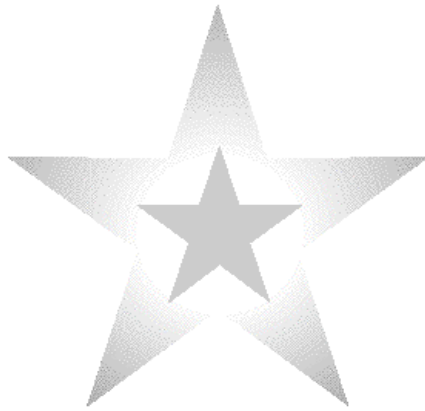


A SUPPLEMENTAL COURSE OF THE

**FUNDAMENTAL VERITIES
OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**



**PROGRESSIVE REVELATION:
THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

BASED UPON A COURSE BY DR. DAVID YOUNG

Facilitator Guide

- | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|
| Session 1 | The Gift of Teaching |
| Session 2 | Teaching Christians About Bahá'u'lláh |
| Session 3 | Shared Doctrines |
| Session 4 | Christian Beliefs |
| Session 5 | Recognition of the Manifestation |
| Session 6 | The Second Coming |
| Session 7 | Bahá'u'lláh Fulfills all Prophecies |

CORE CURRICULUM PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING INSTITUTES
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

*A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith*

INTRODUCTION:
PROGRESSIVE REVELATION:
THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

BASED UPON A COURSE BY DR. DAVID YOUNG



He fully agrees with you that different people must be approached in different ways and that valuable work for the Bahá'í Cause can be done within the Christian Churches by promoting the 'Christianity of Christ.' 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that when people become true Christians, they will find themselves Bahá'ís.

SHOGHI EFFENDI
UNFOLDING DESTINY, P. 421

Introduction:

OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDAMENTAL VERITIES COURSE SERIES

Topics:

THE SPIRIT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE COURSES

This course, developed and distributed by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, has as its essential purpose to evoke the spirit of the Faith and to give Bahá'ís a basic knowledge of some of the fundamental verities of the Faith they have embraced. This is in no wise an in-depth study of the Faith, rather, it is hoped that during this course an atmosphere can be created which will set the foundation for ongoing study of the verities of the Faith and continue turning to the Sacred Writings for guidance and inspiration. The believer should be aroused to realize his or her capacity in many new paths of service to the Cause, the most vital of which is to teach others the Faith they love.

Course Design and Presentation

These courses are divided into 7-9 sessions each. The courses in the series include:

To Be a Bahá'í: An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith

Course One: To Serve the Covenant

Course Two: Every Believer is a Teacher

Course Three: Building a New Civilization

Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh

See page 4 for an overview of Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh.

This program attempts to engage the mind and heart in a variety of activities such as reading, discussing, listening, reflecting and expressing through the arts. Extensive study of the sacred Writings was undertaken in order to develop a program that uses diverse methods compatible with the teaching methods described therein. Not only will each mind and heart be touched when different methods are used, but one is also taken beyond the bounds of one's usual learning modes so that new horizons and vistas can be explored.

You are welcomed and encouraged to read more about the different methods of teaching and learning suggested in our Holy Texts in the book *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* available through the Bahá'í Distribution Service.

As in any course or training program, there are some guidelines and preparations necessary in order to make it successful. Some suggested preparations on the following pages will give the facilitator ideas of how an atmosphere might be created in order to facilitate spiritual learning. Of course, there is much flexibility in how this might be achieved, and different materials may be available in different localities.

Music and materials can be obtained by calling the Bahá'í Distribution Service 1-800-999-9019. Any additional questions about the course may be directed to the Education and Schools Office at the Bahá'í National Center – 847-733-3492 or to the National Teacher Training Center at Louhelen Bahá'í School – 810-653-5033.

The Art of Facilitation, a weekend course to train friends in the skills that will assist them to effectively serve as facilitators in the Fundamental Verities Course Series may also be obtained through the National Teacher Training Center.

Facilitation Guidelines

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

Use 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 friends. Please feel free to personally study and reflect upon some of the writings and prayers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá before you begin so that you will have His image clearly in mind when delivering the workshops.

Use the Sacred Texts as a basis for your answers. When answering questions, always try to refer to the answers that can be found in the Writings. Inspiring in the friends 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.

Be sensitive to the varying levels of literacy. If the amount of reading or number of quotations suggested in the workshops becomes a burden to the friends, select 2 or 3 quotations to study rather than an entire page. If the friends are not comfortable reading in English, either memorize (as a group) one quotation for each activity that can become the basis for that activity, or team readers with non-readers for group activities.

Keep your comments brief. Creating an atmosphere where the participants themselves feel free to share their views and concerns necessitates that the facilitators keep their presentations and answers brief. Allow the participants to have the opportunity to connect their hearts to Bahá’u’lláh through use of the Sacred Texts.

Practice patience and sensitivity. The workshop topics can engender deep emotions. All participants come with something unique to offer and assisting them to realize that their contributions are important is part of making people feel welcome.

Be happy! An uplifting environment will always make learning easier and a cheerful presenter can really make all the difference. You may even find your own Faith renewed as you joyfully assist the friends to understand the magnificence of this New Day and the privilege of recognizing Bahá’u’lláh as that Manifestation of God awaited by all the peoples of the earth.

Course Series on Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith



Course One: To Serve the Covenant
Course Two: Every Believer is a Teacher
Course Three: Building a New Civilization
Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh

Each of these courses may be convened as a weekly study circle. Each session includes an opportunity to study, to consult, and to prepare to “translate that which hath been written into reality and action.”

Overview of Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh

Session 1	The Gift of Teaching <i>Teaching the Cause</i> <i>Spiritual Preparation for Teaching</i> <i>Myths about Teaching</i>	Session 5	Recognition of the Manifestation <i>Defining a Manifestation of God</i> <i>For God So Loved the World</i> <i>The Christ</i>
Session 2	Teaching Christians About Bahá'u'lláh <i>Why Teach Christians</i> <i>What Bahá'ís Believe about Christians</i> <i>Teaching Christians</i>	Session 6	The Second Coming <i>Every Eye Shall See Him</i> <i>Rapture and Resurrection</i> <i>Armageddon</i>
Session 3	Shared Doctrines <i>Interpretation of the Bible</i> <i>What Many Christians Believe</i> <i>Difficult Questions Asked by Christians</i>	Session 7	Bahá'u'lláh Fulfills all Prophecies <i>Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh</i> <i>Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ</i> <i>Helpful Hints and Summary</i>
Session 4	Christian Beliefs <i>Basis of Christian Beliefs</i> <i>Removing Apprehensions of Christians</i> <i>Baptism and Original Sin</i>		

The purpose of this program is to inspire the friends and assist them in their path of self-directed learning of the creative word. To accomplish this, the program is structured using a learning model derived from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

***“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, p. 3

Most learning experiences start and end with knowledge and wisdom, but by using this model the learner can achieve a deeper level of understanding. He or she can internalize what is learned by applying it to his or her own everyday experiences and actions.

The activities in this program are organized to achieve the following four aspects of learning:

Knowledge

A keen awareness of information and facts; the remembering and recalling of previously learned materials.

Wisdom

True comprehension and insight into the meaning of information and facts.

Spiritual Perception

A penetrating inner vision and the internalization of what is being learned.

Eloquent Speech

The ability to speak or act in a way that manifests one's learning.



Volumes will not suffice to hold the mystery of the Beloved One, nor can it be exhausted in these pages, although it be no more than a word, no more than a sign. "Knowledge is a single point, but the ignorant have multiplied it."

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Seven Valleys and Four Valleys*, Pages: 24-25

How great the multitude of truths which the garment of words can never contain! How vast the number of such verities as no expression can adequately describe, whose significance can never be unfolded, and to which not even the remotest allusions can be made! How manifold are the truths which must remain unuttered until the appointed time is come! Even as it hath been said: "Not everything that a man knoweth can be disclosed, nor can everything that he can disclose be regarded as timely, nor can every timely utterance be considered as suited to the capacity of those who hear it."

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings*, Page: 176

The All-Knowing Physician hath His finger on the pulse of mankind. He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth, in His unerring wisdom, the remedy. Every age hath its own problem, and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in, and center your deliberations on its exigencies and requirements.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings*, Page: 213

What he wants the Bahá'ís to do is to study more, not to study less. The more general knowledge, scientific and otherwise, they possess, the better. Likewise he is constantly urging them to really study the Bahá'í teachings more deeply. One might liken Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them....

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *The Importance of Deepening*, Pages: 228-229

As the processes impelling a rapidly evolving Order on the highroad of its destiny multiply and gather momentum, attention should be increasingly directed to the vital need of ensuring, by every means possible, the deepening of the Faith, the understanding and the spiritual life of the individuals who, as the privileged members of this community, are called upon to participate in this glorious unfoldment, and are lending their assistance to this historic evolution. A profound study of the Faith which they have espoused, its history, its spiritual as well as administrative principles; a thorough understanding of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and of the Will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a deeper realization of the implications of the claims advanced by the Founders of the Faith; strict adherence to the laws and principles which they have established; a greater dedication to the fundamentals and verities enshrined in their teachings - these constitute, I feel convinced, the urgent need of the members of this rapidly expanding community. For upon this spiritual foundation must depend the solidity of the institutions which they are now so painstakingly erecting. Every outward thrust into new fields, every multiplication of Bahá'í institutions, must be paralleled by a deeper thrust of the roots which sustain the spiritual life of the community and ensure its sound development. From this vital, this ever-present need, attention must at no time be diverted; nor must it be, under any circumstances, neglected, or subordinated to the no less vital and urgent task of ensuring the outer expansion of Bahá'í administrative institutions.

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *Letters to Australia and New Zealand*, Pages: 75-76; *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 1, pgs. 208-209

Overview of educational programs of the National Spiritual Assembly

Fundamental Verities Course Series

To Be a Bahá'í: An Introduction

Course One: To Serve the Covenant

Course Two: Every Believer is a Teacher

Course Three: Building a New Civilization

Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh

Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education

(Trainer/Facilitator Training for each of the following offered at the National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Bahá'í School • (810) 653-5033 • NTTC@usbnc.org)

Training for Teachers of Children and Youth

Parenting

Training for Race Unity Workers

Marriage and Family Life for Couples

Preparation for Marriage and Family Life

Youth Empowerment

Equality of Women and Men

Army of Light Training

Local Assembly Development Program

Training for Pioneers

Training for Media Representatives

Training for Local Treasurers

Permanent Schools and Institutes

Bosch Bahá'í School

Green Acre Bahá'í School

Louhelen Bahá'í School

Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute

Native American Bahá'í Institute

National Teacher Training Center at Louhelen Bahá'í School

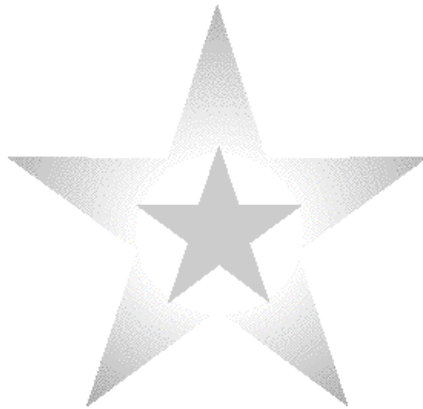
The Wilmette Institute

***A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith***

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session One

THE GIFT OF TEACHING



The corner-stone of the foundation of all Bahá'í activity is teaching the Cause. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá has categorically proclaimed in His Will and Testament, “the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world” is “the most important of things”, and “Of all the gifts of God the greatest is the gift of Teaching.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI

Session One:

THE GIFT OF TEACHING

Topics:

TEACHING THE CAUSE

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

MYTHS ABOUT TEACHING

Teach thou the Cause of God with an utterance which will cause the bushes to be enkindled, and the call 'Verily, there is no God but Me, the Almighty, the Unconstrained' to be raised therefrom.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, Page 143

The aim is this: The intention of the teacher must be pure, his heart independent, his spirit attracted, his thought at peace, his resolution firm, his magnanimity exalted and in the love of God a shining torch. Should he become as such, his sanctified breath will even affect the rock; otherwise there will be no result whatsoever. As long as a soul is not perfected, how can he efface the defects of others? Unless he is detached from aught else save God, how can he teach severance to others?

`ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, Page 54

The Bahá'í teacher must be all confidence. Therein lies his strength and the secret of his success. Though single-handed, and no matter how great the apathy of the people around you may be, you should have faith that the hosts of the Kingdom are on your side

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *Guidelines for Teaching*, Page 310

Everyone can find some effective method of teaching.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE: *Individual and Teaching*, Page viii

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To know the benefits one receives when one teaches.

Wisdom

To understand the benefits of teaching the Cause.

Spiritual Perception

To recognize that preparing a correct mental attitude and personal spiritualization are the single most important and effective tools in teaching.

Eloquent Speech

To overcome barriers created by myths regarding teaching Christians about the Bahá'í Faith.

Session One: **THE GIFT OF TEACHING**

Topics: **TEACHING THE CAUSE** **SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING** **MYTHS ABOUT TEACHING**

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

		<i>Other Materials Needed</i>
Devotions	10 minutes	
Welcome to the Course	5 minutes	Prayer books
The Gift of Teaching	10 minutes	Bibles
Teaching the Cause	15 minutes	Music, recorded or sung
Spiritual Preparation for Teaching – Recognizing the Gift	20 minutes	Chart paper, markers
Spiritual Preparation for Teaching – Qualities	15 minutes	“Requisites for Spiritual Growth” on nice paper
Break	15 minutes	Blown-up balloons (optional)
Spiritual Preparation For Teaching – Preparation Steps	20 minutes	Teaching prayer for your region
Requisites for Spiritual Growth	35 minutes	Blank paper for journaling or a small journal
Overcoming Myth Barriers	25 minutes	
Assign Extended Activities	5 minutes	
Closing devotions	5 minutes	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Overview & Session One Objectives	Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Qualities
The Gift of Teaching quotes	Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Preparation Steps
Teaching the Cause	Requisites for Our Spiritual Growth
Word Splash	Overcoming Myth Barriers ~ Role-play Script
Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Recognizing...	

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment so that it reflects the principles of hospitality, beauty, cleanliness, dignity and refinement. Arrive early and say prayers in the room. Lovingly greet each of the friends as they arrive. Consider displaying a portrait of the Master, photographs of Holy Places, framed quotations. Consider playing music as the friends enter. Plan the opening devotions for a reverent, uplifting beginning to this fourth part of the course series on fundamental verities of the Bahá'í Faith. Include prayers for teaching and sung or recorded music as part of the opening devotions.

Welcome to the Course

Welcome the friends to the course on behalf of the sponsoring Institution and the National Spiritual Assembly. Invite the friends to introduce themselves and share one hope that each person has for this course. Share any logistical information such as cost, time frame, location of washrooms, refreshments available, child care, etc.

The Gift of Teaching

Read the four topic quotations “The Gift of Teaching” aloud. Discuss that Session One is a glimpse at the gift of teaching through the following topics:

Teaching the Cause
Spiritual Preparation for Teaching
Myths about Teaching

Share the learning objectives of Session One. These may be posted on chart paper and left on the wall for continued reference.



1. *Teach thou the Cause of God with an utterance which will cause the bushes to be enkindled, and the call 'Verily, there is no God but Me, the Almighty, the Unconstrained' to be raised therefrom.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, Page 143

2. *The aim is this: The intention of the teacher must be pure, his heart independent, his spirit attracted, his thought at peace, his resolution firm, his magnanimity exalted and in the love of God a shining torch. Should he become as such, his sanctified breath will even affect the rock; otherwise there will be no result whatsoever. As long as a soul is not perfected, how can he efface the defects of others? Unless he is detached from aught else save God, how can he teach severance to others?*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, Page 54

3. *The Bahá'í teacher must be all confidence. Therein lies his strength and the secret of his success. Though single-handed, and no matter how great the apathy of the people around you may be, you should have faith that the hosts of the Kingdom are on your side*

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *Guidelines for Teaching*, Page 310

4. *Everyone can find some effective method of teaching.*

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE: *Individual and Teaching*, Page viii

Teaching the Cause

Read aloud the quotes, “Teaching the Cause.”

Discuss the focus topic:

What are the benefits of a Bahá'í teaching the Cause?

Divide participants into teams of 2 or 3.

- Handout “Word Splash”.
- Using many of the words on the “Word Splash”, create sentences about teaching the Cause that all team members agree are true. Other words may be used.
- Identify the group’s favorite sentence to record on a large poster and display in the room.

Note: these posters are wonderful to re-display at future sessions.



TEACHING THE CAUSE

Focus Topic:

What are the benefits of a Bahá'í teaching the Cause?

1. *By the Lord of the Kingdom! If one arise to promote the Word of God with a pure heart, overflowing with the love of God and severed from the world, the Lord of Hosts will assist him with such a power as will penetrate the core of the existent beings.*

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *Guidelines for Teaching*, Page: 297

2. *When a speaker's brow shineth with the radiance of the love of God, at the time of his exposition of a subject, and he is exhilarated with the wine of true understanding, he becometh the centre of a potent force which like unto a magnet will attract the hearts. This is why the expounder must be in the utmost enkindlement.*

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *Guidelines for Teaching*, Page: 299

3. *The teachings are like the body, and this holy Name is like the spirit. It imparteth life to the body. It causeth the people of the world to be aroused from their slumber."*

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *Guidelines for Teaching*, Pages: 299-300



WORD SPLASH

radiance

spirit

enkindlement

teachings

life

Kingdom

magnet

heart

world

Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Recognizing the Gift

Ask individuals to respond to the following questions with a word or phrase:

(Note: this should go quickly, with group members calling out answers rapidly.)

1. What is the “greatest gift” we have as human beings?
2. What is the “most meritorious of all deeds”?
3. What is our “first obligation”?
4. What should be the “dominating passion of our life”?
5. What is “the greatest glory and honor that can come to an individual”?
6. What is the “duty of every real Bahá’í, and must be our main aim in life”?
7. What is better than “to possess all that is on earth”?

Remind participants that the Writings give us perfect answers, and that we are blessed to have such clear guidance.

Divide participants into small groups of 3-5.

Each group read aloud the handout, “Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Recognizing the Gift”, and then answer the questions again, using precise language from the quotes.

In the large group, process:

How does answering from the text empower you as an individual?

How do you feel, after reflecting briefly on the powerful, bountiful gift of teaching that has been bestowed upon you?



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING ~ RECOGNIZING THE GIFT

Focus Topics:

Complete the following with answers directly from the Writings.

1. What is the “greatest gift” we have as human beings?
2. What is the “most meritorious of all deeds”?
3. What is our “first obligation”?
4. What should be the “dominating passion of our life”?
5. What is “the greatest glory and honor that can come to an individual”?
6. What is the “duty of every real Bahá’í, and must be our main aim in life”?
7. What is better than “to possess all that is on earth”?



1. *...Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath...regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 278

2. *It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth.*

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 77

3. *Of all the gifts of God, the greatest is the gift of teaching. It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our first obligation.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p.25

4. *Of all the gifts of God, the greatest is the gift of teaching.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p.25

5. *...let us arise to teach His Cause with righteousness, conviction, understanding and vigor....Let us make it the dominating passion of our life.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Individual and Teaching*, #32, p.15

6. *The greatest glory and honor which can come to an individual is to bring the light of guidance to some new soul.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Individual and Teaching*, #98, p.35

7. *Although teaching the Cause is the duty of every real Bahá’í, and must be our main aim in life.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Individual and Teaching*, #40, p.20

Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Qualities

Handout “Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Qualities.”

In previously assigned small groups, read the quotes aloud.

Answer the focus topic:

What are some of the specific qualities needed to teach the Cause of God?

In the large group, list on a chart spiritual qualities for teaching.

Share the following summary comments if they do not surface in the listing process:

- Teach to remove barriers between a soul and its Lord for Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord returned.
- Teach as opportunity to share your belief and love of Christ.
- Always leave as friend and fellow believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Nothing spiritual is ever communicated in an argument and it always takes two to argue.
- Unhelpful attitudes: we tend to teach with the sense of competition embedded in white, middle-class American culture: my religion against yours. When combativeness arises, return to Christ and Bahá'u'lláh: help that person connect to the Manifestation.
- Watch the use of jargon.
- If questions come from the heart, answer to the heart, not the head.



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING ~ QUALITIES

Focus Topic:

What are some of the specific qualities needed to teach?

1. *If anyone should refuse it, leave him unto himself, and beseech God to guide him. Beware lest ye deal unkindly with him.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 289; also *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 15

2. *Consort with all men...in the spirit of friendliness and fellowship....A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 289

3. *It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one who hath guided him will both be recipients of God's tender mercy, whereas possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. The path to guidance is one of love and compassion, not of force and coercion. This hath been God's method in the past, and shall continue to be in the future!*

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, page: 77

4. *Do not argue with anyone and be wary of disputation....If he is obdurate, you should leave him to himself, and place your trust in God. Such is the quality of those who are firm in the Covenant.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Individual and Teaching*, p. 13, #29

5. *...his sanctified breath will even affect the rock.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 54

6. *In accordance with the divine teachings in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle anyone and call him ignorant, saying: 'You know not, but I know.' Rather we should look upon others with respect and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should look upon others with respect and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying: 'Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found.'...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

7. *An humble man without learning, but filled with the Holy Spirit, is more powerful than the most nobly born, profound scholar without that inspiration.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, p. 165

8. *If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 51

9. *The first and most important qualification of a Bahá'í teacher is, indeed, unqualified loyalty and attachment to the Cause. Knowledge is, of course, essential; but compared to devotion it is secondary in importance. What the Cause now requires is not so much a group of highly cultured and intellectual people who can adequately present its teachings, but a number of devoted, sincere, and loyal supporters who, in utter disregard of their own weaknesses and limitations, and with hearts afire with the love of God, forsake their all for the sake of spreading and establishing His Faith.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 128

Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Preparation Steps

Preparation Steps:

- Divide into pairs.
- Read aloud the quotes, “Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Preparation Steps”
- Brainstorm on the focus topic:
What specific steps must one take to teach effectively?



SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR TEACHING ~ PREPARATION STEPS

Focus Topic:

What specific steps must one take to teach effectively?

1. *From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances.... So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, page 200

2. *They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach. In fact, every one of the believers should choose one person every year and try to establish ties of friendship with him, so that all his fear would disappear."*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Individual and Teaching*, page 12, #27

3. *It is very good to memorize the logical points and the proofs of the Holy Books.... These proofs ought to be collected and memorized. As soon as someone will ask you—What are your proofs?—you may cry out at the top of your voice and say, 'Here they are!'*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding of the Bahá'í Faith*, page 18, #64

4. *It is imperative to acquire the knowledge of divine proofs and evidences, and to acquaint oneself with convincing testimonies.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding of the Bahá'í Faith*, pages 8-9, #29

5. *Surely the ideal way of teaching is to prove our points by constant reference to the actual words of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding of the Bahá'í Faith*, page 32, #103

6. *Success will crown the efforts of the friends on the home front, when they meditate on the teachings, pray fervently for divine confirmations for their work, study the teachings so they may carry the spirit to the seeker, and then act; and above all persevere in action. When these steps are followed, and the teaching work carried on sacrificially and with devoted enthusiasm, the Faith will spread rapidly.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Directives of the Guardian*, pages 71-72

7. *What is needed to achieve success in the teaching field is a complete dedication on the part of the individual, consecration to the glorious task of spreading the Faith, and living of the Bahá'í life, because that creates the magnet for the Holy Spirit which quickens the new soul....*

On behalf of SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 32, #88

8. *Perhaps the reason why you have not accomplished so much in the field of teaching is the extent you looked upon your own weaknesses and inability to spread the Message. Bahá'u'lláh and the Master have both urged us repeatedly to disregard our own handicaps and lay our whole reliance upon God. He will come to our help if we only arise and become an active channel for God's grace.*

On behalf of SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding of the Bahá'í Faith*, page 20, #42

9. *Do you think it is the teachers who make converts and change human hearts? No, surely not. They are only pure souls who take the first steps, and then let the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh move and make use of them. If any one of them should even for a second think or consider his achievements as due to his own capabilities, his work is ended and his fall starts.... The criterion is the extent to which we are ready to have the will of God work through us.*

On behalf of SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Power of Divine Assistance*, page 26

10. *It is now imperative for every Bahá'í to set himself individual teaching goals.*

Messages from the UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE 1963-1986, page 35

Spiritual Preparation for Teaching ~ Spiritual Requisites and Personal Teaching Plan

Spiritual Requisites:

Distribute the list of spiritual requisites from the Universal House of Justice copied onto special paper. (Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-1986. page 589)

Play soft instrumental music in the background as the requisites are being distributed.

Invite participants to individually reflect:

What personal goals do I choose in relation to these "Requisites for Our Spiritual Growth"?

Spiritual Preparation Plan:

Play quiet music while friends develop their personal teaching plan, allowing 20-30 minutes.

- Individually create a Personal Teaching Plan based on the qualities, steps, and requisites for teaching.
 1. Identify specific goals to accomplish in one week, one month, six months, one year.
 2. Honestly commit to this plan, or modify it so that you can commit to the goals.
- Write plan in journal.

Provide the friends with blank paper to use as a journal or a small journal that can be used throughout the course. Ask participants to record their plan in their journals. Also ask them to make a plan to review their progress toward achieving their goals and adjust their plans as necessary.
- Once plan is complete, ask participants to close their eyes and visualize the results – what life will look like – when you accomplish these goals!
- Invite volunteers to share highlights of their plan with the large group, or invite participants to share highlights of their plan with a person sitting beside them.

Requisites for Our Spiritual Growth

Bahá'u'lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His talks and tablets. One can summarize them briefly in this way:

- 1. The recital each day of the Obligatory Prayers with pure-hearted devotion.**
- 2. The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.**
- 3. Prayerful meditation on the Teachings, so that we may understand them more deeply, fulfill them more faithfully, and convey them more accurately to others.**
- 4. Striving each day to bring our behavior more into accordance with the high standards that are set forth in the Teachings.**
- 5. Teaching the Cause of God.**
- 6. Selfless service in the work of the Cause and in carrying out our trade or profession.”**

Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963-1986, page 589

Myths about Teaching ~ Overcoming Barriers

There are many myths regarding teaching which create barriers to a significant advance in the process of entry by troops.

Choose one of the following two activities to stimulate thought and reflection on myths about teaching.

Activity 1

Prepare a number of blown-up balloons--enough for each participant if possible. Tape or glue a copy of one of the following five myths on each balloon. Read all the myths aloud, then have some participants read different quotes addressing or dispelling the myths. Participants should be instructed to listen carefully for a quotation that "explodes" the myth-balloon they are holding. When they hear an appropriate myth-dispelling quote or answer, participants should pop their balloon any way they can. When all the myths are exploded, it is time to move on.

Activity 2

Distribute "Overcoming Myth Barriers ~ Role-play Script." Assign parts by highlighting scripts or designating characters. Set the scene: a community meeting to develop a teaching plan. Some community members share their concerns (myths) while others keep the group on track by constantly referring back to the Writings.

Myth #1: People aren't interested.

Answer: In the *Gleanings* Bahá'u'lláh writes, "...endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize...." *Gleanings*, pp. 105-06 The Faith speaks to what is most important in every person's life. It is for the Bahá'ís to relate the Faith to what is more important in the life of the seeker after the Bahá'í knows the seeker well enough to determine what indeed is more important to that seeker.

Second Answer: "*The Bahá'í teacher must be all confidence. Therein lies his strength and the secret of his success. Though single-handed, and no matter how great the apathy of the people around you may be, you should have faith that the hosts of the Kingdom are on your side....*" On behalf of SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Individual and Teaching*, pp. 23-24, #51

Myth #2: I can't teach the Faith. I'm not a teacher.

Answer: "*Everyone can find some effective method of teaching.*"

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Individual and Teaching*, p. viii

Myth #3: I don't know enough to teach.

Answer: "*If he be kindled with the fire of His love, if he forgoeth all created things, the words he uttereth shall set on fire them that hear him.*"

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, in *Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 51

Myth #4: I don't meet enough new people.

Answer: In this country, anyone can meet new people.

Honorary Myth #5: Teaching is something that happens at meetings.

Note: The above myths were identified as the most common barriers to teaching in a survey conducted by the Oregon District Teaching Committee and answered by over 300 Bahá'ís in Oregon.



OVERCOMING MYTH BARRIERS ~ ROLE-PLAY SCRIPT

Myth #1: People aren't interested.

Answer: In the *Gleanings* Bahá'u'lláh writes, "...endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize...." *Gleanings*, pp. 105-06 The Faith speaks to what is most important in every person's life. It is for the Bahá'ís to relate the Faith to what is more important in the life of the seeker after the Bahá'í knows the seeker well enough to determine what indeed is more important to that seeker.

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Myth #4: I don't meet enough new people.

Answer: In this country, anyone can meet new people.

Honorary Myth #5: Teaching is something that happens at meetings.

Answer: (everyone jump in and be creative!)

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Return to Personal Teaching Plans. Invite individuals to envision this plan wrapped as a beautiful gift and presented from Bahá'u'lláh. Commit again to the accomplishment of these goals.

About the Bible

Ask the friends to bring their own Bibles to Session Two and all future sessions of this course as it will be used in each class. Remind participants that there are many different translations of the Bible. The beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, used the King James Version of the Bible. For the purposes of this course, feel free to use a translation of the Bible that you like. When studying the Bible with seekers, refer to your Bible and also encourage them to use **their own** favorite translation. Although the translations vary, there is a great deal of congruence on the main ideas presented in the Bible. Individual Christians may care deeply about which particular translation is used. Remember to use and show respect for your seeker's Bible.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

Be prepared to share the results of your efforts at the beginning of the next session.

1. Memorize a passage of your choice from this session that will assist you with your teaching efforts.
2. Research the customs, interests, habits and traditions of some of the friends you wish to teach.
3. Further develop your Personal Teaching Plan.
4. Research: What is the essential requisite of teaching? See *The Individual and Teaching*, p. 15, #32
5. Research: What is the greatest help to letting spiritual power recreate us? See *Prayer, Meditation and the Devotional Attitude*, p. 18
6. Study *Teaching the Masses* – a compilation prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

Closing devotions

Close with singing and prayers for teaching.

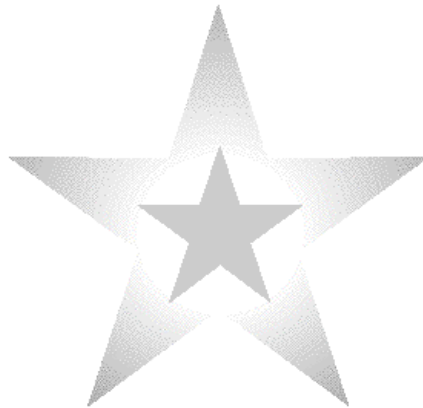
Include the Teaching Prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *The Tablets of the Divine Plan* for your region.

***A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith***

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Two

TEACHING CHRISTIANS ABOUT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH



*The first and most important qualification of a Bahá'í Teacher is, indeed,
unqualified loyalty and attachment to the Cause. Knowledge is, of course essential;
but compared to devotion it is secondary in importance.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI

Session Two:

TEACHING CHRISTIANS ABOUT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Topics:

WHY TEACH CHRISTIANS

WHAT BAHÁ'ÍS BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIANS

TEACHING CHRISTIANS

The friends of God should weave bonds of fellowship with others and show absolute love and affection towards them. These links have a deep influence on people and they will listen. When the friends sense receptivity to the Word of God, they should deliver the Message with wisdom. They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach. In fact, every one of the believers should choose one person every year and try to establish ties of friendship with him, so that all his fear would disappear. Only then, and gradually, must he teach that person. This is the best method.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Guidelines for Teaching in Compilation of Compilations*, Page: 300

If thou wishest to guide the souls, it is incumbent on thee to be firm, to be good and to be imbued with praiseworthy attributes and divine qualities under all circumstances. Be a sign of love, a manifestation of mercy, a fountain of tenderness, kind-hearted, good to all and gentle to the servants of God, and especially to those who bear relation to thee, both men and women. Bear every ordeal that befalleth thee from the people and confront them not save with kindness, with great love and good wishes.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Guidelines for Teaching in Compilation of Compilations*, Page: 298

Let him remember the example set by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, and His constant admonition to shower such kindness upon the seeker, and exemplify to such a degree the spirit of the teachings he hopes to instill into him, that the recipient will be spontaneously impelled to identify himself with the Cause embodying such teachings.

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *The Advent of Divine Justice*, Page: 52

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To discover current religious beliefs and attitudes of the U.S. public, especially of U.S. Christians.

Wisdom

To understand that teaching is not the mere dispensing of information; it is a striving to directly address the mindset, beliefs and language of those whom you are teaching -- in this case, the Christian community.

Spiritual Perception

To recognize that preparing a correct mental attitude and personal spiritualization are the single most important and effective tools in teaching.

Eloquent Speech

Explain the Bahá'í relationship to Christianity and to Christians.

Session Two: **TEACHING CHRISTIANS ABOUT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

Topics: **WHY TEACH CHRISTIANS** **WHAT BAHÁ'ÍS BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIANS** **TEACHING CHRISTIANS**

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

		<i>Other Materials Needed</i>
Devotions	10 minutes	
Reflection and Consultation	10 minutes	Prayer books
Why Teach Christians	10 minutes	Bibles
What Percentage of the U.S. Population...	15 minutes	Music, recorded or sung
U.S. Bahá'í Enrollment Charts	15 minutes	Lord's Prayer, set to music
What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity	20 minutes	Enlarged enrollment charts
Break	15 minutes	"Difficult Questions" on paper slips or cards
Teaching Christians ~ Frequent Questions	20 minutes	Human figure on chart paper
Difficult Questions Commonly Asked by Christians	30 minutes	6 Apprehensions written on paper
Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians	25 minutes	
Assign Extended Activities	5 minutes	
Closing devotions	5 minutes	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Two Objectives	What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity
Why Teach Christians	Teaching Christians ~ Frequent Questions
What Percentage of the U.S. Population...	Difficult Questions Commonly Asked by Christians
U.S. Bahá'í Enrollment Charts	Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment so that it reflects the principles of hospitality, beauty, cleanliness, dignity and refinement. Arrive early and say prayers in the room. Lovingly greet each of the friends as they arrive. Consider displaying a portrait of the Master, photographs of Holy Places, framed quotations, and playing music as the friends enter.

Open with the Lord's Prayer set to music from the CD or cassette tape, *Songs of the Ancient Beauty*, for example.

Reflection and Consultation

Invite participants to briefly share results of their extended activities from Session One:

1. Memorize a passage of your choice from session one that will assist you with your teaching efforts.
2. Research the customs, interests, habits and traditions of some of the friends you wish to teach.
3. Further develop your Personal Teaching Plan.
4. Research: What is the essential requisite of teaching? See *The Individual and Teaching*, p. 15, #32
5. Research: What is the greatest help to letting spiritual power recreate us? See *Prayer, Meditation and the Devotional Attitude*, p. 18
6. Study *Teaching the Masses* – a compilation prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

Why Teach Christians ~ Guidance from the Writings

Divide into teams of two.

Read each of the quotations in "Why Teach Christians" aloud.

Reread the first passage and substitute the word "Bahá'í" for "Muslim" and "Bahá'í Writings" for "Qurán."

Answer the focus question:

Why do Bahá'ís need to prepare specifically to teach Christians?



WHY TEACH CHRISTIANS

Focus Topic:

Why do Bahá'ís need to prepare specifically to teach Christians?

1. *If for example a spiritually learned Muslim is conducting a debate with a Christian and he knows nothing of the glorious melodies of the Gospel, he will, no matter how much he imparts of the Qurán and its truths, be unable to convince the Christian and his words will fall on deaf ears. Should, however, the Christian observe that the Muslim is better versed in the fundamentals of Christianity than the Christian priests themselves, and understands the purport of the Scriptures better than they, he will gladly accept the Muslim's arguments, and he would indeed have no other recourse.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 36

2. *In this Day, there is nothing more important than the instruction and study of clear proofs and convincing arguments for therein lie the source of life and path of salvation.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, p. 4, #31

3. *...It is very good to memorize the logical points and proofs of the Holy Books. Those proofs and evidences which establish the fact that Bahá'u'lláh is the fulfillment of the Promise of the Holy Book. These proofs ought to be collected and memorized.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Star of the West*, Vol. 3, No. 11, p. 4, 9/27/12

4. *I beg of God through the confirmation and assistance of the True One that thou mayest show the utmost eloquence, fluency, ability and skill in teaching the real significance of the Bible.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. 2, p. 243

5. *Nor should any...overlook the fundamental prerequisite for any successful teaching enterprise, which is to adapt the presentation of the fundamental principles of their Faith to the cultural and religious backgrounds, the ideologies ...whom they are called upon to enlighten and attract.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 25

6. *He fully agrees with you that different people must be approached in different ways and that valuable work for the Bahá'í Cause can be done within the Christian Churches by promoting the 'Christianity of Christ.' 'Ábdu'l-Bahá said that when people become true Christians, they will find themselves Bahá'ís.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Unfolding Destiny*, p. 421

Why Teach Christians ~ US Statistics Reflected in the Population

Pass out the handout, "What Percentage of the U.S. Population...?"

In the large group, invite several guesses for each question. Have participants fill in each figure when the correct answer is given. (If no one has the correct figure within 3 or 4 guesses, supply the answer. This should be a lively, non-threatening exchange.)

Ask: *What do these figures imply?*

Encourage responses that lead to the realization that 8 or 9 of the next 10 people we meet--in the grocery store, on the bus, at the office--8 or 9 of the next 10 people we hope to teach about the Bahá'í Faith--will be Christians.

Ask: *As we have 'entry by troops' in this country, who are likely to comprise those troops? (Christians!)*

You may venture the suggestion that, generally, we Bahá'ís have looked more to teaching the narrow percentage of people who have rejected Christianity, rather than the vast majority of mainstream, Christian Americans.

What Percentage of the U.S. Population...

1. Claims to be Christian? (85%)
2. Believes Jesus is God? (70%)
3. Owns a Bible? (90%)
4. Belongs to a church? (70%)
5. Have a "born again" experience? (40%)
6. Believe in *literal* interpretation of the Bible--with no symbols? (35%)
7. Believe in literal interpretation, but accept *some* symbolism? (25%)
8. Believe there will be a literal final Judgment Day? (60%)
9. Believe in a physical "rapture?" (44%)
10. Believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus? (88%)
11. Have never opened a Bible? (25%)
12. Do *not* attend church regularly? (60%)
13. Protestant? (70 million)
14. Catholic? (50 million)
15. Bahá'í? (130,000)

Note: These figures are from the book *The People's Religion: American Faith in the 90's* by George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli; Macmillan Co. publisher. Additional information about the beliefs of U.S. Christians is published in the book *The Second Coming of the Church* by George Barna, Word Books, 1998.



WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE U.S. POPULATION...

1. Claims to be Christian? _____
2. Believes Jesus is God? _____
3. Owns a Bible? _____
4. Belongs to a church? _____
5. Have a "born again" experience? _____
6. Believe in *literal* interpretation of the Bible--with no symbols? _____
7. Believe in literal interpretation, but accept *some* symbolism? _____
8. Believe there will be a literal final Judgment Day? _____
9. Believe in a physical "rapture"? _____
10. Believe in the physical resurrection of Jesus? _____
11. Have never opened a Bible? _____
12. Do *not* attend church regularly? _____
13. Protestant? _____
14. Catholic? _____
15. Bahá'í? _____

Why Teach Christians ~ US Statistics Reflected in Enrollment Charts

Enlarge to poster size, or make overhead transparencies to project the charts of enrollments in the United States. Ask participants to study the graphs and share their observations.

There should be comments about the increased enrollment between 1971-1972 and the following questions asked:

What was going on in 1971-72?
(Mass teaching in the south.)

What was the message being shared at this time?
(Bahá'u'lláh is the return of Christ and only through His Coming will the races be united.)

Invite the friends to reflect on the Ridvan 2000 message in which the Universal House of Justice declares:

“We bow our heads in gratitude to the Lord of Hosts, our hearts brimming with joy, as we witness how marvellous a difference four years have made since the launching of the global Plan now concluded at this Festival of Splendours. So marked was the progress achieved during this period that our world community attained heights from which bright new horizons for its future exploits can clearly be discerned.

“The quantitative difference resulted mainly from a more critical qualitative difference. The culture of the Bahá’í community experienced a change. This change is noticeable in the expanded capability, the methodical pattern of functioning and the consequent depth of confidence of the three constituent participants in the Plan—the individual, the institutions and the local community. That is so because the friends concerned themselves more consistently with deepening their knowledge of the divine Teachings and learned much—and this more systematically than before—about how to apply them to promulgating the Cause, to managing their individual and collective activities, and to working with their neighbours. In a word, they entered into a learning mode from which purposeful action was pursued. The chief propellant of this change was the system of training institutes established throughout the world with great rapidity—an accomplishment which, in the field of expansion and consolidation, qualifies as the single greatest legacy of the Four Year Plan.”

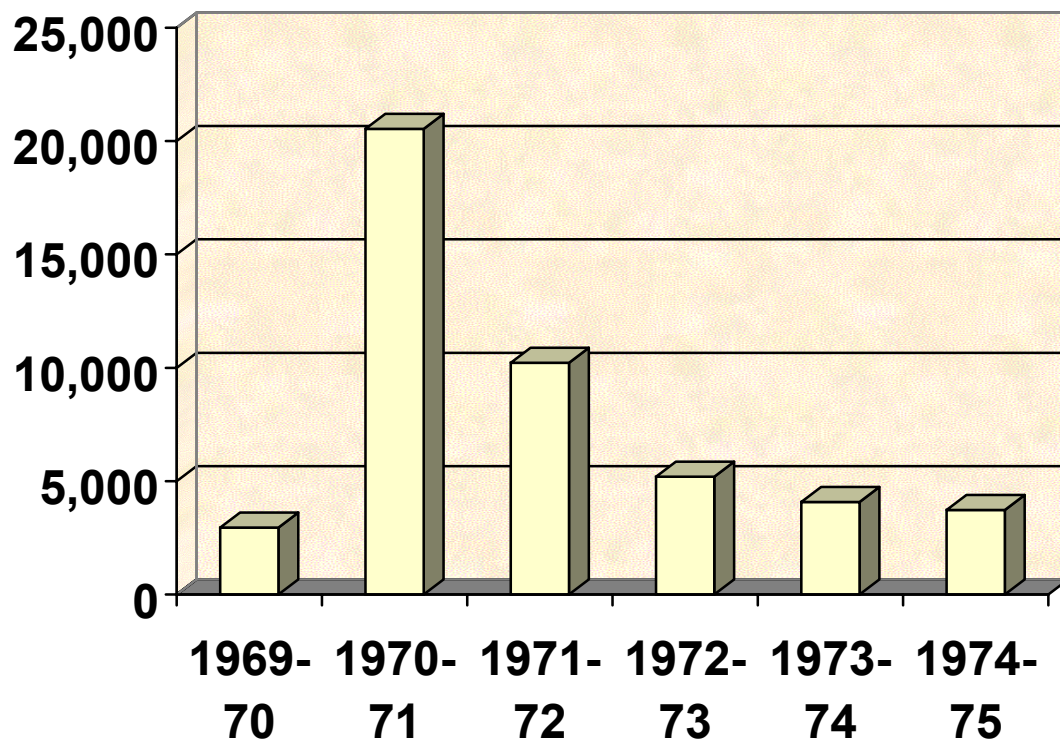
Briefly discuss the questions:

In what way will the “qualitative difference” achieved during the Four Year Plan also lead to a “quantitative difference” in subsequent plans?

How does this course and other training programs of the National Spiritual Assembly help accomplish the many tasks of expansion and consolidation?

U.S. BAHÁ'Í ENROLLMENT CHART

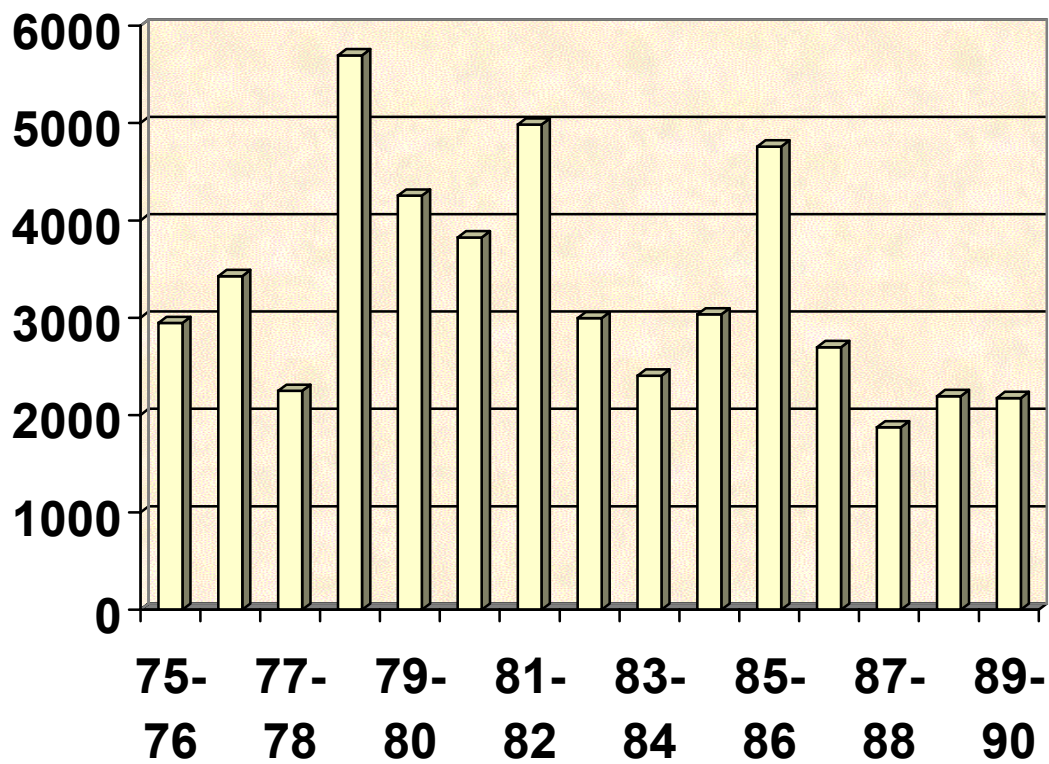
MAY 1ST-MAY 1ST
1969-1975



Prepared by Bahá'í National Information Services March 8, 2000

U.S. BAHÁ'Í ENROLLMENT CHART

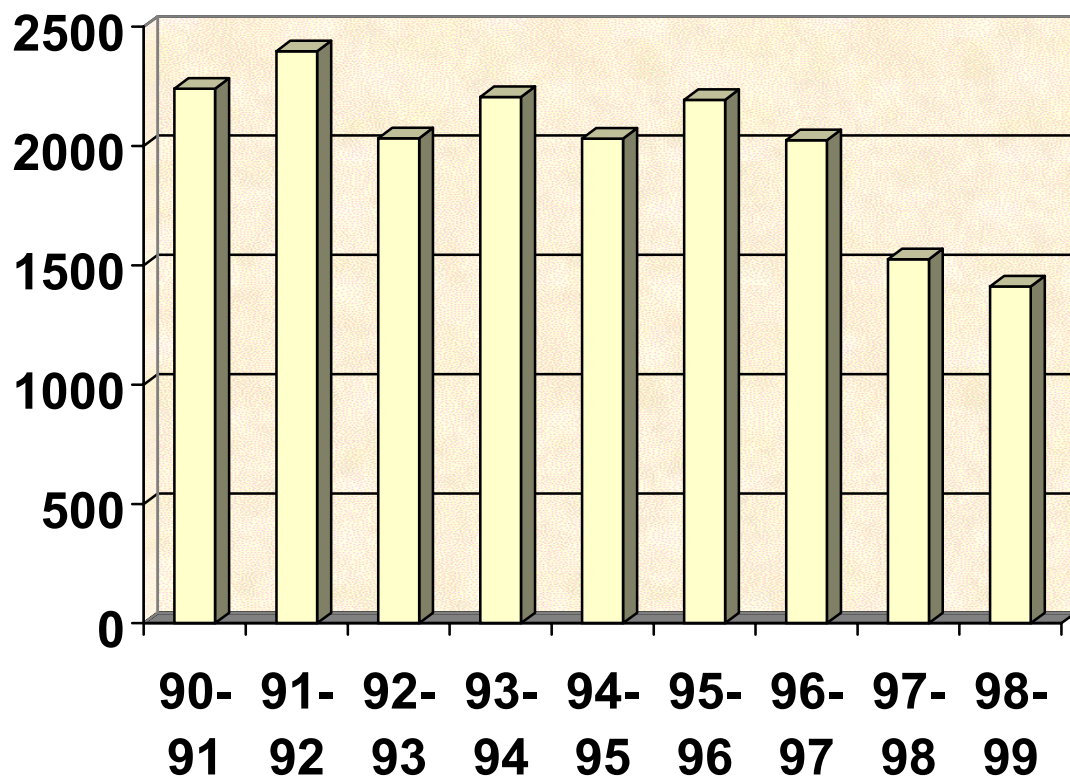
MAY 1ST-MAY 1ST
1975-1990



Prepared by Bahá'í National Information Services March 8, 2000

U.S. BAHÁ'Í ENROLLMENT CHART

MAY 1ST-MAY 1ST
1990-1999



Prepared by Bahá'í National Information Services March 8, 2000

What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity

Divide the class in half.

Ask each half to read the quotations under "What Bahá'ís Believe About Christianity" and answer **one** of the focus questions:

1. *As Bahá'ís, what is our relationship to Christianity and to Christians?*
2. *Is the text of the Bible sufficiently authentic to consider it as the authoritative Word of God?*

Come together in the large group. Ask a spokesperson from each group to share the results of their consultation. Summarize with the following points (if not made by the spokespersons):

Christianity is our religion too and **we are fellow believers in Christ and the Bible**. The differences between Bahá'ís and Christians are in terminology only, which can be resolved by reinterpretation of the Bible for Christians to demonstrate the common foundation of Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith.

In teams of two, practice explaining our relationship as Bahá'ís to Christianity and to Christians.

Ask the friends to get out their Bibles and write these citations in the back of their Bible for easy future reference. This simple note-taking process is used throughout the course. For our fellow-believers in Christ, a well-used and well-marked Bible is a clear testimony of our love for Jesus, the Christ. Throughout the course, participants are asked to regularly mark Bible passages. We will also be creating our own "index" in the back of our Bibles. This index will include citations from the Bahá'í Writings. This first entry in our index should be titled "Bahá'í Beliefs About Christianity."



WHAT BAHÁ'ÍS BELIEVE ABOUT CHRISTIANITY

Focus Topics:

1. As Bahá'ís, what is our relationship to Christianity and to Christians?
 2. Is the text of the Bible sufficiently authentic to consider it as the authoritative Word of God?
-

1. We have also heard a number of the foolish of the earth assert that the genuine text of the heavenly Gospel doth not exist amongst the Christians.... How grievously they have erred! How oblivious of the fact that such a statement imputeth the gravest injustice and tyranny to a gracious and loving Providence.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán* p. 89

2. [Referring to the Gospel, Bahá'u'lláh states]

Reflect: the words of the verses themselves eloquently testify to the truth that they are of God. A similar verse hath been also revealed in the Qurán.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 84

3. *The Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is the same as the Cause of Christ....*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Bahá'í World Faith*, p. 400

4. *When Christians act according to the teachings of Christ, they are called Bahá'ís. For the foundations of Christianity and the religion of Bahá'u'lláh are one. The difference among them is one of terminology only.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 247

5. *The Apostles of Christ were even as letters, and Christ was the essence of the Word Itself; and the meaning of the Word, which is grace everlasting, cast a splendor on those Letters. Again, since the Letter is a member of the Word, it therefore, in its inner meaning is consonant with the Word.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 60

6. *This book is the Holy Book of God and of celestial inspiration. It is the Bible of Salvation, the Noble Gospel.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in London*, p. 18

7. *As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation, that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed, and the primacy of Peter, the prince of the Apostles, is upheld and defended. The Founder of the Christian Faith is designated by Bahá'u'lláh as the 'Spirit of God,' is proclaimed as the One Who 'appeared out of the breath of the Holy Ghost,' and is even extolled as the 'Essence of the Spirit.' His mother is described as 'that veiled and immortal, that most beauteous, countenance,' and the station of her Son eulogized as the 'station which hath been exalted above the imaginings of all that dwell on earth,' whilst Peter is recognized as one whom God has caused 'the mysteries of wisdom and of utterance to flow out of his mouth.'*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, pp. 109-10

8. *When 'Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 494

Teaching Christians ~ Frequent Questions

Ask participants to partner with someone sitting next to them. Together, they should come up with answers to the questionnaire, “Teaching Christians ~ Frequent Questions” (Provide about 10 minutes for them to write their answers.)

Go over the answers to each question in the large group. There will undoubtedly be discrepancies, and partners may have even disagreed on their answers. Ease any anxiety anyone may have about having the “wrong” answers. These variations underscore the fact that as Bahá’ís we have much to learn about the Bahá’í Writings on Christ and the Bible.

Discuss what impression such disagreement might make on a Christian who is investigating the Bahá’í Faith. This is one reason we need to educate ourselves.

Work with a partner to learn answers to each of the questions, and to memorize one of the short quotations that can be used to answer questions #3 and #8. Participants may choose to create a poster, illustrations, or other visual representation as part of their answer.

Answers to “Teaching Christians ~ Frequent Questions” questionnaire:

Invite participants to research Bahá’í Writings to answer each question below. Some examples provided.

1. and 2. Typically, the questions identified in #1, the most common questions Christians ask, show up again in #2 as the ones that give us the most difficulty in teaching!
3. Yes. *“Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: ‘I am God’, He, verily, speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto.”*
BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p.54
4. Yes
5. No
6. No
7. Yes
8. Yes. *“The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws...”*
BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p.1
9. Yes, Yes, Yes, Yes
10. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
11. Jesus Christ
12. The physical Resurrection of Christ



TEACHING CHRISTIANS ~ FREQUENT QUESTIONS

1. What are the three (3) most common questions Christians ask when you are first teaching the Bahá'í Faith?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
2. What questions asked by Christians give you the most difficulty in teaching the Bahá'í Faith?
3. Do the Bahá'í Writings support the belief in the claim that Jesus was God?
4. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept the Virgin Birth of Christ?
5. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept the physical resurrection of Christ?
6. Do the Bahá'í Writings accept that the genuine text of the heavenly gospel does not exist among the Christians?
7. Do Bahá'ís accept the writings of Paul and the other Apostles as of equal authority as the words of Jesus Himself in the Bible?
8. Do Bahá'ís believe that Faith is more important than deeds?
9. Are Bahá'ís Born Again? Saved? Believe in a Personal God? Forgiven for their sins? Believe in the Sonship of Jesus?
10. Name the four (4) gospels:
11. Who wrote the Sermon on the Mount?
12. What event of Jesus Christ's life is so crucial that Paul said Christianity would not exist without it?

Teaching Christians ~ Difficult Questions Commonly Asked By Christians

Cut apart the 30 “Difficult Questions” into separate slips or cards.

- Distribute these around the room, mixed up among all the participants.
- Ask each person to read aloud his or her question or concern, following the numerical order (so that the questions come from around the room unexpectedly).
- Encourage all to read the slips with expressive, skeptical voices, just as they might sound coming from someone questioning your beliefs.

When all are read, reflect: are these not some of the very concerns we’ve encountered from Christian friends?

Reassure participants with the fact that these 30 questions represent most of the concerns held by the Christians with whom we come in contact. We already know their questions! We simply need to learn the answers, from the Bahá’í perspective.



DIFFICULT QUESTIONS COMMONLY ASKED BY CHRISTIANS

Note: Each of these questions is addressed during the following sessions of this course.

1. I'm worried that Bahá'u'lláh is a **false prophet**.
2. I'm worried that Bahá'u'lláh is the **Anti-Christ** since you Bahá'ís talk so much about world peace and world government.
3. You Bahá'ís are good enough, but the **devil** puts one drop of poison in with the good, which is enough to send you to hell.
4. **Jesus was God**. Why should I follow anyone but God?
5. Where is Bahá'u'lláh buried? **Jesus rose from the grave** and conquered death and left behind an empty tomb.
6. “For God so loved the world, that he gave **His Only Begotten Son**, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16, KJV) Can Bahá'u'lláh be anything as important as God's Only Son?
7. Why should I believe in Bahá'u'lláh when Christ said “**I am the Way**, the Truth, and the Life. No one cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” (John 14:6, KJV)
8. The Bible says, “For there is one God, **and one mediator between God and men**, the man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 2:5, KJV) How can Progressive Revelation be true?
9. Christ led a **sinless life**. Moses killed a man. How can you say Moses or any man was equal to Christ?
10. If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, why haven't I heard of Bahá'u'lláh when the Bible says, “**Every eye shall see Him**”? (Rev. 1:7, KJV)
11. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son **cleanseth us from all sin**.” (1 John 1:7, KJV) Have you been washed in the blood of the Lord and have your sins been forgiven?
12. “He that believeth and is **baptized shall be saved**.” (Mark 16:16, KJV) Where were you baptized?
13. **Are you saved?**
14. Have you been **born again**?

15. Do you have a **personal relationship with God**?
16. In Galatians 1:7-9 and Revelations 22:18-19, the Bible says **you can't add to the Scripture**. How can the Bahá'í Faith be true if you're adding to the Bible?
17. "Jesus Christ the **same yesterday, and today, and forever**." (Heb. 13:8, KJV) How can Bahá'u'lláh just change Christ's Laws?
18. What about the **Rapture**? If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, I'm a good Christian and I would be raptured up to heaven already.
19. "We are sanctified through the **offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all]**." (Heb. 10:10, KJV) Are you Bahá'ís saying Jesus' sacrifice wasn't enough and we need Bahá'u'lláh when the Bible says Jesus' sacrifice was perfect and once only for all time?
20. Where is the **name Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in the Bible**?
21. If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, why haven't all the **prophecies regarding the Return been literally fulfilled**?
22. I'm a good Christian. **Why should I be interested in the Bahá'í Faith**?
23. The Bible says there is "**none other name under heaven**" (Acts 4:12, KJV) by which we can be saved. (p. 37)
24. Do you Bahá'ís believe the **Bible is the Word of God**?
25. Do you Bahá'ís believe we are saved by **Grace**?
26. Do you Bahá'ís believe **Faith is more important than Deeds**?
27. How can you say **All Religions are One** when they teach different things?
28. Jesus claimed to be God. Does **Bahá'u'lláh claim to be God**?
29. Aren't the **Miracles of Jesus greater than those of Bahá'u'lláh**?
30. Do you believe that Jesus on His Return will **fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament literally** that he hasn't already fulfilled?

Teaching Christians ~

What Many Christians Believe About the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity

Share verbally the following two paragraphs from *The Kingdom of the Cults*, which presents a distorted view of the Bahá'í Faith.

Also relate the fact that, for Christians studying the Bahá'í Faith, this book is the most widely-read reference book by a Christian author. It is in Christian bookstores and read by many ministers.

Remind the friends of the need to be scripturally-based in our understanding of Christ, the Bible and their relationship to the Bahá'í Faith. Then share the information in point II below.

- I. “The Cardinal doctrines of the Christian Faith (see A below), including the absolute authority of the Bible, the doctrines of the Trinity, the Deity of Jesus Christ, His Virgin Birth, Vicarious Atonement, Bodily Resurrection and Second Advent are all categorically rejected by Baha’ism [sic]. They maintain that Christ was a manifestation of God, but not the ‘only manifestation of the Divine Being.’

“There is very little indeed that a true Christian can have in common with the faith of Bahá'í [sic]. There is simply no common ground on which to meet or to talk once the affirmations have been made on both sides of Jesus Christ, as opposed to Bahá'u'lláh. **Of course there is common ground of Scripture upon which we can meet all men** [emphasis added] to proclaim to them the indescribable gift of God in the Person of Christ, but there can be no ground for fellowship with the Bahá'í [sic] Faith, which is, at its very core, anti-Christian theology.”

The Kingdom of the Cults, Walter Martin, 1982 ed., p. 258 (see B below)

- A. Though variably expressed, these doctrines are indeed the central Christian beliefs broadly accepted by Catholics, Eastern Orthodox and most Protestant sects which number over 23,000 and include over 1.8 billion people. These doctrines – (1) Authority of Bible; (2) Trinity; (3) Deity of Jesus Christ; (4) Virgin Birth; (5) Vicarious Atonement for Sins of Humanity; (6) Bodily Resurrection; (7) Second Advent are examined in subsequent sessions of this course. Bahá'ís can accept these central doctrines of Christianity as interpreted in the Bahá'í Writings with the exception of Bodily Resurrection.

- B. *The Kingdom of the Cults* is a widely read reference book written by a Christian, and used by Christians when studying the Bahá'í Faith. It is a theological distortion of the Bahá'í beliefs.

- II. Fundamentalism originated in 1895 as a “transchurch” movement in response to historical criticism of the Bible, Theory of Evolution, Comparative Religion studies, and other advances in science: (1) Inerrancy of the Scriptures; (2) Deity of Jesus; (3) Virgin Birth; (4) Substitutionary Theory of Atonement; and (5) Bodily Resurrection and Imminent Bodily Second Coming.

The Church in Age of Revolution, Vidler, p. 241

Teaching Christians ~

Common Apprehensions of Christians Upon Encountering the Bahá'í Faith

Display a cut-out, or a sketch on chart paper, of an outline of a person whose heart is covered over by pieces of paper taped on top of it. On each paper is written one of these six apprehensions:

1. **Fear of “non-Christian,” Biblical sources of information** as coming from false prophets, Anti-Christ, the Devil, etc.
2. **Diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s Station** (e.g., The Only Way, the Only Begotten Son, the Only mediator between God and Man, the Only Sinless Life, the Perfect Sacrifice for all Sinners, God in the Flesh, etc.).
3. **Diminishing the uniqueness of Christ’s Power** (to Resurrect on Judgment Day; to Forgive Sins; to Perform the Greatest Miracles the world has ever seen; to offer Himself selflessly to Atone for the Sins of All; to fulfill Prophecy of the Old Testament; to Raise Himself from the dead, etc.)
4. **Replacing a personal relationship with the Lord and Savior.**
5. **Replacing the uniqueness of the Bible as the Only Word of God.**
6. **Context of Bahá'í Faith as described by Christian writers as a Cult**, an Eastern Religion, New Age, branch of Islam, as for those who have not understood the Bible or been touched by the Spirit.

Read aloud these words from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach.
The Individual and Teaching, p. 12, #27

Invite six different participants to come up, one at a time, to physically “remove” one of the “apprehensions” from this “seeker’s” heart. Have each person read aloud the apprehension as they remove it.

Acknowledge that only now is this seeker perhaps open to hearing about Bahá'u'lláh. Our responsibility as Bahá'ís and as fellow believers in Christ is to remove these apprehensions through our love and through accurately presenting the message of Bahá'u'lláh in language that can be heard by the seeker. The purpose of this course is to develop the knowledge, spiritual qualities and skills to teach.

Teaching Christians ~ Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians

Now let's look at what to keep in mind when teaching Christians.

Handout, "Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians."

Take turns around the room reading these points aloud and inviting discussion or comments.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING CHRISTIANS

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher are the most important and effective tools.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish agreement:
- Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
 - Bahá'ís and Christians have similar beliefs/doctrines;
 - Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve apparent differences of understanding: “As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the blank). Let us turn to the Bible and see what the Scripture says.”
- Key 3: Teach that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
- Ask for reasons the Christian believes in Christ and state these are the same reasons you believe in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and invite the Christian to test the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh by using the Bible.
 - Point out that objections to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than the Jews' objections to Christ.
- Key 4: Interpret the Bible, often symbolically, to establish:
- Bahá'u'lláh is not a false prophet, anti-Christ, devil.
 - Scriptural proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
 - Christians are obliged to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
 - Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations are inconsistent with Bahá'í Writings.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as spiritual brothers and sisters who need to have barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion” too.
- Key 7: Realize that most Christians are not listening until you refer to the Bible as the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í jargon (e.g., Manifestation, Dispensation, etc.).
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve **fear** that the Christian has (false prophet, devil, etc.)
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Key 11: Leave some of the Creative Word in the hands of the Christian and always leave as a friend and fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Key 12: Pray that this soul may overcome their barrier and recognize that their Lord has returned.

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Extended After-class Activities:

Remind the friends that the actions called for between course sessions will systematically engage them in teaching, “the most meritorious of all deeds!”

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

Facilitator may wish to record participant selections as a reminder for the following session review.

1. Memorize one of the passages from this session that will assist with your teaching efforts.
2. Identify a Christian friend and earnestly inquire about their beliefs. Listen to your friend with loving attention.
3. Explain the Bahá'í relationship to Christianity and Christians to an earnest seeker.
4. Select four of the “Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians” and apply them to the achievement of your teaching goals in the next week.
5. Study *Teaching the Masses* – a compilation prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

Closing devotions

Close with singing and prayers for teaching.

Include the Teaching Prayer revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *The Tablets of the Divine Plan* for your region.

***A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith***

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Three

SHARED DOCTRINES



Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all-embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session 3:

SHARED DOCTRINES

Topics:

SOME HELPFUL HINTS IN TEACHING CHRISTIANS
DOCTRINES SHARED BY CHRISTIANS AND BAHÁ'ÍS
INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE
ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHRISTIANS

Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all-embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge. BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kutáb-i-Iqán*, p. 68

...many wonderful things [miracles] were done by Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth, and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them: they may think that they are merely enchantments. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 37

Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 101

As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, p. 109

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To become familiar with religious doctrines shared by Christians and Bahá'ís.

Wisdom

To appreciate that Christians have insights to help us learn to teach them, as well as to deepen our own faith and understanding of both Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith.

Spiritual Perception

To develop the mindset to see the Christian Message as the Bahá'í Message too.

Eloquent Speech

To gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá'u'lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept, using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.

To gain confidence and skills in referring to the Bible systematically.

To learn how to avoid criticism and argument, and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.

Session 3:

SHARED DOCTRINES

Topics:

SOME HELPFUL HINTS IN TEACHING CHRISTIANS
DOCTRINES SHARED BY CHRISTIANS AND BAHÁ'ÍS
INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE
ANSWERING DIFFICULT QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHRISTIANS

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

Devotions	10 minutes	<i>Other Materials Needed</i> Prayer books Bibles Music, recorded or sung Matching “cards” Art and craft supplies, e.g. markers, assorted types of paper- construction, wrapping, tissue; rubber stamps and ink; stickers, feathers, scissors, glue Cloak or large cloth
Reflection and Consultation	10 minutes	
Some Helpful Hints in Teaching Christians	5 minutes	
Doctrines Shared by Christians and Bahá'ís	15 minutes	
Interpretation of the Bible- activity 1	15 minutes	
Interpretation of the Bible- activity 2	30 minutes	
Break	15 minutes	
Answering Difficult Questions - Paradigm	30 minutes	
Answering Difficult Questions - Role Play	15 minutes	
Answering Difficult Questions - Miracles Not Best Proof	20 minutes	
Personal Teaching Plan	5 minutes	
Extended After-class Activities	5 minutes	
Closing Devotions	5 minutes	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Three Objectives	Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh ...
Some Helpful Hints in Teaching Christians	Role Play Scenarios
Some Doctrines Shared by Christians & Bahá'ís	The Miracle
Interpretation of the Bible	Miracle Is Not the Best Proof
Paradigms	Closing Quotes from 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Lovingly greet the friends as they arrive. Begin the session with heartfelt prayers and singing or recorded music.

Reflection and Consultation

- Invite the friends to briefly reflect on the time that has passed between session two and this one.
- Share successes in extended class activities from session two, such as:
 1. Memorize one of the passages from this session that will assist with your teaching efforts.
 2. Identify a Christian friend and earnestly inquire about their beliefs.
 3. Explain the Bahá'í relationship to Christianity and Christians to an earnest seeker.
 4. Select four of the “Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians” and apply them to the achievement of your teaching goals in the next week.
 5. Study *Teaching the Masses* – a compilation prepared by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

Some Helpful Hints in Teaching Christians

This session focuses on the points of similarity or unity between Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith. Begin with a review of “Some Helpful Hints in Teaching Christians”.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING CHRISTIANS

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher are the most important and effective tools.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish agreement:
- Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
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- Key 3: Teach that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
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 - Scriptural proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
 - Christians are obliged to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
 - Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations are inconsistent with Bahá'í Writings.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as spiritual brothers and sisters who need to have barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion” too.
- Key 7: Realize that most Christians are not listening until you refer to the Bible as the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í jargon (e.g., Manifestation, Dispensation, etc.).
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve **fear** that the Christian has (false prophet, devil, etc.)
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Key 11: Leave some of the Creative Word in the hands of the Christian and always leave as a friend and fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Key 12: Pray that this soul may overcome their barrier and recognize that their Lord has returned.

Doctrines Shared by Christians and Bahá'ís

1. Point out that one way to remove apprehensions is to help each other realize how many doctrines Christians and Bahá'ís share.
2. Work together to complete a “matching exercise”:
 - Have cards, each with a Christian doctrine from “Some Doctrines Shared by Christians and Bahá'ís” in large print. For example, Atonement, Repentance, etc. as listed on the following page.
 - Spread these out on a table, or tape them onto the walls.
 - Provide another set of cards, each with a passage from the Bahá'í Writings, which match these doctrines. To assist participants, you may wish to mark key words in the passages with a highlighter.
3. Encourage participants to work cooperatively in finding matches, and placing or taping the corresponding passage next to the doctrine. When all the matches are made, provide time for looking over all the quotes.
4. Provide a handout of all the doctrines and Bahá'í Writings.

Ask the participants:

With all of these shared beliefs, why is it difficult for Christians to approach the Bahá'í Faith?

After carefully listening to the friends' reflections, share the following statement by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

All the texts of the holy Testaments have intrinsic spiritual meanings. They are not to be taken literally.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 406



SOME DOCTRINES SHARED BY CHRISTIANS AND BAHÁ'ÍS

Christian

Bahá'í

Atonement

...have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 10

He, in truth, has offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 315

Repentance

Wherefore, hearken ye unto My speech, and return ye to God and repent, that He, through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins, and forgive your trespasses.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 130

Belief Before Deeds

On the Day of His manifestation, unless thou truly believest in Him, naught can save thee from the fire, even if thou performest every righteous deed....

THE BÁB, *Selected Writings of the Báb*, p. 110

...since deeds are secondary to faith in Him....

THE BÁB, *SELECTED WRITINGS OF THE BÁB*, p. 133

Everlasting Life

All the favors of God have been sent down as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life, have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 34

Sonship and Divinity of Jesus

As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of the mystery of the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary is confessed.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day Is Come*, p. 109

Virgin Birth

see previous quote

Divine Inspiration of Gospel

see previous quote

Personal God

What is meant by a personal God is a God Who is conscious of His creation, Who has a Mind, a Will, a Purpose, and not, as many scientists and materialists believe, an unconscious and determined force operating in the universe.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 477

Christ Is Without Sin	<p>In the Gospel it is said that a man came to Christ and called Him "Good Master." Christ answered, "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God." This did not mean - God forbid! - that Christ was a sinner; but the intention was to teach submission, humility, meekness and modesty to the man to whom He spoke. These Holy Beings are lights, and light does not unite itself with darkness.</p> <p>'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, <i>Some Answered Questions</i>, p. 170</p>
Trinity	<p>Then He ['Abdu'l-Bahá] explained the puzzling question of the 'Trinity' and demonstrated...that 'trinity' not only exists in every religion but in philosophy as well. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, <i>Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá</i>, Vol. III, pp. 512-13</p>
Grace	<p>The tie...between the creature and the Creator should be regarded as a token of His gracious favor unto men and not as an indication of any merit they may possess.</p> <p>BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, <i>Gleanings</i>, pp. 193-94</p>
Justification by Faith	<p>We are cognizant of thy righteous deeds, though they shall avail thee nothing, for the whole object of such righteousness is but recognition of God, thy Lord, and undoubted faith in the Words revealed by Him.</p> <p>THE BÁB, <i>Selections from the Writings of the Báb</i>, p. 34</p>
Reborn in Faith	<p>...man must be born again. As the babe is born into the light of this physical world, so must the physical and intellectual man be born into the light of the world of Divinity.</p> <p>'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, <i>Promulgation of Universal Peace</i>, p. 288</p>
Forgiveness of Sins	<p>Thou [Bahá'u'lláh] art indeed the One Who forgiveth the sins of all mankind.</p> <p>THE BÁB, <i>Selections from the Writings of the Báb</i>, p. 4</p> <p>...return ye to God and repent, that He through His grace, may have mercy upon you, may wash away your sins and forgive your trespasses.</p> <p>BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, <i>Gleanings</i>, p. 130</p>
<p>Salvation: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."</p> <p>ACTS 16:31, NKJV</p>	<p>Blessed is the man that hath acknowledged his belief in God and in His signs, and recognized that "He shall not be asked of His doings.... Such is the teaching which God bestoweth on you, a teaching that will deliver you from all manner of doubt and perplexity, and enable you to attain unto salvation in both this world and in the next.</p> <p>BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, <i>Gleanings</i>, pp. 86-87</p>

Interpretation of the Bible ~ activity 1

Note that many Biblical passages are best understood through spiritual or symbolic, as opposed to literal, translation.

Assign the following Biblical references to individuals or small groups (depending on the size of your class) to find in their Bibles. A parallel goal here is to assist participants in feeling confident to find references in the Bible.

- ❖ John 3:3
- ❖ Luke 9:30
- ❖ Deut. 10:16
- ❖ Luke 3:16; 3:2-6

- ❖ Rom. 2:29
- ❖ Phil. 3:3
- ❖ Matt 17:10-13
- ❖ Acts 2:14

Once all the references are located, ask individuals/small groups to read their passage aloud. Invite participants to mark all of these passages in their Bibles for easy future reference.

After reading the passages aloud, ask the large group:

Is it apparent that there are difficulties in reading these passages from an exclusively literal interpretation?

Consider the following explanations **from the Bible** in which Christ and the Apostles give authority and examples for interpreting the Bible spiritually:

Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know [them], because they are spiritually discerned.

1 COR. 2:13-14, KJV

And account [that] the longsuffering of our Lord [is] salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; as also in all [his] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as [they do] also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

2 PETER 3:15-16, KJV

Ask the friends to mark the above two passages in their Bibles.

Share with the group the fact that there are now over 23,000 branches of Christianity (World Christian Encyclopedia, D. Barrett), which have arisen over the difficulty of interpreting the Bible. Point out that we are warned about this division in both the Hebrew and the New Testaments. Ask two participants to look up these two references, read them aloud, and mark them in their Bibles:

- Daniel 12:9
- Revelations 5:1-5

As a group, discuss the implications of these verses (i.e. that the meaning of the Scriptures is sealed until Christ's Return, at which time He (Bahá'u'lláh) will open them and explain their meaning.

Interpretation of the Bible ~ activity 2

Divide into 4 groups. Each group will read the handout, “Interpretation of the Bible,” mark the appropriate passages in their Bibles, note the Bahá’í references in their Bibles, and consult on the focus question:

Why would God make scripture so challenging and difficult to interpret?

Assign each group a different passage and ask them to create an artwork that captures its essence.

Share the artwork by displaying on a wall or table.

Invite participants to quietly journal for five minutes on the following questions:

What doctrine am I comfortable sharing with a Christian?

Are passages on this doctrine interpreted symbolically or literally?



INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

Focus Question:

Why would God make scripture so challenging and difficult to interpret?

1. *For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

HEB. 4:12, *KJV*

2. *Know verily that the purpose underlying all these symbolic terms and abstruse allusions, which emanate from the Revealers of God's holy Cause, hath been to test and prove the peoples of the world; that thereby the earth of the pure and illuminated hearts may be known from the perishable and barren soil. From time immemorial such hath been the way of God amidst His creatures, and to this testify the records of the sacred books.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 49

3. *It is evident unto thee that the Birds of Heaven and Doves of Eternity speak a two-fold language. One language, the outward language, is devoid of allusions, is unconcealed and unveiled, that it may be a guiding lamp and a beaconing light whereby wayfarers may attain the heights of holiness, and seekers may advance into the realm of eternal reunion. Such are the unveiled traditions and the evident verses already mentioned. The other language is veiled and concealed, so that whatever lieth hidden in the heart of the malevolent may be made manifest and their innermost being be disclosed.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 254-55

4. *Wert thou to cleanse the mirror of thy heart from the dust of malice, thou wouldst apprehend the meaning of the symbolic terms revealed by the all embracing Word of God made manifest in every Dispensation, and wouldst discover the mysteries of divine knowledge.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 68

Share the following insights.

When preparing to answer questions, consider that questions frequently are based on:

- a literal interpretation of the Bible,
- only on *selected* Biblical quotations addressing the subject,
- the claim of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ (e.g., only Jesus was the Only Way, the Only Begotten Son, the Only One to rise bodily from the grave, etc.).

Questions are frequently intended to prove:

- a division between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity,
- Bahá'ís are not Biblical in their beliefs,
- superiority of Jesus the Christ over Bahá'u'lláh.

However, Bahá'ís seek unity and points of agreement by not accepting the literal mindset of the question, by establishing that Bahá'ís believe in Jesus the Christ and the Bible, and by pointing out one or more of the answer “paradigms” on the handout.

Activity:

In the whole group ask the friends to define the word “paradigm.” Refer to a dictionary if necessary. Then have participants each work with a partner.

Give each pair a copy of “Paradigms” and “Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh the Same as Jews to Christ”.

Distribute 2 or 3 questions to each pair from “Difficult Questions Commonly Asked by Christians” found in Session One.

- Ask pairs to discern which paradigm best answers each question (more than one may apply).
- Using “Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh the Same as Jews to Christ” complete the focus topics:
What explanation from the following can I apply to answer the assigned “difficult” questions?
Mark the corresponding passages in your Bible.

Share verbally one of the questions and an approach to answering that question with the full group.



PARADIGMS

Focus topic:

Which paradigms best answer each “difficult” question assigned?

- Paradigm #1: Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ and therefore all the claims of uniqueness for the Station of Christ apply to Bahá'u'lláh.
- Paradigm #2: There are Bible passages that clearly demonstrate a literal interpretation cannot always be correct. Only a spiritual interpretation makes sense when all Bible verses are considered.
- Paradigm #3: The method of literal interpretation used by Christians to reject Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í interpretation is used also by the Jews to reject the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament and of Jesus. Therefore, Jesus cannot be the Messiah by the same reasoning Christians use to reject Bahá'u'lláh. (See “Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Jews to Christ.”) The same methods of Biblical proofs Christians use to accept Jesus apply equally well to Bahá'u'lláh.
- Paradigm #4: Although a literal interpretation is not supported by the Bahá'í Writings (e.g., physical resurrection of Jesus; physical existence of Satan), the spiritual principle illustrated by the Bible is indeed supported and confirmed in the Bahá'í Writings (e.g., “satanic power” is confirmed though a physical Satan is not; and the power of Jesus over death and His divine nature is confirmed though not His physical resurrection.) All can agree upon the underlying spiritual principles and teachings.
- Paradigm #5: According to the Bible, interpretations of both the Old Testament and the New Testament are sealed until Jesus returns. There are over 23,000 branches of Christianity claiming to have the correct interpretation based on Biblical authority. Bahá'í symbolic interpretations are at least as valid as these multiple branches of Christianity and absolutely correct if the claims of Bahá'u'lláh can be proven.



OBJECTIONS OF CHRISTIANS TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THE SAME AS JEWS TO CHRIST

Focus topic:

What explanation from the following passages can I apply to the assigned “difficult” questions? Mark the corresponding passages in your Bible.

1. Can't add anything to the New Testament

(see Rev. 22:18-19; Matt. 5:18; Gal. 1:8, therefore Bahá'í Writings can't be scripture).

Old Testament also says the same of itself (Deut. 4:2; 12:32) which would disallow New Testament as scripture (see “Can't Add to the Bible or Preach Any Other Gospel”).

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8) (see “Yesterday, Today, and Forever”). Certainly the *physical* body of Jesus did change as He grew to manhood and Jesus as the Word of God also changed as Jesus changed the laws of Moses and the Word of God given to the Jews.

2. Prophecies of New Testament are not literally fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh.

Jesus did not literally fulfill all the prophecies of the Old Testament either. Jesus Himself interprets prophecy not literally but as spiritually fulfilled.

Elijah was to return before Messiah. (Mal. 4:5) John the Baptist when asked by the Jews said he was not Elijah (John 1:21). Yet Jesus interprets spiritually that John the Baptist was the return of Elijah (Matt. 17:10-13) clarifying that the literal expectation of the Jews was an incorrect interpretation.

Messiah was to come from an unknown place but “can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46 KJV). The Jews said, “Howbeit we know this man whence he is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is.” So Jesus proclaimed, “Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but He that sent me is true, Whom ye know not..” (John 7:27-28 KJV) Again, Jesus Himself interprets spiritually and not literally.

Jesus was not literally the lineage of David “of the fruit of thy body.” (Psalms 132:11) Mary was not of David's heritage per *Who's Who in the Bible* and nowhere is it said in the Bible that Mary is lineage of David.

Messiah was to live forever. “This he said, signifying what death he should die. The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?” (John 12:33-34, KJV) Again, only a spiritual fulfillment can make sense as Jesus did die physically.

Messiah's name was to be Emmanuel, not Jesus. “Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, ‘Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph... took unto him his wife...and he called his name JESUS.’” (Matt. 1:22-25, KJV) Jesus means “he who saves.” Once again, the Bible uses names as titles and not as literal requirement for prophecy to be fulfilled. Hence Bahá'u'lláh's name does appear in the New Testament and the Old Testament (e.g., Glory of the Lord), just as Jesus of Nazareth took the title Christ, Emmanuel, etc. (See also quotes in the sections “Bahá'u'lláh Name Mentioned in Bible” and “No Other Name Under Heaven.”)

Messiah was to sit on the throne of David and re-establish the glory of the Jews. (Amos 9:11-15)
Only a spiritual interpretation of throne of David allows fulfillment of this prophecy.

Messiah was to carry a sword and defeat enemies of God's Chosen People. (Isa. 66:16) Jesus had not a physical sword but "the sword" of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17, KJV) which triumphed over all. Again, only a spiritual interpretation allows fulfillment of this prophecy.

3. Apostles Luke and Peter interpret prophecy as fulfilled spiritually when clearly they weren't fulfilled literally:

"And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see [it] together... Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." (Isa. 40:4-5, KJV) Luke says all this was fulfilled when it clearly was not literally: "As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet... Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low... and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." (Luke 3:4-6, KJV) Clearly we still have valleys and mountains and all flesh did not see Jesus physically. The above spiritual interpretation applies to the prophecy that Christians claim Bahá'u'lláh must fulfill literally: "Every eye shall see Him" just as "all flesh shall see it together." (See "Every Eye Shall See Him.")

"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come." (Joel 2:30-31, KJV) [In Acts the above is recounted as having been fulfilled: "But Peter... said unto them For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel... I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.... And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Acts 2:14-21, KJV) No historic record recounts any eclipse of the sun or the moon literally becoming blood which would of course be impossible to see in any form if the sun were dark, as the moon only reflects the light of the sun.

4. Bahá'u'lláh Changes the Laws of Christ which are to be the same "yesterday, today and forever."

But Christ changed the law of the Sabbath (Matt. 12:1) which was to be a "a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever." (Exod. 31:17, KJV) Christ also changed laws of marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:7-9) and "eye for an eye," "tooth for a tooth" (Matt. 5:38-42, KJV) announcing He was changing the law as He spoke. Yet the Old Testament clearly states, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish [ought] from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you." (Deut. 4:2, KJV)

Remind the friends that the explanations are to be offered in the spirit of unity, as a fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.

Answering Difficult Questions Asked by Christians ~ Practice Teaching Role-Play

Prepare participants for creating their own answers to Christians' questions.

Provide two volunteers with a copy of the following script. Facilitator role-plays the Christian.

Characters:

- **Christian** has a question.
- **Bahá'í #1** gives an *ineffective* answer.
- **Bahá'í #2** gives a better answer.

Scenario #1

Christian: Bahá'í # 1, how do the Bahá'ís regard Jesus Christ?

Bahá'í #1: He was a Manifestation, like Moses, Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh.

Stop to process: This answer is correct, isn't it? What limits its effectiveness? (Refer back to "Some Helpful Points" if necessary.)

Christian: Bahá'í #2, how do the Bahá'ís regard Jesus Christ?

Bahá'í # 2: Bahá'ís believe in the "Sonship and Divinity" of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Process: Why is this answer effective?

Repeat the process with two new volunteers, and a new question.

Scenario #2

Christian: Bahá'í #3, do you accept the Bible as the Word of God?

Bahá'í #3: Well, we know that it's inspired but it's been corrupted and edited with additions and deletions. But we believe it's a Holy Book for a past age. Bahá'ís follow the Bahá'í Writings which are for this day.

Christian: What about you, Bahá'í #4? Do you accept the Bible as the Word of God?

Bahá'í #4: Bahá'ís fully recognize the divine inspiration of the Gospel and understand it to be the Bible of Salvation.

Process the different reactions to these two answers.



TEACHING ROLE PLAY SCENARIOS

Scenario #1

Christian: Bahá'í # 1, how do the Bahá'ís regard Jesus Christ?

Bahá'í #1: He was a Manifestation, like Moses, Muhammad and Bahá'u'lláh.

Stop to process: This answer is correct, isn't it? What limits its effectiveness? (Refer back to "Some Helpful Points" if necessary.)

Christian: Bahá'í #2, how do the Bahá'ís regard Jesus Christ?

Bahá'í # 2: Bahá'ís believe in the "Sonship and Divinity" of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Process: Why is this answer effective?

Scenario #2

Christian: Bahá'í #3, do you accept the Bible as the Word of God?

Bahá'í #3: Well, we know that it's inspired but it's been corrupted and edited with additions and deletions. But we believe it's a Holy Book for a past age. Bahá'ís follow the Bahá'í Writings which are for this day.

Christian: What about you, Bahá'í #4? Do you accept the Bible as the Word of God?

Bahá'í #4: Bahá'ís fully recognize the divine inspiration of the Gospel and understand it to be the Bible of Salvation.

Process the different reactions to these two answers.

Answering Difficult Questions Asked by Christians ~ Miracle Is Not the Best Proof

Introduce this session by choosing one of the following two options:

1. Act out being a “magician” or miracle-worker:

Enter the room dramatically, with a bright, shiny cloak or cloth. Swoosh the cloak about in the air and magically announce: “ $1+1=3$ ”, then dramatically exit.

Return to the room normally and ask, “Well, do you believe it? Do you believe now that $1+1=3$? Magic, or a miracle, is not a proof that everything one says is true, and a miracle worker is not necessarily a Messiah!

OR

2. Divide participants into small groups and assign the following task (2 minutes):
Determine what would be the best miracle to prove the truth of a Manifestation.
Share miracle ideas very quickly. Would any of these miracles prove conclusively that everything a person says is correct?

Share the story on the following page, “The Miracle” of Bahá'u'lláh’s offer to perform any miracle if the assembled clergy would agree that the miracle would prove the truth of His message.

Take turns reading aloud the quotes, “Miracle is Not the Proof”.
Engage in large group discussion, and read the following as a summary:

The Jews are looking for the promised Messiah to perform the “great miracle” –literal salvation of the Jewish people as Moses did by splitting the Red Sea, thereby saving the Jews from Pharaoh’s army. The Jews felt that a physical resurrection by and for one person – Jesus – had already been done by others and was therefore not the “greater miracle”. For example, Ezekiel resurrects many bodies. Eze. 37:11-14 By testing God and demanding that Jesus perform to their standard of miracle working, the Jews missed the Messiah.

Faith in Christ shouldn’t be based on miracles, as stated by Christ and Paul. Even the physical Resurrection does not establish that Jesus is the Christ.



Some time before, Bahá'u'lláh had invited Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Husayn to meet Him face to face so that the truth of His Cause might be established. ...the conference of the divines decided to send the devout and high-minded Háji Mullá Hasan-I’Ammú as an emissary to Bahá'u'lláh to put certain questions to Him, designed to establish the truth of His Mission....

No sooner had Háji Mullá Hasan presented himself to Bahá'u'lláh than he discovered the ocean of His utterance surging before him and saw himself as a mere drop compared to the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's knowledge. Having had his questions answered with brilliance and simplicity, he then ventured to inform Bahá'u'lláh that the divines regarded the performance of a miracle to be the final and conclusive evidence of the authenticity of His mission. These are the words of Bahá'u'lláh in answer to him:

Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request...The ‘ulamás must assemble, and, with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture.

Háji Mullá Hasan found this answer to be satisfactory. He arose, reverently kissed the knee of Bahá'u'lláh and promised to convey His words to the divines. But the assemblage of the divines decided not to respond to Bahá'u'lláh's challenge and did not pursue the matter. Háji Mullá Hasan conveyed this decision to Bahá'u'lláh ... Upon hearing this news, Bahá'u'lláh is reported to have said:

We have, through this all-satisfying, all-embracing message which We sent, revealed and vindicated the miracles of all the Prophets, inasmuch as We left the choice to the ‘ulamás themselves, undertaking to reveal whatever they would decide upon.

TAHERZADEH, *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. 1*, pages 145-47



MIRACLE IS NOT THE BEST PROOF

Focus question:

How can miracles be discounted as a significant proof of the Manifestation of God?

1. *...false prophets... shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if [it were] possible, they shall deceive....* MATT. 24:24, KJV

Of course Bahá'u'lláh discourages the mentioning of His miracles.

2. *For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom.... To another the working of miracles.* 1 COR. 12:8-10, KJV

Many have been given power to do miracles; therefore miracles are not proof of being a Messiah.

3. *But when the Pharisees heard [it], they said, "This [fellow] doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."* MATT. 12:24, KJV

Pharisees argued that miracles could be performed by Satan and evil powers, and miracles as proof could therefore deceive and mislead.

4. *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled.* JOHN 12:37-38, KJV

Isaiah had prophesied miracle would not be sufficient proof.

5. *...and [the devil] saith unto him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down [from the top of the temple]".... [and] Jesus said unto him, "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."*

MATT. 4:6-7, KJV

The devil asked Jesus to do a miracle to prove His mission and Jesus said to ask for proof of miracle is wrong. Therefore to ask for miracle as proof is following the devil's example.

6. *And the Pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.* MARK 8:11-12, KJV

Here, Jesus refuses to produce miracle as proof when Pharisees say this is the proof they seek for belief. Therefore they sought the wrong proof in asking for miracles.

7. *Verily, verily I say unto you, ye seek Me, not because ye saw miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you.... They said therefore unto him, "What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert.... Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.... Jesus said unto them 'I am the bread of life.'"* JOHN 6:26-35, KJV

Jesus says to believe not because of miracles but because His teaching gives spiritual food and life to the world.

8. *For Jews require a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.* 1 COR. 1:22-24, KJV

Paul says the Jews seek a miracle for proof, but Paul points out it is Christ's teachings and His pure sacrifice that is the greater proof and shows the power and wisdom of God.

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

1. Befriend a Christian and *listen* to their beliefs.
2. Select one doctrine shared by Christians and Bahá'ís. Memorize an accompanying Bahá'í quote selected from the handout pages.
3. Incorporate the sharing of the doctrine and quotation with at least one other soul before the next session.
4. Memorize the following quotation and share it at the next session:

Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 101

Closing devotions

Provide the explanations about miracles by 'Abdu'l-Bahá from *Some Answered Questions* (page 21) on nice paper. Read these as the closing meditation.

The meaning is not that the manifestations are unable to perform miracles, for They have all power. But for Them, inner sight, spiritual healing and eternal life are the valuable and important things.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 102

If we relate to a seeker, a stranger to Moses and Christ, marvelous signs, he will deny them and will say: 'Wonderful signs are also continually related of false gods by the testimony of many people, and they are affirmed in the Books. The Brahmans have written a book about wonderful prodigies from Brahma.' He will also say: 'How can we know that the Jews and the Christians speak the truth and that the Brahmans tell a lie?...For if they [i.e., miracles] are proofs for those who are present, they fail as proofs to those who are absent.'

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 100-101

... Many wonderful things [miracles] were done by Bahá'u'lláh, but we do not recount them, as they do not constitute proofs and evidences for all the peoples of the earth, and they are not decisive proofs even for those who see them: they may think that they are merely enchantments.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 37

Recollect that Christ, solitary and alone, without a helper or protector, without armies and legions, and under the greatest oppression, uplifted the standard of God before all people of the world, and withstood them, and finally conquered all, although outwardly He was crucified. Now this is a veritable miracle which can never be denied. There is no need of any other proof of the truth of Christ.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 101

***A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith***

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Four

CHRISTIAN BELIEFS



*The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the
Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable
Essence as one and the same.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session 4:

CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Topics:

BASIS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

REMOVING APPREHENSIONS OF CHRISTIANS

BAPTISM AND ORIGINAL SIN

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Gleanings*, Page: 167

The recognition of Him Who is the Bearer of divine Truth is none other than the recognition of God, and loving Him is none other than loving God.

THE BÁB: *Selections from the Báb*, Page: 121

If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly and his actions conformable with the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of His Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan. Therefore, Christ hath said, "Ye shall know them by their fruits."

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 335-336

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary...that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 92

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To become familiar with Bible verses that are of particular concern to Christians.

Wisdom

To acknowledge the importance of first removing the apprehensions of the person whom one wishes to teach.

Spiritual Perception

To see teaching as removing barriers between a soul and its Lord.

Eloquent Speech

To gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá'u'lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept, using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.

To gain confidence and skills in referring to the Bible systematically.

To learn how to avoid criticism and argument, and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.

Session 4:

CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Topics:

BASIS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS
REMOVING APPREHENSIONS OF CHRISTIANS
BAPTISM AND ORIGINAL SIN

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

Devotions	10 minutes	<i>Other Materials Needed</i> Prayer books Bibles Music, recorded or sung "Basis of Christian Belief" slips 2 placards - Jesus is God, Is Not God Paper keys w/quotes on them Polishing rags Flashlights
Reflection and Consultation	10 minutes	
Basis of Christian Beliefs - How Jesus Was God, but not God Incarnate	15 minutes	
Basis of Christian Beliefs - Perfect Mirror Analogy for Station of Manifestation is Biblical	15 minutes	
Removing Apprehensions of Christians	35 minutes	
Break	15 minutes	
Removing Apprehensions of Christians - Helpful Hints	5 minutes	
The Non-existence of Satan - Role Play	30 minutes	
Baptism and Original Sin - Understanding Baptism	15 minutes	
Baptism and Original Sin - Original Sin	15 minutes	
Personal Teaching Plan	5 minutes	
Extended After-class Activities	5 minutes	
Closing Devotions	5 minutes	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Four Objectives	False Prophets and Satan
Basis of Christian Belief	Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians
How Jesus Was God But Not God Incarnate	Role Play: The Non-existence of Satan
The Trinity	Baptism
Perfect Mirror Analogy for Station of Manifestation	Original Sin Unsupported in the Bible
Bahá'u'lláh & The Báb's Claim to be God	Baptism gift quotes
Removing Apprehensions	Original Sin gift quotes

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. **In advance of the session, place individual slips of paper around the room, each with a verse from "Basis of Christian Beliefs" (see page 4).** Arrive early to pray in the room before the session begins. Lovingly greet the friends as they arrive. Open with the song, "See the Light" from the World Congress CD and a prayer for Spiritual Qualities.

Reflection and Consultation

- Invite the friends to briefly reflect on the time that has passed between session three and this one.
- Discuss:
 - What opportunities did you seize to use the Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians?*
 - How did listening first to your friend assist you to select a shared doctrine to share with that friend?*
 - Were there difficult questions asked for which you felt prepared?*



BASIS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. *JOHN 14:9, KJV*

I and My Father are one. *JOHN 10:30, KJV*

I am He (the Father). *JOHN 8:24, KJV*

I [am] in the father and the Father in Me. *JOHN 14:11, KJV*

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. *JOHN 12:45, KJV*

I go unto the Father, for My Father is greater than I. *JOHN 14:28, KJV*

I can of mine own self do nothing... I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me. . *JOHN 5:30, KJV*

I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. *JOHN 8:28, KJV*

But of that day and hour knoweth no [man], no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.
MATT. 24:36, KJV

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? *MARK 15:34, KJV*

Basis of Christian Beliefs ~ How Jesus Was God but not God Incarnate

Tell participants that today you are going to solve one of the great mysteries of Christianity: Is Jesus God? (Remember that about 70% of the U.S. population believes that Jesus IS God.)

- ❖ Place two placards on the board, or wall, spaced two feet apart. One reads, “Jesus Is God,” the other, “Jesus Is Not God.”
- ❖ Instruct them to move about the room, looking for the Bible verses that you placed before the session began. When one finds a verse, read it and decide which of the two statements this verse better supports. Attach the verse to the board or wall below that statement.

Facilitator should mingle, assisting participants if they appear confused or uncertain as to which heading is supported by their verse, and making sure all verses are found.

Together, process the results:

How can we explain this apparent dichotomy of belief?

Point out the fact that the word “trinity” does not occur in the Bible; it is usually referred to as a mystery that can’t be understood, and was a doctrinal attempt to explain why Jesus said he was and also was not God.

Announce that Bahá'u'lláh has given us “keys” to understanding the two-fold nature of Christ and the other Manifestations: present a tray with large, cut-out paper “keys”, on each of which are printed one of the passages from *Gleanings* or the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* (see page 6).

Invite individuals to come up, read a passage and then attach the “key” in the space between the divergent verses, as a symbol of uniting these seemingly conflicting views of Christ.

Share the following summary:

Both the Old and New Testaments confirm that no one has seen God at any time and that God is greater than Jesus. Yet, Bahá'u'lláh in the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* (pp. 178-79) makes it clear that Christ or Bahá'u'lláh or any Manifestation could truthfully declare that they were God, since it is through the Manifestation’s Revelation and attributes in the world of humanity that we come to know all that we do know of God (i.e., the Perfect Mirror of the Sun [God] analogy). Christians tend to emphasize the Divine station of the Manifestation to the exclusion of the human station, and some Bahá’ís reverse the emphasis. Perhaps we can learn from each other by referring to our Scriptures. It is this insight and understanding of the Twofold Station of the Manifestations along with the Twofold Language of Revelation that will “unlock” all the world’s scriptures, bring about the understanding of the true unity of the world’s religions, and the Golden Age of the Bahá’í Faith, God’s Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.

'Abdu'l-Bahá explains it most perfectly. (Invite one or more participants to read eloquently His explanation of the Trinity from *Some Answered Questions*, found on page 6.)



HOW JESUS WAS GOD BUT NOT GOD INCARNATE

Place on "keys" to unite the views that Jesus is and is not God.

Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being [Prophet of God] He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter; and the spiritual, which is born of the substance of God Himself. He hath, moreover, conferred upon Him a double station. The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself.... The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following: "I am but a man like you."

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, pp. 66-67

These Manifestations of God have each a twofold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth....

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 152

The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations....

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 176

Were any of the all-embracing Manifestations of God to declare: 'I am God!' He verily speaketh the truth, and no doubt attacheth thereto. For it hath been repeatedly demonstrated that through their Revelation, their attributes and names, the Revelation of God, His name, and His attributes are made manifest in the world.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 178

The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *Gleanings*, p. 167

Therefore, whosoever, and in whatever Dispensation, hath recognized and attained unto the presence of these glorious, these respondent and most excellent Luminaries, hath verily attained unto the 'Presence of God' Himself, and entered the city of eternal and immortal life.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 143

The recognition of Him Who is the Bearer of divine Truth is none other than the recognition of God, and loving Him is none other than loving God.

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 121



THE TRINITY

Question. - What is the meaning of the Trinity, of the Three Persons in One?

Answer. - The Divine Reality, which is purified and sanctified from the understanding of human beings and which can never be imagined by the people of wisdom and of intelligence, is exempt from all conception. That Lordly Reality admits of no division; for division and multiplicity are properties of creatures which are contingent existences, and not accidents which happen to the self-existent.

The Divine Reality is sanctified from singleness, then how much more from plurality. The descent of that Lordly Reality into conditions and degrees would be equivalent to imperfection and contrary to perfection, and is, therefore, absolutely impossible. It perpetually has been, and is, in the exaltation of holiness and sanctity. All that is mentioned of the Manifestations and Dawning-places of God signifies the divine reflection, and not a descent into the conditions of existence.

God is pure perfection, and creatures are but imperfections. For God to descend into the conditions of existence would be the greatest of imperfections; on the contrary, His manifestation, His appearance, His rising are like the reflection of the sun in a clear, pure, polished mirror. All the creatures are evident signs of God, like the earthly beings upon all of which the rays of the sun shine. But upon the plains, the mountains, the trees and fruits, only a portion of the light shines, through which they become visible, and are reared, and attain to the object of their existence, while the Perfect Man is in the condition of a clear mirror in which the Sun of Reality becomes visible and manifest with all its qualities and perfections. So the Reality of Christ was a clear and polished mirror of the greatest purity and fineness. The Sun of Reality, the Essence of Divinity, reflected itself in this mirror and manifested its light and heat in it; but from the exaltation of its holiness, and the heaven of its sanctity, the Sun did not descend to dwell and abide in the mirror. No, it continues to subsist in its exaltation and sublimity, while appearing and becoming manifest in the mirror in beauty and perfection.

Now if we say that we have seen the Sun in two mirrors - one the Christ and one the Holy Spirit - that is to say, that we have seen three Suns, one in heaven and the two others on the earth, we speak truly. And if we say that there is one Sun, and it is pure singleness, and has no partner and equal, we again speak truly.

The epitome of the discourse is that the Reality of Christ was a clear mirror, and the Sun of Reality - that is to say, the Essence of Oneness, with its infinite perfections and attributes - became visible in the mirror. The meaning is not that the Sun, which is the Essence of the Divinity, became divided and multiplied - for the Sun is one - but it appeared in the mirror. This is why Christ said, "The Father is in the Son," meaning that the Sun is visible and manifest in this mirror.

The Holy Spirit is the Bounty of God which becomes visible and evident in the Reality of Christ. The Sonship station is the heart of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the station of the spirit of Christ. Hence it has become certain and proved that the Essence of Divinity is absolutely unique and has no equal, no likeness, no equivalent.

This is the signification of the Three Persons of the Trinity. If it were otherwise, the foundations of the Religion of God would rest upon an illogical proposition which the mind could never conceive, and how can the mind be forced to believe a thing which it cannot conceive? A thing cannot be grasped by the intelligence except when it is clothed in an intelligible form; otherwise, it is but an effort of the imagination.

It has now become clear, from this explanation, what is the meaning of the Three Persons of the Trinity. The Oneness of God is also proved.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ: SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS, PAGES: 113-115

Basis of Christian Beliefs ~ Perfect Mirror Analogy for Station of Manifestation Is Biblical

Invite the group to conduct an experiment which demonstrates 'Abdu'l-Bahá's analogy of the "perfect mirror." Provide several mirrors, polishing rags and, if conducted indoors, flashlights. As participants experiment with positioning the mirrors and flashlights (or sun) so that the mirrors reflect the light, read aloud the following verses:

Who (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God.... COL. 1:15, KJV

Who being (Jesus)...the express image of His person (God). HEB. 1:3, KJV

Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 COR. 4:4, KJV

Here, Manifestation is the Image of God, a perfect mirror that "shines" on humanity, the Word of God, the "rays" of God's guidance.

'Abdu'l-Bahá explains the station of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh as the analogy of God as sun and Manifestation as perfect mirror to reflect the rays of the Holy Spirit to humanity.

SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS, PP. 113-14: THE TRINITY

Also: *The Lord Christ said, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father—God manifested in man.*

The Sun [God] does not leave His place in the heavens and descend into the mirror, for the actions of ascent and descent, coming and going, do not belong to the infinite, they are the methods of finite beings. In the Manifestation of God, the perfectly polished mirror, appear the qualities of the Divine in a form that man is capable of comprehending.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, PARIS TALKS, P. 26

Provide a quiet time for participants to reflect in their journals regarding the precious gifts we have to offer our Christian brothers and sisters in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings. Topic:

How can we convey our sense of appreciation for these gifts of insight and understanding to others?

Close the reflection time with a dramatic reading of verses from The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh in which They claim to be God.

In advance, invite strong readers to choose one of the verses (see page 8). Ask them to stand around the perimeter of the room and, in turn, triumphantly read aloud their passage.



PERFECT MIRROR ANALOGY FOR STATION OF MANIFESTATION IS BIBLICAL

Note: Mark the following Biblical passages in your Bible. Also write corresponding Bahá'í references in the appropriate place in your Bible.

1. *Who (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God.* COL. 1:15, KJV

2. *Who being (Jesus) ...the express image of His person (God).* HEB. 1:3, KJV

3. *Lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

2 COR. 4:4, KJV

Here, Manifestation is the Image of God, a perfect mirror that “shines” on humanity, the Word of God, the “rays” of God’s guidance.

4. *‘Ábdu'l-Bahá explains the station of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh as the analogy of God as sun and Manifestation as perfect mirror to reflect the rays of the Holy Spirit to humanity.*

SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS, PP. 113-14: THE TRINITY

Also: The Lord Christ said, He that hath seen me hath seen the Father—God manifested in man.

5. *The Sun [God] does not leave His place in the heavens and descend into the mirror, for the actions of ascent and descent, coming and going, do not belong to the infinite, they are the methods of finite beings. In the Manifestation of God, the perfectly polished mirror, appear the qualities of the Divine in a form that man is capable of comprehending.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, PARIS TALKS, P. 26



BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S CLAIM TO BE GOD

When I contemplate, O my God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee.... I am moved to proclaim to all created things 'verily I am God!'

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 133

Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and My self but His Self, and in My movement but His Movement, and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised. There hath not been in My soul but the Truth, and in Myself naught could be seen but God.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 109



THE BÁB'S CLAIM TO BE GOD

Verily, verily, I am God, He besides Whom there is none other God and I am the Ancient of Days.

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 58

Verily God and every created thing testify that there is none other God but Me, the Almighty, the Best Beloved....

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 31

He who doeth good unto Me, it is as if he doeth good unto God....

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 15

This is a letter from God [The Báb] the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, unto God [Bahá'u'lláh] the Almighty, the Best Beloved...expressing my undoubting faith that there is no God but thee....

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 6-7

Removing Apprehensions of Christians

Remind participants of today's second key point: to anticipate and offer to relieve the apprehensions of Christians. Share with participants:

- ❖ ‘Ábdu'l-Bahá encourages us, “They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach.” (*The Individual and Teaching*, p. 12, #27) The Bahá'í teacher may wish to acknowledge the Christian's **fear** of the Anti-Christ, False Prophet, and Satan by referring to the Biblical criteria for recognizing each early in the teaching process. This will assist the Christian to seriously consider all that the Bahá'í teacher is presenting and not be distracted by “apprehensions.” It may even be a kindness for the Bahá'í teacher to raise the question, since out of courtesy to the Bahá'í, the Christian may not wish to raise the issue.

Divide class into three groups. Ask each group to research Bible verses related to one area that could cause fear:

- Anti-Christ and the Beast
- False Prophets
- Satan and the Devil

Their assignment is to develop a set of Biblical criteria for recognizing these elements, and provide proofs for how Bahá'u'lláh **does not** fulfill these criteria. Each group will present their list and findings to the others. (See page 11 for references and page 12 for a possible list of criteria each group might find.) If the groups are having trouble locating criteria, provide them with a Concordance to the Bible and show them how to use it, assist them with one or two samples, or add additional points to their final lists.

After the groups' presentations, share the “False Prophets and Satan” handout with the class, followed by:

For some Christians who seem to be focused on **fear** of Satan, the following may be helpful: “The Power of Satan” could cause Christians to miss recognizing Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ just as the New Testament refers to this same “Power of Satan” blinding the Chosen People, the elect, the Jews from recognizing Jesus as the Christ. See “Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Jews to Christ.”

...in whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.
2 COR. 4:4, KJV

If Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, then those who do not recognize Bahá'u'lláh “believe not” in Christ and may be blinded by Satan.

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

EPH. 6:16, KJV

Therefore Christians can be assured that as long as they have faith in Jesus Christ which Bahá'ís recognize as returned in Bahá'u'lláh, they are protected from the evil one. But if they fail to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as Christ then possibly they will be subject to the darts of the evil one. The Christian can be asked to apply the same reasons they have faith in Christ to Bahá'u'lláh by examining the proofs of the Bible and applying them to Bahá'u'lláh to be sure that they are not blinded by Satan.

After reminding the friends to mark these passages in their Bibles, process the session:

How can a discussion about Satan reassure a Christian seeker?

How can a Bahá'í teacher decide whether or when to pursue these questions with a Christian seeker?



REMOVING APPREHENSIONS

Focus:

- Develop a set of Biblical criteria for recognizing your assigned topic (Anti-Christ and the Beast, False Prophets, or Satan and the Devil).
- Provide proofs for how Bahá'u'lláh does not fulfill these criteria.
- Be prepared to present your list and findings to the others.

ANTI-CHRIST and THE BEAST

The Biblical criteria for recognizing the Anti-Christ:

1. 1 John 2:22
2. 1 John 2:22
3. 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 1-7
4. 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7
5. 1 John 2:18; 4:3
6. 1 John 2:19

FALSE PROPHETS

The Biblical criteria for recognizing false prophets:

1. Matt. 7:15-20
2. 2 Peter 2:1-3
3. Matt. 24:11
4. Matt. 24:23-24
5. Gal. 5:22-23)

SATAN AND THE DEVIL

The Biblical criteria for recognizing Satan:

1. John 8:44
2. Rev. 12:9
3. Matt. 7:15-18
4. Gal. 5:22
5. 1 Cor. 14:33
6. Eph. 6:11-12
7. Matt. 16:21-23
8. Matt. 16:19
9. Luke 22:3
10. John 12:31
11. 2 Cor. 4:4
12. Eph. 2:2
13. Eph. 6:12
14. John 17:2

REMOVING APPREHENSIONS ~ POSSIBLE CRITERIA

Anti-Christ and the Beast:

- Denies that Jesus is the Christ. 1 John 2:22
- Denies the Father and the Son. 1 John 2:22
- Denies that Jesus came in the flesh. 1 John 4:2-3; 2 John 1-7
- Equated with deceivers and linked with false prophets. 1 John 4:1; 2 John 1:7
- Already in the world during the writing of the epistles of John (100 A.D.) 1 John 2:18; 4:3
- Former Christians. 1 John 2:19

The Beast in Revelation 19:19-21 which along with “the Kings of the earth and their armies” is to make war on the Return of Christ is nowhere in the Bible equated with the Anti-Christ. Therefore, by Biblical criteria, there is no basis for claiming the Anti-Christ *is* the Beast or that Bahá'u'lláh meets the criteria for either by promoting world peace and disarmament. Furthermore, the followers of the Beast worship his image (Rev. 19:20) and of course Bahá'ís do not worship Bahá'u'lláh's image.

False Prophets

- Wolves in sheep's' clothing (Jesus' flock). Matt. 7:15
- Will bear bad fruit. Matt. 7:17
- Already in the world during the writing of 2 Peter (about 150 A.D.) 2 Peter 2:1
- Come at the end of the age and will deceive many, even the elect, with great signs and wonders. Matt. 24:11; 24:23-24
- Will bring heresies into Christianity and will deny the Lord. 2 Peter 2:1
- Will arise amongst the Christians. 2 Peter 2:1
- Will show greed and licentiousness. 2 Peter 2:3

O ye that are foolish, yet have a name to be wise!... Wherefore do ye wear the guise of shepherds, when inwardly ye have become wolves, intent upon My flock?

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Hidden Words, Persian #24 Bahá'u'lláh uses the very same imagery as Christ.

Satan and the Devil

- Has nothing to do with the truth. John 8:44
- Devil and Satan are the same. Rev. 12:9 Therefore, the Devil and Satan are the same being and there is no truth in him. Bahá'u'lláh can't be of the Devil or Satan because Bahá'u'lláh proclaims Jesus as the Son of God and the Christ.
- Bears evil fruit. Matt. 7:15-18 Bahá'u'lláh teaches that all humanity must acquire the “fruits of the spirit” identified in Galatians 5:22 and demonstrated these same fruits in His sacrificial life of suffering; therefore He can't be evil because His “fruit” is “good” and is the “fruits of the spirit” which only a good prophet can bear and an evil or bad prophet cannot bear.
- Is author of confusion. 1 Cor. 14:33 Therefore, God will not cause confusion and the devil can tell no truth which makes the accusation of the devil planting partial truths in Bahá'í teachings to confuse the Christian not Biblical and false.
- Is without physical body. Eph. 6:11-12 Bahá'u'lláh had a physical body and therefore could not be Satan or someone to fight against.
- Not on the side of God. Matt. 16:21-23 Jesus here identifies Peter, his foremost disciple as Satan with a capital “S” when he is on the side of men and not God. Therefore, Satan must be a symbolic title for being on the side of men opposing God as Christ founds His Church on Peter and gives him the “keys of the kingdom of heaven.”
- Can enter another's body. Luke 22:3 Did Peter (as Satan) actually enter the body of Judas or is Satan a symbolic term?



FALSE PROPHETS AND SATAN

Indeed the actions of man himself breed a profusion of satanic power. For were men to abide by and observe the Divine teachings, every trace of evil would be banished from the face of the earth. However, the widespread differences that exist among mankind and the prevalence of sedition, contention and conflict, and the like are the primary factors which provoke the appearance of the satanic spirit...a world in which naught can be perceived save strife, quarrels and corruption is bound to become the seat of the throne, the very metropolis of Satan.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 176-77

The word of Satan appears at least 47 times in the Bahá'í Writings and is used with a capital S in the same manner as the Bible. The actions of man can breed satanic power.

He [Chancellor to Muhammad Shah] will bring thee into grievous trouble...and verily, he himself is Satan.

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 25

The Báb identifies Satan with a capital “S” in the same usage style as Jesus.

If his morals become spiritual in character, his aspirations heavenly and his actions conformable with the will of God, man has attained the image and likeness of His Creator; otherwise, he is the image and likeness of Satan. Therefore, Christ hath said, “Ye shall know them by their fruits.”

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 335-336

Removing Apprehensions of Christians ~ Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians

Review again these “Helpful Hints” and provide extra copies for anyone who did not receive one at a previous session.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING CHRISTIANS

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher are the most important and effective tools.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish agreement:
- Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
 - Bahá'ís and Christians have similar beliefs/doctrines;
 - Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve apparent differences of understanding: “As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the blank). Let us turn to the Bible and see what the Scripture says.”
- Key 3: Teach that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
- Ask for reasons the Christian believes in Christ and state these are the same reasons you believe in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and invite the Christian to test the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh by using the Bible.
 - Point out that objections to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than the Jews' objections to Christ.
- Key 4: Interpret the Bible, often symbolically, to establish:
- Bahá'u'lláh is not a false prophet, anti-Christ, devil.
 - Scriptural proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
 - Christians are obliged to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
 - Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations are inconsistent with Bahá'í Writings.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as spiritual brothers and sisters who need to have barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion” too.
- Key 7: Realize that most Christians are not listening until you refer to the Bible as the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í jargon (e.g., Manifestation, Dispensation, etc.).
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve **fear** that the Christian has (false prophet, devil, etc.)
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Key 11: Leave some of the Creative Word in the hands of the Christian and always leave as a friend and fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Key 12: Pray that this soul may overcome their barrier and recognize that their Lord has returned.

Role-Play: The Non-Existence of Satan

Select volunteers: “Christian”, “Bahá’í #1” with an *ineffective* answer, and “Bahá’í # 2” with an *effective* answer. Provide a copy of the scenario script to volunteers.

Christian: Bahá’í #1, how do you know you’re not being led astray by the Devil?

Bahá’í #1: Oh, Bahá’ís don’t believe in the Devil. We believe that evil is just the absence of good.

Christian: Bahá’í #2, how do you know you’re not being led astray by the Devil?

Bahá’í #2: The Bible, in John, chapter 8, tells us that “there is no truth in him (the Devil).” All Bahá’ís believe in the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus, so Bahá’ís can’t be following the Devil. The Bahá’í Writings confirm satanic power. We know this power can prevent souls from recognizing their Lord just as the Bible tells us Satan blinded the minds of them “which believe not.” (2 Cor. 4:4) Many people oppose Bahá’u’lláh for the very same reasons the Jews rejected Christ such as stating the prophecies were not literally fulfilled by Jesus, and that the laws of the Old Testament were not supposed to be changed, and nothing could be added to the Scriptures. Could I show you what I mean about the power of Satan to blind men’s minds by pointing out the Bible passages illustrating why the Jews rejected Christ? And then we can look at the claims of Bahá’u’lláh using the Bible as our guide.

Process the skit/dialogue:

Here the Bahá’í changed the focus from the literal existence of Satan to the “power of Satan” to prevent souls from recognizing their Lord (which is the real threat posed by a literal or spiritual Satan) and then invited the Christian to refer to the Bible to see the danger of objecting to Bahá’u’lláh for the same reasons the Jews objected to Jesus. The conversation was refocused on the proofs of Bahá’u’lláh.

Divide into groups of three or four.

- Give each group a question from “Difficult Questions Commonly Asked By Christians” from Session One--provide extra copies for those who may not have it.
- Assign questions #1, 2, 3, 4, 15, 28 to be answered.

Each group should prepare two kinds of answers:

- typical, but ineffective
- effective, addressing the Christian’s concerns and experiences. Have groups practice acting out the scenario. *As time permits, present role-plays to the full group.*



ROLE-PLAY: THE NON-EXISTENCE OF SATAN

Christian: Bahá'í #1, how do you know you're not being led astray by the Devil?

Bahá'í #1: Oh, Bahá'ís don't believe in the Devil. We believe that evil is just the absence of good.

Christian: Bahá'í #2, how do you know you're not being led astray by the Devil?

Bahá'í #2: The Bible, in John, chapter 8, tells us that “there is no truth in him (the Devil).” All Bahá'ís believe in the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus, so Bahá'ís can't be following the Devil. The Bahá'í Writings confirm satanic power. We know this power can prevent souls from recognizing their Lord just as the Bible tells us Satan blinded the minds of them “which believe not.” (2 Cor. 4:4) Many people oppose Bahá'u'lláh for the very same reasons the Jews rejected Christ such as stating the prophecies were not literally fulfilled by Jesus, and that the laws of the Old Testament were not supposed to be changed, and nothing could be added to the Scriptures. Could I show you what I mean about the power of Satan to blind men's minds by pointing out the Bible passages illustrating why the Jews rejected Christ? And then we can look at the claims of Bahá'u'lláh using the Bible as our guide.

Baptism and Original Sin ~ Understanding Baptism

Write out on the board the first part of Mark 16:16:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.”

Exclaim, “What! Must one be baptized in order to be saved?” Finish writing the rest of the verse on the board:

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”

Explain that this is an excellent example of why an entire verse in context must be read to have a full understanding, not a distorted one.

Hand out “Baptism” quotes and read aloud together in the whole group, then mark them in your Bible. The following notes correspond to these passages and may be helpful.

1. The rest of the verse makes it clear that the penalty is for not believing, but no penalty is given for not having physical baptism with water. This is an excellent example of why an entire verse in context must be read to have a full understanding of the meaning which can be distorted easily in partial quotations. By believing in Jesus, Bahá'ís are saved without a water Baptism: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31)
2. After John the Baptist, all baptism should be with fire and the Holy Ghost, so it can't be literal baptism.
3. Therefore baptism does not automatically bestow the Holy Spirit or true faith but is a physical gesture or symbol.
4. Again, baptizing with water is an independent event of receiving the Holy Spirit and faith and in this case occurred after receiving faith. Therefore, literal baptism is not necessary to achieve faith.
5. Here Peter quotes Christ and gives a case where baptism occurs only with the Holy Spirit and water baptism is no longer necessary for having faith.
6. Clearly baptizing by proxy for dead people demonstrates the symbolic nature of baptism.
7. The Spirit does real baptism and the term “baptized” is clearly used symbolically.
8. Baptism is a “spiritual operation.”

Suggest that the ultimate gift to a seeker, after exploring the words of the Holy Bible, would be the clarifying words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Read aloud the passage below and mark the Bahá'í citation in your Bible for easy reference:

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary...that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins....But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Some Answered Questions, p. 92



BAPTISM

Mark these citations in your Bible. Add the Bahá'í citation for easy reference.

1. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*

MARK 16:16, KJV

2. *John answered...I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, ...he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.*

LUKE 3:16, KJV

3. *Peter and John, who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus).*

ACTS 8:14-16, KJV

4. *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?*

ACTS 10:47, KJV

5. *And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.*

ACTS 11:15-16, KJV

6. *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the dead?*

1 COR. 15:29, KJV

7. *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.*

1 COR. 12:13, KJV

8. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.*

COLOSS. 2:11, KJV

9. *Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary...that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins.... But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.*

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 92

Baptism and Original Sin ~ Original Sin

Read aloud the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Adam is the cause of man's physical life; but the Reality of Christ—that is to say, the Word of God—is the cause of spiritual life.... But the mass of Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among his descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God...have become without reason guilty sinners.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ', Some Answered Questions, p. 136-137

Share that the topic of “Original Sin” was created in 400AD by St. Augustine. Many people believe that all people have inherited the sin of Adam and Eve, the “Original Sin,” and only those who believe in Christ are forgiven of this inherited sin. This belief relies on the verse: “For as in Adam all die, so even in Christ shall all be made alive.” 1Cor. 15:22

Hand out and read aloud in pairs the Bible verses “Original Sin Unsupported in the Bible”.

Answer the focus question:

How does the Bible contradict a belief in Original Sin?



ORIGINAL SIN UNSUPPORTED IN THE BIBLE

Focus question:

How does the Bible contradict a belief in Original Sin?

Note: Mark both Bible and Bahá'í citations in your Bible.

1. *Adam is the cause of man's physical life; but the Reality of Christ—that is to say, the Word of God—is the cause of spiritual life.... But the mass of Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among his descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God...have become without reason guilty sinners.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 136-137

2. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

1 COR. 15:22, KJV

Many Christians believe all people have inherited the sin of Adam and Eve, the Original Sin, and only those who believe in Christ are forgiven of this inherited sin.

3. *[if] he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, ...he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live.*

EZE. 18:14-17, KJV

A son will not be judged or die for the sins of his father and sin is not inherited.

4. *Why doth not the son bear the iniquity of the father? When the son hath done that which is lawful and right, [and] hath kept all my statutes, and hath done them, he shall surely live. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him.*

EXE. 18:19-20, KJV

The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father but will be judged upon his own actions.


5. *The righteous judgement of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds.*

ROM. 2:5-6, KJV

6. *They were judged every man according to their works.*

REV. 20:13, KJV

At the last judgment all men, whether they lived before Christ or after, they would not be judged in context of original sin but by their deeds. As otherwise, those men who lived before Christ would have no hope of salvation under the doctrine of original sin.



John
answered...
I indeed
baptize you
with water;
but one mightier
than I cometh, ...
he shall baptize you
with the Holy Ghost
and with fire..

LUKE 3:16

★ ★ ★

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary...that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God.

Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty.

Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water?
No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins....
But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ
SAQ, p. 92

**FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE,
EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE.**

1 COR. 15:22



Adam is the cause of man's physical life; but the Reality of Christ—that is to say, the Word of God—is the cause of spiritual life....But the mass of Christians believe that, as Adam ate of the forbidden tree, He sinned in that He disobeyed, and that the disastrous consequences of this disobedience have been transmitted as a heritage and have remained among his descendants. Hence Adam became the cause of the death of humanity. This explanation is unreasonable and evidently wrong, for it means that all men, even the Prophets and the Messengers of God...have become without reason guilty sinners.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ
Some Answered Questions, pp. 136-37

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

1. Memorize the following two quotations:

John answered...I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, ... he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

LUKE 3:16

Man cannot free himself from the rage of the carnal passions except by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why He says baptism with the spirit, with water and with fire is necessary...that is to say, the spirit of divine bounty, the water of knowledge and life, and the fire of the love of God. Man must be baptized with this spirit, this water and this fire so as to become filled with the eternal bounty. Otherwise, what is the use of baptizing with material water? No, this baptism with water was a symbol of repentance, and of seeking forgiveness of sins.... But in the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh there is no longer need of this symbol; for its reality, which is to be baptized with the spirit and love of God, is understood and established.

‘ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 92

2. Share these quotations with at least one other soul before the next session.
3. Share the mirror analogy with at least one other soul before the next session.

Closing Devotions

Close the session with a musical rendition of “The Lord’s Prayer.”

Present gift quotes, one with Luke 3:16 and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Baptism; one with 1 Cor. 15:22 and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Original Sin, which could be shared with a Christian friend. Consider photocopying pages 22 and 23 on beautiful paper.

*A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith*

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Five

RECOGNITION OF THE MANIFESTATION



This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session 5:

RECOGNITION OF THE MANIFESTATION

Topics:

DEFINING A MANIFESTATION OF GOD FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THE CHRIST

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it - verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Pages: 85-86

These Manifestations of God have each a two-fold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth....

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, page 152

The recognition of Him Who is the Bearer of divine Truth is none other than the recognition of God, and loving Him is none other than loving God.

THE BÁB, *Selections from the Báb*, Page: 121

How often the Prophets of God and His supreme Manifestations in Their prayers confess Their sins and faults! This is only to teach other men, to encourage and incite them to humility and meekness, and to induce them to confess their sins and faults. For these Holy Souls are pure from every sin and sanctified from faults. In the Gospel it is said that a man came to Christ and called Him "Good Master." Christ answered, "Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God." This did not mean - God forbid! - that Christ was a sinner; but the intention was to teach submission, humility, meekness and modesty to the man to whom He spoke.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, Page: 170

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To become familiar with Bible verses related to the Station of Christ.

Wisdom

To understand the importance of realizing that most statements in the Bible that cause arguments pertain to either two-fold language or two-fold station.

Spiritual Perception

To internalize the realization that Bahá'u'lláh is indeed the Return of all aspects of the Station of Christ.

Eloquent Speech

To gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá'u'lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept, using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.

To gain confidence and skills for reference to the Bible systematically.

To learn how to avoid criticism and argument and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.

Session 5:

RECOGNITION OF THE MANIFESTATION

Topics:

DEFINING A MANIFESTATION OF GOD FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THE CHRIST

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

Devotions	10 minutes	<i>Other Materials Needed</i>
Reflection and Consultation	5 minutes	Prayer books
Defining a Manifestation of God - Can't Add to the Bible or Preach any other Gospel	15 minutes	Bibles
Defining a Manifestation of God - Yesterday, Today and Forever	15 minutes	Music, recorded or sung
For God So Loved the World - No Other Name Under Heaven	30 minutes	Assorted candles
For God So Loved the World - Only Begotten Son of God	15 minutes	Art & craft supplies (for name tags)
Break	15 minutes	Index cards – one per participant
The Christ - Sanctified Once and for All Time / Sinlessness / Greater than Moses	40 minutes	Candle & closing quote for each
The Christ - Role Play: Answering Difficult Questions	20 minutes	
Personal Teaching Plan	5 minutes	
Extended After-class Activities	5 minutes	
Closing Devotions	5 minutes	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Five Objectives	Sinlessness Only Applies to Christ
...changeless Faith of God	Christ Is Greater Than Moses
Practice Script ~ Only Begotten Son of God	Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians
Christ Sacrificed Once and For All Time	

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Arrive early to pray in the room before the session begins. Lovingly greet the friends as they arrive. Open with reading the prayer, “All praise, O my God, be to Thee Who art the Source of all glory and majesty...” and/or listening to the song, “All Praise” on *Selections from the Bahá’í Writings, Vol. II* by Paul Parrish.

Reflection and Consultation

- Invite the friends to briefly reflect on the time that has passed between session four and this one.
- Ask the friends to share their teaching stories, especially ones that dealt with Baptism, Original Sin or sharing the Mirror Analogy. Allow a few moments of silent reflection to give the friends the time to remember their teaching efforts and then to decide what they’d like to share with the group.

Defining a Manifestation of God ~ Can't Add to the Bible or Preach any Other Gospel

Create a large time-line by drawing a horizontal line on the board, or by pinning a piece of yarn on the wall that is marked every 50 years from 1AD to 200AD.

Distribute cards printed with the name of a Book of the Bible and its date revealed:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ◆ Revelations (circa 95-96 A.D.) | ◆ James (circa 200 A.D.) |
| ◆ Galatians (circa 50-60 A.D.) | ◆ 1 Timothy (circa 185 A.D.) |
| ◆ John (circa 130 A.D.) | ◆ 2 Timothy (circa 185 A.D.) |
| ◆ 2 Peter (circa 150 A.D.) | ◆ Matthew (circa 70 A.D.) |

Invite participants to attach their card to the appropriate place on the time-line.

Ask three people to look up and read aloud these verses:

Gal. 1:8 Rev. 22:18 Matt. 5:18-19.

Invite comments as to the chronological position of these three verses and their Books, compared to the other Books. Make the point that the New Testament contains much revelation AFTER Revelations. Galatians and Matthew are recorded AFTER passages stating that one cannot add to or preach any other Gospel.

Point out that, just as a Christian would offer that these other Books of the Bible are all part of the same Gospel - the same Book - since Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, His Book (His Revelation) is the same Gospel of Christ in the New Testament and is not “another Gospel”.

Divide participants in half: one half is to look up references from the Hebrew (Old) Testament, the other from the New Testament. Mark references in Bibles for easy future use. Post this list of references:

OLD

Deut. 4:2

Deut. 12:32

Ex. 31:17

NEW

Matt. 19:7-9

Col. 2:16

Matt. 5:38-42

Ask three people from each group to read their verses aloud: first the “Old” then the “New” Testament.

Afterwards, pose the question:

What does a literal reading of the Old Testament verses imply about these New Testament verses?

Remind participants that both the New and Old Testaments state that the Return of Christ will add to the Scriptures:

I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.

JOHN 16:12-18 KJV

He will teach us of his ways...

ISA. 2:3 KJV

Remind the friends to mark all these passages in their Bibles for easy future reference.

Defining a Manifestation of God ~ Yesterday, Today and Forever

Remind participants that a key concept for the Christian to understand is the dual nature of Christ (and the other Manifestations). Most of the statements in the Bible that cause arguments pertain to either two-fold language of the Bible (see Session Three) or the two-fold station of the Manifestation of God.

Activity:

Set up several unlit candles, of various shapes, sizes, colors, designs, etc. Point out that the candles themselves are simply vehicles for the flame. Invite friends to reflect on the qualities and essential purpose of the candle.

- ❖ Light each candle and fix attention on the flame, which is the same regardless of the candle that supports it.
- ❖ Invite analogies between these candles and their flames, and the Manifestations of God and their Revelations – their Divine Natures. (Keep the candles burning as you continue this section.)

Write out on the board this verse:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. HEB 13:8 KJV

Ask the group, “To which aspect of Jesus the Christ does this verse refer?” Obviously, it is His Divine Nature and His Spiritual Teachings -- the “flame” of the “candle”.

Share these verses, which support a spiritual interpretation of Jesus’ immortality:

Before Abraham was, I am. JOHN 8:58 KJV

In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. JOHN 1:1 KJV

Ask participants to mark these passages in their Bibles, then discuss the fact that some Christians believe that the physical body of Christ was resurrected (more on this in Session Six) and now lives and will return to rule this world. Of course, the Bible recounts that Christ’s body was born, changed form and grew into manhood; therefore the physical body of Jesus cannot be the changeless nature referred to in these Bible verses.

Share a gift of the following two passages from Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which provide an answer to this question of Christian doctrine (see page 6):

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Page: 85

The spiritual aspect of religion is... the same, yesterday, today, and forever!
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, Pages: 142-143

In the whole group, memorize one of these passages from the Bahá'í writings.

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the
past, eternal in the future.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 85



The spiritual aspect of religion is...the same,
yesterday, today, and forever!

`Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, Pages: 142-143

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the
past, eternal in the future.

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 85



The spiritual aspect of religion is...the same,
yesterday, today, and forever!

`Abdu'l-Bahá: *Paris Talks*, Pages: 142-143

For God so Loved the World ~ No Other Name under Heaven

Present the challenge: two verses from the New Testament seem to say that there can be no salvation except through Christ, and Christ alone. Post these verses:

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. ACTS 4:12 KJV

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. 1 TIM 2:5

See if the group can offer a simple and effective response to these verses. Assist as needed, to respond that, “Yes, Jesus Christ offers salvation and is man’s Mediator with God, and Bahá'u'lláh, as the Return of Christ therefore claims that same Name and is this same Mediator.”

Whatever praise the Christian offers of Christ, agree, and acknowledge that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of that station.

After asking participants to mark these passages in their Bibles, take the investigation one step further: consider the fact that many “names” in the Bible are titles, rather than surnames. They refer to descriptions and roles rather than exact phonetic names. Jesus Christ had many names, which expressed His Titles, and His Return will have a new Name.

Activity:

To illustrate this concept of “names” and “titles,” invite participants to create a “new name” name tag for themselves using the arts and crafts supplies provided. Ask them to consider a service they offer, a spiritual quality they’re striving to develop, a role they play in their family or community, or consider their vocation or hobby for inspirations for a new title for themselves. Decorate these name tags with symbols inspired by the new name. Begin the work at this time, allowing participants to continue working on them throughout the session. Plan time for participants to share name tags with each other at the end of the session.

To research the Names or Titles of Christ and His Return, distribute an index card with one of the following nine references to each participant. Ask them to look up, mark the passage in their Bible, and copy the verse onto the index card. On the reverse side, jot down any reflections or questions they may have concerning the meaning of this verse and/or its implications for the acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh. It is okay if more than one person has the same verse to look up.

(Next to each reference are pertinent points for your information as facilitator.)

- Isaiah 7:14 Emmanuel means “God with us”, Jesus means “He Who saves”
- Isaiah 9:6 Jesus had many names
- Isaiah 35:1-2 Bahá'u'lláh means “Glory of God”
- Rev 3:12 Jesus’ Return will have a new Name
- Rev 19:13 adds to names of Christ’s Return
- Rev 19:16 adds to names of Christ’s Return
- John 16:12-13 Spirit of Truth is a new name and a new identity other than Jesus, as Christ says “he” will guide, not “I” will guide, after “I” (Jesus) go away
- John 14:16 there will be another helper than the one mediator, Christ Jesus
- John 16:7 there will be another helper than the one mediator, Christ Jesus

When finished, ask each person to read aloud their quote, then share their personal reflection and/or ask their question of the group. If points above are not made, you may add them to personal insights.

For God so Loved the World ~ Only Begotten Son of God

Write out the following passage on the board:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son. JOHN 3:16

Challenge the group: The Bible says that Jesus is the only begotten SON OF GOD.
How can we respond to this question?

Remind the friends:

1. Whatever praise the Christian gives for Christ, Bahá'ís agree: Bahá'u'lláh is the RETURN of that station. So, an answer to this challenge could be:
“Yes, Jesus IS the Son of God. Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ, and therefore He is the Return of the Only Begotten Son.”
2. At this point the Bahá'í would invite the Christian to turn to the Bible together, remembering the two-fold language of scripture.
3. The spirit of humble fellowship must prevail, remembering Shoghi Effendi's words:
As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted...
SHOGHI EFFENDI: *The Promised Day is Come*, Page: 109

Provide the “**Practice Script ~ Only Begotten Son**”.

Ask two readers to go through this proof: one reading the Bible verse, the other patiently and lovingly reading the commentary after each. The others can follow along with their copies.

Ask the group to imagine that they personally, actually shared this series of proofs with a Christian seeker. Discuss:

How might you conclude the conversation?

Brainstorm possible summary statements.

These could also include an invitation to future study together, a fireside, an offer of books to read, etc.



Practice Script ~ ONLY BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD

Christian: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)
You see, Christ is much greater than Bahá'u'lláh, as Christ is the only begotten Son of God.

Bahá'í: Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ and therefore the Return of the Only Begotten Son and, in John 3:13, we read, “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven.” Christ says that He was in heaven at the same time He is saying He is the Only Begotten Son of God with his feet firmly planted on the ground. Therefore He is an entity unlike a human begotten son as He is in two places at once.

Also consider that the Pharisees said the Messiah must be the lineal son of King David to fulfill Old Testament prophecy (“of the fruit of thy body” Psalms 132:11) and if Jesus is not the literal son of Joseph, the prophecy is not literally fulfilled by Virgin Birth since Mary is not of the lineage from King David. Adam was also “son of God” (Luke 3:38) and clearly was the first son and clearly also begotten of God, making Jesus as the “only begotten Son” a title rather than a literal description. Melchizedek also was “without father or mother” and has no end of life. (Heb.7:3)

Christian: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1) “...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...as of the only begotten of the Father.” (John 1:14) Jesus is the Word made flesh and the only Son of the Father!

Bahá'í: Yes, but Christ was pre-existent before birth from Mary's womb: “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58) So, a part of Christ existed before the physical body in Mary's womb. Thus, Christ was unlike an only son who comes into being only at conception. Consider: “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24) “...that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6) Therefore, Christ's sonship must be a spiritual sonship, mustn't it?

The Christ ~ Christ Sacrificed Once and for All Time/Sinlessness only Applies to Christ/Christ Is Greater than Moses

Present these three topics in a “jigsaw” learning activity:

Form three study groups, each of which will study one of the topics.

Each member of the small study group will become a “mini-expert” on that topic.

Form new groups, each consisting of one person from each study group. (May double up if numbers don’t divide evenly.)

1. Each spend 5 minutes teaching the others what he or she learned on their topic of expertise.
2. Individuals mark at least one citation in Bibles for each topic studied.
3. Individuals identify key words in their handmade index in their Bibles.

Share major insights with the large group.



CHRIST SACRIFICED ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME

Focus Topic:

If Christ has already saved the sinners, what role does Bahá'u'lláh play?

Mark citations in your Bible.

1. *We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once [for all] ... But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins.... For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

HEB. 10:10-14, KJV

The argument is that Christ's sacrifice once and for all is enough to sanctify all people and therefore Bahá'u'lláh is not needed.

2. *So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time....*

HEB. 9:28, KJV

Therefore Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of the same Christ whose sacrifice was perfect and for all time and whose Return is eagerly awaited.

Additional points:

3. Revelations 19:19-21 indicates the Return of Christ will be fought against in battle, persecuted and attacked, i.e., further sacrifice will be necessary.

4. The literal body of Christ did die only once and for the benefit of all, and the spirit of Christ has returned in Bahá'u'lláh. Anyone following Christ's teachings, which state that Christ only sacrificed once to establish for the benefit of all, will find the fulfillment of these teachings using Biblical proofs in the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh.



SINLESSNESS ONLY APPLIES TO CHRIST

Focus Topic:

How does Christ demonstrate that breaking religious law is not a sin?
Mark citations in your Bible.

1. *For such an high priest became us, [who is] holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.*

HEB. 7:26, KJV

2. *Noah was a just man [and] perfect in his generations, [and] Noah walked with God.*

GEN. 6:9, RSV

Noah was also sinless and blameless.

3. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God.*

MARK 10:18, KJV*

Since Christ denies that He is perfectly good, how can we explain that Christ is without sin?

4. *And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus and sought to slay him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.*

JOHN 5:16, KJV

Christ broke the law by healing on the Sabbath as interpreted by men, but not by God's interpretation of the law. Can't the same argument be applied to the life of Moses and all the other Manifestations?

5. *And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves.*

MATT. 21:12, KJV

Again Christ disrupted temple worship and services breaking the law as man interpreted the law but, of course, He did not break the spirit of God's law. Shortly after these actions, Christ was seized as a criminal and executed for His "crimes."

Summation: Christ, like all Manifestations, broke the laws of man and past religious laws, but only in accord with the will of God. No Manifestation breaks the Law of God, which they have the power to reveal and establish, though it be contrary to past religious law and the expectations of those seeking the Promised One (see "Christ is Greater than Moses").

* Note:

How often the Prophets of God and His Supreme Manifestations in Their prayers confess Their sins and faults! This is only to teach other men, to encourage and incite them to humility and meekness, and to induce them to confess their sins and faults. For these Holy Souls are pure from every sin, and sanctified from faults. In the Gospel it is said that a man came to Christ and called Him 'Good Master.' Christ answered: 'Why callest thou Me good? There is none good but One, that is, God.' This did not mean—God forbid!—that Christ was a sinner; but the intention was to teach submission, humility, meekness, and modesty to the man to whom He spoke.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 170



CHRIST IS GREATER THAN MOSES

Focus Topic:

How can one Manifestation be greater than another, and yet both be equal in station?

Mark citations in your Bible.

1. *For this man (Christ Jesus) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses.* **HEB. 3:3, KJV**

2. *If in the day of Jesus Christ the Jews had forsaken imitation and investigated reality, they would assuredly have believed in and accepted Him, for the Messianic effulgence was far greater than the Mosaic. The Sun of Reality, when it appeared from the dawning point of Christ, was in the midsummer sun in brilliancy and beauty.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 274

3. *Likewise, we must set aside prejudice in considering other divine Educators by investigating reality. For instance, let us take Christ. He achieved greater results than Moses.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 345

4. *These Manifestations of God have each a two-fold station. One is the station of pure abstraction and essential unity. In this respect, if thou callest them by one name, and dost ascribe to them the same attribute, thou hast not erred from the truth....*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 152

5. *The other is the station of distinction, and pertaineth to the world of creation and to the limitations thereof. In this respect, each Manifestation of God hath a distinct individuality, a definitely prescribed mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Kitáb-i-Iqán, p. 176

6. *To prevent an act of cruelty, Moses struck down an Egyptian, and afterwards became known amongst men as a murderer, more notably because the man he killed was of the ruling nation.*

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Some Answered Questions, p. 15

7. *Reflect upon the strange and manifold trials with which He doth test His servants. Consider how He hath suddenly chosen from among His servants, and entrusted with the exalted mission of divine guidance Him Who was known as guilty of homicide. ...Like wise, reflect upon the station and condition of Mary.... How could she claim that a Babe Whose Father was unknown had been conceived of the Holy Ghost?*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Kitáb-i-Iqán, pp. 55-56

God's way is to test the hearts of all people with events in the life of the Manifestation that are contrary to expected standards of conduct so that the heart of the true believer can be known and tested before God.

The Christ ~ Role-Play: Answering Difficult Questions Commonly Asked

Briefly review “Some Helpful Hints” again, in preparation for role-playing.

Form new groups of three.

Each group shall designate characters:

Christian seeker

Bahá'í with an *ineffective* answer

Bahá'í with an *effective scriptural* answer

- ❖ Assign questions selected from “Difficult Questions Commonly Asked”:
#6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 23, 27

If time permits, groups may have the opportunity to role-play more than one scenario.

Re-enact one response for the full group.



SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING CHRISTIANS

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher are the most important and effective tools.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish agreement:
- a. Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
 - b. Bahá'ís and Christians have similar beliefs/doctrines;
 - c. Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve apparent differences of understanding: “As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the blank). Let us turn to the Bible and see what the Scripture says.”
- Key 3: Teach that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
- a. Ask for reasons the Christian believes in Christ and state these are the same reasons you believe in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and invite the Christian to test the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh by using the Bible.
 - b. Point out that objections to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than the Jews' objections to Christ.
- Key 4: Interpret the Bible, often symbolically, to establish:
- a. Bahá'u'lláh is not a false prophet, anti-Christ, devil.
 - b. Scriptural proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
 - c. Christians are obliged to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
 - d. Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations are inconsistent with Bahá'í Writings.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as spiritual brothers and sisters who need to have barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion” too.
- Key 7: Realize that most Christians are not listening until you refer to the Bible as the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í jargon (e.g., Manifestation, Dispensation, etc.).
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve **fear** that the Christian has (false prophet, devil, etc.)
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Key 11: Leave some of the Creative Word in the hands of the Christian and always leave as a friend and fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Key 12: Pray that this soul may overcome their barrier and recognize that their Lord has returned.

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

1. Invite a Christian friend to your home. Serve that person with love, offer the opportunity to study the Bible together, and invite them to raise any question regarding Bahá'u'lláh's teachings about Jesus Christ.
2. List three things that you especially love (praise) about Christ. Share them with at least one friend.
3. Memorize the following:

Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today and forever. HEB 13:8

Before Abraham was, I am. JOHN 8:58

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, Page: 85

The spiritual aspect of religion is... the same, yesterday, today, and forever!
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *Paris Talks*, Pages: 142-143

Closing Devotions

Share personal name tags in one sentence or less.

Close with a meditation on the Names of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh. Place an unlit candle at each person's place along with one of the Names of Jesus or His Return. These Names may be attached to the candle, or simply on a beautiful card placed beside it on the table.

Some Names would include:

- Emmanuel
- Comforter
- Everlasting Father
- Prince of Peace
- Glory of God
- Savior, and so on.

With soft instrumental, Christianity-inspired music, (such as Amy Grant titles, etc.) in the back ground, light one candle as that Name is read. Use that candle to light the next candle, then read next Name, and so on around the room.

***A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith***

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Six

THE SECOND COMING



This is the Day, O My Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and cry out: "O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs and of the King of Creation! I, verily, perceive the fragrance of Thy presence."

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session 6:

THE SECOND COMING

Topics:

EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

RAPTURE AND RESURRECTION

ARMAGEDDON

This is the Day, O My Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and cry out: "O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs and of the King of Creation! I, verily, perceive the fragrance of Thy presence."
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Prayers and Meditations*, page 279

Render thanks unto thy Lord O Carmel.... Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the day spring of the evidences of His Revelation.... Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings.... Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee....
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, pages 15-16

The recognition of Him Who is the Bearer of divine Truth is none other than the recognition of God, and loving Him is none other than loving God.
THE BÁB, *Selections from the Báb*, page 121

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.... This is that bread which came down from heaven...he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.... Doth this offend you? [What] and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life.
JOHN 6:56-63, KJV

But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.... for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
MICAH 4:1-2, KJV

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To become familiar with Bahá'u'lláh's explanation in the *Kitab-i-Iqán* of Biblical prophecies.

Wisdom

To realize that the literal, physical Resurrection of Christ is the pivotal teaching of Christianity and requires both love and tact when presenting the Bahá'í perspective.

Spiritual Perception

To be able to discern the meanings of metaphors within sacred Scripture.

Eloquent Speech

To gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá'u'lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept, using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.

To gain confidence and skills in referring to the Bible systematically.

To avoid criticism and argument, and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.

Session 6:

THE SECOND COMING

Topics:

EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM
RAPTURE AND RESURRECTION
ARMAGEDDON

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

Devotions	10 minutes	<i>Other Materials Needed</i>
Reflection and Consultation	5 minutes	Prayer books
Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Bible Perspective	15 minutes	Bibles
Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Kitab-i-Iqán Perspective	30 minutes	Music, recorded or sung
The Rapture	15 minutes	Assorted candles
Break	15 minutes	Art & craft supplies
The Resurrection of Christ	30 minutes	Slides or video of Mount Carmel
Resurrection of Christ ~ Role-play Script	30 minutes	Song: "Queen of Carmel" set to music
Armageddon	15 minutes	
Personal Teaching Plan	5 minutes	
Extended After-class Activities	5 minutes	
Closing Devotions	5 minutes=	

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Six Objectives	The Resurrection of Christ
Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Bible Perspective	Resurrection of Christ ~ Role-play Script
Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Kitab-i-Iqán Perspective	Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians
The Rapture	Armageddon

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Arrive early to pray in the room before the session begins. Lovingly greet the friends as they arrive.

Listen to "Expectation" from the Oratorio from *Music of the World Congress* CD.

Read "The Lord's Prayer."

Introduce the theme of this session: the **Second Coming of Christ**.

Reflection and Consultation

- Invite the friends to briefly reflect on the time that has passed between session five and this one.
- Invite a volunteer to recite the memorized verses from session five.
- Ask the friends to share their teaching stories, especially ones in which the participant expressed praise of Jesus Christ.

Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Bible Perspective

Write this verse on the board:

Behold, He is coming with clouds and every eye shall see Him. REV 1:7

Invite participants to look at this verse through the two-fold language – spiritual and literal – of scripture. Hand out the verses, “Every Eye Shall See Him”. Ask participants to take turns reading each verse aloud with a partner, identifying a literal and then a spiritual meaning for each. Remind participants to mark passages in their Bibles.

The facilitator may share the notes provided below, to illustrate that the language of scripture provides spiritual rather than literal fulfillment:

1. *As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias ...shall see the salvation of God.* LUKE 3:4-6, KJV

Luke says that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled by the coming of Jesus the Christ that “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” when clearly not all humans alive literally saw Christ living in a physical body. The interpretation must be spiritual since literally “all flesh” did not see Jesus...and Luke interpreted Isaiah spiritually to claim Christ fulfilled the words, “and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.”

2. *Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.*

REV. 1:7, KJV

Since the Roman soldier’s eyes (who pierced Jesus at His Crucifixion) are long ago returned to dust, it must be spiritual eyes that will “see him” or at least eyes unlike the ones we see with today. Also, (Rev 20:4) says the Romans would not be resurrected at first when Christ Returns but 1,000 years later. Note that the quotation is “every eye shall see Him,” but not that every eye shall recognize Him. Just as Luke thought “all flesh” saw the salvation of God, yet few people became Christians at first just as few became Bahá’ís at first.

3. *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

REV. 3:3, KJV; also referred to in Rev. 16:15

That He shall come as a “thief” suggests many literal eyes won’t see Him at His coming.

4. *But as the days of Noe [were], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.* MATT. 24:37-44, KJV

The people did not recognize until after Noah was gone that His Message was indeed from God, and thus it will be with the coming of the Son of Man—few will recognize Him until after He is gone.

5. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth...see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven.* MATT. 24:29-30, KJV

- How could every eye see Him...?
- How could the sun be literally darkened...?
- How could stars fall upon the earth...?

6. *This is the Day, O my Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and to cry out: "O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs and the King of creation! I, verily, perceive the fragranc of Thy presence."* BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Prayers and Meditations*, Page: 279

Spiritually, every eye hath seen and felt the power of the Revelation, the Spirit of the Age.



EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM ~ BIBLE PERSPECTIVE

Focus Topic:

Identify a literal and then spiritual meaning for each passage.

Mark favorite passages in your Bible.

1. As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways [shall be] made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

LUKE 3:4-6, KJV

2. Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him.

REV. 1:7, KJV

3. *Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.*

REV. 3:3, KJV; also referred to in Rev. 16:15

4. *But as the days of Noe [were], so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. ...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

MATT. 24:37-44, KJV

5. *Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth...see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven*

MATT. 24:29-30, KJV

6. *This is the Day, O my Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and to cry out: "O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs and the King of creation! I, verily, perceive the fragrance of Thy presence."*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Prayers and Meditations*, Page: 279

Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Kitáb-i-Iqán Perspective

Working with the same partner, read the handout “Every Eye Shall See Him ~ Kitáb-i-Iqán Perspective”. Remind participants that the point is not to argue with Christians or make them feel that they must defend their Book, but to suggest that the Bible is written in two-fold language, much of it to be understood on a symbolical, spiritual level. One would offer to share with a Christian Bahá'u'lláh's interpretation of these verses from Matthew.

Have participants work with their partner to create a piece of art, using the arts and crafts materials provided, symbolizing one or more of the metaphors in Bahá'u'lláh's explanation:

- Sun
- Stars
- Moon
- Morn/Night
- Heaven or Clouds

Share finished creations with the large group.

Process the session:

- ❖ How does using art help to reinforce the metaphors? How might you use this process with a Christian seeker?



EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM ~ KITAB-I-IQÁN PERSPECTIVE

Focus Activity:

Create a piece of art, using the arts and crafts materials provided, symbolizing one or more of the metaphors in Bahá'u'lláh's explanation:

- Sun
 - Stars
 - Moon
 - Morn/Night
 - Heaven or Clouds
-

1. *And now, concerning His words: "And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven." By these words it is meant that when the sun of the heavenly teachings hath been eclipsed, the stars of the divinely-established laws have fallen, and the moon of true knowledge - the educator of mankind - hath been obscured; when the standards of guidance and felicity have been reversed, and the morn of truth and righteousness hath sunk in night, then shall the sign of the Son of man appear in heaven. By "heaven" is meant the visible heaven, inasmuch as when the hour draweth nigh on which the Day-star of the heaven of justice shall be made manifest, and the Ark of divine guidance shall sail upon the sea of glory, a star will appear in the heaven, heralding unto its people the advent of that most great light. In like manner, in the invisible heaven a star shall be made manifest who, unto the peoples of the earth, shall act as a harbinger of the break of that true and exalted Morn. These twofold signs, in the visible and the invisible heaven, have announced the Revelation of each of the Prophets of God, as is commonly believed.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *The Kitab-i-Iqán*, Pages: 61-62

2. *And now regarding His words, that the Son of man shall "come in the clouds of heaven." By the term "clouds" is meant those things that are contrary to the ways and desires of men. Even as He hath revealed in the verse already quoted: "As oft as an Apostle cometh unto you with that which your souls desire not, ye swell with pride, accusing some of being impostors and slaying others." These "clouds" signify, in one sense, the annulment of laws, the abrogation of former Dispensations, the repeal of rituals and customs current amongst men, the exalting of the illiterate faithful above the learned opposers of the Faith. In another sense, they mean the appearance of that immortal Beauty in the image of mortal man, with such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away. All such veils are symbolically referred to as "clouds."*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *The Kitab-i-Iqán*, Pages: 71-72

3. *This is the Day, O my Lord, whereon every atom of the earth hath been made to vibrate and to cry out: "O Thou Who art the Revealer of signs and the King of creation! I, verily, perceive the fragrance of Thy presence.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Prayers and Meditations*, Page: 279

The Rapture

Discuss the belief of a literal, physical “rapture.” Explain that many Christians believe that if Christ had returned they would no longer be on earth. According to this belief, true Christians will be physically lifted into heaven to meet the physical body of Jesus in the clouds, along with those Christians who believed in Christ at their death. Some Christian videos depict what will happen at the moment of rapture, with driverless cars crashing, mothers disappearing out of their homes, and co-workers vanishing from their offices, the raptured individuals physically levitating into the sky.

The Bahá’í can gently suggest looking at the Bible with spiritual eyes and ears.

Hand out the passages, “The Rapture” and read aloud in the large group. Commentary is added on “Facilitators Notes: The Rapture” for the facilitator to help guide discussion on the focus topic:

How is the truth in these Bible passages preserved by seeing with spiritual eyes and ears?

FACILITATORS NOTES: THE RAPTURE

1. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.*

1 THESS. 4:16-17, KJV

Some Christians believe that when Christ returns they will no longer be on earth; along with Christians who died believing in Christ at their death, they will ascend into heaven together.

2. *Every eye shall see Him.*

REV. 1:7, KJV

See discussion of Matthew 24:29-30, RSV, that outlines stars falling on earth before Christ returns which would incinerate humankind making Rapture impossible: “The stars will fall from heaven...then all the tribes of earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds.”

3. *The stars shall fall from heaven...then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds.*

MATTHEW 24:29-30, KJV

4. Read all of Revelations Chapters 20 and 21

Revelations Chapters 20 and 21 detail an alternate view of the First Resurrection of beheaded Christian Martyrs and later a Second Resurrection of all other Christians and remaining dead on earth 1,000 years later.

5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

1 TIM. 2:5, KJV

Also see quotes that establish another physical being than Jesus will be sent as Christ's Return with a “new name”: “Spirit of Truth, the Comforter.” (John 14-16, KJV) This did not happen at Pentecost since Christians would know all truth; clearly they do not-- there are 23,000 branches of Christianity and they openly state that the Trinity is a mystery to them.

6. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...*

JOHN 14:16, KJV

7. *The Lord will come as a thief in the night.*

2 PETER 3:10, KJV; see also MATT. 24:42-44, RSV; REV. 3:3 and 6:15-16, KJV

When do you know a thief has come? (Note: Quotes 1 through 4 detail four different accounts of what events will surround the actual appearance of the Return of Christ.)

8. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

1 COR. 15:50, KJV

9. *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

MATT. 24:44, KJV

The hour that would be least expected is in the past.

10. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man.*

LUKE 21:36, KJV

Christ indicated Christians may recognize His return but it is not an automatic event.



THE RAPTURE

Focus Topic:

How is the truth in these Bible passages preserved by seeing with spiritual eyes and ears?
Mark these passages in your Bible.

1. *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive [and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.*

1 THESS. 4:16-17, KJV

2. *Every eye shall see Him.*

REV. 1:7, KJV

3. *The stars will fall from heaven...then all the tribes of earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of man coming on the clouds.*

MATTHEW 24:29-30, RSV

4. Read all of Revelations Chapters 20 and 21

5. *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

1 TIM. 2:5, KJV

6. *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever...*

JOHN 14:16, KJV

7. *Christ will return as a Thief in the Night.*

2 PETER 3:10, KJV; MATT. 24:42-44, RSV; REV. 3:3 and 6:15-16, KJV

8. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

1 COR. 15:50, KJV

9. *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.*

MATT. 24:44, KJV

10. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and stand before the Son of man.*

LUKE 21:36, KJV

The Resurrection of Christ

Share with participants that the Resurrection of Christ is THE pivotal teaching of Christianity. Most U.S. Christians believe in the physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. This doctrine is considered crucial to the existence of Christianity itself. Many Christians believe Christ died and was buried, and on the third day His physical body rose into heaven to live after His body appeared to many of His followers – the same physical body they believe will return to earth.

To move from a literal to a spiritual understanding of this core belief is an extremely delicate task, requiring wisdom and tact, even though the Bible itself supports a spiritual interpretation.

Note: The realization that Christ's Resurrection was a spiritual, not a physical event, may come as a shock and surprise even to Bahá'ís who were raised Christian.

Reverently read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explanation from *Some Answered Questions* p.103-104.

Question--What is the meaning of Christ's resurrection after three days?

Answer--The resurrections of the Divine Manifestations are not of the body. All Their states, Their conditions, Their acts, the things They have established, Their teachings, Their expressions, Their parables and Their instructions have a spiritual and divine signification, and have no connection with material things. For example, there is the subject of Christ's coming from heaven: it is clearly stated in many places in the Gospel that the Son of man came from heaven, He is in heaven, and He will go to heaven.... Observe that it is said, "The Son of man is in heaven," while at that time Christ was on earth. Notice also that it is said that Christ came from heaven, though He came from the womb of Mary, and His body was born of Mary. It is clear, then, that when it is said that the Son of man is come from heaven, this has not an outward but an inward signification; it is a spiritual, not a material, fact....Therefore, we say that the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and His spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared; His religion found life; His teachings and His admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.

Such is the meaning of the resurrection of Christ, and this was a true resurrection
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Some Answered Questions, Page: 103-104

Break into small groups of 3 to 5. Read and discuss together the verses and explanations offered in "The Resurrection of Christ".

Ask groups to:

- 1) List at least three instructions Christ gives concerning His return to heaven on flip chart paper.
- 2) Provide a brief presentation explaining Christ's ascension to heaven to the large group.

After processing the groups' insights in the large group, provide a quiet time for journal reflection on the question:

What has been my own personal journey on the topic of the Resurrection of Christ, and how may I assist others' spiritual perception of this basic doctrine?



THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

Focus Topics:

What instructions does Christ give concerning His return to heaven?

How might one explain Christ's ascension to heaven?

Mark these passages in your Bible.

1. *The disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signifies His teachings, His bounties, His perfections and spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after His martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather, it was lost, for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body; and when after three days the disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting His counsels into practice, and arising to serve Him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and His bounty appeared.... In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body, until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.*

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 104

2. *So also [is] the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.*

1 COR. 15:42-44, 50, KJV

3. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. JOHN 3:6, KJV*
God is a Spirit. JOHN 4:24, KJV

The essence of Christ is the spirit and is born from God, and flesh is not this same essence.

4. *I am the resurrection, and the life... JOHN 11:25, KJV*

Christ says he is the “Resurrection” before he dies and therefore resurrection is clearly symbolic usage.

5.. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him...this is that bread which came down from heaven... he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever... Doth this offend you? [What] and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, [they] are spirit, and [they] are life. .*

JOHN 6:56-63, KJV

When instructing His disciples, Christ speaks of His body as a spiritual substance that can be eaten of and that His physical body “is of no avail.”

6. *And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, [even] the Son of man which is in heaven. JOHN 3:13, KJV For I came down from heaven. JOHN 6:38, KJV They (the Jews) said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven? JOHN 6:42, KJV*

It is clear that being “in heaven,” “ascended to heaven,” and “come from heaven” have a spiritual meaning.

7. *These ancient Beings, though delivered from the womb of their mother, have in reality descended from the heaven of the will of God. Though they be dwelling on this earth, yet their true habitations are the retreats of glory in the realms above. Whilst walking amongst mortals, they soar in the heaven of divine presence.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitab-i-Iqán*, p. 67

Paul lists Resurrection appearances in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, and includes himself. Yet Paul only saw a bright light long after the Crucifixion. Therefore appearances may have been very spiritual experiences such as Paul describes as his own.

8. *But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

JOHN 21:1, 4, KJV

Jesus' resurrected body was not the physical body that the disciples knew and could recognize.

9. *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. 1 COR. 12:27, KJV and He [Christ] is the head of the body, the church COL. 1:18, KJV Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? ACTS 9:4, KJV*

The body of Christ symbolizes the community of believers.

10. *God alone has immortality. See 1 TIM 1:17*

God is a Spirit. See JOHN 4:24

The physical body of Christ would therefore not be immortal if God alone is immortal and only the Spirit has immortality.

11. *Who in the days of His flesh.... HEB. 5:7, KJV*

Days of flesh are spoken of in past tense meaning Christ was no longer in flesh.

12. *Today shalt thou be with Me in paradise. LUKE 23:43, KJV*

Christ says this to the man crucified at the same time. Were both resurrected, and did both go to heaven that same first day of crucifixion?

13. *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*

MATT. 27:52-53, KJV

Many non-Christians were resurrected along with Jesus--Isaiah, Elijah, Ezekiel, Melchizedek, and Enoch all ascended bodily into heaven. Ezekiel 37:11-14 describes Ezekiel resurrecting many dead bones and therefore having power over death also.

14. *For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

ROM. 6:5, KJV

The bodies of the believers to be resurrected are clearly not their physical bodies.

15. *Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust [it] into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed [are] they that have not seen, and [yet] have believed.*

JOHN 20:27-29, KJV

Jesus says Thomas saw him and not that Thomas touched him. This quote could be interpreted that Thomas finally understood the wounds of Jesus as His willingness to sacrifice and a proof of His station and not a weakness. Christ then states blessed are those that never doubted His station to begin with.

16. *Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them [his] hands and [his] feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered....* LUKE 24:39-41, KJV

Again, the Bible does not say the disciples ever handled Jesus; He suddenly appears in their midst unlike the capability of a physical body; states he is not a ghost but that His body (i.e., His teachings or church) has reality. Still the disciples don't believe until He explains the Scriptures and eats a fish, the symbol for Jesus as Messiah. Ultimately then, the Resurrected body was unlike a normal physical body in behavior and the disciples only recognized Jesus as the Messiah after they understood his explanation of the Scriptures and His claim to be the Messiah. Therefore, the appearance of the "body of Christ" itself did not cause belief. Only their understanding that Jesus' nonphysical body represented the symbolic truth of the Resurrection lead to their recognition that Jesus was the Messiah.

17. *Attainment unto such presence [i.e., the presence of Manifestation] is possible only in the Day of Resurrection, which is the Day of the rise of God Himself through his all-embracing Revelation. This is the meaning of the 'Day of Resurrection' spoken of in all the scriptures.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 143

It is clear from Bahá'u'lláh's words that Jesus was indeed the Resurrection.

"Resurrection is to be distinguished from resuscitation or reanimation of the physical body. It denotes a complete transformation of the human being." From 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 we learn that faith in the resurrection was based not on the empty tomb, which Paul does not mention, but on the appearances of the Lord. The word used for "appeared" is the same Greek word used elsewhere for visionary experiences [emphasis added]. We may today characterize these experiences as revelatory disclosures from the transcendent realm. No distinction was drawn between the resurrection and ascension. The appearances are manifestations of the resurrected and already ascended Christ from heaven.

Harper's Bible Dictionary, p. 864, 1985

Resurrection of Christ ~ Role-Play

Distribute “Some Helpful Hints for Teaching Christians” to those who do not have copies from a previous session. Allow a moment to glance over these keys, in review.

Choose two volunteers to act out a teaching scenario on the topic of the Resurrection of Christ. Provide them with copies of this script:

Bahá'í: How does the Physical Resurrection of Jesus help you believe He was the Christ?

Christian: This shows He conquered death and that He has the power to raise me at the second coming.

Bahá'í: I believe in the Bible and in Jesus the Christ, and I know believers often interpret the Bible differently. I believe Jesus does have power over death (or does have the power to raise the dead, etc.) and this faith is what is important to both of us whether or not we agree on a physical resurrection.

(Here the Bahá'í reassures the Christian of the Bahá'ís' belief in the Bible and Jesus as well as acceptance of the proofs of Christ that the Christian believes the physical resurrection itself.)

Christian: But Bahá'u'lláh died and was buried and Christ still lives.
This shows he was “better” than all the other prophets and Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'í: The proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are the same as the proofs of Christ, and the objections to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as the Jews' objections to Christ. Many Jews felt Moses' literal salvation of the Jews by parting the Red Sea was a greater miracle than the Physical Resurrection of Jesus. They denied Jesus because they were expecting the miracle of another literal salvation of the Jewish people rather than one person resurrecting only himself, especially when the Bible had many examples of people being raised to heaven. Therefore, the believers should not reject the Messiah because He does not perform a miracle *they* want or expect as the Jews did to Christ. What are the reasons you believe in Jesus? Let's apply these same proofs to Bahá'u'lláh.

Discuss briefly:

What helpful hints did you see utilized in the role-play?

What other helpful hints might have improved the conversation?

Follow the teaching role-play modeled in previous sessions. Divide into groups of 3:

- Christian
- Bahá'í with *ineffective* answers
- Bahá'í with *effective scriptural* answers

Assign these questions from “Difficult Questions Commonly Asked” (Session One) for role-play practice:

❖ #5, 7, 10, 18, 30



RESURRECTION OF CHRIST ~ ROLE-PLAY SCRIPT

Bahá'í: How does the Physical Resurrection of Jesus help you believe He was the Christ?

Christian: This shows He conquered death and that He has the power to raise me at the second coming.

Bahá'í: I believe in the Bible and in Jesus the Christ, and I know believers often interpret the Bible differently. I believe Jesus does have power over death (or does have the power to raise the dead, etc.) and this faith is what is important to both of us whether or not we agree on a physical resurrection.

(Here the Bahá'í reassures the Christian of the Bahá'ís' belief in the Bible and Jesus as well as acceptance of the proofs of Christ that the Christian believes the physical resurrection itself.)

Christian: But Bahá'u'lláh died and was buried and Christ still lives.
This shows he was “better” than all the other prophets and Bahá'u'lláh.

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SOME HELPFUL HINTS FOR TEACHING CHRISTIANS

- Key 1: The attitude and spirit of a Bahá'í teacher are the most important and effective tools.
- Key 2: Avoid argument and establish agreement:
- Bahá'ís believe in Christ and the Bible;
 - Bahá'ís and Christians have similar beliefs/doctrines;
 - Bahá'ís are eager to turn to the Bible to resolve apparent differences of understanding:
“As a Bahá'í, I believe in the Biblical explanation of (fill in the blank). Let us turn to the Bible and see what the Scripture says.”
- Key 3: Teach that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ as nothing makes sense to Christians without this point.
- Ask for reasons the Christian believes in Christ and state these are the same reasons you believe in Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and invite the Christian to test the proofs of Bahá'u'lláh by using the Bible.
 - Point out that objections to Bahá'u'lláh are no more Biblical than the Jews' objections to Christ.
- Key 4: Interpret the Bible, often symbolically, to establish:
- Bahá'u'lláh is not a false prophet, anti-Christ, devil.
 - Scriptural proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ.
 - Christians are obliged to investigate Bahá'u'lláh.
 - Explanation of Christian doctrines based on literal interpretations are inconsistent with Bahá'í Writings.
- Key 5: Treat Christians as spiritual brothers and sisters who need to have barriers removed to know that Bahá'u'lláh is their Lord Christ.
- Key 6: Speak from the mindset of Christianity as “our religion” too.
- Key 7: Realize that most Christians are not listening until you refer to the Bible as the bridge between scriptural Christianity and Bahá'í beliefs.
- Key 8: Avoid Bahá'í jargon (e.g., Manifestation, Dispensation, etc.).
- Key 9: Anticipate and offer to relieve **fear** that the Christian has (false prophet, devil, etc.)
- Key 10: Redirect questions on doctrinal issues to proofs of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Key 11: Leave some of the Creative Word in the hands of the Christian and always leave as a friend and fellow-believer in Christ and the Bible.
- Key 12: Pray that this soul may overcome their barrier and recognize that their Lord has returned.

Armageddon

Acknowledge that there is currently a heightened sense of fear of “end-times,” including the Biblical “Battle of Armageddon.” Here is an opportunity for Bahá’ís to remember to:

...labor serenely, confidently, and unremittingly to lend our share of assistance, in whichever way circumstances may enable us, to the operation of the forces which, as marshaled and directed by Bahá'u'lláh, are leading humanity out of the valley of misery and shame to the loftiest summits of power and glory.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 124

If possible, locate Mt. Carmel and the city of Megiddo on a map of Israel.

Share this information on Armageddon:

- “Hebrew for “Mount of Megiddo.” The word occurs only in Revelations 16:16 – “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon”--as a Greek transliteration of the term claimed to be Hebrew. It represents the location of the final cosmic battle of the forces of good and evil, according to the apocalyptic view of the writer. However, no such term appears elsewhere in Hebrew, and there is no mountain known to ancient or modern geographers by that name....Megiddo, situated at the north end of the major pass through the Mount Carmel range....”
Harper’s Bible Dictionary, p. 64
- Map 3 of the *Oxford Companion to the Bible* (p. 889) shows the dominant mountain nearest the city of Megiddo to be Mt. Carmel overlooking the pass to the sea where great battles were fought in ancient times.

Hand out, and read aloud in the large group, passages from both the Bible and the Bahá’í Faith entitled “Armageddon”. Discuss:

How does Mount Carmel literally and spiritually fit the prophesy of Armageddon?



ARMAGEDDON

Focus Topic:

How does Mount Carmel literally and spiritually fit the prophesy of Armageddon?

Mark these passages in your Bible.

1. *But in the last days it shall come to pass, [that] the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make [them] afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken [it].* (Mic. 4:1-4, KJV) Note: “The New Testament continues this imagery using the term ‘heavenly Jerusalem’ or Zion metaphorically in reference to...the place of God’s dwelling. (Rev. 14:1)

Harper’s Bible Dictionary, p. 1166

2. *In this Dispensation, these laws are destined to flow from His Holy Mountain (Mount Carmel) even as in the Mosaic Dispensation the law of God was promulgated from Zion.*

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *Establishment of the Universal House of Justice*, p. 442

3. *Render thanks unto thy Lord O Carmel.... Rejoice, for God hath in this Day established upon thee His throne, hath made thee the dawning-place of His signs and the day spring of the evidences of His Revelation.... Call out to Zion, O Carmel, and announce the joyful tidings.... Ere long will God sail His Ark upon thee....*

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Gleanings*, pp. 15-16

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities to complete before the next session.

1. Prepare a presentation of Bahá'u'lláh's passage from the *Kitab-i-Iqán* concerning "Every Eye Shall See Him" using His metaphors in a visual/artistic way. Share with adults and/or children.
2. Share 'Abdu'l-Bahá's explanation about resurrection with a Christian you have been teaching.
3. Memorize a passage of your choice from today's learning.

Closing Devotions

Close with a musical/visual meditation: show video clips from Bahá'í newsreels, or show photos or slides of the Arc on Mt. Carmel, while listening to or singing, "The Queen of Carmel."

"The Queen of Carmel" is sung on the *We Have Come to Sing Praises* CD; there are several other versions on other CD's and cassettes.

*A Supplemental Course of the
Fundamental Verities of the Bahá'í Faith*

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION: THE BIBLE AND BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session Seven

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS
ALL PROPHECIES



*We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world
for your salvation.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Session 7:

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS ALL PROPHECIES

Topics:

CHRISTIANS MUST INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS CHRIST RETURNED HELPFUL HINTS & SUMMARY

We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, Page 92

Though immersed in the ocean of misbelief, yet with your lips ye profess the one true faith of God. Him whom I abhor ye have loved, and of My foe ye have made a friend. Notwithstanding, ye walk on My earth complacent and self-satisfied, heedless that My earth is weary of you and everything within it shunneth you.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *Persian Hidden Words*, Page 20

O My brother! When a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading unto the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, Page 264

The proof of the validity of a Manifestation of God is the penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ: *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Page 341

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

MATTHEW 7:16-20, KJV

Objectives of the Session:

Knowledge

To acquaint oneself with passages of the Bible directly relating to Bahá'u'lláh's coming.

Wisdom

To appreciate how the Kitab-i-Iqán, Bahá'u'lláh's own explanation of His proofs, "unlocks" the Scripture for all Christians in fulfillment of Biblical prophesy.

Spiritual Perception

To strengthen one's awe and appreciation of the stupendous nature of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and the fundamental verities of our Faith as fulfillment and explanation of the Old and New Testament.

Eloquent Speech

To gain confidence that referring Christians to "scriptural Christianity" directly from the Bible itself leads to proofs that Bahá'u'lláh is Christ Returned and will convincingly answer most questions.

To gain confidence and skills for presenting Bahá'u'lláh to Christians in a way they can understand and are likely to accept, using the Bible as our shared Holy Book and arbiter of truth.

To gain confidence and skills in referring to the Bible systematically.

To learn how to avoid criticism and argument, and build bridges of agreement and mutual respect with our fellow believers in Christ.

Session 7:

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH FULFILLS ALL PROPHECIES

Topics:

CHRISTIANS MUST INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST HELPFUL HINTS & SUMMARY

Suggested Schedule of Activities / List of Materials Needed

Devotions	10 minutes	<i>Other Materials Needed</i>
Reflection and Consultation	5 minutes	
Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh - story	10 minutes	Prayer books
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ -		Bibles
6 Points for a Brief Response	15 minutes	Music, recorded or sung
Biblical Proofs ... Finding Relevant Bible Passages	15 minutes	Post-it notes or index cards
Biblical Proofs ... Sharing with Others	15 minutes	Blank note cards for each
Biblical Proofs ... Fruits of the Spirit	15 minutes	Art & craft materials
Biblical Proofs ... Bahá'u'lláh's Example of the Fruits...	20 minutes	Tree drawn on paper
Break	10 minutes	Paper fruits, labeled
Teaching - Role Play	20 minutes	Beautifully wrapped copy of the
Biblical Proofs ... from the Kitáb-i-Iqán	10 minutes	<i>Kitáb-i-Iqán</i>
Biblical Proofs ... Prophecies Fulfilled	10 minutes	Additional copies: <i>Kitáb-i-Iqán</i>
Summary of Presentation	10 minutes	Music: In This Day Bahá'u'lláh
Personal Teaching Plan and Course Evaluation	10 minutes	Parting gift quote, "Tablet to a
Extended After-class Activities	5 minutes	True Seeker"=
Closing Devotions	5 minutes=	
=		

Reproducible Pages for Participant Handouts

Session Seven Objectives	=
Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh	= = Proofs of the Manifestation from the
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh ... 6 Points	Kitáb-i-Iqán
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the ... Worksheet	Some Prophecies Given by Bahá'u'lláh
Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the ... Quotes	... Fulfilled
Proof of the Fruits of the Spirit	Resources for Further Study
Fruit images to label	Tablet to a True Seeker
Stories About the Suffering of Bahá'u'lláh=	Evaluation form=

Devotions

Carefully prepare the learning environment to reflect hospitality, beauty, friendliness and love. Arrive early to pray in the room before the session begins. Lovingly greet the friends as they arrive.

Open with a prayer for spiritual growth, such as "I am, O my God, but a tiny seed..."

Introduce the theme of this session: Bahá'u'lláh Fulfills All Prophecies.

Reflection and Consultation

- Invite the friends to briefly reflect on the time that has passed between session six and this one.
- Invite a volunteer to recite memorized verses from session six.
- Invite the friends to share teaching stories, especially ones in which the participant shared views about Resurrection with a Christian.

Christians Must Investigate Bahá'u'lláh ~ Story

Tell the story, “The Goose and the Moon,” (from Iran, taken from *The Sunshine Tree*) a moral tale of mistaking reality for illusion.

* * * * *

A goose was searching for fish one night when she saw the new moon’s reflection on the quiet pond. ‘A fish!’ she said, and dived into the water. But she found no fish. When the ripples went away and the water grew still, the silvery reflection of the moon came back. ‘A fish!’ cried the goose happily, and dived into the water again. But again she caught nothing. When the pond became calm once more, the reflection of the moon floated on the dark water. ‘A fish?’ said the goose. But when she dived into the water, once more she found nothing. ‘Where is that fish?’ she thought angrily. Then she looked up and saw the new moon shining in the sky. ‘So that’s it,’ she grumbled. ‘It was only the moon reflected on the water of the pond. But it shall not fool me again!’ And off she went. The next night, the goose went back to the pond. A silvery fish was swimming just below the surface of the water. The goose turned up her beak and shook her feathers in disgust. ‘That moon again! But I’m a wise goose now – it doesn’t fool me!’ And she waddled off to hunt for worms in the mud.

* * * * *

Process the story:

- ❖ Don’t we often search for something we want and look in the wrong places, or our own expectations blind us to the truth? How is the goose like human beings searching for spiritual truth?

Hand out the verses about searching, and read these aloud. (Potential points are included on the Facilitator’s Notes.)

Discuss the focus topic:

How does the Bible encourage investigation of truth?

FACILITATOR'S NOTES: CHRISTIANS MUST INVESTIGATE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Focus Topic:

How does the Bible encourage investigation of truth?

1. Christians must test the spirits to see if they are God's teachings:

...but try the spirits whether they are of God ...

1 JOHN 4:1, KJV

Therefore a Christian is commanded to test the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

2. Jesus gives the test instructions to see whether spirits are of God:

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

JOHN 7:16-18, KJV

Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings and life clearly show He did not seek His own glory but only God's glory as among other things Bahá'u'lláh gave up all His earthly wealth and position of power to serve God.

3. Christ says: *...Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*

1 JOHN 4:2, KJV

Bahá'u'lláh refers to Jesus as the Spirit of God in *Gleanings*, p. 57

4. *Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

1 THESS. 5:19-21, KJV

Christians are instructed to "prove all things" so as not to quench the spirit or miss the fulfillment of prophecy.

5. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may ...stand before the Son of Man.*

LUKE 21:36, KJV

The word "may" implies that Christians must prayerfully consider the claim of Bahá'u'lláh and that recognition of the Return is not automatic.

6. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

MATT. 7:21, KJV

Therefore, if Christians are not watching at all times, testing the spirits, proving all things, then they are not doing the will of the Father and in jeopardy of not entering the Kingdom.

7. *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

LUKE 11: 9-10, KJV



Focus Topic:

How does the Bible encourage investigation of truth?
Mark these passages in your Bible for easy future reference.

1. Christians must test the spirits to see if they are God's teachings:

...but try the spirits whether they are of God ...

1 JOHN 4:1, KJV

2. Jesus gives the test instructions to see whether spirits are of God:

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

JOHN 7:16-18, KJV

3. Also, Christ says: *...Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.*

1 JOHN 4:2, KJV

4. *Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*

1 THESS. 5:19-21, KJV

5. *Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may ...stand before the Son of Man.*

LUKE 21:36, KJV

6. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

MATT. 7:21, KJV

7. *And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.*

LUKE 11: 9-10, KJV

Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ ~ Six Points for a Brief Response

Handout and briefly present the “Six Points for a Brief Response.” These are a summary of key proofs of Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ.

1. Your Personal Testimony: Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh as Christ's Return has recreated your spiritual and personal life, brought you a closer and deeper relationship with the Spirit of Christ and has done so for over six (6) million Bahá'ís who are a cross-section of humanity. (Emphasize a renewed and closer relationship with the Holy Spirit and Christ in your life and the promise of the same for those who practice the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.)
2. The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those of Jesus, and the objections to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those raised against Jesus (see “Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Jews to Christ” in Session 3, pp. 13-14).
3. Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the prophecies of both Old and New Testaments.
4. Bahá'u'lláh gave up a life of wealth and social prestige to lead a sinless life of suffering and self-sacrifice to proclaim His teachings (i.e., emphasize the suffering of Bahá'u'lláh).
5. Bahá'u'lláh in clear and unmistakable terms claims to be the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Counselor Christ promised the Father would send in His place.
6. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon all humanity to accept Jesus and the truth of His message as Christ prophecies his Return would do. Bahá'u'lláh has brought Buddhists, Hindus and Jews to accept Jesus who normally rarely do so.

Invite participants to look more closely at the Biblical *criteria* for Christ's Return, and how Bahá'u'lláh fulfills these. Hand out the worksheet, which is a matching exercise. On the top are Bible verses which give criteria for what Christ's Return will do. On the bottom are statements by Bahá'u'lláh.

Instruct participants to work with the person seated next to them: Read the Biblical criteria and write the letter of the passage from the Bahá'í Writings which fulfill or support that verse.

As people finish, pass out “answer sheets:” compilations against which they can check their work. Suggest using this compilation as a proof of Bahá'u'lláh's fulfillment of Biblical criteria for the Return of Christ.



BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST ~ SIX POINTS FOR A BRIEF RESPONSE

1. Your Personal Testimony: Recognizing Bahá'u'lláh as Christ's Return has recreated your spiritual and personal life, brought you a closer and deeper relationship with the Spirit of Christ and has done so for over six (6) million Bahá'ís who are a cross-section of humanity.
2. The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those of Jesus, and the objections to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as those raised against Jesus (see "Objections of Christians to Bahá'u'lláh are the same as Jews to Christ").
3. Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the prophecies of both Old and New Testaments.
4. Bahá'u'lláh gave up a life of wealth and social prestige to lead a sinless life of suffering and self-sacrifice to proclaim His teachings (i.e., emphasize the suffering of Bahá'u'lláh).
5. Bahá'u'lláh in clear and unmistakable terms claims to be the Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Counselor Christ promised the Father would send in His place.
6. Bahá'u'lláh calls upon all humanity to accept Jesus and the truth of His message as Christ prophesies his Return would do. Bahá'u'lláh has brought Buddhists, Hindus and Jews to accept Jesus who normally rarely do so.



BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST ~ WORKSHEET

Write the letter of the passage from the Bahá'í Writings below which fulfill or support the following Biblical criteria for what Christ's return will do.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>___ 1. Testify of Christ and Glorify His Station.
John 15:26, 16:14</p> <p>___ 2. Teach and bring to remembrance all things.
John 14:26</p> <p>___ 3. Guide the Christians unto all truth.
John 16:13</p> | <p>___ 4. Tell the Christians of things yet to come.
John 16:13</p> <p>___ 5. Speak only by the authority of God.
John 16:13</p> <p>___ 6. Be sent from the Father.
John 14:26, 15:26</p> <p>___ 7. Convict the world of sin and righteousness and judgment.
John 16:8-11</p> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- A. We have laid bare the divine mysteries and in most explicit language foretold future events, that neither the doubts of the faithless, nor the denials of the froward, nor the whisperings of the heedless may keep back the seekers of truth from the Source of the light of the One True God.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 241
- B. Say, this is the One Who glorified the Son and hath exalted His Cause.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.12
- C. The Comforter Whose advent all the scriptures have promised is now come that He may reveal unto you all knowledge and wisdom.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 104-05
- D. Not of Mine Own volition have I revealed Myself, but God of His Own Choosing, hath manifested me.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 11
- E. The essence of religion is to testify unto that which the Lord hath revealed, and follow that which He hath ordained in His mighty Book.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh* p. 155
- F. So great is the folly and perversity of the people, that they have turned their face toward their own thoughts and desires, and have turned their back upon the knowledge and will of God....
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 171
- G. Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His own self, but as bidden by him who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p.12

After checking your responses, mark all Bible and Bahá'í citations in your Bible.

Answers: 1-B 2-E 3-C 4-A 5-G 6-D 7-F

Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ ~ Finding Relevant Bible Passages

Remind participants to continue annotating their Bibles with prophecies referring to the Second Coming—fulfilled by Bahá'u'lláh. Ideally, participants will have marked their Bibles throughout the course. This is an opportunity to go back through their work and make sure that key passages are marked for easy future reference.

Using pencil or small strips of Post-It notes, mark Bibles or make an index card with the following verses to be used as a handy reference:

Place of His Coming: Carmel and Plain of Sharon will see Him. (Is. 35:1-2)

Where He Comes From: From Assyria and fortified cities. (Micah 7:12) ...from the way of the East. (Eze. 43:2)

How He Would Come: As Thief in the Night. (2 Peter 3:10)
...and unexpectedly. (Matt. 24:36)

Come with a New Name: Isaiah 62:2 and Revelations 2:17 and 3:12;
Isaiah 35:1-2 refers to the “Glory of the Lord.”

Time of His Coming: Prophecy of Daniel explained in *Some Answered Questions*, pp. 41-44 to be 1844.

Accompanying Events (less specific): Gospel preached throughout the world (Matt. 24:14); wars and rumors of wars (Mark 13:7-9); terrible troubles (Dan. 12:1).

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels. (Matt. 16:27)

Note: “Glory of the Lord” appears 37 times in the Old Testament and 3 times in the New Testament!

Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ ~ Sharing with Others

Make a greeting card for a Christian friend or in preparation for someone you will soon be teaching.

Handout “Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh”.

Silently read the verses and quotations and choose one or two to write on your card.

Decorate the card with the art supplies provided.



BIBLICAL PROOFS FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AS THE RETURN OF CHRIST

Focus Topic:

Select one or two of the following to include in a card you will give to a Christian friend.
Mark passages in your Bible.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God.

1 JOHN 4:1-3, KJV

Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and [that] no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.

1 COR. 12:3, KJV

Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or [whether] I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true.

JOHN 7:16-18, KJV

Verily, He Who is the Spirit of Truth is come to guide you unto all truth. He speaketh not as prompted by His Own Self, but as bidden by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 12

Not of My Own volition have I revealed myself but God, of His Own Choosing hath manifested Me.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 125

The glory of all greatness belongeth to God, the Incomparable, the All-Compelling.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 35

Tree of Fruits of the Spirit

- Draw a simple tree on a black or white board, or prepare a simple line drawing of a tree on paper to post where all can see it.
- Pass out prepared fruit shapes that have been cut out of paper with the words: LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF CONTROL on each “fruit.” (See following pages for examples.)
- Provide participants with the handout “Fruits of the Spirit.”
- As the list of fruits of the spirit are read, have volunteers tape their “fruit” on the tree.
- Remind the participants to mark these passages in their Bibles.

Next, ask if anyone recalls what Shoghi Effendi said would “unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of this sacred cause”? Read aloud his words, from *Bahá'í Administration*, p.66:

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 confirms it is the “Fruits of the Spirit,” the “eternal principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh,” demonstrated in the Bahá'í Community as the acquisition of spiritual attributes that “will unfailingly and alone secure the undoubted triumph of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.”

Reflection

Provide for quiet reflection in journals, on these questions:

What was the greatest proof of the truth of Bahá'u'lláh for you personally?
What strengthened your belief as you were seeking?



PROOF OF THE FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

1. *Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither [can] a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

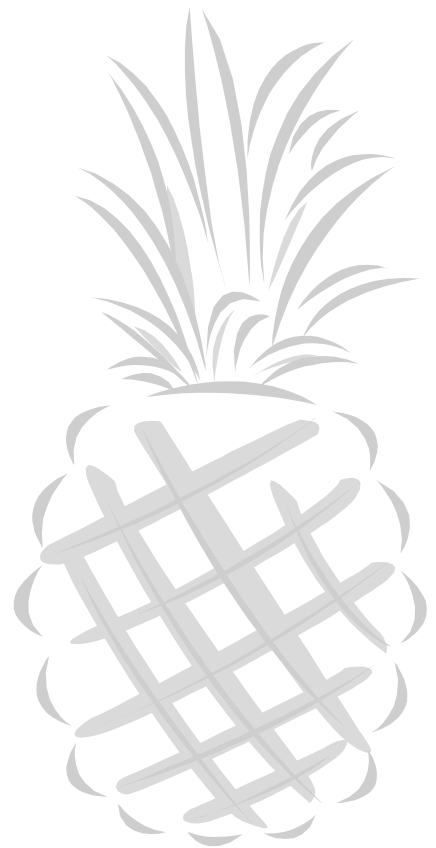
MATT. 7:16-20, KJV

2. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.*

GAL. 5:22-23, KJV

3. *The proof of the validity of a Manifestation of God is the penetration and potency of His Word, the cultivation of heavenly attributes in the hearts and lives of His followers and the bestowal of divine education upon the world of humanity. This is absolute proof.*

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 341



Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ: Bahá'u'lláh's Example of Fruits of the Spirit

Begin by reading aloud 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eloquent reminder that the example of Bahá'u'lláh's life – His sinless, self-sacrificing life of suffering – illustrates the fruits of the spirit.

Bahá'u'lláh who, during His life, bore innumerable trials and persecutions in order to show forth to the world of mankind the virtues of the world of divinity, making it possible for you to realize the supremacy of the spirit....

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, Paris Talks, p. 160

Distribute short stories on the Life of Bahá'u'lláh.

Divide group into small groups of 3-5 and ask each group to choose one story to practice reading. Each group member should have a turn practicing with feeling, pausing in appropriate places. Part of the benefit is that the same story is heard several times.

Select one member of each group to share their story with the large group.

Remind the friends that most Christians are well-versed in stories about Christ. We should make every effort to know stories about Bahá'u'lláh as well.

Note: There are a number of sources for stories of Bahá'u'lláh's suffering and sacrifices. See the following pages for examples. You may wish to include others.



STORIES ABOUT THE SUFFERINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Describing His confinement in the Siyah-Chál, the Blessed Beauty recalled: “The weight of the chain placed about Our neck was difficult to bear [the heaviest chain used weighed over fifty kilos], but having the thumbs of both hands bound together behind the back was even more aggravating. The royal guards were unyielding, but the executioners would show us kindness. One even offered Me tea and some grapes, but as I was freighted with chains and My hands were bound, I was unable to accept them.”

Continuing His recollections Bahá'u'lláh said: “To whatever place We were banished, difficulties ensued similar to those experienced after Our arrival in Akká. Now, however, the situation is reversed so that people here are inclined towards meekness. It has been like this wherever We have Dwelt. At first the Cause of God was unknown and We were engulfed in tribulations. But now, praise be to God, the people of these regions are manifesting their humility and respect towards Us.”

Stories of Bahá'u'lláh, compiled by Ali-Akbar Furutan, #142, p. 108



Even in the early years of their married life, they, my father and mother, took part as little as possible in State functions, social ceremonies, and the luxurious habits of ordinary highly-placed and wealthy families in the land of Persia; she, and her noble-hearted husband, counted these worldly pleasures meaningless, and preferred rather to occupy themselves in caring for the poor, and for all who were unhappy, or in trouble.

From our doors nobody was ever turned away; the hospitable board was spread for all comers.

Constantly the poor women came to my mother, to whom they poured out their various stories of woe, to be comforted and consoled by her loving helpfulness.

Whilst the people called my father “The Father of the Poor,” they spoke of my mother as “The Mother of Consolation”....

Words of the Greatest Holy Leaf in The Chosen Highway by Lady Blomfield, p. 40



One day I remember very well, though I was only six years old at the time...suddenly and hurriedly a servant came rushing in great distress to my mother.

“The master, the master, he is arrested—I have seen him. He has walked many miles! Oh, they have beaten him! They say he has suffered the torture of the bastinado! His feet are bleeding! He has no shoes on! His turban is gone! His clothes are torn! There are chains upon his neck!”

My poor mother’s face grew whiter and whiter.

We children were terribly frightened and could only weep bitterly.

Immediately everybody, all our relations, and friends, and servants fled from our house in terror, only one man-servant...remained, and one woman. Our palace, and the smaller houses belonging to it were very soon stripped of everything: furniture, treasures, all were stolen by the people.

Mirza Musá, my father’s brother, who was always very kind to us, helped my mother and her three children to escape into hiding. She succeeded in saving some few of the marriage treasure, which were all of our vast possessions left to us. These things were sold with the money my mother was able to pay the jailers to take food to my father in the prison, and to meet other expenses incurred later on.... The prison into which my father had been cast was a terrible place, seven steps below the ground; it was ankle-deep in filth, infested with horrible vermin, and of an indescribable loathsomeness. Added to this, there was no glimmer of light in that noisome place. Within its walls forty Bábis were crowded; murderers and highway robbers were also imprisoned there.

Words of the Greatest Holy Leaf, The Chosen Highway by Lady Blomfield, p. 40-41

Teaching—Role Play

Form new groups of three.

Each group shall designate characters:

Christian seeker

Bahá'í with an *ineffective* answer

Bahá'í with an *effective scriptural* answer

- ❖ Assign questions selected from “Difficult Questions Commonly Asked”:
#20, 21, 22
There may be other questions participants would like to try answering.

If time permits, groups may have the opportunity to role-play more than one scenario.

Re-enact one response for the full group.

Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ ~ from the Kitáb-i-Iqán

Reverently bring out a beautifully wrapped parcel (a copy of the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*). As you unwrap it, remind the friends that Bahá'u'lláh gave us an eternal gift that would forever “unseal the books” – our key to understanding prophesy: the *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, the Book of Certitude.

Among the many gems within this precious gift are proofs of the Manifestation. Distribute the handout, “Proofs of the Manifestation from the Kitáb-i-Iqán”.

Provide a few moments for individual perusal. Have copies of the Kitáb-i-Iqán available for individuals who wish to refer to His text.

Suggest that, as Christian friends follow the admonition of Jesus to “test the spirits,” these points can assist them.



1. He is opposed by the people. (pp. 11-13)
2. Always foretells the coming of Another after Him. (p. 13)
3. Gives signs that would herald Another after Him. (p.13)
4. Oppression envelopes whole world. (pp. 311-32) [i.e., iniquity shall cover the earth and seeker will not know where to seek knowledge of God.]
5. Re-establish and re-emphasize the Law of Prayer. (p. 39)
6. Fearless and steadfast in the face of persecution and rejection. (p. 45)
7. Uneducated in schools of the time. (p. 46)
8. A star appears in the visible heaven and a star in the invisible heaven (e.g., John the Baptist, Ahmad, and Kazim.) (pp. 62-65)
9. Produce a book of Divine Scripture. (p. 91, p. 205) “In mine hand I carry the testimony of God, your Lord and the Lord of your sires of old. Weigh it with the just balance that ye possess, the Balance of the testimony of the Prophets and Messengers of God.” (*Gleanings*, p. 281)
10. His own Self; the fruits of the Spirit. (p. 75)
11. Small group of holy disciples of high character recognize first and are scorned by learned and wealthy and testify through their acts of the Faith. (pp. 221-26)
12. Transforming effect of His words and teachings of His followers. (pp. 221-226)
13. All have been subject to heinous cruelties for their teachings. (p. 6)
14. All have suffered through the authority of religious leaders of the time. (p. 15)
15. All have been subject to poverty and afflictions, hunger, ills, and chances of this world. (p. 73)
16. Each possess all attributes of God and sovereignty over all things. (p. 107)

Biblical Proofs for Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ ~ Prophecies Fulfilled

Handout “Some Prophecies Given by Bahá'u'lláh That Have Been Fulfilled”.

Silently read through the prophecies and place a star next to those that most touch your heart.
Select one “favorite” prophecy from those starred.

With a partner, share your “star” prophecy and a brief reason for its selection.

Reflect: *What seeker do I know who is truly investigating Bahá'u'lláh's claims?*
What proofs are most likely to touch the heart of that seeker?
How can I demonstrate to that seeker through my own actions the “fruits” of this spirit?



SOME PROPHECIES GIVEN BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH THAT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED

1. *We have laid bare the divine mysteries and in most explicit language foretold future events, that neither the doubts of the faithless, nor the denials of the froward, not the whisperings of the heedless may keep back the seekers of truth from the Source of the light of the One True God.*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 241

2. *Through the prophecies He, in an unmistakable language, hath made have been fulfilled....*

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings*, p. 58

Bahá'u'lláh states He has made explicit prophecies as one of His Proofs.

3. *There will be no successful attempt to create sects in the Bahá'í Faith.*

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *God Passes By*, p. 100

4. World War I and World War II as the destruction of the German Empire in two wars on German soil.

see SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, pp. 36-37

5. Fall of Napoleon III and loss of his empire.

see SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, p. 30

6. Fall and destruction of the Ottoman Empire

see SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, pp. 61-62

7. Fall and destruction of the Moslem Caliphate.

see SHOGHI EFFENDI, *God Passes By*, p. 231

8. Fall and destruction of the Persian Qajar Dynasty.

see SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Promised Day is Come*, pp. 68-70

These are only some of the fulfilled prophecies of Bahá'u'lláh. These prophecies focus on the warnings given to some of the most powerful empires of His day that refused to acknowledge His written summons and were destroyed by their lack of response to Him as He prophesied.

Summary of Presentation

As a review, in a small or large group discuss each of the following statements:

First we must be sanctified if our utterance is to have power.

The attitude and spirit a Bahá'í teaches with is the single most important and effective tool.

We must know what Christians believe so we can speak their language and use their concepts.

We must know what we as Bahá'ís believe about Christ and the Bible.

We must know how to use the Bible as a bridge between Christian and Bahá'í beliefs. Two keys from the Kitáb-i-Iqán:

- Two-fold Language of Scripture
- Two-fold Station of Manifestation.

We must know how to reinterpret the Bible for Christians to connect their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh.

- Proving Bahá'u'lláh is the Return of Christ by using the Bible.
- Resolving objections by reinterpreting Biblical literal reading and pointing out Jews had exactly the same literal objections to Christ as Christians to Bahá'u'lláh and that the proofs of Jesus as the Christ are the same as Bahá'u'lláh as the Return of Christ.
- Explain that the Bible must be understood spiritually if all the Bible verses on the subject are considered.

We must use the language of love to become increasingly effective teachers of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. For our fellow-believers in Christ, the Bible is the language of love.

Session Conclusion

Personal Teaching Plan and Course Evaluation

Invite individuals to turn to their personal teaching plan (begun in Session 1).

Play quiet music while friends take 5 minutes to reflect on today's learning and how it applies to their personal teaching plan.

Journal:

How have I increased my knowledge, spiritual insights, and skills for teaching Christians through my participation in this course?

How will I sustain or increase the momentum of teaching Christians that I've begun in this course?

How will I encourage others to increase their effectiveness in teaching Christians with the Bible?

Invite participants to share their reflection in the whole group.

Then complete the attached evaluation form. Mail copies of the evaluation form to the NTTC, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423.

Extended After-Class Activities

Choose one or more of these extended activities for personal development.

1. Invite a Christian friend and family to “swap stories” with your family about Christ and Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Share “Some Prophecies Given by Bahá'u'lláh that Have Been Fulfilled” with a seeker.
3. Memorize a passage of your choice from today's learning.
4. Carefully review 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talks given in the West to Christian audiences, published in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*. Study the Master's approach to building love and unity with His audience, using the language of the Bible to teach spiritual truth. Share the results of your study with fellow participants in this course. Use the results of your study to continue your development as a teacher.

Resources for Further Study

Inform participants that, if they desire to study the topic of the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity in the future, there are a number of additional resources available, including those in the following list:

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*

Eric Bowes, *The New Gospel—Good News for Christians*

Nabil I. Hanna, *Bible Proofs—A Fireside Aid for Teaching Christians*

Gary Matthews, *Every Eye Shall See—Bible Evidence for the Return of Christ*

Thomas Tai-Seale, *Thy Kingdom Come—A Biblical Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith*

William Sears, *Thief in the Night—The Case of the Missing Millennium*

Michael Sours, *The Prophecies of Jesus*

Michael Sours, *Understanding Biblical Evidence—Preparing for a Bahá'í /Christian Dialogue, Vol. 1*

Michael Sours, *Understanding Christian Beliefs—Preparing for a Bahá'í /Christian Dialogue, Vol. 2*

Michael Sours, *Understanding Biblical Prophecy—Preparing for a Bahá'í /Christian Dialogue, Vol. 3*

Michael Sours, *Jesus Christ in Sacred Bahá'í Literature—A Compilation with Introductory Observations*

George Townshend, *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*

George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel—The Bible and the Bahá'í Faith*

David Young, *The Resurrection of All Mankind*

David Young, *Teaching Christians Effectively* (video/learning materials kit)

SOME RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Authoritative Texts of the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*

Works of Bahá'í Authors

Eric Bowes, *The New Gospel—Good News for Christians*

Nabil I. Hanna, *Bible Proofs—A Fireside Aid for Teaching Christians*

Gary Matthews, *Every Eye Shall See—Bible Evidence for the Return of Christ*

Thomas Tai-Seale, *Thy Kingdom Come—A Biblical Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith*

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Michael Sours, *Understanding Biblical Prophecy—Preparing for a Bahá'í /Christian Dialogue, Vol. 3*

Michael Sours, *Jesus Christ in Sacred Bahá'í Literature—A Compilation with Introductory Observations*

George Townshend, *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*

George Townshend, *The Heart of the Gospel—The Bible and the Bahá'í Faith*

David Young, *Teaching Christians Effectively* (video/learning materials kit)

All the above resources are available through the Bahá'í Distribution Service, 1-800-999-9019

In addition, David Young's *The Resurrection of All Mankind* is available from the Spokane Bahá'í Library of Spokane, Washington.

Closing Devotions

Present a gift quote, perhaps from “Tablet to a True Seeker,” on beautiful paper to participants. Ask someone to read it aloud with quiet music in the background.

Sing together, “In This Day, Bahá’u’lláh,” from the *World Congress New York 1992* CD or from the *We Have Come to Sing Praises* CD.



O My brother! When a true seeker determineth to take the step of search in the path leading unto the knowledge of the Ancient of Days, he must, before all else, cleanse his heart, which is the seat of the revelation of the inner mysteries of God, from the obscuring dust of all acquired knowledge, and the allusions of the embodiments of satanic fancy. He must purge his breast, which is the sanctuary of the abiding love of the Beloved, of every defilement, and sanctify his soul from all that pertaineth to water and clay, from all shadowy and ephemeral attachments. He must so cleanse his heart that no remnant of either love or hate may linger therein, lest that love blindly incline him to error, or that hate repel him away from the truth. Even as thou dost witness in this Day how most of the people, because of such love and hate, are bereft of the immortal Face, have strayed far from the Embodiments of the Divine mysteries, and, shepherdless, are roaming through the wilderness of oblivion and error.

That seeker must, at all times, put his trust in God, must renounce the peoples of the earth, must detach himself from the world of dust, and cleave unto Him Who is the Lord of Lords. He must never seek to exalt himself above any one, must wash away from the tablet of his heart every trace of pride and vain-glory, must cling unto patience and resignation, observe silence and refrain from idle talk.... Our purpose in revealing these convincing and weighty utterances is to impress upon the seeker that he should regard all else beside God as transient, and count all things save Him, Who is the Object of all adoration, as utter nothingness.

These are among the attributes of the exalted, and constitute the hall-mark of the spiritually-minded. They have already been mentioned in connection with the requirements of the wayfarers that tread the path of Positive Knowledge. When the detached wayfarer and sincere seeker hath fulfilled these essential conditions, then and only then can he be called a true seeker.

Bahá'u'lláh
Gleanings, Pages: 264-266



Fundamental Verities Course – Part Four – Progressive Revelation: The Bible and Bahá'u'lláh

Location of Course:_____ **Facilitator(s):**_____ **Ending Date:**_____

Session(s) Attended:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All | <input type="checkbox"/> Session 4: Christian Beliefs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Session 1: The Gift of Teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> Session 5: Recognition of the Manifestations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Session 2: Teaching Christians About Bahá'u'lláh | <input type="checkbox"/> Session 6: The Second Coming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Session 3: Shared Doctrines | <input type="checkbox"/> Session 7: Bahá'u'lláh Fulfills All Prophecies |

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

What sessions were most informative and why?

What type of activity did you most enjoy and why?

What session was the least informative and why?

What activity did you least enjoy and why?

What type of extended after-class activity did you most enjoy and why?

(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.

Please return this form to: National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Bahá'í School, 3208 S. State Rd., Davison, MI 48423.