

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

*Teachers' Perceptions on Relevance of the Methods they Used
to Teach Christian Values Among Ages 2-5 at Africa Inland
Church Kenya*

BY
ANNE NDUTA KIRAGU

*A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master
of Divinity in Educational Studies*

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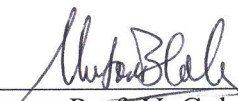
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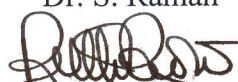

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Student's Declaration

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ON RELEVANCE OF THE METHODS
THEY USE TO TEACH CHRISTIAN VALUES AMONG
AGES 2-5 AT AFRICA INLAND CHURCH KENYA

I declare that this is my original work and has not been
submitted to any other College or University for academic credit

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi
Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners

(Signed) _____
Anne Nduta Kiragu

July, 2006

ABSTRACT

This study was aimed at evaluating the relevance of the teaching methods employed by Sunday school teachers in teaching Christian values among children of ages 2-5 years in Africa Inland Church Kenya. This research served two purposes; first, to ascertain the methods teachers use and second to test the relevance of those methods for the purpose of ensuring that the pre-school children comprehend and internalize the word of God in their lives.

This was a descriptive study in which a survey was carried out in order to detect teachers' opinions concerning the relevance of the methods they use to teach pre-school children. Data collection involved the use of open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires. The questionnaires were administered to 30 Sunday school teachers who minister to pre-schoolers in nine Africa Inland Churches around Nairobi. Since the study sought to find out the relationship between perception of relevance and factors such as teachers' age, gender, class size, length of ministry experience and teachers' educational levels, the statistical instrument used to determine this relationship was chi-square test of independence.

Findings revealed that teachers perceived story telling, music and visuals to be the most commonly used teaching methods in communicating Bible truths among pre-school children. In addition, teachers perceived prayer, music and stories to be the most relevant teaching methods in their endeavor. It was also found out that age, gender, educational level, length of ministry experience and class size were not factors to consider when determining perception of relevance of teaching methods.

To

Njeri our daughter, who is in her initial stages of acquiring Christian values

And

Mumbi my mum, who introduced me to godly ways and who first, took me to church
where I learnt Christian values

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIC Africa Inland Church

CED Christian Education Department

CE Christian Education

NEGST-Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Africa Inland Church (AIC) of Kenya was founded in 1895 through the sacrificial work of John Scott Cameron among others, who worked with the Africa Inland Mission. The Christian Education Department (CED) of the church was realized in 1963 after its needs had been felt for some time. One of the main duties of the Christian Education Department of the Africa Inland Church is to design curricula as well as to develop teaching materials for various age groups in the church that are aimed at achieving the educational objectives of the Church: teaching everyone with all wisdom, to make everyone mature and perfect in Christ (AIC Christian Education Manual 1995). Ironically, report from the CED director at the national level and at the local church level reveals that the church has neither an organized program nor a curriculum for pre-school children. The church's CED programs cover from grade/standard one, which begins at age six or seven, to most children. Very few AIC churches have Bible Study programs for pre-school children. Consequently, most churches opt to combine pre-school children with the first and the second graders, which leaves the 2-5 spiritually un nourished.

Like AIC, many denominations in Kenya ignore ministry to pre-schoolers, claiming that they are still young and have a long way to go before they can be exposed to Bible truths. The reality is that these children are total human beings, born with fallen nature therefore needing redemption. Taking children to church and telling them to be quiet does not help much but teaching them to worship does. Teaching children to

worship God is one of the most life transforming things both to children and to their parents. Just as God delights in the worship of adults so does He delight in and desires the worship of children. In other words, pre-schoolers need a full expression of the Christian faith just like any other person but in ways and words they can understand. Scripture is plain that Jesus included young children when He commissioned His disciples to “go and make disciples of all nations” (Matthew 28:19). Gangel and Hendricks, quoting Johann Amos Comenius, asserts,

If we want to educate a person in virtue we must polish him at a tender age. And if someone is to advance toward wisdom he must be opened up for it in the first years of his life when his industriousness is still burning, his mind still malleable, and his memory still strong (Gangel and Hendricks 1980, 45).

Children need to be exposed to Christian values from a tender age because it is at that age when the foundation of spiritual truth is laid. For this to happen Sunday school teachers need to know how children learn and use appropriate teaching styles to help them learn. Just like the way a chicken sits on her eggs, giving them warmth awaiting for the time they will hatch, the same way children need to be taught God’s word when they are still young in preparation for the time they will make a personal decision of embracing the love of Christ.

Research Problem

Most psychologists conclude that learning and cognitive development of human beings go hand in hand. Effectiveness in teaching comes about when teachers are conscious of the cognitive developmental stages of their learners. Assumption is made that preschoolers are not ready to understand God and faith because they are incapable of abstract thought, which is not expected to develop until the adolescent stage, when serious instruction about faith should begin. Instead they are considered unruly and troublesome when they accompany their parents to the place of worship.

The end result is that ages 2-5 is left to chance till they are ‘old enough’ to understand matters of faith. Conversely, just as the adults and youths receive spiritual nurture, pre-school children too are capable of receiving Christian values. This does not imply that children comprehend all the terminologies and abstract concepts taught to the youths or adults (Downs 1994, 91) but faith to them should be communicated in terms and methods they can understand and apply in their lives. If proper teaching methods are applied, children too are capable of understanding God’s word like any other person. Having all these in mind there was therefore a need to investigate what methods are used to communicate Bible truths to pre-school children in nine Africa Inland Churches namely, Ngong Hills, Ngong Road, Ong’ata Rongai, Kiserian, Lang’ata, Riruta, Kariobangi South, Milimani and Kikuyu Township. This investigation was done for the purpose of finding out whether the methods used in these churches are relevant in meeting the intended goal.

Purpose of the Study

The AIC seems to be very clear on what goal it intends to pursue as far as spiritual development is concerned. The problem lies in the fact that the pre-schoolers are not planned for, yet they regularly attend Sunday School like other children. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the relevance of the various teaching techniques through which Sunday school teachers at Africa Inland Churches communicate Christian values to pre-schoolers. This was for the purpose of ascertaining either or not that the methods employed are consistent with the children’s cognitive development. The question that this study intended to answer was, “how effective are the teaching methods used by teachers to communicate Christian values to pre-schoolers in AIC?”

Research Questions

In order to accomplish the above purposes, the researcher was guided by the following research questions.

R.Q. 1. What teaching methods do teachers commonly use in passing Christian values to children in Africa Inland Church?

R.Q. 2. What teaching methods do teachers consider most relevant in passing Christian values to pre-schoolers?

R.Q. 3. What factors influence teachers' perception of the relevance of (each of) the teaching methods?

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses acted as a means of tentative answers to the questions raised in this study and were tested. The hypotheses were stated in the light of the research questions.

H₀: 1. A teacher's educational level will not affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

H₀: 2. A teacher's gender will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

H₀: 3. The duration of time a teacher has been in ministry to pre-schoolers will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

H₀: 4. Class size will not significantly affect a teacher's perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

H₀: 5. The age of a teacher will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

Significance of the Study

Wilhoit and Dettoni stated, “Developmentalism declares that the valuable content of scripture must be combined with an awareness of the stage the child is in so as to match the teaching of the content to the capacity of the child” (Wilhoit and Dettoni 1995, 142). The above statement suggests that while all the parts of the Bible are true, not all parts are suitable for teaching children. How a child thinks has many implications for a teacher of spiritual truth. In any learning environment, teaching methods play a big role in ensuring that a learner understands what is being communicated to him. If educational goals and objectives are to be achieved then proper teaching methods have to be used. The use of relevant teaching methods in this case in point, according to cognitive developmental level of each learner, will improve his/her spiritual development. This study thus was intended to provide appropriate information to local churches about the choice of relevant teaching methods that would contribute to spiritual growth of ages 2-5.

Limitations and Delimitations

Due to limitation of the available time and finances to carry out this research, the sample was delimited to nine local churches around Nairobi namely: Ngong Road, Ngong Hills, Ongata Rongai, Kiserian, Lang’ata, Milimani, Kariobangi South, Riruta and Kikuyu Township, where a total number of thirty participants were required to respond to the questionnaires. The respondents were required to be teaching 2-5 year olds or have a class that contains this age group among other children. The teacher was also required to have taught these children for at least one year. In addition, the research focused on opinion of teachers as opposed to other people’s opinion.

Definition of Terms

Pre-schoolers

This term was used in this study to refer to children 2-5 years old. The terms pre-schoolers and 2-5 years old were used interchangeably in this study.

Christian Values-

This expression was used to refer to the morals that Christians hold as desirable and they would like to see imparted to their children. The term 'Bible truths' was used interchangeably with the expression Christian Values.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Biblical View of Children

Children are often confronted with rebukes and harsh words when they try to touch the public address system or even a keyboard in a church gathering. They are told that those things belong to adults and that they should wait till they are older in order to touch them. This attitude makes children feel insecure, incapacitated and separated from adult life that they are being prepared for. A similar episode happened with Jesus' disciples when a group of children interrupted their discussion. Jesus said that children should be allowed to come to him since the Kingdom of heaven belongs to those who would be like those little children (Matthew 19:14). Every church or individual that would like to follow Christ's example must receive children as Jesus did. Jesus valued ministry to children. He was ready to be interrupted in his ministry to adults and other personal commitments in order to attend to children. For instance, when he heard that Jairus' daughter was dead he left what he was doing in order to go and raise her back to life (Mark 5:35-43). Also when a group of children disrupted Jesus' meeting with the disciples He was furious when they tried to block them from Him (Matthew 19:13-15). Most senior pastors leave the task of nurturing the spiritual lives of children to support staff and volunteers who in most cases are not trained to handle them. Valuing ministry to children like Jesus would bring a mighty transformation in the body of Jesus Christ

Biblical Basis for Teaching the Pre-schoolers

Both the Old and the New Testament put great emphasis on teaching of Christian values to children. God through his servant Moses told the Israelites to study the law carefully, put it in their hearts and teach it to their children. Diligence was necessary to ensure that the young understood and practiced the law. Studying the law was not an easy task. It required much patience, prudence, judgment and piety. Parents were commanded to teach their children throughout the day, in every place and in all circumstances (Deuteronomy 6:6-10).

In the New Testament this same important commission is also emphasized. Paul told Timothy, “and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15 NIV). Timothy became a Christian because his mother and grandmother taught him God’s word when he was a small child (1 Timothy 1:5). Either at home or in Church, teaching young children is both an opportunity as well as a responsibility. For Timothy, boyhood instruction prepared him for a life of service. At present, teaching Christian values to a child is a strong foundation upon which he will build the rest of his life. Commenting on this, Doharty says,

Experience with the children teaches us that it is dangerous to wait until the child is grown before teaching him the word of God and the claims of Christ. Materialism, atheism, sects and crime are trying to win the children and to win them for evil. They do not wait until the children are grown. (Doharty 1981, 57)

The childhood stage is when one is open to learning, discovery, influence and a time in which personality is developed. Teachers should thus ensure that as children endeavor to discover, they first and foremost discover God and his love to them.

Arnold Gesell states, "From birth to five or six years, one's life moves at a furious pace, never to be equaled in a like period" (quoted by Barbour 1981, 16).

Also, quoting Bernice, Cory Barbour writes,

A child's learning and remembering abilities are greater during his first five years of life than they will ever be again. This is the most sensitive, receptive and crucial period of development. In fact, the optimum learning period of his entire life (Ibid).

What is put in the mind of a child at his primal years is there to stay and very difficult to erase. Research studies show that a child develops approximately 50% of his intelligence by the age of four, another 30% by eight and the final 17% by seventeen (Choun 1992, 171). During these years of intelligence development a child can learn through a schedule of activities and creative methods designed specifically for his age-level (Ibid).

Both scripture and modern theory emphasize the importance of developmentally appropriate practices. Lesson contents and teaching methods must be geared to the learner's developmental level of understanding (I Corinthians 3:2). Children willingly follow the Savior if they are skillfully led. God commands that our children be reared "in the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4 NIV). Christian Educators who are responsible for training the young ones should thus be very careful to communicate only what is desirable. A child becomes what he experiences in his early years of life. That is, if he is loved he will learn to love and if he is listened to he will learn to listen. Horace Bushnell in Barbour noted, "Every father and mother should realize that when their child is three years of age, they have done more than half they will ever do (sic) for his character" (Barbour 19).

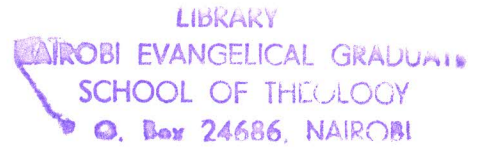
Characteristics of Pre-schoolers

Understanding how preschoolers learn will help us know what sorts of activities we should provide for their learning. We do not make preschoolers sit and listen nor do we ask them to work in groups. We do not ask them to stay with a single activity for a long period of time. Rather we provide them with a series of informal activities that would capture their minds. In order to take good care of children, teachers must learn how they grow and develop physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. Our understanding of how children develop will help us know better how to relate to them and what to provide for their learning. The goal of training children is that they become aware of and are transformed by the principles of faith. For this to be realized, a teacher needs to observe the child's style of learning and level of understanding in order to teach him/her appropriately.

The needs and ability of children to understand concepts depend on their stages of development. The way a child responds to religious teaching relates closely to how he thinks. Shelly points out that just as there is physical growth and development before physical birth consequently there is spiritual growth and development before spiritual birth (Shelly 1982, 20). Shelly adds, "An understanding of developmental tasks can alert us to appropriate times to challenge and encourage children in their spiritual development" (Ibid 19). Teachers should therefore be able to notice any developmental change in their learners.

People go through various stages of development from childhood to old age. Stonehouse defines a stage as "a phase of life when the person is dealing with certain challenges, developing new capabilities and a new sense of the self in relationship with others" (Stonehouse 1999, 46). Due to these changes, a person experiences and views life differently from what goes on in other stages. Movement from one stage of

development to another takes place as changes take place physically, emotionally, and cognitively, which makes the society express new expectations. As an individual responds to these new changes and manages them, then development takes place. At each point challenges in one stage are solved and the person goes on to the next stage (Ibid).



Spiritual Characteristics of 2-3 Years Old

The 2-3 years old children believe what their parents and teachers tell them. At this stage also, children have a hunger for God and ask questions about Him. They can learn simple Bible truths and songs as well as express their love to God and talk to him through prayers (Hall 1980, 49). Dennis Dirks in Michael Anthony observes that at the age of 2 and 3, “Imagination emerges through stories, gestures, and other symbols” (Anthony 2001, 84). Dennis Dirks adds that imagination, perception and feelings create images that continue over a lifetime. At this stage also, a child has no content of faith. Child’s faith experience at this stage consists of “... a collection of independent, generally unconnected events” (Ibid 85). Parents and other adults with whom an emotional bond with the child has been formed are responsible in shaping the faith of a child.

Psychosocial Development of 2-3 Years Old

Quoting Erick Erickson, Anthony calls the second stage of psychosocial development as Autonomy versus Shame and Guilt (Anthony 64). He suggests that most children go through this stage at the age of 1-3. At this stage a child discovers that he can do things on his own and thus insists on doing them without any assistance. Stonehouse points out that at this stage parents should take care not to shame the young ones when they do not do things right (Stonehouse 54). She adds, “If the choices and efforts of toddlers are not guided, their limitations and inability are

exposed and they experience shame and self doubt” (Ibid). If children are not taught to perform new duties, they are defeated leading to shame and doubts. Shame and doubt occur also to children who are not guided and thus inhibit development of initiative in the next stage.

Mental Characteristics of 2-3 Years Old

At 2-3, children can ‘read’ pictures and they love stories about people. They learn through imitation, by asking questions through senses and through repetition of favorite stories (Ibid). At this point since children learn better through repetition, a routine needs to be introduced. Shelly illustrates this,

Two-year-old Amy stood in her crib shrieking, “Pay! Pay!” while her bewildered babysitter sought the cause of her distress. She reviewed the bedtime routine—brushing teeth, potty, pajamas...leaving the door ajar. She did not think she had missed anything, but Amy continued to cry out, “Pay! Pay!” Suddenly she realized that Amy was trying to say, “Pray!” She went back in, sat down and prayed with Amy, who then contentedly ...went to sleep (Shelly 29).

Moreover, preschoolers are concrete in their thinking and they think of God in literal forms similar to their parents. A story is told of a three-year old who one day got disappointed when he went to church and failed to see the regular pastor who was on vacation. The boy stomped his foot and asked loudly, “Where is Jesus” (Castleman 1993, 32)?

Spiritual Characteristics of 4-5 years old Children

The 4-5 years old children think of God in a personal way, that is, He is a giant and with supernatural powers. They sometimes confuse him with Jesus. These children are able to pray and to worship. At this stage also they are able to recognize right from wrong yet blame others for their wrongdoing (Hall 50). Spiritual stability of parents influences that of a child such that we cannot consider one without the other. Children brought up in a Christian home unselfconsciously and naturally

acquire their parents' approach of faith. They will often talk about Jesus as if he were a member of their family and will always quote the words of their parents concerning Jesus such as 'Christ died for the sins of mankind'. They may not know what they are talking about but they just utter what they hear others say. Also at this stage of development, a child should be brought up in an environment that offers both love and discipline in order to help him understand who God is. If a child is given too much freedom he might come to a conclusion that he is in charge of his own world, which might make him develop a protective cocoon of toughness. Later when a child discovers that his parents are disciplinarians and protectors he might begin to question the existence of God.

Mental Development of 4-5 years old

It is generally observed that children aged 4-5 are curious and want to learn more. They love to ask questions, they cannot differentiate fact from fantasy, they believe what their parents tell them and they do not understand symbolism. These children learn best through senses, play and imitating those around them. They are able to memorize but do not always understand the meaning of what they have learnt (Ibid). Though to them the meaning of prayer is vague they emphasize prayer ritual. They enjoy visual works as they reinforce words and ideas especially if they can be touched. At this stage still, children understand Bible stories with one clear theme. The 4-5's behavior is geared towards pleasing older people be they teachers, parents or older siblings. For instance they do good in order to please Jesus. Shelly points out that the "major area of spiritual growth is in forming attitudes toward God, the Bible and the Church" (Shelly 20). Shelly adds that, "unrealistic demands for a child's behavior at this stage may cause a child to later reject God or become legalistic in religious practice" (Ibid 21).

The Task of a Christian Educator

Owing to the development of their understanding, children go through different stages in their development. Christian educators need to realize that they do not give children a primary understanding of God. Children come to church with an understanding that God is real. Children become ripe for instruction the moment they begin to ask endless questions that seem to be ‘silly’, such as what does God eat for supper? Or even where does he go for shopping? Children ask these questions earlier, even before they are taken to Sunday School. The most important task of a Christian educator is thus to help children reconcile the image they have of God with what they teach them about Him. Preschoolers have a concrete and anthropomorphic image of God, which may be a very good foundation that can be reshaped and transformed. Stonehouse underscores this by commenting that, “In each stage of development the image of God must grow and be redefined, using new capacities of reasoning and relating so that the current understanding of God is adequate for the challenges of the new stage of life” (Stonehouse 134). This means that it is impossible to give a person an image of God that will be adequate for a lifetime. The primary image of God is powerful and lasting but the relationship with God should be constantly changing thus transforming God’s image in one’s life. Christian educators need also to realize that a child’s understanding develops very slowly and concepts such as the meaning of death, Christ, being born again, committing one’s life to Christ mean very little to the small child unless they are explained in terms he/she can understand (Leslie 1982, 18).

How Children Learn

Leslie suggests that Sunday school activities for children should be interesting and must exercise the child’s imagination and curiosity (Leslie 55). Teachers need to

keep order in class and keep the children occupied. The following are some of the ways through which children learn.

Through Play

Play is a very powerful method of learning to the wee ones basically because they are egocentric and would wish to do their own things. It is through play that a child learns to join with other children, to obey set rules, see fair play, to lose and to win a game. Also, it is through play that a child learns to settle differences with other children. Play should go hand in hand with a few moments of conversation geared towards guiding their play into Bible truth (Ibid 31). In other words, play should be structured to have an educational intention. Hall notes, "To a young child play is as important as work is to an adult" (Hall 1980, 60). Since the 2s and 3s are short on words, they need to learn ideas in association with activities that will give the ideas meaning. A Christian educator should try to channel a child's natural interest and thinking to the day's theme and topic without necessarily telling him/her his objective. He should use necessary tools to drive home spiritual implications in any given activity. For instance when a child carries a doll, a teacher should liken that to God's tender care for them. Activities for pre-school children should be kept short because their concentration span is very short, which is 3-5 minutes. Lawson in Choun observes that:

Play occupies an increasingly large place in the child's life. A child plays spontaneously. You do not have to teach him....A child learns, develops and builds knowledge through play. Play reflects children's understanding of the world and is therefore a constant testing of the world (Choun 1992, 171).

Through Modeling

Modeling is what Elkind referred to as 'watch me' school of instruction (Elkind 1976, 80). Children are very good at imitating what they see others do. Their

lives are greatly influenced by those whom they interact with, those they consider to be authority figures as well as those they respect. Teachers are called upon to model the correct behavior in their learners. In order to do this Sunday school teachers should live the Bible truths they teach, which in turn should influence their learners to also live out those values.

Through Role Play

When children are role-playing they do so very seriously. They feel like the characters they are portraying. Their power of imagination is so powerful that they can shift from acting one character to another. A Sunday school teacher is supposed to encourage his/her children to act Bible stories after they hear them from her since this will sink in their minds better than when they are just narrated. Elkind says, “Since the children will experience the feeling and actions of the persons being portrayed, do not have them pretend to be the ‘bad’ characters” (Elkind 27) such as the wicked Pharaoh in the story of Moses, the robbers in the story of the Good Samaritan and the wicked Goliath in the story of the children of Israel. Apart from Bible stories, Sunday School teachers should help the children to act plays on modern day situations such as traffic police taking a bribe and showing them the importance of receiving right dues. Also, when teaching them the need of obedience, provide a practical way in which a child will literally obey in a way that when confronted with an obedience dilemma, the child will directly switch on to what he did and then respond accordingly. Such plays help children relate what they learn with their daily life experiences. Harrell points out, “When possible, get application into the muscles of your children and it will get into their heads!” (Harrell 1971, 28).

Through Story Telling

Stories express great Bible truths in simple words. Bible stories have much to help a child develop his concepts of God, Jesus and other important truths. Bible stories should be read in a simplified way at an early age. Stories for the pre-schoolers should be repeated over and over again. Repetition will enable a child to learn the stories by heart and even narrate them to other children and parents at home. Words used in narrating stories need to be carefully chosen to ensure that they are well understood and that they are not ambiguous and obscure meaning. Stories should be simple and brief. Stonehouse recommends that a story should just be narrated the way it is without telling them the meaning of the story or explaining to them what they should be hearing (Stonehouse, 186). When narrating, the teacher needs to keep eye contact with the children and sometimes personalize the story. He should also ensure that children identify with the story in order to capture their attention and to allow the word of God to be personal to every child. In order to make a story more effective in communicating Bible truths to children, a teacher should begin by mentioning a problem typical to his/her learner's problem. Help them identify with the problem that the Bible story will answer. After narration, the teacher should ask the children to suggest a solution to the identified problem.

Through Prayer

Children have the capacity to speak and to listen to what is unseen. The faith they possess to do so is part of what Jesus commended as the very faith that gives evidence of the kingdom of God. Castleman says, "children can know what it is to pray in faith to an unseen God who is a real friend" (Castleman 1993,83). Children need to learn to talk to God as easily and as naturally as they talk to each other. Encourage children to pray aloud so that they will not feel hesitant later in life. Also ensure that they do so confidently with an assurance that God is listening and will

answer them. Castleman records a prayer of Robert, praying for his daddy's sick knee a night before he went for surgery,

Dear Jesus, please make my Daddy's knee all better so when the doctors see it tomorrow they will be surprised that they don't have to fix it. Well I know you always do what's best, so if you decide not to do what I really want, well, that's ... (He paused and then haltingly and deliberately continued), okay... because...you...are still...well...Jesus (Ibid 83).

At the beginning a teacher should pray while they listen then ask each child to pray for various issues. Prayers should be simple and brief, containing one major thought in each prayer. A teacher should ask children to mention things to pray for as he also guides them on various forms of prayer such as asking for forgiveness, thanksgiving, prayer for their needs and those of others (Hall 69).

Through Music

The young ones love and enjoy music just as the older people. Of all the words children remember most are the ones set to music. Melody and rhythm give words a great impact, making them easy for the young ones to remember and repeat. Harrell says it well that “*Through music a shy child can be helped to relax; an overactive, aggressive child can release his tensions in an acceptable way*” (Harrell 142).

Children can sit and watch you sing and through that they are learning something in the process. The 4s and 5s can comfortably sing while the 3s can begin singing with the teacher though with a few words behind. Words should describe concrete experiences familiar to children and should be spiritually and doctrinally sound.

Songs should contain one main idea for 2s and 3s. Music with the child's name makes him feel accepted and enjoy the music the more. Use music to help a child respond to God in thankfulness and love. Children enjoy familiar songs and wish they could be sung again and again.

Through Visuals (Drawings and pictures)

One of the ways in which children learn is through the sense of sight. Children admire pictures and drawings; more especially the bright colored ones. In order to understand a child's mind, a Sunday school teacher should ask him/her to make a drawing of a particular thing. Through such drawings, children express their concepts of God, the church, and of the world they live in, in ways they cannot verbalize. Children can often talk about a picture they have drawn with words they could not put together before making the drawing.

Methodological Literature Review

Literature reveals various methodologies that one can use in carrying out a research. One of the most commonly used approaches in finding out people's opinions, attitudes and perceptions is the survey method. This research sought to determine teachers' opinions or feelings on the effectiveness of their teaching methods with pre-school children. In this case, survey method was the most appropriate approach. Best and Kahn observe that survey method is not concerned with individuals as individuals; rather it is concerned with the statistics that result when data is obtained from a number of individual cases (Best and Kahn 1998, 115). The purpose of a survey is "to use questionnaires or interviews to collect data from participants in a sample about their characteristics, experiences, and opinions in order to generalize the findings to a population that the sample is intended to represent" (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, 289). There are several advantages in using surveys. First, survey can be administered in a short period of time, making them economical as a means of data collection. Second, survey gathers data from a relatively large number of cases at a particular time. Further the participants can be contacted anonymously without being influenced by the researcher.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is an instrument used to obtain factual information from respondents. A questionnaire is the most common instrument used to gather information from a population. Gall, Borg and Gall define questionnaires as “documents that ask the same questions to all individuals in the sample” (Gall, Borg and Gall 289). One of the advantages of using questionnaires is that the cost of sampling respondents over a wide geographical area is lower and the time spent to collect data is less. Questionnaires can be either open-ended or closed-ended. A closed-ended questionnaire contains questions that require responses with a yes or a no, a short response or a check on an item from a list of suggested responses. On the other hand, open-ended ones call for a free response from the respondent. This research made use of a 19-item questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed-ended questions.

Likert Scale

The type of summated scale most frequently used in study of social attitudes or opinion is the Likert-type scale. In the Likert scale, the subjects are asked to respond to each attitude item in terms of several degrees of agreement or disagreement. For instance one can be asked to respond to: “strongly agree”, “agree”, “undecided”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. Likert scale has advantages over Thurstone scale in that it is generally simpler to construct and to use. However this scale has disadvantages in that it only ranks individuals in terms of favorableness but it does not tell us by how much more favorable one is from the other.

Hypothesis

Hypotheses are “tentative answers to research problems and are expressed in the form of a relationship between independent and dependent variables” (Nachmias and Nachmias 23). Null hypotheses “make predictions that in the general population

there is no relationship between variables or no difference between groups on measured variables” (Creswell 2002, 143). Statistical tools test these hypotheses by determining the probability that whatever difference is found in the research subjects is a true difference that also is present in the population from which the research samples have been drawn (Borg and Gall 1989, 66-67). In this particular study, the null hypothesis was used to test the difference that exists between teaching methods and spiritual development of the pre-school children. A test of statistical significance of 0.05 was carried out to determine whether the null hypothesis could be rejected or not rejected. If the teaching methods affect spiritual growth of children then the null hypothesis was rejected but if they did not affect children’s spiritual growth, then the hypothesis was not rejected.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Methodology

This chapter describes the methods and the procedures utilized in the research. Since this study deals with people's perceptions and opinions, an appropriate methodology needed to be used to allow the inquirer to gather the required data. In order to achieve the objectives of the study the researcher designed questionnaires and distributed them to the intended subjects.

Research Design

Due to the nature of the research topic and the research problem the researcher made use of quantitative design in which a survey was carried out to find out teachers' opinions about the relevance of their teaching methods for pre-school children. Creswell observes that, "A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population" (Creswell 2003, 153). Surveys are often used to collect background information, data opinion, and information on attitudes and reasons for behavior (Nachmias and Nachmias 1975, 109). In this study, information was gathered from teachers who facilitate spiritual growth of pre-schoolers. Teachers were chosen in this case because they are in a better position to give an account of any changes that take place in the lives of their learners. The inquirer used questionnaires in which both open-ended and closed-ended questions were asked. These questionnaires were self-

delivered in order to ensure that they all reached the required respondents and so that the researcher may clarify any unclear item in the instrument.

Entry Procedure

In order to conduct the survey, the researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs (DVCAA). Through this letter, the local church pastors as well as Christian Education Directors were notified of the study, which enabled the researcher to carry out the study.

Population

The population of this study was all Sunday school teachers in the AIC Church who deal with children between 2 and 5 years of age in the local churches mentioned in chapter 1.

Sampling

Since it was impracticable or impossible to get an impression of opinion from every teacher in the mentioned churches, a sampling technique was employed in such a way that the resulting opinions of the sample can be inferred on the population. Sampling was done randomly to ensure that every subject has an equal chance of being chosen and that the sample is a true representation of the population. In the process of sampling, the researcher made use of stratified sampling (Creswell 2002, 166). In carrying out stratified sampling, three steps were followed. First, a list of all the churches of interest containing the names of teachers teaching pre-school children was made. Second, the population was divided according to their stratum, which is by their local churches. Third, sampling was done within the stratum. Stratified sampling in this case ensured that teachers from all the churches of interest were selected for the study since simple random sampling would probably end up producing teachers from a few churches leaving out those of other churches. Out of

the entire population, 30 teachers were selected to respond to the questionnaires. The opinion gathered was analyzed and reported by such classifications as age, educational level, class size, ministry experience, gender, and the local church where one does ministry. Table 1 shows distribution of sampled teaches per local churches.

Table 1. Distribution of teachers by local churches

LOCAL CHURCH	NO. OF TEACHERS PER LOCAL CHURCH	NO. OF TEACHERS SELECTED
Ngong Road	5	4
Ngong Hills	5	4
Ong'ata Rongai	6	3
Kiserian	3	2
Kikuyu Township	3	2
Milimani	12	5
Lang'ata	7	4
Riruta	9	3
Kariobangi South	8	3
TOTAL	58	30

Instrument Design

Questionnaires were used in this study as a survey instrument to collect data. In developing this instrument the researcher went through two stages. First, relevant literature was read to ascertain the possible methods that may be used to teach Bible truths to pre-school children. Second, the researcher conducted a prior investigation through interacting with the Sunday school teachers in a casual way as well as using personal experience as a Sunday school teacher to find out what methods were being employed to teach Bible truths to pre-schoolers and what the teachers felt about the relevance of the methods they use in teaching.

The research instrument addressed the three specific research questions cited in chapter 1 and the research variables. The researcher decided on one dependent variable, namely the effectiveness of teaching methods used to instruct pre-schoolers. The independent variables were several and included, level of education, gender, age,

ministry experience and class size. Questions were developed to measure each of the independent variables. The questionnaires were then self-delivered to the respondents so that the instrument could reach the respondents in good time. The survey instrument comprised three parts as follows:

Part A

This section involved seven items, each soliciting specific information relating to the individual's personal data. These items were developed in order to answer the third research question, which sought to find out the possible factors that influence teachers' perception of the relevance of each of the teaching methods.

Part B

Part B of the questionnaire contained one question in which respondents were asked to indicate their preferred teaching methods and to give reasons for their choice. The response to questions 8 was to answer the first research question, which was to help in determining the most frequent methods employed in instructing the pre-schoolers. In addition, this section helped the researcher in validating the findings from part A of the instrument.

Part C

This group of questions consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions intended to solicit information about the actual behavior of individuals in the sample. In other words, this set of questions related to obtaining attitudes and opinions from individuals in the sample. The respondents were required to indicate to what extent they make their stand. Also this section was used to gather information on what they consider to be the relevant methods to use in teaching the pre-school children in their churches and what improvement they would wish to see in teaching

the pre-school children. This part of the questionnaire was designed to respond to the third research question.

Pilot Testing

In order to establish the reliability and the validity of the instrument, the researcher asked two NEGST Sunday school teachers who are involved in teaching ages 2-3 and ages 4-6 Sunday school classes at NEGST to respond to the questionnaires. These teachers must have taught the children for the last one year. Creswell points out that the reason for pilot testing is to assist in content validity of the instrument “and to improve content, format and the scales” (Creswell 2003, 158). Teachers were required to evaluate the content of the instrument and point out any unclear items. They were also required to make suggestions on how to improve the instrument in order for the researcher to meet the intended objectives. Appropriate modifications were thereafter made based on the feedback to reflect those concerns. Through this exercise, the researcher ascertained that the individuals in the sample had sufficient knowledge and understanding to express a meaningful opinion about the topic.

Validation and Verification of Instrument

Validity is concerned with the question, “Is one measuring what one thinks he is measuring?” (Nachmias and Nachmias 59). If so, to what extent? Reliability on the other hand is the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedure demonstrates, that is, the instrument is measuring whatever it does consistently. It is always necessary to gather some evidence that one is doing what he/she intends to do. Verification of the relevance of the questionnaire by professionals in the area of research is essential. This research made use of content validity. Content validity, according to Best and Kahn, refers to “the degree to which the test actually measures,

or is specifically related to, the traits for which it was designed” (Best and Kahn 171). Best and Kahn further assert, “...content validity is often assessed by a panel of experts in the field who judge its adequacy...” (Ibid). Another way of verifying an instrument is by repeating a questionnaire with the same individual after a lapse of time.

In order to further verify the instrument in this study, two Christian Education Directors in AIC Church were asked to verify (through studying the instrument) whether the researcher would be able to get the required information in order to achieve the desired objectives. Feedback from Christian education directors was as well considered, which, further contributed to modification of the survey instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher gathered detailed information from the participants through administering questionnaires to pre-school teachers in the various local churches. Data for this research was collected on three types of scale including nominal, ordinal and interval. Simple frequency counts was taken for nominal categories. The results of every analysis were reported in tabular form.

Plan for Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin wrote, “Analysis is the interplay between researchers and data” (Strauss and Corbin 13). In doing data analysis in this research, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were applied. Closed-ended questions were analyzed quantitatively (deductive coding), whereas open-ended ones were analyzed qualitatively (inductive coding). Coding is the “technical procedure through which data is categorized” (Selltiz 1951, 140). “It involves combining detailed information into a limited number of categories that enable simple description of the data and

allows for statistical analyses” (Nachmias and Nachmias 1976, 143). According to Nachmias and Nachmias, deductive coding requires that “data be recorded according to some preconceived scheme that is being applied as the record is being made” (Ibid 144). In this particular study, categorization of data was done in order to determine the number of cases that fall into various categories, followed by counting the number of teachers using a particular teaching method.

For this study, the null hypothesis was tested using the Chi-Square Test. Chi-Square is a non-parametric test that can be used as a “test of independence, the idea that one variable is not affected by, or related to, another variable” (Best and Kahn 1989, 299). Since the null hypothesis states that there is no relationship between the variables, the Chi-Square test merely evaluates the probability that the observed relationship results from chance. Chi-Square is defined by

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O= observed frequency
E= expected frequency.

If the observed frequency was identical with the expected frequency then the Chi-Square was zero. In other words the larger the difference between the expected and the observed frequency the greater was the Chi-Square. Chi-Square test evaluates whether these differences are large enough to warrant the conclusion that the null hypothesis is false and can be rejected in favor of an alternative stating that there is a relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. If the calculated Chi-Square does not equal or exceed the critical values necessary to warrant rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis was rejected, if otherwise it was not rejected. In this research therefore, the responses of the teachers on the Likert Scale were tallied and summed up to show their opinions about the

effectiveness of the methods they use to teach the children. In a table with one degree of freedom, the following formula was used to calculate values of each cell.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{N \{AD - BC\}^2}{(A+B) (C+D) (A+C) (B+D)}$$

Where N= Population size

A, B, C and D are values of the respective cells on a table.

With the open-ended questions, inductive coding was used. Here, a representative sample of responses developed from the data was chosen. When the selection was sufficient to allow a pattern to emerge, the coding scheme was constructed. This scheme was applied to the data, which was then interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This study sought to find out the relevance of the teaching methods employed in teaching Bible truths to children aged 2-5. This chapter reports the findings, analysis and the interpretations of data collected.

Questionnaire Returns

Table 2 shows the rate of returns of questionnaires distributed to teachers.

Table 2. Rate of returns of questionnaires

Number sent out	Number returned	Percentage returned
30	22	73

The table above reveals that out of 30 questionnaires, 22 were completed, returned and were fit for analysis. This represents 73% response rate. The outstanding 8 questionnaires were either never returned or they were returned but the information contained was unclear or mixed up. Table 3 shows the rate of return of questionnaires from respondents in various local churches.

Table 3. Return of questionnaires by individual local churches

Local Church	No. Sent out	No. Returned	Percentage of total
Ngong Road	4	2	6.7
Ngong Hills	4	3	10
Kiserian	2	2	6.7
Ongata Rong'ai	3	2	6.7
Lang'ata	4	3	10
Milimani	5	4	13.3
Kariobangi South	3	3	10
Riruta	3	2	6.7
Kikuyu Township	2	1	3.3
Total	30	22	73.4

The distribution of the questionnaires returned by individual local churches is reflected in table 3 above.

The Most Commonly Used Teaching Methods in AIC Church

R.Q. 1. What teaching methods do teachers commonly use in passing Christian values to children in AIC church?

No hypothesis was cast in response to research question one. However, item number 9 of the questionnaire was developed in order to provide information concerning the methods teachers commonly use to teach ages 2-5 in AIC Church and the reasons why they prefer these methods. Respondents were asked to simply list three methods they mostly use in teaching their learners. The researcher counted the respondents for each method and recorded the results in table 4 below. Table 4 shows the methods that teachers mostly use in teaching pre-schoolers in AIC Kenya.

Table 4. The most commonly used teaching methods

Method used	Frequency	Percentage
Story telling	13	23
Music	12	21
Visuals	7	13
Question and answer	6	11
Discussion	5	9
Role play	5	9
Play	4	7
Memory verse	4	7
Total	56	100%

N=56

Table 4 reveals that out of 56 responses, 13 (23%) indicated that story telling was used to teach ages 2-5 at AIC Church, 12 (21%) indicated that music was used while 7(13%) indicated that visuals were used. Tabulated results also reveal that 6 (11%) indicated question and answer, 5 (9%) indicated discussion and role-play while 4 (7%) indicated play and memory verses. Generally, as revealed in table 4, story

telling, music and visuals were the top three commonly used teaching methods in communicating Bible truths to pre-schoolers in AIC Church Kenya.

Apart from listing the methods they mostly employ in teaching ages 2-5, teachers were also asked to state reasons for their rating. Despite the fact that 22 respondents answered the question desiring them to give their most frequently used methods, only 18 respondents gave reasons why they chose story telling, 11 gave reasons regarding music while only 5 gave reasons why they prefer visuals. The following is a summary of the reasons they stated on each of the commonly used teaching methods. Table 5 shows how story telling was ranked as a method used in comparison with others.

Table 5. Reasons story telling ranked most commonly used method

Serial no.	Reason	Frequency	%
1.	Helps catch and retain learners' attention	9	50
2.	Facilitates understanding of concepts better	7	38.89
3.	Stabilizes their movements as they get caught up in the story	1	4.55
Total		18	100

Table 5 reveals that the most favored reason why teachers use story telling in teaching Bible truths to children was that stories help in catching and retaining children's attention. This reason was stated by 9 (50%) of the respondents. The other reason stated by 7 (38.89%) of the respondents was that stories enhance understanding of great Bible concepts. Only one teacher (4.55%) stated that through stories children's movement is stabilized as they make children remain glued to them. Table 6 shows how music was ranked as a method used in comparison with others.

Table 6. Reasons music ranked as most commonly used method

Serial no.	Reason	Frequency	%
1	Enhances understanding of Bible truths	4	36.36
2	Teaches a child the importance of worship	2	18.18
3	Enables the children to enjoy the lesson	2	18.18
4	Allows total participation of all children in learning	1	9.09
5	Enhances remembering of what is learnt by a child	1	9.09
6	Prepares children to learn	1	9.09
Total		11	100

Out of 22 respondents who answered the question about what methods they perceived to be commonly used to teach Bible truths to pre-school children, only 11 gave reasons for their choice. Table 6 shows that 4 (36.36%) respondents said that music enabled a child to understand Bible truths. Another 2 (18.18%) suggested that through music, children learn the importance of worship. Also, 2 (18.18%) said that they use music because it makes children enjoy the lesson. Other reasons given are that music enhances remembrance of what is taught as well as a means of preparing children to learn. These reasons were given by 1 (9.09%) teacher in each case. In addition, 1 (9.09%) of the respondents said that music allows total participation of learners. Table 7 shows how visual was ranked as a method used in comparison with others.

Table 7. Reasons visuals ranked most commonly used method

Serial no.	Reason	Frequency	%
1	Visuals help children remember what is taught	3	60
2	Helps children remain attentive and alert	1	20
3	Age 2-5 learn well through seeing	1	20
Total		5	100

Most teachers seemed not to know the reasons why they perceived visual to be a most commonly used teaching method among pre-schoolers because out of 22 respondents, only 5 respondents gave reasons why they chose visuals to be a most

commonly used teaching method. As revealed in table 7 above, 3 (60%) respondents said they use visual aids because they help children remember what they learn while 1 (20%) responded that visuals help learners remain attentive and alert as well as assist them in better understanding of the concepts.

Discussion

Analysis reveals that generally almost every pre-school teacher seemed to use stories in teaching. Story telling was preferred because it catches and retains learners' attention. This agrees with what was pointed out in the literature review that stories capture children's attention and allows the word of God to be personal to them.

Music was the second in rank of the most commonly used teaching methods with the pre-school children. Several reasons were given why teachers used music in teaching. Some 36% of the respondents said that music helps a child to understand better what is being taught. Music gives words a great impact, making it easy for the young ones to remember and repeat. In the real sense, teachers used music not as a teaching method through which Christian values can be communicated but as a supplement of other teaching methods. What teachers should know is that songs communicate God's word clearly to children.

Most teachers seemed to be using visuals as a teaching method but very few (5) gave reasons for using them. Three of them responded that they use visuals because they help children remember what they learn. For this reason, teachers should be creative enough to ensure they use visuals in every lesson.

Methods Teachers find the Most Relevant in Communicating Bible Truths to Pre-schoolers

The second research question was meant to find out what teaching methods teachers find the most effective in communicating Bible truths among pre-school children in AIC Church.

R.Q. 2. What teaching methods do teachers consider most relevant in passing Christian values to pre-schoolers?

No hypothesis was posted for this second research question. However, the eleventh question on the instrument was asked in order to find out to what extent the teaching methods listed were relevant in communicating Bible truths to pre-schoolers. The researcher provided a list of seven methods for teachers to pick from. Respondents were asked simply to indicate along a five-point scale their perception of relevance of the seven methods in relation to their teaching. The scale on which teachers were required to respond was “totally relevant”, “relevant”, “not sure”, “irrelevant” and “totally irrelevant”. The researcher counted the number of respondents choosing a method and recorded the results in table 8.

Table 8. Teachers’ responses on perception of relevance of teaching methods

Methods	Responses		
	Relevant	Not sure	Irrelevant
Prayer	20	2	-
Story telling	19	2	1
Music	18	1	3
Visuals	13	4	5
Role-play	12	3	7
Play	12	1	9
Modeling	5	4	13

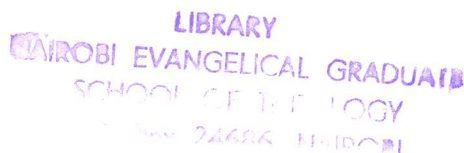
The findings in table 8 reveal that most teachers, 20 (90.9%), perceived prayer to be relevant, 19 (86.36%) perceived story telling to be relevant while 18 (81.81%) perceived music to be relevant. The level of uncertainty was highest in modeling and

visuals, picked in each case by 4 (18.18%) respondents followed by role-play, picked by 3 (13.64%) respondents. On the level of irrelevance, 13 (59.09%) said that modeling was irrelevant, 9 (40.91%) said that play was irrelevant, while 7 (31.82%) said that role-play was irrelevant.

Discussion

Table 8 above reveals that prayer, story telling and music were picked by majority of teachers as being relevant. The same were rated low in terms of uncertainty as well as irrelevance. A conclusion can therefore be drawn that these three methods were perceived to be the most relevant compared to the rest. Teachers' perceptions regarding prayer, music and story telling may be attributed to their usage and their necessity in a Christian life. In every Sunday school meeting, the usual routine is prayer, a chorus and stories. The three methods are performed naturally without much struggle. Also little is needed in terms of materials in order to tell a story, lead in a prayer as well as lead children in singing. The other reason that might have affected teachers' choice of prayer and music is the method's necessity in spiritual growth of every Christian. Prayer was perceived to be the most relevant method yet it did not appear among the most commonly used teaching methods. This situation may be because teachers fail to consider prayers as a teaching method but a necessity in Sunday school meetings, which is why none of the respondents perceived it to be irrelevant.

Modeling, role-play and visuals were picked by the majority in terms of uncertainty. Teachers' perception of relevance of modeling might have been caused by lack of understanding of what modeling really means. Teachers might have understood modeling to mean the art of making or designing a representation of the real thing using locally available materials such as making gun toys from mud or



weaving a rope from grass. Three teachers were uncertain on the relevance of role-play because teachers rarely used the method since it takes time and a lot of patience to organize ages 2-5 for an educative play especially since most classes contained more than 20 children. Four teachers were uncertain about the relevance of visuals yet the same method was one of the most commonly used methods. An assumption can be made that teachers were using visual aids without being certain of their importance in helping children to learn.

Modeling, role-play and play were selected by majority teachers as being irrelevant. Again, modeling was perceived as irrelevant due to misunderstanding of the term. Concerning play, teachers did not see the need of children coming to play in church, being a sacred place. The issue on what should be done with modeling, role-play and play in order to change teachers' perceptions of their relevance should be looked into because literature reveals that these three stand very high in terms of helping pre-schoolers to learn Christian values.

Considering the analysis above, it could be affirmed that prayer, music and story telling were perceived as the most relevant teaching methods in teaching Bible truths among ages 2-5 in AIC Church. Analysis also reveals that methods that were selected by many teachers in terms of relevance were picked by few in terms of irrelevance and uncertainty. Teaching methods that were said to be relevant are those that are used by most believers in spiritual nurture.

Factors Responsible for Teachers' Perception on the Relevance of their Teaching Methods

R.Q. 3. What factors influence teachers' perception of the relevance of (each of) their teaching methods?

Research question 3 was designed to provide information about factors that affect teachers' perception on the relevance of their teaching methods. Parts 1 and 3 of the survey instrument and six null hypotheses were developed in response to this question. Factors that were to influence teachers' perception on the relevance of their teaching methods included availability of teaching and learning materials, ministry experience with pre-school children, class size, teacher's educational level, teacher's gender and teacher's age.

Teacher's Educational Level and his/her Teaching Methods

Item number 6 of the questionnaire solicited information about the relationship between teachers' educational level and their perception of relevance of the methods they use in teaching. This relationship was analyzed based on the three commonly used teaching methods, namely story telling, music and visuals. The first null hypothesis was cast in order to respond to the relationship between teachers' educational level and perception of his/her teaching methods.

H₀: 1. A teacher's educational level will not affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

Item 6 of the questionnaire required teachers to indicate their level of education from primary, secondary, college and others. Item 11 sought to find out how relevant are the teaching methods Sunday school teachers use to teach pre-school children. The scale on which teachers were required to respond was "totally relevant", "relevant", "not sure", "irrelevant" and "totally irrelevant". The results are tabulated on table 9 below.

Story telling

Table 9. Perception of relevance of story telling as a teaching method based on teachers' educational levels

Level of Education	Perception of Relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Primary	2 (1.81)	0(0.09)	0(0.09)	2
Secondary	4(4.55)	1(0.23)	0(0.23)	5
Post secondary	14(9.55)	0(0.68)	1(0.68)	15
Column total	20	1	1	22

N= 22 $\chi^2 = 1.207$ df = 4 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed as shown in table 12 above.

The chi-square value of 1.207 is far below the critical value (9.488) necessary to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected. The results therefore imply that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along educational levels and their view that story telling is highly relevant.

Music

Table 10. Perception of relevance of music as a teaching method based on teachers' educational levels

Level of education	Perception of Relevance			Row Total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Primary	2(1.64)	0(0)	0(0.36)	2
Secondary	5(4.09)	0(0)	0(0.91)	5
Post secondary	11(12.27)	0(0)	4(2.73)	15
Column total	18	0	4	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 1.265$ df= 4 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed as shown in table 10. The result obtained (1.265) is far below the critical value (9.488) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along educational levels and their view that music is highly relevant.

Visuals

Table 11. Perception of relevance of visuals as a teaching method based on educational levels

Level of education	Perception of Relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Primary	1(1.182)	0(0.273)	1(0.545)	2
Secondary	2(2.955)	2(0.682)	1(1.364)	5
Post secondary	10(8.864)	1(2.045)	4(4.091)	15
Column total	13	3	6	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 1.539$ df=4 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed as shown in table 15. The result obtained (1.539) is far below the critical value (9.488) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along educational levels and their view that visuals is highly relevant.

Table 12. Summary of perception of relevance of teaching methods based on teachers' educational levels

Teaching method	N	χ^2	df	Remark
Story telling	22	1.207	4	NS
Music	22	1.265	4	NS
Visuals	22	1.539	4	NS

NS =Not Significant

Discussion

The analyses reveal that for the teachers concerned, there was no statistically significant difference along levels of education and their perception of high relevance of story telling, music and visuals and their levels of education. Teachers' educational level did not affect their perception of relevance of the teaching methods they use. Regardless of their educational levels, 90.91% of teachers perceived story telling as highly relevant method of teaching and only 4.55% perceived it as of less relevance. Also regardless of their educational levels 59.09% perceived visuals as of high

relevance. A conclusion can thus be made that educational level is not a factor to consider in determining perception of relevance of teaching methods. Teachers along all levels of education can handle the pre-schoolers well and be able to instruct them well in matters of faith.

Teacher's Gender and Perception of Relevance

H₀: 2. A teacher's gender will not significantly affect perception of the effectiveness of his/her teaching methods.

Item 2 of the questionnaire was designed to provide information on teachers' gender. Relationship between teachers' gender and perception of relevance of their teaching methods was analyzed based on the three commonly used teaching methods that is, story telling, music and visuals.

Story telling

Table 13. Perception of relevance of story telling based on gender

Gender	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Male	3(3.65)	1(0.17)	0(0.17)	4
Female	18(17.35)	0(0.83)	1(0.83)	19
Column total	21	1	1	23

N=23 $\chi^2 = 0.473$ df=2 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. The chi-square value of 0.473 obtained is far below the critical value of 5.99 necessary to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of independence. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. What this means is that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers across gender and their view that story telling is highly relevant.

Music

Table 14. Perception of relevance of music based on teachers' gender

Gender	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Male	4(3.13)	0(0.17)	0(0.70)	4
Female	14(14.87)	1(0.83)	4(3.30)	19
Column total	18	1	4	23

N= 23

= 0.326

df = 2

level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 0.326 obtained was far below the critical value of 5.99 necessary for the rejection of the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Thus the null hypothesis was not rejected, implying that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers across gender and their view that music is highly relevant.

Visuals

Table 15. Perception of relevance of visuals based on teachers' gender

Gender	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Male	3(2.26)	0(0.52)	1(0.91)	4
Female	10(10.74)	3(2.48)	6(5.78)	19
Column total	13	3	7	23

N=23

 $\chi^2 = 0.346$

df = 2

level of significance =

0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 0.346 obtained was below the critical value of 5.99 necessary for rejection of the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers across gender and their view that visuals are highly relevant.

Table 16. Summary of perception of relevance of teaching methods based on teachers' gender

Teaching method	N	χ^2	df	Remark
Story telling	23	0.473	2	NS
Music	23	0.326	2	NS
Visuals	23	0.346	2	NS

NS = Not Significant

Discussion

Analysis showed no statistically significant difference along gender lines and teacher's perception of high relevance of story telling, music and visuals and gender. Teachers across both genders perceived the above three methods as highly relevant. Regardless of teachers' gender, they perceived visuals as of less relevance compared to story telling and music. Therefore, as the church recruits Sunday school teachers, both genders should be considered, as there was no difference in perception of relevance of teaching methods across gender. The other thing that comes out of the analysis is that only 17.39% of all the respondents are male, the rest are female teachers. The reason why most Sunday school teachers are female may be attributed to the attachment young children have with their mothers, who are the primary providers of their immediate needs, thus preferring mother figures in teaching them. The other reason is that children's ministry is generally perceived as a women's ministry. This attitude is partly attributed to lack of women being involved in leadership positions in AIC church. Consequently, their ministry in other areas in the church is very minimal. Since women too have a calling to ministry, they end up working with children where any kind of a person can work. It should be pointed here that as already noted in chapter one, the church does not have a written curriculum for the pre-school children, questioning its commitment and seriousness to reaching these

young ones. Men on the other hand have other avenues of ministry, making them fewer in the children's ministry.

Perception of Relevance in Relation to Ministry Experience

H₀: 3. The duration of time a teacher has been in ministry to pre-schoolers will not significantly affect perception of the effectiveness of his/her teaching methods.

The independent variables in hypothesis 3 include the number of years that a teacher has been in ministry to pre-schoolers. Item 7 of the questionnaire was designed to provide information regarding teachers' experience in ministry to ages 2-5. The scale was collapsed to avoid having many empty cells. Analysis was performed based on the most frequently used teaching methods, which are music, story telling and visuals.

Story telling

Table 17. Perception of relevance of story telling based on length of ministry experience

Ministry experience	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Less than 5 years	6(5.45)	0(0.27)	0(0.27)	6
More than 5 years	14(14.55)	1(0.73)	1(0.73)	16
Column total	20	1	1	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 0.216$ df =2 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. The result obtained (0.216) was below the critical value (5.99) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along ministry experiences and their view that story telling is highly relevant.

Music

Table 18. Perception of relevance of music based on length of ministry experience

Ministry experience	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Less than 5 years	4(5.6)	1(0.35)	2(1.05)	7
More than 5 years	12(10.4)	0(0.65)	1(1.95)	13
Column total	16	1	3	20

N= 20 $\chi^2 = 1.467$ df =2 level of significance =
0.05

The chi-square test of independence was performed. The result obtained, 1.467 was below the critical value of 5.99 required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected, meaning that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceptions of the teachers along ministry experiences and their view that music is highly relevant.

Visuals

Table 19. Perception of relevance of visuals based on length of ministry experience

Ministry experience	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Less than 5 years	4(4.55)	1(1.05)	2(1.4)	7
More than 5 years	9(8.45)	2(1.95)	2(2.6)	13
Column total	13	3	4	20

N=20 $\chi^2 = 0.347$ df = 2 level of significance =
0.05

The chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 0.347 obtained was below the critical value of 5.99 required to reject the null hypothesis. Thus the null hypothesis was not rejected. What this means is that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along ministry experience on their view that visuals is highly relevant in teaching pre-school children in AIC Kenya.

Table 20. Summary of perceptions of relevance of teaching methods based on length of ministry experience

Teaching method	N	χ^2	df	Remark
Story telling	22	0.216	2	NS
Music	20	1.467	2	NS
Visuals	20	0.347	2	NS

NS =Not Significant

Discussion

The results obtained reveal that most pre-school teachers have been in this ministry for more than five years. Analysis performed reveals also that teachers with a long ministry experience among pre-schoolers did not perceive story telling, music and visuals as more relevant than teachers with a shorter ministry experience. Therefore, this study reveals that experience in ministry is not a factor that may influence perception of relevance of teaching methods among pre-schoolers.

Perception of Relevance and Class Size

H₀: 4. Class size will not significantly affect a teacher's perception of relevance of his/her teaching method.

Item 4 was designed in order to solicit information regarding a teacher's class size. The independent variables varied from less than 10 learners in a class to more than 20 in one class. Teachers' responses were analyzed based on the method they commonly use to communicate Christian values to their learners, that is story telling, music and visuals.

Story telling

Table 21. Perception of relevance of story telling based on class size

Class size	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
More than 20	12(10.91)	0(0.55)	0(0.55)	12
19-15	5(5.45)	0(0.27)	1(0.27)	6
15 and below	3(3.64)	1(0.18)	0(0.18)	4
Column total	20	1	1	22

N= 22 $\chi^2 = 1.267$ df = 4 level of significance = 0.05

The chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 1.267 obtained was below the critical value of 9.488 required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along class size and their view that story telling is highly relevant.

Music

Table 22. Perception of relevance of music based on class size

Class size	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
More than 20	11(9.82)	1(0.55)	0(2.18)	12
19-15	2(4.91)	0(0.27)	4(1.09)	6
15 and below	4(3.27)	0(0.73)	0(0.73)	4
Column total	18	1	4	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 6.207$ df =4 level of significance = 0.05

The chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 6.207 obtained was below the critical value of 9.488 required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along class size and their view that music is highly relevant.

Visuals

Table 23. Perception of relevance of visuals based on class size

Class size	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
More than 20	5(6.55)	3(1.64)	4(3.82)	12
19-15	3(3.27)	0(0.82)	3(1.91)	6
15 and below	4(2.18)	0(0.55)	0(1.27)	4
Column total	12	3	7	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 3.609$ df = 4 level of significance = 0.05

The chi-square test of independence was performed. A value of 3.609 obtained was below the critical value of 9.488 required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along class size and their view that visual aid is highly relevant.

Table 24. Summary of perception of relevance of teaching methods based on class size

Teaching method	N	χ^2	df	Remark
Story telling	22	1.267	4	NS
Music	22	6.207	4	NS
Visuals	22	3.609	4	NS

NS = Not Significant

Discussion

Analysis reveals that most teachers (54.55%) had classes with more than 20 learners. This is a very big class for pre-schoolers. A class of this size makes it very hard for a teacher to manage. From analysis performed, there is enough evidence to suggest that teachers with fewer learners did not perceive the methods as more relevant than those with more learners. However, this does not mean that churches should choose not to purchase teaching materials for the children ministry but they need to provide them the more, for they enhance learning.

Perception of Relevance and Age of the Teachers

H₀: 5. The age of a teacher will not significantly affect perception of the effectiveness of his/her teaching methods.

The independent variables in the above hypothesis are various ages represented by the Sunday school teachers in the sample. Also in this factor, analysis was based on the methods that teachers mostly use in communicating Bible truths to the children. Item 3 of the questionnaire was intended to provide information regarding this hypothesis. In this item, teachers were asked to indicate their age, ranging from those under 17 years old to above 30 years old. Results are tabulated below.

Story telling

Table 25. Perception of relevance of story telling based on age of teachers

Age	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Under 30	10(9.52)	1(0.52)	0(0.52)	11
Over 30	9(9.05)	0(0.48)	1(0.48)	10
Column total	19	1	1	21

N=21

$\chi^2 = 0.295$

df = 2

level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. The result obtained (0.295) was far much below the critical value (5.99) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the null hypothesis was not rejected, implying that there is no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers across ages and their view that story telling is highly relevant as a teaching method with pre-school children in AIC Kenya.

Music

Table 26. Perception of relevance of music based on age of teachers

Age	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Under 30	10(8.5)	1(0.5)	0(2)	11
Over 30	7(8.5)	0(0.5)	4(2)	11
Column total	17	1	4	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 2.909$ df =2 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. The result obtained (2.909) was below the critical value (5.99) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected, meaning that there was no statistically significant relationship between teachers' age and perception of music as a teaching method with pre-school children.

Visuals

Table 27. Perception of relevance of visuals based on age of teachers

Age	Perception of relevance			Row total
	High	Uncertain	Low	
Under 30	8(6.5)	1(1)	2(3.5)	11
Over 30	5(6.5)	1(1)	5(3.5)	11
Column total	13	2	7	22

N=22 $\chi^2 = 1.636$ df =2 level of significance = 0.05

A chi-square test of independence was performed. The result obtained (1.636) was below the critical value (5.99) required to reject the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was thus not rejected, meaning that there was no statistically significant relationship between teachers' age and perception of visuals as a teaching method among pre-school children.

Table 28. Summary of perception of relevance of teaching methods based on age of teachers

Teaching method	N	χ^2	df	Remark
Story telling	21	0.295	2	NS
Music	22	2.909	2	NS
Visuals	22	1.636	2	NS

NS =Not Significant

Discussion

Generally, teachers' age did not reveal any statistically significant difference in the teacher's perception of relevance of the three teaching methods. Teachers across all ages perceived story telling as the most highly relevant, followed by music and then visuals. Conclusion can be made here that teachers' age is not a factor to consider in perception of relevance of teaching methods. In this case, Christian educators should encourage both young and old to join in children's ministry since age made no difference in perception of relevance of teaching methods.

Spiritual Nurture of Pre-schoolers

Teachers were asked to comment on spiritual nurture in their learners. The question asked was, In all honesty, what would you say concerning the spiritual nurture of the preschoolers in your church? The scale on which they were required to respond ranged from "excellent", "very good", "good", "fair" and "poor". Contained in the parenthesis are the numbers of the respondents whose scores are tabulated in table 29. The numbers placed outside are the total score values for a particular point on the scale. The results are represented in the table below.

Table 29. Spiritual nurture of pre-schoolers

	Excellent 5	Very good 4	Good 3	Fair 2	Poor 1	Total score
Score	5 (1)	28 (7)	30 (10)	6 (3)	0	69 (21)

Teachers were asked to state the extent to which their learners were nurtured spiritually. Out of 22 respondents, one teacher failed to respond to the question. Results reveal that 1 (4.76%) teacher perceived the spiritual nurture of pre-schoolers as excellent, 7 (33.33%) perceived it as very good, 10 (47.62%) perceived it to be good, 6 (28.57%) perceived it to be fair, while no respondent perceived spiritual nurture of pre-school children as poor. It can be concluded therefore that teachers perceived that pre-schoolers were being properly nurtured spiritually.

Preparation for Ministry through Training

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they were trained to minister to ages 2-5. One respondent failed to respond to the question. Responses are tabulated in table 30.

Table 30. Preparation for ministry through training

	Very large extent (5)	Large extent (4)	Not sure (3)	Small extent (2)	Very small Extent (1)	Total score
Score	20 (4)	56 (14)	0	8(2)	1(1)	21(86)

Based on table 30, 4 respondents (19.05%) said they were trained to teach ages 2-5 to a very large extent, 14 (66.67%) perceived they were trained to a large extent, 2 (9.52%) perceived they were trained to a small extent and 1(4.76) person perceived that he was trained to a very small extent. Generally we can conclude that most pre-school teachers perceived themselves to be well prepared for ministry among pre-schoolers through training. Consequently, CE directors should organize training for those teachers who are not well prepared for ministry to ages 2-5.

Behavior Change in Pre-school Children

Item 16 of the questionnaire required teachers to indicate to what extent they noted behavior change taking place in their learners. Below are their responses.

Table 31. Behavior change in preschoolers

	Very great extent (5)	Great extent (4)	Not sure (3)	Small extent (2)	Very small Extent (1)	Total score
Score	25 (5)	56 (14)	0	8 (2)	0	89 (21)

Table 31 reveals that 23.01% of the respondents observed behavior change in their learners to a very great extent, 66.67% observed behavior change to a great extent while 9.52% observed behavior change taking place to a small extent. A conclusion can be made that there was a remarkable perceived behavior change in pre-school children in AIC Church. Behavior change is the ultimate goal for teaching ages 2-5.

Reasons for Behavior Change among Pre-schoolers for the Last Six Months

Apart from stating the extent of observed behavior change, teachers were asked to give reasons for the change.

Table 32. Reasons for behavior change

Reason	Frequency	%
Use of proper teaching methods	8	53.33
Children having known Jesus and developed a desire to please Him	3	20
Involvement of a child in learning process	2	13.33
Teachers being a role model to children	1	6.67
By children attending Sunday School regularly	1	6.67
Total	15	100

Table 32 above reveals that 8 (53.33%) of the respondents perceived that behavior change in their learners was attributed to use of proper teaching methods. Another 3 (20%) said that their learners' behavior change was due to children having known Jesus and developed a desire to please Him. This is in line with the children's moral development at this stage, where they behave morally in order to please those in authority. Also, 2 (13.33%) said that behavior change in their learners was due to children being involved in the learning process. Further, 1 (6.67%) respondent said

that behavior change was attributed to teachers being a role model to their learners, while another 1 (6.67%) said that it was due to children regularly attending Sunday school meetings. However, 2 (13.33%) respondents reported that there was no behavior change in their learners in the last six months.

Challenges Teachers Face while Teaching Pre-schoolers

Table 33 below gives a summary of teachers' responses concerning the challenges they face as they teach their learners. As indicated, the greatest challenge faced by pre-school teachers in AIC is huge classes. Most teachers reported that their classes contained more than 20 learners, which is quite big considering the mobility of the children and their concentration span and the need to control them. Out of 22 respondents, 8 (36.36%) said that their classes were so big that they were unable to manage them, 7 (31.82%) said that they lacked adequate teaching and learning materials to teach their learners, 2 (9.09%) said they faced the challenge of children having difficulty in comprehending the lesson partly due to their concentration span and also due to language problem. Other challenges cited included language problem in cosmopolitan churches and lack of support from unbelieving parents who have children attending Sunday school. Following the challenges faced by teachers in their endeavor at teaching ages 2-5, concerted efforts should be made by church leadership, Sunday school teachers as well as parents in order to alleviate or reduce them. More important, parents who send their children to church but do not themselves attend, should be visited and encouraged to join the church in order to support spiritual nurture of their children.

Table 33. Challenges faced while teaching ages 2-5

Challenge	Frequency	%
Classes are too big leading to lack of control	8	36.36
Lack of adequate teaching and learning materials	7	31.82
Language problem especially in cosmopolitan churches	2	9.09
Difficulty in comprehending the lesson among children	2	9.09
Lack of support from unbelieving parents with children in the church	2	9.09
Class containing a wide range of learners in terms of age	1	4.55
Total	22	100

Teachers' Suggestions for the Improvement of Sunday School

In responding to question 19 of the questionnaire that asked teachers to point out what improvements they would like to see in Sunday school, the researcher did not limit the number of suggestions. Teachers' responses are tabulated in table 34 below.

Table 34. Suggestions for improvement in Sunday school

Improvement	Frequency	%
Need for more materials and facilities	11	42.31
Need for more teachers	6	23.08
Training needed for the teachers	5	19.23
Teachers to be more committed to the ministry	1	3.85
Parents should reinforce what has been taught in Sunday school	1	3.85
Team work among teachers is very necessary	1	3.85
The church should develop a curriculum for pre-schoolers	1	3.85
Involvement of children in the learning process	1	3.85
Total	26	100

The table above reveals that most Sunday schools needed more teaching and learning materials. A majority of teachers 11 (42.31%) said that they would love to see more teaching materials and facilities provided to them, 6 (23.085) said they needed more teachers in the ministry in order to reduce the number of children per class, 5 (19.23%) of the respondents said they needed training on how to handle the

pre-school children. Other improvements needed in the churches include provision of curriculum, involvement of children in the learning process, parents reinforcing what is taught in Sunday school to bring about consistency as far as teaching of Biblical values is concerned. The above analysis suggests that despite the fact that children are nurtured spiritually, the church should provide more materials for the children's ministry as well as encourage more church members to join the ministry. Further, trainings should be offered both to those still in the ministry and those intending to join to make them capable of ministering to the pre-schoolers more effectively.

Passionate About Teaching Pre-schoolers

In order to solicit information on how teachers felt about their work of teaching ages 2-5, the researcher designed question 13 in the questionnaire. Responses for 19 teachers who responded to the question are tabulated in table 35 below.

Table 35. Enthusiasm about teaching ages 2-5

	Strongly agree (5)	Agree (4)	Undecided (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Total scores
Score	40 (8)	40 (10)	0	2 (1)	0	19

The table above reveals that 8 (42.11%) are very enthusiastic about teaching ages 2-5, 10 (52.63%) were enthusiastic, while 1 (5.26%) was not enthusiastic at all in teaching the pre-school children. We can therefore conclude that teachers were passionate about teaching children of ages 2-5. This passion may be due to training they receive, which enables them to handle the young ones effectively. For this reason, pre-schoolers in AIC are in good hands of people who long for their time together for the purpose of learning.

Overall Discussion

The general impression one gets from the results is that in most cases, pre-school teachers in AIC Church use stories, music and visuals in communicating Bible truths to their learners. These three methods are easy to use and quite common in many churches. Supporting the importance of using music among children, LeFever notes, “The sounds the ears hear in those early years are the native sounds that will not be erased by subsequent experiences” (LeFever 1985, 261). Since every child loves to listen to stories, story telling becomes one of the most effective methods through which young children can learn Christian values. The church can also be commended for the use of visual aids in teaching. The power of visuals lies not only in a teacher communicating to learners but learners do respond effectively to teachers through drawings and paintings. However, the church has not tapped from using modeling, play and role-play. Research reveals that children understand concepts better when they are involved in learning. When play is used as a teaching method, every child in class is involved in learning. Through play, children learn not only Bible concepts but also how to socialize with other children. Leslie comments that play enables a child learn to join with other children, to obey rules, to lose and win a game as well as to settle differences (Leslie 1982, 31). If organized well, role-play is a powerful teaching method because it helps children relate what they learn in church with what transpires in their life experiences.

Concerning the methods teachers perceived to be most effective among pre-schoolers, prayer, story telling and music ranked the highest. Surprisingly, prayer was perceived to be the most effective method yet it did not appear among the most commonly used methods. The reason behind this might be that teachers responded according to what they do every time they meet with children for Sunday school. In a

normal Sunday school class, there must be prayers, singing and at many times a story. Modeling, play and role-play ranked highest in terms of irrelevancy. As already pointed out above, teachers might have misinterpreted the meaning of 'modeling' in order to perceive it as irrelevant. Children cannot do without imitating what they see others do, especially older people. For this reason, a teacher should be careful to conduct himself in a godly manner. Further, Sunday school teachers did not see the reason why children should go to church to play. The researcher holds the opinion that if teachers were educated on the power of play in teaching ages 2-5 and are taught on how to utilize the method, most teachers would be using it. Bailey says that play is a vehicle for learning in children. She adds that through play, children get the opportunity to live out truths they learn from the Bible; in other words, they learn the real meaning of Christian living (Bailey 1980, 39).

Of the six factors expected to affect perception of relevance of teaching methods, none was found to be statistically significant. It can therefore be said that age of a teacher, gender, class size, length of ministry experience, and educational level of a teacher were not factors found to affect perception of relevance of teaching methods among pre-school children in AIC Kenya. Consideration of the above factors in normal situation is dependent on the nature of the congregation. If the congregation is made up of people who value spiritual nurture of their children and are aware of what it takes to get it, they will consider the above factors before recruiting teachers for their pre-school children. On the other hand, if a church is made congregants who are ignorant on the importance of spiritual nurture of their children, then they will not mind any kind of pre-school teacher coming to teach their children.

Teachers perceived that children were being spiritually nourished through their interaction with them. Most teachers perceived that spiritual nourishment was

due to the teaching methods they used. Spiritual nourishment was seen through behavior change in the lives of these children. Consequently, children have a good foundation on which to build in future. The church should be commended for offering training to their Sunday school teachers, which enables them to teach the children better.

The biggest challenge that teachers face as they teach pre-school children is the overwhelming number of children in one class. Most classes were reported to have more than 20 learners, which is a very big class for ages 2-5. Church leaders should see the need of teaching Christian values to young children, thus sensitize members to join the ministry. Through this, classes will be made smaller, allowing one-to-one interaction between a child and the teacher. Generally it was felt that teachers lack adequate teaching and learning materials. CE departments in various churches should make a point of availing these to teachers. Also, teachers should be encouraged to be creative in terms of developing their own teaching and learning aids from locally available materials.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was an attempt to investigate Sunday school teachers' perceptions of the relevance of the teaching methods they use to teach Christian values to ages 2-5 in Africa Inland Church Kenya. To begin with, the researcher sought to find out the teaching methods that were commonly used to teach pre-school children, followed by investigating the teaching methods that teachers found to be the most relevant in teaching pre-schoolers in AIC Finally, the research sought to establish factors that influenced teachers' perceptions on the effectiveness of their teaching methods.

Purpose of the study

For the purpose of investigating teachers' perception of relevance on the teaching methods they use in teaching pre-school children, the following research questions were developed in order to guide this study:

R.Q. 1. What teaching methods do teachers commonly use in passing Christian values to children in Africa Inland Church?

R.Q. 2. What teaching methods do teachers consider most relevant in passing Christian values to the pre-schoolers?

R.Q. 3. What factors influence teachers' perception of the relevance of (each of) the teaching methods?

Significance of the study

How a child thinks has many implications for a teacher of spiritual truth. In any learning environment, teaching methods play a big role in ensuring that a learner understands what is being communicated to him. If educational goals and objectives are to be achieved, then proper teaching methods have to be used. The use of relevant teaching methods in this case in point, according to cognitive developmental level of each learner, will improve their spiritual development. This study thus was intended to provide appropriate information to local churches about the choice of relevant teaching methods that would contribute to spiritual growth of ages 2-5.

Research Design

Data for this study was solicited by the use of questionnaires. The researcher prepared a 19-item questionnaire containing both closed-ended as well as open-ended questions. Three research questions were designed to guide the focus of this study. Consequently, five hypotheses were developed following casual interaction with Sunday school teachers, literature review as well as the researcher's personal experience as a Sunday school teacher.

Sampling

Sample for this study consisted of 30 Sunday school teachers who are involved in teaching ages 2-5 in nine Africa Inland Churches around Nairobi. In order to ensure that the results obtained were a true representation of the entire population, stratified sampling procedure was done, in which nine categories of churches were obtained. From each church, Sunday school teachers were asked to provide information required in the questionnaires regarding their personal data as well as

their perceptions of the effectiveness of the teaching methods they use among pre-schoolers.

Findings

This particular research was an attempt to answer the following three research questions:

R.Q. 1. What teaching methods do teachers commonly use in passing Christian values to children in AIC?

No hypothesis was cast in response to this research question. However, in order to find out the methods that teachers mostly used in communicating Christian values to ages 2-5, teachers were asked to freely list three methods in order of priority. Teachers' responses revealed that 23% of them said story telling was the most commonly used, 21% said music, while 13 % said that visuals were the commonly used method. Generally, it was discovered that teachers perceived story telling, music and visuals, in that order, to be the three most commonly used methods.

R.Q. 2. What teaching methods do teachers consider most relevant in passing Christian values to the pre-schoolers?

No hypothesis was cast in response to this research question. However, item 11 on the questionnaire was designed in order to provide information related to this question. Teachers were asked to indicate their perception on the relevance of seven teaching methods provided in a list on a scale ranging from "totally relevant", "relevant", "not sure", "irrelevant" and "totally irrelevant". Responses revealed that most teachers perceived prayer, story telling and music to be the three most relevant teaching methods that should be used to teach pre-schoolers. Methods that were said to be the most irrelevant were modeling play and role-play. Teachers were uncertain on the relevance of visuals role-play and modeling in teaching ages 2-5.

R.Q. 3. What factors influence teachers' perception of relevance of (each of) the teaching methods?

In order to establish the factors that affected teachers' perception of the relevance of the teaching methods they use, five hypotheses were designed. It is important to point out here that the researcher isolated the three most commonly used methods that is, story telling, music and visuals in order to test the hypotheses.

H₀: 1. A teacher's educational level will not affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

This hypothesis was not rejected as it was found that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along educational levels and their view that story telling, music and visuals were highly relevant teaching methods among ages 2-5.

H₀: 2. A teacher's gender will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods

This hypothesis was not rejected, hence there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of teachers across gender and their views that story telling, music and visuals are highly relevant.

H₀: 3. The duration of time a teacher has been in ministry to pre-schoolers will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

This hypothesis was not rejected, as findings revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers along ministry experience and their views that story telling, music and visuals are highly relevant teaching methods in teaching ages 2-5.

H₀: 4. Class size will not significantly affect a teacher's perception relevance of the teaching method.

This hypothesis was not rejected. Analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of the teachers across class size and their views that story telling, music and visuals are highly relevant in teaching Christian values to pre-school children.

H₀: 5. The age of a teacher will not significantly affect perception of relevance of his/her teaching methods.

This hypothesis was not rejected. Research revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the perception of teachers across ages and their views that story telling, music and visuals are highly relevant methods among pre-schoolers.

Conclusion

Pre-schoolers need to be taught Christian values just like any other persons in church. In order for them to understand God's word and integrate it in their lives, proper teaching methods need to be used by Christian educators. Given the above findings, the following conclusions can be made:

1. Most Sunday school teachers said story telling, music and visuals are the most commonly used teaching methods among pre-school children in AIC church. On the other hand, memory verses, play and role-play were said to be the least used methods among ages 2-5. These findings show that teachers have not ventured fully into the use of more creative methods, partly due to ignorance on how they can apply them and also due to huge size of classes. Therefore, trainings should be carried out in all churches informing Sunday school teachers on other methods they can use in addition to the common ones.
2. Teachers said that prayer, stories and songs are the most relevant teaching methods among ages 2-5 in AIC church. Modeling, role-play and play were

perceived to be highly irrelevant. The greatest challenge faced by teachers in regard to teaching method was ignorance of the existence as well as the usage of various teaching methods. In order for teachers to see the relevancy of all the seven teaching methods as listed in question 11 of the questionnaire, CE directors should educate teachers on all the teaching methods and show them how to apply them.

3. There was no statistically significant difference in the perception of teachers across age, gender, class size, teachers' educational level and length of ministry experience and their view that story telling, music and visuals are highly relevant in teaching pre-school children in AIC Kenya.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions derived in this study, the following recommendations are made for the Christian Education Directors, pastors and Sunday school teachers in order to enhance their teaching among ages 2-5 in AIC church Kenya.

First, it may be suggested that there is a great need for Sunday school teachers to be trained on different teaching approaches, to enhance communication of Bible truths to children. From the study, teachers seemed to have not tapped into crucial methods such as modeling, role-play and play, which were selected by most teachers in terms of irrelevance, yet they greatly enhance learning among ages 2-5.

Second, for effective management of a pre-school class, learners must not be more than 12. This research showed that most Sunday classes had more than 20 children, which is too large for a single teacher to handle. Christian Education Directors should

teach the church on the importance of teaching Christian values to children and encourage more church members to join the ministry.

Third, the Christian Education Department at the national level should make a point of developing a curriculum for ages 2-5. Lack of curriculum has led to struggle by teachers as they try to find out what is best to teach their learners, bearing in mind that most teachers lack training on how to design a curriculum.

Areas for Further Research

Other related areas possible for research are as follows:

1. This research focused on perception among teachers ministering in urban and semi-urban setting. A similar study among teachers ministering in rural churches other than in Nairobi can be done to find their perception of relevance of the teaching methods they use among pre-schoolers.
2. A study based on other factors apart from the ones addressed in this study such as constitution of children in terms of tribe and their social economic status, physical environment in terms of buildings and furniture can be conducted.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Sunday School teacher,

The purpose of this research is to study your perception of the various teaching methods you employ in teaching Christian values to preschoolers. In order to assist me achieve this purpose, I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire in a way that truly reflects your opinion.

Sincerely,

Anne.

Part A

Please put a tick in the box against the correct response and fill in the blanks where necessary.

1. What is the name of your local church? _____

2. Sex: Male () Female ()

3. Please indicate your age: under 17 ___ 17-20 ___ 21-24 ___ 25-29 ___ Over
30 ___

4. What is your average class size _____?

More than 20 ___ 19-15 ___ 15-11 ___ less than 10 ___

5. Does your class contain learners whose age is more than five years?

___ Yes ___ No

6. What is your level of education? (Circle appropriately)

a. Primary level

- b. Secondary
- c. Post secondary
- d. Other (Specify) _____

7. For how long have you been involved in children's ministry? Circle appropriately

- a. Less than 1 year ()
- b. 1-3 years ()
- c. 3-5 years ()
- d. More than 5 years ()

8. How would you evaluate the adequacy of teaching materials and supplies?

- Excellent () Good () Poor ()
- Very good () Fair ()

Part B

9. Kindly list three methods you commonly use in teaching your learners in order of priority and give reasons for your choice (s).

Suggested Method	Reasons
1.	
2.	
3.	

Part C

10. To what extent are the teaching methods you have listed in 8 above adequate for achieving your objectives?

- Very large extent () Not sure () very small extent ()
- Large extent () Small extent ()

11. To what extent is each of the following teaching methods effective in communicating Bible truths to your learners?

Method	Totally relevant	Relevant	Not sure	Irrelevant	Totally irrelevant
Music					
Prayer					
Modeling					
Role-play					
Story telling					
Visuals					
Play					

12. In all honesty, what would you say concerning the spiritual nurture of the preschoolers in your church?

- a) Excellent () c) Good () e) Poor ()
 b) Very good () d) Fair ()

13. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Most days I am enthusiastic about teaching the preschoolers

_____ Strongly agree

_____ Agree

_____ Undecided

_____ Disagree

_____ Strongly disagree

14. To what extent do you think your training prepared you for your work in teaching the 2-5 year old?

_____ Very large extent

_____ Large extent

_____ Not sure

_____ Small extent

_____ Very small extent

15 (a.) According to your opinion, what defines an effective teaching method for the preschoolers?

(b.) Would you describe your teaching methods in those terms?

(c.) Give reasons for your answer to 15 (b) above.

16 (a.) Have you noted any spiritual growth in your learners for the last six months?

Yes _____

No _____

(b.) If yes, to what extent?

1. Very great extent
2. Great extent
3. Not sure
4. Small extent
5. Very small extent

17. What would you say contributed to the spiritual growth of your learners?

18. What challenges do you find in communicating Bible truths to pre-schoolers?

19. What improvement would you like done in order to minister to the children in a better way?

-THE END-

Thank you for faithfully responding to all the questions