

## Efforts to Improve Understanding of the Meaning of Prayer through a Direct Practice Approach to Grade III Students of SD 008 Rambah Hilir

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**Abstract:** This research aims to improve the understanding of the meaning of prayer through a hands-on approach in grade III elementary school students. The method used in this study is Classroom Action Research, which is carried out in two cycles. The study subjects were 21 students in grade III of elementary school. The instruments used include observation sheets, interviews, and comprehension tests. The study results show that applying the hands-on approach can increase students' understanding of the meaning of prayer. In cycle I, students' comprehension increased by 20%, while in cycle II, it increased by 35%. These results show that the hands-on approach is effective in helping students understand the meaning of prayer more deeply.

**Keywords :** Prayer, Comprehension, Hands-on Practice, Classroom Action Research.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a mandatory worship that has a very important position in Islamic teachings. Apart from being a form of obedience of a servant to Allah SWT, prayer also functions as a means of character formation that is disciplined, patient, and has high spiritual awareness (Solihah et al., 2024). However, in practice, many children perform prayers without

understanding the meaning of the readings and movements. Prayer is often performed only as an obligation or daily routine without being accompanied by a deep understanding of the nature of the worship (Dweirj, 2023).

At the elementary education level, especially in grade III of elementary school, the introduction of prayer is often only focused on the aspects of memorization of

readings and the sequence of movements, while the understanding of the meaning behind it receives little attention. This can result in students not having emotional and spiritual attachment to prayer, so they tend to do it without solemnity (Abidin & Sirojuddin, 2024). This lack of understanding also has the potential to make them less istiqamah in carrying out prayers as they get older (Tria Paliban et al., 2024).

Theoretical learning methods are one of the main factors that cause students' lack of understanding of the meaning of prayer. In many cases, prayer teaching is more done through lectures, memorization, or simply demonstrations that do not involve the student's direct experience (Hastasari et al., 2022). This approach often makes students feel bored and find it difficult to appreciate the meaning of the worship they are doing (Özerk, 2020). Therefore, a more interactive and applicable learning method is needed to help students better understand and internalize the meaning of prayer.

The hands-on practice approach is one of the learning methods that is believed to increase students' understanding of the meaning of prayer. Through this approach, students not only learn in theory, but also directly practice prayer with assistance and guidance from teachers (Ginting et al.,

2022). With active involvement in the practice of worship, students can more easily understand the relationship between movements, readings, and the meanings contained in them. In addition, this direct experience can also foster awareness in students that prayer is not just an obligation, but also a spiritual need that brings tranquility and closeness to Allah SWT (Agustina & Tago, 2024).

Several studies have shown that practice-based learning methods can improve students' understanding and skills in various fields, including in religious education. Through hands-on practice, students can be more focused and involved in the learning process, making it easier for them to understand the concepts being taught (Sayed Munna & Kalam, 2021). In addition, this method can also increase students' motivation in learning because they feel more actively involved in the learning process. Several previous studies have shown that an interactive and hands-on practice-based learning approach can improve students' understanding of the field of religious education. Majid (2023), in their research, found that the demonstration method has a positive impact on improving students' understanding of the procedures and meaning of prayer. This is in line with Djamdjuri et al., (2022) research, which shows that students directly involved in

worship practice find it easier to understand worship's concept and meaning than students who only learn through lectures or memorization. Their study found that repetitive practice was effective in helping children better understand and remember readings and prayer movements. Other methods, such as discussions and hands-on practice, can increase students' interest in and understanding of the meaning of prayer.

Based on the study, the hands-on approach is one of the learning methods that is believed to increase students' understanding of the meaning of prayer. With this method, students not only learn theoretically, but also directly practice prayer with the guidance of the teacher. Through this hands-on experience, students can more easily understand the relationship between movement, reading, and the meaning contained in it. In addition, this method can also foster awareness that prayer is not just an obligation, but also a spiritual need that brings peace and closeness to Allah SWT. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of the hands-on approach in improving the understanding of the meaning of prayer in grade III elementary school students. Through this research, it is hoped that a more optimal learning strategy can be found in forming worship awareness from an early age, so that students not only understand the

procedures of prayer mechanically, but also be able to live and practice it with full awareness. Thus, learning to pray is not only part of the Islamic religious education curriculum, but also the foundation for the formation of students' character and morals in daily life.

## **II. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses the Classroom Action Research method which is carried out in two cycles. Each cycle consists of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection stages. The subject of the study is 21 third-grade elementary school students in the 2023 school year. Data collection techniques are carried out through observation, interviews, and comprehension tests. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively to determine the improvement of student understanding.

## **III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This research uses the Classroom Action Research approach, which aims to improve students' religious character through storytelling. This classroom action research is carried out in two cycles.

### **Cycle I**

#### **1) Planning**

At this stage, the researcher prepares a learning plan with a hands-on

practice approach. Teachers prepare learning media through video tutorials, teaching aids, comprehension rubrics, and test questions.

**2) Implementation**

The teacher explained the procedures and meaning of prayer, and then students were asked to practice movements and read prayers with direct guidance.

**3) Observation**

The observation results showed that some students still had difficulty understanding the meaning of each movement and reading in prayer. Some students lacked focus and still needed additional guidance. The results of observations, interviews, and comprehension tests can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. Results of observations, interviews, and comprehension tests in cycle I

No	Assessment Aspect	Number of Students Who Understand	Percentage (%)
1	Prayer movement	12	57%
2	Prayer readings	10	48%
3	Meaning of prayer	9	43%

**4) Reflection**

Based on the evaluation, the students' understanding reached 43%. However, some students still do not understand the meaning of prayer readings well. Therefore, improvements are needed in the next cycle, such as increasing the intensity of practice and providing group discussions.

In cycle I, students' understanding was still relatively low, with an average knowledge of around 49%. After reflection, it was found that students still needed more practical practice and an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the readings in prayer..

**Cycle II**

**1) Planning**

Based on the reflection of cycle I, the researcher added learning strategies by providing more frequent practice exercises, group discussions, and repeated demonstration methods to deepen understanding.

**2) Implementation**

Teachers provide material reinforcement through repeated practice with intensive guidance. Students are invited to discuss the

meaning of movements and readings in prayer so that they better understand the essence.

**3) Observation**

The observation results showed an increase in student involvement in learning. Students seem more confident and able better to explain the meaning of movements and recitation in prayer. The results of observations, interviews, and comprehension tests can be seen in the following table.

Table 2. Results of observations, interviews, and comprehension tests in cycle II

No	Assessment Aspect	Number of Students Who Understand	Percentage (%)
1	Prayer movement	18	86%
2	Prayer readings	16	76%
3	Meaning of prayer	15	71%

**4) Reflection**

The test results showed a 35% increase in understanding compared to before the action. Most students already understand the meaning of prayer well and can apply it more solemnly.

The study's results show that the direct practice approach has a positive impact on

grade III students of SD Rambah Hulu's understanding of the meaning of prayer. In summary, the following table shows the differences in learning in cycles 1 and 2.

Table 3. Comparison of cycles I and II

Assessment aspect	Percentage of cycle I (%)	Percentage of cycle II (%)	Increase (%)
Prayer movement	57%	86%	29%
Prayer readings	48%	76%	28%
Meaning of prayer	43%	71%	28%

The comparison results showed a significant increase in student understanding from cycle I to cycle II, with an average increase of 28-29%. This indicates that the hands-on approach effectively improves students' understanding of the meaning of prayer. In cycle I, many obstacles still cause suboptimal learning outcomes. Most students have difficulty understanding the readings and meanings of prayers because they are still used to more theoretical learning methods. In addition, the lack of direct practice makes it difficult for students to associate prayer readings with their meaning. In cycle II, improvements were made by adding more frequent practice sessions, group guidance, and reflection after prayer practice.

This approach has been proven to significantly improve students'

understanding, as seen in the comparison table of cycles I and II results. Students become more confident in memorizing prayer readings and understanding their meaning. The most significant improvement occurred in understanding prayer movements (29%), which showed that students could remember and carry out prayer movements correctly with repeated practice. Reading and meaning of prayer have also experienced a significant increase, namely 28% each. This confirms that students find it easier to understand the concept and meaning of worship if they are directly involved in practice, not just through theory. In addition, changes in student behavior are also visible. At first, some students show ignorance or lack of motivation to understand the meaning of prayer. However, after the second cycle, they became more enthusiastic about prayer and began to understand the relationship between worship and its spiritual values. This shows that practice-based learning not only improves the cognitive aspects of students but also forms better attitudes and worship habits.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Based on the study's results, the direct practice approach effectively increases the understanding of the meaning of prayer in grade III elementary school students in two cycles. This approach makes students more active in learning and understanding prayer as a ritual and worship that has a deep meaning. Therefore, teachers should adopt this approach in Islamic religious learning in elementary schools.

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