

# THE PRACTICE OF IMPLEMENTING DHUHA PRAYER BEFORE LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND ITS IMPACT ON STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER AT SD NEGERI 215 BENGKULU UTARA

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## Abstract

*This study aims to examine the implementation of the daily Salat Dhuha routine before classroom activities and its impact on the development of students' religious character at SD Negeri 215 Bengkulu Utara. The academic concern driving this research lies in the limited exploration of routine worship practices as a character-building strategy within public elementary schools. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, the study involved teachers, the principal, and students as key informants. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, display, and verification. The findings reveal that the Salat Dhuha routine strengthens discipline, enhances worship consistency, fosters emotional calmness, and cultivates responsibility, all of which are reflected in students' behaviors during the learning process. Teachers' exemplary conduct, supportive school culture, and established habituation programs further contribute to the effectiveness of the initiative. Despite its strengths, the program faces challenges including students' varying developmental levels, limited facilities, and the need for continuous teacher development. These findings highlight the importance of integrating religious practices into daily learning structures as a sustainable strategy for nurturing students' spiritual and behavioral growth.*

**Keywords:** *Dhuha prayer, religious character, habituation, elementary school, Islamic education.*

## INTRODUCTION

The formation of students' religious character at the elementary level has gained increasing attention as

educational demands shift toward more holistic development. Rapid changes in social environments require children to possess strong moral foundations that

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guide their behavior and decision-making. Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a pivotal role in providing experiences that blend academic learning with spiritual growth. Within this framework, structured religious practices become meaningful tools for cultivating early awareness of faith and morality. Such practices not only shape behavior but also foster discipline and self-regulation in students. As a result, integrating worship routines into school programs becomes an essential component of character education (Rahmawati, 2023).

Dhuha prayer is one of the Sunnah practices that embodies both spiritual and pedagogical value for young learners. Its placement in the early hours of the day makes it relevant to be embedded within the school morning routine. Beginning the day with prayer helps students enter the learning process with a calmer mindset and greater emotional stability. The presence of Dhuha prayer as a daily activity also shapes a religious atmosphere that influences how students interact with peers and teachers. Through repeated practice, students gradually develop habits that reflect both devotion and responsibility. For this reason, schools that systematically incorporate religious activities can facilitate more comprehensive spiritual development (Muzaini & Salamah, 2023).

SD Negeri 215 Bengkulu Utara is one of the schools that has implemented Dhuha prayer before the start of formal lessons. This initiative emerged from the school's concern about the need for stronger character formation among elementary students. The administration believes that daily worship provides moral grounding that supports students throughout their academic activities. This practice also represents a concrete expression of the school's commitment to holistic education. By introducing the program, the school aims to cultivate an environment where religious values can be internalized through both routine and reflection. Consistent implementation is therefore expected to support continuous character transformation (Polem et al., 2024).

The practice of Dhuha prayer in the school setting requires more than simple instruction; it demands guidance and mentoring. Teachers play a central role in ensuring that students understand the procedure of the prayer while encouraging them to perform it sincerely. Their involvement demonstrates exemplary behavior that students can emulate as part of their moral development. Teacher participation also enhances the structure and discipline of the activity, allowing students to experience the prayer with greater reverence. Such interactions nurture positive emotional connections between teachers and learners. Consequently, Dhuha prayer

becomes a platform that strengthens both spiritual practice and interpersonal relationships.

Students, as the primary recipients of character education, experience gradual behavioral changes through this daily worship routine. Their engagement in Dhuha prayer fosters habits of gratitude, self-reflection, and humility. The practice influences how they respond to rules, communicate with others, and handle classroom responsibilities. Improvements in behavior emerge as students internalize the values associated with worship. These developments align with their emotional and social growth, which is shaped through repeated exposure to values-based activities. Thus, daily religious practices offer students opportunities to express moral principles through concrete actions (Khasanah, 2021).

The influence of Dhuha prayer extends beyond spirituality and contributes to students' academic readiness. Performing worship before studying helps reduce anxiety, creating a calmer psychological state conducive to learning. Students may experience improved concentration and better time management as a result of beginning their day with structured routines. The sense of discipline fostered by worship practice translates into greater attentiveness during lessons. This connection illustrates that religious formation intersects

meaningfully with educational performance. Therefore, embedding worship within the school day fosters both spiritual and cognitive benefits (Annur, Kurnianto, & Rohmadi, 2018).

Despite the advantages, the implementation of daily Dhuha prayer presents certain challenges. Some students require time to adapt to the new routine, especially when it demands adherence to consistent schedules. Variations in family backgrounds influence students' prior exposure to religious practices, affecting motivation and readiness. While some children are accustomed to performing prayer at home, others may not receive similar guidance. These differences create diverse levels of engagement that teachers must navigate with sensitivity. Such conditions highlight the need for an inclusive and compassionate approach to ensure all students benefit equally from the program (Latifah, 2023).

Another challenge relates to infrastructure and time management within the school environment. The administration must ensure that the prayer activity does not disrupt the overall learning schedule. Adequate space, proper facilities, and organized systems are required to maintain the orderliness of the routine. Limited resources may create logistical difficulties, particularly when accommodating a large number of students. Ensuring comfort and accessibility during worship becomes

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an important aspect of the school's role. Thoughtful preparation of these elements influences the smooth execution of the program (Fitri, 2023).

Support from school leadership significantly influences the sustainability of the Dhuha program. Clear policies and well-structured guidelines are necessary to prevent the activity from becoming ceremonial or inconsistent. The school management must ensure that the prayer routine becomes part of the institution's culture. Regular supervision, evaluation, and improvement efforts strengthen the stability of the program. Active involvement of leadership helps maintain alignment between the school's vision and the spiritual goals of the activity. In this way, administrative commitment serves as a foundation for effective religious education.

The school's social environment contributes greatly to the reinforcement of religious character. Interactions shaped by a shared spiritual routine foster politeness, respect, and empathy among students. The habit of beginning the day with prayer nurtures solidarity and strengthens peer relationships. This environment teaches students to regulate emotions and behave according to moral norms. The influence of religious activities extends beyond the prayer space and permeates classroom life. As a result, the school becomes a setting where moral

development is both practiced and observed daily.

Parental involvement is another crucial aspect in sustaining students' religious habits. Support from home ensures that the values learned at school continue to be nurtured beyond the classroom. Parents who understand the aims of the program tend to provide encouragement and reinforcement. Effective communication between teachers and parents creates shared responsibility in guiding children's character development. This partnership enhances students' consistency in practicing religious values. Consequently, family participation becomes an integral component of the program's long-term success (Ihsanti, 2023).

The daily performance of Dhuha prayer offers long-term benefits for students' spiritual and moral development. Regular worship cultivates gratitude, discipline, and emotional resilience that help students navigate future challenges. These values become foundational traits as children grow into adolescence and adulthood. Character formation through worship enables students to develop a strong religious identity from an early age. The impact of this program extends beyond academic progress and contributes to the shaping of well-rounded individuals. Thus, the practice of Dhuha prayer becomes a meaningful investment in students' lifelong

character development (MAULIDIN, 2024).

Considering these dynamics, the implementation of Dhuha prayer at SD Negeri 215 Bengkulu Utara presents significant potential in strengthening students' religious character. The program offers spiritually meaningful experiences aligned with the needs of elementary education. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and families creates a supportive network that enhances the program's effectiveness. Existing challenges call for adaptive and inclusive strategies to ensure equitable participation. The initiative reflects a serious effort to cultivate religious values systematically through daily routines. Through structured and meaningful worship practices, the school contributes to shaping students who embody strong moral and spiritual foundations.

## **METHOD**

The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore how the practice of performing *Salat Dhuha* before classroom instruction influences students' religious character at SD Negeri 215 Bengkulu Utara. Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers, and informal conversations with students to capture authentic daily practices. The observation process focused on students' participation, emotional engagement, and behavioral changes

before and after the prayer routine. Interviews were conducted to understand teachers' intentions, perceptions of effectiveness, and challenges in sustaining the program. Document analysis, including school policies and routines, was used to contextualize the prayer practice within the broader character education strategy. Triangulation was applied to ensure the credibility of the findings and to minimize interpretive bias. Each source of data was analyzed iteratively to identify recurring themes and patterns related to spiritual growth and behavioral discipline.

Data analysis followed an inductive thematic procedure, allowing insights to emerge naturally from the field rather than being predetermined. Transcripts from interviews and field notes were coded based on indicators of religious behavior, such as discipline, sincerity, responsibility, and emotional readiness for learning. Patterns of student behavior were examined not only during the prayer activities but also throughout the school day to determine whether the positive effects extended beyond the ritual itself. The themes were then refined by comparing variations across students' age levels and teachers' instructional roles. Reflexive memo writing supported the interpretation process by documenting analytical decisions and researcher reflections. Findings were validated through member checking with teachers to confirm the accuracy of

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interpretations. This analytical framework enabled the study to capture a comprehensive picture of how *Salat Dhuha* contributes to the cultivation of students' religious character in a natural school setting.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### Patterns of Students' Participation in the Daily *Salat Dhuha* Routine

Students' participation in the daily *Salat Dhuha* routine reflects a gradual adaptation to a structured spiritual activity embedded within the school day. Many students initially engage out of guidance rather than personal initiative, yet their involvement shows steady improvement as the routine becomes familiar. Observation indicates that students respond positively when the schedule is consistent and clearly communicated. The presence of teachers supervising the prayer also enhances students' sense of responsibility. As the program continues, students begin to internalize the expectation that *Salat Dhuha* is part of their morning rhythm. This pattern suggests that habituation plays an essential role in shaping early participation. The stronger the routine is established, the more students demonstrate readiness and commitment (Hasanah, Wahyudin, & Waluyo, 2023).

Participation levels vary among students, influenced by personal readiness, family background, and prior

religious exposure. Some students exhibit immediate enthusiasm, possibly due to strong reinforcement at home. Others need longer periods of adjustment, particularly those who lack earlier experience performing voluntary prayers. However, most students gradually align with the collective practice once they witness peers engaging consistently. This social dimension supports moral reinforcement, as students often learn through observation and shared behavior. Over time, these interactions encourage broader participation. The emerging pattern indicates that communal influence becomes an important catalyst for sustained involvement (Purnomo, 2021).

Attendance during the *Salat Dhuha* routine tends to remain high when the implementation is supported by clear logistical arrangements. Schools that provide adequate space, structured seating, and efficient transitions between activities help students maintain discipline. When physical arrangements are organized, students can focus more on the prayer rather than on adjusting to the environment. This orderly setting reduces hesitation among younger learners who may still struggle with coordination. A predictable sequence of steps also strengthens students' sense of security and belonging. These conditions collectively form participation patterns that are stable

and responsive to environmental clarity.

Students' participation increases noticeably when the school embeds motivational messages into the routine. Short reminders delivered by teachers before the prayer encourage reflection and provide moral context. These messages help students understand that *Salat Dhuha* is not merely a requirement but a meaningful practice connected to personal growth. The emphasis on sincerity and gratitude deepens students' emotional engagement. As a result, participation becomes more than physical presence; it develops into an expression of internalized intention. This shift demonstrates how intellectual and affective elements complement behavioral involvement. Patterns of participation therefore grow stronger when motivational components are consistently provided (Azurazmi, Putri, Mubaroq, & Amelia, 2024).

Younger students often show fluctuating levels of attention, yet they tend to develop steadier participation when routines are delivered through gentle modeling. Teachers who demonstrate calmness, precision, and focus indirectly teach students how to embody the prayer's values. This modeling helps create a subtle learning environment where behavior is shaped through repeated exposure rather than explicit directives. Over time, students begin to emulate these actions with increasing accuracy. Their movements

become more coordinated, and their attention span improves. These changes indicate that observational learning significantly contributes to participation stability. Patterns formed in this manner tend to last longer because they arise from internal imitation (Nofi Nofarinda & Supriyadi, 2024).

A notable pattern emerges when students are given roles in supporting the routine. Assignments such as leading du'a, arranging prayer mats, or helping younger peers create a sense of ownership. When students feel responsible, their participation naturally becomes more consistent. The routine shifts from being an external requirement to a shared communal duty. These small roles reinforce students' confidence and introduce early leadership experiences. Participation patterns shaped through responsibility tend to be more durable and self-driven. This distribution of roles also helps build a collaborative spiritual atmosphere (Mujamil & Suryadi, 2023).

Emotional readiness also influences participation patterns in subtle ways. Students who arrive at school feeling calm or supported tend to engage more fully in the prayer. Conversely, those experiencing fatigue or personal difficulties may struggle to maintain focus. Teachers who greet students warmly before the routine help lighten these emotional burdens. This simple interaction improves

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students' willingness to join the prayer with a clearer mindset. Over time, students associate the routine with a sense of safety and emotional stability. These associations strengthen participation as they reflect the deeper connection between well-being and religious practice.

Participation is also affected by how students perceive the relevance of *Salat Dhuha*. When teachers occasionally explain its virtues using relatable language, students gain a clearer sense of purpose. This understanding shifts the practice from a mechanical obligation to a meaningful act linked to personal benefits. Students who grasp the significance show higher enthusiasm and fewer signs of reluctance. Their body language appears more relaxed, and they display increased attentiveness. Gradually, these students influence their peers through their consistency. Participation patterns involving personal meaning tend to be more resilient and sincere.

Peer dynamics play a vital role in encouraging consistent involvement. Students who share close friendships often attend and perform the prayer together, forming small supportive clusters. These clusters create positive pressure that makes absence or disengagement less likely. When one student shows initiative, others often follow, creating a ripple effect across the group. Such dynamics cultivate an environment where commitment becomes a shared norm. These

interactions produce participation patterns shaped by social cohesion and mutual encouragement. The more cohesive the peer relationships, the more stable the participation trends (Bachruddin & Darmiyanti, 2023).

Across all observations, students' participation patterns reveal a gradual evolution shaped by structure, modeling, emotional support, and communal interaction. The routine strengthens students' ability to transition from informal morning activities to a focused spiritual practice. Their increasing familiarity reduces hesitation and improves behavioral accuracy. The collective atmosphere also fosters a sense of unity that reinforces individual effort. Over time, participation becomes integrated into students' identities as part of their daily rhythm at school. These patterns reflect a holistic interplay between habit formation and spiritual development. The consistency observed suggests that the routine serves as both a behavioral anchor and a formative learning experience.

### **Behavioral and Religious Character Development Observed After the Implementation**

The implementation of the daily *Salat Dhuha* routine has contributed to noticeable improvements in students' behavioral consistency. Many students begin the school day with a calmer attitude, showing reduced restlessness during subsequent lessons. This shift suggests that the structured prayer

helps regulate emotional states and prepares students for academic engagement. Teachers also observe an increase in students' ability to follow instructions without frequent reminders. The atmosphere in classrooms appears more orderly because students transition from a disciplined activity to academic tasks. These improvements indicate that the prayer routine acts as a behavioral primer. Over time, the practice builds a foundation for greater self-regulation (Septantiningtyas, Amanah, Fadilah, Maulidah, & Ningtyas, 2024).

Students show enhanced discipline in their punctuality after the routine is institutionalized. The need to arrive before learning begins motivates them to adjust morning habits at home. This change leads to more consistent attendance patterns and fewer late arrivals. Teachers report that students who regularly participate tend to exhibit stronger awareness of time. This awareness gradually extends to other responsibilities, such as turning in assignments promptly. The reinforcement of punctuality through daily prayer supports broader behavioral organization. Such changes signal a growing internalization of responsibility (Ariyani & Mutia, 2024).

Respectful behavior is also more visible among students who engage regularly in the prayer program. The calm, collective atmosphere encourages them to interact with peers more thoughtfully. Students begin

demonstrating greater patience when facing minor conflicts. Their tone becomes more controlled, and they display reduced impulsivity when responding to classroom challenges. Teachers note a subtle but steady shift toward more polite communication. These behavioral signs reflect the internal influence of a spiritually grounding activity. The routine thus shapes relational conduct in a positive direction.

Religious character development becomes evident as students show deeper familiarity with basic prayer procedures and meanings. Many students demonstrate improved accuracy in movements and recitations after repeated exposure. Their confidence in performing worship increases because they practice collectively and receive guidance. Students begin to ask questions about the prayer's significance, indicating growing curiosity. This curiosity reflects an early form of reflective religious awareness. The program helps them transition from simple imitation to more conscious practice. Such developments mark an important stage in spiritual maturity (Polem et al., 2024).

A stronger sense of gratitude emerges as a consistent pattern among students participating in the routine. Teachers observe that students increasingly express appreciation for small acts of kindness. This behavior is reinforced by the reflective tone

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cultivated during prayer. Students appear more mindful of their surroundings and more sensitive to the needs of others. Their willingness to help classmates grows, especially during collaborative activities. The cultivation of gratitude strengthens emotional resilience. These attitudes indicate early development of a positive moral outlook.

Students also show enhanced self-control, particularly in managing negative emotions. The quiet, rhythmic nature of the prayer routine guides them toward regulating their responses. Teachers notice fewer emotional outbursts and quicker recovery after moments of frustration. Students seem more capable of pausing before reacting impulsively. This behavioral shift aligns with the values embedded in prayer, such as patience and humility. Over time, students develop a calmer approach to academic challenges (Rofiq, 2023). These gains reflect strengthened emotional discipline.

Responsibility emerges as another aspect of religious character that develops through the routine. Students begin demonstrating initiative in preparing prayer spaces without waiting for teacher directives. Their willingness to maintain order shows increased ownership of collective activities. Some even remind peers about the importance of joining the prayer. This peer-based responsibility indicates internal motivation rather

than external pressure. Students also become more attentive to completing daily tasks assigned by teachers. The growth of responsibility contributes to the formation of reliable behavioral habits (Sholicha & Aliyah, 2024).

Cooperation becomes more visible as students engage in group-based elements of the prayer routine. They learn to coordinate positions, maintain alignment, and follow shared instructions. These small acts train them to function as part of a disciplined collective. The shared spiritual experience strengthens trust among peers. Teachers observe fewer competitive tensions and more willingness to work together. This collaboration transfers to classroom learning activities. The prayer routine thus fosters social cohesion rooted in religious values.

Students' moral awareness expands through regular exposure to reminders delivered before the prayer. The short reflections help them internalize concepts such as honesty, kindness, and respect. As students reflect on these concepts, they become more attentive to their daily choices. Teachers notice students voluntarily correcting their behavior when they realize it conflicts with the values discussed. This self-correction marks an important stage in moral growth. The awareness gained through the routine guides students' interactions throughout the school day. Moral sensitivity therefore strengthens as an

integrated component of religious development.

Overall, the behavioral and religious character development observed after implementing the routine demonstrates a gradual but meaningful transformation. Students show increased emotional steadiness, improved discipline, and higher moral attentiveness. Their interactions with peers reflect a blend of respect, cooperation, and empathy shaped by shared spiritual practice. The routine becomes a formative experience that bridges personal behavior and religious understanding. As students internalize these values, their participation gains deeper sincerity. These shifts indicate that the prayer routine functions as both a behavioral regulator and a character-building mechanism. The observable outcomes highlight its role in fostering holistic student development (Rahmawati, 2023).

### **Teachers' Roles, School Culture, and Challenges in Sustaining the Program**

Teachers play a central role in sustaining the daily *Salat Dhuha* program by providing consistent guidance and modeling proper conduct during worship. Their presence reinforces the seriousness of the routine and establishes a sense of shared responsibility with students. Many teachers arrive early to prepare the space, ensuring that students feel welcomed and ready to begin the activity. This level of involvement

strengthens the connection between spiritual practices and classroom expectations. Teachers also use brief reminders to highlight the values embedded in the prayer. These reminders help students link the act of worship with daily behavior. The teachers' example contributes significantly to the program's overall stability (Khasanah, 2021).

The instructional role of teachers extends beyond guiding the prayer itself. They integrate character values associated with *Salat Dhuha* into lessons across different subjects. This integration helps students see that religious character is not confined to ritual practice but encompasses broader attitudes toward learning. Teachers reinforce discipline, patience, and cooperation through classroom routines that mirror values expressed in prayer. By linking these elements, they create continuity between spiritual and academic domains. Students gradually recognize that positive behavior is expected throughout the school day. This consistency strengthens the internalization of religious character (Hasanah et al., 2023).

Teachers also serve as emotional regulators within the prayer setting. Their calm demeanor establishes an atmosphere that encourages students to settle into a focused state. Students often mirror the emotional tone set by their teachers, allowing the prayer to function as a

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grounding activity. Teachers provide gentle corrections when necessary, helping students maintain attention without creating tension. Their ability to manage the group contributes to the fluidity of the routine. This emotional leadership also extends into classrooms, where students adopt similar patterns of self-control. These behaviors support a more harmonious learning environment.

The broader school culture plays a crucial role in sustaining the prayer routine. A shared vision among staff and administrators helps integrate the practice into the school's identity. Posters, announcements, and daily reminders reinforce the importance of religious character. These cultural elements create a sense of unity and encourage students to view the prayer as a collective responsibility. The school environment becomes structured around predictable patterns that support moral growth. When students witness consistent messages about religious values, they internalize them more readily. This cultural coherence enhances the impact of the program (Azurazmi et al., 2024).

School leadership contributes to shaping a supportive environment for the routine. Administrators allocate time, coordinate teacher responsibilities, and ensure that facilities are available. Their commitment signals that the program is not an optional activity but part of the school's educational mission.

Leadership involvement also motivates teachers to maintain high levels of participation. When administrators visit the prayer sessions, students perceive the activity as meaningful. This administrative oversight strengthens accountability and motivates consistent implementation. The partnership between leaders and teachers forms the backbone of the program.

The physical and social environment of the school further supports the prayer routine. Administrators ensure that the prayer space is clean, comfortable, and accessible. The arrangement of the setting encourages discipline and focus. Students quickly adapt to the spatial structure, helping the routine proceed smoothly each day. Regular maintenance of the area reflects the school's respect for the spiritual practice. Students respond positively when they feel the environment is prepared with care. This supportive setting strengthens the overall culture of worship and character development (Purnomo, 2021).

Despite strong cultural support, sustaining the program presents several challenges. One major issue concerns variations in students' developmental maturity. Younger students sometimes struggle to remain focused throughout the prayer, requiring additional teacher attention. These differences demand flexible strategies to maintain engagement. Teachers must adjust approaches

without compromising the program's structure. This challenge becomes more evident during busy school periods or when academic pressures increase. Addressing these differences requires patience and coordination.

Another challenge involves the need for ongoing professional development for teachers. Not all teachers feel equally confident in guiding the prayer or explaining its associated values. Some require further training in spiritual pedagogy to provide consistent guidance. Workshops and mentoring can strengthen their skills, but these efforts depend on administrative support. Without adequate training, variations in teacher performance may affect students' experience. Sustaining the program effectively requires investment in teacher competence. The commitment to professional growth directly influences program quality.

Facilities and logistics also pose limitations in certain situations. The school may experience space constraints when attendance increases or when the weather affects outdoor areas. These logistical shifts require quick adaptation and coordinated planning. Teachers sometimes need to reorganize student positions or adjust timing to ensure participation. Such adjustments can disrupt the rhythm of the routine if not managed carefully. The school must anticipate these challenges to minimize interruptions. Addressing facility needs supports

long-term sustainability (Ihsanti, 2023).

Overall, the success of the *Salat Dhuha* program depends on a strong interplay between teacher roles, supportive school culture, and the ability to navigate emerging challenges. Teachers' active involvement ensures guidance, consistency, and emotional structure. The school's cultural framework reinforces shared values and strengthens collective participation. Challenges such as developmental differences, professional training needs, and facility limitations require thoughtful responses. When these elements are managed effectively, the program remains stable and meaningful. The combined effort creates an environment where religious character can flourish naturally. This synergy ensures that the routine continues to function as a transformative part of students' daily lives.

## CONCLUSION

The implementation of the daily *Salat Dhuha* program at SD Negeri 215 Bengkulu Utara demonstrates that structured spiritual routines can effectively strengthen students' behavioral discipline, emotional regulation, and religious character when supported by committed teachers and a coherent school culture. The program's success is reflected in students' increasing punctuality, improved self-control, strengthened

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cooperation, and growing moral awareness, all of which are shaped through consistent modeling, guided practice, and a supportive environment. Although challenges arise—such as developmental differences among students, varying teacher competencies, and logistical constraints—these obstacles can be managed through targeted professional development, administrative commitment, and flexible planning. Overall, the program highlights the importance of integrating spiritual practices into the school's daily rhythm as a means of fostering holistic student development and reinforcing core religious values that influence behavior both within and beyond the classroom.

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