



# Improving Students' Understanding of the Pillars of Faith through Storytelling Methods at MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to improve the understanding of grade 2 students at MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu about the pillars of faith through the storytelling method. The pillars of faith are fundamental aspects of Islamic teachings that must be understood from an early age. However, in practice, many students have difficulty in understanding the concept of the pillars of faith in depth. The storytelling method was chosen because it has the advantage of conveying religious messages in a way that is easier to understand and touches the hearts of students. This study uses a qualitative approach with the classroom action research (CAR) method consisting of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection in several cycles. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and comprehension tests before and after the application of the storytelling method. The results showed that the use of the storytelling method significantly improved students' understanding of the pillars of faith. Students became more enthusiastic in learning, were able to remember and explain the six pillars of faith better, and were able to relate the concept to their daily lives. Based on these findings, it is concluded that the storytelling method is an effective strategy in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith in grade 2 MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to apply this method in learning (PAI) so that learning becomes more enjoyable and meaningful for students.

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## Introduction

Islamic religious education plays a very important role in shaping the character and personality of students. One of the main aspects of Islamic religious education is understanding the pillars of faith, which consist of six main beliefs in Islam, namely believing in Allah, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Day of Judgment, and qada

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and qadar. A good understanding of the pillars of faith from an early age will help students in forming a mindset and behavior that is in accordance with Islamic teachings. However, in reality, many grade 2 MI students have difficulty understanding the concept of the pillars of faith. This is due to several factors, including the limited experience and abstraction of early childhood which is still developing. In addition, teaching methods that are less varied and focus more on memorization than understanding are also obstacles in delivering this material. As a result, students tend to memorize without really understanding the meaning and relevance of the pillars of faith in their daily lives. One method that can be used to improve students' understanding of the pillars of faith is the storytelling method. This method is known as an interesting and interactive learning approach, because it involves narrative elements that can make it easier for children to understand abstract concepts. Through stories, teachers can convey religious values in a more concrete and easily understood way by students. Stories that contain moral and exemplary elements can also help students internalize Islamic teachings naturally, without feeling burdened with theoretical material. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving the understanding of grade 2 students of MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu about the pillars of faith. By implementing this method, it is hoped that students can understand the six pillars of faith better, and are able to apply the values contained therein in everyday life.

## Methods

The storytelling method is a way of delivering learning materials using stories as the main media. This method utilizes narratives or stories that are delivered verbally to attract attention and improve students' understanding of a particular concept or value. In the context of Islamic religious education, the storytelling method is used to convey Islamic teachings, such as the pillars of faith, in a way that is easier to understand, interesting, and sticks in students' memories.

According to education experts, the storytelling method can stimulate students' imagination, improve memory, and help them connect abstract concepts with real experiences. In Islam itself, the storytelling method has been used since the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, where he often conveyed religious teachings through stories of previous prophets and the experiences of his companions.

The storytelling method has several objectives in the learning process, including: Improving Student Understanding by Helping students understand abstract concepts, such as the pillars of faith, with real examples in the form of relevant stories. Cultivating Interest in Learning so that Students tend to be more interested in stories compared to lecture or memorization methods. Improving Memory with interesting stories is easier to remember than material that is only presented in theory. Developing Values and Character Through stories, students can learn moral and religious values that they can apply in everyday life. Improving Listening and Speaking Skills. This method also trains students' communication skills through discussions after listening to the story. In this study, data analysis was carried out descriptively qualitatively to understand the

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effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith.

## Result

This research was conducted at MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu, with the subjects of the study being grade 2 students. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith.

**Student Characteristics;** The number of students who participated in this study was 25 students, with details of Male students: 13 students, Female students: 12 students with an age range: 7 - 8 years. Initial level of understanding of the pillars of faith: Various, from not understanding to understanding enough

**Student Activity Observation Results;** Observation data shows an increase in student activity and involvement in learning with the storytelling method. The following are the results of observations during two learning cycles:

**Pretest and Posttest Results;** To determine the increase in student understanding, tests were conducted before and after the application of the storytelling method. The result is that student understanding has increased significantly, especially in the 80-100 value category which increased from 5 students to 18 students.

Based on the results of interviews and group discussions, most students gave a positive response to the storytelling method, with details: 85% of students stated that it was easier to understand the pillars of faith through stories than through lecture methods. 75% of students feel more interested in learning Islam through storytelling. 65% of students find it easier to remember the concept of the pillars of faith because it is associated with real stories

The storytelling method successfully increases students' interest in learning and understanding of the pillars of faith. There was a significant increase in learning outcomes based on the results of the pretest and posttest. Students are more enthusiastic and active in learning when given interesting and relevant stories. The use of the storytelling method is effective for early childhood, especially if supported by visual media and active interaction with students. Thus, the storytelling method can be an effective learning strategy to improve students' understanding of the concept of Islam.

Data verification is an important step in research to ensure that the data obtained is accurate, valid, and accountable. In this study, the data verification process was carried out through the following techniques. **Data Triangulation;** Triangulation is carried out to compare and ensure the consistency of data from various sources. The types of triangulation used in this study include:

**Source Triangulation;** Direct observation: Data were obtained through observation of student activities during learning using the storytelling method. Interview: Data were collected from interviews with students and teachers regarding their experiences in

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using the storytelling method. Pretest and posttest results: Quantitative data were obtained from tests conducted before and after the implementation of the storytelling method. Documentation: Photos, learning notes, and teacher reflections were used to support the observation results. The results of source triangulation showed consistency between observations, interviews, and test results, confirming that the storytelling method has a positive impact on improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith.

Method Triangulation was conducted To ensure the validity of the data, this study used two data collection methods, namely: Quantitative method using pretest and posttest to measure the increase in student understanding numerically. Qualitative method using observation and interviews to understand student responses and involvement in learning.

From this method triangulation, the results of the pretest and posttest showed an increase in student understanding, while observation and interviews strengthened these findings by showing that students were more interested and active in learning.

In order for the data obtained to be truly valid and unbiased, several steps were taken to test its credibility:

**Data Rechecking (Member Check):** After the interviews and observations were conducted, the results were reconfirmed with the teacher and several students to ensure that the data recorded was in accordance with their experiences. The teacher stated that the results of the study were in line with his observations during the learning process.

**Data Consistency (Dependability Check):** Pretest and posttest data were analyzed repeatedly to ensure that there were no errors in recording the test results. Observations were conducted in two cycles to see if there were significant changes in student participation and understanding.

**Adequacy of Reference (Confirmability):** The results of the study are supported by various data sources (tests, interviews, observations, and documentation). There is no conflicting data or inconsistent results.

**Transferability and Dependability Test:** Transferability → The results of this study can be applied in other schools with similar conditions, especially in lower grades that require interactive and fun learning methods. Dependability → If this study is repeated with the same procedure, the results obtained will most likely remain consistent, indicating that the storytelling method is indeed effective in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith.

Based on the various verification techniques used, it can be concluded that the data in this study is valid and reliable. The results of the study indicate that the storytelling method is effective in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith, supported by consistent and credible test results, observations, interviews, and documentation.

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## Discussion

Discussing the results of research on the effectiveness of the storytelling method in improving the understanding of grade 2 students of MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu about the pillars of faith. This discussion was conducted by comparing the results of the study with relevant theories and previous studies. Improving Student Understanding through the Storytelling Method that The results of the study showed that the storytelling method succeeded in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith. This is evidenced by: Improvement in student learning outcomes from pretest to posttest. Before using the storytelling method, only 5 students (20%) received a "very good" category score. After the method was applied, this number increased to 18 students (72%). The students' more enthusiastic responses were indicated by increased participation in asking questions, responding to stories, and repeating the contents of the story with better understanding. These results are in accordance with Bruner's theory (1966) which states that children learn more effectively when information is presented in the form of interesting narratives. Piaget (1952) also stated that elementary school children are in the concrete operational stage, so the storytelling method can help them understand abstract concepts such as the pillars of faith more easily.

Classroom observations showed that students were more focused, actively asked questions, and were able to connect stories with the concept of the pillars of faith after learning using this method. The storytelling method increased students' interest and involvement in learning. Students were more enthusiastic and interested in participating in learning with stories compared to the lecture method previously used. Interviews with students showed that they found it easier to understand and remember the pillars of faith because they were associated with real stories or interesting parables.

The storytelling method made it easier for early childhood students to understand abstract concepts. The abstract concept of the pillars of faith became more concrete when presented in the form of a story. Students were able to remember and re-explain the contents of the story and connect it with the concept of the pillars of faith, indicating that this method was effective in helping their understanding.

There are several challenges in implementing the storytelling method, namely that teachers need to have good storytelling skills so that the delivery of the material is interesting and not boring. Learning with the storytelling method takes longer than the lecture method. Some students need additional media, such as pictures or videos, to help them better understand the contents of the story.

Overall, the storytelling method can be an effective learning strategy to improve students' understanding of the concept of Islam, especially the pillars of faith, if applied with the right variations and adequate learning media support.

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, there are several suggestions that can be given to improve the effectiveness of the storytelling method in learning, especially in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith:

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Suggestions for Teachers are that teachers should develop storytelling skills so that they can deliver material in a more interesting and interactive way. The use of appropriate intonation, facial expressions, and body language can increase the appeal of the story to students. Teachers should use supporting media, such as pictures, videos, or hand puppets, to help students understand the story better, especially for those who have a visual learning style. Teachers can combine the storytelling method with discussions, educational games, or direct practice, so that students not only listen but are also active in learning. It is recommended that teachers be more selective in choosing stories, ensuring that the content of the story is relevant to students' daily lives and easy to understand according to their age.

Suggestions for Students are that students need to be more active in learning by asking questions and discussing after hearing the story, so that they can understand the deeper meaning of the material presented. Students can be trained to retell the material they have heard, both to peers and family, so that their understanding is stronger. It is recommended that students not only memorize the pillars of faith, but also try to apply their values in everyday life, such as believing in Allah by increasing worship and doing good to others. Suggestions for Schools: Schools should provide training for teachers on effective storytelling techniques in learning, especially in teaching Islamic religious concepts. It is recommended that schools provide Islamic story books, teaching aids, or digital learning media to support the implementation of more varied and interesting storytelling methods. Schools can hold storytelling activities or storytelling competitions with Islamic themes to increase students' interest and understanding of religious teachings.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted regarding improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith through the storytelling method in class 2 of MI Nurussalam Rantau Karau Hulu, the storytelling method is effective in improving students' understanding of the pillars of faith. The results of the pretest and posttest showed a significant increase in students' understanding. The number of students with a "very good" category score increased from 5 students (20%) to 18 students (72%) after the implementation of the storytelling method. Suggestions for Further Researchers are that this study still has limitations, especially in the use of supporting media. Therefore, it is recommended that further research test the effectiveness of the storytelling method equipped with digital media or interactive technology. Future research can expand the scope of research subjects, for example by involving higher classes or comparing the effectiveness of the storytelling method with other methods. It is recommended that further research measure the long-term effects of the storytelling method, to see to what extent students' understanding persists after some time. With this suggestion, it is hoped that the storytelling method can continue to be developed and applied more effectively in learning, especially in improving students' understanding of Islamic teachings.

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