



CORE CURRICULUM
FOR
SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

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Spiritual Parenting

COURSE TWO

Facilitator Guide

**National Bahá'í
Education Task Force**

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Spiritual Parenting

COURSE TWO

Elements of a Successful Parenting Course

This course attracts the hearts of parents from many different backgrounds and may serve as an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith as well as to the principles and practices of parenting as explained in the Bahá'í writings. This course is open to all.

Well prepared, spiritually-focused facilitators provide the key to the success of all Core Curriculum courses. Please consider the following elements for success:

Humility and Love

The role of the facilitator is to encourage the participants to deepen their engagement with the Word of God and the application of spiritual principles to their own circumstances. Love and humility are keys to this service. You may contact the Education and Schools Office at the Bahá'í National Center with questions about the use of course materials: (847) 733-3492 or SCHOOLS@usbnc.org.

Knowledge Through Service

Ongoing engagement with parents in genuine friendship and collaborative service is critical to your success as a facilitator of Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting courses. Staying closely involved in the community will enhance your ability to meet the needs of the parents you serve.

Planning and Implementation Procedures

All these gifts and bounties depend upon love for the Beauty of the All-Glorious, and on the blessings in the teachings of the Most High, and the spiritual instructions of the Supreme Concourse, and on ecstasy and ardor and diligent pursuit of whatsoever will redound to the eternal honor of the community of man.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ. *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, REV. ED. 1999, NO. 61

As a Spiritual Parenting Facilitator, you may collaborate with Bahá'í institutions according to your circumstances to offer Spiritual Parenting courses.

- The Education and Schools Office at the Bahá'í National Center maintains a list of individuals known to have completed training to offer this course. Interested institutions and individuals may contact the Education and Schools Office to learn the names of such individuals in their area: (847) 733-3492, SCHOOLS@usbnc.org.
- Individuals trained to offer any of the Core Curriculum courses may offer collaboration, logistical support, and encouragement.
- Current information, regular updates, and new materials are posted on the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.
- At the conclusion of the course, please complete and return the Feedback Form to the National Bahá'í Education Task Force. The Feedback Form is provided on pages 37–38 of this Facilitator Guide.

A Joyous Learning Environment

Create an atmosphere of love, joy, cooperation, and discovery throughout your course. Experience suggests that a range of participants (i.e., 8–16) enables close interaction among the group members, while allowing for a full demonstration of varied methods of group interaction.

Creating an Environment for Spiritual Education

Prepare and maintain a reverential, dignified, and beautiful environment throughout the course. Some possibilities for enhancing the environment are:

- Arrangements of fresh or dried flowers in vases.
- Photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- Bowls of potpourri or drops of rose oil.
- Candles, if permitted by hosting facility.
- Soft instrumental music from diverse cultural backgrounds.
- Sharing devotions in a separate location from the work area.
- Photographs of great teachers, heroines, and heroes.

The setting need not be elaborate or expensive but it does need to be clean and orderly and have some elements of beauty. Please clean the space if it isn't already clean.

Remember that beauty doesn't require a big budget. This can be done by setting an example of simplicity while at the same time expressing the principle of beauty, a reflection of the Most Great Beauty. Inexpensive or cost-free expressions of beauty include an interesting arrangement of rocks, a bouquet of leaves or wildflowers, simple cloth pieces under a vase or a nicely shaped branch, etc. Please spend some time considering how to add beauty according to your circumstances. It is also nice to refresh the environment daily so that each session has a fresh and clean beginning.

Possible Devotional Activities

Consider a variety of reverential and inspirational ways to share the sacred writings and prayers together. Some possibilities are:

- Share prayers in different languages.
- Listen to prayers and sacred writings recited with music as a background.
- Encourage chanting, singing, and melodious recitation of prayers.
- Share recordings of prayers or passages that have been set to music.
- Encourage incorporating movement, dance, or sign language into the recital of prayers.
- Prepare, in an attractive manner, pre-selected devotional readings for distribution.
- Prepare pre-selected passages on small slips of paper, rolled up and tied with a ribbon; present these on a tray as “special treats.”

Emphasis on the Sacred Texts

Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas and convictions of the children of men.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN*, REV. ED. 1993, P. 103

The Bahá’í writings are the foundation, the standard and the inspiration of all Core Curriculum programs. Therefore, the study of the sacred texts, the writings of the Guardian and those of the Universal House of Justice is the most essential element of the Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting Courses. Any content of the program beyond the actual writings represents the efforts of the National Bahá’í Education Task Force to apply the principles and characteristics of Bahá’í education to the dynamic practice of parenting in light of the experiences of friends from all around the world.

Modeling and the Principle of Example

Guidance hath ever been given by words, and now it is given by deeds.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *THE HIDDEN WORDS*, PERSIAN NO. 76

Your conduct in the Spiritual Parenting courses should mirror for participants the distinctive qualities of a Bahá’í educational process. This will be reflected in the set-up of the physical environment, in your loving attitude toward the friends, and in your appreciation and honoring of the diversity of your participants. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s example and presence should be a constant, conscious, and primary reference throughout.

Team Facilitators

Experience shows that teams of two Spiritual Parenting Facilitators provide the most effective learning experience. In addition, a diverse team of facilitators provides an ideal learning and teaching model for the parents you serve.

Scheduling Considerations

The activity times suggested on the following pages are offered as an aid in maintaining a schedule for each session. Of course you may choose to make modifications to fit the needs of your group. For example, a large group of 16–20 parents might require more time for sharing working groups' insights. Another group might wish to spend more time with Parents Helping Parents. Some groups might enjoy 20 minutes instead of the allotted 15 to create an art project. The key is that these times merely provide suggestions, and you and your group are free to make the choices that best serve the needs of the friends.

You may involve participants in consultation about the schedule by asking such questions as: Are we allowing ourselves enough time for the activities so that we consider the questions carefully and also have a good sense of forward movement? Do we need to be sure to begin and end our sessions punctually so that we can plan for our children's care during these sessions?

Participants should feel confident that this program is well planned, and that there is enough time to accomplish their task. The following suggestions are helpful to many facilitators:

- Use of music, a bell, a raised hand or other simple signal often serves well to call groups back to a new focus when time frames are nearing completion, rather than constantly announcing, "You have two minutes," or, "Your time is up."
- Tell participants the length of time allotted and when they should return as part of directions, especially when groups may disperse.
- Let the time "flow." For example, if it is 2:16 and the activity takes "15 minutes," request a return by 2:30.
- Give groups gentle signals, such as, "Do you think three minutes will be sufficient or would you like more time?"
- Provide a more generalized schedule for participants, so that they are not burdened with the small details of the schedule. The detailed time management is a service the facilitator can offer the group. Make it feel easy!
- Plan grouping strategies in advance, perhaps placing stickers or colored hearts at participants' places during a previous activity, so that grouping is both fun and fast.
- Cut strips of masking tape in advance to hang artwork or flipchart lists.
- Write activity directions and focus questions for journaling and discussions on the board or flipchart in advance.
- Other ideas that you know or develop and will share with the rest of us!

Double-Checking Your Preparation

1. Make sure you have all your materials and are well prepared.
2. If a public place can't be found, you can use someone's home. You may also consider hosting the Spiritual Parenting course in your home. Many communities have great success in offering Spiritual Parenting courses at the same time and place as their local Bahá'í classes.
3. You may consider inviting a sponsoring Local Spiritual Assembly to assist with refreshments if desired. Study circles in the area may also provide this service.
4. Assess if there is a need for transportation or childcare and if so, invite a sponsoring institution to assist with the arrangements. Study circles may also provide this service. Ask for the help you need. Individuals are often happy to assist.
5. The participant fee for the Spiritual Parenting classes should cover all expenses. The sponsoring institution may also consider underwriting all or part of the cost. When the course is offered under the auspices of a Regional Training Institute or Bahá'í School, those institutions may have regular policies for managing costs of materials, etc.

Potential costs for each participant might include:

Participant course book	\$ 8.75
Copies of <i>Foundations for a Spiritual Education</i> (optional)	\$ 9.95
Inexpensive book of prayers	\$ 1.50
Art supplies, candles, assorted items	\$ 2.00
Miscellaneous photocopies	\$ 1.00
<i>These Heavenly Children</i> DVD (optional)	\$ 0.00
Total	\$23.20

NOTE: Requesting participants to bring their own scissors, markers, or other art supplies may be a useful cost-saving technique.

Please also consider the cost of any snacks, meals, facility rental, and transportation, if facilitators travel to a non-local community.

Program Success Factors Checklist

- _____ My co-facilitator and I met with the sponsoring institutions (if applicable) and received their guidance and support for our plan.
- _____ We consulted with our Core Curriculum mentor (if applicable).
- _____ We have personally invited prospective participants (both Bahá'ís and others) and encouraged them to invite their friends to participate in the course. This course attracts the hearts of parents from many different backgrounds and may serve as an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith as well as to the principles and practices of parenting as explained in the Bahá'í writings. This course is open to all.
- _____ Letters of invitation have been sent to surrounding Bahá'í communities, including teachers, education committee members, Local Spiritual Assembly members, and those who plan deepenings and community events. This course may be advertised as part of an outreach initiative.
- _____ Follow-up phone calls were made to be sure that friends in the area know about the course and schedule.
- _____ Books were ordered for each participant (participants' course books; small copies of Bahá'í Prayers and *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, if desired).
- _____ We visited the site for the course (home or other) and made plans to assure that it is clean, pleasantly fragrant, comfortable, and attractive for the course.
- _____ Appropriate arrangements were made for transportation to and from the programs.
- _____ Appropriate arrangements were made for children during the programs.
- _____ Arrangements were made for refreshments to be served.
- _____ We reviewed carefully each session to be offered, noted the schedule and materials needed, and decided who will lead each activity.
- _____ Supplemental materials were gathered or prepared for each participant.
- _____ We arranged for music, art supplies, and audio-visuals to create a beautiful atmosphere for presentation of the course.
- _____ We arranged to make Bahá'í prayer books and other holy books available during the workshops.
- _____ We sought divine assistance for our work with participants.
- _____ We reported our service to our sponsoring institution and shared our feedback about the training materials with the National Bahá'í Education Task Force, using the form on pages 37–38.

General Supplies & Equipment

The following is a list of suggested supplies and materials to have on hand for use in the course. Share this list with the sponsoring institution to determine what is available and what needs to be purchased or collected.

Materials to be ordered from the Bahá'í Distribution Service: (800) 999-9019, www.bahaibookstore.com; or from the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore (800) 894-9716, Louhelen@usbnc.org

- ___ *Spiritual Parenting* Course Two course books
- ___ Small copies of Bahá'í Prayers*
- ___ *Foundations for a Spiritual Education: Research of the Bahá'í Writings* (optional)
- ___ *These Heavenly Children* DVD (optional)

*Available from Special Ideas: www.special-ideas.com or (800) 326-1197

For the Facilitators

- ___ White board & pens or chalk board & chalk
- ___ Pad of large chart paper, easel, markers
- ___ CD/cassette player
- ___ Small bell or chime (optional)

For the Environment

- ___ Recorded music: instrumental, prayers, cultural
- ___ Photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- ___ Throw pillows, floor mats
- ___ Boxes of tissue
- ___ Potpourri, candles, tablecloth
- ___ TV and VCR, if you plan to show part of a Bahá'í video during your devotions
- ___ TV or computer and DVD player, if available, for viewing *These Heavenly Children*

For the Participants

- ___ Name tags or cardstock for name boards
- ___ Pens, pencils, pencil sharpener
- ___ Gift quotations for participants
- ___ Felt markers and crayons
- ___ Paints, paint brushes (if available)
- ___ Tape: transparent & masking
- ___ Ribbon, glitter, beads, feathers (if available)
- ___ Glue, glue sticks
- ___ Musical instruments (if available)
- ___ Scissors
- ___ Construction paper, tissue paper, wrapping paper, writing paper; lined or unlined
- ___ Containers to hold and display art material

Books

- ___ The Kitáb-i-Aqdas
- ___ Prayer books
- ___ The Hidden Words
- ___ Dictionaries
- ___ *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*

Materials to Photocopy, If Desired:

- ___ Participant roster
- ___ Agendas
- ___ Maps (to restaurants, parking, or overnight facilities)
- ___ Handouts selected after reviewing the course materials

SPECIFIC ACTIVITY NOTES FOR FACILITATORS

Session One

The Joys and Challenges of Parenting

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions and Welcome!	15 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Remover of Difficulties” prayer set to music, either recorded or sung• A diverse selection of images cut from magazines, realistic as well as abstract• Copies of p. 47 of Spiritual Parenting Course One for reference in goal-setting using the Core Curriculum learning model (optional)• <i>Foundations for a Spiritual Education</i>• Quotation cards for concluding Session One, as participant gifts
The Greatest of All Services	30 min.	
Course Overview; Course Logistics	5 min.	
Session One Themes and Learning Objectives	5 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	15 min.	
Growth Through Challenge	25 min.	
Concluding Session One	10 min.	

Growth Through Challenge

pp. 18–22

If magazine pictures are difficult to find, consider inviting participants to sketch their images from page 21 of the course book, “My Vision of Spiritual Growth.” Encourage them to develop more fully the image of their current goal.

Review your copy of the goal setting activity, pages 44–48 in *Course One* of the Spiritual Parenting program to re-familiarize yourself with the Core Curriculum learning model. Provide copies of the example on page 47 in *Course One* if you feel that your participants might like to refer to it as they set their own goals for Course Two.

Concluding Session One

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Please show your copy of *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*. Offer to order copies for participants if they’d like to have their own copy. Explain that in Course Two of the Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting program, selections from the *Foundations* book will be suggested to supplement the group’s study for each session. The facilitator should also study these readings.

Present each of the friends with a beautifully decorated card with the following quotation:

O Son of Spirit!

Ask not of Me that which We desire not for thee,
then be content with what We have ordained for thy sake,
for this is that which profiteth thee, if therewith thou dost content thyself.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic no. 8

Consider reading this quotation as part of your closing devotions.

Session Two

Nurturing Spirituality in Children

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Materials for demonstration (see below)• Cut fresh or dried fruit sections (optional)• Inexpensive prayer books, as participant gifts
Session Two Themes and Learning Objectives	5 min.	
Reflections on Session One	5 min.	
Nurturing Spirituality in Children	30 min.	
Demonstration	10	
Read/share	20	
Nurturing the Soul	15 min.	
The Value of This Day	25 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	15 min.	
Closing Devotions	5 min.	

Nurturing Spirituality in Children

p. 27

Prepare and conduct the following demonstration, using the script below. Consider practicing in advance.

Materials needed:

- One or more pieces of fresh fruit with seeds—to cut for demonstration
- Knife for cutting fruit
- Small dish with soil
- Ice in a small bowl, glass, or pitcher
- Hot water, to melt ice
- Sunny window, if possible
- Thriving young plant, if possible
- Fruit to serve participants, if desired

Script: Nurturing Spirituality in Children

If we compare our own lives to a tree bearing fruit, we can say that our children are among the finest fruits of our earthly lives. [Show a fruit or a bowl of fresh fruit.]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá even refers to a child as a “fruit” on the tree of his father’s life:

O dear one of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Be the son of thy father and be the fruit of that tree. Be a son that hath been born of his soul and heart and not only of water and clay. A real son is such a one as hath branched from the spiritual part of man.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, no. 117, p. 140

Within each fruit is a seed. [Cut a piece of fresh fruit to show the seeds within. Reserve the seeds.]

Children come into this world rich with seeds of spiritual potential. In the words of this prayer, the soul itself is compared to a seed:

I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love, and caused to spring forth by the hand of Thy bounty. This seed craveth, therefore, in its inmost being, for the waters of Thy mercy and the living fountain of Thy grace.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. Ed., p. 172

[Plant some of the seeds from the fruit in a small bowl of soil. Reserve a few seeds for later in the demonstration. Ask: “What does the seed crave?” Allow time for participants to respond; then show the bowl of ice.]

Shoghi Effendi tells us that “the hearts of humanity [are] frozen for lack of real love. . . .”¹ How can we give the seed the water it craves?

[Allow time for participants’ response; then pour the hot water over the ice to melt it.]

It is the warmth of our love that melts the ice:

I pray for each and all that you may be as flames of love in the world, and that the brightness of your light and the warmth of your affection may reach the heart of every sad and sorrowing child of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, pp. 95–96

[Pour the water over the planted seed.]

. . . The Teachings of God, the utterances of God, are like the water.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 77

[If possible, refer to a sunny window or a light source.]

As the sun ripens the fruits of the earth, and gives life and warmth to all living beings, so shines the Sun of Truth on all souls, filling them with the fire of Divine love and understanding.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 25

Thus will these young plants in the garden of God’s love grow and flourish under the warmth of the Sun of Truth, the gentle spring winds of Heaven, and their mother’s guiding hand. Thus, in the Abhá Paradise, will each become a tree, bearing his clustered fruit, and each one, in this new and wondrous season, out of the bounties of the spring, will become possessed of all beauty and grace.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 138–39

[Refer again to some of the seeds and, if possible, refer also to a thriving young plant.]

As parents we’re encouraged by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Look ye not upon the present, fix your gaze upon the times to come. In the beginning, how small is the seed, yet in the end it is a mighty tree. Look ye not upon the seed, look ye upon the tree, and its blossoms, and its leaves and its fruits.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 81

Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way ye train them.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 135

[If desired, you may conclude the demonstration by passing a fruit bowl or cut pieces of fruit and inviting the participants to enjoy it as you continue with the session.]

¹ On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 312.

Session Three

The Purpose of Spiritual Education

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	• Nice paper and art materials for decorated quotations
Session Three Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Two Reflections	5 min.	
The Purpose of Spiritual Education	20 min.	
Small groups demonstrate	5	
Whole group shares	5	
Small groups read/discuss	10	
Spiritual Foundations for Family Life	30 min.	
Group discussion	5	
Small group reads/discusses	10	
Journal	5	
Decorate quotation	10	
Memorization: Mining the Gems	10 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity	5 min.	

Memorization: Mining the Gems

p. 43

An alternative memorization strategy would be to write the quotation on a chalkboard or whiteboard, and draw the images on the board above the words. Then gradually erase words rather than cover them.

Another option is to write the quotation on index cards, one word per card, and lay them on a table or on the floor. Then gradually cover the word cards with image cards or blank cards.

Session Four

Guiding Children Spiritually

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials and location for obstacle course Access to the outdoors for nature walk
Session Four Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Reflections on Session Three	5 min.	
Guiding Children Spiritually	25 min.	
Introduction	5	
Obstacle course	10	
Read/discuss	10	
Learning from Nature	35 min.	
Introduction	5	
Nature walk	15	
Read/discuss/journal	15	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity	5 min.	

Guiding Children Spiritually

pp. 47–48

Advance Preparation:

Prepare a short obstacle course that would take 1–2 minutes to traverse by going over, under, around, and through objects to get from one side of the room to another or one side of a yard to another. Some examples might be: over toys strewn on the floor, around furniture, under a table or a towel draped in a doorway, through a maze of chairs or other small furniture that is easy to move OR over a log or two, around a bush, under a low-hanging branch, and through a flowerbed without stepping on flowers. If the obstacle course will be in the same room that you use for your Spiritual Parenting course, consider having a plan to quickly adjust a few items in the room to create the obstacle course when you are ready to introduce the activity.

Begin the activity by inviting the participants to work in teams of two, with one person acting as the *walker* and the other as the *guide*. In these teams, they will take turns guiding each other through the obstacle course. If the number of participants permits, give each team one of the following assignments. If you have fewer participants, invite teams to go through the course more than once so that at least one team in the group will have experienced each of the following ways to move through the course:

- The walker has eyes closed. The guide links arms with the walker and the two people walk slowly side by side through the course. The guide takes

responsibility for guiding the walker safely through the course by using gentle pressure on the arm. Both observe silence.

- The walker has eyes closed. The guide links arms with the walker. They walk together through the course. The guide uses language to coach the walker safely through the course.
- Both people have eyes open. The guide and the walker move through the course side by side, with the guide using language to coach the walker through the course.
- Both people have eyes open. The guide stands near the course, invites the walker to traverse the course and uses language to provide direction as needed as the walker moves through the course.
- Both people have eyes open, although the guide may be in another room. The walker personally initiates movement and successfully travels through the course and tells the guide some of the high points of the experience. The guide listens and encourages.

After all people have moved through the course, briefly discuss the questions: What are some important responsibilities of a guide? What changes and what stays the same as circumstances change? How might this activity illustrate the responsibilities of parents to guide children at different ages and stages of life?

Learning from Nature

pp. 49–51

Even if the outdoors is cold, hot, wet, or dark, encourage the participants to step outside—even onto a porch—to engage directly with the world of nature.

If absolutely necessary, you may consider viewing part of a video of beautiful natural environments or paging through nature magazines or picture books.

Session Five

Consultation and Reflection

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	• Art materials
Session Five Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Four Reflections	5 min.	
Consultation	15 min.	
Practicing Consultation	30 min.	
The Power of Reflection	20 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity	5 min.	

Consultation and Practicing Consultation

pp. 57–60

Some participants may not be familiar with the process of consultation. A simplified explanation of this process, adapted from *Spiritual Institutions: The Foundation for Oneness*, prepared by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, could include the following:

Bahá'u'lláh has given us a process called consultation, through which we investigate truth, seek justice, and make decisions based upon spiritual laws and principles. “Consultation is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.”

The Universal House of Justice guides our understanding: “There are spiritual principles, or what some call human values, by which solutions can be found for every social problem.”

Spiritual Assemblies go through several steps during the process of consultation.

1. Facts are gathered.
2. The problem is clearly stated.
3. Relevant spiritual principles are identified.
4. The Assembly considers how these apply to the particular situation.
5. A discussion follows in which every member of the Assembly freely expresses his or her views, and ultimately the spark of truth becomes apparent.
6. A decision is made after all have been heard and a consensus has emerged.

Session Six

Research and Action

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources for research, including books such as <i>Lights of Guidance</i>, <i>The Compilation of Compilations</i>, <i>Bahá'í Marriage and Family Life</i>, <i>Compilation on Women</i>, <i>Foundations for a Spiritual Education</i>, and any other resources that might be useful for finding answers, including online sources, if available
Session Six Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Five Reflections	5 min.	
Researching the Writings for Answers	40 min.	
Read/discuss/generate list	10	
Research	20	
Share	10	
The Power of Action	30 min.	
Read/discuss	5	
Prepare role-play	15	
Share	10	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity	10 min.	

Researching the Writings for Answers

p. 67

Please circulate among the participants to suggest specific resources, demonstrate the use of indexes, and provide encouragement as needed. Do not answer their questions for them as the purpose of the activity is for the participants to practice using the books themselves. The Bahá'í writings will provide direct answers for some questions. In many cases, the participants will need to find quotations that describe spiritual principles that can be applied to the specific questions they have selected.

The Power of Action

p. 69

For Step 2, some ideas to add to participant suggestions of times we might choose to guide our children through action include:

- When they are very young.
- In times of emergency.
- When we've already noticed that they are not listening.
- When we're striving to teach through example.
- When we've already offered a suggestion and don't want to repeat it.

If desired, you may add specific examples such as the following to the participants' list:

- Seven-year-old finicky eater at dinner table: “I hate chicken casserole. I won’t eat it.”
- Mom and her friend are on the patio, trying to have a conversation. The child keeps interrupting with requests for favors, questions, and loud noises.
- Four-year-old is visiting a friend. Parent says it is time to go home. Child insists on taking home friend’s toy. Mother says that is not possible. Child throws tantrum.

If desired you may choose to add some of the following ideas to the list of appropriate actions that parents might choose to take when they employ action more than speech in guiding their children.

- Act without talking, i.e., continue walking.
- Give limited choice, e.g., “Would you like to walk to the car or have me carry you?”
- Make a reasonable request in ten words or less. Wait for the child’s response.
- Use one word.
- Use a signal or note.

Session Seven

Spiritual Education in the Home

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	• Blank paper and assorted art supplies
Session Seven Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Six Reflections	5 min.	
Spiritual Education and Training	30 min.	
Read/discuss story	5	
Read/discuss quotations	10	
Create/share art	15	
“Seize Thy Chance”	35 min.	
Read/discuss story	5	
Read/discuss quotations	10	
Questionnaire/share	10	
Role-play	10	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity: Music—A Ladder for the Soul	10 min.	

Session Eight

Love in the Human Family

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	• Copies of <i>Brilliant Star</i> magazine
Session Eight Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Seven Reflections	5 min.	
Appreciating Diversity	5 min.	
Teaching Children About Oneness	30 min.	
The Power of Unity: Example of Louis Gregory	10 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Devotions	5 min.	

Teaching Children About Oneness

p. 90

Take a few moments to assist participants to learn about resources available to promote further understanding of the principle of oneness in our families and in our communities, including the Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides for children and junior youth, and the Core Curriculum Race Unity course for youth and adults. The Youth Empowerment program also includes the topic of race unity.

For more information about all these resources, parents may visit the Core Curriculum website at www.core-curriculum.org.

Session Nine

The Child Development Centered Community

Activities and Suggested Times	Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.
Session Nine Theme and Learning Objectives	2 min.
Session Eight Reflections	5 min.
Community Roles and Responsibilities: Defining the Child Development Centered Community; The Community Web	40 min.
<i>Brilliant Star</i> magazine	20 min.
Parents Helping Parents	15 min.
Closing Devotions	5 min.

Community Roles and Responsibilities

p. 99

Take time to establish a common vision of the child development centered community by discussing what its major features will be. Discern the differences between child indulgence and child development, by brainstorming lists of what it is and what it is not.

List comments on the board as they are suggested. A possible list might look like this:

Participants may be curious about the sources of

What It Is:

- child or day care center
- child is included in all aspects of the community
- inward and outward manifestation of oneness of mankind
- a real community
- vehicle for interactive personal and global transformation
- has impact on all community, administrative & family activities
- values and supports marriage and family life

What It Is Not:

- child centered
- child indulgence
- child controlled
- a replacement for the Spiritual Assembly
- a replacement for the community

the summary on page 102, Major Features of the Child Development Centered Community. References for this summary include many sections in *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, including The Nature, Purpose, and Outcomes of Spiritual Education (pages 85–93) and Roles and Responsibilities (pages 173–87), as well as letters from the Universal House of Justice such as those dated 25 May 1975, 19 July 1982, 31 August 1976, Ridván 1996, Ridván 2000.

Community Web

p. 103

1. Play Community Web to illustrate the interdependency of all community members. You will need a large ball of yarn and labels for each player to wear designating them as one of the following.

<u>Youth</u>	<u>Community Member</u>
<u>Child</u>	<u>Seeker</u>
<u>Schools Committee Member</u>	<u>RTI Area Coordinator</u>
<u>LSA Member</u>	<u>Teacher</u>
<u>Assistant to Auxiliary Board</u>	<u>Parent</u>
	<u>Junior Youth</u>

If you have more than nine players, duplicate identities are fine.

2. Stand in a circle. The first person holds the end of the yarn, identifies herself and states how she would like to work with someone else in the community for the education of children. For example, “I am a member of the Assembly. We would like to sponsor a conference for the junior youth in our district. I would like to meet with Julie, one of our area’s junior youth, to consult on meaningful topics for the conference.” Then she uses her free hand to toss the ball of yarn across the circle to another member, who is wearing the “junior youth” label. That person then chooses to work with someone and explains why in a similar manner.
 - Caution players not to wrap yarn around a finger, as this can become painful as game progresses. Remind everyone to keep the connecting lines of yarn fairly taut.
3. As the game continues, a complex web is built. Participants can feel the interconnectedness of each other and the strength that results from a unified community. Notice that even the tension is bonding.
4. Discuss the implications of our roles and responsibilities and the effect of our behavior on the growth and development of the children, youth, and the community.
 - How do these roles interconnect to assist the children and youth in fulfilling their destinies?
 - What are the implications of these interconnections for the community’s welfare and growth?
 - How is the community strengthened by the participation of all its members in the spiritual education of children and youth?

Session Ten

Bahá'í Classes Open to All

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Copies of Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides and storybooks• <i>These Heavenly Children</i> DVD (optional)
Session Ten Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Nine Reflections	5 min.	
Bahá'í Classes Open to All: The Content of Bahá'í Education; Bahá'í Classes Open to All: The Core Curriculum for the Spiritual Education of Children and Junior Youth	45 min.	
Sharing Stories for Spiritual Education	30 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Closing Activity	5 min.	

Bahá'í Classes Open to All: The Core Curriculum for the Spiritual Education of Children and Junior Youth

pp. 112–16

Before discussing the questions of page 116 of the course book, consider showing the video *These Heavenly Children*. Viewing and discussing this video will enrich and enhance your discussion of the questions listed.

Here is a recent true story to encourage parents in your group:

A Bahá'í parent of two boys had concerns about the kind of environment in which they were growing up, and wondered if other parents in his boys' private middle school had similar concerns. So he planned a series of questions to pose the next time he had a chance to chat with other parents. He never got past the first question: "What concerns do you have for the spiritual and moral education of your children?" The discussion lasted two hours.

Realizing an enormous amount of interest in the topic, he felt emboldened to ask, "Would you be interested in allowing your child to attend a Bahá'í class focusing on spiritual education?" This led to a quarterly Bahá'í Boys Academy that focuses on stories of spiritual heroes from Islamic, Biblical, and Bahá'í texts and includes art, storytelling, service projects, and sports.

The participants' eagerness to return has led parents to remark that, however this dad has been able to maintain the attention of so many 9- to 14-year-old boys with Bible stories, he should keep it up!

This work led to a series of coffee house discussions with parents about fostering the spiritual education of their children, and plans to begin parenting classes.

Session Eleven

Children in the Cause of God

Activities and Suggested Times	Materials Needed
Welcome and Devotions	10 min.
Session Eleven Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.
Session Ten Reflections	5 min.
Children: Full Participants in Community Life	35 min.
Children as Teachers of the Cause of God	30 min.
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.
Closing Activity	5 min.

Session Twelve

Love is Light

Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions	15 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candles for Love Is Light devotions • Small pieces of paper to place in “treasure chests” • Small boxes, or materials to create a treasure chest for each participant • Copies of the Feedback Form and Needs Assessment Survey for each participant
Session Twelve Themes and Learning Objectives	2 min.	
Session Eleven Reflections	5 min.	
Love Is Light	20 min.	
Love in the Family—Stories from the Childhood of Shoghi Effendi	20 min.	
Methods of Showing Love	10 min.	
A Treasure Trove of Parenting Methods and Tools	10 min.	
Parents Helping Parents	10 min.	
Evaluation and Conclusion: What’s Next? Parenting Program, Course Three	15 min.	

A Treasure Trove of Parenting Methods and Tools

p. 137

Please bring your own copy of *Spiritual Parenting, Course One*, for reference.

Conclusion: What’s Next? Parenting Program, Course Three

p. 139

Assure the friends that you have taken notes and carefully recorded questions and concerns that have been raised during this course. Assure them that you will add these notes to the Needs Assessment Surveys.

Kindly collect and return course evaluations to the National Bahá’í Education Task Force, along with a participant list and your training feedback form on pages 37–38 of this Facilitator Guide. These forms are available online at www.core-curriculum.org/downloads if you prefer to download them.

Your participation in this simple process of feedback and evaluation allows the National Bahá’í Education Task Force to carry out its function of systematically learning from your experiences and sharing this learning with others.

Please also use the standard reporting process put in place by your Regional Training Institute, if they have adopted the *Spiritual Parenting* program as a branch course.

Carefully plan a beautiful and uplifting closing devotional program for your participants.

Present a small gift to each participant as a beautiful remembrance of this *Spiritual Parenting* program. As a group, make a plan for continued group study and workshops, perhaps selecting a related Core Curriculum community development course, such as those focusing on *Marriage and Family Life*, *Equality*, or *Race Unity*. Contact the Education and Schools Office at the Bahá’í National Center for the names of individuals trained to facilitate these courses.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR CORE CURRICULUM PARENTING FACILITATORS

Distinctive Characteristics of Bahá'í Education

Among the Bahá'í principles and characteristics that are integral to this course are:

- Reliance upon God through prayer and a spiritual attitude.
- Use of the Creative Word as a foundation for learning.
- Significance of meditation and reflection in the learning process.
- Use of memorization.
- Use of consultation to develop true understanding.
- The importance of diversity to the growth of the individual, to creativity, and to the unity of the group (ethnicity, gender, personality, learning style, capacity, experience, knowledge).
- Teaching the Faith in word and deed as the ultimate outcome of spiritual education.
- Service to humanity as a primary purpose of education.
- Respect for each person's unique contribution to the learning process.
- Excellence in all things as a standard for all Bahá'í activity.
- Genuine love and recognition of each person's spiritual reality.
- Recognition of parents as primary educators of the children.
- Use of the arts to deepen spiritual perception and richness of the learning experience.

The Learning Experience

The course has been designed so that the participants actively engage in their own learning. Consultation and interactive learning activities form an integral part of the learning experience. As a course facilitator, you will be modeling and utilizing a variety of learning tools and instructional methods as described in the Bahá'í writings, as well as considering a wide array of different learning modalities. Among these are direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings, including memorization of the writings, experiential learning activities, creative expression, and use of music. The arts are fully incorporated into the learning process as a means to deepen understanding and apply knowledge.

Conscious Knowledge

Throughout the course the facilitators engage the participants in processing activities to assist them to identify the spiritual and educational principles and practices being modeled and taught. This conscious knowledge enables participants to consider how they can apply these same principles and practices in their child-rearing.

Journal Work

The journal provides a powerful tool to assist participants in directing their spiritual development process. It offers:

- Time to reflect and process the events, new concepts, and activities in the course.
- A place to record ideas, insights, questions, and concerns.
- A place to recognize understanding, consider past events, and engage in self-evaluation.
- A place to describe aspirations and future action steps.

Participants in the course are encouraged to use the journal to record their thoughts, feelings, visions, hopes, questions, themes, patterns, memories, mood, personal goals, and progress. The journal is most effective when it is used on a regular basis. Questions or prompts for journal reflections are suggested throughout the course book.

Resources for Spiritual Education

Making use of available resources is an important part of Core Curriculum programs. While participants will be introduced in Course Two of the Spiritual Parenting Program to selected Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides and Storybooks as resources for the spiritual education of children, it is useful to have as many resources as possible on hand for the participants to see. It is also helpful to be familiar with online resources such as the Core Curriculum website (www.core-curriculum.org), the national Bahá'í education website (www.education.usbnc.org), the Bahá'í Parenting newsletter (www.bahaiparent.com), and *Brilliant Star* magazine, to encourage parents to develop their own resources and activities.

Instructional Methods

A variety of instructional methods are suggested throughout the course. Facilitators may adapt these to fit their own style and to meet the styles of their participants. At the same time, we suggest that you maintain a diversity of methodologies as a model for the parents in their own work with their children. Listed below are a number of ways to diversify the activities in your course and add some fun to the process.

Methods for Creating Working Groups

- Table Groups. Those people already sitting together may form a group.
- Counting Off. Decide how many groups you need, and ask participants to count off (1, 2, 3 . . . or A, B, C . . .).
- Thematic. Invite participants to gather in designated spots in the room according to themes, such as “everyone whose favorite color is red,” or, “. . . who has visited another continent.” Let those who fit more than one category fill in where needed for group size.
- Seat Markers. During a break, place small objects (such as paper clips, pennies, rocks) at each place. When it is time to divide into groups draw attention to the object and form groups accordingly.

- **Sounding Off.** Pass out or leave small pictures or names of animals at each seat. At a signal, all participants begin making the noise of and/or acting out their animal, trying to locate their group members.
- **Scavenger Hunt.** Give out slips of paper with instructions like, “Find three people with the same color shoes as you,” or, “Find one person who first heard Bahá’u’lláh’s Name before you did and one person who first heard Bahá’u’lláh’s Name after you first heard it,” and form groups with the results.

Group Sharing

Once the groups have been formed and been given their tasks, you will be asking them to share the results of their consultations and/or work with the whole group at a designated time. There are a number of ways to achieve this. Use a variety in your course. Examples include:

- **Verbal Reporting.** One or more speakers or all members of the group simply tell the large group their results. Major points may be listed on chart paper by one of the facilitators (hint: alternate colors of pen for each statement).
- **Visual Arts.** Invite all groups to create a visual art piece (drawing, painting, diagram, sculpture, construction, etc.) that expresses their findings. They may verbally explain their creation.
- **Performing Art.** Ask that all groups express their findings through dance, drama, role-play, music, song, or other performance. Some verbal explanation may accompany the piece.

Group Learning: “Jigsaw” as a Group Learning Method

Jigsaw works best when there are at least eight participants in the course and there is a large body of material to be read and understood by the group. Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy. It is a relatively simple technique designed to increase group interdependence and to increase students’ sense of responsibility for their learning. The idea is for each member of a leading team to become an expert on one part of the material. Once the “experts” have grasped the material they teach it to those from other teams.

Organizing a Jigsaw

Before the Course Session:

- Once you know how many will be attending the course, divide the material to be studied into 3–6 parts.
- Assign the participants into heterogeneous teams, i.e., insure a balance of gender, experience, and ethnicity. For example, with 20 participants, you may decide to have five teams, each comprising four participants (potential “experts”).
- Decide how you will assess the success of the learning (i.e. evaluate the learning through quizzes, games, or presentations).

At the Course Session:

Step 1: Assign teams.

Step 2: Invite teams to choose a name for their group.

Step 3: Plan a short inclusion activity to create a sense of interdependence—prayers, a get acquainted activity or team building game—depending on the time you have.

Step 4: Assign each team member a number according to the number of sections into which you have divided the material. If you have divided it into four parts, then number the members of each team 1-4.

Step 5: Give section 1 of the divided material to “expert” 1, section 2 to “expert” 2 and so on. No person in each team has all the material; each person has part of it.

Step 6: Team members then leave their teams and form “expert groups.” The task of the “expert” group is to read the material, grasp its content, consult on its meaning, and decide on clever ways to teach it to other team members.

Step 7: All “experts” (now greater experts than before!) return to their respective teams and teach the material in their section to the rest of their team.

Step 8: Assess the team learning. Combine the scores to give a group score. You may, or may not, choose to reward the teams that demonstrate successful learning.

PREPARE! PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Site Considerations

Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting courses have been held in places as diverse as homes, Bahá’í centers, colleges, hotels, rustic conference centers, and pre-schools. There are a number of factors to consider, in consultation with the sponsoring institution. Please note that the size of the group will be an important factor to keep in mind as you plan your Spiritual Parenting course.

Space: Avoid being cramped! You’ll need adequate room for:

- Tables and chairs to be arranged to facilitate consultation and note taking.
- Room for small group break-out work, for presentations, for stretching and movement activities and for fellowship and visiting.
- Comfortable reception and registration area.
- Meditation, prayer or quiet study area.
- Space for doing messy crafts (including appropriate floor space and covering).
- Storage area for supplies, coats and luggage.
- Outdoor area with convenient access to yard, park, garden or woods for fresh air and sunshine anytime!
- Childcare areas if children will be attending.
- A place for snacks or even a dining area if you will be including meals as part of your program.

All of the above can be creatively arranged in a large hall, by dividing areas with furniture or rugs.

Aesthetics: If the facility doesn't readily lend itself to a reverential, inspirational atmosphere, choose another or work to make it so!

Acoustics: To facilitate both presentations and group consultation, acoustics need to be good. Also check for excessive noise from traffic, heat and air systems, or other groups of people. Use consultation to address any difficulties and come up with the best solution for your circumstances.

Food: Check into the facility's policies pertaining to food service. Ideally you will have beverages such as water, tea, coffee, and juice available and easily accessible. If you are conducting an extended day-long intensive session, meals can be on-site in a separate area from the course classroom. If meals are off-site, adjust the agenda to allow extra time. Some options for meals are an outdoor picnic (bring-your-own or sponsor-provided), nearby restaurants, on-site kitchen with volunteer staff, or catered meals by the local community.

Setting Up Arts, Crafts, and Music Resources

Identify a special area in your facility for arts, crafts, and musical supplies. These materials should be available throughout the course for the friends to express themselves and their ideas. Encourage the friends to make creative use of these supplies.

Please make use of a variety of inexpensive, readily available materials for art. Is it not necessary to spend a lot of money to inspire creativity. Materials from nature such as sticks, pinecones, pressed flowers, string, pretty rocks, etc., make excellent supplies for art activities. You may also invite participants to bring scissors, markers, crayons, etc., from home to use during the training.

Spiritual Parenting Facilitators are encouraged to draw on the resources of the community to assure that sufficient materials are available for the course.

Visual Aids

You may choose to use some visual aids during your course. Some suggestions are:

- Make posters from enlargements. Some copy centers are equipped to make poster size enlargements from an 8 1/2" x 11" original. You may also wish to protect posters you've made by having them laminated or covering them with clear contact paper yourself.
- Make your own beautiful posters using calligraphy and color!
- Create graphic slides using a personal computer.

Personnel

Community members can assist by serving in the following capacities:

- Receptionist(s), hosts, guides, or servers.
- Treasurer or designated assistant for payments and receipts.
- People to help cook, set up, run errands, clean up.

Involve everyone in your community—encourage children to participate! Involvement brings participants.

Childcare

Participants in your Spiritual Parenting course will need to have appropriate care for their children to be able to effectively participate in this program. In some communities parents make their own arrangements; in others they may choose to jointly hire high quality childcare (on-site or off-site). Sometimes parenting sessions are offered at the same time as Bahá'í children's classes. Sometimes participants in study circles are eager to offer service with small groups of children. Please consult with the parents and your sponsoring institution to assure that children's needs are met.

Other Considerations

Provide if possible:

- Photographer for candid and group pictures.
- Transportation to and from site for those using public conveyances (arrange for shuttling to secondary sites as needed, e.g., nature walk).

Scheduling Considerations

Flexibility has been purposely built into the course implementation to allow communities to adapt the schedule to their unique situations. Ideally, participants will have sufficient time between sessions to practice new skills and to reflect on the writings they have studied. Scheduling of each course session will be determined through consultation with participants and the sponsoring institution.

Breaks, Time for Reflection, Fellowship, and Devotions

- In your advance planning, schedule breaks as they seem appropriate according to your needs.
- Plan to open and close all sessions with devotions and to set an example by encouraging the use of memorized devotions and music.
- Provide sufficient time also for fellowship and consultation. Part of the joy and excitement of the course is the opportunity to share with others the challenges and bounties of parenting. Consultation within the parenting group can also effectively resolve many questions related to schedule and other matters.

Inviting Parents to Participate

The key to building the participation of parents is your own enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of others. Parents need to feel confident that this course will address their needs, hopes, and interests and that the course will be enjoyable and productive. Enthusiastic parents will bring others.

A personal approach works best. Announcements, flyers, and general letters can be useful parts of an outreach plan but cannot replace personal contacts (phone calls, conversations, and e-mail) with others. Sending a sweet, handwritten invitation by mail can also offer a personal touch.

Your introductory session can help parents experience a sample of the sorts of experiences they will have in the course and may be especially effective when you're reaching out to parents in the community at large.

CULTURAL APPRECIATION

The learning environment is created through physical surroundings and material preparations that reflect love and appreciation for the individual participants' capacities, capabilities, and cultural diversity.

The following examples illustrate strategies to bridge cultural differences:

- Ask: Perhaps one of the best ways to learn about the needs, hopes, and interests of the people we're with is simply to ask them what they think and listen carefully to their responses. It is also important to observe participant responses and invite their questions and comments as the course unfolds.
- Working in pairs: If close interaction with the opposite sex is culturally inappropriate and the activity suggests working in pairs, direct friends to choose male-male and female-female partners or arrange pairs in advance to quietly accommodate this need.
- Language use: Some individuals enjoy reading quotations in English, while others do not. During the first part of the training invite volunteers to read rather than assigning readers. Please carefully observe the group you are serving. Routinely invite individuals to "pass" if they prefer not to read; if possible, organize working groups so that at least one able reader is in each group. Alternatively you may memorize the first quotation for an activity and focus the activity on deep exploration of that one quotation.
- Time: Please be mindful that different groups require more or less time for study depending on such factors as group size, reading ease, familiarity with the Faith, and possibly cultural factors. Consult with the group and adjust the schedule if necessary so that:
 - Participants engage thoroughly with the Word of God with both mind and heart.
 - There is a feeling of dynamic energetic movement in the training without rushing or feeling stressed.
- Recognition of individuals: For those who find public recognition of individual attributes immodest, try setting the stage by sharing that every attribute is a gift from God. Avoid directing praise to selected individuals: "Praise without distinction." Note that God's gifts allow His attributes to shine forth within the community.
- Any activity that uses posters or two-dimensional art expression: Some friends come from backgrounds that seldom use two-dimensional, paper art for expression. Clarify that visual artwork may be three-dimensional, using a wide range of materials for creation.
- Avoiding materialism: The Core Curriculum *is not* about equipment or supplies, although it strives to use them well. Core Curriculum *is* about the interaction of the Word of God with the human spirit in a way that engages the mind and heart to mobilize participation to transform the world. Please assess the local environment and make creative use of the materials that will be available to the participants in this course.
- Music throughout the training: Diverse music—and lots of music—enhances any environment. Some favorites include:
 - *Amame* by Leonor Dély y Millero Congo.
 - Any of the many *Black Men's Gathering* albums.
 - "Dastam Begir" (any version, such as Music of the World Congress) when considering the Example of the Master.

- *Esengo Na Mboka Haija* by Congo Youth Choir.
- *Keepers of the Dream* by Kevin Locke.
- *Louhelen: Fruits of the Spirit* compilation album.
- *Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh* by Zheng Fei Hong.
- *The Santour* by Kiu Haghighi.
- *Sounds of the World*, music from the World Center Terrace Dedications.
- *We Have come to Sing Praises*, “In this Day Bahá'u'lláh” by the Bahá'í Gospel Choir at the conclusion of a session.

There are many choices to explore!

SITUATIONS BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE CORE CURRICULUM PROGRAM

While the role of the Spiritual Parenting Facilitators is one of profound service to families, Bahá'í institutions, and the community, sometimes situations can arise that are beyond the scope of the Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting program. Based on what you already know, consider situations that might be beyond the scope of this program. Some examples include abuse, deeply emotional issues, custody and other legal matters, etc.

What can you do should such a situation arise? How could you prepare for such situations?

For example, if a participant is emotionally overcome by a particularly moving activity, one facilitator could assist by stepping out of the room with the participant to listen and show love, while the other continues the course.

In some instances, be prepared to refer the situation to a Bahá'í institution such as the Local Spiritual Assembly, an Auxiliary Board Member or an Assistant.

Consider the following story as analogy:

There once was a village hospital which every day saw a consistent stream of bloodied, battered people coming with the same injuries. The doctors and nurses were so busy patching people up they had no time to investigate the cause. Finally a youthful, inquisitive soul investigated and found that a commonly used footpath passed a dangerous cliff, and many people were falling off this cliff. The village people then built a fence, and the problem was solved.

As Spiritual Parenting Facilitators, we know there are lots of injured people among us; there are others trained to treat the injured. We are the youthful, inquisitive souls, uniting our communities to work for change.

ACADEMIC CREDIT FOR CORE CURRICULUM SERVICE

University credit at the graduate or undergraduate level may be earned for your participation in online Character Education and Community Development courses, which are based on the Core Curriculum framework, and for your service in your local community as a Spiritual Parenting Facilitator. Draw on professional resources for teachers to enhance your effectiveness at the local level through a combination of face-to-face learning and internet resources. Visit www.louhelen.org/cecd or contact Dr. Rick Johnson at Louhelen Bahá'í School (Louhelen@usbnc.org, (810) 653-5033) for more information about this exciting opportunity.

Sample Course Invitation Letter from the Sponsoring Institution to Parents, Grandparents, and Communities

Date_____

To_____

Dear Friends,

We are happy to announce that our [*Local Spiritual Assembly or other institution*] has scheduled a Spiritual Parenting Course on [*date and time*] at [*place*]. This program is designed to foster loving, unified, spiritually vibrant families.

Our [*Local Spiritual Assembly or other institution*] encourages all parents from all Faiths and backgrounds in your community to participate in the course. Additionally, grandparents and community members who care for children may cherish this learning opportunity. We humbly request your support for this program.

The course to be offered is the second course in the Spiritual Parenting program.

Through a variety of learning activities we will:

- Explore the Bahá'í writings as a strong foundation of guidance and inspiration for our role as parents.
- Learn practical ways to implement the guidance in the Bahá'í writings.
- Establish our own parent network to provide support and strength for families.
- Realize that parents, teachers, and community members collaborate to support growth and development of children.

Among the topics covered in this course are:

- The Joys and Challenges of Parenting.
- Nurturing Spirituality in Children.
- The Purpose of Spiritual Education.
- Guiding Children Spiritually.
- Spiritual Education in the Home.
- The Child Development Centered Community.
- Children in the Cause of God.

The cost for all sessions, including the Spiritual Parenting course book, is \$_____.

We encourage all participants to plan to attend all sessions of the course to achieve maximum benefit. We anticipate that this will be a very rich experience for all. Should you have any questions regarding the course, please contact [*facilitators' names and phone numbers*] who will be happy to answer your questions. You may view the content of the course online at www.core-curriculum.org.

Please send or phone registration requests or recommended names by [*date*] to [*contact person's name, phone number, and address*].

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Sample Registration Confirmation

We are pleased to confirm your registration!
Core Curriculum Spiritual Parenting, Course Two

Tuesdays, October 6 to December 16, 7:30 p.m.



- Location:* Anywhere Bahá'í Center
99 Unity Lane, Covenant City, USA
Phone (909) 909-9999
- Directions:* From Highway 9, take the . . .
- Cost:* \$____ per person, includes:
Instructional materials for all sessions and refreshments
- Registration fee of \$____, payable by [date] to [Institutional addresses, phone]
- What to Bring:* Prayer book, pen or pencil, sweater or jacket, favorite art supplies to share, a smile
- What to Wear:* Comfortable clothes for sitting and moderate activity
- Who to Contact:* Please call either Mary Friend, (919) 191-1919, or John Helper, (919) 919-9191

Kindly inform us if you are unable to attend.

FEEDBACK FORM FOR CORE CURRICULUM SPIRITUAL PARENTING COURSE TWO

Facilitators are requested to photocopy this form, complete it, and send it to:
National Babá'í Education Task Force,
Office of Education and Schools at the Babá'í National Center, 1233 Central St., Evanston, IL 60201
within two weeks of the completion of the course.

Email feedback prepared using this format is welcome at SCHOOLS@usbnc.org.
Please also enclose a roster of participants and a summary or copy of their evaluations.

FACILITATORS

Names _____

Addresses _____

Phone Numbers _____

LOGISTICS

Sponsoring Institution _____ Location of Course _____

Dates of Course _____

Total Number of Participants _____ Number Completing All Modules _____

Heritage:

____ African American ____ Hispanic ____ Pacific Islands

____ European American ____ Interracial ____ Persian

____ Asian ____ Native American ____ Other

EVALUATION

1. Did you complete the activities as designed?

2. What were the highlights of the course for you and for the participants?

3. What difficulties did you encounter, if any?

4. To what extent did you achieve the goals of each session?

5. What provisions were established by the sponsoring institution for:

Follow-through on participants' plans made during the course?

Continued support by providing ongoing networking and deepening?

Initiating new study circles or other activities?

Outreach to other parents?

Continuous improvement of Bahá'í education programs in the local community?

6. Further comments:

