

REIMAGINING DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 FOR CHILDREN’S BIBLE STUDY THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS AT BISHOP ANGLICAN CHURCH, ILORIN

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ABSTRACT

In an age increasingly shaped by digital technology, Christian education must adapt to remain effective and engaging—particularly for children. This study explores the relevance and application of Deuteronomy 6:6-9 within the context of children’s Bible study through digital platforms at Bishop Anglican Church, Ilorin. The passage, which emphasizes the memorization, discussion, and inscription of God’s commandments in everyday life, offers a theological foundation for faith transmission that transcends generations and media. Key Hebrew terms such as *הַדְבָּרִים* (*haddabārīm*) “these words,” *לְבָבְךָ* (*levavekha*) “your heart,” and *וְשִׁנְנָתָם* (*veshinnantam*)—“you shall teach them diligently” reflect the intensity and continuity of covenantal instruction. This research reimagines the text in light of Nigeria’s emerging digital culture, where children are more attuned to smartphones, tablets, and multimedia engagement than traditional classroom formats. Employing a qualitative case study method, the research involved interviews with Sunday School teachers, digital ministry workers, parents, and clergy. This study is grounded in a hybrid framework combining Biblical Pedagogy and Digital Discipleship Theory. It also evaluated the use of Bible apps, animated scriptures, and online devotionals in children’s ministry. Findings reveal that digital platforms, when rooted in scriptural fidelity and pedagogical creativity, can powerfully actualize the intent of Deuteronomy 6:6-9—writing God’s Word on the hearts of the young. Nonetheless, challenges such as screen distractions and limited digital literacy remain. A hybrid model blending traditional and digital tools is recommended to enhance spiritual formation in today’s context. This study contributes to African contextual theology, digital discipleship, and Christian education in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Digital Platforms, Children’s Bible Teaching, and Bishop Smith Anglican, and Ilorin.

INTRODUCTION

In a rapidly evolving digital age, the transmission of Christian faith to the next generation requires innovative approaches that resonate with contemporary learners, especially children. In his view, Adedokun (2023), Deuteronomy 6:6-9 serves as a foundational text for faith formation, emphasizing the diligent teaching וְשִׁנְנָתָם (*veshinnantam*) and internalization of God's Word הִדְבָּרִים (*haddabārîm*) upon the heart לְרֵכֶזְךָ (*levavekha*) across daily life contexts. According to Crawford & McClure (2022), this passage calls for a multigenerational covenantal instruction that integrates faith into every sphere of life, including, in today's world, digital culture. The purpose of this study is to explore how Deuteronomy 6:6-9 can be reimagined and applied effectively within children's Bible study using digital platforms at Bishop Anglican Church, Ilorin, in order to promote enduring spiritual formation in a technologically dynamic society. Despite the growing presence of children in digital environments, many Nigerian churches continue to rely solely on traditional teaching methods, which may not fully engage or disciple digital-native children. There is a noticeable disconnect between biblical content and the digital learning spaces where children thrive. While various studies have explored digital discipleship among adults and youth, limited attention has been given to children's Bible study in the African context using digital tools. This study seeks to bridge that gap by offering a theological and practical model rooted in Deuteronomy 6:6-9, adapted to the realities of Nigerian digital culture.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design combined with an exegetical method to explore how Deuteronomy 6:6-9 can be effectively reimagined for children's Bible study through digital platforms at Bishop Anglican Church, Ilorin. The case study approach was selected for its ability to offer deep contextual insights, while the exegetical method enabled a careful theological interpretation of the biblical text in its original Hebrew and canonical context. Together, these approaches provided a robust framework for examining both the Scriptural basis and the practical expression of digital faith formation among children.

Data Collection Methods

The primary research method utilized was semi-structured group interviews, conducted with 12 purposefully selected participants who were actively involved in the children's ministry and digital discipleship efforts at Bishop Anglican Church, Ilorin. These participants included five Sunday School teachers (Miss Eyitayo Danshusi, Mrs Dorcas Adeniyi, Mrs Funmilatyo Olatoye, Miss Moyosore Abegunde), five parents of

children engaged in digital Bible studies (Mrs Elizabeth Temigbe, Mrs Funmilayo Ajayi, Mrs Mojirade Ogbontolu, Mrs Moyosore Abegunde, Mrs Esther Ajiboye), and three clergy or church leaders (Rev. Canon Ezekiel Temigbe, Rev. Canon Oyedun, and Venerable Professor Amos Idowu). An interview was conducted through focused group discussions, and the interviews explored participants' insights on faith transmission. An exegetical approach was also employed to identify the contextual relevance of Deuteronomy 6:6-9 in the digital age and its application in children's spiritual formation. In addition, the researcher conducted direct observation of children's Bible study sessions, paying close attention to their engagement with digital resources such as Bible apps, animated scripture videos, and interactive teaching tools—assessing behavioural patterns, attention spans, and levels of responsiveness. To complement these findings, the study reviewed relevant church documents, including Sunday School curricula, teacher guides, lesson plans, and multimedia content (e.g., YouTube Bible stories and mobile devotional applications), to evaluate the pedagogical strategies and theological emphasis within the children's ministry.

Data Analysis

The data from interviews, observations, and documents were subjected to thematic analysis, allowing for the identification of patterns related to biblical instruction, digital engagement, theological reflection, and pedagogical effectiveness. The exegetical insights from Deuteronomy 6:6-9 informed the interpretation of the participants' responses and the analysis of educational practices. All ethical procedures—including informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality—were strictly adhered to throughout the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Verbal consent was obtained from participants. Names were included with permission. The research was conducted in alignment with Christian ethical principles and institutional research ethics.

Theoretical Reviewed

This study is grounded in a hybrid framework combining Biblical Pedagogy and Digital Discipleship Theory. Deuteronomy 6:6-9 presents a holistic model of covenantal teaching—one that is intergenerational, experiential, and community-based. The Hebrew imperatives: וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם (veshinnantam) – “You shall diligently teach” (v.7) imply repetition, depth, and intentionality. The כָּל-לֵבְבְּךָ (bekhol-levavkha) “With all your heart” (v.5) emphasizes affective engagement. וְכָתַבְתָּם (ukhetavtam) – “Write them” (v.9) speaks to memory aids, which today can include digital tools as modern forms of inscription. Brueggemann (2001) argues that

Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes a “pedagogy of saturation” where Torah becomes embedded in the life rhythms of children. Waltke and Connor (1990) further stress the pedagogical weight of the Hebrew verbs used, pointing to a theology of repetitive formation. Digital Discipleship Theory examines how social media, Bible apps, and virtual spaces can be harnessed for spiritual formation. This theory supports immersive engagement where Scripture becomes a daily, interactive experience. Campbell and Garner (2016) assert that “digital technology, when rooted in theological intentionality, can extend spiritual practices beyond traditional spaces.” Likewise, Phillips (2019) speaks of “digital spiritual literacy” as a necessary skill for 21st-century discipleship. By weaving together ancient biblical instruction with contemporary digital realities through these theoretical lenses, this study offers a culturally grounded and theologically sound model for enhancing children’s Bible teaching in Nigeria.

African culture must inform the biblical interpretation process for it to be meaningful within the Nigerian context (Ahiamadu, 2010). The instruction to teach children diligently (שׁוֹנֵנִתָּם) reflects God’s model for spiritual formation (Merrill, 1994). Children’s theological engagement must consider both digital realities and the communal orientation of African life (Bunge, 2008; Mbiti, 1991). In the digital age, applying the biblical mandate of Deuteronomy 6 requires reimagined pedagogical strategies (Oosthuizen, 2016). Hebrew syntax reveals the heart-oriented nature of the covenantal commandment (Cooper, 2002; Sailhamer, 1992). Contextual hermeneutics and spiritual formation demand integration of local and digital practices (Dube, 2000; Osmer, 2008). Effective discipleship models should engage children where they are—often online (Smith & Denton, 2005; Towner, 2011). The term לֵבָב (*lěvāv*), meaning “heart,” denotes holistic devotion, not just intellectual assent (Heiser, 2021).

PRESENTATION OF DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 (LENINGRAD CODEX / BHS TEXT)

6. וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מְצַוְךָ הַיּוֹם עַל־לִבְּךָ:
7. וְשׁוֹנֵנִתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם בְּשִׁיטְכָּהּ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבִלְכֹתְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשֹׁכְכְךָ וּבְקוֹמְךָ:
8. וְקִשְׁרָתָם לְאָזְנוֹת עַל־יְדֶיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטוֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ:
9. וְכַתְּבָתָם עַל מְזוֹזֹת־בֵּיתְךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ

PRESENTATION OF DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

- 6: *Ve-hayu ha-devarim ha-elleh asher anokhi metzavvekha ha-yom al-levavekha.*
7: *Ve-shinantam le-vanekha ve-dibbarta bam be-shivtekha be-veitekha u-ve-lekhtekha va-derekh u-ve-shokhvekha u-ve-kumekha.*
8: *U-keshartam le-ot al-yadekha ve-hayu le-totafot bein einekha.*
9: *U-khetavtam al-mezuzot beitekha u-vish'arekha*

PRESENTATION OF DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

6: And these words that I command you today shall be upon your heart.

7: And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

8: And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

9: And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

MANUSCRIPT VARIATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9

According to Damilola Ogunyemi (2024), these variations enrich biblical pedagogy today, especially in digital and multilingual faith contexts like Nigeria. Despite their differences, all texts uphold the covenantal imperative to teach שִׁנְנָתָם (*shinnantām*) and internalize אֶל־לְבָבְךָ (*al-levavekha*) God's Word across generations. These manuscript witnesses reflect both textual stability and strategic adaptations across traditions. There are:

1. Masoretic Text (MT): The Leningrad Codex, adopted in (*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*), represents the authoritative MT, vocalized and meticulously preserved by medieval Jewish scribes. Scholars like James Kugel, Emanuel Tov, Robert Alter, and Eugene Ulrich underscore the MT's exceptional reliability—remarking on its “astonishing accuracy” and “unparalleled preservation” compared to other ancient literatures.

2. Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS): Discovered in Qumran, the DSS contain multiple textual strands—proto-Masoretic, Samaritan, Septuagintal, and independent traditions—confirming a diverse textual landscape before the MT was standardized exists, comparisons from other passages show that the DSS mostly validate the MT's textual accuracy .

3. Samaritan Pentateuch (SP): The SP—preserved in an alternate Hebrew script—displays roughly 6,000 variant readings compared to the MT, most of which are orthographic. Some reflect sectarian harmonization, including references to Mount Gerizim reedit . While these variants seldom affect Deuteronomy 6:6–9, they illustrate how scribal traditions could reshape theological nuance over time.

4. Septuagint (LXX): Translated in the 3rd–2nd century BCE, the LXX often reflects an earlier Hebrew source than the MT. It includes both literal and interpretive renderings. Scholars note that sometimes the LXX preserves readings later lost in the MT (e.g. Deut. 32:8). The LXX of Deut. 6:6–9 aligns closely with the MT, reinforcing

the stability of this passage reedit. Emanuel Tov emphasizes that the diversity found in DSS and SP demonstrates fluidity in early textual transmission, but that the MT solidifies a consistent core text around 200 BCE onward Christian publishing house. Bernard Levinson notes that while other traditions like the SP may include “sectarian revisions,” the MT remains the most theologically coherent witness to Israelite scripture Menachem Cohen’s meticulous work in refining MT manuscripts confirms the exquisite fidelity of Masoretic vocalization and accentuation—ensuring reliable modern texts.

Table: Manuscript Variations and Interpretations of Deuteronomy 6:6–9

Manuscript Tradition	Textual Feature	Scholars Views	Interpretations
Masoretic Text (MT)	Preserves core covenantal commands; stable Hebrew text with terms like <i>עַל-לְבָבְךָ</i> (<i>al-levavekha</i>) and <i>שִׁנְנָנְתָּם</i> (<i>shinnantām</i>)	Rachel Avrahami (2024): Designed for oral memorization and generational instruction	Emphasizes heart-centered transmission and memorized recitation within the home
Dead Sea Scrolls (4QDeut ⁿ)	Minor orthographic variants; slight spelling changes (e.g., <i>totafot</i>)	Elior & Negev (2025): Reflects scribal precision and liturgical accuracy	Reinforces purity of covenant education within sectarian settings (e.g., Qumran)
Samaritan Pentateuch	Adds and adjusts wording to support Samaritan theology (e.g., focus on Mount Gerizim)	Chikere & Adamu (2024): Theologically shaped to reflect local sanctuaries	Shows harmonization of text for sectarian theology while retaining covenant themes
Septuagint (LXX)	Greek translation; uses terms like <i>kardia</i> (heart) and <i>dianoēō</i> (to understand)	Marina Ekpo (2025): Adapts Hebrew thought for Hellenistic audiences	Promotes reasoned obedience; aligns instruction with Greek intellectual context

EXEGESIS OF SOME KEYWORDS IN DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9 FOR DIGITAL CHILDREN’S BIBLE STUDY

The passage in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is a foundational text for Jewish and Christian pedagogical traditions. It's imperative to transmit God's Word across generations holds renewed relevance in the digital age. This exegetical analysis focuses

on five core Hebrew expressions in the text and how their meaning shapes effective digital discipleship for children in contemporary contexts are discussed below:

1. The word וְהָיָה (*vehāyû*) was translated as “And they shall be.” The verb וְהָיָה is derived from the Hebrew root הָיָה (*hāyāh*) meaning “to be” or “to exist.” It introduces the clause: “And these words that I command you today shall be...” implying a call for permanence and internalization.

Modern Jewish and Christian exegetes interpret *vehāyû* as emphasizing covenantal continuity. Baḥya ibn Paquda (as cited in *The Living Torah*, 2024) stresses that the words of Torah must abide in the inner consciousness, not merely be recited. This verb structure connotes a state of being that is ongoing and internal, reinforcing identity. Brueggemann (2024) affirms this in his commentary on Deuteronomy, arguing that the use of *vehāyû* links divine command with human obligation through covenantal presence. It signals that the word must permeate not only thought but lifestyle, guiding daily rhythms. In a digital context, this implies that Scripture must “be” present across children’s digital environments—from devotional apps to video content—rather than being confined to Sunday classes alone. Children need constant, meaningful contact with Scripture that cultivates familiarity and integration.

2. The word עַל־לִבְּךָ (*‘al-levāvekha*) which means “Upon your heart.” The phrase עַל־לִבְּךָ combines עַל (“upon”) and לִבְּךָ (“your heart”). In Hebrew thought, the heart (לֵב / לִב) is the centre of thought, will, and emotion, not just feelings as understood in Western frameworks. Lois Tverberg (2025) explains that in the Hebrew worldview, the heart is “the seat of reason, memory, and moral decisions,” making the command to place God’s words “upon the heart” a call to cognitive and moral absorption. This aligns with digital platforms designed to stimulate memory, understanding, and ethical discernment—including interactive story apps or guided devotionals. According to Kotzker Rebbe, cited in recent Midrashic reflections (Jewish Learning Centre, 2024), the use of “upon” rather than “within” suggests that even if the heart is not yet receptive, the words can rest there until transformation occurs. This concept is deeply applicable in children’s digital learning, where repetition and exposure can nurture eventual understanding and conviction.

Thus, children’s digital Bible content should be intellectually engaging and emotionally resonant, integrating God’s Word into the seat of thought, not just memory.

3. The word וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם (*veshinnantām*) “You shall teach them diligently”. This verb *veshinnantām* comes from the Hebrew root שָׁנַן (*shānan*), meaning to sharpen or whet. It carries the imagery of engraving or etching—suggesting persistent, focused, and intentional instruction. Spurgeon’s legacy, as revisited by modern digital expositors like Emmanuel Ndukwe (2025) points to “sharpening” as a metaphor for deep formation, not surface learning. Teaching must be methodical and repetitive, forming sharp convictions in a distracted generation. The Torah Resource Institute (2025) interprets *shānan* not

just as academic instruction, but as an act of transformational transmission—where children are taught with the expectation of mastery and imitation. In this regard, digital Bible teaching tools should be structured, consistent, and repeated, perhaps through gamified scripture apps or daily verse drills. This term encourages parents and teachers to go beyond one-time exposure and adopt repetitive digital formats—daily animations, scheduled podcasts, or recurring devotionals that “sharpen” young minds and hearts over time.

4. The word *וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם* (*vedibbarta bām*) – “You shall speak of them.” The phrase *וְדַבַּרְתָּ בָּם* uses the verb *דָּבַר* (*dibbēr*) meaning “to speak,” emphasizing ongoing verbal engagement with God’s Word. This expression extends beyond formal teaching and into everyday relational settings. David Adamo (2024), an African biblical scholar, notes that “speaking of them” includes storytelling, proverbs, and spontaneous moments of discipleship, which are essential to African oral cultures and ideal for digital integration through voice recordings or family podcasts. Precept Austin (2024) connects this verse to the discipline of daily Scripture meditation, not just public proclamation. This highlights the role of ordinary conversation—especially through digital voice notes, short YouTube devotionals, or Christian reels on platforms like TikTok. In children’s ministries, this command challenges leaders to integrate Scripture into the digital languages of the day, ensuring that even casual digital interaction reflects and reinforces biblical truths.

5. The word *וְכָתַבְתֶּם* (*ukhetavtām*) – “You shall write them.” This imperative, derived from *כָּתַב* (*kātab*), denotes literal and symbolic inscription. In biblical times, this meant writing on doorposts and gates; in digital times, this may translate to digital visuals, banners, wallpapers, and online memory verses. Jeremiah 31:33, echoed in this context, speaks of God’s law written on the heart—a spiritual internalization. According to Utley (2024) and McNutt (2025), writing the words signifies both permanence and visibility. In modern pedagogy, this suggests the use of scripture-infused digital space—from classroom smartboards to children’s Bible apps that allow verses to be traced, highlighted, or illustrated. Churches should thus consider how to “write” Scripture across children’s digital environments—not merely texts, but multimedia that displays God’s Word in engaging, visible, and interactive ways. The Hebrew imperatives of Deuteronomy 6:6–9 call for a deliberate, repetitive, and relational approach to Scripture transmission—ideals that can be amplified through digital media when used wisely. As children’s attention migrates to screens, digital Bible study must be shaped by the enduring commands of *vehāyû*, *‘al-levāvekha*, *veshinnantām*, *vedibbarta bām*, and *ukhetavtām*—ensuring that the Word of God is not just taught, but lived, spoken, and seen.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BISHOP SMITH MEMORIAL ANGLICAN CHURCH, ILORIN, KWARA STATE

Bishop Smith Memorial Anglican Church, located in the Agba Dam area of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria, was established on July 17, 1983, under the guidance of the Rt. Rev. Herbert Haruna, the first Bishop of the Diocese of Kwara, and the Very Rev. E. A. Falase. The inaugural service took place at a temporary site with just fourteen members in attendance. Over the years, the church has experienced significant growth, evolving into the headquarters of an Archdeaconry that oversees several other churches. The church is named in honour of Bishop Alfred W. Smith, a prominent missionary of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) who played a pivotal role in introducing Christianity and Western education to parts of Northern Nigeria in the early 20th century. Bishop Smith's missionary efforts included the establishment of schools and churches, notably in Offa, where he founded St. Mark's Primary School in 1912, the first primary school in the old Ilorin Province. His dedication to evangelism and education laid the foundation for the spread of Anglicanism in the region.

In December 2023, Bishop Smith Memorial Anglican Church celebrated its 40th anniversary, marking four decades of spiritual and community development. The celebration included various events such as drama presentations, revival services, and the presentation of merit awards to individuals who have significantly contributed to the church's growth. The theme of the anniversary was "From Glory to Glory," reflecting the church's journey and aspirations for continued progress. Today, Bishop Smith Memorial Anglican Church stands as a testament to the enduring legacy of missionary work in Nigeria, continuing to serve its congregation and the broader community through various spiritual and social initiatives.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON REIMAGINING DEUTERONOMY 6:6–9 FOR CHILDREN'S BIBLE STUDY THROUGH DIGITAL PLATFORMS AT BISHOP ANGLICAN CHURCH, ILORIN

Question 1: How do you understand the message of Deuteronomy 6:6–9, especially its relevance to teaching children in today's context?

Participants generally expressed a shared understanding that Deuteronomy 6:6–9 emphasizes the intentional, consistent, and practical transmission of God's Word to the next generation. Rev. Canon Ezekiel Temigbe explained, "This passage speaks of generational teaching. It calls parents and teachers to embed God's Word in children's hearts through every moment of life, not just in formal instruction." This is consistent with Adamo (2025), who stresses that Deuteronomy 6 models a life-encompassing pedagogy where biblical teaching is integrated into daily life rhythms — a necessity for

African families navigating the distractions of digital modernity. Dorcas Adeniyi viewed the text as a call to relational teaching: “It shows us that children learn best when the Word is explained through daily routines. This is especially true now when children are surrounded by many competing voices from the digital world.” Her perspective resonates with Ezeokoli & Babalola (2024), who emphasize relational discipleship in digital parenting, arguing that meaningful faith transmission today must be modelled through consistent interaction between adult believers and children within both physical and virtual spaces. Moyosore Abegunde stated, “The idea of writing them on the doorposts and gates makes sense today if we consider that our screens and apps can serve the same function as teaching spaces.” This echoes Onwuchekwa (2025), who reinterprets Deuteronomy 6 through the lens of digital theology, noting that smartphones and media apps have become today’s “gates” — daily portals through which faith or distraction enters a child's life.

By the way, Elizabeth Temigbe noted, “As a parent, I feel responsible to teach my children God’s Word, not just leave it to the church. Deuteronomy 6 makes that very clear.” This is affirmed by Akinwale (2024), who argues that the biblical model of household discipleship remains the most enduring and effective form of Christian education, especially when reinforced through digital family devotions and intentional parental engagement. Venerable Professor Amos Idowu added a theological insight: “The Hebrew term ‘veshinnantam’ implies repetition and sharpening. In today’s terms, this could mean reinforcing biblical lessons through digital repetitions, quizzes, or animated retellings.” His interpretation aligns with Oluwaseun (2025), who emphasizes that “*veshinnantam*” demands layered repetition — a concept easily adaptable to app-based learning, interactive videos, and gamified scripture tools. Overall, participants and scholars agreed that Deuteronomy 6:6–9 mandates a holistic, intentional, and repeated pattern of Scripture engagement that must now extend into the digital spaces children occupy. Both the home and the church are called to work collaboratively, using culturally contextual and technologically relevant tools to embed God’s Word in the hearts of the next generation.

Question 2: What digital tools are currently used in the children’s ministry, and how do children respond to them during Bible study sessions?

Participants noted a variety of digital tools currently used during children’s Bible study. The most commonly mentioned platforms included the YouVersion Bible App for Kids, Superbook animations, Bible trivia games, and YouTube Bible storytelling channels. In her personal experience, Eyitayo Danshusi shared, “We use Bible apps to teach memory verses. Children love tapping on icons and hearing the verses read aloud. It helps their attention span.” This aligns with Adenuga and Okafor (2025), who observed that multisensory learning through interactive apps improves focus and

retention in early childhood biblical education. Ajiboye added, “Animated videos are a big win. When we show videos like Superbook or VeggieTales, the children become glued. They even narrate the stories later.” Her observation supports Chukwuma (2024), who affirms that biblical animation, when well-structured, enhances both visual memory and narrative comprehension among African children.

Besides, parents also confirmed this effectiveness at home, as stated by Funmilayo Oyatoye, “My kids often quote Bible stories they watched on YouTube. It helps with retention.” This echoes Nwachukwu (2025), who found that children exposed to Bible stories through digital media displayed significantly improved recall and theological vocabulary over time. However, not all feedback was positive. In her perception, Mojirade Ogbontolu cautioned, “The problem is that children sometimes use the same devices to access cartoons that have no moral values. So, we must supervise them.” This concern is consistent with Ibe & Fagbamila (2025), who warn that without digital boundaries, faith-based platforms may unintentionally open doors to secular or harmful content. Rev. Canon Oyedun mentioned another innovation: “We created WhatsApp groups where short video devotionals and Bible songs are sent weekly for parents to use at home with their children.” This aligns with Uzochukwu (2024), who advocates for mobile messaging platforms like WhatsApp as powerful, low-cost channels for digital discipleship in African homes. The consensus among both participants and scholars is that digital tools significantly increase engagement and interest, particularly when the content is interactive, age-appropriate, biblically grounded, and well-supervised. Scholars agree that a hybrid model combining technology, parental involvement, and theological oversight is most effective for nurturing spiritual growth in today’s children.

Question 3: How can digital platforms be improved to make faith transmission to children more effective and aligned with biblical principles?

In response to the above question, the participants offered a range of thoughtful suggestions for improving digital faith resources. In his view, Venerable Professor Amos Idowu suggested, “Developers should integrate local languages like Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa into the storytelling apps. This will help the children connect culturally and spiritually.” This resonates with Adamo (2024), who argues that African biblical hermeneutics must intentionally reflect indigenous languages and cultural idioms for authentic spiritual formation. By the way, Dorcas Adeniyi emphasized the need for African content: “We need to see African children, names, and settings in Christian animations. This will make children feel like the Bible belongs to them, too.” This aligns with Okoye (2025), who asserts that contextual biblical storytelling is essential in postcolonial African Christian education, especially when targeting digital-native generations.

In addition to the above assertion, Moyosore Abegunde proposed gamified learning: "Let's create Scripture memory games that reward children with points or certificates. That kind of motivation works today." Her suggestion echoes Adeniran & Uche (2025), who advocate for gamification in Christian education, noting that it enhances engagement and retention in digital discipleship models. Ajiboye highlighted the importance of parental involvement: "We should have digital tools that parents and children can use together, maybe daily devotionals with family discussion questions." In support, Okonkwo (2024) emphasizes the role of intergenerational faith formation through shared digital liturgies and devotional practices. Rev. Canon Ezekiel Temigbe called for theological depth: "While animations are fun, they must be theologically sound and avoid oversimplifying biblical truths." This reflects the caution raised by Iheanacho (2025), who warns that theological dilution in digital children's media could compromise doctrinal accuracy and must be monitored through ecclesiastical oversight. There was a clear agreement among both participants and scholars that digital tools must not only be exciting and accessible, but also rooted in solid biblical content, culturally contextualized, and developed with theological intentionality. This collective insight aligns with the broader academic consensus that faith transmission in the digital age must marry biblical fidelity with technological innovation.

Question 4: What challenges and opportunities have you experienced while integrating digital tools into children's Bible teaching at church or at home?

This question explored both the obstacles and potential seen by Sunday School teachers, parents, and clergy in incorporating digital tools into the faith formation of children. The findings revealed a dynamic tension between innovation and limitation, aspiration and constraint, and biblical fidelity and technological adaptation. The following key challenges were identified by participants for Bishop Smith Anglican Church, Ilorin. There are:

a. Digital Divide and Economic Barriers: Funmilayo Oyatoye emphasized how limited access to smartphones and tablets among low-income families limits digital faith engagement. She opines that "I use printed materials more often because we can't afford two smartphones in the house. My child has to wait until I'm done using mine." This finding is consistent with Okon (2024), who asserts that the digital divide in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, restricts equitable access to faith-based e-learning. Poor electricity supply and expensive internet data also widen the technological gap among households

b. Internet Instability and Data Costs: Miss Moyosore Abegunde noted persistent network failures and high data subscription costs that often disrupt streaming or downloading of Bible animations. According to Ayoola and Adeyemi (2025), unreliable internet infrastructure is a major hindrance to digital religious education in West Africa.

Even in urban centres like Ilorin, inconsistent bandwidth undermines the smooth running of virtual Sunday School.

c. Screen Distractions and Overexposure to Secular Content: Ogbontolu raised concerns about children easily being distracted while online or shifting attention to secular content like cartoons and games. She articulates that "Sometimes I play Bible stories on YouTube, but before I return, they've already switched to Spiderman or music videos." This echoes Aremu (2024), who critiques the unregulated consumption of digital media, warning that "media multitasking impairs children's cognitive absorption of spiritual values."

d. Inadequate Teacher Training in Digital Ministry: In her opinion, Esther Ajiboye admitted that many children's teachers lack the technical training to maximize digital teaching tools such as interactive apps or presentations. This aligns with Nwachukwu and Ogundipe (2025), who stress that "the success of faith transmission in the digital age depends on teacher readiness and digital literacy." Without proper training, the potential of digital tools remains underutilized or even misused.

Unique Opportunities Highlighted by Participants

a. Reaching Children beyond Sunday Services: Rev. Canon Adekunle Oyedun highlighted how mobile devotionals and WhatsApp messages extend discipleship beyond church walls. Daily verses, videos, and prayer reminders serve as follow-ups to weekly classes. He cites that "We created a WhatsApp group for our Sunday School. Each day, a short devotional or Bible verse is sent to parents to use with their kids." This resonates with Chinwe and Olutade (2024), who argue that mobile-based spiritual education "facilitates continual engagement, turning every day into a discipleship moment."

b. Faith Formation during Holidays or Illness: Moyosore Abegunde observed that during school breaks or when children are ill, digital tools keep them spiritually connected. Idoko (2025) confirms that online Bible platforms can fill discipleship gaps during times of absence or mobility. This reflects the flexibility digital tools offer to accommodate different family circumstances.

c. Enhancing Learning for Children with Learning Differences: In her contribution, Dorcas Adeniyi explained how audio-visual materials such as animated Bible stories and audio scriptures help children with short attention spans or mild learning difficulties. She explains, "One of my boys cannot read very well, but when he watches the animated stories, he remembers everything clearly." As Alabi and Ekundayo (2025) report, visual and auditory stimuli support multisensory learning, enabling better comprehension and retention among diverse learners.

D. Encouraging Family-Based Spiritual Bonding: Interestingly, Moyosore Abegunde mentioned that using tablets for devotionals encourages her husband to join the children

in Bible study. This unintentional outcome mirrors Onyema and Danjuma (2024), who argue that "technology-based faith activities in the home can bridge generational gaps and revive father-child spiritual bonding." Recent scholarship strongly supports the dual nature of integrating digital tools into Christian education. While the challenges revolve around infrastructure, digital literacy, and content regulation, the opportunities present new paths for relational, inclusive, and adaptive faith teaching. According to Bamigboye (2025), "digital discipleship among children must balance technological innovation with theological discernment." Similarly, Isah and Oluwatosin (2024) recommend that churches invest in digital faith literacy training for both parents and Sunday school teachers to improve implementation outcomes. Theologically, reimagining Deuteronomy 6:6-9 in the digital age means equipping families to teach God's Word "on the phone, in video chats, on tablets, and while scrolling," just as they would "when you sit, walk, lie down, and rise up." The medium has changed, but the mission remains eternal.

CONCLUSION

Reimagining Deuteronomy 6:6-9 for children's Bible study through digital platforms at Bishop Anglican Church, Ilorin, bridges ancient covenantal teaching with 21st-century digital realities. The divine command, "וְהָיָה דְּבַרְךָ יְהוָה... עַל-לִבְּךָ" *vehāyū haddevarim hā'ēlleh...* 'al-levāvekha – "these words shall be upon your heart", remains timeless but demands new pedagogical expressions—such as digital storytelling, interactive learning apps, and שִׁנְנָנְתָם (*shinnantām* – "you shall teach them diligently") through parent-child engagement on mobile platforms. Aligning biblical instruction with today's digital learning styles deepens both לֵב (*lev* – heart) commitment and שְׁמָעָה (*shāma* – attentive listening). This study affirms that faithful digital adaptation, not abandonment, of biblical methods ensures the דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים (*devar Elohim* – Word of God) remains alive across generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Develop a Contextual Digital Curriculum: Create a Sunday School curriculum that weaves digital storytelling, memory verse animations, and interactive mobile applications with the theological depth of Deuteronomy 6. Local language integration should be encouraged to bridge biblical understanding and cultural relevance.

Capacity Building for Teachers: Organize workshops to train children's teachers in digital literacy and creative media usage for Bible instruction. This includes tools like Bible App for Kids, Canva for Kids' Scriptures, and storytelling AI tools such as Superbook's online platform.

Digital Theology Seminars for Clergy: Introduce clergy to Digital Discipleship Theory, encouraging them to interpret ancient mandates like *ukhetavtam* and *veshinnantam* through a contemporary lens—emphasizing digital writing, visual memory, and constant presence.

Establish a Digital Discipleship Committee: Bishop Smith Memorial Anglican Church can set up a Digital Engagement Task Force responsible for monitoring, selecting, and contextualizing digital resources that uphold theological integrity and are child-friendly.

Parental Involvement in Digital Faith Formation: Encourage parents to monitor and co-engage with their children’s digital Bible activities, modelling how faith conversations can occur through shared screen time, bedtime animations, and app-based devotions.

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List of Interviewees from Bishop Smith Anglican Church, Agbadam, Ilorin, Kwara State.

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