

**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

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# Youth Empowerment

## A New Cycle of Human Power

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*Facilitator Guide*

***National Bahá'í Education  
Task Force***

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National Spiritual Assembly of the  
Bahá'ís of the United States

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# Youth Empowerment

## A NEW CYCLE OF HUMAN POWER

### *Elements of a Successful Youth Empowerment Course*

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This course attracts the hearts of youth from many different backgrounds and has served as an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith as well as to the practices, roles, and responsibilities of youth 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 their application of spiritual principles to their own circumstances. Love and humility are keys to this service.

You may contact the Office of Education and Schools at the Bahá'í National Center with questions about the use of course materials: (847) 733-3492 or [SCHOOLS@usbnc.org](mailto:SCHOOLS@usbnc.org).

#### **Knowledge Through Service**

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

As a Youth Empowerment Facilitator, you may collaborate with the appropriate Bahá'í institutions, such as your Local Spiritual Assembly or Regional Training Institute, according to your circumstances, to offer Youth Empowerment courses.

- Individuals trained to offer any of the Core Curriculum courses may offer collaboration, logistical support, and encouragement. In January 2006, the Universal House of Justice stipulated “that the Core Curriculum should be considered as a specialized branch after Book 3 of the Ruhi Institute’s main sequence of courses, that serves the needs of teachers of Bahá'í schools for children.”
- Regular updates, current materials, and new information are posted on the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).
- At the conclusion of the course, kindly complete and return the Feedback Form to the National Bahá'í Education Task Force. The Feedback Form is provided on pages 57–58 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., 6–16) enables close interaction among the group members, while allowing for a full use of varied methods for 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 sacred writings and prayer during your time together in this course. Some possibilities are:

- Share prayers in different languages.
- Listen to prayers and sacred writings recited with music playing in the 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 Youth Empowerment 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 challenges and bounties of being a Bahá’í youth in light of the experiences of thousands of friends from all around the world.

This course was developed in collaboration with the National Youth Committee and youth collaborators throughout the United States.

## **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 Youth Empowerment 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 Youth Empowerment Facilitators provide the most effective learning experience. In addition, a diverse team of facilitators provides an ideal learning and teaching model for the youth you serve.

## **A Note on Scheduling**

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 youth might require more time for sharing working groups' insights. 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 achieve all we desire 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," suggest 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. You may use a public place or also consider hosting the Youth Empowerment course in your home. Many communities have great success offering Youth Empowerment courses at the same time and place as their local Bahá'í classes, as weekend retreats, or as weekly gatherings for youth.
3. You may consider inviting a 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 and if so, invite a sponsoring institution to assist with the arrangements. Study circles may also offer this service. Ask for the help you need. Individuals are often happy to assist.
5. The participant fee for the Youth Empowerment 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 books	\$ 9.00
Art supplies, candles, refreshments, assorted items	\$ 4.00
Total	\$12.00

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***

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- \_\_\_\_\_ My co-facilitator and I met with the sponsoring institutions (if applicable) and received their guidance and support for our plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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 youth from many different backgrounds and may serve as an introduction to the Bahá'í Faith as well as to the practices, roles, and responsibilities of youth as explained in the Bahá'í writings. This course is open to all.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Letters of invitation have been sent to youth as well as 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 and other desired materials were ordered for each participant.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 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.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrangements were made for refreshments to be served.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We reviewed carefully each module 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. We also shared our feedback about the training materials with the National Bahá'í Education Task Force, using the form on pages 57–58.

## General Supplies & Equipment

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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. Additional materials for specific activities are listed on pages 8, 15, 18, and 29.

Some materials listed below can be ordered from the Bahá'í Distribution Service: (800) 999-9019 [www.bahaibookstore.com](http://www.bahaibookstore.com):

- \_\_\_ Youth Empowerment course books (one for each participant)
- \_\_\_ Youth Empowerment set of Heroes, Heroines, and Hands cards (for the facilitator)
- \_\_\_ Youth Empowerment CD (for the facilitator) or alternative melodies for learning the prayer for youth

### For the Facilitators

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

### For the Environment

- \_\_\_ Recorded music: instrumental, prayers, cultural
- \_\_\_ Throw pillows, floor mats
- \_\_\_ Potpourri, candles, tablecloth
- \_\_\_ TV and VCR, if you plan to show part of a Bahá'í video during your devotions
- \_\_\_ Photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- \_\_\_ Boxes of tissue

### For the Participants

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

### Books

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

### Materials to Photocopy, If Desired:

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

## Introduction

### *The Day of God*

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Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Welcome, Devotions, and Introductions	30 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome gift (a quotation—prayer for youth—nicely presented)</li> <li>Prayer books</li> <li>Gem Ball—crepe paper, polished rocks, shells, beads, etc., small mirror, crystal</li> <li>Name Boards</li> <li>Poster or large cards with K, W, SP, ES definitions, if desired</li> <li>Tree Activity: Definition of trees, pictures of trees, tree parts, live tree (if available), tree quotations, small pictures or stickers of trees and leaves, small cards and envelopes</li> <li>Participant course books</li> </ul>
Contributing Our Gems	30 min.	
The Light of Unity	20 min.	
Name Boards; A New Cycle of Human Power: The Youth Empowerment Program	10 min.	
The Power of Growth	30 min.	
The Core Curriculum Learning Model	10 min.	
Summary: Personal Journal; Closing Devotions	5 min.	

### *Welcome, Devotions, and Introductions*

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#### pp. 2–4

You may wish to offer a nicely prepared gift quotation (such as the photocopy-ready prayer provided on page 10 of this Facilitator Guide) to welcome the participants as they arrive.

The following suggestions may provide a useful format for opening devotions, or you may wish to make other selections.

#### PRAYERS:

Tablet of Visitation for Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 328–31, *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. edition.

“All Praise,” pp. 135–36, *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. edition.

“Glorified art Thou,” pp. 139–40, *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. edition.

“O Lord! Make this youth radiant,” p. 254, *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. edition.

#### MUSIC

“O Bahá'u'lláh,” *Music of the World Congress*.

“Bahá'u'lláh's Getting Us Ready for That Great Day,” *Lift Up Your Voices and Sing*, vol. 2.

“Love Me That I May Love Thee,” *Bird*, Susan Lewis Wright.

Group singing: Prayer for Youth (use Youth Empowerment CD as desired).

SLIDES or VIDEO of the Holy Land

## PROGRAM

Note that the following quotations are provided in the participant course book.

1. Music—"O Bahá'u'lláh." Consider showing slides or video of Bahjí and 'Akká while playing the first song.
2. Tablet of Visitation for Bahá'u'lláh. Consider inviting two or three people to share the reading and playing Persian music or other instrumental music in the background during readings.
3. Quotation 1—The Day of God, p. 3.
4. Quotation 2—The Day of God, p. 3.
5. Quotation 3—The Day of God, p. 3.
6. Quotation 4—The Day of God, p. 3.
7. Music—"Love Me That I May Love Thee" (or alternate).
8. Prayer of Praise and Gratitude—"Glorified art Thou."
9. Quotation 1—The Station of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 4.
10. Quotation 2—The Station of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 4.
11. Quotation 3—The Station of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 4.
12. Prayer of Praise and Gratitude—"All Praise."
13. Music—"Bahá'u'lláh's Getting Us Ready for That Great Day."
14. Group singing—Use the Youth Empowerment CD or capable singers to teach the Prayer for Youth.

Conclude the program with repeated singing of the prayer for youth so that the youth memorize this prayer. If you do not choose to use the Youth Empowerment CD, you may wish to enlist the help of friends to create your own melody to sing this prayer.

Suggest to the friends that as youth with great responsibilities in this great Day, each may consider promising themselves to use this prayer each day for the spiritual empowerment of youth throughout the world.

Consider providing a gift quotation of this prayer as part of the opening devotional program, using the template on page 10 of this Facilitator Guide, if desired.

## *Contributing Our Gems*

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p. 5

### **Advance Preparation:**

Prepare in advance a “gems” surprise ball, which uses the “mine rich in gems” metaphor to invite the friends to introduce themselves and then to establish community standards for the course. To prepare the “mine rich in gems,” place a tiny mirror in the center of a long strip of crepe paper, wrap it with the crepe paper streamer; add a glass crystal and wrap it; add glass beads of various translucent colors and keep wrapping with the crepe paper strip; add one small polished rock (plus a few extras) for each participant and keep wrapping. Then consider adding a small shell, or a bead reflecting a particular culture, or other tiny artifacts that may represent diverse cultures or geographic regions.

1. In the whole group, read aloud the following quotations to introduce the activity:

Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 162

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 287

2. Observing that each person is a mine rich in gems, indicate that some individual gifts come from one’s culture, or one’s environment (unwrap ball enough to show shell, bead, etc.). We bring those to this course. Then mention that we also bring gifts given to us as individuals. Invite all participants in turn to “excavate the mine” by unwrapping a portion of the ball, introduce themselves, and mention a gift (personal characteristic) that God has given them that they feel they can contribute to the spirit of this Youth Empowerment course.
3. After going all around the circle, the ball comes back to you. This activity is designed to blend seamlessly with the next activity, which continues the metaphor of gems within.

NOTE: You can often find small polished rocks at local museum stores and gift shops. Online sources for polished rocks include:

[www.minertown.com/market/polished/tumbled\\_stones](http://www.minertown.com/market/polished/tumbled_stones)

[www.bestcrystals.com/tumbled4.html](http://www.bestcrystals.com/tumbled4.html)

Continue with the next activity ➤

## *The Light of Unity*

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### p. 6

1. After the gem ball from the previous activity returns to you, read aloud the quotation on page 6 in the course book, in which Bahá'u'lláh says that all these gifts are from God.
2. Continue holding the gem ball while you note that conflict arises when we look at the different colored globes (unwrap and show glass beads of various colors that were placed at the center of the gem ball). But in fact He instructs us not look at the different colors—or different gifts—but instead to look at the light, which makes all colors visible. He also says that light makes fire appear in a crystal (unwrap and show crystal), and in a mirror the light reflects itself (unwrap and show mirror). Briefly discuss: if the human soul is like a crystal, what is the fire? If the human soul is like a mirror, what is the light?
3. Then invite the friends to acknowledge all our gifts and use them to create a unified spirit for this learning experience. Invite the friends to reflect on the community standards we need so that we will create a community of light, using the questions on page 6 of the course book.
4. After allowing time for participants to reflect, list suggestions on chart paper.

If desired, you may also use the activity on pages 43–44 of this Facilitator Guide to generate discussion guidelines.

After listening to the contributions of each person, you may wish to add to the list any additional standards needed for the duration of the course, such as:

- Invite God's assistance.
  - Speak your own thoughts—with love, courtesy, care, and moderation.
  - Welcome different opinions.
  - Maintain confidentiality.
  - Listen more than you talk. Share the time.
  - Look for the good in each other. Avoid criticism.
5. Then ask the question:
    - Do we all agree that these are our standards while we're here together?

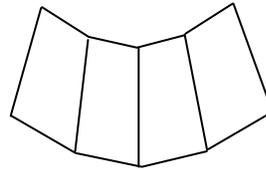
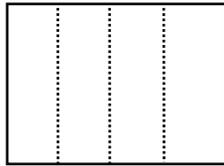
After all agree to the standards, post this list in the meeting room for the duration of the course and refer back to it at any time you feel a need to restore unity.

Then invite participants to decorate name boards or name tags to express the gems that they offer the group.

## Name Boards

Provide your participants with heavy paper or card stock (approximately 8 1/2" x 11"). From these they will make name cards which can stand up on a table and can be read from across the room.

Instruct them to fold the card in half, crease and open it. Then ask them to fold both ends in to meet at folded line and crease these folds. If you open the paper, you'll have three creases, like this:



Create a three-dimensional triangular prism using the folds, like this:



Invite participants to write their name, as they wish to be addressed, on one side of their name card. Present the art supplies and invite them to decorate their name card as well. Explain that this can be an ongoing art project throughout the course, adding more decoration to their name card as they feel inclined.

Alternatively, you may choose to create wearable name tags.

## *The Power of Growth and The Core Curriculum Learning Model*

pp. 8–11

Explain that we are going to use an image from nature to explore the power of growth, and to assist us in better understanding the Core Curriculum learning framework.

1. Read aloud the following definition:

“a woody perennial plant with one main stem or trunk which develops many branches: most trees are over ten feet tall and over six inches in diameter at a height of about five feet.”

Ask: “Based on this definition alone, what do we now **know** about this image?”

2. Show pictures of trees.

Discuss the question: “What do we now **know** about the tree based on this information?”

3. Display a real tree (fruit-bearing, if possible) planted in a pot or viewable through a window and take a moment to observe its beauty.
4. Pass fresh tree leaves around the room—enough so everyone can have a leaf.

5. Invite participants to feel and smell the leaf and gaze on the beauty of the tree. Then discuss the question: “What do we now **understand** about the tree, on the basis of this experience?”
6. Refer participants to the set of quotations titled “The Tree” on page 9 of the course book and read the passages aloud. Consider playing soft music in the background.
7. Ask participants to reflect on the passages.
8. Then discuss the question, “What **spiritual insights** do you have about the power of growth as a result of Bahá’u’lláh’s use of the tree as a metaphor of growth?”
9. Distribute blank cards, tree and leaf stickers, and tree pictures.
10. Invite participants to create a card that shares an insight or message inspired by the tree that they will give to someone else—a person left at home, a friend they’ve been teaching, etc.
11. With the participants, read through pages 10–11 of the course book, “The Core Curriculum Learning Model,” and discuss the questions on page 11.
12. Then invite the participants to process the activity as suggested at the bottom of page 8 in their course books.

### ***Summary: Personal Journal***

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#### **p. 12**

In advance, refer to the list of suggested readings for the Youth Empowerment program described on pages 35 of this Facilitator Guide. Based on what you know about the ages, aspirations, and experiences of your participants, select two or three of the books listed in the Individual Study columns.

As a group, discuss the questions:

- One of the indicators of spiritual maturity is beginning a regular pattern of individual study of the Holy Books. In this course we have the opportunity to select a book that we will all agree to read individually and to discuss how the spiritual teachings in that book will help us promote positive change in ourselves and in the world. Which Holy Book would we like to read first?
- How many pages would we like to read between now and the next time we meet together as a group?
- As we read, let’s mark our favorite passages that tell us how to make positive changes in ourselves and in the world. Would we each like to bring one or two favorite short passages to share as part of our opening devotions for Module Two?

After this short discussion, introduce the Journal pages at the back of the course book.

## Module One

### *The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh*

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Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions; Module One Themes and Objectives	20 min.	• Dictionaries
Fulfilling Our Purpose	60 min.	• Items such as pretty cloth, candles, flowers, etc., for participants to use to set a devotional atmosphere, if desired
The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh	90 min.	• “Goop” materials: shallow bowl or cake pan, spoon, corn starch, water; food coloring, if desired
Freedom and Maturity	30 min.	
The Power of Choice; Closing Devotions	20 min.	• Pictures cut from magazines to represent power of choice and change in the world

### *The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh*

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#### pp. 17–29

If your group is quite small, decide as a group whether the teams (or pairs) prefer to prepare more than one topic or to simply use some (but not all) of the topics provided.

While they are working, circulate among the groups to provide encouragement and assistance as needed.

In addition to circulating and providing encouragement and assistance as needed, facilitators are responsible for setting a deeply spiritual and reverent atmosphere for the participants' presentations. Consider providing items such as pretty cloth, candles, flowers, etc., for participants to use to set a devotional atmosphere. The purpose of this event is to assist participants to connect deeply with the Person and the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and a reverent approach to the topic increases the impact of these presentations.

### *Freedom and Maturity*

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#### pp. 30–31

##### **Advance Preparation:**

Collect all materials for the Goop activity, listed below, and practice making it before showing this demonstration to participants.

You should carefully listen to participant comments to make sure the following point is clear:

As individuals attain spiritual maturity, they—not their parents—are responsible for their own spiritual growth and transformation. It is important to work on this transformation every day, because “if a few days pass,” it is possible to backslide. However, if using our own volition we persevere in our efforts to serve God and humanity, He will assist us and assure our success. And even if we do backslide, we can always pick ourselves up and begin again. It is never too late to try again!

Conduct the following demonstration to illustrate the importance of continuous efforts.

Using the directions below, mix “goop.”

Then invite one or more of the friends to make a ball. They will demonstrate how a constant rolling motion with the hands can form this “goop” into a ball. As soon as the effort stops, the ‘goop’ becomes formless again. It is always possible to reform the ball; and always possible to keep it in motion. Effort, persistence, and always trying again achieve the goal. Provide supplies so that all participants can make and experience goop in small teams.

## **Goop**

*Materials needed for each small group of people (measure carefully!):*

- ½ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup + 1 tablespoon water
- Shallow bowl or cake pan
- Spoon
- Towels (to clean up)
- Food coloring (if desired)

*Directions:*

1. Place cornstarch in bowl.
2. Add water and stir. It will be difficult to stir, but keep stirring.
3. If desired, add a drop of food coloring. This will take awhile to mix in.
4. Play with your goop.

*What’s happening?*

The cornstarch and water did not form a solution. The solid particles are held up by the water molecules but not dissolved in them. This is called a “suspension.” Squeezing keeps the suspension together and it feels solid. When you stop squeezing, the liquid and solid begin to come apart and the goop starts to feel like liquid.

## *The Power of Choice*

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p. 32

Have on hand a collection of pictures cut from magazines that participants might use to represent themselves today and how they might make contributions to a better world. These pictures might be literal or abstract. Magazines that might offer good visual imagery include *National Geographic*, *Wired*, *Smithsonian*, and some newsmagazines.

Return also to the topic of individual study of the writings. Briefly discuss:

How are we coming with our individual study of the Holy Book that we selected? What are we finding valuable about this process? What new insights have we gained about our own power to change ourselves and change the world? What else would we like to say about our study? How many pages would we like to read between now and Module Two? Would we like to bring some favorite passages to share as part of our opening devotions for Module Two?

## Module Two

### *The Choicest Time in Human Life*

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Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions; Module Two Themes and Learning Objectives	20 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Bowl of fruit, like oranges, that are very similar in appearance—at least one piece per person</li><li>• Tray large enough to hold all fruit</li><li>• Chart paper and markers</li><li>• Dictionaries</li><li>• Masking tape to divide room</li><li>• Blank or decorated paper for poems</li><li>• Highlighters or pencils</li><li>• Post-It<sup>®</sup> or other self-stick notes</li><li>• “Material” and “Spiritual” magazine pictures for each person plus a few extra</li><li>• Cardstock “temple” for each person</li><li>• Quotation for inside of temple</li><li>• Removable labels for people to wear on foreheads</li><li>• “Volcano” materials: paper cone, bottle, baking soda, spoons, dish detergent, vinegar</li></ul>
Reflections on Module One	10 min.	
Fruit on the Tree of Life	20 min.	
The Choicest Time in Human Life	40 min.	
Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests	60 min.	
Establishing the Kingdom	60 min.	
Prerequisites for Success: A Double Crusade	15 min.	
Rectitude of Conduct	75 min.	
A Chaste and Holy Life	90 min.	
Spiritualizing Our Lives	60 min.	
The Temple of Being	40 min.	
Overcoming Stereotypes	40 min.	
Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice	40 min.	
Expressing True Liberty	30 min.	
Arising to Serve—Memorization	20 min.	
Illumined Youth: Transforming Ourselves	20 min.	
The Power of Transformation; Closing Devotions	10 min.	

### *Fruit on the Tree of Life*

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#### p. 36

This introduction illustrates that each individual is truly unique, and that no individual embodies a stereotype.

Have available a large bowl of oranges (or another fruit that is easily available) so that there is one whole fruit for each person present.

## *The Choicest Time In Human Life*

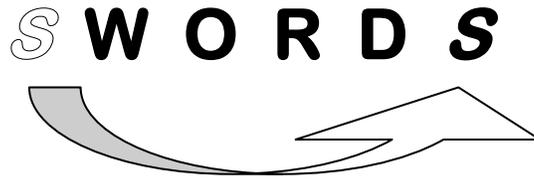
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pp. 37–38

To determine definitions of youth and adolescence, use common “old world order” concepts, not necessarily a Bahá’í perspective.

You should become familiar with the summary on the following two pages or the full article, “Obsession with the Dark Side of Adolescence: A Decade of Psychological Studies,” to share the relevant points with the participants. The full article is available online at <http://taylorandfrancis.metapress.com/link.asp?id=mrd3d8061u39v4ht>.

In this era of revolutionary change brought by the Blessed Beauty, youth can be seen as “spiritual stormtroopers” using the **Words** of God instead of the **sword**. Demonstrate that this is accomplished by moving the letter “s”.



## SUMMARY

### **“Obsession with the Dark Side of Adolescence: A Decade of Psychological Studies”**

by Saba Ayman-Nolley and Lora L. Taira

During the 20th century the whirlwind of beliefs and psychological theories of adolescence included divergent views such as a “stage of storm and stress” and “adolescents as criminals” as well as a “stage of abstract and reflective thought” and “adolescents as builders of society” There is a persistent bias towards research on the negative aspects of adolescence such as risk-taking and adolescent turmoil, especially in the case of Black and Hispanic youth. The prevailing force within the field of psychology continues to be the view of adolescence as a “stage of storm and stress.”

Adolescence as a period of life can be seen primarily as a 20<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon. In pre-industrial societies there was a very quick change, often a religious or cultural ritual, that bridged childhood to adulthood. Only the modern world gave birth to a new period of life, ages 12 to 21: adolescence.

In the early part of the century, view of adolescence was dark and dim: “In all civilized worlds, criminal statistics show two sad and significant facts: First, that there is a marked increase of crime at the age of 12 to 14. . . . Second . . . that the proportion of juvenile delinquents seems to be everywhere increasing” (Hall, 1904).

This was further supported by theorists such as Anna Freud (1937) who held that during adolescence, aggressive impulses and unruliness are intensified to the point that it turns into criminal behavior.

In the second half of the century, a different view of adolescence emerged that added a more optimistic and constructive perspective. Piaget (1964) saw this stage as one that “Assures thought . . . of an equilibrium superior to that . . . of childhood . . . the adolescent has interest in theoretical problems not related to everyday realities.”

In 1968 Erikson claimed that: “Adolescence is a vital regenerator in the process of social evolution, for youth can offer its loyalties and energies both to the conservation of that which it continues to feel true and to the revolutionary correction of that which has lost its regenerative significance.”

It was pointed out, in the 1980s, that only 20% of adolescents, the same rate as adults, suffer from serious psychological disturbances. Studies, though, tend to ignore the 80% of adolescents who are stable and healthy, and focus on the negatives.

In a 1964 summary of the various views of adolescence in literature, it was seen that there were three roles that adolescents play: visionary, victim, and victimizer. Most articles focus on the negative roles: victim and victimizer, and ignore the visionary. And, as adolescents became less of a working force and more of a financial burden, society developed a cultural view of adolescence as a rebellious, troublesome segment of society, which was reflected in the media.

2084 articles in six journals on adolescent psychology published between 1985 and 1995 were examined. Each article was categorized by topic and coded for presence or absence of an “adolescent turmoil” bias. An article was considered biased if it pertained to parent-adolescent conflict, emotional disturbance, problem behaviors, trouble in identity or confusion of thought, or if it studied a special population of adolescents.

The most frequently studied topics were Psychological Abnormalities and Risk-Taking Behaviors, which accounted for one-third of all articles. (See Table 2.)

When Whites were the focus, the most frequently researched topic was Family. (There was no study solely on Hispanics that had Family as its Topic.) The most frequently studied topic about Hispanics and Blacks was Risk-Taking Behavior (46% and 30%), while only 8% of studies on Whites looked at Risk-Taking. When studies focused on Asians, the most frequent topic was Education (66%). There were no studies on Risk-Taking among Asians.

53% of all studies reviewed had an “adolescent turmoil” bias. It becomes evident that the negative portrayal of adolescence and obsession with the dark side continues to be the prevailing force in psychological literature. Topics that were seldom studied include language, creativity, art, leisure, career and work, puberty, and peers.

What is feeding this obsession with negativity regarding adolescence? One reason is portrayal by the media. The popular cultural view is adolescents as troubled, emotionally unstable, with a surplus of hormones over which they have very little control. According to newspapers, the average teenager is criminally inclined, and/or involved in athletic sports. This view is even more exaggerated for Blacks and Hispanics.

The cultural image is still one of the “terrible teens” and many parents and teachers believe this to be true, even though scientific research indicates otherwise. As a society we look at the negative attributes, or the half-empty cup of adolescence and created the dark images. Somehow we have not created images that include the positive attributes or the bright side which is the half of the cup that is full. Many changes in adolescence that appear tumultuous have important productive outcomes. It should not be surprising that the social conscious trained throughout childhood is now ripe and finally being used by an independent-thinking adolescent. Without supporting them and seeing the bright side, how can we go forward as a society?

Adolescents are ready and have the capacity and the vision to bring about positive social change. When adolescents question tradition and set new ways they are no longer seen as inquisitive children but as rebellious, rude, and outrageous. It is to the adolescent’s benefit to digest the cultural viewpoints of their parents and community and formulate their own identity. Adolescents contribute the energy to move human society forward beyond its present state. Without this push from the adolescents of each generation, if they did only as they are told and what had been done before, progress and evolution would drastically slow down or possibly even come to a halt.

## ***Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests***

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pp. 39–42

After reading and discussing the letter of the Universal House of Justice, play a cooperative game. Some ideas for cooperative games may be found online at sites such as [www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/resources/99-720/x08.pdf](http://www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/resources/99-720/x08.pdf). You may also use the “Victory” game described below.

### **Victory Game**

Divide the room into three sections using masking tape. One section is “home,” another is “the valley,” and the third is the “new world.” Direct all of the participants to gather at “home.” Explain that their goal is to pass through the valley and arrive in the “new world.” There are only six rules that they must obey to get to the “new world.”

- First, they must ensure that all participants get to the “new world.”
- Second, they must all pass through the valley.
- Third, to pass through they must build a “human bridge.”
- Fourth, all participants who arrive at the “new world” must use the body parts (arm, leg, ankle, etc.) of all other participants who are still traveling, and be a part of the bridge themselves before passing over.
- Fifth, if any member passes through the valley in a manner deemed unacceptable (i.e., in violation of the four rules) the entire group must start over.
- Sixth, they must consult BEFORE any attempts are made.

After the allotted time, debrief about how they felt about the process: How can they connect this experience to their role in the progression of the Bahá’í Faith? What is the relationship between the acceptance of Bahá’í principles and the maturation of the world community? How can youth assist this process?

Hint: The easiest way to achieve victory in this game is for each member to leapfrog across the valley. Avoid the temptation to give too much direction. The beauty is in the PROCESS, not the PRODUCT. Discontinue any attempts if consultation breakdowns occur. Intervene to refocus the group, remind them of the importance of consultation, and start the process over.

## ***Establishing the Kingdom***

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pp. 43–45

Carefully prepare to eloquently read the quotations on pages 44–45 of the course book. Consider playing quiet background music as you read.

Using Post-It® or other self-stick notes, write comments about each work of art and leave them at each display. Invite the friends to find a way to celebrate all of the poetry through their posted comments (e.g., “your poem really used a lot of rhyming and it made me as a listener feel \_\_\_\_\_,” “all of the words were very powerful, you really were able to communicate the power in the quotations,” etc.).

If desired, assure participants that the poem may be created simply by arranging the words and phrases they selected in the form of a poem. Naturally, participants are free to add their own words as well.

### ***Prerequisites for Success: A Double Crusade***

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**p. 46**

Discuss:

- What is the importance of these spiritual weapons of the warriors of love in the army of light?

Some possible responses include:

- Rectitude of conduct requires our recognition of the underlying spiritual Reality of the universe, and setting our standards according to the description of that Reality.
- Living a chaste and holy life follows directly from our attachment to the ultimate Reality of the universe. This recognition of what is most important frees us from those who would define us as wholly material beings.
- Freedom from racial prejudice, expressed through our constant efforts to promote the oneness and wholeness of the human family, reflects Bahá'u'lláh's fundamental message to humanity today, the pivotal principle of oneness.

### ***Rectitude of Conduct***

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**pp. 47–50**

Prepare in advance to read the story on page 47 of the participant course book and practice eloquently retelling Ruby's story.

**Definition of Rectitude:** *noun* 1. moral integrity; 2. correctness of procedure.  
(Merriam Webster's Desk Dictionary)

### ***A Chaste and Holy Life***

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**pp. 51–55**

**Advance Preparation:**

Practice telling the story of the puppet show with feeling and energy before sharing it with participants.

**Definition of Companionate Marriage:** *noun* 1. A trial marriage in which the partners agree not to have children and may divorce by mutual consent, with neither partner responsible for the financial welfare of the other.

## *Spiritualizing Our Lives*

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pp. 56–62

If there are not enough participants to create three study groups, consider other ways to organize the readings.

## *The Temple of Being*

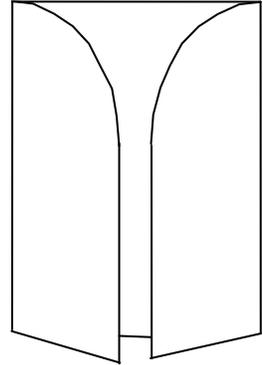
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p. 63

### **Advance Preparation:**

In advance prepare for each participant a piece of 8 ½" x 11" card stock folded so that the ends meet in the middle. The card stock should now be 8 ½" x 5 ½". The top corners of flaps meeting in the center can now be cut in the shape of an arc to form a temple. Alternatively, you may photocopy onto cardstock the template on the following page to form a slightly smaller temple.

You may also wish to make photocopies of the quotations below, for those participants who would prefer not to write them out by hand.



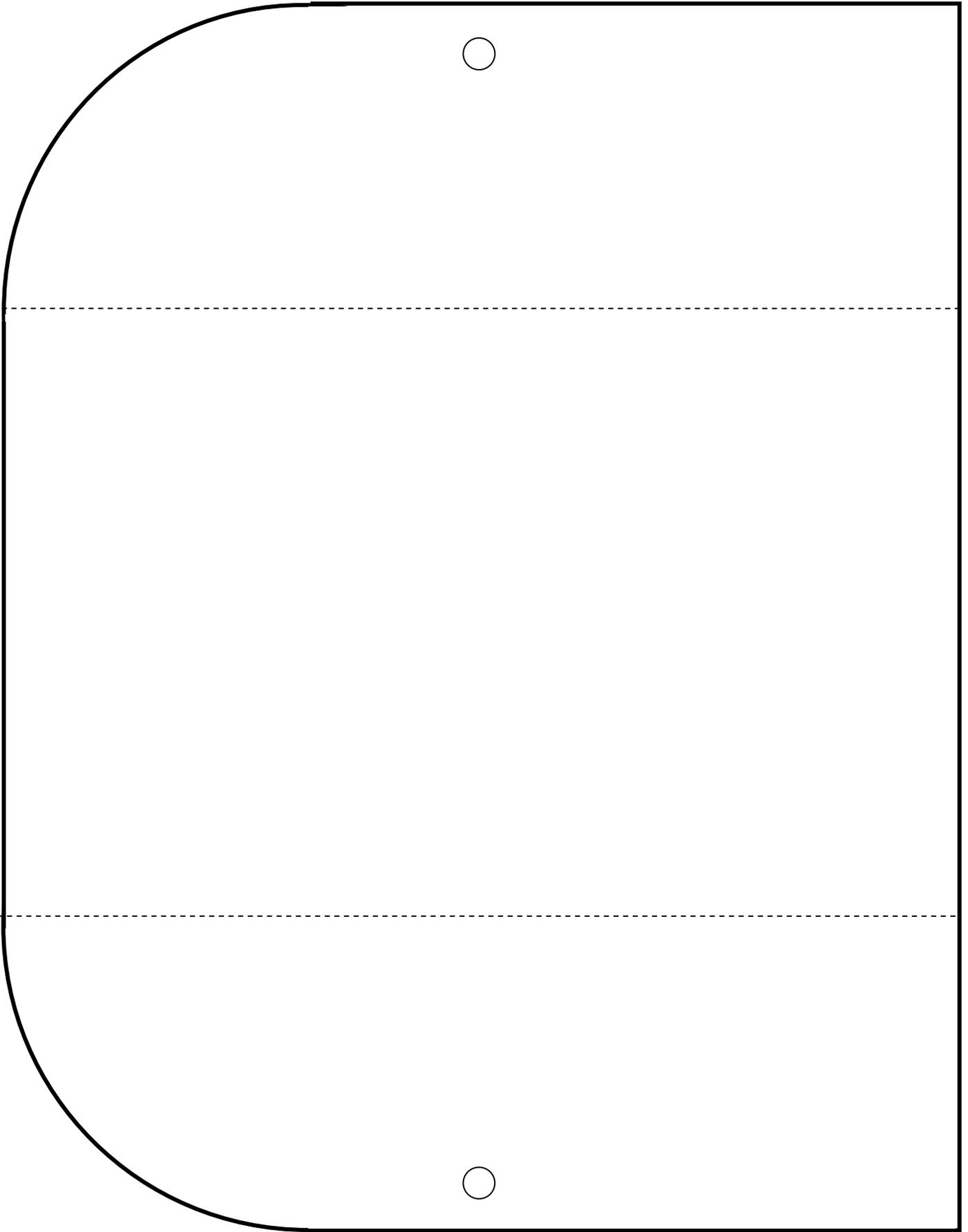
Play soft music as participants work and ask them to think about the connection between the physical and spiritual realm, and how we use the physical entities to have access to the spiritual realities.

O Son of Man! The temple of being is My throne;  
cleansing it of all things, that there I may be established  
and there I may abide.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE HIDDEN WORDS*, ARABIC NO. 58

O Divine Providence! Bestow Thou in all things purity  
and cleanliness upon the people of Bahá. Grant that  
they be freed from all defilement, and released from  
all addictions. Save them from committing any  
repugnant act, unbind them from the chains of every  
evil habit, that they may live pure and free,  
wholesome and cleanly, worthy to serve at Thy  
Sacred Threshold and fit to be related to their Lord.  
Deliver them from intoxicating drinks and tobacco,  
save them, rescue them, from this opium that bringeth  
on madness, suffer them to enjoy the sweet savours of  
holiness, that they may drink deep of the mystic cup  
of heavenly love and know the rapture of being  
drawn ever closer unto the Realm of the All-Glorious.  
For it is even as Thou has said: 'All that thou hast in  
thy cellar will not appease the thirst of my love—  
bring me, O cup-bearer, of the wine of the spirit a cup  
full as the sea!'

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, P. 149



## **Overcoming Stereotypes**

p. 64

### **Advance Preparation:**

Prepare labels, as described below, so that there are more labels than participants.

Provide a label for participants to wear on their foreheads. (Sample labels are the following: African American, Male, Female, Thief, Athlete, Cheerleader, Homeless Person, Brainy, etc.) During the activity, they are to interact with the other participants as in a typical social gathering, using the “name labels” as the single determining factor for their interactions. Instruct the participants to please not look at or try to guess their own label, or reveal the label of the other participants unless instructed to do so. Each participant should interact with the other members of the group in the way they think is the most appropriate.

After a very few minutes of social interaction, invite all participants to attempt to guess their own label.

## ***Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice***

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pp. 65–67

Step 2: Go around the group and invite each participant in turn to share one response to one of the line items for this question. Repeat until all ideas have been shared in the whole group.

Step 3. Be sure to allow sufficient time for this important step. After all have recorded their plans, invite individuals to share their personal plans if they like. Then in the whole group briefly discuss the questions:

- How can we encourage and support each other so that we achieve our goals?
- In addition to individual plans, what would we like to do as a group to overcome this most vital and challenging issue?

## ***Expressing True Liberty***

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pp. 68–70

In advance ask two of the friends each to prepare to share one of the following two stories in the whole group.

\* \* \*

All the animals are materialists. They are deniers of God and without realization of a transcendent power in the universe. They have no knowledge of the divine Prophets and Holy Books—mere captives of nature and the sense world. In reality they are like the great philosophers of this day who are not in touch with God and the Holy Spirit—deniers of the Prophets, ignorant of spiritual susceptibilities, deprived of the heavenly bounties and without belief in the supernatural power. The animal lives this kind of life blissfully and untroubled, whereas the material philosophers labor and study for ten or twenty years in schools and colleges, denying God, the Holy Spirit and divine inspirations. The animal is even a greater philosopher, for it attains the ability to do this without labor and study. For instance, the cow denies God and the Holy Spirit, knows nothing of divine

inspirations, heavenly bounties or spiritual emotions and is a stranger to the world of hearts. Like the philosophers, the cow is a captive of nature and knows nothing beyond the range of the senses. The philosophers, however, glory in this, saying, "We are not captives of superstitions; we have implicit faith in the impressions of the senses and know nothing beyond the realm of nature, which contains and covers everything." But the cow, without study or proficiency in the sciences, modestly and quietly views life from the same standpoint, living in harmony with nature's laws in the utmost dignity and nobility.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, PP. 311–12

\* \* \*

One day a group of scientists got together and decided that humans had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell God so.

The scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you; we're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don't You just go on and get lost."

God listened very patiently and kindly to the man. After the scientist was done talking, God said, "Very well, how about this? Let's say we have a man-making contest." To which the scientist replied, "Okay, great!"

"But," God added, "we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam."

The scientist said, "Sure, no problem," and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt.

God looked at him and said, "No, no, no. You go get your own dirt."

## *The Power of Transformation*

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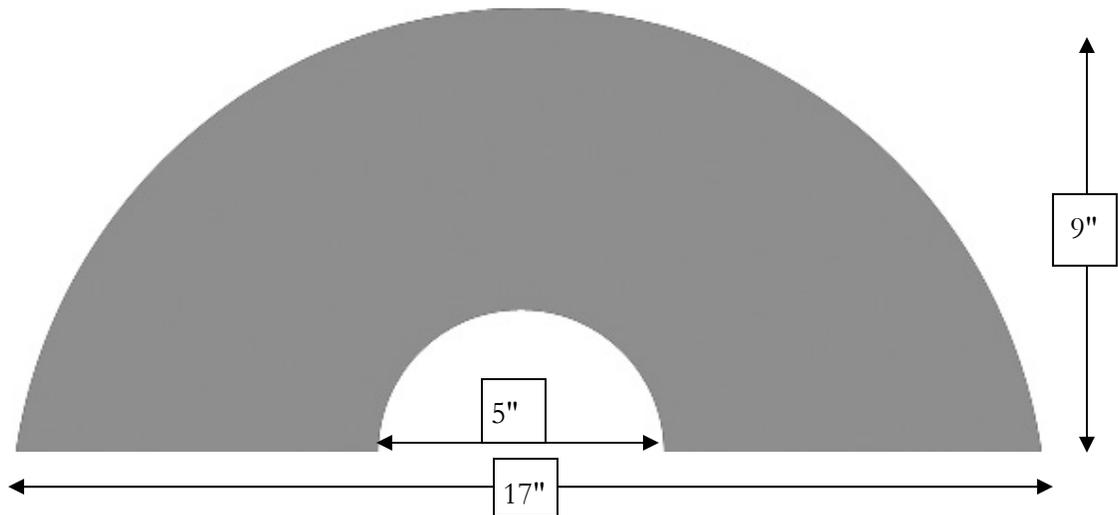
p. 77

### **Advance Preparation:**

Gather all materials necessary for the volcano demonstration, listed below, and make the volcano itself, also described below.

Offer the following demonstration of the collective power of individual action after reading the quotation on page 77 of the course book.

Prepare in advance a “volcano” that includes a watertight container in its heart. The volcano could be clay, or could be a cone cut from poster board or a large piece of chart paper like this:



The poster board can then be shaped into a cone and taped around the watertight container. A wide-mouth 10-ounce juice container works well.

Place a tablespoon of dishwashing liquid detergent in the container.

Provide a teaspoon of “power powder” (baking soda) for each participant. Ask each person to add a spoonful of “power” to the center of the volcano. Then pour on the “power of divine assistance” (vinegar) to add to the individual “power.” Notice how the resulting volcano totally transforms the landscape, just as this Revelation will transform the entire face of the planet to build the Kingdom of God in our hearts and on His earth.

Briefly discuss as a group your progress with individual study of the sacred writings, as determined in Module One:

- What have been some highlights of our study of the book we selected?
- What are some ways that we could share these highlights with other people?
- Would we like to continue with the same pattern of individual study or is it time to make an adjustment?
- How many pages would we like to study between now and Module Three?

Briefly review the themes and objectives for Module Two and then conclude the session with prayers for divine assistance that we all may achieve our goals.

## Module Three

### *Transforming Civilization*

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Activities and Suggested Times		Materials Needed
Opening Devotions	20 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large blank sheet of paper for each person</li> </ul>
Fellowship and Love	40 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art supplies for family trees</li> </ul>
Module Three Themes and Learning Objectives	5 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collection of advertisements from magazines or newspapers (at least one per person)</li> </ul>
Trees of Our Lives	40 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chart paper</li> </ul>
The Environment and the Human Heart	40 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blank "note" paper for each person</li> </ul>
Overcoming Oppression	40 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,000 BBs or 2 pounds dried chickpeas</li> </ul>
Investigating Reality	40 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large metal mixing bowl</li> </ul>
Storming the Gates of Heaven	70 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recorded TV advertisements and TV/VCR</li> </ul>
A New Cycle of Human Power	45 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3 x 5 index cards in basket</li> </ul>
Heroes, Heroines, and Hands	30 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Masking tape</li> </ul>
Spiritual Revolution: A Handbook	90 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>One set of photographs and short biographies of Heroes, Heroines, and Hands of the Cause, available for purchase from the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore (which can be used again the next time you conduct this activity) or free download at <a href="http://www.core-curriculum.org">www.core-curriculum.org</a></li> </ul>
Teaching the Cause of God: Jigsaw Activity	75 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spiritual Revolution Handbook materials: cardboard covers (approx. 4 x 4"); wrapping paper for covers, if desired; scissors, glue, art supplies</li> </ul>
Empowering Community Life	30 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 very large sheets of blank paper (each composed of 3–4 sheets of chart paper taped together), markers, stickers</li> </ul>
Systematic Training for Youth Empowerment	10 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medium or large clear plastic bowl, potato-sized rocks, small stones, gravel or sand; water to fill bowl</li> </ul>
Naming Our Gifts	30 min.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parting gift quotation</li> </ul>
Reflect on the Training	15 min.	
Closure; Closing Devotions		

### *Fellowship and Love*

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#### p. 82

Play three or four cooperative games, designed to build unity and foster the spirit of fellowship. Some ideas for cooperative games appear on the next page.

## **Bird, Nest, Flock**

This game is best played with a large group of people.

- Two people hold hands creating a “nest,” leaving room in the center of their arms for a “bird.” In groups of three, all players except one should form a nest with bird.
- The remaining person is the announcer and shouts either “bird,” “nest,” or “flock.”
- When “bird” is called, all the birds leave their nests and run to find another one.
- When “nest” is called, the nests leave their bird and create another nest (not necessarily with the same person) around a different bird.
- When “flock” is called, everyone—including the announcer—changes positions and chooses a new position. One person will always be left out, who will become the next announcer.

Have fun!

## **Find a Group**

- An announcer calls out a certain group parameter, such as “Find a group that has the same number of siblings,” or “A group that has visited the same number of countries.” You can make up a number of others.
- When the idea is called all players must try to find others who share their opinion or situation and form group.

Keep it fast paced and fun!

Some other ideas for cooperative games may be found online at sites such as [www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/resources/99-720/x08.pdf](http://www.learning-for-life.org/exploring/resources/99-720/x08.pdf).

## ***Trees of Our Lives***

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**pp. 85–86**

Provide each person with a blank piece of paper or use a blank journal page. Ask all participants to take a few minutes to sketch their own family tree, showing as many generations as they can. Then ask them to add branches of the tree to show their connections to their friends, their school or place of work, and any group to which they feel they belong. Make the tree as large and as complex as it takes to show our connections with other people and groups of people.

After each person has had a chance to work independently, ask the friends to work in small groups to share their own trees. Invite them to think of a time when they felt proud to be a member of a certain group, or a time when it was painful to be a member of a certain group, or one thing they wish people would never say about a group to which they belong. Invite each person to listen carefully to the others in their group while the participants share their stories in turn.

When each of the small groups has completed sharing, reconvene the entire group. Then in the whole group, read aloud the quotations on page 86 and discuss the questions provided on page 85.

## *The Environment and the Human Heart*

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p. 87

Provide a collection of advertisements from popular magazines.

## *Overcoming Oppression*

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pp. 88–89

### **Passing Notes**

Although passing notes is not appropriate in every circumstance, we can use the process of passing notes in this context to share our reflections on the discussion of social pressure. In response to this discussion of social pressure, invite the friends to each write their names and a brief comment in response to the discussion of social pressure on a blank piece of paper. Then the participants pass their comment to the person sitting on their left. That person reads what is on the paper, writes a response, and at the signal passes it on to the next person. This timed process is repeated three times, and then at the stopping time, each paper is returned to the person whose name is at the top of the page. Because each person reads what the others have written, the time for writing each note is slightly increased as follows: original writer – 1 minute; second writer – 1½ minutes; third writer – 2 minutes; fourth writer – 3 minutes. Then allow the original writer a few moments to read the comments on their reflections. Do not share the comments or the responses in the whole group.

## *Investigating Reality*

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pp. 90–93

Before the course session, record 3–5 minutes of commercial advertisements on television. Remind the friends of the advertising messages we discussed in an earlier activity, then play the recorded advertisements in the whole group. Mention that it is not only advertising that affects us, but also the entire mass media and the culture it reflects. Remind the friends that:

“By age 16, the average child will have witnessed an estimated 200,000 acts of violence and by age 18, approximately 40,000 sexually titillating scenes.”

THOMAS LIKONA, *EDUCATING FOR CHARACTER*, p. 5

Ask the friends to recall one of their earliest memories of watching a violent, racist, or sexually inappropriate scene on television. Ask one or two volunteers to briefly describe that experience. Observe that we can see how that one past experience still affects us: it is like the echo of a BB or a bean reverberating in a metal bowl.

- Drop one BB in a metal bowl and swirl it in the bowl so the BB continues to resound.

Then mention that the cumulative experience, not only of the media, but of our entire culture, has a much more profound affect.

- Add all BBs to the metal bowl and continue to rotate the bowl, so that the sound continues. Mention that this is the power of thousands of BBs, think how much more it would be if it were 40,000 or 200,000 or even more!

In the whole group, share the story of the “first white youth to speak to a black in one of Atlanta’s desegregated high schools,” page 90 of the participant course book.

## ***A New Cycle of Human Power***

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**pp. 97–101**

You may choose to repeat this activity either by inviting each group to select another scenario and create a new role-play to address it, or by repeating the activity as a whole sometime later in the course.

## ***Heroes, Heroines, and Hands***

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**p. 102**

NOTE: The photographs and short biographies for this activity are available for download and free at [www.core-curriculum.org/cdp.html](http://www.core-curriculum.org/cdp.html). Participants greatly enjoy this deeply meaningful activity. You may wish to print the document on 25 lb. paper, then laminate or place in sheet protectors.

To conduct this activity, select about one and one half times as many heroes, heroines, and Hands as there are participants in the course, taking care to select those who represent a diversity of backgrounds. Lay the portraits out on tables or post them on walls. Invite the friends to circulate around the room and select a portrait that attracts them, and to spend time looking at it and reading the short biography on the back of the photograph. This may take 10–12 minutes.

Then invite the participants to choose a partner with whom they have not yet spent much time in the course. All will introduce their partner to the hero, heroine, or Hand of the Cause of God they studied by saying, “I would like to introduce you to . . .” and then explain what it is about this particular picture that attracted them. Then invite the participants to tell their partners *one* thing that *attracts their heart* to this person, based on the information on the back of the portrait. It is important not just to pass on information, but to describe what it is about this person that *interests us* and touches our hearts.

Optional extension activity:

Invite the friends to further research the heroic life that touches their heart and prepare a presentation that will inspire other Bahá’ís and seekers to also arise to perform heroic deeds of service to humanity.

## ***Spiritual Revolution: A Handbook***

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**p. 103**

### **Advance Preparation:**

Cut lightweight cardboard (from cereal boxes or similar items) or heavy cardstock into 4" x 4" covers for the handbooks, making 2 squares for each participant, plus some extras. Gather wrapping paper and other art supplies for decorating the handbooks.

In advance, gather materials and pre-cut lightweight cardboard (from cereal boxes or similar items) or heavy cardstock into 4" x 4" covers for the handbooks.

Ask the friends to identify some of the revolutionary changes that Bahá’u’lláh has created in the world. Ask them to pause to reflect on their own role as activists in Bahá’u’lláh’s revolution, and invite them to prepare their own Handbook for Spiritual Revolution by

creating an accordion-fold book. Have precut cardboard covers available, and use pages 125–29 of the course books to create the accordion-fold pages of the handbook by cutting and gluing the pieces end to end.

Invite the friends to wrap the covers of the book with wrapping paper, if desired, and illuminate the pages with markers, colored pencil drawings, etc.

Ask the friends to work individually or in small teams and to read, reflect on, and (if desired) discuss the passages as they create their books. Help maintain a quiet, reflective atmosphere as they work, perhaps by playing instrumental music.

After the friends have had time to work on their books, ask them to select a partner and, in pairs, to choose one of the quotations to memorize together. After about 10–15 minutes, invite the friends to show their books, and recite their selected quotations in the whole group.

### ***Empowering Community Life***

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pp. 112–14

As you carry out this activity, remember that in the next activity your group will have the opportunity to consult about ongoing study, teaching, and outreach using the prepared and downloadable fireside materials. That activity will also provide a good time to learn about your cluster’s plans for outreach and teaching.

### ***Systematic Training for Youth Empowerment***

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pp. 115–16

#### **Advance Preparation:**

Gather the materials for the demonstration: potato-sized rocks, small stones, fine gravel or sand, water, bowl.

Familiarize yourself with ongoing Ruhi study circles in the community and with the community development resources available on the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org). You may also wish to contact your Local Spiritual Assembly or Regional Training Institute to obtain a list of trained facilitators of these community development courses to facilitate the discussion.

Using the materials listed above, conduct the following demonstration:

- In a large or medium-sized bowl (preferably clear plastic or glass), place potato-size rocks until the bowl is full. Ask the friends: Is the bowl full?
- Then add as many smaller stones as the bowl can hold, stirring if necessary. Ask: Is the bowl full?
- Next add as much fine gravel or sand as the bowl will hold, stirring if necessary. Again ask: Is the bowl full?
- Finally add as much water as possible, declaring, “Now the bowl is full!”

Ask the friends what we can learn from this demonstration.

Although they may observe that “there’s always room for more,” Listen carefully to responses, then follow by asking: What would be the result if we added the materials in the reverse order? If we started with water, how could we add stones? If we filled the bowl with small stones, where would we put the big stones? The point is that we need to take care of the “big stones”—the most important things—first! Each of us has the same 24 hours in each day, and the most important actions must be scheduled first, if we’re to achieve our purpose in life!

Invite the group to name the “big rocks” in our lives. List on chart paper. Then discuss the questions under point 3 in their course books.

Ask the participants what opportunities for outreach and service exist in our own community? How would we like to serve the community’s children? Participants also choose to participate in Core Curriculum Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth, available through the regional training institute, to prepare themselves to teach systematic, ongoing children’s classes. Contact your institute coordinator for more information.

After adding these ideas to the list, mention that continuous institute training and personal deepening are important ways that we can better prepare ourselves to serve others. Briefly discuss: How would the group like to continue studying together?

Kindly provide information about ongoing study circles for the main sequence of institute courses that are available in the community. This group may also continue its collective study through local deepenings, the Fundamental Verities sequence, *Spiritual Foundations for Friendship, Courtship, and Marriage*, or another course. Individuals are free to facilitate these courses, as desired.

Allow sufficient time to consult as a group and plan for ongoing study and service.

Refer back to your group’s consultation in the previous activity, Empowering Community Life, to take into account this group’s needs, hopes, and plans, as well as the needs, hopes, and plans of the larger community. It is your own individual initiative as a facilitator and the power that you generate as a group that provide the impetus for your group to go from strength to strength in this service.

Allow sufficient time for the participants to become familiar with the sample fireside materials provided in their course books. Consult as a group to select a time and place to experiment with using these materials.



## ***Books for Individual Study***

<p><b>Objective:</b> Develop skills to read, understand, and apply entire works of the Central Figures relating to spiritual and social topics.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Develop a deeper understanding of key Bahá'í works, and put this understanding into action.</p>	<p><b>Objective:</b> Develop a more thorough understanding of the Bahá'í teachings on marriage, family life, and a chaste and holy life.</p>
<p><b>Suggested for Age 15</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The Hidden Words</i></li> <li>○ <i>Paris Talks</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested for Age 16</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh</i></li> <li>○ <i>Some Answered Questions</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Suggested Readings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys</i></li> <li>○ <i>Prayers and Meditations</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Suggested for age 17:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh</i></li> <li>○ <i>The Promulgation of Universal Peace</i></li> <li>○ <i>The Advent of Divine Justice</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested for age 18:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Epistle to the Son of the Wolf</i></li> <li>○ <i>Tablets of the Divine Plan</i></li> <li>○ <i>God Passes By</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Suggested Reading:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Selections from the Writings of the Báb</i></li> <li>○ <i>Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Suggested for all youth:</b></p> <p><i>Spiritual Foundations for Friendship, Courtship, and Marriage</i></p> <p>Compilations prepared by the Universal House of Justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>A Chaste and Holy Life</i></li> <li>○ <i>Family Life</i></li> <li>○ <i>Preserving Bahá'í Marriages</i></li> <li>○ <i>Women</i></li> </ul>

## ***Naming Our Gifts***

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**p. 117**

Be sure to pause after posing each question for reflection so that participants have time to deeply consider the question. Consider playing quiet background music during this period of reflection.

Please discuss as a group how you'd like to continue your individual study of the Holy Books: Are you ready to start a new book? What would you like to read next?

## ***Reflect on the Training***

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**pp. 117–19**

Take the time necessary for participants to complete the course evaluation on page 119 of their course books. 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 56–57 of this Facilitator Guide. These forms are available online at [www.core-curriculum.org/downloads](http://www.core-curriculum.org/downloads) if you prefer to download them.

This valuable feedback provides information for continuous improvement of these courses. Your participation in this simple process of feedback and evaluation allows the National Bahá'í Education Task Force to carry out its function of periodically updating all Core Curriculum materials.

You may also share this information with your sponsoring institution, if applicable.

## ***Closure***

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**p. 121**

Plan a short devotional program, including prayers, readings, and music, perhaps including the quotation on page 121 of the course book and other prayers for youth published in *Bahá'í Prayers*, 2002 U.S. edition, pages 151–55.

## **SOME GUIDELINES FOR CORE CURRICULUM FACILITATORS**

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### **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 daily lives.

### **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

Many youth are inspired to arise as teachers of children and junior youth. If available, borrow copies of Core Curriculum Storybooks and Lesson Planning Guides to show participants resources available for spiritual education. You may also introduce participants to online resources such as the Core Curriculum Website [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org), the national Bahá'í education's *Spiritual Education Resources* Web link [www.bahai.us/bahai-education](http://www.bahai.us/bahai-education), and [www.ruhiresources.org](http://www.ruhiresources.org).

## 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 to address the capacities and capabilities of all participants. 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 slips of paper with instructions like, “Find someone who has memorized the same quotation,” “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 did,” or “Find three people with the same color shoes as you.” 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. This means that no person in each team has all the material; each person has a 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**

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### **Site Considerations**

Core Curriculum Youth Empowerment courses have been held in places as diverse as homes, Bahá’í centers, colleges, hotels, and rustic conference centers. 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 course.

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

- Tables and chairs 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 teaching supplies, coats, and luggage.
- Outdoor area with convenient access to yard, park, garden, or woods for fresh air and sunshine anytime!
- 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 course 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.

Youth Empowerment 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 attractive 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! Involvement brings participants.

## **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 this precious time in life. Consultation within the parenting group can also effectively resolve many questions related to schedule and other matters.

### **Inviting Youth to Participate**

The key to building the participation of youth is your own enthusiasm and the enthusiasm of others. Youth need to feel confident that this course will address their needs, hopes, and interests and that the course will be enjoyable and productive. Enthusiastic youth 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 email) with others. Sending a sweet, handwritten invitation by mail can also offer a personal touch.

Your introductory session can help youth 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 youth in the community at large.

## GENERATING DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

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If desired, you may use this activity to generate guidelines for the Light of Unity activity, page 6 of the course book.

1. Invite participants to divide into groups of 3–5 people.
2. In groups, read photocopies of the “Guidelines for Discussion” quotations on the following page.
3. Ask the friends to develop 5–6 guideline points while in their small groups.
4. Invite each group to share the guidelines they develop, and then in the whole group agree on the guidelines that will inspire and inform the whole group during this course.
5. Write the whole group’s guidelines on chart paper and refer back to them as desired.

### Guidelines for Discussion

Put your whole trust and confidence in God, Who hath created you, and seek ye His help in all your affairs.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *THE SUMMONS OF THE LORD OF HOSTS*, P. 189

They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the realm of Glory.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 6

. . . When we put our trust in Him, Bahá’u’lláh solves our problems and opens the way.

LETTER ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *POWER OF DIVINE ASSISTANCE*, P. 23

Therefore true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love. Members must love each other in the spirit of fellowship in order that good results may be forthcoming.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, PP. 72–73

They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, dignity, care and moderation to express their views.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 6

Patience and restraint, however, should at all times characterize the discussions and deliberations . . . and no fruitless and hairsplitting discussions indulged in, under any circumstances.

LETTER ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, PP. 16–17

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 5

. . . Every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should anyone oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 5

In discussions . . . let no one assert and insist upon his own mere opinion; nay, rather, let each investigate reality with the greatest love and fellowship.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, P. 183

. . . It is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 6

It is an important principle of the Faith that one must not promise what one is not going to fulfill. Therefore, if a Bahá’í accepts confidential information either by virtue of his profession (e.g., as a doctor, a lawyer, etc.), or by permitting another person to confide in him, he is duty bound to preserve that confidentiality

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *LIGHTS OF GUIDANCE*, P. 335

Man should weigh his opinions with the utmost serenity, calmness and composure. Before expressing his own views he should carefully consider the views already advanced by others.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, P. 72

Every one of the friends should highly praise the other and each should regard himself as evanescent and as naught in the presence of others.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, P. 97

. . . Be silent concerning the faults of others . . . look always at the good and not at the bad.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, QUOTED BY J.E. ESSLEMONT, *BAHÁ’U’LLÁH AND THE NEW ERA*, P. 83

## CULTURAL APPRECIATION

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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 with us 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.

- *Loubelen: 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 Youth Empowerment 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 Youth Empowerment 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 Youth Empowerment 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.

## Sample Workshop Invitation Letter from the Sponsoring Institution to Youth and Their Communities

Date\_\_\_\_\_

To\_\_\_\_\_

Dear Friends,

We are happy to announce that [*Local Spiritual Assembly or other institution*] has scheduled a Youth Empowerment course to begin on [*date and time*] at [*place*]. This course is designed to empower youth as teachers of the Cause, consecrated servants of humanity and heroic champions of Bahá'í standards of morality.

Our [*Local Spiritual Assembly or other institution*] encourages all youth to participate in this workshop. We humbly request your support for this program.

Topics covered during the workshop sessions will include:

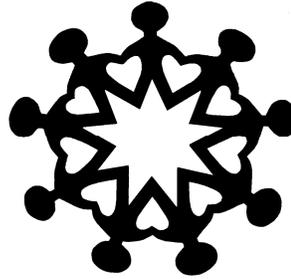
- The Power of Growth
- Fulfilling Our Purpose
- The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh
- Freedom and Maturity
- The Choicest Time in Human Life
- Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests
- Establishing the Kingdom
- Rectitude of Conduct
- Spiritualizing Our Lives
- Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice
- Expressing True Liberty
- The Power of Transformation
- The Environment and the Human Heart
- Investigating Reality
- Heroes, Heroines, and Hands
- Transforming Humanity
- Empowering Community Life

The cost for all sessions and instructional materials is \$\_\_\_\_\_.

We anticipate that this will be a very rich experience and look forward to your response. Should you have any questions regarding the course, please contact [*facilitators' names and phone numbers*] who will be happy to answer any of your questions. You may view the content of the course online at [www.core-curriculum.org](http://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,



An Introduction to

# Youth Empowerment

## A New Cycle of Human Power

**Facilitators:**

**Dates:**

**Fee:**

**Location:**

**Time:**

**Topics include:**

- The Power of Growth
- Fulfilling Our Purpose
- The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh
- Freedom and Maturity
- The Choicest Time in Human Life
- Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests
- Establishing the Kingdom
- Rectitude of Conduct
- Spiritualizing Our Lives
- Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice
- Expressing True Liberty
- The Power of Transformation
- The Environment and the Human Heart
- Investigating Reality
- Heroes, Heroines and Hands
- Transforming Humanity
- Empowering Community Life

**Sponsored by:**

## *Sample Registration Confirmation*

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We are pleased to confirm your registration!

Core Curriculum Youth Empowerment:

A New Cycle of Human Power

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 address, 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.*

## ***Youth Empowerment Session Planning Template***

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1. Opening prayers and music (approximately 20 minutes):
  
2. Welcome, review previous session, and discuss acts of service and study since the previous session. Consider using questions like:
  - What are some high points of our service since we were last together?
  - How have people responded to our initiative?
  - What are we learning from our ongoing study of the sacred writings of the Bahá'í Faith?
  
3. Refer to the purpose of the activities planned for this session.
  
4. Carry out one or more activities using the Youth Empowerment course book and Facilitator Guide.
  
5. Refer again to the purpose of the activities just completed and plan acts of service and study to complete before the next session. Also consider ways for participants to support each other in their service as desired.
  
6. Closing prayers and music:

# Youth Empowerment: A New Cycle of Human Power

## General Sample Agenda: Four Modules \*agenda times do not include breaks

### Introduction to the Course (2 hours)

Min.	Activity	Min.	Activity
30	Opening Devotions and Group Singing (Sing Youth Prayer)	30	The Light of Unity, Name Boards
30	Contributing Our Gems	30	The Power of Growth: Tree Activity

### Module One: Youth: The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh (4 hours)

Min.	Activity	Min.	Activity
20	Devotions, Introduction, Objectives	30	Freedom and Maturity
60	Fulfilling Our Purpose	20	The Power of Choice
90	The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh	10	Closing Devotions

### Module Two: The Choicest Time in Human Life (11 hours)

Min.	Activity	Min.	Activity
15	Opening Devotions, Music	60	Spiritualizing Our Lives
5	Learning Objectives	40	Temple of Being
20	Fruit on the Tree of Life	40	Overcoming Stereotypes
60	The Choicest Time in Human Life	40	Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice
60	Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests	30	Expressing True Liberty
60	Youth: Establishing the Kingdom	20	Arising to Serve: Memorization
15	Prerequisites for Success: A Double Crusade	20	Illumined Youth: Transforming Ourselves
75	Rectitude of Conduct	10	Closing Devotions and Singing
90	A Chaste and Holy Life		

### Module Three: Youth: Transforming Civilization (12 hours)

Min.	Activity	Min.	Activity
15	Opening Devotions	30	Heroes, Heroines, and Hands
40	Fellowship and Love	75	Spiritual Revolution Handbook
5	Themes and objectives, Module Three	75	Teaching the Cause of God
40	Trees of our Lives	60	Empowering Community Life
40	The Environment and the Human Heart	30	Systematic Training for Youth Empowerment
40	Overcoming Oppression	10	Naming Our Gifts
70	Investigating Reality	30	Evaluations
45	Storming the Gates of Heaven	15	Closing Devotions and Parting Gift
90	A New Cycle of Human Power		

# Youth Empowerment: A New Cycle of Human Power

## Sample Agenda: Eleven Sessions \*agenda times do not include breaks

### Session One

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#### Introduction to the Course

20 min. Opening Devotions and Group Singing (Sing Youth Prayer)

30 min. Contributing Our Gems

20 min. The Light of Unity

30 min. The Power of Growth

#### Module One

5 min. Introduction to Module One

60 min. Fulfilling Our Purpose; Closing Devotions

### Session Two

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15 min. Opening Devotions with Music and Singing

5 min. Briefly Review Session One and Introduce Session Two

90 min. The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh

45 min. Freedom and Maturity

10 min. Review Module One; Closing Devotions

### Session Three

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#### Module Two

15 min. Opening Devotions and music

5 min. Introduction to Module Two

20 min. Fruit on the Tree of Life

50 min. The Choicest Time in Human Life

75 min. Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests; Closing Devotions

### Session Four

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20 min. Opening Devotions

5 min. Briefly Review Sessions One through Three; Introduce Today's Activities

60 min. Youth: Establishing the Kingdom

10 min. Prerequisites for Success: A Double Crusade

70 min. Rectitude of Conduct; Closing Devotions

### Session Five

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15 min. Opening Devotions

5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities

90 min. A Chaste and Holy Life

60 min. Spiritualizing Our Lives; Closing Devotions

### Session Six

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15 min. Opening Devotions

5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities

40 min. Temple of Being

40 min. Overcoming Stereotypes

40 min. Complete Freedom from Racial Prejudice; Closing Devotions

**Session Seven**

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- 10 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities
- 30 min. Expressing True Liberty
- 20 min. Arising to Serve: Memorization
- 20 min. Illumined Youth: Transforming Ourselves

**Module Three**

- 10 min. Opening Devotions for Module Three
- 30 min. Fellowship and Love
- 5 min. Share Module Three Themes and Objectives
- 40 min. Trees of our Lives; Closing Devotions

**Session Eight**

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- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions, Introduce Today's Activities
- 40 min. The Environment and the Human Heart
- 40 min. Overcoming Oppression
- 65 min. Investigating Reality; Closing Devotions

**Session Nine**

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- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities
- 45 min. Storming the Gates of Heaven
- 85 min. A New Cycle of Human Power
- 30 min. Heroes, Heroines, and Hands; Closing Devotions

**Session Ten**

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- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities
- 90 min. Spiritual Revolution
- 60 min. Teaching the Cause of God; Closing Devotions

**Session Eleven**

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- 15 min. Opening prayers
- 5 min. Briefly Review Previous Sessions; Introduce Today's Activities
- 60 min. Empowering Community Life
- 40 min. Systematic Training for Youth Empowerment
- 10 min. Naming Our Gifts
- 30 min. Evaluations
- 10 min. Closing Devotions and Parting Gift

# Youth Empowerment: A New Cycle of Human Power

## Sample Agenda: Three Weekend Retreats

### Weekend One

#### Friday Evening

##### Dinner and Clean-Up

##### Introduction to the Course (2 hours)

- 30 min. Opening Devotions and Group Singing (Sing Youth Prayer)
- 30 min. Contributing Our Gems
- 30 min. The Light of Unity
- 30 min. The Power of Growth

##### Fellowship

Plan curfew arrangements, separate lodgings for male and female, etc.

#### Saturday Morning

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

##### Morning Session (9:00 a.m.–Noon)

##### Module One: The Blessed Beauty

- 15 min. Morning Devotions
- 10 min. Introduction to Module One
- 60 min. Fulfilling Our Purpose
- 90 min. The Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh

##### Lunch and Clean-Up

Service, Teaching, or Fellowship Activity

##### Saturday Afternoon Session

(3:30 p.m.–5:00 p.m.)

- 10 min. Opening Devotions
- 45 min. Freedom and Maturity
- 20 min. The Power of Choice
- 5 min. Review Module One, Closing Devotions

Dinner and Clean-Up

Organized Recreation

#### Saturday Evening Session

(7:30 p.m.–9:10 p.m.)

##### Module Two: Choicest Time in Human Life

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- 15 min. Opening Devotions and Music
- 5 min. Introduction to Module Two
- 20 min. Fruit on the Tree of Life
- 60 min. The Choicest Time in Human Life
- Closing Devotions

Fellowship; curfew; and separate lodging for males and females, etc.

#### Sunday Morning

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

##### Morning Session (9:00 a.m.–Noon)

- 15 min. Opening Devotions and Music
- 5 min. Review Saturday's Activities and Introduce Today's Activities
- 90 min. Making Decisions, Seizing Opportunities, Addressing Challenges, Overcoming Tests
- 60 min. Establishing the Kingdom
- Closing Devotions

Lunch and Clean-Up

Goodbyes and Departure

## Weekend Two

### **Friday Evening**

Dinner and Clean-Up

### **Evening Session (7:30 p.m.–9:40 p.m.)**

- 20 min. Opening Devotions
- 10 min. Overview of Weekend;  
Quick Ice-Breaker Activity
- 10 min. Prerequisites for Success:  
A Double Crusade
- 90 min. Rectitude of Conduct  
Closing Devotions

Fellowship

Plan curfew arrangements, separate lodgings for male and female, etc.

### **Saturday Morning**

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

### **Saturday Morning Session**

**(9:00 a.m.–Noon)**

- 15 min. Opening Devotions and  
Music
- 5 min. Briefly Review Evening  
Session; Introduce Today's  
Activities
- 90 min. A Chaste and Holy Life
- 10 min. Break
- 60 min. Spiritualizing Our Lives

Lunch and Clean-Up

### **Afternoon Session**

Significant service or teaching activity—plan carefully for success (1:00 p.m.–4:30 p.m.)

Debrief service or teaching activity (4:30 p.m.–4:45 p.m.)

### **Saturday Afternoon Session**

**(4:45 p.m.–6:00 p.m.)**

- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 60 min. Temple of Being

Dinner and Clean-Up

Organized Recreation

### **Saturday Evening Session**

**(8:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.)**

- 10 min. Opening Devotions
- 60 min. Overcoming Stereotypes
- 10 min. Break
- 40 min. Complete Freedom from  
Racial Prejudice

Fellowship; curfew; separate lodging for males and females

### **Sunday Morning**

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

### **Morning Session (9:00 a.m.–Noon)**

- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Review Yesterday's  
Activities, Introduce  
Today's Activities
- 30 min. Expressing True Liberty
- 20 min. Arising to Serve:  
Memorization
- 10 min. Break
- 20 min. Illumined Youth:  
Transforming Ourselves
- 45 min. Storming the Gates of  
Heaven (from Module  
Three)
- 40 min. Conclude with Devotional  
Gathering and Invite  
Parents, Seekers, and  
Friends to Join

## Weekend Three

### **Friday Evening**

Dinner and Clean-Up

### **Evening Session (7:30 p.m.–10:00 p.m.)**

#### **Module Three: Transforming**

#### **Civilization**

- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 40 min. Fellowship and Love
- 5 min. Themes and Objectives
- 40 min. Trees of Our Lives;  
Closing Devotions

Fellowship

Plan curfew arrangements, separate lodgings for male and female, etc.

### **Saturday Morning**

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

### **Saturday Morning Session**

**(9:00 a.m.–Noon)**

- 20 min. Devotions and Music
- 5 min. Review Evening Activities;  
Introduce Today's  
Activities
- 40 min. The Environment and the  
Human Heart
- 40 min. Overcoming Oppression
- 15 min. Break
- 70 min. Investigating Reality

Lunch and Clean-Up

Organized Teaching, Service, or Fellowship  
Activities

### **Saturday Afternoon Session**

**(3:30 p.m.–5:40 p.m.)**

- 10 min. Opening Devotions
- 90 min. A New Cycle of Human  
Power
- 30 min. Heroes, Heroines, and  
Hands

Dinner and Clean-Up

Organized Recreation

### **Saturday Evening Session**

**(7:00 p.m.–10:00 p.m.)**

- 10 min. Opening Devotions
- 90 min. Spiritual Revolution
- 10 min. Break
- 70 min. Teaching the Cause of God

Fellowship; curfew; separate lodging for  
males and females

### **Sunday Morning**

Dawn Prayers

Breakfast

### **Morning Session (9:00 a.m.–Noon)**

- 15 min. Opening Devotions
- 5 min. Review Yesterday's  
Activities, Introduce  
Morning Plan
- 60 min. Empowering Community  
Life
- 15 min. Break
- 35 min. Systematic Training  
for Youth Empowerment
- 10 min. Naming Our Gifts
- 30 min. Evaluations
- 10 min. Closing Devotions and  
Parting Gift

Lunch and Clean-Up

Farewell and depart with plans for  
continued training, transformation, and  
teaching

**FEEDBACK FORM**  
**FOR CORE CURRICULUM YOUTH EMPOWERMENT: A NEW CYCLE OF HUMAN POWER**

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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](mailto: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 module?
  
5. What provisions were established 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 new youth and their parents?
  
  - Continuous improvement of Bahá'í youth programs in the local community?
  
6. Further comments: