



Research Article

Implementation of Small Groups for Spiritual Development and Values Formation among Students in a Private School

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Abstract

This research implemented small groups in the spiritual development and values formation of Grade 6 students at Unida Christian Colleges. The research examined its efficacy and aimed to fill a research gap in children's spirituality by acknowledging the Grade 6 students' critical developmental phase and the significance of molding their spirituality and moral values. Employing the principles of Transformative Learning Theory, a four-week small group program was implemented, involving the students in conversations and tasks focused on their spiritual development and values formation that are relevant to their day-to-day lives. The results revealed a significant improvement in the students' perspectives on spiritual development and values formation following engagement in small group activities. By conducting a qualitative analysis, various themes such as spiritual growth through shared experiences, positive class relationships, practical application of biblical teachings, and strengthened faith were recognized, highlighting the transformative influence of small groups. The findings highlight the effectiveness of small group interventions in fostering spirituality, building positive peer connections, and instilling core values for holistic development among Grade 6 students. This study provides valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and Christian educational institutions, advocating for the implementation of small group activities in academic frameworks to promote students' spiritual and moral well-being.

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Introduction

Rationale

Children's spirituality is a vital yet frequently overlooked aspect of their life. The early years of a child's schooling play a crucial role in shaping their values and spirituality, guiding their decisions and actions throughout their lives. The focus of spirituality lies in an individual's inner well-being, which leads to their quest for self-exploration, completeness, and life's purpose. (Bryant et al., 2020). The selection of Grade 6 as the target group is based on the crucial developmental stage, where students actively form their beliefs and values. Focusing on this transitional period aligns with Unida Christian Colleges' commitment to holistic education and addresses the existing research gap in children's spirituality.

By intervening at this stage, the research aims to proactively shape students' spiritual and moral foundations, contributing valuable insights to their overall well-being. Integrating spiritual development and values into primary school students is essential. DepEd order no. 36 s. 2013 officially adopts the Department of Education Vision, Mission, and Core Values (DepEd VMV), wherein one of the core values is MAKADIYOS, as well as one of the National Mottos according to Republic Act No. 8491, which engages learners in meaningful spiritual activities and instills a sense of curiosity and openness towards other expressions of spiritual life.

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Non-religious individuals often experience anxiety, stress, loneliness, substance abuse, and an increased likelihood of depression. Having not been exposed to groups causes problems with friendships and romantic relationships, seriously impairs academics, and leads to increased vulnerability to drugs (Zhang, 2012, as cited in Ali et al., 2019). Students of this age are more prone to questioning themselves and their purpose and tend to explore many things. The self-perception of individuals within the Christian religion is of great importance.

Believers must comprehend their identity and how it correlates with their daily interactions and representation of God. The absence of self-awareness or a flawed comprehension of oneself can adversely affect individuals, others, the surroundings, and faith in God. Moreover, religious convictions can shape one's self-perception, as evidenced by a study that revealed students with a higher level of religious devotion exhibited more religious-related responses when defining themselves.

Research on the relationship between spirituality and health reveals that kids who have a healthy, engaged relationship with spirituality are 40% less likely to use and abuse drugs, are 60% less likely to experience teenage depression and have a lot more indicators of thriving, such as a stronger sense of meaning and purpose in life and high academic achievement (Miller, 2015). All in all, self-perception plays a significant role among believers, influencing their faith, interactions, and overall well-being (Jankowski et al., 2021).

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Their spiritual and values formation has a significant relationship between small groups. According to Lee (2020), a study of 12 countries revealed that 76% of individuals view spirituality as a means for children to develop connections. Participation in a small group setting where students can freely express themselves and engage with their peers' viewpoints can help prevent the negative effects of a limited self-concept.

Small groups are extensively embraced to foster interpersonal connections, engage in dialogues on religious convictions, and provide opportunities for introspection and personal development. It allows young individuals to convene and engage in discussions regarding their faith experiences, all the while gaining knowledge from one another. These groups are essential to young students' spiritual growth and moral principles. Small groups cultivate a favorable atmosphere for establishing connections, deliberating religious beliefs, and facilitating personal growth (Boyer, 2018). They promote active participation, involvement, and encouragement from peers, all of which are integral to a comprehensive education.

Unida Christian Colleges gives priority to a well-rounded education, with emphasis on academics and spirituality with one of its goals; to *Live with Faith*. A department called the Spiritual Development and Values Formation (SDVF) was created to address the spiritual needs of students. The department aims to develop students' spirituality through a personal relationship with Jesus. SDVF conducts weekly worship services, particularly for elementary students, to nurture their spiritual growth and moral values. Worship services in schools can enhance students' spiritual growth, but routine attendance may not fully engage students in understanding and applying spiritual teachings. The role of worship in Christian learning goes beyond mere attendance and requires a deeper understanding of its nature and purpose. (Wright A, 2013).

In collaboration with the SDVF Department of Unida Christian Colleges, this research aims to implement an effective approach: the S.S.S.G. (SDVF Student Small Group). The SDVF is a transformative experience for the students, especially in grade 6, enhancing their connection with faith and values for lifelong guidance.

Researchers selected Grade 6 as it is a crucial period for shaping sixth-grade students' spiritual and moral compass, and targeted small-group interactions can positively influence their overall development. But, while there is a growing recognition of the importance of spiritual development and values formation in the education of Grade 6 students, there is a gap in the interventions tailored to this specific age group. There is significantly less research on children's spirituality than on adult spirituality (Hufton, 2006, as cited in Deputy, 2016).

This study addressed this gap by investigating the outcomes and experiences of implementing small groups for spiritual development and values formation among Grade 6 students.

Research Questions

Unida Christian Colleges (UCC) conducts weekly worship services to impart spiritual development and values formation to higher elementary (Grades 4 to 6) students. However, the program requires a more comprehensive strategy to guarantee that students are not simply participating in these services as a routine but are actively interacting with the program and undergoing personal development. Moreover, these research questions arise:

- What is the engagement level of Grade 6 students?
- What is the perception of Grade 6 towards spiritual growth and values formation?

- How effective is integrating small groups in UCC for the spirituality and well-being of Grade 6 students?

Hypothesis/ Thesis Statement

This thesis will provide valuable insights for educators, Christian educational institutions, and policymakers by conducting a comprehensive examination of Spiritual Development and Values formation. Through evidence-based findings, the research aims to propose strategies that can enhance the educational environment and foster holistic development within the faith-based teaching framework for Grade 6 students. Engaging Grade 6 students in spiritual development and values formation activities within a faith-based educational framework will positively impact their overall well-being.

To show evidence of the statistical significance of the difference in the pre-test and post-test scores, a statistical test was conducted, based on the following hypothesis: Ho: There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of respondents on the tests.

Ha: There is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of respondents on the tests.

Methods

Participants/ Sources of Data

The participants selected for this action research consist of Grade 6 students from Unida Christian Colleges, totaling 44 individuals. To qualify for participation, students must meet specific criteria for sex (male or female). Ages 11 to 12 are the common ages for this grade level but the researchers chose to include all grade 6 students enrolled at Unida Christian Colleges regardless of their age.

The selection of Grade 6 as the target demographic is based on the crucial developmental stage, where students actively form their beliefs and values (Bryant et al., 2020). By intervening during this phase, the study aimed to proactively shape the spiritual and moral values of students, offering valuable perspectives on their general well-being. Focusing on this transitional phase aligns with Unida Christian Colleges' commitment to holistic education and addresses the existing research gap in children's spirituality. First, participants must demonstrate a history of active participation in the weekly worship services hosted by the Spiritual Development and Values Formation (SDVF) Department. Parental or guardian approval is mandatory to uphold ethical standards and research procedures. Also, the chosen students should show a willingness to engage in small group activities, a crucial aspect of the integrated approach to spiritual development and values formation. Lastly, to ensure a thorough comprehension, participants should come from diverse spiritual backgrounds within the Christian faith. These criteria seek to enhance the relevance and reliability of the research findings by ensuring active engagement, ethical participation, openness to proposed interventions, and representation of various Christian perspectives within the Unida Christian Colleges community.

Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy

This research implemented a small group into the spiritual development and values formation of Unida Christian Colleges for Grade 6 students. A collaboration with the Unida Christian Colleges SDVF Department was necessary for this intervention to form and gather the participants, including the student leaders who convened regularly to participate in the group discussions and activities around spiritual growth and the values formation relevant to their daily lives.

The small group implementation was rooted in the principles of Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) developed by Jack Mezirow. Departing from merely accumulating knowledge, this transformative experience aims to empower the Grade 6 students to undergo a significant shift in their perspective, fostering a meaningful and lasting impact on their spiritual and moral development. Guided by Norma Nerstrom's Transformative Learning Model, the small group strategy is designed to simplify Mezirow's transformative steps into four components: engaging in experiences, making assumptions, questioning perspectives, and undergoing transformative learning.

This framework is incorporated into the SDVF program, with the goal of not only enhancing the student's knowledge but also creating an environment where they actively contribute to shaping their spiritual and moral compass. Various schools, such as School of Tomorrow and BEREAN Bible Baptist Academy, use small groups as a tool for their school ministries. According to her interview with Ms. Ulao, a teacher at BEREAN Academy, conducts weekly small groups for elementary students to ensure their spiritual growth. Throughout this journey, they emphasize students' interaction through group activities. On the other hand, the evangelical church of Unida utilizes small groups led by a leader within the group which was reflected in this integration. Through these models, the small group integration aimed to produce disciplined leaders and encourage students to not only just merely attend the program.

The small group had "student leaders" or the small group leaders, individuals who willingly dedicated their time and effort to guide their classmates through their transformative journey. These Student Leaders were carefully selected and gathered by the SDVF Staff, ensuring that they embody the principles of Transformative Learning and Christian Values and are committed to fostering a nurturing environment within the small groups. These Student Leaders acted as mentors and guides, ensuring the effectiveness of the small group sessions. Their commitment extends to nurturing the growth of students within each group.

The SDVF Faculty made the selection of student leaders, which was based on the willingness of students. By the word 'student leaders,' the grade 6 students were the ones who were selected for this role. The 44 students were divided into smaller numbers and had student leaders per group. The SDVF Staff ensured the mentoring of selected students to live out the school's mission of creating leaders and promoting students' learning with each other.

Deac. Aira Angelica Sigon, an SDVF Staff for higher elementary, was the one who led this program. As such, the SDVF Department was the one who finalized decisions and handed out the foundation of lessons and mentoring. The research members have done the following:

- a. Online promotion and engagement
Promote every activity and ministry of the SDVF department, especially the small group, and create an impact through online platforms.
- b. Mentoring of Student Leaders
Helped and observed the process of SDVF Small Group Leaders mentoring. To conduct a make-up class for those unable to attend the weekly Student Leaders mentoring.
- c. Modifying Small Group Lessons
 - Modified the Life's Journey booklet that was used for small group lessons.
 - Prepared visual aids, activities, and handouts for SG Leaders and SG members.
- d. Document, Observe, and Gather the data needed

- Checked and analyzed the progress and state of the integration.
- Report and recommend strategies and interventions on the way.

Life's Journey booklet from Navigator Ministries Incorporated is widely used at Unida Christian Churches and was the basis of lessons that were handed out by SDVF. This booklet consists of different lessons per week. The researchers modified the booklet that was approved by the SDVF Department to create age-appropriate content for the students. As such, the researchers also prepared the needed activities, visual aids, and materials that align with the lessons.

This integration was required to conduct pre and post-test surveys for the Grade 6 students. In the pre-tests, the students were asked questions regarding their spiritual development and values formation. Such questions were directed to answer the question of their (1) level of engagement with the SDVF weekly service, (2) perception of personal spiritual growth and values formation. At the end of the implementation, the post-test was conducted. The post-test ran through the same set of questions with the addition of their thoughts on the integration, their engagement with activities they did, and their reflection within the small group setup.

Data Gathering

The researchers of this study understood and adhered to the statement provided in the Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012. All personal information provided by the respondents will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will only be used for research purposes. All gathered information will be given codes and stored separately from any names or other direct identification of participants. Research information will be kept in locked files at all times.

Prior to participating in the research, the Grade 6 students and their parents or guardians are provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. The researchers informed that participation of the children was required for their child as they comply with the worship services held once a week. Given that information, the researchers ensured that the consent of parents is still the final decision for the participation of the students. If the parents have issues, concerns, or will not consent to their children, their child will not participate in the study.

The researcher developed questionnaires with explicit words to serve its intended respondents. The survey implemented will be done using suitable questions. The pre-test questionnaire has three parts:

1. The demographic profile of the respondents
2. The student's current engagement with the SDVF program (Students' Engagement Aspect)
3. Perception of personal spiritual growth and values formation (Perception of Spiritual Growth & Values Formation Aspect)

The demographic profile section aims to gather basic information about the respondents. This includes their name, age, and sex. Students' Engagement Aspect focuses on the student's current engagement with the Spiritual Development and Values Formation (SDVF) program during their weekly worship services. The questions/statements are designed to assess the level of involvement and satisfaction with the worship service. Each question is structured to measure specific aspects of engagement, such as the student's perceived meaningfulness of the service, comfort in expressing oneself,

a sense of belonging, and the belief in the service's impact on faith and spirituality.

Perception of Spiritual Growth & Values Formation Aspect explores students' reflections on their spiritual journey and values formation. The questions/statements cover aspects like understanding and remembering messages from the worship service, personal habits such as reading the Bible and praying, as well as behaviors reflecting kindness, respect, and patience which reflects Filipino values. The scale provided will help gauge the strength of these perceptions.

The post-test questions mirror the pre-test questions, allowing them to measure changes in students' engagement, perception of spiritual growth, and openness after participating in the SDVF Student Small Group sessions. This provided a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the small group sessions in influencing students' attitudes and behaviors.

The reflection questions offered a qualitative dimension to the research. They prompt students to think deeply about their experiences in the small group sessions. Questions about enjoyable activities aim to identify elements that resonate with students, potentially indicating effective methods for engagement. Reflection on changes in relationships and daily life activities provides insights into the broader impact of the small group sessions on students' social and personal lives.

Workplan/ Timeline

The research was divided into the following phases:

- 1. Preparation for Small Group Integration (1 month): During this period, the research team, together with the SDVF Department prepared the lesson plan and materials for the small group sessions. The research team gathered the lesson plan of SDVF for the following 1 month of implementation and collaborated on the appropriate activities and strategies for the small group integration.
- 2. Implementation (4 weeks): The researchers started integrating small groups starting March 15, 2024, and finished on April 30, 2024. While conducting, the researchers observed and documented all the sessions.
- 3. Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test results: During this period, the researchers gathered the data collected from the pre-test and post-test observations. It was analyzed to compare the effectiveness of small groups for the spiritual development and values formation of the students.

Table 1 Workplan

Activities	Feb	March	April
1. Small Group Integration Preparation			
2. Integration			
3. Analysis of Pre-test and Post-test results and Conclusions			

Cost Estimates

Table 2 Cost Estimates

Activity	Expenditures	Quantity	Cost
1. Modifying of lessons and Formation of weekly activities for small groups	Supplies and materials	44 pax	P2,000.00
2. Start of Small Group implementation	Printing costs	50 pax	P1,000.00

3. Implementation	Other incurred expenses during the conduct of research	-	P1,000.00
			Total: P4,000.00

Dissemination and Utilization

The dissemination plan of the intervention began with the collection of lessons and insights in February 2024, followed by the development of weekly activities and strategies for integration. Meetings, planning, coordinating with collaborators, and pilot testing were also held the same month. The preparation of material ensured that the researchers and implementers were ready for the implementation, which took place from March 2024 to April 2024. The researchers collected the data necessary to assess the impact of the small-group implementation. Collection of data included the pre and post-tests.

By the end of April 2024, the data evaluation phase began, where researchers thoroughly analyzed the collected data to understand how the implementation of small groups has influenced the spiritual development and values formation among Grade 6 students.

The findings of this research will guide future decisions regarding the integration of small groups for spiritual development and values formation into the school curriculum. These insights will be shared to relevant stakeholders, including the school administration, teachers, parents, and will also advocate future decisions about implementing small groups for spiritual development and values formation in the school curriculum. This dissemination and utilization plan aims to ensure that the research outcomes have a meaningful impact on the educational practices at Unida Christian Colleges.

Table 3 Plans for Dissemination and Utilization

Dissemination Activities	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24
1. Lessons modification, meeting, planning, and coordinating with collaborators			
2. Pilot testing of instrument			
3. Pre-test of Grade 6 students			
4. Student leaders huddle/mentoring			
5. Implementation			

Data Analysis

A mixed-method approach was used in this study. Likert scale questions were answered by the Grade 6 students for the pre-test and post-test. The responses were analyzed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics were used as means and percentages, and calculated to provide a snapshot of the baseline characteristics. The post-test data underwent quantitative analysis to gauge the modifications and changes in the identified metrics in contrast to the pre-test.

Various statistical methods, like paired-samples t-tests, were employed to determine the importance of any observed differences. The researchers analyzed the qualitative responses in the post-test using thematic analysis in order to identify

recurring patterns, trends, and insights pertaining to the effectiveness of small group implementation.

After gathering the questionnaire, the data collected were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted. The following interpretation table was used to help translate the respondent scores into themes.

Table 4 Interpretation Table for Student Engagement

Student Engagement	Average Score
Actively Engaged	3.25 - 4.00
Engaged	2.50 - 3.24
Low Engagement	1.76 - 2.49
No Engagement	1.00 - 1.75

Table 5 Interpretation Table for Perception on Spiritual Growth Range

Perception on Spiritual Growth	Range
Very Positive Perception	3.25 - 4.00
Fairly Positive Perception	2.50 - 3.24
Fairly Negative Perception	1.76 - 2.49
Very Negative Perception	1.00 - 1.75

The decision rule was based on the resulting p-value. Reject the null hypothesis if p-value is less than $\alpha = 0.05$, which is the probability for type 1 error. Otherwise, fail to reject the null hypothesis. The findings are then presented in a narrative format, combining quantitative trends and qualitative themes. To capture the complexities of students' experiences, qualitative insights were conveyed through narrative summaries and direct quotes.

Based on the analysis of the data, recommendations were provided for educational interventions, enhancements, or adjustments to improve the implementation of small groups. These recommendations were firmly based on the strengths and areas for improvement that were identified through the data.

Results And Discussion

Results

In this chapter, the results of the studies are presented. The following results are shown to answer each statement of the problem.

Research question 1: What is the engagement level of Grade 6 students?

Research question 2: What is the perception of Grade 6 towards spiritual growth and values formation?

Student Engagement and Student Perception

Following are the results of the tests done both before (Pre-test) and after (Post-test) the SDVF student small group program. The pre-test and post-test questions had two essential parts: the student engagement aspect, and their perception on spiritual development and values formation aspect. These aspects were categorized to determine each response's range and identification.

Table 6 Summarization of the descriptive statistics of pre-tests and post-tests on Student Engagement scores and Perception of SDVF

	Eng PreTe st	Perc PreTe st	Eng PostT est	Perc PostT est
Mean	3.283 8	3.362 2	3.300 0	3.489 2
Std. Deviation	.2901 3	.3003 3	.2748 7	.2826 3
Minimum	2.60	2.70	2.90	2.80
Maximum	3.90	3.80	3.90	4.00

The mean scores for both Engagement and Perception in the pre-test are approximately 3.28 and 3.36 respectively, with standard deviations of around 0.29 and 0.30. Based on the interpretation in table 4, the average pre-test scores translate to active engagement of students on SDVF and a very positive perception of students on SDVF. The lowest score observed in the pre-test for the Engagement aspect is 2.60, which is interpreted as “engaged”, while the lowest score for Perception is 2.70, which translates as “fairly positive perception”. The highest score observed in the pretest for Engagement is 3.90, and for Perception is 3.80, almost achieving the highest possible score which is 4.00.

On average, the respondents scored higher in the post-test than in the pre-test, with mean values of 3.30 and 3.49 for Engagement and Perception respectively. The lowest observed score for Engagement post-test is 2.90 and the lowest observed score for Perception is 2.80.

To test for the statistical significance of the difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores, a statistical analysis using Paired sample T-test was conducted. To confirm that the assumptions of the paired sample T-tests are met, specifically on the normality of the data distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality was done. Based on the results of the test for normality, the p-values for all variables, engagement pre-test and post-test, and perception pre-test and post-test, are greater than $\alpha = 0.05$. Hence, the data follow a normal distribution and that the paired sample T-test was appropriate for the comparison of Pre-test and Post-test results.

Table Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality

	Statistic	df	Sig.
Eng_PreTest	.971	37	.440
Perc_PreTest	.944	37	.062
Eng_PostTest	.951	37	.102
Perc_PostTest	.971	37	.423

Table 8 Paired Samples Statistics

Because the p-value is greater than $\alpha = 0.05$, the decision rule states fail to reject the null hypothesis. This means that while there is a mean difference of 0.02 between the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents in the engagement test, it is not considered to be statistically significant. On the other hand, the p-value for the perception test is less than $\alpha=0.05$, so the null hypothesis is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the respondents in the engagement test. For the perception test, a statistically significant increase of 0.13 between the pre-test and the post-test score was observed.

Research question number 3: How effective is integrating small groups in UCC for the spirituality and well-being of Grade 6 students?

Table Themes and sub-themes that emerged in the study

Theme	Sub-themes
Spiritual Growth Through Shared Experiences	Building Connections Deepening the Faith
Positive Class Relationship	Deeper Connections and Communication Spiritual Understanding and Growth
Biblical Application	Reflecting on Behavior Moral Awareness and Positive Action
Faith	Strengthened Belief and Trust Enhanced Connection and Relationship with God

The table shows the themes and sub-themes derived from participants' responses regarding the impact of small group discussions on their lives as a student. The themes and sub-themes highlight how these discussions may have influenced participants' spiritual growth, relationships with classmates, application of values in daily life, and personal faith.

In four sessions, the students demonstrated different reflections and observations in each small group session. One participant shared her most enjoyable part of the program, which according to the statement: *"When at the end of the discussion, we get to reflect and tell each other how we can communicate with God better even at our lowest times."* Therefore it suggests that being involved in a small group fostered a sense of safety and support, encouraging participants to press on their faith in God even when experiencing negativity or doubt (Hindmarsh, 2024).

Another participant writes: *"Me and my members talked about God and his words. I also enjoyed every moment where I spent my time listening to the word of God with my small group."* It shows the importance of the discussions in fostering a deeper understanding of God and his teachings.

	Paired Differences				t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper			
Eng_Pr eTest - Eng_Po stTest	0.016 22	.24096	.0396 1	-.096 56	.064 12	-.4 09	36 .685
Perc_Pr eTest - Perc_Po stTest	0.127 03	.2673 4	.0439	-.216 16	-.037 89	2. 89	36 .006

This study shows that spiritual growth cannot only be attained on their own but with peers, suggesting a desire to learn and grow together in the faith (Hindmarsh, 2024).

The reflections also show positive class relationships as the small group progresses, which according to a statement: *"It has been all positive and we share a lot of things we didn't know about each other, but since time passed we became closer and closer."* Another participant writes: *"They are gradually expanding their learning and also strengthening their bond with not just us but also with our savior Jesus Christ."* It shows that in small groups, participants will not only get to know themselves and others but most importantly the Lord (Brown, 2023).

Positive Relationships emerge through their one desire which is to study God's word. This study suggests that the application of Biblical Teachings is important. A participant writes: *"I learned to help other people no matter what, and follow God's command more. I learned that you should love your enemies and never take revenge on them because revenge is a sin."* It shows that the application of biblical teaching results in a positive attitude, which according to the statement: *"It influenced me to be nicer and more kind around my peers by reading the Bible, I learned to be much more."* One participant shared their understanding of testing: *"Yes, the bible says that we have to be honest, and if we have problems we sacrifice(surrender) to God. That's what I did."* It emphasizes that God is with them. By surrendering their problems, they found strength and possible solutions through faith (Brown, 2023). As to one participant: *"[It] served as a reminder for me that I will never be alone as Jesus Christ is always here right by my side and I know he never left my side when I needed him the most, he helped me and raised me out of my problems."*

The themes that emerged were: (1) Spiritual Growth through shared Experiences (2) Positive Class Relationships (3) Biblical Application and (4) Faith. The first theme delves into how engaging in discussion and exchanging experiences within a small group setting nurtured individual spiritual progress. It emphasizes the feeling of connection and belonging cultivated through shared experiences within the group. Also, it emphasizes how engaging with values and the Bible led to a deeper understanding of faith concepts.

The second theme concentrates on the beneficial influence the small group had on relationships among peers. It emphasizes how the small group strengthened connection, bond, and companionability among the students. This also

shows how the sharing of experiences and learnings has stimulated growth in the classroom environment and promoted understanding and respect among the different spiritual beliefs.

The third theme centers on the effect of small groups on the students' actions and behaviors. The students were encouraged to compare their behaviors with the Bible. And lastly, the fourth theme concentrates on the beliefs and faith of each student. This emphasizes how the small group sessions helped improve students' trust and faith in God which stimulates a personal and emotional connection with their faith.

The theme that arises shows that small group discussions provide an encouraging and healthy environment where anyone can deepen and grow their faith, have a sense of belongingness, and apply bible teachings. These themes prove that small group discussions are not just merely an exchange of information. This strengthens a person's faith, deepens their understanding of God, and gives them a feeling of fellowship within a caring environment.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable information on the implementation of small groups for spiritual growth and values development among Grade 6 students at Unida Christian Colleges.

The examination of pre-test and post-test data has provided insights into the levels of engagement of Grade 6 students before and after engaging in small group activities. Although no significant disparity in engagement scores was noted between the pre-test and post-test phases, the average scores remained consistently high throughout both stages of the study. This indicates that students sustained a steady level of involvement with the program for spiritual growth and values formation, demonstrating a strong dedication to their spiritual journey.

The findings indicated a significant enhancement in students' perceptions of their spiritual progress and values development after participating in small group activities. The qualitative assessment recognized themes such as spiritual growth and development through shared experiences, application of biblical principles, and faith. These themes signify a deeper recognition and comprehension of spiritual ideas among students, revealing a positive change in their outlook on spiritual growth and values development.

The result suggests that the implementation of small groups in the program for values formation and spiritual growth has a favorable impact on the Grade 6 student's spirituality and values formation. The qualitative assessment highlighted the positive changes and personal growth observed in students participating in small group discussions. Topics such as spiritual growth, building connections, applying biblical principles, and strengthening faith emphasized the significant impact of small group interactions on students' overall well-being.

Small group's effectiveness in the spiritual development and values formation of students was evaluated through quantitative and qualitative assessments. Although the quantitative analysis displayed no significant difference in engagement levels, it showed a remarkable enhancement in students' perceptions of spiritual development and values formation. The qualitative analysis showed significant differences in the transformative experience and favorable results of participating in small groups, confirming the effectiveness of this program in nurturing spirituality among Grade 6 students.

These discoveries align with previous research that highlights the benefits of small group interactions for the

spiritual development of children and adolescents; fostering a sense of inclusion, promoting open communication, and offering chances for individual advancement (Lee, 2020; Boyer, 2018). Moreover, examinations of transformative learning theory suggest that small group settings can enable significant shifts in outlook and values (Mezirow, 2000; Nerstrom, n.d.). This study contributes to the existing body of literature by specifically investigating the influence of small groups on sixth-grade students in a Christian educational environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this study show the effectiveness of small group integration for spiritual development and values formation of the Grade 6 students at Unida Christian Colleges. The results not only answer research questions but also provide valuable insights into the impact of small group activities on students' engagement, perceptions, spirituality, and values formation. The result suggests that the implementation of the small group program had a positive impact on the Grade 6 students.

The continuous study of small groups and their effectiveness on spiritual growth and values formation in the students is essential. Future research must look into further studies to examine the long-term effects of small-group activities. They can also look for different activities and ways to modify and enhance the small group discussions. The study advocates for the broader adoption of small group programs in educational settings to support overall student well-being and growth, underscoring the importance of spirituality and values during the critical transition to adolescence. As such, investing in initiatives that foster spirituality and values formation in educational settings holds promise for cultivating well-rounded individuals who are equipped to navigate life's challenges with resilience and integrity.

Recommendations

The study revealed that students are actively engaged in weekly SDVF programs and that they continue to have positive perceptions of spirituality. On this basis, the researchers recommend the following: Stakeholders offer financial assistance, volunteering as mentors or guest speakers, or advocating for the significance of holistic education, School Administrators acknowledge the beneficial influence of such endeavors on student well-being, administrators must allocate resources and deliver training for teachers to proficiently facilitate small group sessions, Teachers to receive training and continual support to adeptly facilitate small group activities. This may encompass opportunities for professional development, mentorship programs, and access to resources and materials to refine their abilities in guiding meaningful discussions and cultivating spiritual growth among students, Parents to urge their children to partake in small group activities and engage in candid conversations about faith and values at home, and future researchers to conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate the enduring impact of small group interventions on students' spiritual growth and values development.

The research recognizes various constraints, including the short duration of the program and the single-institution focus, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the presence of subjectivity in qualitative data introduces difficulties. Further studies should aim to tackle these limitations. Christian educational institutions should adopt small-group programs as core components of their educational framework, and policymakers should support and potentially mandate small-group activities to promote holistic

student growth. They should broaden the research scope to encompass diverse populations and educational environments to enhance comprehension of the applicability of findings.

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