic family. Using teaching materials still requires creativity and innovation from supervisors to create effective learning. As

times change rapidly, this teaching material remains open to be submitted and developed according to the demands of the times.

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