

The Influence of Storytelling Methods in Improving the Religious Character of SDN 015 Rambah Students

Nismar¹, Jasrizal², Supriyadi³

¹ SD Negeri 015 Rambah, Riau, Indonesia

² SMP Islam Kepenuhan, Riau

³SMP Negeri 5 Satu Atap Kunto Darussalam, Riau, Indonesia

Email : Nismar55@guru.belajar.id, Xsist1984@gmail.com, Aupriyadi86@gmail.com

Abstract, Students often consider religious learning in elementary schools (SD) less attractive, so religious values are difficult to understand and internalize properly. One approach that can be used to overcome this problem is the storytelling method, which is considered more effective in conveying moral messages and religious values. This study aims to analyze the influence of storytelling methods on improving elementary school students' religious character. This study uses the Classroom Action Research method, which is carried out in two cycles. Storytelling is applied by delivering stories of prophets and inspirational Islamic figures as a learning medium. Data were collected through observation sheets to measure students' responses and understanding of religious values, as well as students' reflections to see the extent of changes in attitudes after applying the storytelling method. After using storytelling, the study results show a significant increase in students' understanding and application of religious values. Success indicators can be seen from increased student participation in discussions, knowledge of moral values in stories, and behavioral changes in a more positive direction in daily life. Thus, it can be concluded that the storytelling method effectively improves the religious character of elementary school students and can be a more interesting and meaningful learning alternative in religious education.

Keywords : Storytelling, Religious character, Religious education, Active learning.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Religious education in elementary schools (SD) is very important in shaping students' religious character from an early

age. This education aims to transfer knowledge about religious teachings and form attitudes and behaviors based on religious values (Helen Suhasri, 2024). However, religious learning at the

elementary level often faces various obstacles. One of the main challenges is the low interest of students in religious materials because the delivery method tends to be monotonous and less interesting (Destri M. Nur, 2025). The conventional lecture-based approach often makes students passive in receiving material, so their understanding of religious values becomes limited and difficult to internalize daily (Murdani et al., 2025).

Children are more interested in interactive and fun media in the modern era filled with various digital distractions. Therefore, innovations are needed in religious learning methods to be more effective and attractive to students. One of the methods that is believed to be able to increase understanding and appreciation of religious values is storytelling (Holidi et al., 2021). This method is an approach that has been known for a long time and has proven to be effective in conveying moral messages and life values through inspiring and meaningful stories (Tamyis, 2022). Storytelling in religious education can be done by telling the stories of prophets, companions, and Islamic figures who have an example in living life (Ulfah Arini et al., 2022). With this method, students can more easily understand religious values contextually so that they not only memorize religious teachings but also be able to live

and apply them in their daily lives. In addition, storytelling can build students' imagination, increase their emotional involvement, and foster a love for religious values (Novia Damayanti, 2024).

The storytelling method also has advantages in improving students' memory. In the learning process, stories conveyed interestingly will be easier to remember than simply conveying theories or concepts in the abstract (Napitupulu et al., 2022). By listening to stories with moral messages and religious values, students will be more motivated to imitate the good behavior of the characters. In addition, stories told repeatedly will help strengthen students' understanding of religious teachings so they can apply these values in their daily lives (Rohmatul Azizah & Nicky Estu Putu Muchtar, 2023). In addition to the cognitive aspect, storytelling also plays a role in developing students' affective and psychomotor aspects. In the affective aspect, storytelling can build students' empathy and emotional awareness of the moral values contained in the story. Students will more easily understand concepts such as honesty, patience, and kindness through real-life examples in stories. Meanwhile, from a psychomotor aspect, storytelling can encourage students to behave according to their learning values. For example, after listening to the story of

the Prophet Muhammad's honesty, students can be more motivated to be honest in their daily lives.

Studies have shown that storytelling can improve various aspects of education, such as concept understanding, student engagement, and character reinforcement. In the context of religious education, this method is expected to be able to overcome boredom in learning and foster religious awareness more effectively. For example, research conducted by (Latif, 2021) shows that students who learn with the storytelling method are more active in discussing and understanding religious values faster than the lecture method. In addition, a study (Junaidi, 2024) found that students accustomed to hearing religious stories improved their manners and honesty in the school environment. This study's results prove that storytelling improves students' understanding of religious concepts and shapes their character in real life and daily life. By delivering interesting and interactive stories, students are more encouraged to actively participate in discussions and reflect on the moral values contained in the stories. Research conducted by (Putri, 2024) also supports this finding, where in classes that apply the storytelling method, students are more enthusiastic and show higher involvement in religious lessons. In addition, students'

reflections after listening to the stories showed that they were more likely to connect religious values with their personal experiences, making learning more meaningful (Tri Setyorini et al., 2025).

This research was conducted to examine in depth the influence of the storytelling method in improving the religious character of elementary school students. Using the Classroom Action Research approach, this study will observe how storytelling can affect the understanding and application of religious values in students' lives. The results of this research can contribute to the development of more innovative and meaningful religious learning methods and be a reference for educators in improving the quality of religious learning in elementary schools.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a Classroom Action Research approach that aims to improve students' religious character through storytelling. The subjects of this study are 21 students of SD Negeri 08 Rambah Hilir. Classroom Action Research is carried out in two cycles, where each cycle consists of four main stages, namely:

1) Planning.

At this stage, the researcher develops a learning plan that integrates the storytelling method into teaching Islamic religious education. Planning includes selecting stories of prophets and inspirational Islamic figures with high spiritual value, preparing scenarios for telling stories, and creating research instruments such as observation sheets and student reflections.

2). Action.

This stage is the implementation of the storytelling method in the learning process. Teachers deliver selected stories with engaging and interactive techniques, such as using varied voice intonation, facial expressions, and body gestures to increase student engagement. In addition, students are encouraged to actively participate by discussing the moral and religious values in the stories.

3) Observation.

During the learning process, the researcher observed student involvement in learning. Observation instruments were used to assess students' responses, levels of participation in discussions, and their understanding of the moral messages and religious values in the stories. This observation data is collected through

observation sheets that have been prepared in advance.

4) Reflection.

At this stage, the observation results were analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' religious character. Reflection was also carried out by asking students to fill out a reflection sheet to measure the extent of their understanding and change in attitude after listening to the story. The results of this reflection are used as the basis for improvement for the next cycle.

2.1 Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study consist of:

1) Observation Sheet.

It measures students' involvement in learning, their response to storytelling, and their participation in discussions about religious values.

2) Student Reflection.

This instrument assesses students' understanding of the religious values conveyed in the story and observes changes in their attitudes and behaviors after the storytelling method is applied..

2.2 Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed in a qualitative descriptive manner. The results of student observation and reflection were compared between the first and second cycles to see an increase in students' understanding and application of religious values. The success of the storytelling method is measured by increased student participation, knowledge of moral values, and more positive behavior changes in daily life. With this approach, this study can provide a clearer picture of storytelling's effectiveness in improving elementary school students' religious character.

2.3 Success Indicators

The success of the application of the storytelling method in improving the religious character of elementary school students is measured through:

- 1) Student involvement in learning (participation in discussions, enthusiasm in listening to stories).
- 2) Understanding religious values (students' ability to explain the story's moral message).
- 3) Changes in students' attitudes and behaviors (applying religious values in daily life).

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 research is carried out in two cycles.

3.1 Cycle 1

Stage 1: Planning

- 1) Arrange the story material by choosing the story of Prophet Ibrahim and his steadfastness in faith.
- 2) Create observation guidelines to measure student engagement and understanding.
- 3) Compile a student reflection sheet to find out their understanding and change in attitude.

Stage 2: Implementation

- 1) The teacher conveys the story through storytelling, interesting expressions, and intonation.
- 2) Students listen to stories and are invited to discuss the religious values contained in the stories.

Stage 3: Observation

The following table shows the results of the observation of student involvement and understanding in cycle one..

Table 1. Results of observation of student involvement in storytelling learning in cycle 1

No Indicators	Number of Students (n=21)	Percentage (%)
1 Students listen to stories with enthusiasm	13	62%
2 Students actively ask questions and discuss	8	38%
3 Students can explain the moral message of the story	9	43%
4 Students show a change in attitude in daily life	7	33%

Stage 4: Reflection

- 1) Some students are still passive in discussions.
- 2) Students' understanding of religious values still needs to be improved.
- 3) More interactive storytelling techniques and supporting media (images/videos) are needed in cycle 2.

3.2 Cycle 2

Stage 1: Planning

- 1) Using additional media such as illustrations/pictures of characters to attract students' attention.
- 2) Choosing the story of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH about honesty and compassion.
- 3) Arrange guide questions to encourage students to participate more in discussions.

Stage 2: Implementation

- 1) The teacher conveys the story with a more interactive storytelling method.
- 2) Using images as visual aids to attract students' attention.
- 3) Encourage students to relate the value of the story to their daily experiences.

Stage 3: Observation

Results of observation of student involvement and understanding in cycle 2:

Table 2. Results of observation of student involvement in storytelling learning in cycle 2

No Indicators	Number of Students (n=21)	Percentage (%)
1 Students listen to stories with enthusiasm	19	91%
2 Students actively ask questions and discuss	16	76%
3 Students can explain the	18	86%

No Indicators	Number of Students (n=21)	Percentage (%)
moral message of the story		
4 Students show a change in attitude in daily life	15	71%

Stage 4: Reflection

- 1) Student participation increased after the use of supporting media.
- 2) The understanding of religious values has increased significantly.
- 3) Students are more enthusiastic in discussions and can better relate stories to real life.
- 4) It can be concluded that the storytelling method is effective in improving the religious character of elementary school students.

3.3 Discussion

Based on the results of classroom action research conducted in two cycles, the storytelling method has been proven to positively impact student engagement, understanding religious values, and changing their attitudes in daily life. Here is a discussion of each cycle and a comparative analysis between the two:

3.3.1. Cycle 1: Initial Implementation and Challenges

In the first cycle, the storytelling method was applied by telling the story of Prophet Ibrahim and the steadfastness of his faith. The observation showed that most students were interested in the stories conveyed, but many were still passive in the discussion.

- 1) Student Engagement: As many as 62% of students showed enthusiasm in listening to stories, but only 38% actively asked questions and discussed. This shows that although the storytelling method attracts students' attention, the delivery technique still needs to be improved to make it more interactive.
- 2) Understanding Religious Values: As many as 43% of students can explain moral values in stories well, while the rest struggle to relate stories to real life.
- 3) Change in attitude: Only 33% of students showed a change in positive attitude after learning. This indicates that despite increasing understanding, the internalization of religious values still needs to be strengthened.

3.3.2 Cycle 1 Analysis:

- 1) Student involvement in learning is still not optimal.

- 2) The delivery of the story is still one-way, so interaction is limited.
- 3) Additional strategies are needed to increase student participation and understanding.

3.3.3. Cycle 2: Improvement and Improvement of Results

Based on the reflection of the first cycle, several improvement strategies are applied to the second cycle, such as:

- 1) Use of supporting media (pictures and illustrations of characters in the story).
- 2) More interactive storytelling techniques (e.g. with more varied expressions and more questions and answers).
- 3) The selection of stories that are more relevant to students' lives, namely the story of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) about honesty and compassion.

The results of observations in the second cycle showed significant improvements in all indicators:

1) Student Engagement:

Student participation increased rapidly, with 91% of students showing enthusiasm in listening to

stories and 76% actively asking questions and discussing. This increase is due to additional media and interactive strategies that encourage students to be more engaged in learning.

2) Understanding Religious Values:

In the second cycle, 86% of students could explain the story's moral message, compared to 43% in the first cycle. This shows that a more interactive storytelling method helps students better understand religious values.

3) Change in attitude:

The number of students who showed a change in positive attitudes increased to 71%, meaning most students began to internalize religious values in daily life.

3.3.4 Cycle 2 Analysis:

- 1) More interactive storytelling strategies and the use of visual media have been proven to increase students' attention and understanding.
- 2) Discussion encourages students to think critically and relate stories to their lives.

- 3) Increased understanding of religious values leads more students to apply these values daily.

3.3.5 Comparison of Cycle 1 and Cycle 2

This research was conducted in two cycles to test the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' religious character. The results of observation and reflection showed a significant increase from cycle 1 to cycle two after improving learning strategies. The results of the comparative analysis of the two cycles can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of cycle 1 and cycle 2 on storytelling learning

Indikator	Cycle 1 (%)	Cycle 2 (%)	Increase (%)
Students listen to stories with enthusiasm	62%	91%	+29%
Students actively ask questions and discuss	38%	76%	+34%
Students can explain the moral message of the story	43%	86%	+43%
Students show a change in attitude in daily life	33%	71%	+28%

The table above shows that all indicators have experienced considerable improvement, showing that the storytelling method with interactive techniques and visual media is more effective in increasing student engagement, understanding of religious values, and changing their attitudes in daily life.hari .

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussions from both cycles, the storytelling method is an effective learning strategy for improving the religious character of elementary school students. Applying more interactive techniques and supporting media play a major role in increasing student participation and their understanding of religious values. The results of this study show that storytelling is not only an interesting method but also able to help students internalize moral and spiritual values more deeply. Therefore, this method can be an innovative learning alternative in religious education in elementary schools.

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