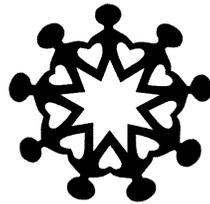


*The Fundamental Verities*  
Sequence of Courses



Core Curriculum  
Training Programs  
for Community Development

**Contents**

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# The **Art** of Facilitation

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes

prepared by the  
NATIONAL TEACHER  
TRAINING CENTER  
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Assembly of the Babá'is of the  
United States*

## *The Art of Facilitation—Suggested Agenda*

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- Opening Devotions / Welcome / Introduction
- Historical Overview
- Core Curriculum Learning Framework
- Discussion Guidelines
- Overview of The Art of Facilitation
- Summary: Personal Journal

### **Facilitating Study Circles**

- Experiencing the Fundamental Verities
- Debrief
- Training for Facilitators and Tutors
- Learning from the Example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- The Humble Servant
- Qualities for Humble Service
- Qualities of Listening
- Facilitating Text-Based Discussions
- Fostering Self-Discipline in Groups
- Movement and Music
- Cultivating Love
- Creating a Learning Environment
- Preparation for practice
- First Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities
- Debrief
- Instructional Methods and Learning Tools
- Preparation for second practice
- Second Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities
- Debrief
- Sharing Your Facilitation Experiences
- Unifiers and Agents of Change

### **A Dynamic Community of Growth**

- Guidance from the Universal House of Justice
- Building Momentum
- The Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses for Community Growth
- Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development
- Study Circles Open to All
- Serving Regional Training Institutes
- Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly
- A Door to Entry by Troops

### **Moving to Action**

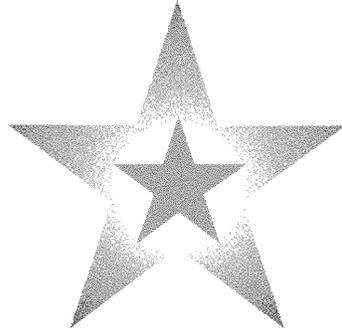
- Facilitating the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses
- Situations Beyond the Scope of Core Curriculum Training Programs
- Cultural Sensitivity
- Review Appendix
- Summarize *The Art of Facilitation*
- Questions and Answers
- Course Evaluation
- Planting Seeds of Service and Closing Devotions











- Welcome, Devotions, and Introductions
- Historical Overview
- Core Curriculum Learning Framework
- Discussion Guidelines
- Overview of The Art of Facilitation
- Personal Journal

### **Learning Objectives**

#### **Knowledge**

To know the historical development of the Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education and Training.

#### **Wisdom**

To understand the Core Curriculum learning framework and its foundation in the Bahá'í writings.

#### **Spiritual Perception**

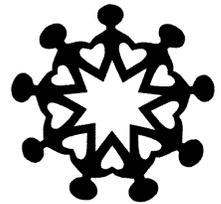
To perceive one's role as a facilitator of spiritual education and training.

#### **Eloquent Speech**

To express a sense of personal meaning as a participant in this training.

# The **Art** of **Facilitation**

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes



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Introduction

## *Welcome, Devotions and Introductions*

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**Purpose:**

To create a joyful, loving, and spiritual atmosphere for learning

### **Devotions**

Begin the session with uplifting devotions and music.

**Welcome** to this training event, on behalf of the sponsoring institute or institution and the National Teacher Training Center.

### **Introductions**

Complete the Introduction activity on the following page.

### **Logistics**

Take a moment to familiarize yourself with the layout of your facility, including the location of rest rooms and refreshments, with practical matters such as child care and the cost of materials and food, and any other important logistical arrangements.

### **Agenda**

Refer to page 2 for a general agenda for this training. A detailed agenda may be provided by your facilitators.

### **Supplies**

A detailed supply list for Core Curriculum training programs is provided in the Appendix, p. 115. Additional supplies specific to The Art of Facilitation are listed in the Appendix, pp. 105-6. These supplies may be flexibly utilized; for example, chart paper and markers substitute for a chalkboard and chalk and vice versa.

1. Refer to the statement of the Universal House of Justice in the 17 January 2003 letter to the Bahá'ís of the World:

Let there be no doubt that what we are witnessing is the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops....

2. This course, *The Art of Facilitation*, represents one example of this gathering momentum. Take a moment to reflect silently on one example of this gathering momentum in your own lives, your community, or from someone you know personally.
3. Divide your group into pairs, preferably with someone you don't already know well. Spend 10 minutes talking with each other. In these pairs:
  - Share your examples of the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops.
  - Learn each other's names and perhaps a little about your families.
  - Also share your aspirations for service in the field of spiritual education and training and any specific hopes for this facilitator training program.
4. Return to the large group and take turns to briefly introduce your new friends, with just their name, where they're from, and one **BRIEF** bit of information shared in your conversation.
5. After introductions have been made, briefly share your specific hopes for this training in the whole group. Record these hopes on chart paper and post the list in the room. It is not necessary to discuss the list at this time. Many of these hopes will be addressed during the course of this training. As you complete the activities in this course, take responsibility for placing a check mark on your items as they are addressed.

Participants with hopes or concerns not addressed in this training may wish to talk privately with their Facilitators or contact to the National Teacher Training Center for a response, if desired.

**Purpose:**

To become acquainted with other participants;  
To perceive the dynamic growth of the Cause

## *Historical Overview of the Development of the Core Curriculum*

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### **Purpose:**

To appreciate the comprehensive nature of the Core Curriculum project and its evolution from extensive research in the Bahá'í Writings and the experiences of the friends.

### **History, current status and future direction of the project**

The National Bahá'í Education Task Force, working under the supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, oversees the ongoing development and evolution of the Core Curriculum training programs. The brief timeline on the following page provides an overview of the evolution of the Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education.

A few further points relating to the development of the Core Curriculum bear mentioning at this time:

- The Education Task Force recognizes the significant contributions of all the Bahá'í teachers and educators who have served the field of spiritual education and training since the very beginning of the Bahá'í Faith. We stand on the shoulders of these giants.
- As a living curriculum, these spiritual education and training programs originate in study of the writings of the Bahá'í Faith and become increasingly effective in response to the experiences of the friends everywhere.
- The purpose of the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses is “to endow ever-growing contingents of believers with the spiritual insights, the knowledge, and the skills to carry out the many tasks of accelerated expansion and consolidation” of the Faith, “according to their God-given talents and capacities.”<sup>1</sup>
- The purpose of the Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development is to build patterns of community life that “welcome all with the light of oneness,”<sup>2</sup> to foster vibrant, unified families, and “to ensure that the vision of the community fully embraces its younger members.”<sup>3</sup> These programs address specific needs of Bahá'ís and seekers alike.
- The purpose of the comprehensive, sequential spiritual education curriculum for children and junior youth is to raise up consecrated, knowledgeable servants of God and humanity.
- The tree diagram provides a quick overview of the Core Curriculum and Ruhi training programs available to Regional Training Institutes and communities in the United States. We will refer to this diagram later in the training.

---

<sup>1</sup> Universal House of Justice, December 26, 1995

<sup>2</sup> Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 37

<sup>3</sup> Universal House of Justice, November 26, 1999

## The Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education and Training: Historical Development

### 1988—1993

National Bahá'í Education Committee appointed by the United States National Spiritual Assembly to develop resources for spiritual education, and for a comprehensive Bahá'í curriculum for children

Sacred Writings systematically reviewed for themes that pertain to education

Educational material assessment process developed, which assesses over 300 existing educational materials

Collaborations initiated with other National Education Committees, Continental Board of Counselors, Representatives of the Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh and agencies and committees of the National Spiritual Assembly

1990 Core Curriculum key concepts elaborated, including:

a) Child Development Centered Community

b) Roles of parents, teachers and the Local Spiritual Assemblies

c) Content and Process of Bahá'í Spiritual Education

(Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception and Eloquent Speech)

Strands on the Central Figures, the Covenant, the Principle of Oneness, the Administrative Order identified

1991 National Teacher Training Center at Louhelen Bahá'í School established by the National Spiritual Assembly

1992 First trainers' training session held at the National Teacher Training Center

Local teacher training sessions begin throughout North America

First Parenting Facilitator Training held at the National Teacher Training Center

### 1993—1996

First Race Unity Trainer Training at National Teacher Training Center

1995 National Spiritual Assembly publishes *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*

Rapidly increasing materials for the spiritual education of children and junior youth

First Marriage and Family Life Facilitator Training held at the National Teacher Training Center

First International Teacher Trainer Workshop held at the National Teacher Training Center

### 1996—2001

Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses released

Scope and Sequence Documents prepared for spiritual education of children and junior youth

First Equality Trainer Training

First Youth Empowerment Facilitator Training

Teacher Development Workshops published

Process of Core Curriculum Trainer Training decentralized

### 2001—2003

*Bahá'u'lláh – Volume One* storybook published

Bahá'u'lláh Lesson Planning Guides, Levels One, Two, Three published

*Bahá'u'lláh – Volume Two* storybook published

'Abdu'l-Bahá Lesson Planning Guides, Levels One, Two, Three published

Teacher Trainer trainings held in Europe, Asia, and the Pacific

*Bahá'u'lláh – Volume Three* storybook published

Principle of Oneness Lesson Planning Guides, Levels One, Two published

The Báb Lesson Planning Guides, Levels One, Two, Three published

Fundamental Verities sequence of courses revised, expanded, and published in book form

“Vision and Evolution of the Institute Process in the United States” statement released by National Spiritual Assembly



### Teacher Training

- ❖ *Spiritual Education for Children & Junior Youth*
  - ❖ *Facilitator Training*
- ❖ *Lesson Planning Guides, Storybooks*
- ❖ *Teacher Development Workshops*



### Youth Empowerment

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Marriage and Family Life Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *For married couples or those preparing for marriage*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Race Unity Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Race Unity Tool Kit*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Equality Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Spiritual Parenting

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Parenting Tool Kit*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Fundamental Verities Supplement

- Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh*
- ❖ *Seven Modules for Study Circles*



### Ruhi Sequence

- ❖ *Book 7: Walking Together on a Path of Service*
- ❖ *Book 6: Teaching the Faith*
- ❖ *Book 4: Twin Manifestations*
- ❖ *Book 3: Teaching Children's Classes*
- ❖ *Book 2: Arising to Serve*
- ❖ *Book 1: Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*



### Fundamental Verities Sequence

- ❖ *The Art of Facilitation: Facilitator Training*
- ❖ *Course Six: Building a New Civilization*
- ❖ *Course Five: To Serve the Covenant*
- ❖ *Course Four: Every Believer is a Teacher*
- ❖ *Course Three: The Seeker's Quest*
- ❖ *Course Two: Circles of Unity*
- ❖ *Course One: This Day of God*
- ❖ *To Be a Bahá'í: 8-hour introductory course*

Entry by Troops

Entry by Troops

### Fireside Workshops for Media Campaign

- ❖ *The Power of Race Unity*
- ❖ *Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith*
- ❖ *Family: Seeds of World Peace*
- ❖ *Two Wings: Equality of Women and Men*
- ❖ *We Are One*
- ❖ *The Power of Prayer*

### Courses for Regional Training Institutes

The training institute process in the United States Bahá'í community is founded on two pillars: the Fundamental Verities and the Ruhi materials. In the Five Year Plan, the National Assembly has called for the use of these two approaches. These basic sequences of courses, much like the trunk of a tree, support courses branching out from it, each branch dedicated to some specific area of training. Specific branches of training may be offered parallel to the main sequence.



Individuals trained as Core Curriculum facilitators or by using the course *The Art of Facilitation* may offer the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses.



Individuals who have completed their own study of a particular course as well as the course *Walking Together on a Path of Service* may offer that particular course.

### Organizational framework

The Core Curriculum learning model is organized in accordance with the following statement of Bahá'u'lláh:

Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. *Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Bahá'í Education*, rev. ed. 1999, #9

#### Purpose:

To become informed of the Core Curriculum learning framework.

While it is not possible to define or limit the creative Word of God, learning objectives inspired by this statement of Bahá'u'lláh assist us to internalize His teachings and translate them into action in our own lives.

### KNOWLEDGE (*I Know*)

To gain **information** about facts, spiritual principles, or sacred writings on a topic.

### WISDOM (*I Understand*)

To gain **deeper understanding** of facts, principles, or writings.

### SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION (*I See*)

To **reflect on the application** of facts, principles, or writings in one's own life and one's service to others.

### ELOQUENT SPEECH (*I Teach, I Serve*)

To **articulate** or **demonstrate**, through words and deeds, understanding and application of facts, principles, and writings.

Read the words of Bahá'u'lláh again, with these questions in mind: How does this quotation assist us to understand the role of volition in the learning process? How does it assist us to appreciate diversity in the learning group? How does it assist us to understand the importance of spiritual education and training? What might be some examples of inner and outer perfections?

Working in pairs or in the whole group, memorize all or a portion of the key quotation.

## Activity

### The Learning Framework

---

**Purpose:**

To understand the Core Curriculum learning framework and its foundation in the Bahá'í writings.

1. The Creator of all has provided us with the gift of a simple object from nature, the seed, that we may use to explore the promise and potential of the Core Curriculum learning framework.
2. As we know, the whole world has been recreated in this day, and we're just at the earliest stages of learning these new meanings. Let's begin at the beginning and imagine that we have no prior knowledge of the concept of "seed."
3. Let's consider the dictionary definition:

Seed—the grains of plants or a ripened ovule of a flowering plant that may develop into a new plant. (*Merriam-Webster's Desk Dictionary* (1995), p. 495)

Based on this definition alone, what do we now know?
4. Examine pictures of seeds. What do these pictures add to our knowledge?
5. Now pass around the room a tray of real seeds. Look at the seeds. Choose one to examine more closely. Feel free to feel and smell the seeds, but keep them intact. If edible seeds are available, enjoy them.
6. What deeper understanding do you now have about seeds?
7. So far we have explored some of the physical aspects of the seed, but we can also explore something of their spiritual potential. Play soft music in the background and refer to the page of quotations "Seeds of Growth." Listen as the passages are read aloud by your fellow participants or your facilitators.
8. Discuss: How is the image of the seed used in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi? What concepts are illustrated? What spiritual qualities are brought forward?
9. Silently reflect on the range of spiritual principles illustrated by this small set of quotations about the seed. Select one of these principles to strive to increasingly express throughout our training.
10. Individually think of an example of a situation in your community in which this spiritual principle has been expressed recently. Turn to the person beside you and tell the story of that experience. Who was there? What happened? What happened after that? What would it be like if this principle were constantly upheld in your own community or cluster?

11. The Universal House of Justice describes clusters as “seedbeds of expansion.” Briefly discuss this question: What is the relationship between increasing numbers of people striving to express these spiritual principles and the happiness and well-being of the entire human race?
12. Using the cardstock provided, fold it into a name board (using the instructions on the following page) OR use re-usable name tags and adorn your name with a visual expression of the word (or a symbol) of the spiritual quality you will be striving to contribute to the group during this training.

13. As you complete your illustrations, identify in the whole group which parts of this activity assist us to gain:

Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_

Wisdom \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual Perception \_\_\_\_\_

and Eloquent Speech \_\_\_\_\_

14. The Content section of the book *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* elaborates the Core Curriculum learning model, which is used throughout a broad range of spiritual education and training programs, including the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses, the Core Curriculum specialized training programs for Community Development, and the Spiritual Education Curriculum for Children and Junior Youth. Though it may seem unfamiliar at first, this learning model will become more and more comfortable as we use it throughout the training.

You may choose to refer to the following pages in *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* for some additional references on knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech.

**Knowledge:** p. 100, two quotations at bottom of page;

**Wisdom:** p. 119, first quotation, and p. 123, first whole quotation;

**Spiritual Perception:** pp. 126-7, first quotation;

**Eloquent Speech:** p. 135, first three quotations.

## SEEDS OF GROWTH

---



I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love, and caused to spring forth by the hand of Thy bounty. This seed craveth, therefore, in its inmost being, for the waters of Thy mercy and the living fountain of Thy grace. Send down upon it, from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness, that which will enable it to flourish beneath Thy shadow and within the borders of Thy court. Thou art He Who watereth the hearts of all that have recognized Thee from Thy plenteous stream and the fountain of Thy living waters.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 178

Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Persian Hidden Words*, no. 33

These are the days of seed sowing. These are the days of tree planting. The bountiful bestowals of God are successive. He who sows a seed in this day will behold his reward in the fruits and harvest of the heavenly Kingdom. This timely seed, when planted in the hearts of the beloved of God, will be watered by showers of divine mercy and warmed by the sunshine of divine love. Its fruitage and flower shall be the solidarity of mankind, the perfection of justice and the praiseworthy attributes of heaven manifest in humanity.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 8

The tender and simple seed, solitary though it may be, must not look upon its own lack of power. Nay, rather, its attention must ever be directed to the sun, in the rays of which it finds life and quickening; and it must ever consider the downpour of the cloud of mercy.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 420

If you plant a seed in the ground, a tree will become manifest from that seed. The seed sacrifices itself to the tree that will come from it. The seed is outwardly lost, destroyed; but the same seed which is sacrificed will be absorbed and embodied in the tree, its blossoms, fruit and branches. If the identity of that seed had not been sacrificed to the tree which became manifest from it, no branches, blossoms or fruits would have been forthcoming.

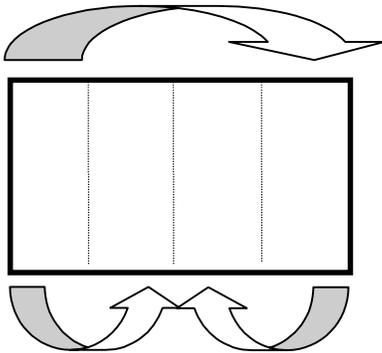
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 451

. . . The seed of the spirit starts to grow in the human soul. This seed must be watered by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These gifts of the spirit are received through prayer, meditation, study of the Holy Utterances and service to the Cause of God. The fact of the matter is that service in the Cause is like the plough which ploughs the physical soil when seeds are sown. It is necessary that the soil be ploughed up, so that it can be enriched, and thus cause a stronger growth of the seed. In exactly the same way the evolution of the spirit takes place through ploughing up the soil of the heart so that it is a constant reflection of the Holy Spirit. In this way the human spirit grows and develops by leaps and bounds.

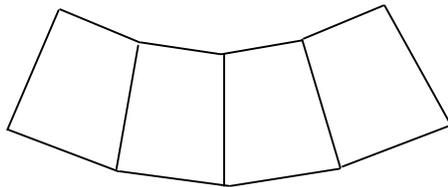
ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. II, pp. 24-5

Using a piece of heavy paper or card stock (approximately 8 1/2" x 11"), make a name card which can stand up on a table and can be read from across the room.

1. To make your name card, fold the paper in half, crease it, and unfold.



2. Then fold both ends in to meet at the center line, and crease these folds. If you open the paper, you'll have three creases, like this:



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



4. Write your name, as you wish to be addressed, on one side of their name card. Using the art supplies provided, adorn your name card with a visual representation of the spiritual quality you hope to cultivate or uphold throughout this training. Enjoy continuing to decorate your name card as an on-going artistic expression of this principle throughout the training.

## *Discussion Guidelines*

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**Purpose:**  
To develop discussion guidelines using the Writings.

It is sometimes helpful to set discussion guidelines at the beginning of a course. On other occasions, it may be sufficient to model the type of discussion that facilitates learning. This is a choice the facilitator is free to make.

Can you think of circumstances in which you'd make one choice or the other?

Here is an activity that a facilitator may use to establish discussion guidelines within a weekend intensive or a study circle.

1. Have participants divide into groups of 3-5 people.
2. Each group reads a portion of the "Guidelines for Discussion" quotations. Please note that these guidelines are organized by content, not by author.
3. Each group develops 2-3 guidelines based on the quotation studied.
4. Invite each group to share the guidelines they develop, then in the whole group agree on the guidelines that will guide the group during this course.
5. In light of your guidelines, also consider exploring such questions as: Are children or babies welcome in the group? When will breaks be? How strict will we be about starting and ending times? Is smoking allowed? What are some practical ways that we can welcome and perhaps balance the contributions of all members of the group?

Remember that once these verbal agreements are established, the group may choose to refer back to them to resolve any question that may arise during your sessions together. And of course, if a guideline isn't working, the group may choose to modify it.

6. Write the group's guidelines on chart paper and beautify it as desired.

### **Process**

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How can it assist a group to effectively study the Writings when they first agree on discussion guidelines?

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 88

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

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 9

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

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Power of Divine Assistance*, p. 54

4 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, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 72-3

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 88

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.

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Consultation: A Compilation*, pp. 16-17

7 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, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 87

8 In view of this important administrative principle of frank and open consultation, the Guardian would advise you to give up the method of asking other members to voice your opinion and suggestions. This indirect way of expressing your views . . . would lead to many misunderstandings and complications.

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Lights of Guidance*, 1988, p. 177

9 . . . 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, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 87

10 They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one’s views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 88

**Guidelines for Discussion, continued**

11 In discussions look toward the reality without being self-opinionated. 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, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 183

12 When you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them. All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto. Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one. . . . Do not allow differences of opinion, or diversity of thought to separate you from your fellow-men, or to be the cause of dispute, hatred, and strife in your hearts.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 53

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

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Consultation: A Compilation*, p. 6

14 Remember above all the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh concerning gossip and unseemly talk about others. Stories repeated about others are seldom good. A silent tongue is safest. Even good may be harmful if spoken at the wrong time or to the wrong person.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London*, 1982, p. 125

15 It is an important principle of the Faith that one must not promise what one is not going to fulfill. Therefore, if a Baha'i 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. 334

16 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, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 72

17 They must also learn to listen to the opinions of their fellow members without taking offence or belittling the views of another.

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 179

18 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, *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 97

19 If we show love, patience, and understanding of the weakness of others, if we seek to never criticize but rather encourage, others will do likewise . . .

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 90

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

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, quoted in *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 83

### Format

The Art of Facilitation is designed as a 23-hour training course to prepare individuals to facilitate the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses and to hone the skills of facilitators for the Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development.

The training is organized as follows:

- Introduction and Overview
- Facilitating Study Circles
- A Dynamic Community of Growth
- Moving to Action

### Purpose:

To give participants a view of how the training process will unfold and what will be covered.  
To familiarize them with their course materials.

### Modeling

Throughout the training sessions the trainers will strive to model the teaching and learning tools that are built into the Core Curriculum training programs. Among these are direct use of the Bahá'í writings, encouragement of memorization of the writings, use of music and the arts, experiential learning activities, cooperative learning experiences, consultation and creative expression.

### Books and Materials

The following materials will be used or referenced in this course:

*The Art of Facilitation* course book contains the activities that we will experience together as we work to hone our facilitation skills.

*Foundations for a Spiritual Education: Research of the Bahá'í Writings* is the compilation of Bahá'í writings that have guided the development and growth of this project. These writings are organized around key concepts of the curriculum framework and are provided for your in-depth study or as background in gaining familiarity with a given aspect of the curriculum. If you do not yet have your own copy of this book, you may want to purchase a copy in the near future.

*Course One: This Day of God* is the first course in the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses. Because the Fundamental Verities Sequence is defined as a basic sequence of courses for training institutes, we use it to practice the skills of facilitation.

Your feedback is a vital and valuable service that is greatly appreciated and directly promotes the increasing effective service to the community. As the historical timeline demonstrates, the program evolves in response to the experiences of the friends using it.

## *Personal Journal*

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**Purpose:**

To cultivate a sense of personal meaning for attendance at this training.

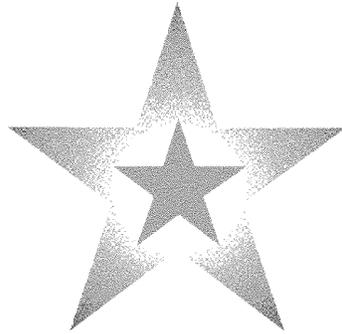
At the beginning of your Art of Facilitation course book you will find several Journal Pages for your use at various times during the course. The journal provides a place to:

- Reflect and process new concepts and activities throughout the training
- Record ideas, insights, questions and concerns
- Recognize understanding, consider past events, and engage in self evaluation
- Describe aspirations and identify future action steps

To begin this process, please use your journal pages to respond to the following question:

Why have I chosen to develop my facilitation skills through the Art of Facilitation?

Consider playing meditative music during your journal writing.



- Experiencing the Fundamental Verities
- Training for Facilitators and Tutors
- Learning from the Example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- The Humble Servant
- The Qualities for Humble Service
- Qualities of Listening
- Facilitating Text-Based Discussions
- Movement and Music
- Cultivating Love
- Creating a Learning Environment
- Unifiers and Agents of Change
- Practice Facilitation of the Fundamental Verities

### **Learning Objectives:**

#### **Knowledge**

To know that the role of the facilitator is that of humble service.

#### **Wisdom**

To understand some of the qualities and attributes for effective service as a facilitator.

#### **Spiritual Perception**

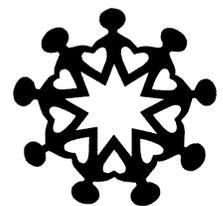
To ponder and reflect, individually and collectively, on the qualities of service needed for facilitating study circles, as demonstrated in the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.  
To reflect on the importance of the skill of listening.

#### **Eloquent Speech**

To experience the practical outcomes of the first session of the first course in the sequence.  
To practice facilitating a group discussion.

# The **Art** of Facilitation

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes



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Facilitating Study Circles

## *Experiencing the Fundamental Verities*

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**Purpose:**

To experience the practical outcomes of the first session of the first course in the sequence.

1. This activity gives participants first hand experience with the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses. Before beginning this experience, note that activities similar to the introduction and overview of this course may be used to create an introductory session to the Fundamental Verities Sequence, as the facilitator chooses. Under what circumstances might we plan an introductory session that includes such activities as the Historical Overview, the Learning Framework, and Discussion Guidelines? Under which circumstances might we choose to simply begin with Session 1, Course One?
2. Observe modeling of facilitation of the following:

**Fundamental Verities, Course One: *This Day of God***

Session 1 – The Meaning of Divine Unity  
approximately 100 minutes

**Topics:**

- Overview of the Course
  - The Oneness of God
  - This Day of God
  - Individual Acts of Study, Service, and Teaching
3. Debrief the demonstration session:
    - What instructional methods and learning tools were demonstrated?
    - How was the Core Curriculum Learning Framework utilized?
  4. Please refer to the **Appendix** of Course One: This Day of God
    - Read the Facilitation Guidelines, pp. 108-9.
    - Notice the suggested schedule for each session, pp. 110-120. Naturally the actual times will vary from group to group. Please be flexible! What are some factors that will influence the amount of time needed for a specific learning activity?
    - Also note the materials list, ideas for recorded music, historical references for Session 8, **The Power of Prayer** fireside packet for Session 9, and the overview of education and training programs of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.
    - What type of preparation is needed to facilitate a Fundamental Verities session?

5. Refer to Session 2 – The Oneness of God: Tests and Sacrifices

- Consultation About Individual Teaching
- Consultation About Individual Study
- Extended After-Class Activities

6. Discuss these questions

- What is the link between the extended after-class activities and the consultation about individual study and teaching in the next session?
- How does this structure facilitate completion of the study circle's service component?

## *Facilitating a Study Circle*

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**Purpose:**

To identify some of the skills and qualities of a facilitator.

1. Read aloud the following quotations from the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Center.

Crucial to the success of the institute's endeavours will be the effectiveness of its tutors. They themselves will require training, both in how to facilitate the courses and maintain the cohesion of the groups studying in the towns and villages across the country. The institute will need to make concerted effort, therefore, to build its own capacity to supervise a growing number of tutors and train them, constantly improving the quality of their teaching.<sup>4</sup>

Tutors require training in how to keep the participants focused on the material, how to formulate questions that stimulate reflection, and how to foster active participation within the group. They need to combine the qualities of love, humility, and patience, with the dedication, perseverance, and commitment required to create a spiritual atmosphere conducive to learning. It should be emphasized that tutor training is not a one-time event but an ongoing activity where tutors come together periodically to share experiences and ideas.<sup>5</sup>

2. Then briefly discuss: What are some of the spiritual qualities and skills necessary for the service of facilitating a study circle? What are some of our responsibilities in undertaking this service?
3. Please bear in mind that while this training considers many of these necessary qualities and provides practice to build the necessary skills, ongoing gatherings for a Regional Training Institute's tutors and facilitators will provide a forum for constantly improving the quality of our service.

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<sup>4</sup> Letter dated 14 November 1997 written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, quoted in "Training Institutes," commissioned by The Universal House of Justice, 1998 April

<sup>5</sup> International Teaching Center, 2000 February, "Training Institutes and Systematic Growth", p. 9

*Activity*  
*Learning from the Example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

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During ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s long trip to Africa, Europe, and North America in 1912, He visited the Bowery Mission in New York City. Juliet Thompson recorded the event in her diary.

1. Sitting close together in teams of two, take turns reading the following story aloud to each other, so that each has the opportunity to simply listen while the other reads.
2. While still in your teams of two, discuss the focus questions.
3. Return to the large group and share your insights about the spiritual qualities needed for facilitating study circles as exemplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. If desired, you may also choose to identify some of the differences between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s circumstances and the role of study circles in the Teaching Plan.
4. Record these insights on chart paper and post where all can see them.

**Purpose:**

To ponder and reflect, both individually and collectively, on the qualities of service needed to facilitate a study circle, as demonstrated in the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

**Process:**

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Turn to your journals and record your private reflections about the spiritual qualities needed for facilitating study circles, perhaps while listening to quiet music.

## ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AT THE BOWERY MISSION

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**Focus Questions:** What distinctive qualities of service are demonstrated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this story? What are some of the ways that we could strive to follow the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as we facilitate study circles?

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Day before yesterday, 19 April, the Master spoke at the Bowery Mission.

I met Him in the chapel, dragging along with me the huge white bag of quarters. Edward [Getsinger] also appeared with a bag of the same size and we sat behind the Master on the platform. Mr. MacNutt, Mr. Mills, Mr. Grundy, and Mr. Hutchinson, and of course all the Persians, were seated there too. The long hall was packed to the doors with those poor derelicts who sleep on park benches or doorsteps.

Dr. Hallimond called upon me to introduce my Lord, which seemed so presumptuous I could scarcely do it.

Then the Master rose to speak. Here are His heavenly words: “Tonight I am very happy for I have come here to meet My friends. I consider you my relatives, My companions, and I am your comrade.

“You must be thankful to God that you are poor, for His Holiness Jesus Christ has said: ‘Blessed are the poor.’ He never said: blessed are the rich! He said too that the Kingdom is for the poor and that it is easier for a camel to enter the needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter God’s Kingdom. Therefore you must be thankful to God that although in this world you are indigent, yet the treasures of God are within your reach, and although in the material realm you are poor, yet in the Kingdom of God you are precious. . . .

“Praise be to God, our hope is in the mercy of God; and there is no doubt that the divine Compassion is bestowed upon the poor. His Holiness Jesus Christ said so; His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh said so.

“While Bahá’u’lláh was in Baghdad, still in possession of great wealth, He left all He had and went alone from the city, living two years among the poor. They were His comrades. He ate with them, slept with them, and gloried in being one of them. . . . And of this title he was very proud. He admonished all that we must be the servants of the poor, helpers of the poor, remember the sorrows of the poor, associate with them, for thereby we may inherit the Kingdom of Heaven.

“God has not said that there are mansions prepared for us if we pass our time associating with the rich, but He has said there are many mansions prepared for the servants of the poor, for the poor are very dear to God. The mercies and bounties of God are with them. The rich are mostly negligent, inattentive, steeped in worldliness, depending upon their means, whereas the poor are dependent upon God and their reliance is upon Him, not upon themselves. Therefore the poor are nearer the Threshold of God and His Throne. . . .

“So, My comrades, you are following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Your lives are similar to His life, your attitude is like unto His, you resemble Him more than the rich resemble Him. Therefore we will thank God that we have been blest with the real riches. And, in conclusion, I ask you to accept ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as your Servant.”

After the service, the Master and we who were with Him walked down the aisle to the door, while the men in the audience kept their seats. At the end of the aisle the Master paused, called to Edward and me and asked us to stand on each side of Him, with our bags. He was wearing His pongee ‘abá and was very shining in white and ivory, His Face like a lighted lamp.

Then down the aisle streamed a sodden and grimy procession: three hundred men in single file. The “breadline”. The failures. Broken forms. Blurred faces. How can I picture such a scene? That forlorn host out of the depths, out of the “mud and scum of things”—where nevertheless “something always, always sings”. And the Eternal Christ, reflected in the Mirror of “The Servant”, receiving them all, like prodigal sons? stray sheep? No! Like His own beloved children, who “resembled Him more than the rich resembled Him.”

Into each palm, as the Master clasped it, He pressed His little gift of silver: just a symbol and the price of a bed. Not a man was shelterless that night. And many, many, I could see, found a shelter in His Heart. I could see it in the faces raised to His and in His Face bent to theirs.

Those interchanged looks—what a bounty to have witnessed them—to have such a picture stamped on my mind forever!

As the men filed toward Him, the Master held out His hand to the first, grasped the man’s hand and left something in it. Perhaps five or six quarters, for John Good told me afterward that the completely destitute ones received the most. The man glanced up surprised. His eyes met the Master’s look, which seemed to be plunging deep into his heart with fathomless understanding. He, this poor derelict, must have known very little of even human love or understanding; and now, too suddenly, he stood face to face with Divine Love. He looked startled, incredulous—as though he couldn’t believe what he saw; then his eyes strained toward the Master, something new burning in them, and the Master’s eyes answered with a great flash, revealing a more mysterious, a profounder love. A drowning man rescued, or—taken up into heaven? I saw this repeated scores of times. Some of the men shuffled past, accepting their gift ungraciously, but most of them responded just as the first did.

Who can tell the effect of those immortal glances on the lives and even, perhaps, at the death of each of these men? Who knows what the Master gave that night?

*The Diary of Juliet Thompson*, pp. 256-61

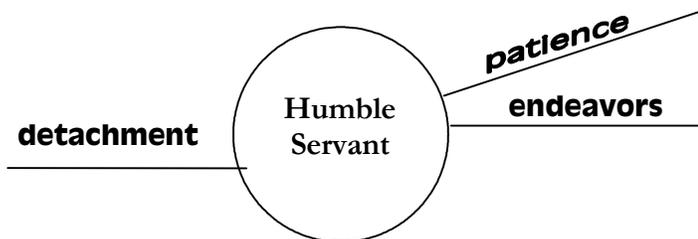
## Art of Facilitation—The Humble Servant

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**Purpose:**

To know that the role of the facilitator is one of humble service.

1. Note that although facilitators have many roles, the most important spiritual characteristics necessary to be an effective facilitator are humility and service.
2. In your whole group, read aloud in turn one quotation on humility and service found on the following page.
3. Now silently re-read and reflect on the quotation or quotations that you read aloud.
4. Select one word or phrase from the quotation you read that will help you remember humility or service.
5. Draw a large circle on a chalkboard, whiteboard, or chart paper. Write “Humble Servant” in the center of the circle.
6. Again read aloud your quotation and share the word you selected. On a line extending from the circle, write the word.



7. Bahá'u'lláh frequently uses light as a metaphor to capture the transforming power of unity. The facilitator's goal is to serve as a clear channel for the light of unity.

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**Process:**

In your journal, create your personal definition of a humble servant, using words or images.

1 Every soul that walketh humbly with its God, in this Day and cleaveth unto Him, shall find itself invested with the honor and glory of all goodly names and stations.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 159

2 He must never seek to exalt himself above anyone, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vainglory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence and refrain from idle talk.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 193

3 Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 93

4 Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing the Source of Revelation, lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator...

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 49

5 . . . Become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 315

6 Go thou straight on and persevere in His service.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 314

7 We must gird ourselves for service, kindle love's flame, and burn away in its heat.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 266

8 Pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 30

9 . . . Service to mankind is the paramount motive of all existence.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 369

10 Service to the friends is service to the Kingdom of God...

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 27

11 The children of God do the works without boasting, obeying His laws.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Paris Talks*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, p. 17

12 Service is the magnet which draws the Divine Confirmations.

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 118

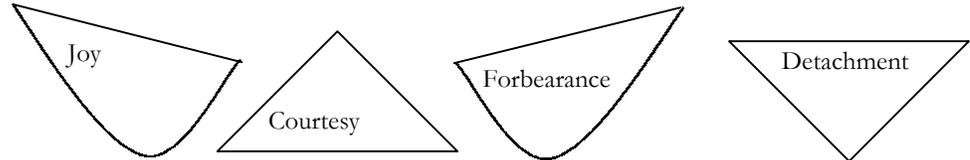
## Qualities for Humble Service

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**Purpose:**

To appreciate some of the spiritual qualities for humble service to humanity.

1. We've learned that our role is to be a humble servant. Let's now determine some qualities for our humble service.
2. Divide into small groups. Each group will receive a puzzle piece and study one page of quotations on the following themes:



3. In your small groups, read aloud the quotations and identify the qualities and attributes explicit or implied in them.
4. Discuss the focus question, then share examples of an individual exhibiting one of these qualities while serving as a facilitator.
5. Select all or part of one of the quotations to copy onto your large puzzle piece. You may choose to create a border or other form of illumination for this quotation while you discuss the quotations and examples. You may also choose to memorize your selected quotation.  
  
You will have an opportunity to share your quotation and one short example with the whole group.  
  
As you complete your work, clean the work area in preparation for the next step in this activity.
6. Gather once again in your large group. Play beautiful background music while one person from each group eloquently reads or recites the selected quotation, briefly shares one example of that quality, and pins the shape on a collage board. All others enjoy listening silently until all pieces are arranged on the board.
7. Conclude the session by observing the power of the love of Bahá'u'lláh to move us and use us in service to His Cause and to all His loved ones.

**Focus Question:** What is the source of true joy? How can we foster joy and happiness in our study circles? What are some examples of individuals promoting joy while serving as a facilitator?

---

1 You must live in the utmost happiness. If any trouble or vicissitude comes into your lives, if your heart is depressed on account of health, livelihood or vocation, let not these things affect you. They should not cause unhappiness, for Bahá'u'lláh has brought you divine happiness. He has prepared heavenly food for you; He has destined eternal bounty for you...

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 188

2 Be thou happy and well pleased and arise to offer thanks to God, in order that thanksgiving may conduce to the increase of bounty.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Divine Art of Living*, p. 36

3 ...Human happiness is founded upon spiritual behaviour.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 127

4 True happiness depends on spiritual good and having the heart ever open to receive the Divine Bounty.

If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness?

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, p. 108

5 May everyone point to you and ask, ‘Why are these people so happy?’ I want you to be happy...to laugh, to smile and rejoice in order that others may be made happy by you.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 218

6 My home is the home of laughter and exultation...

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 397

7 Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled. The actualities of life seem to elude our grasp, the eyes of our spirits fail to discover the sacred mysteries, and we become even as dead beings.

There is no human being untouched by these two influences; but all the sorrow and the grief that exist come from the world of matter—the spiritual world bestows only the joy!

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, pp. 109-10

## COURTESY

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**Focus Question:** What is the source of true courtesy? How can we foster true courtesy in our study circles? What are some examples of individuals fostering the spirit of courtesy in a study circle?

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1 ...Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 305

2 O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endowed with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station. It is hoped that this Wronged One and everyone else may be enabled to acquire it, hold fast unto it, observe it, and fix our gaze upon it. This is a binding command which hath streamed forth from the Pen of the Most Great Name.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 88

3 Consort with all men, O people of Bahá, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. If ye be aware of a certain truth, if ye possess a jewel, of which others are deprived, share it with them in a language of utmost kindness and goodwill. If it be accepted, if it fulfill its purpose, your object is attained. If anyone should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him. A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men. It is the bread of the spirit, it clotheth the words with meaning, it is the fountain of the light of wisdom and understanding.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 15

4 The children must be carefully trained to be most courteous and well-behaved.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 135

5 They [members of an assembly] must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views...it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth...

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 88

6 I have before spoken of ['Abdu'l-Bahá's] unfailing courtesy. It was really more than what that term usually connotes to the Western mind. The same Persian word is used for both reverence and courtesy. He "saw the Face of His Heavenly Father in every face" and revered the soul behind it. How could one be discourteous if such an attitude was held towards everyone!

HOWARD COLBY IVES, *Portals to Freedom*, p. 116

**Focus Question:** What is the source of true detachment? How can we foster true detachment in our study circles? What are some examples of individuals fostering true detachment in a study circle?

---

1 The essence of love is for man to turn his heart to the Beloved One, and sever himself from all else but Him, and desire naught save that which is the desire of his Lord.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 155

2 Should any man, in this Day, arise and, with absolute detachment from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, set his affections on Him Who is the Day Spring of God's holy Revelation, he will, verily, be empowered to subdue all created things, through the potency of one of the Names of the Lord, his God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 319

3 The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 156-7

4 Detach yourselves from all else but Me, and turn your faces towards My face, for better is this for you than the things ye possess.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 257

5 ...Piety and detachment are even as two most great luminaries of the heaven of teaching.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 253

6 Thou are the day-star of the heavens of My holiness, let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendor.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Hidden Words*, p. 47

7 Let it now be seen what your endeavors in the path of detachment will reveal.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Hidden Words*, p. 52

8 No man shall attain the shores of the ocean of true understanding except he be detached from all that is in heaven and on earth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 3

## FORBEARANCE

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**Focus Question:** What is the source of forbearance and understanding? How can we foster the true spirit of forbearance in our study circles? What are some examples of individuals fostering forbearance in a study circle?

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1 Show forbearance and benevolence and love to one another.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 8

2 This Wronged One exhorteth the peoples of the world to observe tolerance and righteousness, which are two lights amidst the darkness of the world and two educators for the edification of mankind. Happy are they who have attained thereto and woe betide the heedless.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 36

3 To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 215

4 The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety, and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 299

5 Warn, O Salmán, the beloved of the one true God, not to view with too critical an eye the sayings and writings of men. Let them rather approach such sayings and writings in a spirit of open-mindedness and loving sympathy.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 329

6 Indeed, the laws of God are like unto the ocean and the children of men as fish, did they but know it. However, in observing them one must exercise tact and wisdom... Since most people are feeble and far-removed from the purpose of God, therefore one must observe tact and prudence under all conditions, so that nothing might happen that could cause disturbance and dissension or raise clamour among the heedless. Verily, His bounty hath surpassed the whole universe and His bestowals encompassed all that dwell on earth. One must guide mankind to the ocean of true understanding in a spirit of love and tolerance. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas itself beareth eloquent testimony to the loving providence of God.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, quoted in introduction to *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 6

1. We've defined our role as humble service to humanity. We've identified some of the spiritual qualities needed for this humble service. Our listening skills also need to be developed in order for us to ultimately become effective facilitators. 'Abdu'l-Bahá teaches us how to listen:

**Purpose:**

To reflect on the importance of the skill of listening.  
To practice facilitating a group discussion.

He [Bahá'u'lláh] spoke about teaching. He said: "A kindly approach and loving behavior toward the people are the first requirements for teaching the Cause. The teacher must carefully listen to whatever a person has to say – even though his talk may consist only of vain imaginings and blind repetitions of the opinions of others. One should not resist or engage in argument. The teacher must avoid disputes which will end in stubborn refusal or hostility, because the other person will feel overpowered and defeated. Therefore, he will be more inclined to reject the Cause. One should rather say, 'Maybe you are right, but kindly consider the question from this other point of view.' Consideration, respect, and love encourage people to listen and do not force them to respond with hostility. They are convinced because they see that your purpose is not to defeat them, but to convey truth, to manifest courtesy and to show forth heavenly attributes. This will encourage the people to be fair. Their spiritual natures will respond, and, by the bounty of God, they will find themselves recreated. Consider the way in which the Master teachers the people. He listens very carefully to the most hollow and senseless talk. He listens so intently that the speaker says to himself, 'He is trying to learn from me.'" Then the Master gradually and very carefully, by means that the other person does not perceive, puts him on the right path and endows him with a fresh power of understanding.

Reported words of Bahá'u'lláh,  
in Haydar-'Alí, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts*, pp. 109-10

2. Let's also consider our own experiences.

Draw a line down the middle of the chart paper/chalk board. In one section write "Not Listening"; in the other write "Listening:"

Not listening:	Listening:

**How do we know when people are not listening?**

Write responses in the appropriate space on the chart paper.

**How do we know when people are listening?**

Write responses in the appropriate space on the chart paper.

3. Working together, we can practice our listening skills, striving always to follow the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Divide into small groups of 3-4. Refer to the questions on the following page. These questions are provided for our short discussion as we practice listening.
4. In the small groups, rotate the following assignments:

- 1) Facilitator
- 2) Questioner
- 3) Timekeeper

Each person will have an opportunity to play each of the roles. For example: the **questioner** will ask the question to begin the discussion. The **timekeeper** will make sure the discussion is concluded in 5 minutes. The **facilitator** practices listening skills while facilitating the discussion. All participate fully in this short discussion.

5. When everyone has practiced, respond to the following focus question:  
What spiritual qualities and practical contributions did you observe while individuals were in the role of the facilitator?
6. Share responses to the focus question with the large group.

## QUALITIES OF LISTENING – PRACTICE QUESTIONS

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- What are the benefits of bringing our lives more into accordance with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh?
- What are the benefits of sharing the message of Bahá'u'lláh?
- How does the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses foster the community's growth?
- How is consultation different from other common forms of decision-making?
- How do I meet people who are receptive to the message of Bahá'u'lláh?
- How does the Bahá'í view of freedom compare to contemporary or popular views?

## Facilitating Text-Based Discussions

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**Purpose:**

To understand the importance of focusing study on the Word of God rather than individual opinion.

1. As we know, the purpose of all Core Curriculum courses, including the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses, is to assist ever-growing numbers of individuals to study the Word of God, ponder its meaning, and apply it in our lives, our communities and families, and in our service to others. Yet facilitating text-based discussion can sometimes present a challenge!
2. Using the following script adapted from *The Path towards Spirituality: Sacred Duties and Practices of the Bahá'í Life*, by Shahin Vafai (Teacher's Training Manual, Appendix A), "role-play" the script.
3. After enjoying the role-play, discuss the question: What are some practical ways that we can assist a group to focus its study on the Word of God?
4. List responses on chart paper.
5. You may also consider the following suggestions provided by Shahin Vafai in his Appendix:
  - reading the quotation more than once (e.g. "Recite ye...")
  - giving participants time to reflect on the quotation
  - asking focused, rather than open-ended, questions about the quotation (e.g. "What is it that we must do every morn and eventide?," rather than "Does anyone have any thoughts about this passage?" or "How do you feel about this quotation?")
  - redirecting the attention of participants to the quotation when comments begin to move away from the text (e.g. "Where do you see that point in this quotation?")
  - recommending avenues of discussion (e.g. "Let us discuss the following points in connection with this quotation:...")
  - encouraging participants to support their comments with the Writings
  - exploring practical applications of the quotation (e.g. "What are practical ways we can arrange our schedule so that we can recite the verses of God every morning and evening?" "What are the obstacles preventing us from carrying out this principle? How can we overcome these obstacles.")
  - stating at the beginning of the discussion the ground rules of the text-centered discussion.

6. Read aloud and briefly discuss the implications of the quotations entitled Facilitating Text-Based Discussions, page 44.

Discuss:

- How can a facilitator assist the group to observe self-discipline and enjoy the bounties of text-centered study of the Word of God?
- How can a facilitator effectively guide the group without dominating the discussion?
- What is the role of silence in a group discussion?

Review again the Guidelines for Discussion created in the introduction to this course and identify one skill to practice the next time you serve a group in the role of facilitator.

## DISCUSSION–SCRIPT

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Facilitator: Let's have a discussion about the following quotation: "Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God." Does anyone have any thoughts about this passage?

Participant # 1: You know, I try to read the Writings in the morning and evening, but it is so difficult. We live in a materialistic world, so it is really a challenge to remember that we've got to do these spiritual things. In the morning, we're rushing to get to work and are trying to get the children ready for school. We just don't get a chance to read the Writings. It's really tough to carry out this commandment.

Participant # 2: You are so right. But my problem is not the morning; it is the evening. I am so tired when I get home from work that all I can do is eat dinner and watch T.V. By the time the T.V. program is over, I am ready to go to bed, and I am in no mood to be reading the Writings.

Participant # 3: I don't have much trouble reciting the verses in the morning and evening. I have trouble remembering my obligatory prayers. Even when I do remember, I don't feel like I'm saying it with a pure spirit or motive.

Participant # 4: Speaking of pure motive and the obligatory prayer—that reminds me of the story of the Arab who was saying his prayer. Have you heard this?

Class collectively: No, no. Please tell us.

Participant # 4: The Arab was saying his obligatory prayer by the side of the road, when some tourists passed by and began admiring the Arab's devotion for saying his prayer in the middle of the hot day. As the tourists were making their comments, the Arab stopped in the middle of his prayer, turned to the tourists, and said, "What you don't know is that I am fasting too!"

Facilitator: These are all very interesting comments. Getting back to the quotation: It talks about whoever fails to recite the verses of God has not been faithful to the Covenant of God. Can someone tell us about the Covenant?

Participant # 5: I really don't see what this has got to do with the Covenant, because the Covenant is about obeying the Guardian and the House of Justice.

Participant # 2: Yeah, I don't see the connection either. And this part about turning away from God for all eternity: That seems a bit rough. I really don't think we should take that literally, because somewhere in the Writings it says that God's mercy exceeds His justice. Nobody is perfect; we're all trying. We should just do our best and not judge other people.

Participant # 4: Yes, if we don't judge other people, and do our best, we could have a peaceful world and achieve unity. And, of course, the purpose of the Bahá'í Faith is to bring about unity.

## FACILITATING TEXT-BASED DISCUSSIONS

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**Focus Questions:** Why is it important to learn to focus our discussion on the Word of God, its application, and its implications? Why is it also important to promote a loving atmosphere that includes both freedom of thought and respect for the views of others? What are some practical strategies for achieving these goals?

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1 Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word—the Word upon which must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men. . . .

Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend. The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 89, 93-4

2 The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 211

3 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, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 292

4 The more the conscience of man develops, the more will his heart be free and his soul attain unto happiness. In the religion of God, there is freedom of thought because God, alone, controls the human conscience, but this freedom should not go beyond courtesy.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, quoted by the Universal House of Justice, Letter, 1998 March 19

5 A clear distinction is made in our Faith between authoritative interpretation and the interpretation or understanding that each individual arrives at for himself from his study of its teachings. While the former is confined to the Guardian, the latter, according to the guidance given to us by the Guardian himself, should by no means be suppressed. In fact such individual interpretation is considered the fruit of man's rational power and conducive to a better understanding of the teachings, provided that no disputes or arguments arise among the friends and the individual himself understands and makes it clear that his views are merely his own. Individual interpretations continually change as one grows in comprehension of the teachings. . . . The friends must therefore learn to listen to the views of others without being over-awed or allowing their faith to be shaken, and to express their own views without pressing them on their fellow Bahá'ís.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Compilation of Compilations* vol. I, p. 358

## Fostering Self-Discipline in Groups

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**Purpose:**

To know some of the strategies in the Bahá'í writings for working in groups. To practice using one or more of those strategies.

As we have seen, effective text-based study requires a measure of self-discipline. Study circles will gradually develop their own rhythm and focus with the assistance of an able facilitator. Consider the following quotations:

. . . The foundation of Bahá'u'lláh is love. . . .

ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 218

Discipline of some sort, whether physical, moral or intellectual, is indeed indispensable, and no training can be said to be complete and fruitful if it disregards this element.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilations*: Vol. 1, p. 303

1. Individually reflect on a time in your own life when your behavior was positively influenced through interaction with another person. Then pair with another participant and briefly share your experiences.
2. In the whole group, identify the factors that made this transforming experience possible. List these factors on a flip chart for everyone to see.
3. In the whole group, read aloud the headings on all the pages of quotations labeled "Loving Self-Discipline in Groups." Using the index cards provided, individually write one example of a challenging situation that you have encountered in a study circle or other group. Collect these cards.
4. Then, divide into four groups so that each group studies a different page of quotations. In your group, read the quotations and briefly discuss their importance for fostering self-discipline in groups.
5. After allowing time to study the quotations, give each group a small set of the situation cards. Each group will then select one or two cards and prepare to do a two-minute role-play for the whole group to demonstrate the experience described on the card(s) as it can be *successfully* addressed using one or more of the loving self-discipline strategies described in the Writings.
6. Enjoy these role-plays demonstrating successful strategies for fostering loving self-discipline. Then identify the loving self-discipline strategies each group used. List on chart paper.
7. Then, individually and privately set a two-part goal:
  - a spiritual attitude that you would like to develop in yourself for fostering loving self-discipline in groups;
  - and a strategy that you would like to practice applying in a group setting.

8. Remember that skill development is an ongoing process and that we're all learning together; participants and facilitators alike, from the Word of God. We will often find that the group itself can resolve its own difficulties. The facilitator's role is service to the group and participation in the group. The National Teacher Training Center, your Regional Training Institute, and other institutions are available as resources to discuss unusual or challenging situations that may arise.
9. Recall again the example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His words in Chicago in 1912, recorded in this excerpt from *Star of the West*:

. . . 'Abdu'l-Bahá led the friends toward the lake, and taking one of a number of seats conveniently disposed under a group of trees, invited the friends to likewise be seated. They found themselves arranged in a circle, and, after dictating an answer to a letter which had been read to him that morning as he had walked along, 'Abdu'l-Bahá suddenly commenced talking to them in a strain of intimate and friendly counsel which exalted the hearts of all present, and warmed the determination of each one to be doubly on guard against any future possibility of becoming a cause of disunion or discord.

Two striking gems we herewith reproduce: "Some of you may have observed that I have not called attention to any of your individual shortcomings. I would suggest to you, that if you shall be similarly considerate in your treatment of each other, it will be greatly conducive to the harmony of your association with each other."

And then, as a concluding delight of the morning's spiritual feast, this charming illustration of the subject of organization: "I want you to be organized like a flock of the doves of Heaven, whose attitude and conduct toward each other is a symbol of that which will take place among human beings when human beings shall become willing to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit. . . ."

"A Stroll With 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Lincoln Park, Chicago," *Star of the West*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 27

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**Process:**

How can we foster the spirit of loving focused study without falling into the attitude of pointing out the faults of our friends or preaching about rules?

## LOVING SELF-DISCIPLINE IN GROUPS

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### GROUP ONE

**Focus Question:** In what ways can the facilitator draw on these powers of the spirit to assist groups to develop loving, focused, self-disciplined study?

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#### POWER OF LOVE

What a power is love! It is the most wonderful, the greatest of all living powers.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, p. 179

One can hardly imagine what a great influence genuine love, truthfulness and purity of motives exert on the souls of men.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*: vol. II, p. 2

#### POWER OF UNITY

Welcome all with the light of oneness.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, in *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 37

Bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. II, p. 415

The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 168

#### POWER OF SELF CONTROL

Each of us is responsible for one life only, and that is our own. Each of us is immeasurably far from being "perfect as our heavenly father is perfect" and the task of perfecting our own life and character is one that requires all our attention, our will-power and energy. If we allow our attention and energy to be taken up in efforts to keep others right and remedy their faults, we are wasting precious time. We are like ploughmen each of whom has his team to manage and his plough to direct, and in order to keep his furrow straight he must keep his eye on his goal and concentrate on his own task. If he looks to this side and that to see how Tom and Harry are getting on and to criticize their ploughing, then his own furrow will assuredly become crooked.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. II, pp. 3-4

#### POWER OF EXAMPLE

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

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Persian Hidden Words*, no. 76

One thing and only one thing will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred Cause, namely, the extent to which our own inner life and private character mirror forth in their manifold aspects the splendor of those eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 66

**Focus Question:** In what ways can the facilitator draw on these powers of the spirit to assist groups to develop loving, focused, self-disciplined study?

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#### POWER OF PERCEPTION

O SON OF MAN! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Arabic Hidden Words*, no. 3

One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 169

#### POWER OF DIVINE ASSISTANCE

We are with you at all times, and shall strengthen you through the power of truth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 33

O thou who art turning thy face towards God! Close thine eyes to all things else, and open them to the realm of the All-Glorious. Ask whatsoever thou wishest of Him alone; seek whatsoever thou seekest from Him alone. With a look He granteth a hundred thousand hopes, with a glance He healeth a hundred thousand incurable ills, with a nod He layeth balm on every wound, with a glimpse He freeth the hearts from the shackles of grief. He doeth as He doeth, and what recourse have we? He carrieth out His Will, He ordaineth what He pleaseth. Then better for thee to bow down thy head in submission, and put thy trust in the All-Merciful Lord.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 51

#### POWER OF COOPERATION

Indeed, the believers have not yet fully learned to draw on each other's strength and consolation in time of need. The Cause of God is endowed with tremendous powers, and the reason the believers do not gain more from it is because they have not learned to draw fully on these mighty forces of love and strength and harmony generated by the Faith.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 27

#### POWER OF CONSULTATION

Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 168

## LOVING SELF-DISCIPLINE IN GROUPS

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### GROUP THREE

**Focus Question:** In what ways can the facilitator draw on these powers of the spirit to assist groups to develop loving, focused, self-disciplined study?

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#### POWER OF JOY AND HAPPINESS

Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded. We seem better able to cope with the world and to find our sphere of usefulness. But when sadness visits us we become weak, our strength leaves us, our comprehension is dim and our intelligence veiled.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, p. 109

In a time to come, morals will degenerate to an extreme degree. It is essential that children be reared in the Bahá’í way, that they may find happiness both in this world and the next. If not, they shall be beset by sorrows and troubles, for human happiness is founded upon spiritual behaviour.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 127

#### POWER OF ENCOURAGEMENT

The friends should love each other, constantly encourage each other, work together, be as one soul in one body, and in so doing become a true, organic, healthy body animated and illumined by the spirit. In such a body all will receive spiritual health and vitality from the organism itself, and the most perfect flowers and fruits will be brought forth.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *Wellspring of Guidance, Messages 1963-68*, p. 39

When training and encouragement are effective, a culture of growth is nourished in which the believers see their duty to teach as a natural consequence of having accepted Bahá’u’lláh. ...

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, 9 January 2001, to the Conference of the Continental Boards of Counselors

#### POWER OF WORDS

Therefore an enlightened man of wisdom should primarily speak with words as mild as milk, that the children of men may be nurtured and edified thereby and may attain the ultimate goal of human existence which is the station of true understanding and nobility.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 173

#### POWER OF SILENCE

Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Persian Hidden Words*, no. 5

The wise are they that speak not unless they obtain a hearing.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Persian Hidden Words*, no. 36

**Focus Question:** In what ways can the facilitator draw on these powers of the spirit to assist groups to develop loving, focused, self-disciplined study?

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#### **POWER OF JUSTICE**

The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 67

O people of God! That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 27

#### **POWER OF OBEDIENCE TO AUTHORITY**

There can be no protection for the Faith unless the friends are willing to submit to their administrative bodies, especially when these are acting in good faith; and the individual believers are not in a position to judge their National Body. If any wrong has been done, we must leave it in the hands of God, knowing, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, that He will right it, and in the mean time not disrupt the Cause of God by constantly harping on these matters.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*: vol. II, p. 114

. . . Authority must in general be expressed with love, humility and a genuine respect for others. Thus exercised, authority strikes a natural note and accords with that which is acceptable to spiritually attuned and fairminded souls.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, 19 May 1994 letter

#### **POWER OF FLEXIBILITY**

It is not necessary for your Assembly to anticipate situations which have not arisen, and to lay down general rules and regulations to meet them. It would be wiser to consider every case individually as it arises, and then to resolve the problem connected with it in the most suitable and practical manner.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*: vol. II, pp. 125-26

It is neither possible nor desirable for the Universal House of Justice to set forth a set of rules covering every situation.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Compilation of Compilations*: vol. I, p. 47

#### **POWER OF LISTENING—A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed to listen with my ears.... And when, under His encouraging sympathy, the interviewer became emptied of his words, there followed a brief interval of silence. There was no instant and complete outpouring of explanation and advice. He sometimes closed His eyes a moment as if He sought guidance from above Himself; sometimes He sat and searched the questioner's soul with a loving, comprehending smile that melted the heart.

HOWARD COLBY IVES, *Portals to Freedom*, p. 195

## *Movement and Music*

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**Purpose:**

To build unity and fellowship through music movement.

To experience how joyful activities can promote unity and re-energize a group.

This is a fun exercise to illustrate the coming together of all people and the journey from working alone to working together.

1. Play lively music, perhaps music from a culture quite different from the majority of participants. The music selected should be delightful and interesting.
2. Individually, initiate a simple movement in rhythm with the music.
3. After a minute or so, pair with another person and find a way together to express both movements.
4. After a another minute, combine your team with another team and join into fours, this time finding a way to incorporate elements of all four movements into a single pattern.
5. Then finally, the whole group comes together to move as one.

NOTE: This activity may be flexibly scheduled to energize the group as needed.

**Process:**

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- How does this sort of activity re-energize the group and promote unity? How could it be used in a study circle format?
- Could this type of activity, demonstrating the joy of coming together, be used at community gatherings, such as Feast or a cluster meeting?

Love is “the greatest of all living powers” and as we have seen, one of the essential qualities for working with groups.

**Purpose:**

To know the Bahá'í concept of love and how it relates to our role as study circle facilitators.

1. In the whole group, read the quotations on the following page aloud. Underline passages that jump out at you as you read about the concept of love.
2. Privately think of a person that you have found especially easy to love and consider:
  - How do you show your love for that individual?
  - How does your love for that person teach you also how to show love to others?
3. Next, turn to the person beside you and, in 60 seconds, share your insights with your partner. The facilitator carefully times the friends so that each person has 60 seconds to listen to their partner and 60 seconds to be heard by their partner.
4. Then individually think of another person with whom you have had challenges learning to love. Keep the name private.
5. Silently re-read the quotations and consider concrete ways that you can show love to that person.
6. Share your ideas with a partner.
7. Using art materials provided, individually make a drawing, poem or quotation illustrating the power of love, as a gift for the second person you identified in this activity.
8. Allow time for reflection and journal-writing, answering the question, “How can we make sure that we ‘welcome all with the light of oneness’ in our study circles?”

1 What a power is love! It is the most wonderful, the greatest of all living powers.

Love gives life to the lifeless. Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold. Love brings hope to the hopeless and gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful. In the world of existence there is indeed no greater power than the power of love. When the heart of man is aglow with the flame of love, he is ready to sacrifice all—even his life. In the Gospel it is said God is love . . .

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, pp. 179-80

2 Be in perfect unity. Never become angry with one another. Let your eyes be directed toward the kingdom of truth and not toward the world of creation. Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 93

3 The foundation of Bahá’u’lláh is love. . . . You must have infinite love for each other, each preferring the other before himself. The people must be so attracted to you that they will exclaim, "What happiness exists among you!" and will see in your faces the lights of the Kingdom; then in wonderment they will turn to you and seek the cause of your happiness. You must give the message through action and deed, not alone by word. Word must be conjoined with deed. You must love your friend better than yourself; yes, be willing to sacrifice yourself. The Cause of Bahá’u’lláh has not yet appeared in this country. I desire that you be ready to sacrifice everything for each other, even life itself; then I will know that the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh has been established. I will pray for you that you may become the cause of upraising the lights of God. May everyone point to you and ask, "Why are these people so happy?" I want you to be happy . . . , to laugh, smile and rejoice in order that others may be made happy by you.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 218

4 The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the hearts. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity."

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, pp. 180-81

1. In this Day of the Blessed Beauty, we can find beauty all around us:

Verily this is that Most Great Beauty, foretold in the Books of the Messengers, through Whom truth shall be distinguished from error and the wisdom of every command shall be tested. Verily He is the Tree of Life that bringeth forth the fruits of God, the Exalted, the Powerful, the Great.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 210

2. What are some of the ways that we can strive to express the Beauty of God in our study circles?
3. Record responses on chart paper.
4. Some possibilities to consider include the beauty of the Word of God that we study, the beauty of human interactions, the beauty of the music and other arts created by participants, and beauty in the physical environment for learning. Do these elements of beauty require preparation and conscious thought? Do they require a large number of items or a large budget? What are some simple and inexpensive ways to express the Beauty of the Beloved in our varied learning environments?
5. On the following page, create your own list of simple ways to express the Beauty of God in study circles.
6. Discuss briefly: Why is it important to consider incorporating elements from the local environment of the group? Why is it also important to share the beauty of cultural elements unfamiliar to the group? Would we want to try to express beauty the same way each time we gather? Why or why not?

## CREATING A LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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What are some ways that I can reflect the Beauty of the All-Glorious in my study circle?

## *First Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities*

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In the **first** practice session, participants facilitate Session 2 of Course One: *This Day of God*.

**Purpose:**  
To gain skill and confidence in facilitating the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses.

1. Divide into working groups of 4-6 participants.
2. Within each working group, each participant is responsible for preparing and facilitating a portion of each practice session for the others in your working group.

For example, if there are six members of a working group in the first practice session, “Tests and Sacrifices”:

- one participant prepares and facilitates “Devotions” and “Objectives;”
- a second participant facilitates “Consultation About Individual Teaching;”
- another participant facilitates “Consultation About Individual Study;”
- another participant facilitates “Tests and Sacrifice;”
- the next participant assigns “Journaling and Memorization;”
- the last participant prepares and facilitates “Individual Acts of Service, Study, and Teaching” and “Closing Devotions.”

If there are fewer than six participants, adjust the assignments to assure an equal distribution of responsibilities.

3. Then identify which activities addressed the knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech objectives for the session.
4. Cultivate an encouraging environment for learning and skill development by using the Sentence Starters for Friendly Feedback Notes to verbally encourage each other after each practice session. Consider choosing one or more of the sentence starters to create your own brief word of encouragement to your fellow participants. Write one specific positive comment for each participant in your working group.
5. Facilitator trainers circulate throughout practice sessions to offer encouragement, answer questions, and provide support as needed.

## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR FRIENDLY FEEDBACK NOTES

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Use one or more of these sentence starters to write an encouraging note to each person in your small working group. Provide these notes of specific encouragement for both practice sessions.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for facilitating \_\_\_\_\_

You really got my attention when...

This idea came across very clearly because...

I enjoyed the...

My heart was touched when...

Perhaps next time you facilitate this activity you might consider...

At the close of the lesson I...

The activity made me want to...

## Instructional Methods and Learning Tools

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Having experienced a demonstration session and your first practice session, let's consider some of the methods and tools identified in the Bahá'í writings. Read through the introductory statements to each of the Instructional Methods and Learning Tools in *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* (pp. 152-167). You may also refer to the quotations listed on pages 59-60 of this course book.

### Reflect, Pair, Share:

1. Play quiet background music.
2. Silently reflect on the variety of Instructional Methods and Learning tools suggested in the Writings, and which ones, as both a learner and a facilitator, you use most often or are most comfortable with. If desired, use your journals to record your thoughts.
3. Divide into pairs.
4. Share reflections about yourselves as learners and teachers.

### Reconvene as a whole group and discuss:

- Why do you think it is important to use a variety of Instructional Methods and Learning Tools?
- Was the background music helpful to you as a participant?
- As facilitators, how can we accommodate diverse learners whose thinking may be enhanced or distracted by music?

### Methods and Tools used in this training:

Working in the whole group, complete the Methods and Tools chart on the next page.

#### Purpose:

Become familiar with the Instructional Methods and Learning Tools described in the Bahá'í Writings.

Reflect on one's own preferred method of teaching and learning.

Recognize the need to expand one's own preferred style in order to meet the diverse needs of those we teach.

Perceive the varied instructional methods modeled during this training.

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#### Process:

How can we increasingly utilize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's guidance on Instructional Methods and Learning Tools?

## **METHODS AND TOOLS USED IN THIS TRAINING**

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Listed below are instructional methods and learning tools derived from the Bahá'í Writings and used in Core Curriculum education and training programs. Determine which of these methods and tools have been used in this facilitator training. Take a mental 'scavenger hunt' through the day's activities and write them down next to the corresponding method or tool. Some activities may have incorporated more than one tool or method.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS**

### **ACTIVITY**

Establishing a loving environment	_____
Direct use of the Sacred Writings	_____
Education directed toward God	_____
Education must include service to humanity	_____
Engaging the mind and the heart	_____
Private study of the Writings	_____
Establishing bonds of unity and friendship	_____
Use of consultation	_____
Use of questioning and peer teaching	_____
Independent investigation and use of the power of reasoning	_____
Use of memorization and recitation	_____
Use of meditation and reflection	_____
Use of parables and stories	_____
Use of music	_____
Use of drama	_____
Employing creativity and use of the arts	_____
The study of science and the world of nature	_____
The importance of play and the use of manipulatives	_____
Use of travel	_____
Recreation	_____
Organize education	_____
Use evaluation	_____

---

## CORE CURRICULUM INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS

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### **Establish a Loving Environment**

Be thou a teacher of love in a school of unity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Education*, rev. ed. 1999, #61

### **Direct Use of the Bahá’í Sacred Writings**

. . . fix their gaze by day and by night upon that which hath shone forth from the Pen of Glory for the training of peoples. . . .

Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 125

### **Education Directed Toward the Recognition of God**

We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge....

Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 129

### **Involve Service to Humanity**

To assist Me is to teach My Cause.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, rev. ed. 1988, p. 196

The honor and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world’s multitudes should become a source of social good.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp 2

### **Engage the Mind and Heart**

The principles of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh should be carefully studied, one by one, until they are realized and understood by mind and heart – so will you become strong followers of the light....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, rev. ed. 1995, p. 22

### **Private Study of the Writings**

...Stimulate the students to proceed in their studies privately once they return home....

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Centers of Bahá’í Learning*, p. 8

### **Establish Bonds of Unity and Friendship**

Let them seek but love and faithfulness....

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, #206, p. 257

### **Use of Consultation**

Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

Bahá’u’lláh, in *Consultation: A Compilation*, p. 3, #1

### **Use of Questioning and Peer Teaching**

Oral questions must be asked and answers must be given orally. They must discuss with each other in this manner.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Education*, no. 107, p. 44

### **Independent Investigation and Using the Power of Reasoning**

Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 293

### **Use of Memorization and Recitation**

It is...highly praiseworthy to memorize the Tablets, divine verses and sacred traditions.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Bahá’í Education*, rev. ed. 1999, #73

Teach...the words that have been sent down from God, that they may recite...

Bahá’u’lláh in *Bahá’í Education*, rev. ed. 1999, #23

## Use of Meditation and Reflection

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, rev. ed. 1995, pp. 187

The source of craft, sciences and arts is the power of reflection.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 72

## Use of Parables and Stories

Divine things are too deep to be expressed by common words. The heavenly teachings are expressed in parables in order to be understood and preserved for ages to come.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 80

...stories regarding the life of different Prophets together with Their sayings will also be useful to better understand the literature of the Cause...

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Education*, p. 53, no. 130

## Use of Music

Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Writings on Music*, p. 8

## Use of Drama

The drama is of the utmost importance. It has been a great educational power of the past; it will be so again.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 93

## Employ Creativity and the Arts

Art can better awaken such noble sentiments than cold rationalizing, especially among the masses of people.

Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 7

## Engage in Science and in the Investigation of the World of Nature

Arts, crafts and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 26

And whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 272

## Play and Use of Manipulatives

The one true God, exalted be He, loveth to witness handiworks of high craftsmanship produced by His loved ones.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 1

They should be taught, in play, some letter and words . . . –as is done in certain countries where they fashion letters and words out of sweets...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Education*, 1987, p. 30, no. 78

## Use of Travel

If a man should live his entire life in one city, he cannot gain a knowledge of the whole world. To become perfectly informed he must visit other cities, see the mountains and valleys, cross the rivers and traverse the plains...

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, rev. ed. 1982, p. 295

## Use of Recreation

A wise schoolmaster should send his scholars out to play...so that their minds and bodies may be refreshed, and during the hour of the lesson they may learn it better.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in “Bahá’í Methods of Education,” *Star of the West*, vol. 9, no. 8, p. 91

## *Second Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities*

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In the **second** practice session, participants facilitate Session 9 of Course One.

1. In this second practice session, you have the opportunity to incorporate suggestions from your group's friendly feedback if you like. In the process of working in your groups, remember to pray together, consult, and then decide how to organize your work. Consider facilitating a portion of the session that is different from the one you facilitated in the first practice session.
2. Facilitator trainers circulate throughout both practice sessions to offer encouragement, answer questions, and provide support as needed.
3. Write friendly feedback notes of encouragement to the participants in your small working group that affirm specific elements of success in their service.

### **Process:**

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In your journals, record one highlight of your facilitation experience.

## *Sharing Your Facilitation Experiences*

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**Purpose:**

To increase understanding of one's role as a Core Curriculum or Fundamental Verities facilitator.

Before concluding this module on facilitation skills consider your previous experience facilitating spiritual education or training programs. This could include setting up or offering courses, or working with sponsoring institutions and the communities served. This is an opportunity for sharing success stories, as well as possible challenges, in this important path of service.

Specifically if you have offered one of the Core Curriculum training programs or otherwise served as a facilitator:

- Silently reflect to organize your thoughts. What did you do? Who else was involved? What was a particular high point? What did you learn from any challenging events, either setting up the course or serving the group? How can you build on success for the next steps in your service?
- Share a 2-minute summary or overview of your training experience.

While listening to the experiences of others, consider recording your notes on the accompanying grid. Consider:

- What do you hear that adds to your Knowledge in this field of service?
- What do you hear that increases your Wisdom in your path of service?
- As you listen to the experiences of others, what do you hear that offers new insights of Spiritual Perception (viewing the world through spiritual eyes)?
- What do you hear that enhances your ability to act to fulfill your goals as a facilitator (Eloquent Speech)?

Please also note on 3x5 index cards any specific questions that you would like to hear addressed. Place the cards in the basket provided.

---

**Process:**

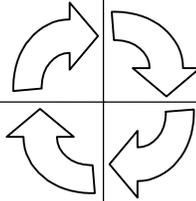
How has this sharing exercise increased your understanding of your role as a facilitator?

# SHARING TRAINING EXPERIENCES

## Notes

Spiritual Perception

Eloquent Speech



Wisdom

Knowledge

## *Unifiers and Agents of Change*

---

1. Write the words "Unifiers" and "Agents of Change" on board or flip chart. These words imply transformation in a loving, unified way.
2. Discuss:

As “Unifiers” and “Agents of Change,” how do we help bring about this transformation?
3. Observe the painting displayed by your facilitator; also observe the brushes distributed by your facilitator.
4. Discuss: What makes the painting beautiful? Could it have been created without the brush? As facilitators, how are we like paint brushes to be used by the Master Artist? If the brush is not clean and ready for use, what might the Master Artist do?
5. Now hold up your brushes and note that each is different, and has a unique purpose.
6. Discuss: Does the brush choose where to make each stroke, or where to apply each color in creating a beautiful painting?
7. Note the interesting paradox: the more we are perfected, the more we detach from our own will. The keys are *Love, Patience* and *Humility*.
8. Note that the Artist may work through channels such as:
  - Individual Initiative,
  - Regional Training Institutes,
  - Local Spiritual Assemblies,
  - Auxiliary Board Members,
  - Regional Bahá'í Councils,
  - National Spiritual Assembly,
  - Members of the Continental Board of Counsellors,
  - Universal House of Justice.
9. Share the story on the following page that illustrates the privilege of service in this Day, service whenever and wherever we are needed.
10. Consider concluding this module with singing or prayers of praise and gratitude for the privilege of service in this Day of God.

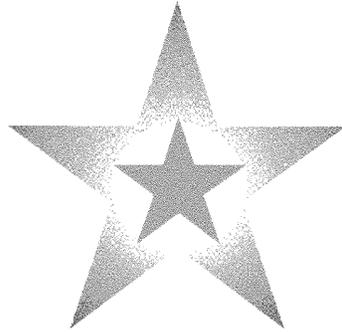
In 1889, Hájí Sháh Khalílu'lláh and his father had the bounty of pilgrimage during the time of Bahá'u'lláh. . . .

“One day Bahá'u'lláh informed my father that He would be visiting us in the afternoon. That day He arrived with a few of His disciples. We were both highly honored by His presence and immersed in the ocean of His grace and bounties. After some time He arose to depart. We accompanied Him to the door and as He went out, He signaled to us not to accompany Him further. I watched from behind His graceful stature and the majesty of His walk, until He disappeared from my sight. I was so carried away, and in that state I said to myself: What a pity! If only the kings of the world could recognize Him and arise to serve Him, both the Cause and the believers would be exalted in this day.

“The following day when we attained His presence, He turned His face to me and addressed the following words to me with infinite charm and loving kindness. He said: ‘If the kings and rulers of the world had embraced the Faith in this day, you people could never have found an entry into this exalted Court. You could never have had the opportunity to attain Our presence, nor could you ever have acquired the privilege of hearing the words of the Lord of Mankind. Of course the time will come when the kings and rulers of the world will become believers, and the Cause of God will be glorified outwardly. But this will happen after the meek and the lowly ones of the earth have won this inestimable bounty.’”

Reported words of Bahá'u'lláh,  
quoted in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh*, v 3, p. 161





- Guidance from the Universal House of Justice
- The Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses
- Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development
- Study Circles Open to All
- Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly
- A Door to Entry by Troops

### **Learning Objectives:**

#### **Knowledge**

To become familiar with the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses and the Core Curriculum programs for community development.

#### **Wisdom**

To understand that the institute process in the United States is founded on two pillars: The Fundamental Verities and Ruhi sequences.

#### **Spiritual Perception**

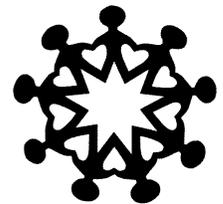
To perceive how one's service as a facilitator aligns with the goals of the Universal House of Justice.

#### **Eloquent Speech**

To create a plan of action for service as a facilitator.

# The **Art** of Facilitation

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes



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A Dynamic Community  
of Growth

## *Guidance from the Universal House of Justice*

### *Ridván Message*

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**Purpose:**

To study the Ridván message with respect to the relevance of Core Curriculum training programs.

Remember that the world receives a precious gift each year: the annual Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice.

Let's turn our attention to a beautifully prepared copy of the current Ridván letter, which has been tied with a ribbon and placed reverently on a beautiful cloth.

Read all or selected paragraphs from the Ridván letter aloud. Note that this letter provides the most recent "marching orders" that will guide our actions in the next two activities.



We should feel encouraged and confident in sharing with others—Local Spiritual Assemblies, Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, parents, teachers, families, and the community at large—our enthusiasm about serving the goals of the current Plan through the institute process. Our glorious task is outlined the Ridván letters along with the perfect tools with which to accomplish it!

## Jigsaw Activity—Building Momentum

Call to mind and heart the beauty and power of the beloved Universal House of Justice. If available, consider displaying a photograph of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice.

1. As we know, the “Building Momentum” document was prepared by the International Teaching Center at the instruction of the Universal House of Justice.\* This important document must be read in light of the United States National Spiritual Assembly’s policy statement of March 24, 2003:

The training institute process in the United States Bahá’í community is founded on two pillars: the *Fundamental Verities* and the *Rubi* materials. In the Five Year Plan, the National Assembly has called for the use of these two approaches and for the development of new curricula. . . .

Because it is well established, the National Spiritual Assembly recommends that it [the Core Curriculum] serve as the foundation for children’s classes in the United States.

We will study the “Building Momentum” document in a “Jigsaw” format, and the latter document later in our training.

2. To begin the “Jigsaw,” Pass around a basket of different colored pencils and choose one. There should be just enough for everyone, a nearly equal number of each of 5 different colors.
3. Rather than reading through the entire document together, we will work in small groups, each group studying one portion of the document, reading that section carefully and thoroughly, using your colored pencils to mark significant passages, if desired, or taking notes, becoming an “expert” on that portion of the letter.

After your small group completes the study of its portion of the document, you will be individually responsible for explaining your portion of the document to others, in new groups. Each new group consists of at least one person from the previous groups. Then, each new group will share a 2-3 minute summary of main points and insights they gleaned from this document with the full group.

4. Your initial study groups will be determined by the color of pencil you chose. Each “color group” will work in one of the four corners or the center of the room (or in separate breakout areas). Sections in the “Building Momentum” document for each study group—or “color group”—are:
  - Color Group 1 – “A Vision of Growth,” page 1 to top of page 5.

### Purpose:

To perceive how one’s service as a Core Curriculum facilitator aligns with the goals of the Universal House of Justice.

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\* Please contact the National Teacher Training Center at [NTTC@usbnc.org](mailto:NTTC@usbnc.org) or 810-653-5033 for possible updates for this activity.

- Color Group 2 - “Movement of Clusters...,” page 5 to middle of page 9.
  - Color Group 3 – Page 9, “Reaching Out to All Inhabitants,” to bottom of page 12.
  - Color Group 4 – “Enhancing Institutional Capacity,” page 12 to page 17.
  - Color Group 5 – “Change in the Culture of the Bahá’í Community,” page 17 to end.
5. After 30 minutes, re-divide into new small groups, so that each new group contains at least one member of the previous groups. In these new groups each individual is responsible for explaining their section of the letter to the other members of this new group. Allow 20 minutes in the new groups for each person to share, so that the entire letter is covered.
  6. Still in your new groups, identify examples of actions that you yourselves have seen or experienced over the past year, in response to this important message of the Universal House of Justice. Explore the STORY of these examples. What was it that was aligned with the goals of the plan? Who was involved? What were they doing? What did you learn from the experience? Explore as many examples as possible during the next 10 minutes. Then, within your group, identify one of the stories you heard to share briefly with the other groups.
  7. Reconvene the whole group. Invite a member of each small group to briefly share their story. Acknowledge these examples that illustrate lines of action that will be systematically pursued to advance the process of entry by troops. Also acknowledge that by now we’re all eagerly looking forward to continuing our individual study of the entire document!
  8. Conclude the session by re-reading the last paragraph from the Ridván message to the Bahá’ís of the world, and remember how exciting and wonderful it is to do our part to advance the process of entry by troops!

## *The Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses for Community Growth*

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1. In the whole group read aloud the quotations entitled “Sequence of Courses and Community Growth.”
2. Divide into six working groups. Each group studies one of the six Fundamental Verities course books and records notes on chart paper in response to the following questions:
  - What is one evidence that the course is structured to welcome the participation of seekers?
  - What are some of the learning tools used in the course?
  - What are some of the knowledge, spiritual insights, and skills developed by participating in the course? How is this accomplished?
  - How does this course promote the growth of the Faith, support the core activities, and advance the process of entry by troops?
3. Reconvene as a whole group and report in turn. Allow 3 minutes per group. Discuss briefly:

In what ways does this *sequence* build skills for community growth in a step-by-step systematic way? Why is it important to encourage friends to complete the entire sequence of courses?

**Purpose:**

To become familiar with the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses.

To appreciate the value of this sequence for promoting systematic growth through systematic training.

## SEQUENCE OF COURSES AND COMMUNITY GROWTH

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1 The value of a sequence of courses, each one following the other in a logical pattern and each one building on the achievements of the previous ones, has become abundantly clear. Various models are emerging that provide insight into how such sequences can be used to create training programmes. In one example the main sequence, much like the trunk of a tree, supports courses branching out from it, each branch dedicated to some specific area of training. In another, several tracks of courses, each with its own focus, run parallel. Institutes will do well to examine these elements and approaches and employ them in a manner that responds to the opportunities before them.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, Letter, January 09, 2001

2 Focus in almost every country has now turned to stimulating the movement of its priority clusters from their current stage of growth to the next. What has become strikingly clear is that progress in this respect depends largely on the efficacy of the parallel process aimed at helping an ever-increasing number of friends to move through the main sequence of courses offered by the institute serving the area. . . .

In most clusters, movement from one stage of growth to the next is being defined in terms of multiplication of study circles, devotional meetings and children's classes, and the expansion they engender. Devotional meetings begin to flourish as consciousness of the spiritual dimension of human existence is raised among the believers in an area through institute courses. Children's classes, too, are a natural outgrowth of the training received early in the study of the main sequence. As both activities are made open to the wider community through a variety of well-conceived and imaginative means, they attract a growing number of seekers, who, more often than not, are eager to attend firesides and join study circles. Many go on subsequently to declare their faith in Bahá'u'lláh and, from the outset, view their role in the community as that of active participants in a dynamic process of growth. Individual and collective exertions in the teaching field intensify correspondingly, further fuelling the process. Established communities are revitalized, and newly formed ones soon gain the privilege of electing their Local Spiritual Assemblies.

The coherence thus achieved through the establishment of study circles, devotional meetings and children's classes provides the initial impulse for growth in a cluster, an impulse that gathers strength as these core activities multiply in number. Campaigns that help a sizeable group of believers advance far enough in the main sequence of courses to perform the necessary acts of service lend impetus to this multiplication of activity.

It is evident, then, that a systematic approach to training has created a way for Bahá'ís to reach out to the surrounding society, share Bahá'u'lláh's message with friends, family, neighbours and co-workers, and expose them to the richness of His teachings. This outward-looking orientation is one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place. The pattern of activity that is being established in clusters around the globe constitutes a proven means of accelerating expansion and consolidation.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, January 17, 2003

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## THE FUNDAMENTAL VERITIES SEQUENCE OF COURSES

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### This Day of God

#### Course One: This Day of God

- Explores some of the fundamental spiritual teachings of Bahá'u'lláh about the human soul and the spiritual reality of the universe in which we live.
- Fosters habits of daily spiritual living such as prayer and meditation, study of the writings, calling ourselves to account each day.
- Provides practice planning and hosting a devotional meeting incorporating the arts.
- Includes plans for additional firesides or devotional meetings on the topic of prayer.

### Circles of Unity

#### Course Two: Circles of Unity

- Introduces the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh about the great changes taking place in the world today and how we can be part of the movement for positive change.
- Applies the principle of oneness in our daily lives, our families, and in our communities.
- Considers ways to create a vibrant community life that welcomes children and families.
- Provides practice hosting a devotional gathering structured to embrace all ages.
- Includes plans for additional firesides or devotional meetings linking family life to world peace.

### The Seeker's Quest

#### Course Three: The Seeker's Quest

- Focuses on the attraction of the human heart to its Creator and strategies for meeting others and becoming increasingly powerful centers of attraction in our local communities.
- Explores the relationship between personal spiritual development and teaching the Faith.
- Provides practice introducing Bahá'í concepts in everyday speech, listening with care to others, and sharing the Word of God with others.
- Provides additional practice hosting text-based firesides and devotional meetings.

### Every Believer Is a Teacher

#### Course Four: Every Believer Is a Teacher

- Provides practice planning and hosting text-based firesides to address our friends' interests.
- Provides additional practice sharing the Word of God with others, incorporating the arts in firesides and devotional meetings, creating a loving environment.
- Considers ways to invite friends to enlist themselves under the banner of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Explores the core activities of study circles, children's classes, and devotional meetings as portals to entry by troops.

### To Serve the Covenant

#### Course Five: To Serve the Covenant

- Provides skill practice in the art of storytelling to be able to effectively introduce Bahá'u'lláh to others and illustrate Bahá'í principles in action.
- Includes a rich assortment of stories about the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá to increase tools for effectively teaching the Faith.
- Explores the relationship between the eternal Covenant of God and our loving obedience to the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh.

### Building a New Civilization

#### Course Six: Building a New Civilization

- Provides an overview of the principles, structure, and process of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, the nucleus and pattern of peace and prosperity for all.
- Provides practice relating Bahá'í principles to contemporary issues.
- Provides additional practice incorporating the arts in devotional meetings open to all and hosting more vibrant Feasts and Holy Day celebrations.

## *Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development*

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**Purpose:**

To appreciate the relationship between a vigorous institute process and community growth.  
To become informed about Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development.

1. In the whole group read aloud the quotations on the following page.
2. Then, based on your experience so far, identify elements common to all Core Curriculum programs.
3. Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development address the needs of Bahá'ís and of the community at large. These programs have been created at the instruction of the United States National Spiritual Assembly and are seen as integral to building the patterns of life that attract all humanity.
4. Divide into six groups. Each group studies one of the six Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development using the summaries provided on pp. 76-77 or trainers' manuals, if available. Within your small group, identify important elements or characteristics of the program you are studying. Allow 15 minutes for a quick study.
5. Then imagine intensive growth in your cluster. In what ways does this course:
  - Reach out to specific segments of the population?
  - Build the true patterns of community life that attract the hearts of all?
6. Gather again as a large group. Allowing 2 minutes per group, share your study group's answers to these questions.
7. Discuss: What are some of the reasons that the facilitators for these programs may require specialized training in addition to The Art of Facilitation?
8. Now, divide into 2-3 largish groups. In these groups, briefly brainstorm and then create a human sculpture using your bodies to create a visual representation of a community of growth, including study circles, children's classes, and devotional meetings open to all, growing numbers of seekers attracted to firesides, a community that attracts and welcomes all.

**Process:**

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How can this sort of human sculpture assist us to see the relationship between a vigorous institute process and community growth?

1 Until the public sees in the Bahá'í Community a true pattern, in action, of something better than it already has, it will not respond to the Faith in large numbers.

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promoting Entry by Troops*, p. 24

2 Spiritual education of children and junior youth are of paramount importance to the further progress of the community. It is therefore imperative that this deficiency be remedied. Institutes must be certain to include in their programmes the training of teachers of children's classes, who can make their services available to local communities. But although providing spiritual and academic education for children is essential, this represents only a part of what must go into developing their characters and shaping their personalities. The necessity exists, too, for individuals and the institutions at all levels, which is to say the community as a whole, to show a proper attitude towards children and to take a general interest in their welfare. Such an attitude should be far removed from that of a rapidly declining order.

Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *Ridván Message*, Ridván 157, 2000

3 Teaching projects will be especially effective if they are "carefully designed" and reach specific segments of the population in a cluster. Teaching approaches and materials may be tailored to persons, for example, of particular occupations (schoolteachers, university students, lawyers), ethnicities (Aborigines, Chinese, Roma), and religions (animist, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim), or to women and youth. After substantial experience accumulates in the field as to the appropriate methods and contexts for teaching special populations, Bahá'ís involved in this work can assist the institute by designing a course that is specific to a particular group; such a course could be offered as a branch of the basic institute course on becoming an effective teacher.

INTERNATIONAL TEACHING CENTER, April 2003, "Building Momentum," Section 2.4.2

## Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth



### Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth (32 hours)

*Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children....*

~Abdu'l-Bahá

- Create Bahá'í classes open to all using Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides and Storybooks
- Develop practical skills for teaching children and junior youth
- Uplift the spiritual reality of all children
- Foster patterns of community life that embrace children and junior youth
- Create attractive spiritual education classes that draw the interest of the wider community
- Plan for your own ongoing spiritual development in the sacred role of a Bahá'í teacher

## Spiritual Parenting



### Spiritual Parenting (32 hours)

*My home is the home of peace. My home is the home of joy and delight. My home is the home of laughter and exultation. Whosoever enters through the portals of this home, must go out with gladsome heart.*

~Abdu'l-Bahá

- Learn to foster loving, unified, spiritually vibrant families by applying spiritual principles to practical issues of child rearing
- Practice the skills of encouraging, guiding, training, and educating children while collaborating with other parents
- Develop habits to spiritualize the daily routines of everyday living
- Teach children to love and serve humanity through full involvement in community life
- Solve difficult challenges in loving and unifying ways
- Foster patterns of community life that embrace its younger members

## Race Unity



### Race Unity (32 hours)

*The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord.*

~Abdu'l-Bahá

- Apply Bahá'í solutions to the most challenging issue facing America today
- Move from words to actions in the promotion of oneness and race unity
- Learn from the sacred writings of the Bahá'í faith and from the example of Hand of the Cause of God Louis G. Gregory to overcome prejudice, promote race unity, and teach Bahá'u'lláh's pivotal principle of oneness to others
- Create racially harmonious environments for teaching and community life
- Become champions of race unity and justice
- Raise a prejudice-free generation

## Equality of Women and Men (32 hours)

*When . . . the equality of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed. . . .*

~Abdu'l-Bahá

- Promote the equality of women and men in the home, the community, and in every field of human endeavor
- Draw powerful lessons in equality from the life of the Holy Family
- Host firesides about the principle of equality and champion the cause of equality in the world at large
- Link the attainment of equality with the unfoldment of world peace
- Teach equality and foster the development of girls
- Empower men to attain the “honor that might be theirs”



## Equality of Women and Men

## Marriage and Family Life (two distinct courses, 20 hours each)

*Husband and wife should be united both physically and spiritually, that they may ever improve the spiritual life of each other, and may enjoy everlasting unity throughout all the worlds of God.*

~Abdu'l-Bahá

*Marriage and Family Life* is for couples who are already married; *Friendship, Relationship, and Courtship* is for youth and single adults.

- Explore spiritual principles and foster practical skills for building strong, spiritually vibrant marriages and families
- Build enduring bonds of affection, love, and mutual support
- Understand the relationship between self-knowledge and enduring marriage
- Understand the process of courtship and marriage
- Resolve differences through consultation
- Promote the development of united, enduring, and spiritual families



## Marriage and Family Life

## Youth Empowerment (30 hours)

*Blessed is he who in the prime of his youth and the heyday of his life will arise to serve the Cause of the Lord of the beginning and of the end, and adorn his heart with His love.*

~Bahá'u'lláh

- Realize the purpose of life—to know and love God and to serve humanity
- Develop knowledge and skills to teach the Cause of God
- Become heroic champions of rectitude, unity, purity, and justice.
- Empower community life through energetic, systematic, loving, and mature action
- Recognize and overcome the challenges of materialism, fanaticism, corruption, and prejudice
- Move the world



## Youth Empowerment

## Study Circles Open to All

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**Purpose:**

To understand ways to foster an open, inclusive environment to welcome seekers as study circle participants.

Read aloud the following statement from the Ridván 2002 message to the Bahá'ís of the world:

Where a training institute is well established and constantly functioning, three core activities—study circles, devotional meetings, and children's classes—have multiplied with relative ease. Indeed, the increasing participation of seekers in these activities, at the invitation of their Bahá'í friends, has lent a new dimension to their purposes, consequently effecting new enrollments. Here, surely, is a direction of great promise for the teaching work. These core activities, which at the outset were devised principally to benefit the believers themselves, are naturally becoming portals for entry by troops. By combining study circles, devotional meetings and children's classes within the framework of clusters, a model of coherence in lines of action has been put in place and is already producing welcome results. Worldwide application of this model, we feel confident, holds immense possibilities for the progress of the Cause in years ahead.

In light of this encouragement of the Universal House of Justice for us to facilitate study circles open to all, let's explore this important line of action.

Discuss:

- What are some positive contributions that seekers make in a study circle?
- What are some simple ways that a facilitator can frame an activity to increase the feeling of inclusion and openness?
- What can the group as a whole do to foster openness and inclusion? How can a facilitator promote this feeling of openness and inclusiveness in the group as a whole?
- What is the importance of service and fellowship for promoting this “outward looking orientation?”
- Are there logistical arrangements that will welcome more and more seekers? What difference does an invitation make?
- What are some examples of warmly encouraging invitations that welcome friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers into our study circles?

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**Process the session:**

How might these plans evolve over time? What is the advantage of carefully planning for increasing numbers of seekers in the study circles we serve?

## *Core Curriculum and Rubi Courses: Serving Regional Training Institutes*

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We know the importance of Regional Training Institutes “as an engine of the process of entry by troops.”\* Cluster by cluster, more and more people are advancing through a sequence of courses. This basic sequence stimulates actions of the friends resulting in expansion and consolidation.

Take a few moments to examine the following pages, including:

- the “Training Tree” illustrating two tracks;
- the chart outlining basic characteristics of the two tracks;
- the anticipated outcomes of study in these two tracks.

Discuss: Why are there many similarities in the basic characteristics and in the anticipated outcomes of these two tracks?

- Notice that these basic sequences are both based on the same Word of God, responding to the same Messages from the House of Justice.
- The Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly, and the Institution of the Counsellors have all approved this two track sequence for use by Regional Training Institutes in the United States.
- Most Regional Training Institutes offer the specialized courses for developing patterns of Bahá’í life (such as Parenting or Teacher Training) PARALLEL to the basic sequence. This means that a seeker or a Bahá’í parent may appropriately enroll in the Parenting Course at the same time that they’re invited to participate in the basic sequence. Both the basic sequence and the special lines of service are crucial to the expansion and consolidation of the Cause of God.

**Purpose:**

To become familiar with the two-track system for a basic sequence of courses in the United States.

To understand the role of Core Curriculum trainers as servants to the Regional Training Institutes as well as the communities they serve.

To identify ways to foster unity and strengthen collaboration with the Institutes.

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\* Universal House of Justice, Ridván 2000



### Teacher Training

- ❖ *Spiritual Education for Children & Junior Youth*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*
- ❖ *Lesson Planning Guides, Storybooks*
- ❖ *Teacher Development Workshops*



### Youth Empowerment

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Marriage and Family Life Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *For married couples or those preparing for marriage*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Spiritual Parenting

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Parenting Tool Kit*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Race Unity Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Race Unity Tool Kit*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Equality Training

- ❖ *Materials for Workshops and Study Circles*
- ❖ *Facilitator Training*



### Fundamental Verities Supplement

- Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh*
- ❖ *Seven Modules for Study Circles*



### Ruhi Sequence

- ❖ *Book 7: Walking Together on a Path of Service*
- ❖ *Book 6: Teaching the Faith*
- ❖ *Book 4: Twin Manifestations*
- ❖ *Book 3: Teaching Children's Classes*
- ❖ *Book 2: Arising to Serve*
- ❖ *Book 1: Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*



### Fundamental Verities Sequence

- ❖ *The Art of Facilitation: Facilitator Training*
- ❖ *Course Six: Building a New Civilization*
- ❖ *Course Five: To Serve the Covenant*
- ❖ *Course Four: Every Believer Is a Teacher*
- ❖ *Course Three: The Seeker's Quest*
- ❖ *Course Two: Circles of Unity*
- ❖ *Course One: This Day of God*
- ❖ *To Be a Bahá'í: 8-hour introductory course*

Entry by Troops

Entry by Troops

### Fireside Workshops for Media Campaign

- ❖ *The Power of Race Unity*
- ❖ *Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith*
- ❖ *Family: Seeds of World Peace*
- ❖ *Two Wings: Equality of Women and Men*
- ❖ *We Are One*
- ❖ *The Power of Prayer*

### Courses for Regional Training Institutes

Two complementary tracks of training are approved by the National Spiritual Assembly and the Continental Board of Counselors for use by Regional Training Institutes in the United States. These basic sequences of courses, much like the trunk of a tree, support courses branching out from it, each branch dedicated to some specific area of training. Specific branches of training may be offered parallel to the main sequence.



Individuals trained as Core Curriculum trainers/facilitators or by using the course *The Art of Facilitation* may offer the Core Curriculum Sequence of Courses.



Individuals who have completed a particular course book, as well as the course *Walking Together on a Path of Service*, may offer that particular course.

## *Characteristics of Basic Sequence Courses in the Core Curriculum and Rubi Tracks of Training*

Frequently Asked Questions:	Core Curriculum	Rubi
1. Number of basic sequence courses?	7 + facilitator training	5 + tutor training
2. What are these courses? How many hours to complete each course?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ To Be a Bahá'í (8 hr.)</li> <li>◦ This Day of God (15 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Circles of Unity (15 hr.)</li> <li>◦ The Seeker's Quest (15 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Every Believer Is a Teacher (18hr.)</li> <li>◦ To Serve the Covenant (16 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Building a New Civilization (16 hr.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Reflections on the Life of the Spirit (36 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Arising to Serve (45 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Teaching Children's Classes (45 hr.)</li> <li>◦ The Twin Manifestations (45 hr.)</li> <li>◦ Teaching the Cause (50 hr.)</li> </ul>
3. Available as intensive weekend courses?	Yes	Yes
4. Available in study circle format?	Yes	Yes
5. Use of the arts?	Yes, structured into the courses	Yes, through individual initiative
6. Service outside of class?	Yes, structured into the courses Facilitator initiates consultation	Yes, through individual initiative Tutor initiates consultation
7. Intensive study of the Writings?	Yes	Yes
8. Memorization?	Some	A great deal
9. How tutors/facilitators are trained?	The Art of Facilitation (23 hr.) or Special Courses Training (37 hr.)	Walking Together on a Path of Service (64 hr.)
10. Specialized Courses?	7 courses available*	Courses under development
11. Where curriculum developed?	U.S.A. – since 1988	Colombia, S. Am. – since 1970s
12. Courses open to all?	Yes	Yes
13. Special materials for seekers?	Fireside packs for Teaching Videos	Illustrations in Book 4
14. Courses approved by Institutions?	Yes	Yes
15. Courses stimulate teaching?	Yes	Yes

\* Specialized Core Curriculum Courses include training for Teachers of children and youth (including extensive classroom materials), Parents, Youth Empowerment, Married Couples, Preparation for Marriage, Race Unity, Gender Equality, and Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh. **These courses are also open to all.**

## *Anticipated outcomes of the basic sequence*

<i>Core Curriculum Basic Sequence (Fundamental Verities)</i>		<i>Rubi Basic Sequence</i>	
7. The Art of Facilitation	Study circles multiply	7. Walking Together on a Path of Service	Study circles multiply
6. Building a New Civilization	Increased outreach to public; more vibrant Feasts, Holy Days	6. Teaching the Faith	Individual / collective teaching efforts increase
5. To Serve the Covenant	Increase in individual teaching through stories; Fosters firmness in the Covenant	4. The Twin Manifestations	Sharing stories about the history of the Faith increases
4. Every Believer Is a Teacher	Collective teaching increases: Firesides multiply and link to media initiative		
3. The Seeker's Quest	Individual teaching increases	3. Teaching Children's Classes	Children embraced by community
2. Circles of Unity	Families, children embraced by community	2. Arising to Serve	Deepening activities increase
1. This Day of God	Devotional meetings increase		
To Be a Bahá'í—Introductory Course	Seekers declare; New believers confirmed	1. Reflections on the Life of the Spirit	Devotional meetings increase
Fireside packets for media campaign	Seekers introduced to Sacred Text		

NOTE: All Core Curriculum specialized courses are open to all, some may be ideal for outreach to seekers

## *Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly*

*Vision and Evolution of the Institute Process in the United States Bahá'í Community*

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1. Either in the large group or smaller groups, read all or selected portions of the document, “Vision and Evolution of the Institute Process in the United States Bahá'í Community,” March 24, 2003. Highlight or briefly discuss specific sections as you read, as desired.
2. Let's envision our unified actions promoting the growth of the Cause, with the process of training empowering the many tasks of expansion and consolidation, and with study circles, children's classes and devotional gatherings open to all...
  - Imagine open and effective collaboration among Regional Training Institutes, Local Spiritual Assemblies and Auxiliary Board members...
  - Imagine Ruhi tutors and Core Curriculum facilitators working collaboratively to promote the growth of the Cause...
  - Imagine seekers participating in Fireside workshops and devotional meetings, perhaps first experiencing “The Power of Prayer”...
  - Imagine seekers and new believers entering either of the basic sequences and sending their children to Bahá'í classes open to all...
  - Imagine seekers and new believers participating in the Parenting, Marriage and Family Life, Race Unity, Equality, or Youth Empowerment programs...
  - Imagine raising up more and more teachers of children...
  - Imagine empowered youth arising as never before...
  - Envision a vibrant, active community of growth!
3. Select, from a wide diversity of pictures cut from magazines, one picture that could represent this vision of training, service, teaching and growth. After you return to your seat, briefly explain the significance of the picture chosen to the person beside you. Allow about 5 minutes for this pair sharing activity.

### **Purpose:**

To understand the National Spiritual Assembly's guidance for the institute process in this country.

### **Process:**

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Consider placing the picture in your journal and respond to the following questions in your journal:

- What specifically can you do to translate this vision into reality and action? What are the first steps in this path of service?

Note that we will return to action planning later in this training.

## VISION AND EVOLUTION OF THE INSTITUTE PROCESS IN THE UNITED STATES BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY

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MARCH 24, 2003

### INTRODUCTION

*The Blessed Perfection suffered innumerable ordeals and calamities, but during His lifetime He trained in all regions many souls who were peerless. The purpose of the appearance of the Manifestations of God is the training of the people. That is the only result of Their mission, the real outcome. The outcome of the whole life of Jesus was the training of eleven disciples and two women. Why did He suffer troubles, ordeals and calamities? For the training of these few followers. That was the result of His life. The product of the life of Christ was not the churches but the illumined souls of those who believed in Him. Afterward, they spread His teachings.*

*It is my hope that you all may become the product of the life of Bahá'u'lláh and the outcomes of His heavenly training. When the people ask you, "What has Bahá'u'lláh accomplished?" say to them, "He has created these; He has trained us."*

*(Promulgation of Universal Peace)*

The power of systematic education and training was nowhere better demonstrated than in His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh's ability to "broaden the outlook and transform the character of the community to which He belonged." The Universal House of Justice has consistently emphasized the essential role of the training institute process in the development of human resources; the vitalization of Bahá'í community life, its spiritual condition, teaching initiatives; and its relationship and service to the larger community and the maturation of Bahá'í institutions. As a teaching and consolidation component of growth, the institute process, in conjunction with the goals of the National Five Year Plan and its media broadcast initiative operating in the framework of clusters, will guarantee the systematic growth of the American Bahá'í community.

The National Spiritual Assembly wholeheartedly believes that unity in our understanding of the organizing principles of the institute process will exert a transforming effect on the spirit and capacity of the United States Bahá'í community to open wide the portals of growth. The rapid development of the institute process in the United States and our confidence in its effect on our future growth inspire us to provide policy guidance on this critical function.

In its letter of January 17, 2003, addressed to the Bahá'ís of the World, the Universal House of Justice expresses its immense gratitude to Bahá'u'lláh for the worldwide development of a "culture of learning," the formation of thousands of geographic clusters, and the rapid growth of the institute process, children's classes, devotional gatherings, and study circles.

The House of Justice notes that the systematic development of clusters with high potential for growth requires a flexible approach, guided by learning from one stage to another. "Two criteria," it emphasizes, "seem especially important: the strength of the human resources raised up by the training institute for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith in the cluster, and

the ability of the institutions to mobilize these resources in the field of service.”

The progress of the community and the prospects for growth open “thrilling opportunities for Local Spiritual Assemblies” who, in collaboration with Auxiliary Board members, are challenged to “utilize the energies and talents of the swelling human resources available in their respective areas of jurisdiction both to create a vibrant community life and to begin influencing the society around them.”

### ***INSTITUTE TRAINING AND GROWTH: A WELCOME INTEGRATION***

The House of Justice’s letter of April 26, 2002, to the National Spiritual Assembly provides a clear and precise vision to the United States Bahá’í Community of the institute process that the Supreme Body promises will guarantee a systematic pattern of growth.

*“The lines of action you have so clearly delineated for advancing the process of entry by troops make for a welcome integration of effort at all levels of the community. The teaching work, largely stimulated by the increasingly effective media campaign, driven by individual and collective activity, and fortified by the consolidation work involving the institute process and its study circles, as well as the devotional meetings, children’s classes and youth programs that are multiplying—all these constitute key elements which operating within the framework of clusters, can and will guarantee a systematic pattern of growth.”*

The House of Justice’s vision clearly anticipates developing the capacity to train and educate large numbers of people, Bahá’ís and seekers alike. We are called upon to develop large-scale systems for education and training in the fundamental verities of the Faith and in learning to teach and administer the Cause with efficiency and love. Such an ambitious mandate requires consistent flexibility in our thinking, continuous refinement and innovation in our methods, and an unwavering commitment to learning as we progress.

With this vision clearly in mind, we are happy to share with you the following guidelines for the operation of the training institute process in the United States Bahá’í community.

### ***COUNSELORS AND THEIR AUXILIARIES INVOLVEMENT WITH TRAINING INSTITUTES***

Training Institutes are agencies of the National Spiritual Assembly, supervised by the Regional Bahá’í Councils, in which the Counselors and their Auxiliaries have extraordinary roles. Involvement in the operation of a Training Institute, by both Counselors and Auxiliary Board members, has to be considered in a special light.

Institutes are centers of learning that offer the Counselors and Auxiliary Board members immediate access to a formal means of educating the believers. Auxiliary Board members may also serve as members of an Institute Board of Directors. The intimate involvement of Counselors and Auxiliary Board members in the establishment and operations of training institutes is one of the important requirements of the current Plan.

The Continental Counselors and the National Spiritual Assembly consult on all aspects of the functioning of training institutes. The National Spiritual Assembly with the advice of the Counselors, and the reports and recommendations of the Regional Councils, decides upon the membership of Training Institute Boards of Directors.

On all significant matters, the National Spiritual Assembly, after receiving guidance from the Universal House of Justice, consults with Counselors before giving direction to the community.

### *LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES*

Spiritual Assembly involvement in the institute process has been shown to encourage greater participation among the friends, generally, and is essential to achieving the full effect of institute training on advancing the process of growth. Experience in the United States Bahá'í community has shown that the institute process is most effective when Spiritual Assemblies are consulted and actively involved. In many localities, Spiritual Assemblies are themselves taking institute courses and participating in study circles.

Local Spiritual Assemblies are the focal centers of Bahá'í activity. These institutions function as the point of convergence for the creative forces of the Faith. It is through strong Spiritual Assemblies that the power of individual Bahá'ís must be nurtured and released and the vitality of Bahá'í community life cultivated.

Spiritual Assemblies are now challenged, as the institute process flourishes, to focus individuals to the service of community development and growth. Spiritual Assemblies, as facilitators of the teaching work and instruments of the spirit of the Faith, will need to act consistently to turn the friends' attention to the needs of seekers to ensure that their spiritual search finds its goal.

### *REGIONAL BAHÁ'Í COUNCILS*

With the advice of Continental Counselors and the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly, Regional Bahá'í Councils are primarily responsible for the supervision of the training institutes and their boards of directors. Regional Councils, using the policies stated herein, supervise the training, function, and assessment of institute process as managed by their boards of directors. Also, systematic training of Local Spiritual Assemblies will continue to be coordinated by Regional Bahá'í Councils with the assistance of the National Spiritual Assembly's Office of Spiritual Assembly Training and Development.

### *A WIDE DIVERSITY OF APPROACHES*

Anticipating the diversity of cultural backgrounds, ages, literacy and learning styles, the Universal House of Justice called for training institutes to “develop a wide variety of approaches fitted to the needs of the diverse components of your population.”

The training institute process in the United States Bahá'í community is founded on two pillars: the *Fundamental Verities* and the *Rubi* materials. In the

Five Year Plan, the National Assembly has called for the use of these two approaches and for the development of new curricula. Already, promising approaches such as *The Wilmette Institute*, *Seeker Follow-up Program*, *Heart to Heart*, *Teaching Christians*, *Book Zero*, and the *Mandala Training Program*, to name a few, provide systematic models to meet the wide diversity of needs among Bahá'ís and seekers alike.

Regional Training Institute Boards of Directors and their branches must become trained and thoroughly versed in both the *Fundamental Verities* and the *Rubi* materials. Moreover, it will be essential to the short- and long-term success of the Boards to habituate the practice of familiarizing themselves with promising new curricula, that may be employed in their regions.

### ***THE IMPORTANCE OF FLEXIBILITY***

Flexibility is the foundation of a culture of learning. At this early stage in the development of the institute process, openness to new approaches and encouragement of new curricula and methods within the framework of systematization and sequencing of training clearly defined by the House of Justice will best serve our efforts to meet the training needs of large and diverse populations of Bahá'ís and seekers. Active encouragement and facilitation of the continuous refinement of existing curricula and the development of new materials and approaches should be considered a core obligation of the Regional Training Institutes' Boards. Flexibility, innovation, and freedom from a rigid insistence on any particular approach will assure the progress of the teaching work, protect the unity of the believers and free the community from conflict over teaching and training methods, which is the primary impediment of growth in all faith communities. Moreover, an important aspect of the principle of flexibility is the adaptation of training materials and delivery systems to the diversity of needs in various localities.

As the institute process evolves, the questions of full-time staff and permanent facilities will naturally emerge. Past experience with the Louis G. Gregory Bahá'í Institute, the Native American Bahá'í Institute, and the Magdalene Carney Bahá'í Institute suggests that full-time employees and permanent facilities should be considered when Regional Training Institutes reach more advanced stages in their capacity and development, and when the needs of the populations they serve clearly require permanent staff and space.

### ***NATIONAL TEACHER TRAINING CENTER/NATIONAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS***

The National Teacher Training Center (NTTC) was established in 1991 and functions to collect, evaluate and make available training and education curricula, and to provide teacher, facilitator, and tutor training services, both at the Center and in the field. As the residence for the National Education Task Force, the Center collected and evaluated over 300 curricula from the Bahá'í world to design the *Core Curriculum* for the Bahá'í education of children, an education and training process that integrates the use of a wide range of curricula, including the adaptation of *Rubi* materials, and a sequence

of training courses called the *Fundamental Verities*. The Education Task Force in collaboration with the NTTC also published *Foundations for Spiritual Education*, a comprehensive compilation of the Bahá'í Writings defining the essential purposes and aspects of Bahá'í education and training. Now, the National Teacher Training Center will also serve as a resource for the Training Institutes' Boards. Training Institutes' Boards are encouraged to establish consulting relationships with the NTTC and to familiarize themselves with the Center's training and curricula resources.

The National Office of Education and Schools administers and coordinates the work of the NTTC, the Louis Gregory and Native American Bahá'í Institutes, the Wilmette Institute, the system of permanent and regional Bahá'í schools, and the National Bahá'í Education Task Force. The expertise of that office also offers a rich resource for the Regional Training Institutes.

### **CHILDREN'S CLASSES**

The *Core Curriculum* has been shown to be highly effective in providing for the spiritual education of Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í children. Hundreds of children's classes currently employ this approach with the aid of a large number of trained and experienced teachers. Research over the past fifteen years shows that the vast majority of children educated in the *Core Curriculum* become devoted Bahá'í youth and remain active Bahá'ís into their adult lives. The deep experience and large reserve of trained teachers and functioning classes provide rich resources for the establishment of new children's classes in clusters. The NTTC can be helpful in facilitating a Training Institute Board's understanding of the *Core Curriculum*. Training Institute Boards should thoroughly acquaint themselves with this approach and with the variety of ways it is being used.

The *Core Curriculum* is an instructional process that integrates a wide range of curricula, including *Rubi* materials, to facilitate learning. Because it is well established, the National Spiritual Assembly recommends that it serve as the foundation for children's classes in the United States. This approach too should be carried out with flexibility. In some cases where other curricula fit the need, they should be used.

### **TRAINED FACILITATORS AND TUTORS**

By all measures, the quality of facilitators and tutors strongly influences the effects of training. This highlights the importance of well prepared facilitators and tutors. Institute Boards should be astute in determining the training needs in their area and in judging the necessary qualifications of potential trainers. They must also exercise care not to exclude otherwise competent participants simply because they have not completed a prescribed course of orientation and training. There have been many instances where skilled and veteran children's class teachers have been asked to discontinue their work pending completion of a prescribed series of courses. At other times, teachers trained in one method have been told that they must train under a different method before resuming their services. Such a requirement, too rigidly enforced, would deprive the institute process of many valuable participants who are able to make significant contributions to

training and education processes. Flexibility in these matters will go far to assure that the training approaches employed meet local needs and that the wide diversity of highly qualified and competent Bahá'ís are encouraged to participate in this essential process.

### **CONCLUSION**

The urgency for the development of the institute process is prompted by current opportunities for advancing the process of growth, that surpass all historical precedents.

In the United States, we have already witnessed that millions of people are searching for spiritual truth and that any number of them are, right now, prepared to investigate the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. We must not make them wait. We must strengthen the institute process in the United States Bahá'í Community to respond to the current challenge of “interest by troops” and to prepare for the imminent prospect of “entry by troops.”

As we proceed, we will discover that growth itself will teach us a great deal about the refinements necessary in our approaches to training and education.

Retain the vision of our Supreme Body upper most in your hearts: “Let there be no doubt that what we are witnessing is the gathering momentum of that process of entry of humanity into the Cause in troops, foreshadowed by Bahá'u'lláh's *Tablet to the King of Persia*, eagerly anticipated by the Master, and described by the Guardian as the necessary prelude to mass conversion.”

The scale of expansion that is to mark the next stage of our growth “calls for an intensity of effort yet to be achieved.” Our united efforts will assure our success.

## *A Door to Entry by Troops*

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**Purpose:**

To appreciate the value of the two sequences of courses.

1. Read aloud the following two quotations of Bahá'u'lláh:

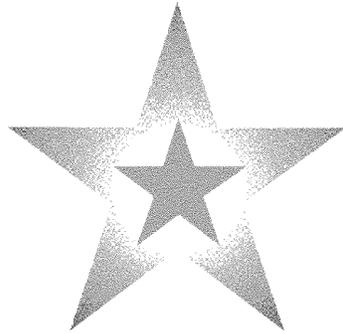
**This Day a door is open wider than both heaven and earth.**

**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 65

**. . . Welcome all with the light of oneness.**

**BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 31

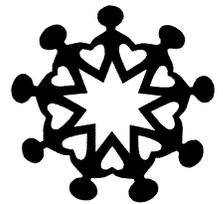
2. Observe that this door to entry by troops is supported by the two pillars of Ruhi and Fundamental Verities.



- Facilitating the Fundamental Verities  
Sequence of Courses
- Situations Beyond the Scope of Core Curriculum  
Training Programs
- Planting Seeds of Service

# The **Art** of Facilitation

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes



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Moving to Action

## *Facilitating the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses*

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**Purpose:**

Prepare to offer study circles for the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses or for a Core Curriculum training program for Community Development.

Work in pairs, preferably with your co-facilitator:

1. Read aloud the set of quotations about “Consultation” on the following page and discuss the focus question.
2. Considering your community situation, plan with your co-facilitator the action steps you will take for initiating the Fundamental Verities sequence of courses through the creation of your first study circle or for offering the Core Curriculum training program for community development in which you have been trained.
3. Refer to the Program Success Factors on p. 94.
4. Then consider the following questions:
  - How will you assist your community to build a unified vision of the importance of training? How will you encourage participation in the training program or study circle?
  - When and how will you share your plans with your Local Spiritual Assembly and/or Regional Training Institute, your Auxiliary Board member or assistant? How will you collaborate with other Core Curriculum facilitators and Ruhi tutors?
  - When and where will you offer your study circle? What resources will you need? Who can help you?
  - How will you know you have been successful? When and how will you report to your Regional Training Institute and to the National Teacher Training Center?
5. Be prepared to share your plans either orally, in written form, or through role playing with the larger group, who will then help you to “reality check” your plans.
6. Reconvene the whole group and share your work plans. In the whole group, collaboratively:
  - a. identify the strengths of your planning
  - b. anticipate some of the obstacles and bounties you might expect
  - c. make suggestions for refining the plan
  - d. encourage each other.

What adjustments, if any, need to be made to the work plans?

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**Focus Question:** What role does consultation play in the training process?

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1 The members who are consulting, however, should behave in the utmost love, harmony and sincerity towards each other.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Consultation Compilation*, #15

2 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. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Consultation Compilation*, #9

3 The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members....The second condition: - They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one’s views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, cited by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’i Administration*, p. 22

4 The purpose is to emphasize the statement that consultation must have for its object the investigation of truth. He who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a contribution to the consensus of opinion...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. If he finds that a previously expressed opinion is more true and worthy, he should accept it immediately and not willfully hold to an opinion of his own. By this excellent method he endeavors to arrive at unity and truth...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. Love and fellowship are the foundation.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 72-73

5 Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Bahá’i Administration*, p. 63

## PROGRAM SUCCESS FACTORS

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1. Do you have everything you need? Make sure you have all your materials and are well prepared; see facilitator notes in the Appendix of each course, and in *The Art of Facilitation*.
2. Where will you meet? Consider whether to host the study circle or institute course in your home, at a community center, or in another location.
3. Will you provide refreshments?
4. Is there a need for child care? If so, plan how you will address that need.
5. How will you address participant expenses for course books, photocopies, art and other education materials, refreshments, etc.?
6. How does your Regional Training Institute organize financial matters? What is your role as facilitator? Who collects money and purchases needed materials?
7. Identify the reporting structure used by your Regional Training Institute. Do you report your service electronically, to the RTI Area Coordinator, or through other means?
8. How did it go? Please send reports and evaluation forms to the NTTC and to your Regional Training Institute. See pp. 118-19 for a training report form.

The NTTC is available by phone or email to respond to your questions and ideas—810-653-5033, or [NTTC@usbnc.org](mailto:NTTC@usbnc.org).

## *Situations Beyond the Scope of Core Curriculum Training Programs*

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While the role of the facilitator is one of profound service to Bahá'í institutions, families and the community, sometimes situations can arise that are beyond the scope of the training program.

### **Discuss:**

- Based on what we already know, what situations might be beyond the scope of this program?

List answers on chart paper.

(Some examples include abuse, deeply emotional issues, legal matters, etc.)

### **Discuss:**

- What can we do should such a situation arise?

List answers.

(Some steps include: one trainer stepping out of the room to listen and show love, while the other continues the workshop; refer the situation to a Bahá'í institution such as the Local Spiritual Assembly, an Auxiliary Board Member or an Assistant.) In a physical emergency, simply call Emergency Services from the public sector.

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 facilitators, we know there are lots of injured people among us; there are others trained to treat the injured. We are the youthful investigators, uniting our communities to work for change.

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### **Process:**

How can you make sure that you consistently maintain your role as facilitator?

The training environment is created through physical surroundings and material preparations that reflect love and sensitivity for the individual teacher's capacities, capabilities, and cultural diversity.

The National Bahá'í Education Task Force trusts that Core Curriculum Facilitators will closely follow the activity directions, ensuring consistent training experiences across the country, and will share elements that work well and those that need refinement. At the same time, facilitators must seek a balance between stretching participants' capacity to facilitate growth, and respecting cultural differences.

The following examples illustrate strategies to bridge cultural differences:

- **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, others do not. 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 as 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 study circle without rushing or feeling stressed.
- **Recognition of individuals:** For those who often 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 individuals. 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 art work may be three-dimensional, using a wide range of materials for creation.
- **Ask:** Perhaps one of the best ways to learn about the needs, hopes, and interests of the people we're with is simply to ask them what they think and listen carefully to their responses.
- **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!

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### *Summarize The Art of Facilitation*

Briefly review the topics covered in **The Art of Facilitation** and address any remaining questions you have regarding your service as a facilitator.

Reflect back through the weekend and use your journal pages to answer the following questions:

- Considering the tools and plans I have developed throughout the weekend, which are of highest priority?
- How will I check the progress of my actions, and if necessary modify the steps being taken?

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### *Evaluation*

Please take a few minutes to complete the evaluation form on the next page. Your thoughts, comments, and suggestions will assist the National Teacher Training Center in the development of future training programs.



# Evaluation of The Art of Facilitation

Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please candidly share your feelings and reactions. This information will assist in improving this course.

What about this training was most helpful or informative and why?

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What type of activity did you most enjoy and why?

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What about this training was the least helpful or informative and why?

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What type of activity did you least enjoy and why?

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What additional service did this course inspire you to offer to your family or community?

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*(Check one of the boxes for each question.)*

	Exceptional	Very Good	Fair	Poor
The presenters were organized and clear in their presentation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The purpose of each session was made clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Materials supported the sessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How would you rate the after-class extended activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please take time to expand on any of the items listed above, particularly if any are rated fair or poor so that we might improve the course. Also, please let us know what you would change or add to this course.

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*Please return this form to:*

**National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Bahá'í School, 3208 S. State Road, Davison, MI 48423**

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## *Conclusion: Planting Seeds of Service*

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Recall the “Seeds of Growth” that introduced the Core Curriculum learning model. This training carries with it the seeds of our service in our clusters, those “seedbeds of expansion.” Let’s plant these seeds of our service.

1. Using a square piece of paper, fold the paper diagonally, corner to corner. Unfold and do the same to the opposite corner, so you’ve creased an “X” into the paper.
2. Now fold each corner of the paper so they meet at the center of the “X”, making a smaller folded square.
3. Again, fold the corners to meet at the center; repeat this process until you’ve created your compact “seed.”
4. Quietly make a pledge of action to take after you leave today’s workshop. Visualize how your seeds of “action” will bear fruit.
5. Then unfold your seeds and, on the inside, sketch, draw, or write your vision of the fruits of your actions.
6. When finished, fold your seeds and put them in your pockets or handbags and carry them with you. Water them with prayers, nourish them with divine assistance, that they may grow.
7. Having planted the seeds of our own service, let’s recall that, “a door is open wider than heaven and earth.” As we know, the key to unlocking that door is the Word of God, and the power to use that key is the power of Divine Assistance.

Conclude the training with music and read the quotation on the following page that begins:

*O phoenix of that immortal flame kindled in the sacred Tree!...*

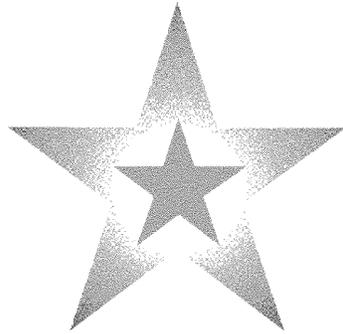
O phoenix of that immortal flame kindled in the sacred Tree! Bahá'u'lláh - may my life, my soul, my spirit be offered up as a sacrifice unto His lowly servants - hath, during His last days on earth, given the most emphatic promise that, through the outpourings of the grace of God and the aid and assistance vouchsafed from His Kingdom on high, souls will arise and holy beings appear who, as stars, would adorn the firmament of divine guidance; illumine the dayspring of loving-kindness and bounty; manifest the signs of the unity of God; shine with the light of sanctity and purity; receive their full measure of divine inspiration; raise high the sacred torch of faith; stand firm as the rock and immoveable as the mountain; and grow to become luminaries in the heavens of His Revelation, mighty channels of His grace, means for the bestowal of God's bountiful care, heralds calling forth the name of the One true God, and establishers of the world's supreme foundation.

These shall labour ceaselessly, by day and by night, shall heed neither trials nor woe, shall suffer no respite in their efforts, shall seek no repose, shall disregard all ease and comfort, and, detached and unsullied, shall consecrate every fleeting moment of their lives to the diffusion of the divine fragrance and the exaltation of God's holy Word. Their faces will radiate heavenly gladness, and their hearts be filled with joy. Their souls will be inspired, and their foundation stand secure. They shall scatter in the world, and travel throughout all regions. They shall raise their voices in every assembly, and adorn and revive every gathering. They shall speak in every tongue, and interpret every hidden meaning. They shall reveal the mysteries of the Kingdom, and manifest unto everyone the signs of God. They shall burn brightly even as a candle in the heart of every assembly, and beam forth as a star upon every horizon. The gentle breezes wafted from the garden of their hearts shall perfume and revive the souls of men, and the revelations of their minds, even as showers, will reinvigorate the peoples and nations of the world.

I am waiting, eagerly waiting for these holy ones to appear; and yet, how long will they delay their coming? My prayer and ardent supplication, at eventide and at dawn, is that these shining stars may soon shed their radiance upon the world, that their sacred countenances may be unveiled to mortal eyes, that the hosts of divine assistance may achieve their victory, and the billows of grace, rising from His oceans above, may flow upon all mankind. Pray ye also and supplicate unto Him that through the bountiful aid of the Ancient Beauty these souls may be unveiled to the eyes of the world.

The glory of God rest upon thee, and upon him whose face is illumined with that everlasting light that shineth from His Kingdom of Glory.

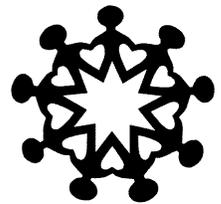
*Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, pages 251-52*



- Notes for Facilitators of this course
- Creating the Training Experience
- Details, Details!
- Training Report forms
- Additional Resources

# The **Art** of Facilitation

Facilitating  
Core Curriculum  
Programs  
for  
Training Institutes



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Appendix

## NOTES FOR FACILITATORS OF THIS COURSE

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Individuals and Regional Training Institutes planning to offer The Art of Facilitation are urged to PLEASE CONTACT the National Teacher Training Center, (810) 653-5033 or NTTC@usbnc.org, for ongoing updates for this course, suggestions for experienced facilitators to offer this course, and collaboration in raising up additional facilitators for the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses.

### **Opening Devotions**

Begin the session with uplifting devotions and music.

**Welcome** the participants on behalf of yourselves, your sponsoring Institute, and the National Teacher Training Center.

### **Introduction of the trainers and participants (music, art)**

Use the introduction activity on page 11, or one of your own, which enables participants to get to know each other and share expectations and desired benefits from the training experience.

### **Logistics**

Explain the layout of your facility, location of rest rooms and refreshments, any child care arrangements, costs for materials or food, and any other logistical arrangements that are necessary.

### **Agenda**

Provide the participants with an agenda and explain that The Art of Facilitation hones facilitation skills for facilitators of the Core Curriculum Courses for Community Development and prepares all of us to offer the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses, the basic sequence of the Core Curriculum. Friends may take The Art of Facilitation either before or after completing Facilitator Training for the Core Curriculum Courses for Community Development.

## Preparation: Materials needed for specific activities

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### Core Curriculum Learning Framework, p. 14

- Pictures of seeds of various colors, to be displayed so everyone can see—examples include sunflower seeds, nuts, rice, dried peas or beans, seeds from fruit or vegetables, seed heads from grass or flowers, acorns, etc.
- A tray of fresh seeds of various colors, sizes, and shapes
- Small pictures and stickers of seeds, if available, or small seeds that could be glued to a card
- Handouts of seed quotations from Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi
- Cardstock or heavy paper for name cards
- Beautiful soft music
- The book, *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*

### Experiencing the Fundamental Verities, p. 24

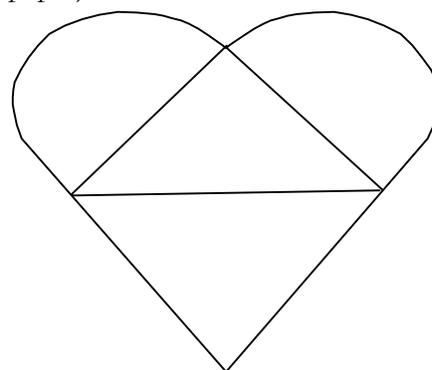
- a copy of *Course One: This Day of God* for each participant
- Session 1 materials as listed in Appendix of *Course One: This Day of God*.
  - Science demonstration
  - Note cards
  - Pictures cut from magazines
  - Other art supplies as desired

### Art of Facilitation—The Humble Servant, p. 30

- humility or service quote for each person (on small slips of paper)

### Qualities of Humble Service, p. 32

- a large heart cut into four puzzle pieces, like this:



### Fostering Self-Discipline in Groups, p. 44

- 3x5 index cards

### Movement and Music, p. 50

- Uplifting, rhythmic, diverse music

### Practice Facilitating the Fundamental Verities, p. 55, p. 61

- a copy of *Course One: This Day of God* for each participant
- approximately 10 small pieces of clean writing paper for each person's Friendly Feedback notes
- consider having on hand some copies of *Some Answered Questions*, assigned as extended study in Session 2, Course One
- music selections for participants' use

### Instructional Methods and Learning Tools, p. 57

- *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*

### Unifiers and Agents of Change, p. 64

- a painting
- artist's paintbrushes (one of which is stiff and useless).

**Guidance from the Universal House of Justice: The Ridván Message, p. 68**

- Copies of the current Ridván message from the Universal House of Justice, rolled and tied with ribbon.

**Guidance from the Universal House of Justice: Building Momentum, p. 69**

- colored pencils of five different colors;
- copies of the “Building Momentum” document,\* available online at [http://www.usbnc.org/communications/uhj/pdf/2003\\_BuildingMomentum.pdf](http://www.usbnc.org/communications/uhj/pdf/2003_BuildingMomentum.pdf), or in printed form from the Bahá’í Distribution Service.
- Photograph of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, if available

**The Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses for Community Growth, p. 71**

- Copies of each of the six courses in the sequence.

**Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development, p. 74**

- One copy of any of the trainer/facilitator manuals for the six programs that might be available for reference. You can view lists of topics for these programs on the web at [www.louhelen.org/nttc](http://www.louhelen.org/nttc).

**Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly, p. 83**

- A wide diversity of pictures cut from magazines to represent the vision of collaborative training, teaching, and growth.

**Conclusion: Planting Seeds of Service**

- Pieces of paper cut in 6-inch squares, one for each participant
- Consider giving each participant a gift quotation in acknowledgment of their completion of The Art of Facilitation as the seed of their service in the coming weeks and months that will bear sweet fruit of a truly human civilization.

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\* contact the National Teacher Training Center for possible updates to this activity

## *The Art of Facilitation—Suggested Agenda with Suggested Times*

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- Opening Devotions / Welcome / Introduction (40 min.)
- Historical Overview (10 min.)
- Core Curriculum Learning Framework (40 min.)
- Discussion Guidelines (20 min.)
- Overview of The Art of Facilitation (10 min.)
- Summary: Personal Journal (10 min.)

### **Facilitating Study Circles**

- Experiencing the Fundamental Verities (100 min.)
- Debrief (20 min.)
- Training for Facilitators and Tutors (10 min.)
- Learning from the Example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (30 min.)
- The Humble Servant (15 min.)
- Qualities of Humble Service (45 min.)
- Qualities of Listening (45 min.)
- Facilitating Text-Based Discussions (20 min.)
- Fostering Self-Discipline in Groups (60 min.)
- Movement and Music (10 min.)
- Cultivating Love (40 min.)
- Creating a Learning Environment (10 min.)
- Preparation for practice (20 min.)
- First Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities (90 min.)
- Debrief (20 min.)
- Preparation for second practice (30 min.)
- Instructional Methods and Learning Tools (20 min.)
- Second Practice: Facilitating the Fundamental Verities (100 min.)
- Debrief (20 min.)
- Sharing Your Facilitation Experiences (45 min.)
- Unifiers and Agents of Change (15 min.)

### **A Dynamic Community of Growth**

- Guidance from the Universal House of Justice (15 min.)
- Building Momentum (75 min.)
- The Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses for Community Growth (60 min.)
- Core Curriculum Training Programs for Community Development (40 min.)
- Study Circles Open to All (20 min.)
- Serving Regional Training Institutes (20 min.)
- Guidance from the National Spiritual Assembly (60 min.)
- A Door to Entry by Troops (5 min.)

### **Moving to Action**

- Facilitating the Fundamental Verities Sequence of Courses (45 min.)
- Situations Beyond the Scope of Core Curriculum Training Programs (15 min.)
- Cultural Sensitivity (10 min.)
- Review Appendix (10 min.)
- Summarize *The Art of Facilitation* (15 min.)
- Questions and Answers (15 min.)
- Course Evaluation (10 min.) Planting Seeds of Service w/ Closing Devotions (20 min.)

# Creating the Training Experience

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## References and Resources

Well prepared facilitators create a smooth and effective learning process for the participants. The following suggestions will assist your preparation.

### A Joyous Environment

Create an atmosphere of love, joy, cooperation and discovery throughout your training. To enable closer interaction, sharing and fuller participation among the group members, it is strongly suggested that the number of participants be limited to 20 for an intensive weekend or 12 for a study circle.

### 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, p. 95*

The Bahá'í Writings are the foundation, the standard and the inspiration of the Core Curriculum. 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 any Core Curriculum program. Any content of the program beyond the actual Writings represents striving to apply the principles and characteristics of Bahá'í Education to the dynamic practices of teaching and service.

### Distinctive Characteristics of Bahá'í Education

Among the Bahá'í principles and characteristics which are integral to this training 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 relationship 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 growth and transformation
- Service to humanity as a primary purpose of education and training
- 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

## **Consistent Conceptual Organization**

Each Core Curriculum Session or Module is organized around the following quotation from Bahá'u'lláh:

Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Bahá'í Education*, #9

## **Modeling and the Principle of Example**

Trainings 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**

A diverse team of facilitators is suggested. This provides a consultative and supportive learning/teaching model. Sessions should be conducted by two facilitators; no more than three facilitators should be present at any particular session. Any special circumstances should be discussed with your Regional Training Institute or the National Teacher Training Center.

## **The Learning Experience**

Core Curriculum training programs are designed so that the participants are actively engaged in their own learning. Consultation and interactive learning activities are an integral part of the training experience. As a 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 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.

While facilitators are free to adapt lessons to fit their own style and to meet the styles of their participants, it is important that content and purpose remain consistent. It is also important to maintain a diversity of methodologies as a model for participants in their own work. Learning activities have been carefully chosen to reflect a diverse range, meeting diverse learning needs; they should be modified only after well-considered consultation with the National Teacher Training Center.

## **Conscious Knowledge**

Throughout the training the facilitators will be engaging the participants in processing activities which enables the spiritual and educational principles and practices being modeled and taught to be identified. This conscious knowledge will enable participants to consider how they can apply such principles and practices in their own lives.

## **Journal Work**

The journal is a powerful tool to assist participants in directing their spiritual development process. It can provide:

- time to reflect and process the events, new concepts and activities in the session

- 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 training are encouraged to use the journal to record thoughts, feelings, visions, hopes, dreams, 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 books.

## Resources

Collaborating with the community and other facilitators and making use of available resources is an important part of the implementation process for the Core Curriculum. Participants will be referred to other programs developed through the guidance of the National Spiritual Assembly as well as being encouraged to develop their own resources and activities.

## Working in Groups

Even the ways in which the group are divided up can be diverse. Some examples:

- Table Groups: those people already sitting together may form a group.
- Counting Off: decide how many groups you need, ask participants to count off (1, 2, 3.. . or A, B, C...)
- Thematic: have participants gather in designated spots in the room according to themes, such as "everyone whose favorite color is red," "...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, everyone begins making the noise of and/or acting out their animal, trying to locate their group members.
- Scavenger Hunt: give out slips of paper with instructions like, "find three people with the same color shoes as you" or, "find a person who has been Bahá'ís longer than you have, and one person who has been one for a shorter time" and form groups with the results.

## Group Sharing

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

- Verbal Reporting: one, some, 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).
- Overhead Projector: give each group a blank transparency sheet and pens in advance, for recording their main points, then share their notes with everyone on the overhead.
- Visual Arts: have each group create a visual art piece (drawing, painting, diagram, sculpture, construction, etc.) that expresses their findings. They may verbally explain their creation.
- Performing Arts: ask that each group express their findings through either 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 will work best when there are at least 6 participants in the training 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 participants' sense of responsibility for their learning. The idea is for each member of a learning team to become an expert on one part of the material. Once the "experts" have grasped the material they teach it to the others in their team.

### Organizing a Jigsaw

Before the Training Session:

- Divide the material into specified topics, determining how many participants will become "experts" on each topic. For example, if there are 5 parts to study, then you will need 5 groups of experts—one for each part. If there are 15 workshop participants, then  $15$  (total participants)  $\div$   $5$  (parts) =  $3$  (participants in each "expert" group). The number of "expert" participants for each topic determines the second number of groups; in this example there are 3 "expert" participants in each group, so there would be three groups of 5 participants (one representing each part) when teams are reformed.

At the Training Session:

Step 1: Assign teams. Grouping methods include:

- Participants number off. If there are 3 topics, number off 1-3; if there are 4 topics, number off 1-4, etc. Number 1's take topic #1, number 2's take topic #2, etc. Once participants have become "expert" on their topic, reform groups by having the first set that numbered off 1-2-3 work together, the second group that numbered off 1-2-3 work together, etc. (This insures that there is an expert from topic 1, topic 2 and topic 3 in each group.)
- Prior to the training: Write each topic on a sheet of paper and photocopy onto different colored paper (one different color sheet for each 2<sup>nd</sup> group that will be formed). Cut apart the topics on each page, and mix the slips of paper randomly.
- During the training: Pass out slips of paper. Groups form first by topic written on their slip of paper. Once they have become "experts" on their topic, new groups form by color of paper.

Step 2: Instruct participants that they are to become "experts" on their topic. Their task is to read the material, grasp its content, consult on its meaning, and decide on clever or insightful ways to teach it to members of a second group.

Step 3: Instruct participants to form new groups (see suggested grouping methods above). Assign the second task, which fulfills the lesson purpose. Each "expert" is now a vital member of the second group, and must "teach" them his/her topic in order to successfully complete the assignment.

Note that studies indicate jigsaw grouping is a powerful tool to eliminate prejudice, since each member becomes an equally vital part of the team.

Step 4: Assess team learning through group presentation, art display, or drama as indicated in the learning activity.

## Details! Details! Material Needs and Preparation

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### Site Considerations

Core Curriculum trainings have been held in places as diverse as homes, Bahá'í centers, colleges, hotels, rustic conference centers and pre-schools. There are a number of factors to consider, in consultation with the sponsoring institution:

**Space** Avoid being cramped! For a weekend intensive program you'll need adequate room for:

- tables and chairs to be arranged to facilitate consultation and note taking
- room for small group break out work, for presentations, for stretching and movement activities and for fellowship and visiting
- comfortable reception and registration area
- meditation, prayer or quiet study area
- space for doing messy crafts (including appropriate floor space and covering)
- storage area for teaching supplies, coats and luggage
- outdoor area with convenient access to yard, park, garden or woods for the nature walk as well as for fresh air and sunshine!
- dining area for sit down meals and snacks

Study circles also benefit from these considerations, when possible. All of the above can be creatively arranged in a large hall, dividing areas with furniture or rugs.

**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.

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

You will wish to prepare and maintain a reverential, dignified, and beautiful environment throughout the training. 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
- tablecloths
- soft instrumental music from diverse cultural backgrounds
- sharing devotions in a separate location from the work area
- photographs of great teachers, heroines and heroes

**Accommodations** Arrangements for overnight guests may be necessary for a weekend intensive program.

**Possible Devotional Activities** Consider a variety of reverential and inspirational ways to share the Sacred Writings and prayers together. Some possibilities are:

- share prayers in different languages

- listen to prayers and sacred Writings recited with music as a background
- encourage chanting, singing and melodious recitation of prayers
- share recordings of prayers or passages that have been set to music
- encourage incorporating movement, dance or sign language into the recital of prayers
- prepare attractive 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’.

**Setting Up Arts, Crafts and Music Resources** Identify a special area in your study circle locale or training facility for arts, crafts and musical supplies. These materials should be available throughout the training for the friends to express themselves and their ideas. Encourage the friends to make creative use of these supplies.

**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 all day. For a weekend intensive, meals can be on site in a separate area from the training classroom. If meals are offsite, adjust the agenda to allow extra time. Some options for meals are outdoor picnic (bring-your-own or provided by sponsor), nearby restaurants, on-site kitchen with volunteer staff, catered meals by the local community.

**Visual Aids** You will want to use some visual aids during your training. Some suggestions are:

- Use an overhead projector. Copy shops can make transparencies for you from pages in the course books.
- Copy the graphic onto transparency film; project it onto the wall adjusting the distance of your overhead projector until you have the desired size; tape a piece of poster board on the wall at the point of projection; trace the image with a pencil or pen.
- Make posters from enlargements. Some copy centers are equipped to make poster size enlargements from an 8 1/2" x 11" original. You may also wish to protect posters you’ve made by having them laminated or covering them with clear contact paper yourself.
- Make your own beautiful posters using calligraphy and color!
- Some posters/overheads you may wish to prepare for use as visual aids are:
  - The organizing quotation, "*Then so much as capacity and capability allow...* "
  - Definitions for knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception and eloquent speech
  - The theme and objectives for each module/session
  - The suggested journal prompt

**Universal Participation** Assistants can perform the following duties, especially for weekend intensive training:

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

Involve everyone in your community!

### **Breaks, Time for Reflection, Fellowship and Devotions**

- In your advance planning, schedule lunches and breaks where they seem appropriate in your own training sessions.
- 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 for fellowship and consultation. Part of the joy and excitement of the training is the opportunity to share with others.

### **Miscellaneous** Arrange if possible:

- A camera for candid and group pictures.
- Transportation to/from site for those using public conveyances (arrange for shuttling to secondary sites as needed).

**Additional Supplies and Equipment are listed on the following page**

**Supplies & Equipment** Refer to the master list for each session. The following is a list of suggested supplies and materials to have on hand for use in any training.

Material to be ordered:

\_\_\_ Course books for all participants  
from the Bahá'í Distribution Service: phone 1-800-999-9019  
or the National Teacher Training Center: phone 810-653-5033; email NTTC@usbnc.org

For the Facilitators

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| ___ pad of large chart paper                  | ___ masking tape                  |
| ___ easel for chart paper                     | ___ audio cassette/CD player      |
| ___ felt markers for chart paper              | ___ receipt book                  |
| ___ white board & pens or chalk board & chalk | ___ stapler, staples, paper clips |
|   | ___ TV & VCR                      |

For the Participants

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ___ course books  |   |
| ___ name tags   | ___ felt markers & crayons  |
| ___ extra paper   | ___ glue, glue sticks   |
| ___ pens, pencils   | ___ tape: transparent & masking   |
| ___ boxes of tissue   | ___ scissors  |
| ___ butcher paper &/or poster board                                       | ___ ribbon, sequins, feathers, beads, pipe cleaners, popsicle sticks... |
| ___ paper: construction, tissue, wrapping (scraps)                        | ___ musical instruments (if available)                                  |
| ___ beautiful quotations lovingly prepared as opening or concluding gifts | ___ containers to hold and display art material                         |

For the Environment

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ___ photos of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahíyyih Khánúm, holy places, etc. | ___ potpourri, candles, table cloths  |
| ___ recorded music: instrumental, prayers, cultural            | ___ nicely arranged flowers, plants, twigs, shells, stones, or other small decorative items |
| ___ throw pillows, floor mats...                               |   |

Books

- \_\_\_ dictionaries  
\_\_\_ Bahá'í reference books as specified for each session

Printed Materials to Photocopy for Weekend Intensives

- \_\_\_ agendas  
\_\_\_ maps (to restaurants, park, child care or overnight facilities)  
\_\_\_ handouts  
\_\_\_ participant roster

## TRAINING REPORT FOR THE ART OF FACILITATION TRAINING

Trainers are requested to complete this form and send it to the:  
*National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Babá'i School, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423*  
within two weeks of the completion of the Art of Facilitation facilitator training.

Typewritten or email reports using this format are welcome! Electronic copies of this form are available on the NTTC web site, [www.louhelen.org/nttc](http://www.louhelen.org/nttc).

Please also remember to report this training to your Regional Training Institute and enclose a roster of participants, with a summary or copies of their evaluations.

### TRAINERS

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Addresses \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #s \_\_\_\_\_

### LOGISTICS

Sponsoring Institution \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of participants \_\_\_\_\_ # completing all modules \_\_\_\_\_

Heritage:

\_\_\_\_ African American

\_\_\_\_ Hispanic

\_\_\_\_ Pacific Islands

\_\_\_\_ Anglo American

\_\_\_\_ Interracial

\_\_\_\_ Persian

\_\_\_\_ Asian

\_\_\_\_ Native American

Auxiliary Board Members present \_\_\_\_\_

Assistants to the Auxiliary Board members \_\_\_\_\_

Area Coordinator for your RTI \_\_\_\_\_

### EVALUATION

1. Did you follow the procedures outlined?

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

3. What problems did you encounter, if any?

4. How far did you achieve the goals of each module?

## TRAINING REPORT FOR THE ART OF FACILITATION TRAINING (CONTINUED)

5. What provisions were established by the sponsoring institution for.. follow through?

continued support?

networking?

materials development?

participation to establish study circles using the Core Curriculum programs in their clusters?

6. Further comments:

7. Please remember to attach a list of participants completing this training.

We very much appreciate your noble service!

Return to National Teacher Training Center, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423  
phone: 810-653-5033                      fax: 810-653-7181                      email: NTTC@usbnc.org

**TRAINING REPORT FOR  
THE FUNDAMENTAL VERITIES SEQUENCE OF COURSES**

Facilitators are requested to copy and complete this form and send it to the:  
*National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Bahá'í School, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423*  
within two weeks of the completion of each Fundamental Verities course.

Typewritten or email reports using this format are welcome!

Electronic copies of this form are available on the NTTTC web site, [www.louhelen.org/nttc](http://www.louhelen.org/nttc).

Please also remember to report this training to your Regional Training Institute and enclose a roster of participants, with a summary or copies of their evaluations.

**COURSE COMPLETED**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course One: This Day of God</i>              | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course Two: Circles of Unity</i>       | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course Three: The Seeker's Quest</i>        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course Four: Every Believer is a Teacher</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course Five: To Serve the Covenant</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Course Six: Building a New Civilization</i> |

**FACILITATORS**

Names \_\_\_\_\_

Addresses \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #s \_\_\_\_\_

**LOGISTICS**

Sponsoring Institution \_\_\_\_\_ Location of Training \_\_\_\_\_

Date Begun \_\_\_\_\_ Date Concluded \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of participants \_\_\_\_\_ # completing all sessions \_\_\_\_\_

Heritage:

- |                       |                      |                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| ____ African American | ____ Hispanic        | ____ Pacific Islands |
| ____ Anglo American   | ____ Interracial     | ____ Persian         |
| ____ Asian            | ____ Native American |                      |

Auxiliary Board Members present \_\_\_\_\_

Assistants to the Auxiliary Board members \_\_\_\_\_

Area Coordinator for your RTI \_\_\_\_\_

**EVALUATION**

2. Did you follow the procedures outlined?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What were the highlights of the study circle for you and for the participants?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What problems did you encounter, if any?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How far did you achieve the goals of each session?

**TRAINING REPORT FOR FUNDAMENTAL VERITIES SEQUENCE OF COURSES** (continued)

6. What provisions were established by the sponsoring institution for..  
follow through?

continued support?

networking?

materials development?

participation to establish study circles using the Core Curriculum programs in their clusters?

8. Further comments:

9. Please remember to attach a list of participants completing this study circle.

**We very much appreciate your noble service!**

Return to National Teacher Training Center, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423  
phone: 810-653-5033                      fax: 810-653-7181                      email: [NTTC@usbnc.org](mailto:NTTC@usbnc.org)

## Additional Resources

Web addresses:

National Teacher Training Center

[www.louhelen.org/nttc](http://www.louhelen.org/nttc)

Includes information about upcoming training opportunities, news and recent developments; downloadable materials for training and reporting; explanatory materials for Core Curriculum programs.

National Bahá'í Education

[www.education.usbnc.org](http://www.education.usbnc.org)

Includes information about Bahá'í education in the United States, downloadable educational materials, links to reference materials, and much much more.

National Teacher Training Center, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423

phone: 810-653-5033

fax: 810-653-7181

email: [NTTC@usbnc.org](mailto:NTTC@usbnc.org)

Bahá'í National Center—Office of Education and Schools

1233 Central St.

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