

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**  
**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY**  
**IN THE MORAL –RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF CHILDREN**  
**IN FOSTERING EVANGELIZATION**  
**IN KITAGWENDA PARISH**  
**IN LIGHT OF**  
**FAMILIARIS CONSORTIO**

**B.A PHIL (URBANIANA UNIVERSITY)**

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**REG NO. 2012/HD03/4656U**

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT**  
**FOR THE AWARD OF A MASTER’S DEGREE OF**  
**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**  
**KAMPALA**

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**MAY 2014**

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to find out the role of the family in the moral-religious education of children in fostering evangelization in Kitagwenda Parish. The future of the Church, country, any political system or society depends on both the parents and the young generation. Therefore, children should be given greater attention in the way they are brought up so that in future they can be a treasure both to the Church and society at large. The study had four specific objectives to achieve and these were: - To establish the rights and duties of parents regarding religious and moral upbringing of children in Christian families, to find out the role of the Church in the religious and moral upbringing of children, to establish the role of Christian families in evangelization, to find out the challenges facing Christian families in the religious moral upbringing of children and how they can be solved.

The word family comes from a Latin word '*Familia*' meaning a group of people affiliated by consanguinity, affinity and co-residence.

According to the Dictionary meaning, a family refers to a group consisting of one or two parents and their children. A gain it can mean a group consisting of one or two parents and their children and other relations (Oxford Dictionary, p 420). According to the New Catholic Encyclopedia (Thomas, 1967:825) a family is a social group or unit based on a procreative partnership of the sexes and normally constituted by the community of parents and children. This can be extended to include the entire group of persons living in one household under one head, that is, household.

My study majorly centered on children because they are both the future of the Church and society. For this research, therefore, the word "children" means all human beings below the age of 16. This is in reference with the Republic of Ugandan constitution of 1995, article 34, Clause

5. In line with the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child of September 1990, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier; this is also in concord with Can.97 §1.

The study was done in light of *Familiaris Consortio* (an Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John II on the family in the modern world). *Familiaris Consortio* (Latin roughly translated as "Of family partnership", but titled in English "On the role of the Christian Family in the Modern World") is a postsynodal Apostolic Exhortation written by Pope John Paul II and promulgated on November 22, 1981. It describes the official position of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the meaning and role of marriage and the family, and outlines challenges towards realizing that ideal. It defines marriage "as a personal union in which the spouses reciprocally give and receive." This Apostolic Exhortation appears to be the "*Magna Carta*" document (great document) in defending the dignity of marriage and family in the modern society. The Pope himself called it a *summa* of the Church's teaching on the family. I did my research in light of this document because I was offering a Religious and Theological studies course that falls under ecclesiastical studies and not mere secular social sciences.

*Moral-religious education:* It is the process of imparting religious and moral principles and values into an individual.

*Evangelization:* It is an attempt to proclaim Christ to those who do not know Him, of preaching, catechesis, of conferring Baptism and other sacraments (*Evangelii Nuntiandi no.17*). For this research therefore, evangelization shall mean the spreading of Good News of Christ to those who have heard it and to those who have not heard it before. In the context of this research, the term evangelization was used because it was found out that the family is the first and vital cell of

society, a domestic church and the cradle of faith. All vocations are nurtured in the families whereby some, like priesthood and religious life help in perpetuating the mission of Christ of evangelization (Mt.28:19-20, *Africae Munus no.46*). Hence, if the parents play their role very well of teaching and instilling religious and moral values to children, in future these young people will carry out evangelization in many forms, either as clerics and religious or as lay faithful. I can rightly say that the family is the seedbed of vocations that perpetuate the mission of Christ of evangelization.

As regards the moral religious education of children, the families nurture children in values and virtues like obedience, sincerity, generosity, patience, temperance, perseverance, industriousness, responsibility, charity, justice, modesty, prudence, humility and loyalty among others. More still, parents protect children's rights by listening to their views, taking them to school, providing basic needs and teaching them work.

Furthermore, families carry out the moral-religious education of children by praying together as a family, taking children to the Church to receive sacraments of Christian initiation, allowing them also to attend Sunday Masses/ Services and also allowing them to join church movements like Holy Missionary Childhood and others. In addition to this, they do this by taking children for Catechumenate courses at the Church and for other Church programmes for children.

To enable the researcher get data from the field, a number of research instruments were used, for example, questionnaire, observation and interview Guide. The research was conducted in Kitagwenda Parish with a population of approximately 50,000 baptized Christians. A survey design was used in data collection.

The Data was qualitatively and quantitatively analyzed and tabulated in chapter four. From the findings, 78% of the respondents held that parents in Kitagwenada parish fulfill their parental obligations. With this discovery therefore, the recommendations pointed out that the church and the parents should work together to bring up children to guarantee the future of the church and society. In conclusion, the researcher proposed that further research be conducted on how marriages in Uganda can be sustainable and minimize instant marriage breakups to guarantee a lasting family institution. Another issue to be looked at is how best religion can be taught and faith imparted in children born out of mixed marriages.