

## Implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) Learning Method to Enhance Learning Motivation in Islamic Religious Education (A Classroom Action Research)

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### Abstract

This Classroom Action Research (CAR) was conducted in response to the low learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) among fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran, which was primarily caused by the predominance of conventional teacher-centered instructional methods. The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of implementing the Questions Students Have (QSH) active learning method combined with visual media in improving students' learning motivation, both individually and classically. The research participants consisted of all 22 fifth-grade students of SDN Cipajaran in the 2025/2026 academic year. Data were collected through classroom observation sheets, a learning motivation questionnaire based on the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction), formative tests, and instructional documentation. The research followed the Kemmis and McTaggart Classroom Action Research model, consisting of the stages of planning, action, observation, and reflection, implemented over two consecutive cycles. The empirical findings demonstrated a significant and progressive improvement in students' learning motivation throughout the research cycles. In the preliminary stage (Pre-Cycle), the percentage of students achieving the classical learning motivation criterion was only 22.7% (5 students). After implementing the QSH method in Cycle I, classical learning motivation increased to 54.5% (12 students), although it had not yet reached the predetermined success criterion due to students' psychological barriers in formulating questions. In Cycle II, the action plan was refined by integrating visual media (images and short videos) as contextual learning stimuli and providing reinforcement through rewards and motivational badges. As a result, students' classical learning motivation increased substantially to 81.8% (18 students), exceeding the predetermined classical mastery criterion of 80%. Both quantitatively and qualitatively, the findings indicate that the combination of the QSH learning method and visual media effectively transformed a conventional classroom into a dynamic, interactive, and student-centered learning environment. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers are encouraged to adopt this instructional approach as a sustainable teaching strategy.

**Keywords:** Questions Students Have (QSH), Visual Media, Learning Motivation, Islamic Religious Education, Classroom Action Research.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human necessity for developing individual potential and enabling individuals to face the increasingly complex challenges of life. **Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System** states that education is a conscious and well-planned effort to create learning environments and learning processes that enable students to actively develop their potential in order to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills required for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Republic of Indonesia, 2003). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping students' character and personality so that they develop **akhlaqul karimah** (noble character), strong faith, and devotion to Allah SWT. PAI learning is not only aimed at providing students with cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings but also at encouraging them to internalize and practice these teachings in their daily lives. Therefore, education needs to develop students holistically through the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in order to foster a generation that is characterized by strong moral values, adaptive, competitive, and socially responsible.

Active and continuous learning is in line with Islamic values, as reflected in **Surah Al-'Alaq verses 1–5**, which emphasize the importance of reading and learning. In this context, teachers play an important role as facilitators who create engaging learning environments and

encourage students to actively develop their potential. However, in practice, Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level still frequently relies on conventional methods, such as lectures and memorization. Teacher-centered learning tends to make students passive and limits their opportunities to ask questions, engage in discussions, and express their opinions.

This condition was also found among fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran. Based on the results of initial observations and preliminary research, approximately 60% of the 22 students demonstrated low learning motivation indicators. This was evident from their low enthusiasm for participating in lessons, limited engagement with the learning materials, reluctance to ask or answer questions from the teacher, and a tendency to lose concentration, talk with classmates, and remain passive during the learning process. These conditions indicate that PAI learning is still perceived as an activity dominated by memorization, making it less engaging and not yet fully connected to students' everyday experiences. Therefore, a more active and engaging learning strategy is needed to increase students' learning motivation.

The decline in learning motivation at the elementary education level is also consistent with broader trends in Indonesia's national education system. According to a national survey published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (MoECRT, 2023), approximately 56% of elementary school students in Indonesia have experienced a persistent decline in learning motivation in the post-pandemic period, largely attributable to classroom practices that remain insufficiently interactive (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023).

On the other hand, learning motivation is one of the most critical determinants of students' academic achievement and character development. It serves as the primary driving force behind students' engagement in the learning process. Without strong learning motivation, the processes of knowledge acquisition and value internalization cannot be carried out effectively. Therefore, revitalizing students' enthusiasm for learning through innovative instructional strategies has become an urgent educational necessity.

To address the problem of low learning motivation among fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran, a strategic solution is required in the form of implementing an active learning approach supported by appropriate and effective instructional media (Azhar Arsyad, 2019). One of the most relevant active learning approaches that can be adopted to address this issue is the Questions Students Have (QSH) learning method. The QSH method is specifically designed to shift the traditional dominance of teacher-centered instruction by positioning students as the focal point of the learning process, thereby promoting a student-centered learning environment (Mel Silberman, 2006). Through the use of individually completed written question cards, this method provides students with a private and psychologically safe space to reflect on their understanding, formulate their curiosity, and express questions without experiencing psychological barriers such as fear, embarrassment, or intimidation arising from social stigma in the classroom.

To optimize the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) learning method among elementary school students, this instructional strategy needs to be integrated with the use of visual media. According to Piaget's theory of cognitive development, fifth-grade elementary school students, who are generally 10–11 years old, are at the concrete operational stage of cognitive development. At this stage, children's critical thinking abilities and natural curiosity can be stimulated more effectively when they are provided with concrete and contextual visual materials, such as pictures, diagrams, or short instructional videos (Silberman, 2013). The integration of visual media at the beginning of the learning process is expected to function as a cognitive trigger, creating cognitive conflict within students and thereby encouraging their intrinsic desire to ask questions and independently seek answers through the Questions Students Have (QSH) question-card mechanism.

In the context of this study conducted in Grade V at SDN Cipajaran, several students represented the dynamics of implementing this method, namely Annisa, Nur Iman, and Alika.

Annisa demonstrated the characteristics of an active and enthusiastic student when observing visual media, which led her to generate exploratory and in-depth questions. Meanwhile, Nur Iman showed significant development in his confidence to ask questions after previously tending to be passive, particularly when supported by contextual visual stimuli. Alika, on the other hand, demonstrated good critical thinking skills, as she was able to connect information presented through visual media with her everyday experiences before formulating questions through QSH cards. These three students illustrate how the integration of visual media and the QSH method can accommodate differences in students' learning styles and levels of participation during the learning process.

Although the effectiveness of active learning methods and the use of visual media have been widely investigated separately in previous studies, empirical research examining the synergistic integration of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method with visual media as a learning stimulus in the context of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at the elementary school level remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to provide a comprehensive, empirical, and in-depth account of the implementation, development, and effectiveness of this integrated instructional strategy through the implementation of Classroom Action Research (CAR) at SDN Cipajaran. The findings of this study are expected to contribute, both theoretically and practically, to the improvement of pedagogical practices among Islamic Religious Education teachers.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research reported in this article employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. The Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach was selected because it emphasizes a reflective and systematic process for addressing practical instructional problems encountered in the classroom, particularly the low level of students' learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) at SDN Cipajaran. This is consistent with Arikunto (2019), who states that classroom action research is a form of research conducted by teachers in their own classrooms through specific actions aimed at improving and enhancing the quality of learning. Furthermore, Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) emphasize that classroom action research is a spiral process consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection, which are carried out repeatedly to achieve continuous improvement in instructional practices.

This study adopted the cyclical model proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart, in which each cycle consists of four interrelated stages: (1) Planning, which involves identifying the root causes of the problem, developing a lesson plan based on the Questions Students Have (QSH) method integrated with visual media, and developing the research instruments; (2) Acting, which involves implementing the instructional intervention in the classroom; (3) Observing, which is conducted by systematically documenting teachers' instructional activities and students' behavioral responses throughout the learning process; and (4) Reflecting, which involves critically evaluating the results of the action to identify weaknesses in its implementation and formulate necessary improvements for the subsequent cycle.

According to Hopkins (1993), classroom action research is a form of reflective research conducted by educational practitioners to improve the rationality and fairness of educational practices being implemented, while also enhancing understanding of those practices and the situations in which they take place. Thus, CAR is not merely oriented toward measuring learning outcomes but also toward improving the learning process through actions that are systematically planned, implemented, observed, and evaluated.

Furthermore, McNiff (2013) explains that action research is a research approach that enables teachers to investigate their own instructional practices through an ongoing process of

action and reflection. Teachers act both as practitioners and observers of the actions undertaken, allowing the results of reflection to serve as a basis for determining subsequent improvement actions. This perspective is relevant to the present study because the teacher directly implemented the Questions Students Have (QSH) method combined with visual media and subsequently observed students' responses and learning motivation to determine improvements for the following cycle.

Another perspective is provided by Suharsimi Arikunto, Suhardjono, and Supardi (2019), who explain that classroom action research aims to improve or enhance the quality of instructional practices through deliberate and systematic actions carried out in the classroom. CAR also enables teachers to identify actual instructional problems, implement problem-solving actions, and evaluate the effectiveness of those actions based on data obtained throughout the research process.

Based on the various perspectives of these experts, it can be concluded that Classroom Action Research (CAR) is a practical, reflective, collaborative, and cyclical research method aimed at improving the quality of the learning process and outcomes through a series of actions that are planned, implemented, observed, and reflected upon repeatedly. Therefore, the CAR method is considered appropriate for this study because it focuses on addressing an actual problem, namely students' low learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE), through the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method combined with visual media. The results of reflection from one cycle are used as the basis for refining the actions in the subsequent cycle so that the learning process can be carried out more effectively and contribute to improving students' learning motivation.

The study was conducted during the second semester of the 2025/2026 academic year over a two-month period, from April to May 2026. The research setting was a fifth-grade classroom at SDN Cipajaran, located in Cikuya Village, Cicalengka District, Bandung Regency, West Java Province, Indonesia. The participants were selected using a total sampling technique, involving the entire population of active fifth-grade students enrolled during the academic year. A total of 22 students, consisting of both male and female students with diverse academic abilities, participated in the study.

Research data were collected comprehensively through a combination of quantitative and qualitative instruments to ensure the validity and credibility of the research findings (Suharsimi Arikunto, 2021). Quantitative data on the development of students' learning motivation were collected using a structured Learning Motivation Questionnaire developed based on John Keller's ARCS motivational model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction). The questionnaire employed a four-point Likert scale consisting of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree to eliminate central tendency bias. These data were further supported by students' scores on written formative assessments.

Qualitative data were collected through observation checklists of the teacher's instructional activities, classroom observation sheets documenting students' learning engagement and participation, semi-structured interview guidelines, and visual documentation of the teaching and learning process.

To ensure the quality and validity of the quantitative data, all questionnaire items were subjected to content validity assessment through an expert judgment process and were subsequently analyzed statistically using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation formula. The instrument's internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The instrument was considered reliable for field implementation because it produced a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding the commonly accepted threshold ( $\alpha > 0.60$ ) (see J. Cronbach, 1951). The trustworthiness of the qualitative data was rigorously ensured through methodological triangulation, which involved cross-validating data obtained from classroom observations, students' self-administered questionnaire responses, and authentic documentation

of the learning activities. The quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive percentage statistics based on the following formula:

$$P = (f / N) \times 100\%$$

In the formula, P represents the percentage of classical learning motivation achievement, f denotes the number of students who achieved the high or very high learning motivation category, and N represents the total number of research participants (22 students).

The success criteria established in this study specified that the classroom intervention would be considered successful if at least 80% of the fifth-grade students attained the high or very high level of learning motivation. Furthermore, the intervention was expected to demonstrate a consistent upward trend in the average learning motivation scores across each cycle of the Classroom Action Research, thereby indicating the sustained effectiveness of the instructional strategy.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### 1. Pre-Cycle (Baseline Condition)

Before the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) active learning method, the level of learning motivation in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) among fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran was considerably low. Based on comprehensive observations conducted during the pre-cycle phase, classroom interactions were entirely dominated by the teacher through a conventional teacher-centered lecture-based approach. The teacher delivered Qur'anic verses, Islamic concepts, and Islamic narratives verbally without the support of engaging instructional media (Nana Sudjana, n.d.) . The classroom atmosphere resulted in widespread student passivity. Many students appeared reluctant, embarrassed, or afraid to ask questions, even when they had not fully understood the learning materials. In addition, a considerable number of students frequently lost concentration, became drowsy, or engaged in non-academic activities instead of participating in the lesson. Empirical data collected during the pre-cycle phase indicated that, of the 22 students, only 5 students (22.7%) demonstrated a high level of learning motivation. In contrast, the remaining 17 students (77.3%) fell within the moderate to low learning motivation categories. These findings provided a strong empirical basis for implementing a classroom intervention.

#### 2. Implementation of Cycle I

During Cycle I, the researcher and the collaborating teacher began integrating the Questions Students Have (QSH) method into the instructional plan for Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The main instructional procedures consisted of the following steps: (1) the teacher provided a brief introduction to the lesson; (2) each student received a small blank question card; (3) students were asked individually to write one original question concerning the IRE topic that they had not yet fully understood; (4) the teacher collected all question cards; and (5) the teacher and students collaboratively reviewed, categorized, and prioritized the questions before discussing them interactively in a whole-class discussion.

The results of the observation sheets and learning motivation questionnaires administered at the end of Cycle I revealed a positive improvement. The number of students categorized as having a high level of learning motivation increased to 12 students (54.5%). Although this represented a substantial improvement compared with the pre-cycle condition, the result had not yet reached the predetermined criterion for classical success, which required at least 80% of the students to demonstrate a high or very high level of learning motivation.

Reflection conducted at the end of Cycle I identified a major operational and psychological challenge. Many students still felt hesitant, anxious, or embarrassed to formulate their own original questions independently. Consequently, some students copied or adapted questions from their classmates rather than expressing their own learning difficulties. As a result, the fundamental objective of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method—to identify and address students' individual learning needs through self-generated questions—had not yet been fully achieved.

In addition, the observation results indicated that some students still required time to adapt to a learning model that positioned them as the primary subjects in the learning process. Previously, students had been more accustomed to receiving direct explanations from the teacher. Consequently, when they were asked to formulate their own questions, many experienced difficulty identifying concepts they had not yet fully understood. Several students also exhibited low self-confidence and tended to wait for guidance or examples from their classmates before writing their questions. This condition suggests that the transition from a teacher-centered approach to a student-centered learning model requires a gradual adaptation process.

Nevertheless, the classroom atmosphere during the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method began to show positive changes. Classroom discussions became more lively, interactions between the teacher and students increased, and several students gradually gained the confidence to express their opinions when their questions were discussed collectively. The teacher also provided positive reinforcement by appreciating every question submitted, helping students understand that no question is considered wrong in the learning process. This strategy gradually created a safer and more supportive learning environment, encouraging students to participate more actively. These findings served as the basis for improving the instructional intervention in Cycle II, particularly through providing examples of well-formulated questions, offering more intensive guidance, and continuously motivating students so that they would confidently express their curiosity and formulate questions independently.

### **3. Implementation of Cycle II**

To address the psychological and operational challenges identified during Cycle I, the researcher designed and implemented several modifications in Cycle II. The primary focus of this cycle was the integration of adaptive visual stimulation at the beginning of the lesson, accompanied by an enhanced extrinsic motivational reinforcement strategy.

Before distributing the Questions Students Have (QSH) question cards, the teacher employed a contextual elicitation strategy by presenting visual media, including thought-provoking illustrations and engaging short educational videos related to the Islamic Religious Education (IRE) topic. These visual materials were intentionally designed to function as cognitive triggers, stimulating students' curiosity and encouraging them to generate meaningful questions from the outset of the learning process (M. Rafdi, 2025). In addition, the teacher introduced a tangible reinforcement scheme by providing immediate rewards, including verbal praise and motivational badges, to individual students or groups that formulated the most critical, logical, and original questions. The implementation of these modifications to the Questions Students Have (QSH) method in Cycle II successfully transformed the classroom atmosphere into a learning environment that was significantly more engaging, dynamic, and characterized by healthy academic competition.

Students demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and independently generated critical questions on their own question cards without showing any tendency to copy from their classmates. The results of the final data collection in Cycle II indicated a substantial improvement in learning motivation. The number of students who achieved the high level of learning motivation increased to 18 students, representing 81.8% of the class. This result successfully

exceeded the predetermined classical success criterion of 80%, indicating that the classroom intervention achieved its intended objective.

The improvement indicates that the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method, combined with visual media and an appreciation-based reward strategy, had a positive impact on students' learning motivation. Students demonstrated greater confidence in asking questions, expressing their opinions, and actively participating in classroom discussions compared with the pre-cycle condition and Cycle I. The learning environment became more interactive, as students were no longer merely recipients of information but actively constructed their own understanding by formulating meaningful questions related to the learning material. These findings reinforce the view that active learning fosters more meaningful learning experiences and significantly enhances students' engagement and participation throughout the instructional process.

The progression of learning motivation among the fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran, from the Pre-Cycle condition through Cycle I to the final outcomes achieved in Cycle II, is presented in the table below.

| Achievement Indicator                                                           | Pre-Cycle   | Cycle I     | Cycle II     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| Number of Students Achieving Mastery (High/Very High Learning Motivation)       | 5 Students  | 12 Students | 18 Students  |
| Classical Achievement Percentage (%)                                            | 22,7%       | 54,5%       | 81,8% (~80%) |
| Number of Students Not Yet Achieving Mastery (Moderate/Low Learning Motivation) | 17 Students | 10 Students | 4 Students   |

Table 4.1. Comparison of Students' Learning Motivation Across Classroom Action Research Cycles

To provide a more comprehensive visual representation of the trend in students' **classical learning motivation** throughout the Classroom Action Research (CAR) cycles, the percentage improvements are illustrated in the graph below.

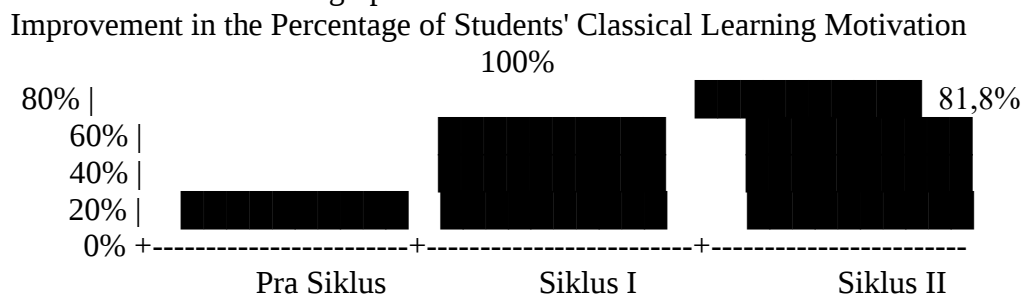


Figure 4.1. Trend Graph of the Increase in the Percentage of Students' Classical Learning Motivation

## B. Discussion

The results of this classroom action research indicate that the implementation of the Questions Students Have (QSH) method combined with visual media was able to increase the

learning motivation of fifth-grade students in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SDN Cipajaran. The increase in motivation occurred gradually from the pre-cycle to Cycle II, namely from 22.7% (5 students) to 54.5% (12 students) in Cycle I, and increased further to 81.8% (18 students) in Cycle II. These findings indicate that the QSH method is effective in increasing students' engagement and learning motivation.

Theoretically, QSH is an active learning method that positions students as active participants in the learning process through questioning activities. Active learning strategies such as *Questions Students Have* encourage students to think critically, identify gaps in their knowledge, and construct knowledge independently (Silberman, 2013). This is consistent with Bruner's view of *discovery learning*, which suggests that learning becomes more meaningful when students discover concepts themselves through questioning and exploration. In the pre-cycle condition, teacher-centered learning caused students to be passive, less confident in asking questions, and more likely to simply receive information. This is consistent with the theory of *Self-Determination Theory*, which states that motivation tends to be low when the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are not adequately fulfilled (Ryan, Richard M., 2017). In Cycle I, the implementation of QSH began to produce positive changes. Students were given the opportunity to write down questions related to the material they did not yet understand, thereby reducing their fear and embarrassment about asking questions directly. Questioning activities are an important indicator of students' cognitive engagement in the learning process (Brookfield, 2012). The findings of this study are also consistent with previous research, which stated that QSH can increase students' learning motivation in PAI by providing opportunities for active participation (Laiya, 2021). However, at this stage, students' motivation had only reached 54.5%, meaning that the predetermined success criterion had not yet been achieved.

The reflection on Cycle I showed that some students still experienced difficulties in formulating questions independently. Therefore, in Cycle II, further reinforcement was provided through the use of visual media, including pictures, illustrations, and instructional videos. According to the *Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning*, combining verbal and visual information can improve understanding because it helps students construct more concrete mental representations (Mayer, 2009). In this study, visual media functioned as a stimulus that aroused students' curiosity, enabling them to formulate more varied and meaningful questions. In addition, the increase in motivation was supported by the provision of appreciation in the form of praise and motivational pins. Positive reinforcement can increase intrinsic motivation when it is provided appropriately and not excessively (Slavin, 2018). In this study, appreciation functioned to increase students' self-confidence and reinforce active questioning behavior. This finding is also consistent with the ARCS theory, which explains that learning motivation is influenced by *Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction* (Keller, 2010). In this study, students' attention was increased through visual media, relevance emerged from the connection between the learning material and students' experiences, confidence developed through questioning activities, and satisfaction was achieved when their questions were appreciated and discussed.

Overall, the implementation of QSH combined with visual media successfully transformed the learning process from a *teacher-centered* approach into a *student-centered* one. Students were no longer merely recipients of information but actively formulated questions, engaged in discussions, and responded to their peers' opinions. This is consistent with Vygotsky's view that social interaction in learning can enhance students' cognitive development through the *zone of proximal development* (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the increase in learning motivation to 81.8% demonstrates that QSH is effective in creating an active, meaningful, and participatory learning environment.

## CONCLUSION

1. The implementation of the *Questions Students Have* (QSH) method combined with visual media was proven to increase the learning motivation of fifth-grade students at SDN Cipajaran in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. The QSH method encouraged students to become more active in asking and answering questions, engaging in discussions, and expressing their opinions, while visual media helped students understand the material more concretely, attracted their attention, and increased their enthusiasm for learning.
2. Students' learning motivation increased gradually in each cycle. In the pre-cycle, only 5 students (22.7%) achieved the high motivation category. After the implementation of QSH in Cycle I, this number increased to 12 students (54.5%). In Cycle II, after improvements were made through the use of contextual images, instructional videos, and rewards, the number of students achieving the high motivation category increased to 18 students (81.8%). This result exceeded the success indicator of 80%.
3. Overall, the implementation of QSH supported by visual media successfully transformed the learning process, which was initially more teacher-centered, into a more active, interactive, and student-centered learning environment. A total of 18 out of 22 students (81.8%) achieved the high or very high motivation category at the end of the intervention. Therefore, the QSH method combined with visual media can be an effective learning strategy for improving students' motivation, activeness, self-confidence, and participation in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at the elementary school level.

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