



## STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER THROUGH RELIGIOUS PRACTICES IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper describes the strengthening of students' religious character education through religious practices at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School. The research uses qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. The data collection methods used are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used in the research is data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Data validity testing used in the research is triangulation techniques, namely source and technique triangulations. The research results entitled Strengthening Students' Religious Character through Religious Practices in Elementary School, which consist of religious activities, are the 7S culture, praying before and after learning, reciting hadiths and daily prayers, reciting the Quran, reading asmaul husna, istighosah, praying in congregations (duha, zuhur, asar, Friday), tarjamah, tahfidz Al-Qur'an, and PHBI. The impact of religious practices instilled in Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School indicates a significant impact for each student, which can increase students' understanding and a better understanding related to the benefits of the positive activities they do and will be applied by them in their daily activities in accordance with the Shariah of Islam.*

**Keywords:** religious character, religious practices, elementary students

## PENGUATAN KARAKTER RELIGIUS SISWA MELALUI PEMBIASAAN KEAGAMAAN DI SEKOLAH DASAR

### ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mendeskripsikan penguatan pendidikan karakter religius siswa melalui pembiasaan keagamaan di SD Al-Islam Plus Krian. Penelitian menggunakan jenis penelitian kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Metode pengumpulan data yang digunakan adalah observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data yang digunakan dalam penelitian adalah reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Pengujian keabsahan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian adalah teknik triangulasi, yaitu triangulasi sumber dan triangulasi teknik. Hasil penelitian yang berjudul penguatan karakter religius siswa melalui pembiasaan keagamaan di sekolah dasar yang terdiri dari kegiatan keagamaan yaitu budaya 7S, berdoa sebelum dan sesudah belajar, melafadzkan hadist dan doa harian, mengaji, membaca asmaul husna, istighosah, salat berjamaah (duha, zuhur, asar, Jum'at), tarjamah, tahfidz Al-Qur'an, dan PHBI. Dampak dari pembiasaan keagamaan yang ditanamkan di SD Al-Islam Plus Krian memberikan dampak yang sangat signifikan bagi setiap siswa, yaitu dapat meningkatkan pemahaman dalam diri siswa dan lebih memahami manfaat dari kegiatan-kegiatan positif yang dilakukannya dan akan diaplikasikan oleh siswa dalam kegiatan kesehariannya yang sesuai dengan ajaran agama Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** karakter religius, pembiasaan keagamaan, siswa sekolah dasar

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### INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important needs for human life. According to the provisions of Law Number 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort in the process of mentoring and learning to ensure that each individual becomes an independent, responsible, creative, knowledgeable, healthy and noble human being (Shinta & Ain, 2021). Indonesian

education not only requires teachers to transfer their knowledge but also to be able to shape students' characters. Character building can be done through character education which aims to realize good habits, so that students have positive morals and attitudes that are integrated into their personalities.

Character is what a person thinks, says, and does in everyday life and becomes a habit (Rahmawati & Muhroji, 2022). The three basic components of character are knowing goodness, loving goodness, and acting morally. Character education is one of the efforts to direct people's attitudes towards the prevailing standards because goodness has the essence of good nature (R. S. P. Fauziah, Maryani, & Wulandari, 2021). Character is already owned by every individual, but it cannot develop by itself but is obtained from the desire and encouragement of others. Character owned by individuals can be influenced by various positive and negative things from advances in technology and information. Therefore, to avoid negative things, it is necessary to strengthen character education.

The character strengthening program is one of the government's efforts to increase the knowledge and awareness of school members in an effort to improve moral and moral education (H. U. Fauziah, Suhartono, & Pudjantoro, 2021). Character strengthening is very relevant in overcoming the problem of moral crisis in students. One of the problems in the world of education is the case of sexual abuse of students committed by fellow students. As an example from Kompas.com news by David Oliver on September 20, 2022 there was a case of sexual abuse of elementary school students in the Nganjuk Regency area. A fifth grade student with the initials MB (11) molested a first grade elementary school student with the initials MA (7) where previously the victim was kicked in the head until she fainted and then the molestation took place. Developing students' religious character at school can also help them grow into people who believe and fear God Almighty, who carry out their obligations according to their religion.

One of the main characters that must be instilled in children from an early age to prevent problems that damage the morals of the nation's children is religious character. Religious character values include human relationships with God, humans with each other, and humans with the surrounding environment which are shown in the behavior of loving and maintaining the integrity of His creation. Religious character is

very important because it can affect other characters and the foundation for humans in behavior. Religion is an attitude and behavior that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion that is adopted, tolerant of the implementation of other religious worship and living in harmony with adherents of other religions (Kemdikbud, 2019). Character strengthening is implemented at the elementary school level and continues to the secondary school level so that the character values of students in Indonesia can be strengthened. Through strengthening religious character, it is hoped that various problems of moral crisis in students can be resolved gradually.

Strengthening religious character can be applied based on school culture which will shape students' character in a better and positive direction. School culture is a characteristic of a school that is recognized through the attitudes, habits, and behaviors displayed by all school members (Johannes, Ritiauw, & Abidin, 2020). The process of strengthening religious character based on school culture can be implemented using various methods and strategies. Each school has its own way of implementing it which is adjusted to school policy. But it still has the same goal, which is to form good character in students (Kurniawan, 2021). One method that can be applied is through habituation, especially in an effort to instill religious principles in students.

Habituation is a teaching strategy that familiarizes students with positive activities so that their daily lives will reflect these actions or things (Ayni, Azizah, & Pribadi, 2022). The habituation method can help students become polite and well-mannered individuals, both in the school environment, family and society. To develop students' personalities, it is very important to instill in them good habits that are in line with their soul growth. This will help students develop certain attitudes that will become stronger and clearer over time and eventually remain stable because they have been embedded in their personality.

The religious habituation method is slowly becoming part of the school's unique culture. This is in accordance with the main purpose of habituation, which is to help students

deliberately practice and carry out regularly the useful things they have learned so that they get used to it. Students will always develop and maintain habits that are repeated every day, making it easy for them to do so without being told. Since repetitive behavior will have a beneficial effect on students, they will develop a school culture that is easy to implement and can help them develop the required character. Everyone in the school environment must implement and maintain the desired school culture (Angdreani, Warsah, & Karolina, 2020). Examples of habits carried out by students, such as reading prayers before and after learning, memorizing short chapters, praying in congregation, and speaking politely to both teachers and peers.

Strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation has been carried out by several previous studies. In research conducted by Rahma Nurbaiti, Susiati Alwy, and Imam Taulabi entitled "*Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa Melalui Pembiasaan Aktivitas Keagamaan*". The results in this study indicate the formation of students' religious character through habituation of religious activities carried out at MI Negeri 2 Bandar Kidul, which include joint prayers before and after learning, the implementation of dhuha and dhuhur prayers in congregation, reading juz 'amma, asmaul husna, istighasah, infaq, 5S habituation, religious extracurricular activities, and Islamic holiday commemoration activities (Nurbaiti, Alwy, & Taulabi, 2020). The difference between this research and this research is the location of the research. The research was conducted in Madrasah Ibtida'iyah, while this research was conducted in Elementary School.

Research conducted by Intan Nuraeni and Erna Labudasari entitled "*Pengaruh Budaya Sekolah Terhadap Karakter Religius Siswa di SD IT Noor Hidayah*". The results in the study showed the influence of school culture on student character by 29.2%. The religious culture that has been instilled in schools includes reading prayers together in class, reading short chapters of the Qur'an, and praying in congregation. The school environment can certainly have a good impact on students' religious attitudes, because its

implementation is carried out continuously (Nuraeni & Labudasari, 2021). The difference between this research and this research is the type of research. The study used quantitative survey research with a quantitative approach. Whereas in this study, the type of research used is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach.

Based on the results of preobservation conducted at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School in November 2022, it is stated that at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School, the implementation of strengthening the religious character of students through religious habituation such as congregational prayer, reading Al-Qur'an verses, and others is carried out programmatically. This is the basis for conducting research related to strengthening character through religious habituation so that it can form religious character in students. From the explanation of the background and results, this study has several problem formulations, namely: (1) How is the strengthening of students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools; (2) How are the obstacles in strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools; (3) How are the solutions in overcoming obstacles in strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools. The objectives of this study are to: (1) Knowing the strengthening of students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools; (2) Knowing the obstacles in strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools; (3) Knowing the solutions in overcoming obstacles in strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools.

## REASERCH METHOD

The type and approach of research used is qualitative research with a phenomenological approach, which seeks to explain and capture a meaning in the form of concepts or phenomena of experience based on awareness that occurs in several people regarding values, beliefs, norms, symbols, language, and daily routine practices (Hardiansyah & Mas'odi, 2020). The instrument

in this qualitative research is the researcher himself. This research was conducted at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School, Sidoarjo Regency. The subjects in this study were the principal and the fourth grade teacher. While the data sources used are primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources come from observations and interviews with principals and fourth grade teachers at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School. While the secondary data sources of researchers come from existing sources such as photos of activities, notes and related files. The object in this study is the strengthening of religious character.

The data collection methods used in this study are: (1) Observation, in which the researcher makes direct or indirect observations about something that is observed and records it on an observation tool. This method is used to obtain information about school conditions, the implementation of religious habituation in an effort to foster students' religious character and student behavior at school; (2) Interview, which is a research method that uses dialogue between the interviewer and the interviewee as a data source, can be done directly, indirectly, or through certain media. This method is used to obtain information about the implementation of religious habituation of students' religious character, obstacles and solutions in overcoming them. The data sources in this study are the principal and class IV teachers to find out their response to religious habituation and the extent to which students have carried out religious habituation at school; (3) Documentation method, can be done by looking for information about related matters in the form of notes or books (Ahsanulhaq, 2019).

The data analysis used in this research are: (1) Data reduction, which is summarizing the important things, focusing on the important things, and looking for themes and patterns; (2) Data presentation, which is compiling information through narrative text; (3) Drawing conclusions, which will answer the formulation of the problem formulated from the beginning. But maybe not, given that in qualitative research, the problem framework will change once the researcher is in the field. In qualitative research, conclusions are findings in the form of a description or description of an object that when observed more closely becomes clear (Dr. Umar Sidiq, M.Ag Dr. Moh. Miftachul Choiri, 2019).

Testing the validity of the data used in this research is a triangulation technique, which is a data collection technique that combines several data collection techniques and existing data sources. The triangulation techniques that will be used in this study are: (1) Triangulation of sources, which is the process of collecting information from several sources, such as papers, archives, observations, and interviews with various subjects who certainly have various points of view; (2) Triangulation of techniques, which refers to researchers who collect data from the same source using various data collection methods. For example, data collected through interviews are then verified through documentation, surveys, or observations. If the results of the three methods are inconsistent, the researcher conducts further discussions with the subject or other parties to determine which results are accepted as accurate (A, Suwilawati, & Sari, 2020).

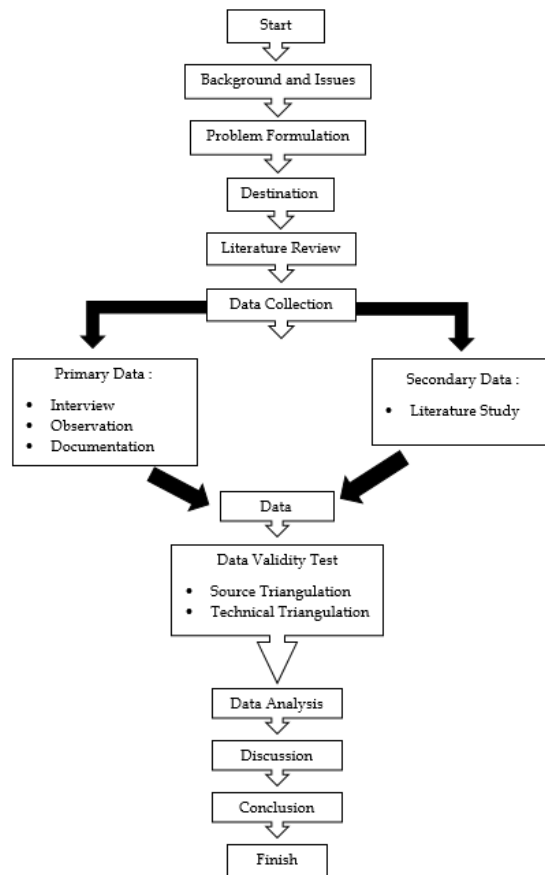


Figure 1. Research Method Flowchart

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Based on the research that has been done, the data obtained include: 1) Interview results with the principal, 2) Results of interviews with class IV teachers, 3) Observation results, and 4) Documentation results during research activities. The results of the research obtained are the forms of strengthening the religious character education of students at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School through several religious habituation programs, namely, 7S culture, praying before and after learning, reciting hadith and daily prayers, reciting the Koran, reciting asmaul husna, istighosah, praying in congregation, tarjamah of prayer readings and short surahs, tahfidz Al-Qur'an, and commemoration of Islamic holidays.

The 7S culture is a habit that aims to form the habit of smiling, greeting, greeting,

politeness, courtesy, patience, and gratitude in students. Praying before and after learning is a habit that aims to teach students that before starting something they must pray, including learning. Reciting hadiths and daily prayers is a habit that aims to make students understand and apply it in their daily lives. Reciting the Koran is a habit that aims to make students easy to read and memorize verses of the Qur'an. Reading asmaul husna is a habit that aims to form good character in students. Istighosah is a habit that aims to ask for help and one way to get closer to Allah SWT. Congregational prayer (duha prayer, zuhur prayer, asar prayer, and Friday prayer) is a habit that aims to form an attitude of student responsibility in carrying out prayer services on time. Tarjamah of prayer readings and short surahs is a spontaneous activity that aims to make students understand the meaning of prayer

readings. Tahfidz Al-Qur'an is a habit that aims to shape students to behave well according to adab in Islam. Then the commemoration of Islamic holidays is an activity that aims to remember and preserve Islamic holidays, such as isra' mi'raj.

Most of these programs are routinely implemented by students and teachers of SD Al-Islam Plus Krian. These routine habits can shape student character, especially religious character and can be applied in everyday life.

### Discussion

Habituation is a way of getting used to positive behavior repeatedly which will be embedded in each individual which will help them overcome problems in life. The implementation of habituation at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School is carried out programmatically. Developing good habits takes a lot of time and effort. But it's also difficult to change habits that are already embedded in one's personality. Habituation is a very important

teaching method in Islam that aims to enable students to carry out habits in accordance with Islamic Teachings (Syaroh & Mizani, 2020).

The school's goal of shaping student character through habituation is to realize graduates who have good character, behave politely and worship in accordance with Islamic teachings. Therefore, the school continues to strive to improve the quality and quantity of habituation in order to shape students' character by conducting dynamic habituation. The various kinds of habituation arranged by the school to develop students' religious character are as follows:

7S culture (Smile, Greeting, Greeting, Polite, Polite, Patience and Gratitude). The habit is carried out by teachers every morning in front of the gate to welcome students whose purpose is to get closer and get to know each other. The school also socializes the 7S culture by making posters or the like that are placed in each class.



Figure 2. 7S Culture Poster

Praying before and after learning. The recitation of prayers at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School is done together along with its meaning. Before that, the teacher does a stimulus in the form of guessing multiplication, hadiths that have been memorized or daily prayers and

their meanings. Allah is the Most Grants and the Most Gives, as His servants must always pray before starting something, especially when students are ready to start the lesson. As humans, we can only ask through prayer and try through learning.



**Figure 3. Praying Before Learning Activity**

Reciting hadiths and daily prayers. The hadiths that are recited include the hadith of the best human being, the hadith of fearing Allah, the hadith of the dangers of loving the world, and the hadith of heaven under the soles of the mother's

feet. For daily prayers such as prayers for entering and leaving the mosque, prayers for help, prayers before and after eating, and prayers when forgetting to read basmalah at the beginning.



**Figure 4. Activity of Reciting Hadiths and Daily Prayers**

Reciting the Koran. This habit is carried out after reading prayers before learning, namely at 08.00-09.00, where students are categorized according to their respective volumes or recitation groups. For students who have reached the Al-Qur'an stage, there is a reading fluency test which

later they will carry out munaqosah. This habit is expected to make students easy to read and memorize the surahs that will be recited during prayer. Apart from school, some students also participate in Quranic activities around their place of residence such as TPQ.



**Figure 5. Quranic activity**

Reading asmaul husna. This habit is included in the morning assembly which is only done every Tuesday and Wednesday. The reading of asmaul husna is carried out at the same time as singing the Indonesia Raya song and the march of Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School. Reading asmaul husna is one way to form good character in students. For example, when facing a problem, students can practice asmaul husna As Shabuur which means patience.

Istighosah. Istighosah is a joint prayer activity aimed at asking for help from Allah SWT. The main purpose of this activity is to get closer to Allah SWT. All human wishes will be granted by the creator of the universe if they are always near Him (Amaliya Nasucha & Rina, 2021). This habit is carried out on Thursdays and takes place

in the school gazebo. It is led by the school's religious team, namely teachers or ustadz.

Duha prayer in congregation. This habit is carried out before reciting the Quran at 07.30-08.00 which is carried out in congregation every day from Monday to Friday in their respective classes. The prayer readings and wirid in the duha prayer are recited aloud which aims to minimize students from joking in praying. In addition, so that the teacher does not miss if there are students who do not read the recitation. The form of action taken by the teacher is to supervise students by guiding them if there are inappropriate movements. The imam in the duha prayer is the student himself, for which there is already a schedule in each class.



**Figure 6. Duha Prayer Activity in Congregation**

Zuhur prayer and Asar prayer in congregation. This habit is carried out every

Monday to Thursday. Unlike the duha prayer, the recitations of the zuhur and asar prayers are not



recited because there are many rak'ahs, which if recited would take a long time. The zuhur and asar prayers are led by students according to their class schedules, but sometimes they are also led by teachers. Congregational prayers are always scheduled on time which will help students learn how to manage time effectively.

Friday Prayer. This habit is only carried out by classes IV, V, and VI which is carried out in the mosque of SMK Yapalis Krian which is led by the teacher. Friday prayer is a prayer that is obligatory for men in congregation on Friday as well as a substitute for the zuhur prayer. As in the hadith narrated by Abu Daud that: "Friday prayer is obligatory for every Muslim in congregation except for four people: the slave, the woman, the child, and the sick." (HR. Abu Daud) (Saputra, Hakim, & Zulfikri, 2021).

Tarjamah of prayer recitations and short surahs. Tarjamah of prayer recitations is only done by classes I and II spontaneously before the zuhur prayer so that students know the meaning of the prayer recitation. But for class IV, it is focused on the recitation of short surahs.

Tahfidz Al-Qur'an. Tahfidz is the activity of reading or listening to verses of the Qur'an repeatedly. There are many traits that can be used when learning to memorize the Qur'an, including: perseverance, tenacity, painstaking, patience, istiqomah, hard work, and discipline (Hariyatmi et al., 2019). Each class at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School has a target in each semester. As in class IV B, the tahfidz target in semester 2, namely the suras Al-Muthaffifin, Al-Infithor, At-Takwir, 'Abasa, An-Nazi'at, and An-Naba'.

Commemoration of Islamic Holidays (PHBI). PHBI at SD Al-Islam Plus Krian is held

during the commemoration of Islamic holidays such as maulid nabi, isra' mi'raj and 10 muharram. In the isra' mi'raj activity, the school held a tahfidz competition which aims to motivate students that having memorized surahs will not be in vain, as well as a bazaar competition and tausiah from the principal. For 10 muharram, the school conducts orphan charity by taking students in the school itself.

Teachers have an important role in implementing habituation at school. Religious character building can be realized through different activities for each dimension, for example in the dimension of worship, namely by habituating congregational prayers (Sulistiyorini & Nurfalih, 2019). At Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School, teachers invite students to do everything with gratitude, sincerity, and patience and always often practice in front of their friends by becoming prayer leaders. In the habituation of worship, teachers act by inviting students to be disciplined and responsible, especially in terms of prayer.

The worship habits in Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School have an assessment which will be tested and the results written on the student's religious report card. The materials that are tested include: (1) Tahfidz, consisting of surah Al-Fajr, Al-Ghosyiyah, Al-A'laa, At-Thariq, Al-Buruj, and others where juz 30 must be completed; (2) Tarjamah, consisting of surah Asy-Syams, Al-Balad, Al-Fajr, and others; (3) Qouliyah worship, consisting of the best human hadith (1 and 2), hadith of fearing Allah SWT, mahfudzot "Aadabu-I-mar-i", prayers for entering and leaving the mosque; (4) Ibadah amaliyah, consisting of tayammum and impurity (thaharah).

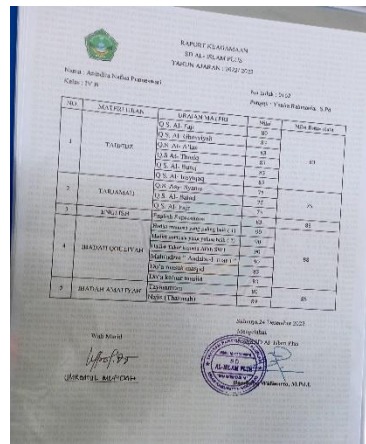


Figure 7. Students' Religious Report Card

In an effort to form students' religious character through habituation, there are several obstacles in its implementation, namely: (1) Lack of parental support at home. Parents and schools have a role in shaping students' religious character. Schools want to instill noble morals, diligent worship, and honesty, but if it is not balanced at home, it will not work properly. Although the school provides a liaison book which contains student activities at school, one of which is worship, there are still some students who do not pray because parents do not tell or order their children; (2) Student characteristics. Each student has their own characteristics, some are fast and some are slow. In Quran recitation activities, not all students are fluent and understand the reading. As a result, the teacher must develop the best implementation strategy; (3) Activities have not been 100% effective. Activities are declared effective at around 90%. The cause of ineffective activities is when there is a teacher who is not present, which means that

students should recite the Quran in their groups but it is carried out in their respective classes.

The solution to overcome the obstacles in strengthening religious character is that the school conducts home visits. In semester 1, teachers make visits to students' homes according to an agreed schedule. The teacher will ask about how students are at home because most students' characters at school and at home are different. For example, when at school students listen to the teacher's explanation but if at home students will yell and not listen to their parents. Therefore, a home visit is carried out to boost the activities in the liaison book so that they are actually carried out. The teacher will ask all aspects in the liaison book such as spiritual aspects or worship and social aspects which include praying five times, reciting the Koran, being devoted to parents, and others. Then aspects of independence such as learning without being reminded, helping with work at home, putting clothes and shoes in place, and others.

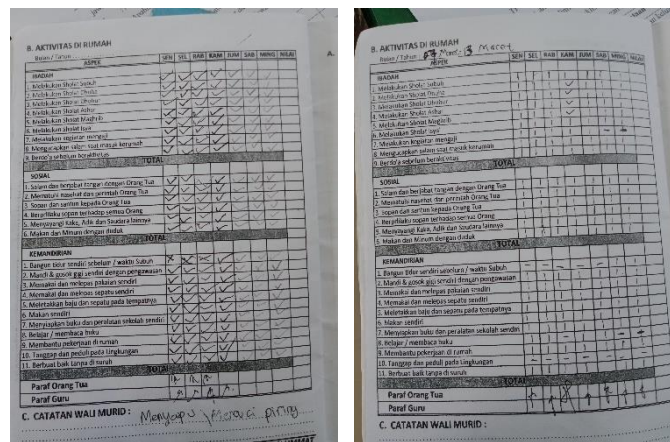


Figure 8. Student Liaison Book

After the home visit, the teacher can find out the existing problems and solutions to overcome them. Providing solutions or problem solving is carried out by the class teacher, namely by providing personal guidance between the teacher and the student concerned. If the student has made mistakes several times, then the teacher will give punishment, for example, if the student does not perform the morning prayer at home, then at school after praying dhuha, the student continues to perform the morning prayer. The aim is to have a deterrent effect on students so that they do not repeat it again.

The impact that occurs in a habituation program that is routinely carried out every day and has the support of teachers and parents will strengthen the strengthening of religious character in students. From the results of the research, the impact of the religious habituation program implemented at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School is that students become more punctual and enthusiastic in praying and reciting the Koran. This habituation activity can improve students' religious character, where students will get used to carrying out their obligations without being warned. If students are negligent, there will be penalties that must be carried out, which will have a deterrent effect on students so that they do not repeat themselves.

The impact of religious habituation instilled in Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School has a very significant impact on each student, which can increase understanding in students and better understand the benefits of the

positive activities they do such as praying, reciting, istighosah, praying before and after learning, and others, then will be applied in their daily activities in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of research on strengthening students' religious character through religious habituation in elementary schools, researchers can conclude that habituation in shaping students' religious character at Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School is carried out programmatically, namely: (1) 7S culture; (2) Praying before and after learning; (3) Reciting hadiths and daily prayers; (4) Reciting the Quran; (5) Reciting asmaul husna; (6) Istighosah; (7) Praying duha in congregation; (8) Praying zuhur and asar prayers in congregation; (9) Friday prayers; (10) Tarjamah of prayer readings and short chapters; (11) Tahfidz; (12) Commemoration of Islamic Holidays (PHBI). The obstacles to strengthening students' religious character are the lack of parental support at home and student characteristics. The solution in overcoming the obstacles to strengthening students' religious character is to conduct home visits. The goal is for teachers to know the character of students when at home. Because most of the student characters at school and at home are different. In addition, the class teacher will also provide personal guidance between the teacher and the student concerned. If the student has committed a problem several times, the

teacher will give a punishment which aims to have a deterrent effect on the student. The impact of religious habituation instilled in Al-Islam Plus Krian Elementary School has a very significant impact on each student, which can increase understanding in students and better understand the benefits of the positive activities they do and will be applied by students in their daily activities in accordance with the teachings of Islam.

Based on the above conclusions, this study provides recommendations that schools and parents should meet and discuss with each other. Because it is important to have a balance in the implementation of strengthening religious character between teachers and parents, then religious character in children can also be embedded at home and the surrounding environment.

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