

LATINOS IN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Five Fireside Workshops to accompany the video "Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith"

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LATINOS IN THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

Five Fireside Workshops

Thank you for choosing to host fireside gatherings that present the video *Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith*. We hope that you and your guests will have the opportunity to share some of the beauty of the Latino cultures. The Guardian explains that the value of firesides is in your loving spirit.

"The most effective method of teaching is the Fireside group, where new people can be shown Bahá'í hospitality, and ask all questions which bother them. They can feel there the true Bahá'í spirit - and it is the spirit that quickeneth."

Each of these five workshops is designed to help you plan a festive and heartwarming fireside experience for your guests. Begin with the fireside that most appeals to you. Then host the others in whatever order you prefer. You may wish to begin your preparation with prayer.

"Make a special point of praying ardently not only for success in general, but that God may send to you the souls that are ready."

From a letter dated 18 March 1950 written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Guidelines for Teaching*, p. 316

Facilitator Instructions

The five short workshops or fireside gatherings in this package support the national video broadcast of *Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith* as an integral part of the National Teaching Plan. They foster a true spirit of unity, and become an important part of a systematic campaign to advance the process of entry by troops.

The oneness of mankind, which is at once the operating principle and ultimate goal of His revelation, implies the achievement of a dynamic coherence between the spiritual and practical requirements of life on earth.

Messages from the Universal House of Justice, p. 602

Getting Ready

Invite your friends. Be sure your invitation is to their entire families, including children.

Have Bahá'í literature available for your guests in both English and Spanish.

- Several prayer books at various prices and two different pamphlets with the title *La Fe Bahá'í*: SLF B10 (in color) 10/\$3.00 and SLF B25, 25/\$1.95 can be purchased from Bahá'í Distribution Service (**800-999-9019** or e-mail **bds@usbnc.org**).
- Other sources of literature are listed in the magazine El Ruiseñor (e-mail ertn9@aol.com).
- Palabra Publications (e-mail **info@palabrapublications.com**) has the following book that you may wish to offer each guest as a parting gift:

Oraciones Bahá'is – Bahá'í Prayers

A bilingual (English & Spanish) collection of daily Bahá'í prayers and a selected sacred words of Bahá'u'lláh. A wonderful asset for getting the Creative Word into the hands of new believers and those newly introduced to the Faith, 47 pages - 25 copies for \$10.00

Prepare refreshments ahead of time. Food that is special to you will be special to your guests. Even simple fare can be made festive with the right dishes, tablecloth, etc. Do not hesitate to serve food that has a Latino influence.

Select music to play at the beginning and end of your gathering. The Latino cultures offer a wealth of diverse musical styles such as classical, folklorico, ranchero, mariachi and marenge. Check your local library for tapes and CDs. Bahá'í Distribution Service has *Crickets Cry*, South American folk music performed by El Viento Canta for \$14.95 and the song "Hoy es el Día," on the cassette tape *It's Up To Me!* for \$6.95. Live music would be beautiful, if available.

Gather materials and copy any papers that you will need. Read through the specific fireside plan for this information.

Preparing the Environment

Simple decorations such as candles, fresh flowers or a bowl of fruit, will show your love for the Faith and for your guests, without distracting them from Bahá'u'lláh's wonderful message.

Review your fireside plan and make sure all the materials are ready.

Say a prayer, light the candles and start the music.

Have Fun:

An uplifting environment will always make learning easier and a cheerful presenter can really make all the difference. Your humble gift of Bahá'u'lláh's world changing Revelation is the very best that you can offer. Those friends who are not yet ready to understand His message will still understand the love you show them. Relax and have a wonderful time!

Some more specific guidelines may be helpful in facilitating these workshops:

Using the Master as our example. Constantly bringing to mind the life and words of our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá will assist you to respond in a loving manner to these precious new believers. Please feel free to personally study and reflect upon some of the writings and prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá before you begin so you will have His image clearly in mind when delivering the course.

Use the Sacred Texts as a basis for your answers. When answering questions, always try to refer the new believers to where those answers can be found in the Writings. Inspiring in the new believers the confidence to know that by going to the Writings they will find answers and advice that they can then translate into action in their daily lives is an invaluable lesson that they will carry with them forever.

Keep your comments brief. Creating an atmosphere where the participants themselves feel free to share their views and concerns necessitates that the facilitators and lecturing guests keep their presentations and answers brief. Allowing them to have the opportunity to connect their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh through use of the Sacred Texts will have much more impact on them that the typical lecture might. For this reason, very little of this course is based on lecturing or giving long answers to the questions of the new believers.

Practice patience. It is important to realize that each of us come to our recognition of Bahá'u'lláh through many different avenues and after varying lengths of search. Some may have read every book in sight and others may have that spark of faith after a brief explanation of Bahá'u'lláh's life and mission. All come with something unique to offer and assisting them to realize that their contributions are important is part of making people feel welcomed.

FIRESIDE I

The Strength of Unity

- See the introduction for tips on preparing your fireside.
- Prepare ahead for a demonstration with these materials: embroidery floss in five colors to represent skin colors; a standard size brick; scissors.
 - o Cut about a 2-foot length of each color of embroidery floss.
 - o Separate three single strands from each of the 2 foot pieces of floss.
- Make handout copies of the quotation on page .

Lovingly greet your guests as they arrive. Offer beverages and show guests to the refreshment table. Keep the atmosphere informal, encouraging everyone to think of your home as his or her own. Give a little background along with introductions, to encourage conversation. Be certain to introduce children, as well.

When all your guests have arrived and are comfortable, invite volunteers to offer prayers. Ask for prayers of other faiths and in other languages, especially Spanish. Ask a Bahá'í guest to say the prayer for unity (*Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 204), if possible, in Spanish.

Explain to your guests that they will be seeing the video "Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith" (or that they have recently seen it, in some cases). Ask why they think Latino culture is important to the Bahá'ís. Positively acknowledge any response related to diversity or the power of unity.

Invite each guest to tell about one of the strengths of his or her own Latino culture. Non-Latino guests may share personal experiences that gave them insight into a Latino culture.

Present the video Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith. Offer additional refreshments.

Ask everyone how he or she feels about the video.

Explain to the group that Bahá'u'lláh has told us that "No power can exist except through unity." Offer to demonstrate the strength of unity.

With the materials you prepared ahead of time:

- Explain that the different colors of thread stand for the diverse people in the world. The task is to lift the brick.
- Invite a volunteer to choose which color will work best.
- Have volunteer tie the single strand around the brick and try to lift it. (The floss will break.)
- Offer to try another color. (All will probably agree that color makes no difference.)
- Point out that working toward a better future is a lot like lifting that brick. People often think it's easier to work alone. Some think that one race or group if people can do a better job than another. Yet, most of the work can't be done by just one person, and color doesn't matter at all!



- Place five strands, one of each color, parallel to each other about an inch apart.
- Place the brick across all five strands and tie each strand around the brick.
- Ask assistants to lift the strands, one in each hand, at the same time. (The floss usually breaks.)
- Point out that following our laws can be like using separate strands. When the law requires diversity, the hearts of some people remain separate. This can end in failure.
- Now twist five strands, one of each color, into a single multi-colored cord.
- Tie this cord around the brick and try again to lift it. (It holds without difficulty.)

Ask a volunteer to read this Bahá'í verse:

"We must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst, and as we work, so will strength be given unto us."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 290-291

- Discuss ways that we can strive toward unity with heart and soul. Could the strengths that were discussed earlier work together for greater strength?
- Allow time for questions and casual socializing.
- Offer your guests a copy of the quotation about unity and a prayer book (if available).
- Close with the prayer for humanity on page 102 of Bahá'í Prayers.
 - O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.
 - O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.
 - O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.
 - O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.
 - O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.
 - Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.
 - O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

`Abdu'l-Bahá

"Bahá'u'lláh

has drawn the circle of unity,

He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples,
and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent
of universal unity. This is the work of the Divine Bounty,
and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have
the reality of unity in our midst, and as
we work, so will strength be
given unto us."

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p.54

FIRESIDE II

The Beauty of Humanity

- See the introduction for tips on preparing your fireside.
- Bahá'í Faith

Latinos In The

- Prepare ahead for a demonstration with these materials:
 - a basket, 4X6 file cards (16)
 - a pencil for each guest
 - double-sided tape
 - scissors
 - Make a copy of the picture on page 7.
 - From RIGHT to LEFT, top to bottom, number the backs of the 16 squares.
 - Cut the 16 squares apart on the lines and place in the basket.
 - Attach a 24X16 inch paper or poster board to the wall, where it will be visible to guests.
 - Number the paper from 1 to 16 in four rows, LEFT to RIGHT, top to bottom.
- Check your library or the Internet for information about Diego Rivera.

Lovingly greet your guests as they arrive. Offer beverages and show them to the refreshment table. Keep the atmosphere informal, encouraging everyone to think of your home as his or her own. Give a little background along with introductions, to encourage conversation. Be certain to introduce children, as well.

When all your guests have arrived and are comfortable, invite volunteers to offer prayers. Ask for prayers of other faiths and in other languages, especially Spanish. Ask a Bahá'í guest to say the prayer starting on page 71 of Bahá'í Prayers, if possible, in Spanish.

Explain to your guests that they will be seeing the video "Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith" (or that they have recently seen it, in some cases). Ask each guest to share some personal observation of the beauty of Latino culture.

Present the video Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith. Offer additional refreshments.

Ask everyone what he or she found beautiful in the video.

Tell the group that 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said, "The composite beauty of humanity will be witnessed in their unity and blending." Ask them to help demonstrate the composite beauty in this room.

With the materials you prepared ahead of time:

- Explain that together, we will make something beautiful and no needs to be an artist.
- Pass out one pencil to each guest. Divide the 16 file cards equally among the group.
- Pass the basket, asking people to take as many papers as they have file cards.

Instructions:

- Work with one paper at a time to avoid confusion.
- Copy the number on the back of the picture onto the lined side of the card.
- Copy the picture on the paper to the other side of the card as accurately as possible.

- When finished, put double-sided tape on the number side and stick it to the matching number on the wall.
- If you have more papers, repeat these steps until they are all done.

As the picture is filled in, some may recognize it as the lilies made famous by Diego Rivera. Ask what happens when we combine our talents.

Ask a volunteer to read this Bahá'í verse:

"Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 291

Discuss what is possible if we combine the talents of everyone in the world. How is any of the beauty that was discussed earlier, a combination of diverse shades of thought, temperament or character?

Allow time for questions and casual socializing.

Offer your guests beautiful, colorful brochures, teaching cards or prayer cards (if available).

Close with the prayer for spiritual qualities that begins on page 144 of Bahá'í Prayers.

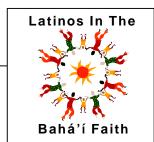
O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee.

Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.

Bahá'u'lláh



One Great Family



- See the introduction for tips on preparing your fireside.
- Prepare ahead for a demonstration with these materials: a basket filled with 20-30 pebbles, varied in color, size, shape and texture
- Make hand-out copies of the quotation at the bottom of the next page.
- Prepare for diverse music to be played live or electronically.

Lovingly greet your guests as they arrive. Offer beverages and show guests to the refreshment table. Keep the atmosphere informal, encouraging your guests to think of your home as their own. Give a little background along with introductions, to encourage conversation. Be certain to introduce children, as well.

When all your guests have arrived and are comfortable, invite volunteers to offer prayers. Ask for prayers of other faiths and in other languages, especially Spanish. Ask a Bahá'í guest to say the prayer for parents (*Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 65), if possible, in Spanish.

Tell your guests that they will be seeing the video "Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith" (or that they have recently seen it, in some cases). Ask how Latinos feel about family. Welcome family stories to illustrate.

Explain that the Bahá'í Faith also recognizes that family is very important. Tell them that 'Abdu'l-Bahá says "If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual."

Tell your guests that, as family members, they are all different and all beautiful in diverse ways, just like the stones in the basket (show basket of pebbles) and that they all have special qualities to offer their families. Pass around the basket and give the following instructions:

- Think about the God-given qualities that you can share.
- Look through the basket for a pebble that reminds you of one of the spiritual qualities taught in your own family, or given to you by the All-Loving Creator.
- Take that pebble and pass the basket on until each person has a pebble.
- Take turns explaining what quality you see in your pebble and how you share that quality with your family.
- Ask guests to remember which pebble is theirs for later and place them near the basket.

Present the video Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith. Offer additional refreshments.

Ask everyone what families they remember from the video. Did anyone see evidence that Bahá'ís consider all humankind to be one family?

Ask for a volunteer to read this Bahá'í verse:

"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 Every edifice is made of many different stones, yet each depends on the other to such an extent that if one were displaced the whole building would suffer."

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p.53

Invite your guests to get their pebbles and help demonstrate how family must work together and depend on one another.

- Have everyone sit around a table. If the group is too large, use the floor.
- Instruct the group to build a structure with their pebbles.
- No one can touch anyone else's pebble.
- Only two pebbles can touch the table. (The number to touch the table can be raised or lowered according to the group size.)
- First try the activity with no talking. Try a second time, allowing people to consult.

Discuss whether cooperation will promote love and harmony in a family. Will the same work for all of humanity? Compare music to the family while listening to some diverse tunes. (See the fireside plan *Art as Service* for additional musical suggestions.)

Allow time for questions and casual socializing during the music.

Offer your guests copies of the quotation about our human family and a prayer book (if available).

Close with the prayer for humanity on page 102 of Bahá'í Prayers.

- O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.
- O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.
- O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.
 - O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.
 - O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.
 - Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.
- O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind.

`Abdu'l-Bahá

The Lamp of the Heart



- See the introduction for tips on preparing your fireside.
- Prepare ahead for a demonstration with these materials: a sticky label for every guest; pen; reverse prejudice list
- Print one of the listed qualities on each of the labels.
- Make hand-out copies of the quotation at the bottom of the next page.

Lovingly greet your guests as they arrive. Offer beverages and show guests to the refreshment table. Keep the atmosphere informal, encouraging everyone to think of your home as his or her own. Give a little background along with introductions, to encourage conversation. Be certain to introduce children, as well.

When all your guests have arrived and are comfortable, invite volunteers to offer prayers. Ask for prayers of other faiths and in other languages, especially Spanish. Ask a Bahá'í guest to say the prayer "O God, guide me" (*Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 36), if possible, in Spanish.

Ask a volunteer to read from the Bahá'í writings:

"When love is realized and the ideal spiritual bonds unite the hearts of men, the whole human race will be uplifted, the world will continually grow more spiritual and radiant and the happiness and tranquility of mankind be immeasurably increased."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 145

Find out what people think about this statement. Is it possible? Is it time? Invite guests to share their visions of a better future.

Present to your guests the video Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith. Offer additional refreshments.

Ask if any part of the video reminds anyone of the better future that was being discussed earlier. Did the video mention any current conditions that must change, such as prejudice?

Read the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "God has sent forth His Prophets for the sole purpose of creating love and unity in the world of human hearts. All the heavenly Books are the written word of love. If they prove to be the cause of prejudice and human estrangement, they have become fruitless."

Discuss the causes of prejudice and the results. Do not focus on individual stories. Everyone will have some. Invite your guests to participate in a game of reverse prejudice.

Begin with the following instructions:

- Do not look at your own label.
- Do not say the words that appear on anyone else's label.
- Treat each participant as if the label were true information about that person.
- Try to guess your own label, based on how you are treated.
- Tell another participant if she or he guesses correctly, or comes close.

Invite guests to return to the refreshment table. As they go, place a label on the back of each participant, without letting it be seen.

Allow game to continue during questions and socializing. When most have guessed, gather to discuss how people felt about the game.

Close with the prayer for detachment on page 51 of Bahá'í Prayers.

Offer your guests a copy of the quotation below and a prayer book (if available).

Reverse Prejudice List (Add your own, if you like.)

musical

happy

strong

smart

humorous

brave

trustworthy

patient

wise

kind

complimentary

punctual

artistic

helpful

generous

This is the glorious time of which the Lord Jesus Christ spoke when He told us to pray `Thy Kingdom come, Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven'. I hope that this is also your expectation and great desire.

We are united in the one aim and hope that all shall be as one and every heart illumined by the Love of our Divine Father, God!

-- 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p.88

Art As Service



- See the introduction for tips on preparing your fireside.
- Prepare ahead for diverse music to be played. Recorded music would be fine. Live music would be great, if it is available. Cassette tapes and CDs are available at many libraries. A few artists to get you started are: Romero Brothers, Joe Paz, Gypsy Kings, Jose Jose, Ballenato, Carlos Vives, Gloria Estefan, Santana, Miliki, Linda Ronstat, Celia Cruz, Tito Fuentes, Selina, Shikira, Los Lobos, Julio Iglesias, Enrique Iglesias, Ricky Martin (Be sure to include Latino Bahá'í music.)
- Make hand-out copies of the music on the next page.

Lovingly greet your guests as they arrive. Offer beverages and show guests to the refreshment table. Keep the atmosphere informal, encouraging everyone to think of your home as his or her own. Give a little background along with introductions, to encourage conversation. Be certain to introduce children, as well.

When all your guests have arrived and are comfortable, invite volunteers to offer prayers. Ask for prayers of other faiths and in other languages, especially Spanish. Ask a Bahá'í guest to say the prayer for spiritual qualities (*Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 142), if possible, in Spanish.

Tell your guests that the Bahá'í writings teach that "science should be considered as an act of worship and art as service to the Kingdom of God." Explain that this includes any work or hobby that benefits others. Ask how art could be a service. Ask guests to tell about the sciences or arts in which they participate.

Mention that guests will be seeing the video *Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith* (or that they have recently seen it, in some cases). Ask each person to name one or more favorite Latino artist. This can include visual art, music, poetry and literature, crafts, acting, or anything creative. If many artists are named, you may wish to write a list on a large paper or poster board.

Present the video Latinos in the Bahá'í Faith. Offer additional refreshments.

Ask the group which arts and sciences are represented by people in the video. Discuss.

Read these words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Music is one of the important arts. It has a great effect upon the human spirit." Offer to demonstrate.

If possible, begin with Bahá'í music, and then play a diversity of styles. Repeat any requested style of music, one you have demonstrated some diversity and discussed how feelings are affected. Encourage dancing and further discussion of artists.

Allow for questions and casual socializing as the music continues.

Offer your guests a copy of the musical score for Hoy Es El Día and a prayer book (if available).

Close with the prayer for spiritual qualities on page 152 of Bahá'í Prayers.

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.

O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Hoy Es El Día

- printed in Brilliant Star, Sept/Oct 1997.



- 3. Hoy es el día del Siervo de la Gloria, Hoy es el día de 'Abdu'l-Baha. Hoy es el día del Siervo de la Gloria, Hoy es el día de 'Abdu'l-Baha.
- Hoy es el día de la unidad del mundo, Hoy es el día de la Fe Bahá'í.
 Hoy es el día de la unidad del mundo, Hoy es el día de la Fe Bahá'í.

Chorus:

Hoy es el día, Hoy es el día, Hoy es el día de la Fe Bahá'í. Hoy es el día, Hoy es el día, Hoy es el día de la Fe Bahá'í.

