

Use of Animation Films as Tools for Catechesis of Young Catholics in Nigeria

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Abstract

In the present digital world, the use of visuals cannot be overstretched. Visual communication is the most effective way of passing information because the mind processes things in images. Hence, the use of visuals is at the centre of almost every means of communication today. Animation photos, videos, and slides are just a few of the many formats in which these visuals can be found. Any visible aid that helps convey facts, skills, comprehension, knowledge, and appreciation to students is known as a visual aid, which is why many young people have become fascinated by television and internet advertisements, especially those that use animations. Traditionally, catechesis is often delivered through orality, memorialisation, and reading from the handbook, while teachers teach with the conventional call-and-response style. This makes young people bored and tired of the same straight-jacketed way of learning catechism, as one cannot ascertain the quality of the effectiveness of the method of learning and the knowledge acquired. Redesigning catechesis is therefore necessary to grab the attention of the intended audience. Thus, through conceptual analysis, this article investigates the extent to which animated films can be effective in teaching catechesis without disregarding oral or memorisation methods as a complement to make the task of evangelisation whole in the Nigerian Church.

Key words: Animation, Catechesis, Catholic Church, Films/Movies, Young people, Youth

Introduction

Catechesis is an essential aspect of faith formation in the Catholic Church. It is one of the basic ways in which God's Word may be known, loved, pondered, and preserved. Catechesis is understood as the "systematic teaching of doctrine and as a gradual experience of the Christian life" (John Paul II, 1979). It is the education of children, young people, and adults in the faith. Catechesis introduces the catechumens into the following elements of Church life: the initial proclamation of the Gospel, or "kerygma, apologetics, the experience of Christian living, a celebration of the sacraments, integration into the ecclesial

community, and apostolic and missionary witness (Fasina, 1994). Within the entire process of evangelisation, proclamation leads to initial faith, catechesis advances this faith by educating the neophyte in the duties of discipleship and giving him or her a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and message of our Lord Jesus Christ (John Paul II, 1979).

On the other hand, catechesis taught using traditional methods can come across as dull and uninteresting, particularly to the younger generation, who are now known as the "digital natives" (Presky 2001). In the past, teachers have typically taught using the call-and-response method of instruction, orality, memorialization, and reading aloud from the handbook. This makes young people bored and tired of the same straight-jacketed way of learning catechism, as one cannot ascertain the quality of the effectiveness of the method of learning and the knowledge acquired. According to Olorunmolu (2018), a lot of Catholic children cannot be taught the faith properly anymore because the read-cum oral/memorization methods cannot easily hold their attention in this digital age, and even "knowledgeable adults are still used to the penny catechism methods" (n.p.). Therefore, according to Musa (2019), a poor catechetical instruction strategy, has serious implications for the development of the Church and an adverse effect on the young people. Given that today's youth are referred to as digital natives, the Church needs to speak to them in a language they can comprehend: digital language.

In the present digital world, the use of visuals cannot be overstretched. According to Nida (2018), visual communication is the most effective way of passing information because the mind processes things in images. Hence, the use of visuals is at the centre of almost every means of communication today. These images can take many forms; animation films, images, and slides are just a few examples. Any visible tool that helps convey facts, skills, comprehension, knowledge, and appreciation to students is called a visual aid, this is why many young people have become fascinated by television and internet advertisements, especially those that use animation. Therefore, Cohen (2012) sees animation as a wonderful way to explore life from many different directions. It could be a business endeavour or a personal study. It can amuse, communicate serious messages, make one feel a wide variety of emotions, and can be a highly intellectual experience, particularly in the area of faith.

While it is true that digital technology is here to stay, this does not in any way suggest that print or oral media will disappear, as some have mistakenly believed. Still, one cannot deny the significance of digital technology in human interaction and relationships, particularly in light of how it affects modern human activities. No doubt, the computer is at the heart of this digital technology, enabling individuals to explore their needs more easily and at a far lower cost than ever before. In addition to computers, other important devices that are advancing the digital age are mobile phones, cable television, internet, etc. This has led to a revolution and like the Industrial Revolution that preceded

it 200 years ago, the digital age has brought about far-reaching changes in society (Arora, 2018). For this reason, Badejo (2018) emphasises that the mass media and other social communication tools define this century and that the initial proclamation, catechesis, or further development of faith is impossible without them. Pope Paul VI says, "The Church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means that human skill is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that she proclaims from the housetops the message of which she is the depository" (EN, 45).

Thus, the Nigerian Catholic Church can leverage animated films as an innovative communication tool for evangelisation and teaching of catechesis, thereby making faith formation of young people more accessible, engaging and effective. Little wonder, Badejo (2018) emphasises the importance of the communication apostolate for the successful and effective revamping of Catechesis for the Church in Nigeria. Corroborating this, Onaiyekan (2023) states that "communication and evangelisation are intimately connected". He believes that since evangelisation is the main task of the church, it is very much a matter of communication. He further affirms that modern technology and the related means of social communication are "an important aspect of the modern world."

Hence, there is a need to redesign catechesis in such a way that would capture the attention of the targeted audience (young Catholics). In other words, there is a need to overhaul the methods of teaching Catechesis in the Church in Nigeria. This article, therefore, focuses on investigating the extent to which animated films can be effective in teaching catechesis, without disregarding or expunging the oral cum memorisation and traditional methods, and serve as a complement to make the task of evangelisation whole in the Nigerian Church.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Animation

Animation can be more pervasive than many people realise, as the term animation can easily be misunderstood. Pilling (1997) for instance, claims that many people still regard animation as entertainment for children. Similarly, Buchan (2006) suggests that animation is misunderstood because it is a complex film medium that typically pervades other media. To her, it is thus treated as a component of other media rather than a medium on its own. With such misconceptions about animation, a proper definition is essential to properly distinguish it from other media and reveal its true nature. Thus, Carpe (2016) posits that animation has been mislabelled as a genre. She further quotes Bird, who notes that "animation can produce a film of any genre" (p.23). It is believed that this in turn would elucidate how it can be used for catechetical formation.

In technical terms, according to Bordwell & Thompson (2013), "animation is a medium in which a series of images is created, one image at a time, such that each successive image is altered slightly from the previous one" (p.370). This means that when projected, the image sequence creates the illusion of motion.

Hence, Beckerman (2012) explains that the illusion of motion occurs when slightly varying pictures replace each other in swift succession. The actual rate used to create the illusion of motion is at least sixteen frames per second (Milic & McConville, 2006). This induces the phenomenon of "persistence of vision", also known as "positive afterimages" (Milic & McConville, 2006, p.1). The images that make up an animated film are derived from one of three sources as follows: 1. Two-dimensional artwork 2. Photographs of real-world objects 3. Computer-generated images (Wells, 2014)

From the aforementioned, different types of animation can be produced. Each type is distinguished by the materials used and techniques employed in the development process. Two-dimensional artwork can take the form of drawings, paintings, or flat cut-outs. These produce cell animations (i.e. cartoons) and cut-out or collage animation. Photographs of real-world objects produce images of three-dimensional space and are used to produce stop-motion animation. The objects in stop-motion animation are typically made of clay or plasticine, although any type of material can be used. Computer-generated images produce computer animation. Advances in computer technology have made this process much easier than before and are a key contributor to the presence of animation in many films today (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). Technology has evolved to such an extent that the functionality of computer hardware and animation software makes it possible for any type of animation to be produced. For example, a drawn animation or a stop motion animation can be partly or entirely produced through the technique of computer animation, making this the most versatile form of animation production.

Animation as a Medium of Communication

Animation is a unique medium with distinct qualities when compared with other media of communication. As a fundamentally visual medium, it is unlike print media because its visual space is dynamic rather than static (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). While it is principally a visual medium, it can also incorporate sound, making it similar to a live-action video. However, it differs from live-action due to the way its visual space is produced. The visual space of live-action video is produced through a continuous real-time recording by a camera. Animation, however, develops its visual space by creating images one at a time. In most cases, a camera is not used (Bordwell & Thompson, 2013). Animators have full control over the visual space and can manipulate visual space in any manner they choose. Whereas, the directors of the live-action film depend on a combination of a scene's setting (physical location), an actor's skill, and the availability of specific props. Besides, animators can create any scene and design any prop. Characters can also be animated to communicate any desired action or emotion. Scenes, props, and characters can be realistic or abstract and need not follow natural laws (gravity for example). Thus, the possible configurations of visual space are limitless (Blazer, 2016).

As a visually limitless medium, the animation is not confined by verbal language. According to Musburger (2007), "Animation production requires one to focus on its visuals more than its dialogue" (p.182). In fact, according to him, "one of the advantages of animation is its ability to transcend language barriers when properly produced. Well-produced and well-conceived visual aspects tell the story in any language and culture, without narration or dialogue" (p.182). Thus, the animation is communicated through visual storytelling. The story takes the form of a time-based visual narrative (Buchan, 2006). Telotte (2010) avers that the narrative unfolds in the manner with which the animator infuses both the physical and the chronological space with life. This narrative, in Buchan's (2006) view, can follow conventional and/or unconventional forms.

The conventional narrative presents recognisable human behaviours and rituals, while unconventional forms are more abstract. In laying out a story through a combination of conventional and unconventional narrative, animation can facilitate new modes of storytelling in that, it can step out of traditional modes of sequential plot development that have a beginning, a middle, and an end, to modes that communicate through symbolism and metaphor (Wells, 2014). As a medium of communication, animation thus makes available a multiplicity of styles and approaches in the telling of a story or the expression of particular thoughts and emotions. Such is the nature of animation (Wells, 2014). Effective animation focuses more on storytelling than story. Staff members of Pixar Animation Studios shared this view during a screenwriting exposition in 2007 (Singer, 2007). They claim that stories can be crafted in a variety of ways, but the most impressive ones are those that captivate their audience. This happens especially when viewers can identify with the "reality" of the story. It is in the telling of the tale that the emotional appeal takes hold. Stories are more powerful when they are entwined with life as it is, and they work best when audiences are allowed to realise things for themselves. Audiences have an unconscious desire to participate in the storytelling (Singer, 2007).

Television and Animation

Television is an inescapable part of modern culture (Walsh, 2006). As a result, television is depended upon for entertainment, news, education, culture, weather, sports, and music. It is pertinent to note that the technology of television has broadened our horizons by bringing faraway places into our homes, revealing the diversity of science and nature, and exposing us to sights and sounds that we can only dream about. Television has the power to inform, inspire, and unite (UKessays, 2018). However, with the recent explosion in satellite and digital television, coupled with the advent of the Internet, television can now be accessed even on mobile phones and other digital devices. Rosin (2006) asserts that television viewing if safely used can stimulate a child's education and creativity. As such, television today offers young people a wide variety of wonder, amusement, and education. The mysteries of the deep sea, the wonders of outer space, and the animal varieties in the natural

world could delight young people and stimulate their imagination without exposing them to any danger.

Young people may be entertained for hours with programmes that engage their senses of seeing and hearing. Programmes designed to teach children such as "Sesame Street" and "Dora the Explorer" expose children to vocabulary, math, science, history, art, religion, and diversity before they go to school. Because of its ability to create powerful touchstones and digital animations, television enables young people to share cultural experiences with others (Rosin, 2006). Television can teach children important values and life lessons. News, events, and historical programming can help make young people more aware of other cultures and people (UKessays, 2018). Television viewing is beneficial for the family as well as the church in the propagation of the faith. Many young people's television series are educational, with special emphasis on animation which better captures the attention of young people, ranging from dedicated learning programmes to those that indirectly teach the viewers. Some series are written to have a specific moral behind every episode, often explained at the end by the character that learned the lesson (Walsh, 2006).

The Inherent Purposes of Animation

Weiss, Knowlton & Morrison (2002) present a set of practical heuristics for using animation in educational software. They analysed the specific nature of animation by describing its characteristics and purposes. Related to the inherent purposes of animation, they suggest the following five functions of the technique: cosmetic; attention-gaining; motivation; presentation; and clarification function:

Cosmetic function: Here, pictures can serve a decorative function in lessons (Levin, Anglin, & Carney, 1987). Similarly, animation can have a purely cosmetic function when it is used to make instruction attractive to learners. For example, special animated effects sometimes can dazzle and impress students in the opening title of a lesson. Cosmetic applications of animation, however, do little to enhance learning. While cosmetics may have their place, they can distract learners from focusing on the main instructional points of a lesson. When the animation distracts from the learning task, learners misunderstand critical information. Thus, animators should exercise caution when using animation for cosmetic purposes.

Attention-gaining function: The second function of animations is their use to gain attention (Rieber, 1990). Examples of this function include interesting special effects for transitions between instructional frames, screen washes, moving symbols or characters, and animated prompts. It is particularly important to gain the attention of learners at the beginning of a lesson (Wilson, 1993). A second aspect of this function is to signal salient points such as switching topics. The movement created by the animation is useful for capturing the learner's attention and focusing it on the salient points. This perspective is not universally accepted. Hence, Large (1996) contends that

empiricism cannot sustain the notion that animation is a productive tool for keeping the learner's attention once its novelty has become mundane. Thus, the overuse of animation to gain learners' attention may not be beneficial.

Motivation function: A dancing bear, unicycle-riding clown, or exploding fireworks used as feedback can motivate learners to strive for correct answers. Animators must exercise caution when using animation as a feedback mechanism. Surber and Leeder (1988) suggest the addition of feedback with colourful graphic displays does not enhance motivation. When a wrong response is provided, an appealing animation might serve to reinforce the incorrect answer. Thus, focusing on positive motivation through animation is particularly important.

Presentation function: The most direct application of animation is to use it as part of the presentation strategy. In general, animation can provide a "concrete reference and a visual context for ideas" (Knowlton, 1964, p.42). Since text illustrated with graphics is retained to a higher degree than text alone (Mayer, 2005), one could argue that animation can improve the retention of information due to the link between static and dynamic visuals. Animation can help present information by defining a concept, rule, or step in a procedure. Also, animation can supplement the text by providing examples of or elaborating upon a concept, procedure, or rule (Rieber, 1989). The use of animation as a presentation strategy is particularly helpful when presenting highly abstract or dynamic processes (Rieber, 1991). For example, animation might be particularly useful in helping students understand the flow of blood through the body.

Clarification function: While closely related to the presentation function, the clarification function employs animation to provide a conceptual understanding without providing new information. That is, the animation clarifies relationships through visual means. Animation can help clarify abstract relationships that might otherwise be difficult to understand. For example, in a computer-based economics lesson, the text might explain the relationship between the number of workers in a factory and the units of production that come off an assembly line. An animated plot graph might not add information, but it could clarify the accompanying text and help learners better grasp the relationship between the two variables (Weiss, Knowlton & Morrison, 2002).

Effectiveness of Animation in the Teaching of Catechism

The process of educating people about the Catholic faith is known as catechesis. It is a handing on of the faith "in an organic and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life" (CT 18). It is geared towards helping people to first have a personal encounter with Jesus Christ (pre-catechesis), which leads to faith. It provides further education for those being initiated into the Roman Catholic faith (initiatory catechesis) and entering the Christian community. It then continues to educate to deepen this faith as the

person grows in holiness as a disciple (continuing catechesis) (GDC 60-72). Catechesis, therefore, assists in developing the faith of persons at every point of their spiritual journey.

Unfortunately, catechesis is still delivered using orality, memorialisation, and reading from the handbook to young people who are digital natives of the digital continent. This makes today's learners bored and tired of the same straight-jacketed way of learning the catechism. It is now difficult to ascertain the quality of the effectiveness of the method of learning and the knowledge acquired. This is experiential in the dwindling number of young people attending catechism classes today. Thus, there is a continuous search for new and better ways to educate the young. Studies have shown that when children are having fun, they tend to learn better. It is even scientifically proven that retention of information is higher when it is communicated using both visual and verbal communication (Mayer, 2014). One would feel that animation as a medium offers exciting possibilities for meeting the needs of 21st-century learners. The use of animated films as a means of teaching and learning catechism could significantly enhance learners' learning if properly designed and executed.

Hence, animation in this regard could help to fulfil a cognitive function. In this role, animations are intended to support students' cognitive processes ultimately resulting in them understanding the subject matter (Pundit, 2018). Animation could be used to make overly exciting and fun but educative animated films that could be easily incorporated into the teaching of catechism. Catechism teachers could also use animation to demonstrate things and explicate concepts with visual aids. It can be used to show how things come together and work together (Khurshid, Noushad, Spanjers, & Al-Darwashi, 2018). Furthermore, animation could be viewed as an effective learning tool that attracts attention; this in turn would engage the catechumens and sustain their motivation to learn. Such Affective Animation Training, in Pundit's (2018) view, "is not focused on facilitating comprehension of any academic subject matter itself and often portrays activities that are interactive, creative, fun and motivational" (p.2).

Empirical Review

Animated Concept Maps film

The primary purpose of this experiment was to investigate the suitability of animated concept maps with audio narration as an instructional medium. The experiment applied the theories and principles of multimedia learning to design the treatment conditions. It was carried out by two scholars, Nesbit and Adesope in 2011. Concept map animation is a knowledge representation medium that shows a node-link diagram changing over time. It may be implemented as a series of slides or frames ordered so that the first slide shows a blank map and the last slide shows a complete map. The experiment is meant to compare learning from animated concept maps and text by randomly assigning

144 students to study 1 of 4 narrated animations presenting semantically equivalent information accompanied by identical audio narration. The first two presented text; one with concurrent audio and another with delayed audio. The other two presented animated concept maps; one in black and white and the other with nodes coloured to represent semantic relatedness.

The animated concept map groups outperformed the text groups on free recall with $p < .05$. The black-and-white animated concept map group outperformed the text groups on a multiple-choice knowledge test with $p < .05$. No advantages were statistically detected for colour enhancements of the animated concept map. The results indicate that verbal information can be effectively communicated by learner-paced animated concept maps accompanied by audio narrations. It also found that studying concept maps using animation resulted in greater retention of central and detailed ideas than studying text passages, but that the advantages of studying concept maps are most apparent in the retention of central ideas. This means that concept maps offer better visual integration of related concepts than text passages and that their simpler syntactic structure is easier to explain by learners with lower reading ability or lower verbal ability. Concept maps may allow a greater proportion of initial semantic processing to be performed in visuospatial working memory, thus distributing the requisite processing more efficiently over the available cognitive resources. As a learning strategy for elaborating or organising information, learners can compare and link concept maps to texts or previous knowledge (Weinstein & Mayer, 1986). Concept maps may benefit learners by signalling hierarchical relationships and superordinate concepts more effectively than text. This shows the extent to which Animated Concept Maps can go in transmitting knowledge. With the P-value being less than 0.05 when using animated films in both cases, the impact would certainly be the same if the method is adapted for teaching doctrine in our local context.

“Read Scripture Series: Deuteronomy”

The second experiment was carried out in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain, in 2018, in which the researchers used animated films in a controlled experiment to measure the knowledge retentiveness of catechumens using - “Read Scripture Series: Deuteronomy”. It is part of a series of animated videos produced by The Bible Project. It is almost eight minutes in length and is a hybrid type of animation containing elements of 2D cel animation. Its visual narrative flows like an advanced version of a PowerPoint or a Prezi presentation. It begins with a blank screen. Words and/or images then appear to be drawn onto the visual space while a verbal narration is delivered. In this way, the information communicated is as much oral as it is visual, although images will be able to communicate more than the oral narration.

As the name suggests, “Read Scripture Series: Deuteronomy” presents an overview of the Bible book of the same name. It does so by describing the flow of the book from the beginning to the end, laying out its themes and sub-themes. Like a Prezi presentation, the animation zooms into sub-themes and out to main

themes. Unlike Prezi however, imagery in the animation (including the formation of words) is drawn onto the visual space at a constant rate. The experimental group was shown the animated film explaining the concepts, and the control group presented texts with concurrent audio teaching by a catechist, explaining the concepts. It was found that the knowledge retention by catechumens in the experimental group in which concepts were explained using the animated film was high (65%), while the knowledge retentiveness by the catechumens in the controlled group in which text with concurrent audio teaching by a catechist was low (35%) (Lindsay, 2018).

The experiment on “Read Scripture Series: Deuteronomy” demonstrates animation's ability to reach all ages. As previously mentioned, many people still consider animation as cartoons geared toward children. Wells (2014) posits that this misconception has contributed to animations underutilisation. He notes that animation has been used in several campaigns, such as war propaganda and in promoting political correctness (Wells, 2014). It is an effective medium of communication for any age. The content that “Read Scripture Series: Deuteronomy” covers can be considered complex and elaborate. Yet this animation manages to delineate the book of Deuteronomy and describe its themes in a fairly understandable manner through words and imagery. This possesses tremendous potential for catechesis. For example, when dealing with lofty theological issues like the mystery of the Trinity, animation can be of great benefit.

“Nancy's Story: Boys Too”

The third experiment also was carried out in the Archdiocese of Port of Spain in 2018. In the study, the researchers used another animated film titled “Nancy's Story: Boys Too” to measure the moral understanding and explication of moral values by catechumens. The animation is nine minutes, it is of the cel animation type (cartoon style) and deals with the theme of child sexual abuse. The narrative followed a conventional form with recognisable and identifiable character behaviours. The synopsis of the story is that Nancy, a student of Guyana's Harmonie Hall Primary School, realises that one of her classmates, Stephen, has become withdrawn. Through genuine care and persistence, she helped Stephen to open up and seek help (he was being sexually abused by a relative). Although it presents one theme from the beginning to the end, it also presents several sub-themes. For instance, Nancy's persistence showed a level of care and concern for others, a sub-topic of the catechetical task of cultivating community living.

The experimental group was shown the animated film explaining the moral concepts, and the control group presented texts with concurrent audio teaching by a catechist, explaining the moral concepts. It was found that the knowledge retention by catechumens in the experimental group in which the moral concepts were explained using the animated film was high (70%), while the knowledge retentiveness by the catechumens in the control group in which text with concurrent audio teaching by a catechist was low (30%) (Lindsay, 2018).

This experiment, 'Nancy's Story: Boys Too' reveals how animation can be a more creative way of transmitting moral values to young people and helping them to speak about what they feel is not right in their lives and the lives of others. We live in a society where a conspiracy of silence has led to many immoral acts and crimes being perpetrated under the guise of covering people. Similarly, animation's mimetic substitution can be used in catechesis to present sensitive topics for discussion. We have observed from the third film that animation can be a more creative way of getting victims to speak while still achieving anonymity. Similarly, animation's mimetic substitution can be used in catechesis to present sensitive topics for discussion. The discussion generated from observations in the animation can also lead viewers to discuss the importance of journeying with others, the power of persistence, and the value of being open to the truth. These and many other sub-topics stem from this nine-minute production. It demonstrates animation's ability to raise awareness, introspection, and possibly transformation.

This animation uses mimetic substitution effectively to deal with sensitive yet important societal issues. One of the advantages of using animation in this way is that a real experience can be communicated without revealing the identity of those impacted. Anonymity is thus preserved. Additionally, this animation's musical component shapes attitudes towards moral behaviour. Packaging the lyrics this way makes them easy to remember since the tune serves as a mnemonic for recalling the lyrics. It can also help the message enter the listener's subconscious memory and the listeners learn specific values from it.

The Challenges of Using Animated Films for Catechesis in Nigeria

Young people are constantly fascinated by animated films. It helps them retain the lessons they have been taught because they get to use their imaginations and enjoy the opportunity to create. The creative potential of animation is enormous. Therefore, integrating the doctrinal content of catechesis into animation offers the possibility of tapping this potential to meet a range of educational objectives and evangelical missions (Pundit, 2018). No doubt, animated films offer great potential for catechesis, nevertheless, some challenges are limiting their effectiveness as a method of teaching catechesis in Nigeria. These challenges include:

1. **Fixation on Oral Methods:** Catechetical instruction in Nigeria often relies heavily on traditional oral communication, such as recitation of questions and answers. Even though pastoral instructions emphasise the importance of communication technologies, oral methods are still the most common.
2. **Slow Adoption of New Media:** The truth remains that there is recognition of the potential of new media (including animation) in Nigeria, but its adoption has been gradual. Despite Papal messages, pastoral decrees and Nigerian Bishops stressing the importance of

utilising communication technologies in teaching catechism, its implementation is still very low.

3. **Digital Divide:** Technologically, digital divide refers to the 'haves' and 'have nots.' Even though, new media is widely used and disseminated in today's world, many individuals and communities still lack access to digital technology, both in terms of hardware and software. For instance, rural communities and parishes in Nigeria may have little or no access to new media and internet facilities, which may impede the effective use of animation films in catechesis.
4. **Lack of Infrastructure and Skills:** Several issues, such as inadequate internet access, unstable power sources, low media literacy, and a lack of experience using multimedia devices, affect the use of animated films in catechesis. Also, the high cost associated with ICT tools hinders the widespread adoption of animated films in catechesis.
5. **Complex for Digital Immigrant Instructors:** Most catechism instructors are elderly and digital immigrants who find the use of new media and multimedia complex and difficult to engage with.
6. **Evaluation Gap:** Practical case studies evaluating the impact of animated films and multimedia in religious instruction are still very scarce in Nigeria. Researchers and scholars often prescribe the use of animation films without comprehensively assessing their effectiveness.

Way Forward

The aforementioned indicates that new media is still evolving when it comes to using animated films for catechesis in the Nigerian Church. Despite the Nigerian Bishops' constant emphasis on the value of digital media in evangelisation and catechesis, most Nigerian parishes and dioceses have not yet adopted or fully utilised these resources. This may be the reason why there is scarcely any practical case study in Nigeria where scholars have evaluated the use of multimedia in catechesis (Musa 2019). As such, the following strategies are recommended to enhance the conventional approach and make effective use of animated films in catechesis instruction in Nigeria.

1. The Nigerian Church should employ the use of animated films as a method for catechesis to enhance its catechetical programme. This means, that every parish should be encouraged to integrate animated films into the existing catechetical programmes and curricula for the growth and internalisation of the faith, especially for young people.
2. Every diocese ought to be prepared to contribute the necessary funds to guarantee the availability, sustainability, and upkeep of a range of media resources, such as big-screen TVs, DVD players, projectors, laptops, and computer systems, which will support religious educators in their efforts to teach the youth in their various parishes.

3. To effectively incorporate these diverse media resources and animated films into the teaching of catechism at different levels, dioceses should regularly host seminars and workshops for catechists, evangelisers, and teachers of the faith.
4. Dioceses should make available and regulate the Christian animated films that should be used for catechesis. Some of the animated films that can be used are 1. "The Adventures of Virgin Mary": An animated series exploring the life and virtues of the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus. 2. "The Prodigal Son": An animated short film retelling the parable of the prodigal son, highlighting themes of forgiveness and redemption. 3. "The Story of Creation": An animated film examining the Genesis creation story focus on God's creative and loving nature. 4. "The Life of Saint Patrick": An animated biopic on the life and missionary work of Saint Patrick, patron saint of Nigeria. 5. "The Beatitudes": An animated series exploring the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, focusing on the Beatitudes. 6. "The Lives of Saints (and that of specific Saints)" and similar works.
5. Dioceses should be willing to partner with local animators and storytellers to develop culturally relevant content and also establish a catechetical film library for parishes and schools.

Conclusion

This article is intended to assess the medium of animated films for use in catechetical formation in the Catholic Church in Nigeria. The primary objectives of catechesis have been delineated, along with the obstacles encountered in fulfilling these responsibilities within the specific locality. Based on the exploration of the medium of animation, this medium is indeed beneficial for the Church's catechetical programme. Its ability to communicate in multiple ways facilitates effective learning. It is also capable of stimulating discussion and prompting deep introspection. Animated films may facilitate the catechumens' development of consistency, uniformity and homogeneity of ideas as they work towards comprehending the essential ideas of the course. It can also offer the young Catholics a strategy to construct their knowledge and reinforce their understanding using visual aids such as comics, stories, and animation. This approach can evoke catechumens' interest and inclination in the discipline. One of its most effective features for catechesis is that of condensation, allowing a lot of information to be communicated in a short space of time. Conclusively, the method of using animated films in catechesis is not to completely replace or substitute the common method of reading, oral, and memorisation, rather it is set out to complement it, in order to make learning whole.

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