

**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

Blessed art thou, since thou art engaged in rendering a service which will make thy face to shine in the Abhá Kingdom, and that is the education and training of children. If one should, in the right way, teach and train the children, he will be performing a service than which none is greater at the sacred Threshold. According to what we have heard, you are succeeding in this. You must, however, struggle unceasingly to perfect yourself and win ever higher achievements.

*‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS  
VOL. I, P. 271*

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

**National Bahá’í  
Education  
Task Force**

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Bahá’ís of the United States

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Printed in the United States of America

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## *About Your Teacher Development Workshops*

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These Teacher Development Workshops are designed to follow the 32-hour **Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth**, which provides practice using the **Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides** and the growing collection of **Core Curriculum Storybooks** to teach children. The Lesson Planning Guides provide hundreds of detailed plans for lessons to systematically progress through the entire nine-year curriculum as well as practical suggestions for adapting the lessons to diverse learners. Core Curriculum Storybooks provide a rich assortment of stories from Bahá'í history, stories that explore spiritual principles and spiritual qualities, and stories about heroic children and youth who champion the Cause of God through their actions.

Because a 32-hour training program cannot possibly provide all the knowledge, training, and skill development required by all teachers of children and junior youth, the National Bahá'í Education Task Force created the Teacher Development Workshops to assist teachers to further develop their own spiritual qualities, build skills of service, and provide a framework for extended study of the Bahá'í writings.

Read ye The Hidden Words, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith. Read, with close attention, the Tablets of Tarázát (Ornaments), Kalimát (Words of Paradise), Tajalliyát (Effulgences), Ishráqát (Splendours), and Bishárát (Glad Tidings), and rise up as ye are bidden in the heavenly teachings.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #17, p. 35

The purpose of such training is to endow ever-growing contingents of believers with the spiritual insights, the knowledge, and the skills needed to carry out the many tasks of accelerated expansion and consolidation, including the teaching and deepening of a large number of people – adults, youth, and children.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, IN *TRAINING INSTITUTES*, (1998) p. 17

The ten workshops in this edition are presented in a coherent order, but are designed with flexibility in mind and can be presented in any order according to the particular needs of the teachers in your community. Each workshop can be completed in approximately three hours, but you need not feel constrained by that time frame. Depending on the circumstances of your community you may choose to devote more time to certain topics.

Above all, these workshops should be used with the ultimate purpose to serve the needs of the children and junior youth of your communities, whether from Bahá'í families or otherwise. We welcome your feedback, ideas, and contributions for further expansion of the Teacher Development program.

### **The National Children's Education and Research Center**

Established in 1991 as the National Teacher Training Center, the **National Children's Education and Research Center** at Louhelen Bahá'í School in Davison, Michigan, works closely with the National Bahá'í Education Task Force for the ongoing development of this curriculum. For more information about the curriculum or training programs, please contact the NCERC at (810) 653-5033, or email [NCERC@usbnc.org](mailto:NCERC@usbnc.org).

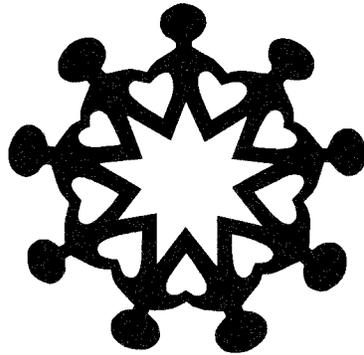












**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Commitment, Dedication, Perseverance

**Building Skills**

Personal Development Planning

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

The Hidden Words

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop One**

Personal Development  
Planning

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome to this first volume of Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshops! These workshops will be times for joyous reunion, consultation, study, and practicing the skills that will assist us to become ever more effective teachers of children and junior youth. Please begin the workshop with prayers and music, including the following quotations as part of your opening devotions. These quotations highlight the **themes** for this workshop.

Ye have written as to the meetings of the friends, and how filled they are with peace and joy. Of course this is so; for wherever the spiritually minded are gathered together, there in His beauty reigneth Bahá'u'lláh. Thus it is certain that such reunions will yield boundless happiness and peace.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #54, p. 93

Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children, young plants of the Abhá Paradise, so that these children, fostered by grace in the way of salvation, growing like pearls of divine bounty in the shell of education, will one day bejewel the crown of abiding glory.

It is, however, very difficult to undertake this service, even harder to succeed in it. I hope that thou wilt acquit thyself well in this most important of tasks, and successfully carry the day, and become an ensign of God's abounding grace; that these children, reared one and all in the holy Teachings, will develop natures like unto the sweet airs that blow across the gardens of the All-Glorious, and will waft their fragrance around the world.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, pp. 133-4, No. 106

From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads this gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time.

To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. Read ye *The Hidden Words*, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 35-36, No. 17

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## *Introductions*

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As we strive together to become more and more effective in our service to the spiritual education process for children and junior youth, we'll become closer and closer in our love for the children, for the Beloved of our hearts, and for this service.

1. To begin, please pair with a person in the group that you may know less well than some of the others, and learn your friend's most cherished hopes for these workshops as well as for ongoing service to children and junior youth.
2. Then, please introduce your friend to the group. Please also share a special 'light' that you notice glowing from within that person.
3. Please also share any logistical information that will assist your group to function smoothly, such as the general schedule for the workshops, cost information, child care arrangements, the location of washrooms, refreshments available, or any other details that will assist your workshop to flow smoothly.

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## *Overview of Teacher Development Workshops, Part One*

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These workshops are inspired by the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Blessed art thou, since thou art engaged in rendering a service which will make thy face to shine in the Abhá Kingdom, and that is the education and training of children. If one should, in the right way, teach and train the children, he will be performing a service than which none is greater at the sacred Threshold. According to what we have heard, you are succeeding in this. You must, however, struggle unceasingly to perfect yourself and win ever higher achievements.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS* VOL. I, p. 271

These workshops are intended to assist us as we “struggle unceasingly” to perfect ourselves and “win ever higher achievements.” The workshops in this first volume address the following topics:

### **WORKSHOP ONE**

- Spiritual Qualities: Commitment, Dedication, Perseverance
- Building Skills: Personal Development Planning
- Extended Study: The Hidden Words

### **WORKSHOP TWO**

- Spiritual Qualities: Generosity
- Building Skills: Outreach and Inclusion
- Extended Study: The Hidden Words

### WORKSHOP THREE

- Spiritual Qualities: Justice
- Building Skills: Attending to Capacity, Capability, Interests, and Special Needs
- Extended Study: Tablet of Tarázát

### WORKSHOP FOUR

- Spiritual Qualities: Patience
- Building Skills: Planning Lessons to Meet Student Needs
- Extended Study: Tablet of Kalímát

### WORKSHOP FIVE

- Spiritual Qualities: Excellence
- Building Skills: Using the Scope and Sequence
- Extended Study: Tablet of Tajallíyát

### WORKSHOP SIX

- Spiritual Qualities: Unity
- Building Skills: Classroom Standards
- Extended Study: Tablet of Ishráqát

### WORKSHOP SIX

- Spiritual Qualities: Unity
- Building Skills: Classroom Standards
- Extended Study: Tablet of Ishráqát

### WORKSHOP SEVEN

- Spiritual Qualities: Love
- Building Skills: Classroom Management
- Extended Study: Tablet of Bishárát

### WORKSHOP EIGHT

- Spiritual Qualities: Joy
- Building Skills: Music as an Instrument of Teaching
- Extended Study: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

### WORKSHOP NINE

- Spiritual Qualities: Sacrifice
- Building Skills: Using Storytelling for Spiritual Education
- Extended Study: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

### WORKSHOP TEN

- Spiritual Qualities: Humility
- Building Skills: Using Science and Nature for Spiritual Education
- Extended Study: Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

## *Learning Objectives*

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Please read aloud the learning objectives for Workshop One:

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with the writings on commitment, dedication, and perseverance.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of utilizing the qualities of commitment, dedication, and perseverance in working with children and junior youth.
- Understand the Core Curriculum learning model more deeply.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the qualities of commitment, dedication, and perseverance.
- Reflect on one's own development as a teacher.
- Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in planning one's own personal development as a teacher of children and junior youth.
- Develop a pattern of systematic study of the Bahá'í writings and systematic application of this study to the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

## *Spiritual Qualities*

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### **Commitment, Dedication, Perseverance**

**Purpose:**

To know the Bahá'í concepts of commitment, dedication, and perseverance and how they relate to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

1. Read aloud the quotations on commitment, dedication and perseverance, p. 15, and discuss the focus questions.
2. Then, use the following questions to reflect on your experience as a teacher of children and junior youth. Please write your answers and then share them in the whole group.
  - How did you become involved in this path of service?
  - Why have you made this commitment to the spiritual education of children and junior youth?
  - What confirmations has the Blessed Beauty bestowed upon you during this service?
  - As you tread this path of service, what obstacles have you encountered along the way?
  - What happens to change our level of commitment or dedication?
  - Naturally, we are all aware of the presence of obstacles, and in fact we've just identified a number of them. What enables us to persevere in face of obstacles?
3. Listen to the strength of each other's responses and add notes about their reflections to your own recorded insights.

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### **Process the Activity**

Briefly discuss the following questions:

How does carefully listening to each other enhance our understanding and create a climate of encouragement?

In what ways can we help children and junior youth learn to listen to one another?

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## COMMITMENT, DEDICATION, PERSEVERANCE

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**Focus Questions:**

What is the importance of commitment, dedication, and perseverance in the spiritual education of children and junior youth? What are some examples of perseverance that we've observed in this important service?

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1 Wert thou to consider this world, and realize how fleeting are the things that pertain unto it, thou wouldst choose to tread no path except the path of service to the Cause of thy Lord. None would have the power to deter thee from celebrating His praise, though all men should arise to oppose thee.

Go thou straight on and persevere in His service.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXLIV, p. 314

2 Beware lest the veils deter you from the outpourings of His bounty in this Day. Cast away the things that keep you back from God and persevere on this far-stretching Way. We desire naught for you but that which profiteth you as hath been recorded in His Preserved Tablet.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 266

3 At the dawn of every day he should commune with God, and with all his soul persevere in the quest of his Beloved.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *KITÁB-I-IQÁN*, p. 194

4 . . . if thou art overtaken by affliction in My path, or degradation for My sake, be not thou troubled thereby.

Rely upon God, thy God, and the Lord of thy fathers.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, FROM TABLET OF AHMAD, *BAHÁ'Í PRAYERS*, p. 211

5 The companions of God are, in this day, the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character that all mankind may profit by their example.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, QUOTED IN *ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE*, p. 23

6 The Sunday school for the children in which the Tablets and Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are read, and the Word of God is recited for the children is indeed a blessed thing. Thou must certainly continue this organized activity without cessation, and attach importance to it, so that day by day it may grow and be quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. If this activity is well organized, rest thou assured that it will yield great results. Firmness and steadfastness, however, are necessary, otherwise it will continue for some time, but later be gradually forgotten. Perseverance is an essential condition. In every project firmness and steadfastness will undoubtedly lead to good results; otherwise it will exist for some days, and then be discontinued.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 143-44, NO. 123

## *Personal Development Planning*

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Carefully read aloud the following passage:

It is neither possible nor desirable for the Universal House of Justice to set forth a set of rules covering every situation. Rather is it the task of the individual believer to determine, according to his own prayerful understanding of the Writings, precisely what his course of conduct should be in relation to situations which he encounters in his daily life. If he is to fulfill his true mission in life as a follower of the Blessed perfection, he will pattern his life according to the Teachings. The believer cannot attain this objective merely by living according to a set of rigid regulations. When his life is oriented toward service to Bahá'u'lláh, and when every conscious act is performed within this frame of reference, he will not fail to achieve the true purpose of his life. Therefore, every believer must continually study the sacred Writings and the instructions of the beloved Guardian, striving always to attain a new and better understanding of their import to him and to his society. He should pray fervently for Divine Guidance, wisdom and strength to do what is pleasing to God, and to serve Him at all times and to the best of his ability.

FROM A LETTER DATED 17 OCTOBER 1968, WRITTEN BY THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE TO AN INDIVIDUAL,  
*THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*, VOL. 1, P. 47

### **Purpose:**

Become more skillful in planning one's own personal development as a teacher of children and junior youth.

Let's use the passage above to create a grid using the diagram on page 18, "Putting It All Together: The Cycle of Personal Development."

For us to grow and develop as spiritually mature individuals, and thereby improve and increase our capacity to serve the Cause and humanity, we must learn to develop a consistent pattern of life according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The Universal House of Justice highlights several interconnecting steps we can take to develop such a pattern of constructive spiritual living:

- Study the Sacred Writings and Instructions of the Guardian
- Strive to Understand the Import of these Teachings for Ourselves and Society
- Pray Fervently for Divine Guidance and Assistance
- Pattern a Life of Service According to the Teachings

Please read again the quotation from the Universal House of Justice.

Then, using the Putting It All Together grid:

1. Start at the center of the grid. Consider how your service to the spiritual education of humanity's children has focused your heartfelt passions and loving concerns. What drew you to this path of service, and what inspires you to persevere in it? What exactly is it that you care about most deeply? In the center of the grid, use a few key words or brief phrases to identify what you care about most, those things that motivate your heart most deeply.

Take a few minutes to consider how you currently are using the steps toward spiritual living described above to effectively respond to these deepest cares.

2. Now move into the middle circle on the grid. Consider how you might wish to further increase your efforts to make your deepest cares and concerns active in the world around you. How could you further develop your service to children, that greatest treasure of any community, as you put your care and concern into action?

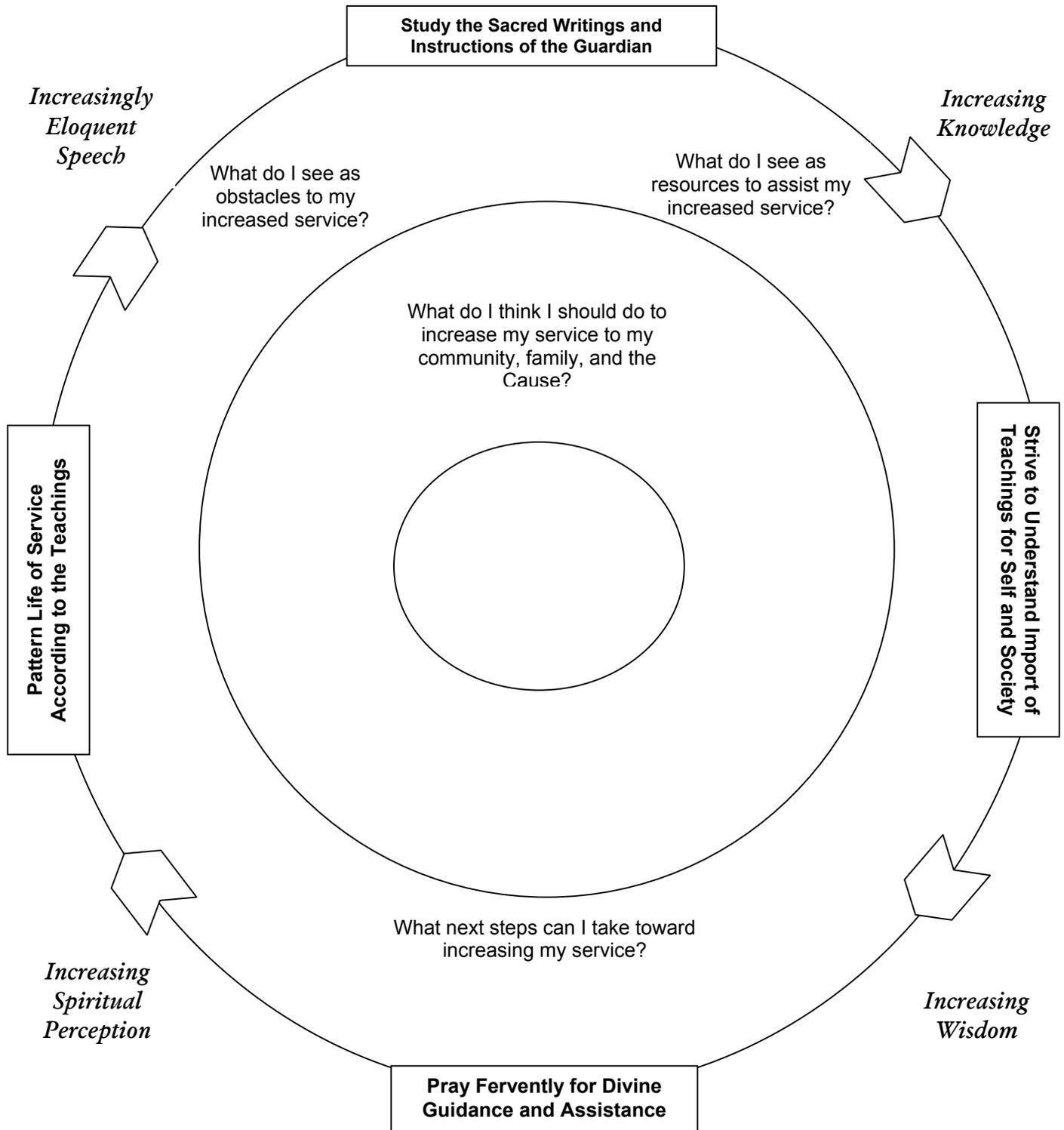
Take a few minutes to consider what pathways of active service you see open to you. Record a few of your best ideas within the middle circle.

3. Now move into the outermost circle on the grid. Reflect on the pathways of active service you recorded in step #2 above. Imagine yourself beginning to carry these ideas forward into action: What obstacles to your increased service might exist? What resources might be available to assist you?

Briefly identify and record a few of the most obvious possible obstacles and resources.

4. Tonight before you retire, take a few minutes to read the passage again. Offer prayers for your increasingly effective service. Review what you have written on the Personal Development Cycle. How will could you further develop these steps to spiritual living, as outlined by the Universal House of Justice, to help you achieve your hopes for increased service? Take a few moments to note down ideas in the outer margins at the appropriate place.
5. As you conclude your period of reflection, read aloud the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on p. 19. Consider also re-reading this passage as you continue your reflections this evening.

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: THE CYCLE OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT



The greatest bestowal in the world of existence is a tranquil heart, and it is impossible for man to obtain a tranquil heart save through the good pleasure of the Lord. That is, many may so adorn the temple of his being with lofty attributes and philanthropic deeds as to be pleasing at the threshold of the almighty. This is the only path and there is no other path. My point is this: Let all your thoughts, your ideals, your aims and purposes revolve day and night around one common object—that is to live in accord with the good pleasure of the Lord. Then all the doors of felicity will be opened before your faces, you will become successful in all your undertakings and you will be confirmed in all your accomplishments. The basic principle is the good pleasure of the Lord: and the good pleasure of God is obtained through a tranquil heart, and the tranquility of the heart is only gained by living in accord with the Divine Teachings and Exhortations. When a person attains to this station he is contented and peaceful. Then he will become prosperous in all affairs and enter into paradise. This station is joy succeeded by joy, confidence after confidence and paradise after paradise. Having reached this exalted station man lives in paradise while upon this earth, is in Paradise when he leaves this world. His heart is in Paradise, his spirit is in Paradise and he is encircled by paradise.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *STAR OF THE WEST*, VOL. 16, P. 40L

## *Transformation and the Butterfly*

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**Purpose:**

To understand the core curriculum learning model more deeply.

This process of continuous transformation may be demonstrated by a tiny insect, the butterfly, which undergoes dramatic transformation as it moves through the stages of its life cycle. Like the butterfly we too go through continuous transformation and change.

1. Please record your answers to the following questions on chart paper, along with simple line drawings to illustrate your answers.
  - How does the butterfly begin its life?
  - What is the next stage?
  - And the next?
  - How does it move from one stage to the next?
  - What do we know about its activities at each stage in its life cycle?
  - At what point does it gain the power of flight?
2. Read aloud the quotations, “Transformation and the Butterfly” with reflection music playing in the background. Briefly discuss the question: How does the metamorphosis of the butterfly illustrate the process of transformation for ourselves as teachers, for the children and junior youth we serve, and for humanity as a whole?
3. In the whole group, read aloud the passages from the Bahá’í writings on the following page, with reflective music playing in the background.
4. While the music continues to play, write your own pledge of sacrifice for this priceless task of the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

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## TRANSFORMATION AND THE BUTTERFLY

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1 Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestations would be apparent.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, CITED IN SHOQHI EFFENDI, *THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p.25

2 I bear witness, O my God, that through a word spoken by Thee in this Revelation all created things were made to expire, and through yet another word all such as Thou didst wish were, by Thy grace and bounty, endued with new life.

I render Thee thanks, therefore, and extol Thee, in the name of all them that are dear to Thee, for that Thou hast caused them to be born again, by reason of the living waters which have flowed down out of the mouth of Thy will.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 42, XXXIII

3 Therefore, man must be the seeker after the Reality, and he will find that Reality in each of the Sanctified Souls. He must be fascinated and enraptured, and attracted to the divine bounty; he must be like the butterfly who is the lover of the light from whatever lamp it may shine, and like the nightingale who is the lover of the rose in whatever garden it may grow.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SOME ANSWERED QUESTIONS*, p.77

4 Physical bodies are transferred past one barrier after another, from one life to another, and all things are subject to transformation and change, save only the essence of existence itself—since it is constant and immutable, and upon it is founded the life of every species and kind, of every contingent reality throughout the whole of creation.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 157, No. 137

5 As translated into programmes and projects by national and local institutions, the Plan, among other things, gives direction, identifies goals, stimulates effort, and provides a variety of needed facilities and materials to benefit the work of teachers and administrators. This is of course necessary for the proper functioning of the community, but is of no consequence unless its individual members respond through active participation. In so responding, each individual, too, must make a conscious decision as to what he or she will do to serve the Plan, and as to how, where and when to do it. This determination enables the individual to check the progress of his actions and, if necessary, to modify the steps being taken. Becoming accustomed to such a procedure of systematic striving lends meaning and fulfilment to the life of any Bahá'í.

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *RIDVÁN MESSAGES*, RIDVÁN 155, 1998, p. 3

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

The question of consultation is of the utmost importance, and is one of the most potent instruments conducive to the tranquility and felicity of the people. For example, when a believer is uncertain about his affairs, or when he seeketh to pursue a project or trade, the friends should gather together and devise a solution for him. He, in turn, should act accordingly. Likewise in larger issues, when a problem ariseth, or a difficulty occurreth, the wise should gather, consult, and devise a solution. They should then rely upon the One true God, and surrender to His Providence, in whatever way it may be revealed, for divine confirmations will undoubtedly assist. Consultation, therefore, is one of the explicit ordinances of the Lord of mankind.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, #14, p. 7

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá’u’lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop you have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer’s challenge could be handled using skills learned in the original 32-hour Core Curriculum Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others, or perhaps based on entirely new ideas.
5. This session, you may also choose to practice with a neutral situation such as: “I’m having trouble getting a proper atmosphere for prayers established. Some children just refuse to cooperate, and the energy I expend in getting them to join in seems to be transferred to other children, so no one is feeling prayerful. What can I do?”
6. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentences might begin:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***The Arabic Hidden Words**

Recall these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. Read ye The Hidden Words, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith. Read, with close attention, the Tablets of Tarázát (Ornaments), Kalímát (Words of Paradise), Tajalliyát (Effulgences), Iṣhráqát (Splendours), and Biṣhárát (Glad Tidings), and rise up as ye are bidden in the heavenly teachings. Thus may each one of you be even as a candle casting its light, the centre of attraction wherever people come together; and from you, as from a bed of flowers, may sweet scents be shed.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #17, p. 35-6

**Purpose:**

Develop a pattern of systematic study of the Bahá’í writings and systematic application of this study to the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá’u’lláh. As a group, consider the possibility of adding a systematic element of personal study to your personal development plan.

As teachers, how could we find a way to read the entire text of the Arabic Hidden Words between now and Teacher Development Workshop Two?

As a group, decide if you’d prefer to set individual schedules or if you’d enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule as a group, consider the following questions as you read:

- What are the implications of these Hidden Words for teaching children?
- How can we use the contents of The Hidden Words to teach children how to live their lives?

Consider enhancing one of the lessons that you teach children or junior youth over the next few weeks by selecting one or more of the Arabic Hidden Words to study in your class. How might children or junior youth translate the concept in that Hidden Word into action in their lives? How could you integrate that concept within your scheduled lesson?

Consider other ways to support and encourage each other as teachers between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop:

- Would you like to take turns observing each others' classes to provide encouragement and support, as well as learn from each other? If so, discuss the practical arrangements for this observation and mutual encouragement.
- Would you like to stay in touch by phone or email?
- Would you like to get together to plan your lessons?

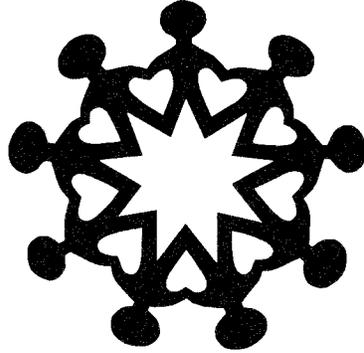
Consider also bringing a favorite Hidden Word to contribute to the opening devotions of the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and, if you have not yet done so, select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, exciting new lessons for children or junior youth, and many other possibilities.
2. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Generosity

**Building Skills**

Promoting Classes Open to All

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

The Hidden Words

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Two**

Outreach and Inclusion

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please also contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Hidden Words as well as the following quotation that highlights the themes for this workshop:

Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, V, P. 7

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with some of the Bahá'í writings on generosity.
- Know the contents and general themes in the Persian Hidden Words.
- Identify strategies for making our Bahá'í classes open to all.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the relationship of the spiritual quality of generosity to our efforts to open our Bahá'í classes for children and junior youth to our friends and neighbors, and to the community at large.
- Understand some of the elements for success in outreach and inclusion.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Perceive outreach strategies that build on the spiritual qualities of love, unity, and fellowship.
- Perceive practical ways to include all students in our Bahá'í classes.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Create a specific plan for offering spiritual education to our friends and neighbors and to the community at large.
- Create a specific plan for outreach and inclusion for spiritual education.

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## *Spiritual Qualities*

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### **Generosity**

1. Read aloud the quotations on generosity, pause for reflection and read them a second time
2. Then, discuss the focus questions and record your responses on chart paper.
3. From your group's list of responses, individually record your own notes recording actions already happening in your community, school, or children's classes.
4. Next, look again at your list of suggested actions to express generosity in outreach to the community. Select one item that you would enjoy adding to your community's outreach efforts in light of your present circumstances.
5. Team with another member or members of your group who'd like to increase their outreach to the community using a similar approach.
6. In your team, develop your approach into a realistic, doable, step by step plan to increasingly express the attribute of generosity in your community outreach efforts. Include in your plan any necessary communications with your Local Spiritual Assembly, local Bahá'í school committee, or other institutions.
7. Share your systematic plan on chart paper with the entire group.

**Purpose:**

To know the Bahá'í concept of generosity and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and youth.

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### **Process the Activity**

In way ways does it promote unity to share our ideas with the appropriate institutions of the Faith?

## GENEROSITY

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**Focus Question:** How does the spiritual quality of generosity relate to the directive to reach out to the community at large for the spiritual education of children and junior youth? What specific strategies can we use to become emblems of generosity in our communities?

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1 Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty. Beware, O people, that ye deal not treacherously with any one. Be ye the trustees of God amongst His creatures, and the emblems of His generosity amidst His people.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXXXVI, p. 297

2 . . . For the attributes of the people of faith are justice and fair-mindedness; forbearance and compassion and generosity; consideration for others; candor, trustworthiness, and loyalty; love and loving-kindness; devotion and determination and humanity. If therefore an individual is truly righteous, he will avail himself of all those means which will attract the hearts of men, and through the attributes of God he will draw them to the straight path of faith and cause them to drink from the river of everlasting life.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION*, pp. 55-56

3 In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth. Now must the lovers of God arise to carry out these instructions of His: let them be kindly fathers to the children of the human race, and compassionate brothers to the youth, and self-denying offspring to those bent with years. The meaning of this is that ye must show forth tenderness and love to every human being, even to your enemies, and welcome them all with unalloyed friendship, good cheer, and loving-kindness. When ye meet with cruelty and persecution at another's hands, keep faith with him; when malevolence is directed your way, respond with a friendly heart. To the spears and arrows rained upon you, expose your breasts for a target mirror-bright; and in return for curses, taunts and wounding words, show forth abounding love. Thus will all peoples witness the power of the Most Great Name, and every nation acknowledge the might of the Ancient Beauty, and see how He hath toppled down the walls of discord, and how surely He hath guided all the peoples of the earth to oneness; how He hath lit man's world, and made this earth of dust to send forth streams of light.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #7, p. 21

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## *Children's Classes Open to All*

### Expanding the Circle of Intimate Friends

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The Universal House of Justice observes:

In the current state of society, children face a cruel fate. Millions and millions in country after country are dislocated socially. Children find themselves alienated by parents and other adults whether they live in conditions of wealth or poverty. This alienation has its roots in a selfishness that is born of materialism that is at the core of the godlessness seizing the hearts of people everywhere. The social dislocation of children in our time is a sure mark of a society in decline; this condition is not, however, confined to any race, class, nation or economic condition—it cuts across them all.<sup>1</sup>

In response to this urgent need, the House of Justice encourages us to initiate Bahá'í classes open to all and praises this “outward-looking orientation” as “one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place.”<sup>2</sup>

Children and their families worldwide respond with enthusiasm to invitations for their children to participate in Bahá'í classes. In the United States, the National Teaching Committee observes that same pattern. Many, if not most, of the individuals responding to the media campaign request spiritual education for their children. When we respond to that call with love, unity, and the true spirit of fellowship, we become active agents for “the gathering momentum of that process of the entry of humanity into the Cause by troops.”<sup>3</sup>

### *Fellowship, Love, Unity*

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1. Organize your group into small teams to study carefully the quotations “Fellowship, Unity, and Love.” Respond to the questions: Why must our classes become open to our friends and neighbors and ultimately to the community at large? What are some advantages to us and to others when we expand the “circle of intimate friends”?
2. Then, individually pick an image from a selection of small pictures cut from magazines, to represent your Bahá'í classes fully open to all.
3. Share your picture and your reason for selecting it in the whole group. Place your image on “My Outreach and Inclusion Plan,” page 31.

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<sup>1</sup> The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 157, 2000, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> The Universal House of Justice, 2003 January 17

<sup>3</sup> The Universal House of Justice, 2003 Jan 17

## FELLOWSHIP, LOVE, UNITY

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**Focus Questions:** Why must our classes become open to our friends and neighbors and ultimately to the community at large? What are some advantages to us and to others when we expand the “circle of intimate friends”?

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 15

2 Inform yourselves of the evidences that the Most Great Name hath dawned. Open your lips in praise. Adduce convincing arguments and proofs. Lead those who thirst to the fountain of life; grant ye true health to the ailing. Be ye apprentices of God; be ye physicians directed by God, and heal ye the sick among humankind. Bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends. Make the despairing to be filled with hope. Waken them that slumber; make the heedless mindful.

Such are the fruits of this earthly life. Such is the station of resplendent glory. Upon you be Bahá'u'l-Abhá.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*, VOL II, p. 415

3 O ye friends! Fellowship, fellowship! Love, love! Unity, unity! -- so that the power of the Bahá'í Cause may appear and become manifest in the world of existence. My thoughts are turned towards you, and my heart leaps within me at your mention. Could ye know how my soul glows with your love, so great a happiness would flood your hearts as to cause you to become enamored with each other.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *TABLETS OF THE DIVINE PLAN*, p. 53

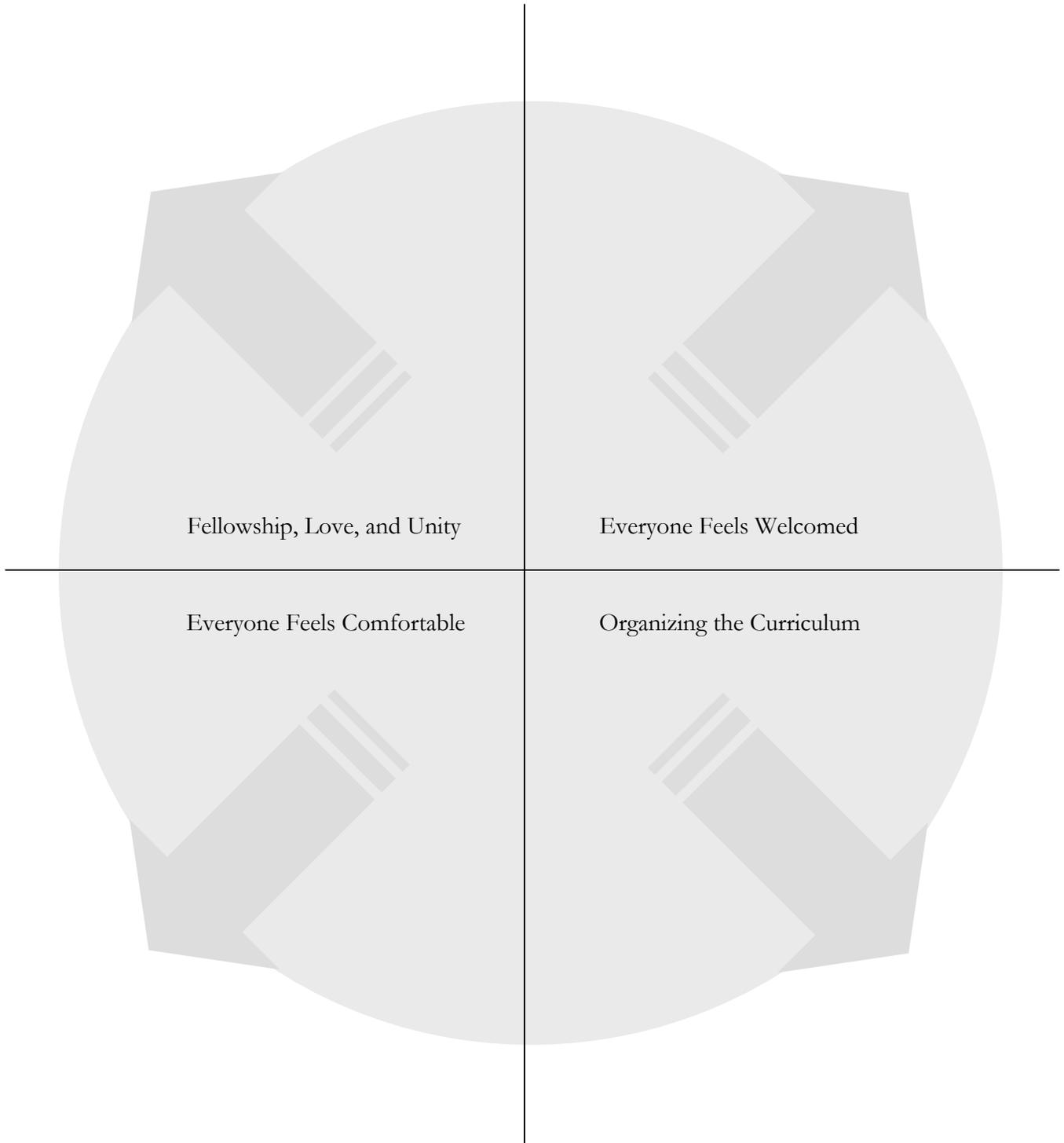
4 In every dispensation, there hath been the commandment of fellowship and love, but it was a commandment limited to the community of those in mutual agreement, not to the dissident foe. In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth. Now must the lovers of God arise to carry out these instructions of His: let them be kindly fathers to the children of the human race, and compassionate brothers to the youth, and self-denying offspring to those bent with years. The meaning of this is that ye must show forth tenderness and love to every human being, even to your enemies, and welcome them all with unalloyed friendship, good cheer, and loving-kindness.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO'L-BAHÁ*, #7, p. 20-21

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## MY OUTREACH AND INCLUSION PLAN

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## *Everyone Feels Welcomed*

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1. In the whole group, briefly discuss:
  - What prevents us from having communities filled with love, unity and fellowship?
  - What do we do that may make individuals feel outside the circle of intimate friends?
2. Record your responses on chart paper.
3. Our role as teachers is to create an environment where everyone feels welcome. In small teams, identify practical, realistic plans for creating a welcoming environment for all. Include these plans on your Outreach and Inclusion Plan.
4. Share your plans with the whole group. Consider adding some of their ideas to your plan!

## *Everyone Feels Comfortable*

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1. As we know, successful outreach and inclusion efforts include not only the students we're inviting but also their parents, the classroom environment they enter, and the overall school community. Organize your group to form 3 teams, with each team focused on one of these topics:
  - Parents
  - Classroom Environment
  - School Community
2. In your teams, further discuss specific strategies for assuring that all are included in the circle of intimate friends.
3. Share the fruits of your consultation in the whole group.
4. Then, add to your Outreach and Inclusion Plan as desired.

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## *Organizing the Curriculum*

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In Teacher Development Workshop Five, we will create plans to implement the full scope of the Core Curriculum for children and junior youth, Bahá'ís and others. Today we will consider ways that the curriculum may easily become welcoming to all. As we recall:

Among the initial goals for every community should be the establishment of. . .children's classes. . .open to all the inhabitants of the locality. . . .

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, LETTER, 9 JANUARY 2001

While Bahá'í religious teachings are part of the programme of child education in Bahá'í classes, the design of the programme, particularly the sequencing of content, may make it more attractive to non-Baha'is.

WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE,  
IN A LETTER TO A SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, 25 SEPTEMBER, 2001

Once communities are able to sustain the basic activities of Bahá'í life, a natural way to further their consolidation is to introduce small projects of social and economic development. . . .

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, LETTER, 9 JANUARY 2001

Discuss:

- Why is the establishment of Bahá'í classes open to all the children and junior youth in the community so important to the well-being of humanity?
- Why do you think that the efforts of Bahá'ís are directed to establishing and sustaining Bahá'í classes open to all before creating small social and economic development projects, such as a moral education program in a secular setting?

Some communities choose to focus their outreach efforts at the beginning of a new school year and schedule instruction in the Principle of Oneness to correspond with that focused outreach. Other communities plan one or two special introductory classes to provide new students with a general orientation to the curriculum and then integrate new students into the regular classes. Still other communities team each new student with another student to work together as buddies for each activity and to assure that the new student's questions and needs are quickly addressed.

1. Please turn to the Scope and Sequence of the Core Curriculum on pp. 86-87. In the whole group, briefly discuss:
2. Looking at the Scope and Sequence as a whole, what sequence of topics could assist our outreach and inclusion efforts?
3. Now looking specifically at a single theme, for example, the theme "Bahá'u'lláh," what sequence of topics could assist our outreach and inclusion efforts?

4. Now consider the topic, “Sufferings and Sacrifices of Bahá'u'lláh.” If a new student joins our class while we’re teaching this topic, how can we assure that our new student feels welcomed into the circle of intimate friends?
5. Individually, turn to your Outreach and Inclusion Plan and add your notes about curriculum to your plan.

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### *Systematic Outreach and Inclusion*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

Refer again to the plans you created while studying the spiritual quality of generosity. As we know a systematic plan to open our spiritual education classes to all requires a systematic plan not only for inclusion, but also for outreach.

1. As a group, discuss the following questions:
  - What are some examples of invitations to the children and families we know?
  - What networking could we do to share information about our Bahá'í classes with like-minded organizations?
  - At what point might we be ready even to advertise our classes in a local paper or on the radio? What are some ideas for structuring those invitations?
  - How exactly do we plan to share these outreach ideas with the sponsoring Bahá'í institution for approval or modification? What parts of our plan could we implement through individual initiative?
2. Then, as time permits, consider these next questions:
  - How can we assist all our students to sustain their attendance over time?
  - How can we encourage the families of our students to foster the spiritual education of their children?
  - What might be some effective approaches to networking all the efforts for spiritual education of children in our cluster—what are some natural linkages among family or neighborhood schools, community schools, and intercommunity schools?

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#### **Process the Activity**

What is the value of returning to these questions from time to time? How can we continue to learn to become more and more effective in our outreach and inclusion efforts as our communities grow and develop and as our skills continue to increase?

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## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, #3, p. 1

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop session you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by cultivating a climate of inclusion and fostering friendship, love, and unity or by using any of the strategies introduced in your original Core Curriculum Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentences might begin:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

## *Extended Study*

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### **The Persian Hidden Words**

**Purpose:**

To foster ongoing development of spiritual qualities and skills of service.

Recall these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws. Read ye The Hidden Words, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, p. 35-6

As we recall, systematic personal study of the Bahá’í writings enhances the effectiveness of these Teacher Development Workshops.

As a group, consider:

Who would like to read the entire text of the Persian Hidden Words between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop?

Then, decide if you’d prefer to set individual schedules or if you’d enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule as a group, consider the following questions as you read:

- What are the implications of these Hidden Words for teaching children?
- How can we use the contents of The Hidden Words to teach children how to live their lives?

Consider enhancing one of the lessons that you teach children or junior youth over the next few weeks by selecting one or more of the Persian Hidden Words to study in your class. How might children or junior youth translate the concept in that Hidden Word into action in their lives? How could you integrate that concept within your scheduled lesson?

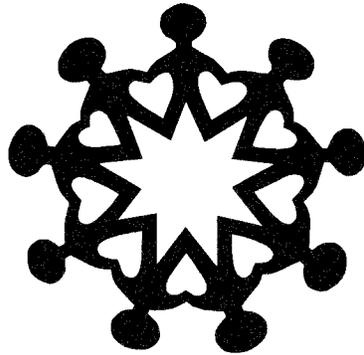
## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and, if you have not yet done so, select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include strategies to increase outreach and inclusion for your Bahá'í classes, ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth.
2. **Advance Preparation for Teacher Development Workshop Three:** Please bring with you a lesson plan from a recent class.
3. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.





**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Justice

**Building Skills**

Attending to Capacity, Capability, Interests,  
and Special Needs

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Tablet of Tarázát

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Three**

Attending to Capacity,  
Capability, Interests, and  
Special Needs

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with prayers and music. Please also contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Hidden Words as well as the following quotations that highlight the themes for this workshop:

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 67

Although capacities are not the same, every member of the human race is capable of education.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, 1982 ED., p. 82

You may also share the results of your efforts to increase your outreach and inclusion for Bahá'í classes, if desired.

## *Advance Preparation:*

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Please bring with you a copy of a lesson plan that you have recently used in your Bahá'í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with some of the Bahá'í writings on justice.
- Become more familiar with some current secular research and theories of child development.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of utilizing the quality of justice in working with children and junior youth of varying capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs.
- Understand the application of Bahá'í writings and current secular research and theories of child development in the classroom.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the quality of justice.
- Reflect on one's own skills in determining capacity, capability, and interests.

## ELOQUENT SPEECH

- Become more skillful in application and putting into action the techniques of determining capacity, capability, and interests.
- Develop lesson plans based on the capacity, capability, interests, and special needs of learners.
- Become more skillful in identifying the special needs of our students and serving them in our Bahá'í classes

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## *Spiritual Quality*

### Justice

1. In the whole group, read aloud the quotations, p. 42, underlining the words and phrases that seem to apply the principle of justice to the classroom.
2. Share these words and phrases, then discuss the following questions:
  - How does seeing with our own eyes and not with the eyes of others help us to practice justice in the classroom?
  - What are some practical ways that a teacher can uphold justice in the classroom?
  - What is the relationship between justice and the need for teachers to discern the capacity, capability, interests, and needs of our students?
3. Then, read aloud the story, “The Master’s Justice,” p. 43, as told by Juliet Thompson in her diary.
4. Briefly discuss: How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá demonstrate justice in His interactions with the children in this story?

What are some ways that we can strive to follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s example in our interactions with children?

#### **Purpose:**

Become familiar with some of the Bahá'í writings on justice.

Perceive ways to apply the principle of justice in the classroom to address student needs.

## JUSTICE

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 67

2 O SON OF SPIRIT!

The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE ARABIC HIDDEN WORDS*, No. 2

3 The essence of all that We have revealed for thee is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 156

4 And if thine eyes be turned towards justice, choose thou for thy neighbor that which thou chooseth for thyself.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 29

5 Overstep not the bounds of moderation, and deal justly with them that serve thee. Bestow upon them according to their needs, and not to the extent that will enable them to lay up riches for themselves, to deck their persons, to embellish their homes, to acquire the things that are of no benefit unto them, and to be numbered with the extravagant. Deal with them with undeviating justice, so that none among them may either suffer want, or be pampered with luxuries. This is but manifest justice.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE SUMMONS OF THE LORD OF HOSTS*, p. 212

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 26

7 Equality and Brotherhood must be established among all members of mankind. This is according to Justice. The general rights of mankind must be guarded and preserved.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *'ABDU'L-BAHÁ IN LONDON*, p. 29

## THE MASTER'S JUSTICE

From *The Diary of Juliet Thompson*

We drove to a country inn where a little later, after a walk, we were to have our tea. As the Master stepped down from the car, about fifteen peasant children with bunches of violets to sell closed in on Him, formed a half circle around Him, holding up the little purple bunches, raising their eyes to His Face with grave astonishment. They pressed so close that they hid Him below the waist, and the benediction in the look He bent on them I shall never forget. Of course He bought all the violets, drawing from His pocket handfuls of francs. But when He had given to each child bountifully, they held out their hands for more!

“Don’t let them impose!” cried Laura.

“Tell them,” said the Master very gently, “that they have taken.”

He turned and walked into the forest. . . .

We walked back to the inn through the woods, He leading us. As soon as He reappeared on the lawn of the inn the children again swarmed around Him, their hands still outstretched. Laura sternly ordered them off, for they were certainly imposing. “He would give away everything He has,” she whispered to me. But the Master had discovered a tiny newcomer, a child much younger than the others, with a very sensitive face, who was looking wonderingly at Him.

“But,” He said, “to this little one I have not given.”

*THE DIARY OF JULIET THOMPSON, PP. 174-75*

## ***Building Skills: Attending to Capacity, Capability, and Interests***

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**Purpose:**

Understand the importance of perceiving students' capacity, capability, interests, and special needs in our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

1. Read aloud the page of quotations, "Attending to Capacity, Capability, and Interests," p. 45, and briefly discuss the focus questions.
2. Organize yourselves into three working groups so that each group studies one of these concepts: Capacity, Capability, Interests.
3. In your working group, create your own definition of that word in relation to children and junior youth. Write your definition on the top half of a large sheet of paper, along with one specific example of this concept as we have observed it in a child or junior youth.
4. Display your definition and example for everyone to see.
5. Read aloud the quotations and definitions on the page, "Defining Capacity, Capability, and Interests". Compare your definitions with the dictionary definitions. Would you add anything to your definition?
6. In these same three groups, work with a second word from the set: Capacity, Capability, Interests. Using your new word, consult on ways to learn about that aspect of the children and junior youth you teach. Then, add to your paper your responses to the following questions:
  - How can we learn about this aspect (capacities, capabilities, or interests) of the children and junior youth with whom we are working?
  - What types of activities, environments, and attitudes do we need to incorporate in the first few sessions of a class to learn about this aspect in all our learners?
  - How can we continue to learn about the capacities, capabilities, and interests of the children and junior youth that we serve over an extended period of time?
  - How can we continue to expand the range of their capacities, capabilities, and interests while assisting them to develop their natural strengths?
7. Display your posters as if in an art gallery and enjoy a "gallery walk" during the next break. During this break, use sticky notes to acknowledge each other's work.

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**Process the Activity**

How do we implement our learning in this area into our lesson planning and working with the class?

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## ATTENDING TO CAPACITY, CAPABILITY, AND INTERESTS

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**Focus questions:** How is a teacher like a lover who learns from the beloved's face?  
How is a teacher like a miner who discovers the treasures within?

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- 1 The lover's teacher is the Loved One's beauty,  
His face their lesson and their only book.

RUMI, QUOTED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE FOUR VALLEYS*, p. 56

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CLVII, p. 260

- 3 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

- 4 O thou whose years are few, yet whose mental gifts are many! How many a child though young in years, is yet mature and sound in judgement! How many an aged person is ignorant and confused! For growth and development depend on one's powers of intellect and reason, not on one's age or length of days.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #121, p. 153

- 5 The loved ones of God be they young or old, be they men or women, each one according to his capabilities, strive to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to increase his understanding of the mysteries of the Holy Books, and his skill in marshalling the divine proofs and evidences.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #30, p. 8

- 6 Every child without exception must from the earliest years make a thorough study of the art of reading and writing, and according to his own tastes and inclinations and the degree of his capacity and powers, devote extreme diligence to the acquisition of learning. . . .

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #121, p. 49-50

- 7 To be specific, at the start the teacher must place a pen in the child's hand, arrange the children in groups, and instruct each group according to its capacity. . . .

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #79, p. 31

- 8 Although capacities are not the same, every member of the human race is capable of education.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, 1982 ED., p. 82

## DEFINING CAPACITY, CAPABILITY, AND INTERESTS

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### Capacity

To be specific, at the start the teacher must place a pen in the child's hand, arrange the children in groups, and instruct each group according to its capacity...

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #79, p. 31

The ability to receive, hold, or absorb; a measure of this ability; volume. The maximum amount that can be contained; ability to perform or produce; capability. The power to learn or retain knowledge; mental ability.

*AMERICAN HERITAGE COLLEGE DICTIONARY*, 1993

The ability to contain or accommodate, the amount which can be contained or accommodated.

*NEW LEXICON WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, 1991

### Capability

The attainment of the most great guidance is dependent upon knowledge and wisdom, and on being informed of the mysteries of the Holy Words Wherefore must the loved ones of God be they young or old, be they men or women, each one according to his capabilities, strive to acquire the various branches of knowledge, and to increase his understanding of the mysteries of the Holy Books, and his skill in marshalling the divine proofs and evidences.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #30, p. 8

The quality of being capable; ability. A talent or ability that has potential for development or use. The capacity to be used, treated, or developed for specific purpose.

*AMERICAN HERITAGE COLLEGE DICTIONARY*, 1993

The quality of being capable, ability, ability to be developed, exploited, potentially excellent performance.

*NEW LEXICON WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, 1991

## Interests

Every child without exception must from the earliest years make a thorough study of the art of reading and writing, and according to his own tastes and inclinations and the degree of his capacity and powers, devote extreme diligence to the acquisition of learning. . . .

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #121, p. 49-50

A state of curiosity or concern about or attention to something.  
Something, such as a subject, that evokes this mental state; self-interest.

*AMERICAN HERITAGE COLLEGE DICTIONARY*, 1993

Curiosity about, or intellectual or emotional involvement in something, something on which their feelings are fixed, the power to arouse these feelings.

*NEW LEXICON WEBSTER'S DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE*, 1991

## *Serving Students with Special Needs*

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**Purpose:**

Become more skillful in identifying the special needs of our students and serving them in our Bahá'í classes.

**Role of the Teacher**

1. In small groups, read the quotations on p. 50 and answer the following focus question:
  - What is my role as a teacher of students with special needs?
2. Still in your group, select one of the roles you identified, and develop a brief dramatic sketch demonstrating the role of the teacher in serving students with special needs.
3. Enjoy a 2-minute presentation from each group.

**Overcoming Obstacles**

1. In pairs discuss the types of special needs that exist in your Bahá'í classes. Share your responses in the whole group. Record them on chart paper.
2. In the whole group, identify obstacles that might prevent one from meeting the needs of these students. Record your responses on chart paper.
3. Turn to the person next to you and brainstorm some practical solutions to the obstacles on the chart.
4. Share your team's solutions with the whole group. Applaud all ideas!
5. As we know, we will need to repeat this process many times during a school year if we have special needs students in our classes because it will take a number of approaches to meet their needs.

(Please note that one important solution will be to have prior notice from the parents of the student's attendance as well as information about the strategies that parents use to help their child be successful at home or at school.)

## Preparation

1. In the whole group, discuss the questions:
  - Why is it important for us to be aware of the needs of all students, especially those with special needs?
  - What information about a student should be given to the teacher by the parent or the institution?
  - How can we request this information?
2. Team with your co-teacher for your Bahá'í class. In your team, make a plan. Identify and record specific steps to become increasingly successful serving students with special needs. Then, determine how to implement your plan.
3. Refer to the sample plans and resources on pp. 54-54 of this Teacher Development Workshop. Add to your plan as desired.
4. Share your plan in the whole group.

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## Process the Activity

Why is it important for us to consider the special needs of students and to get the help we need to include them in Bahá'í classes?

## SERVING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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**Focus Question:** What is my role as a teacher of students with special needs?

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1 O thou seeker after the Kingdom! Every divine Manifestation is the very life of the world, and the skilled physician of each ailing soul. The world of man is sick, and that competent Physician knoweth the cure, arising as He doth with teachings, counsels and admonishments that are the remedy for every pain, the healing balm to every wound. It is certain that the wise physician can diagnose his patient's needs at any season, and apply the cure. Wherefore, relate thou the Teachings of the Abhá Beauty to the urgent needs of this present day, and thou wilt see that they provide an instant remedy for the ailing body of the world. Indeed, they are the elixir that bringeth eternal health.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #29, p. 59

2 No individual should be denied or deprived of intellectual training, although each should receive according to capacity. None must be left in the grades of ignorance, for ignorance is a defect in the human world. All mankind must be given a knowledge of science and philosophy—that is, as much as may be deemed necessary. All cannot be scientists and philosophers, but each should be educated according to his needs and deserts.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 108

3 We must not be unfriendly to anyone because of ignorance; neither must we reject the immature or turn away from the sick but administer the remedy for each human need until all are united in the providence of God.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 120)

4 Although capacities are not the same, every member of the human race is capable of education.

ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF WORLD PEACE*, p. 85

5 The Cause of God has room for all. It would, indeed, not be the Cause of God if it did not take in and welcome everyone—poor and rich, educated and ignorant, the unknown, and the prominent—God surely wants them all, as He created them all.

WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*, VOL. II, p. 261

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## *Building Skills: Identifying Capacity, Capability, Interests and Special Needs*

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### **The *Capacity, Capability, Interests, and Special Needs* Grid**

1. Look together at the working grid on the following page and notice the columns for capacity, capability, interests, and special needs. Briefly discuss the various possible types of special needs, such as gifted children, children with emotional or physical difficulties, children with learning disabilities, children with medical problems or special gifts.
2. On your grid, write names of five children or junior youth—preferably individuals you actually have in your classes or will be working with. Then identify the specific capacities, capabilities, and interests of each of the five children or junior youth on your list. If you are unable to identify an aspect for any of the names on your list, identify the tools needed to use to learn more about that aspect of that child or junior youth. In addition, please identify the special needs of any of these students.
3. After completing your grid, consider the lesson plan you brought with you to this session or consider a lesson that you taught recently. What adjustments might be necessary to make your lesson plan and activities more conducive to these five children?
4. In the whole group, re-read the quotations. Then briefly discuss: What are the challenges and the gains of this type of planning?

Note that as we all become better and more efficient at this type of teaching, it will become second nature to us!

5. Please also notice the list of outside resources that may help in identifying and planning for children and junior youth with special needs. If possible, look through some of these resources to see how they could help you meet the needs of your students. Consider checking out one or more of these books or checking the internet for related materials and preparing a brief report to share with the group at the beginning of the next Teacher Development Workshop.

#### **Purpose:**

To be able to assess capacity, capability, interests, and special needs in the learners we serve.

**WORKING GRID FOR CAPACITIES, CAPABILITIES, AND INTERESTS, AND SPECIAL NEEDS**

<b>Special Needs</b>	
<b>Interests</b>	
<b>Capabilities</b>	
<b>Capacities</b>	
<b>Name</b>	

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## SOME INCLUSION STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

### *Example of an Inclusion Plan*

Step One	Consultation with an Institution (Local Spiritual Assembly, School's committee) to inform them about the special needs of students.
Step Two	Consultation with parent (see interview example).
Step Three	Consultation with student (see interview example).
Step Four	Develop a plan of inclusion. Create plan with parent/student.
Step Five	Share plan with institutions, parent and student.
Step Six	Assess effectiveness of plan after first week of implementation with parent and student. Make necessary changes.
Step Seven	Continue weekly assessments for approximately 4 class sessions, and then assess intermittently.
Step Eight	Meet with parents/students every 2-3 months.
Step Nine	Meet with the institutions at least two times per year.

PARENT INTERVIEW	STUDENT INTERVIEW
1. What type of special needs/disability?	1. What are your expectations?
2. What are your expectations?	2. What is easy for you to do?
3. What is student's reading level/comprehension level?	3. What is hard for you to do?
4. Any physical limitations?	4. Any physical limitations?
5. What does your child know and feel about the disability?	5. What do you know and feel about the disability?
6. Describe the school setting.	6. Describe the school setting.
7. Medications?	7. Medications?
8. Any behaviors that the school staff needs to be aware of?	8. Any behaviors that the school staff needs to be aware of?
9. What are the student's likes/interest?	9. What are your likes and interests?

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**OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS**


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<b>BARRIERS</b>	<b>HOW TO OVERCOME</b>
Teacher not trained for “these” students	Get training. Study special needs books.
Materials too difficult	Adapt materials—shorten assignment, read assignment and have students respond to questions.
Materials need to be modified	Feel free to modify classroom materials to meet a particular student’s needs, get assistance from other teachers.
Need more help	Ask institution to find another co-teacher/assistant. Ask parents or other volunteers to assist at times.
Don’t understand the disability	Ask parents to explain the disability and their expectation for the student. Research the web on the disability.
Class time too long	Secure an assistant to provide variety of activities/experiences for student. Allow student opportunity to take breaks during class.
Classroom is too small, too many children	Get extra assistant.
School furniture does not fit student	Secure appropriate furniture.
Does not conform to the standards	Have a “spiritual conference” with student.

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**INTERNET RESOURCES FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN**


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The Circle of Inclusion web site  
[www.circleofinclusion.org](http://www.circleofinclusion.org)

School as a Caring Community  
[www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/incl/intro.htm](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/ddc/incl/intro.htm)

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

The purpose of consultation is to show that the views of several individuals are assuredly preferable to one man, even as the power of a number of men is of course greater than the power of one man. Thus consultation is acceptable in the presence of the Almighty, and hath been enjoined upon the believers, so that they may confer upon ordinary and personal matters, as well as on affairs which are general in nature and universal.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS* VOL. I, p. 97-98

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá’u’lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop session you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer’s challenge could be handled. Consider how you might address the capacities, capabilities, interests, or special needs of the students in addressing this challenge.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentences might begin:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***Tablet of Tarázát (Ornaments)**

Recall these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

In these Tablets will you have a model of how to be and how to live.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, p. 79

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá’u’lláh.

As a group, decide if you’d prefer to set individual schedules or if you’d enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the entire text of the Tablet of Tarázát between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions as you read:

- What are the implications of this Tablet for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use the contents of the Tablet of Tarázát to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider enhancing one of the lessons that you teach children or junior youth over the next few weeks by selecting a selection of the Tablet of Tarázát to study in your class. How might children or junior youth translate the concept in that selection into action in their lives?

Consider other ways to support and encourage each other as teachers between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop:

- Would you like to take turns observing each other’s classes to provide encouragement and support, as well as learn from each other? If so, discuss the practical arrangements for this observation and mutual encouragement.
- Would you like to stay in touch by phone or email?
- Would you like to get together to plan your lessons?

Consider also bringing a favorite passage from your extended study to contribute to the opening devotions of the next workshop.

**Purpose:**

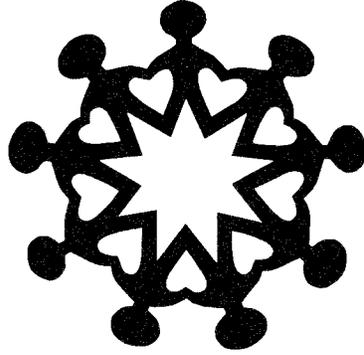
To foster ongoing development of spiritual qualities and skills of service.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include addressing the capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs of your students, continuing your outreach and inclusion efforts for your Bahá'í classes, ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, exciting new lessons for children or junior youth, and many other possibilities.
2. **Advance Preparation:** Please bring to Teacher Development Workshop Four the Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guide and Storybook you are currently using in your Bahá'í class.
3. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Patience

**Building Skills**

Planning Lessons to Meet Student Needs

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Tablet of Kalímát-i-Firdawsíyyih  
(Words of Paradise)

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Four**

Planning Lessons to Meet  
Student Needs

## *Opening Devotions*

---

Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please also contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Tablet of Tarázát as well as the following quotations that highlight the themes for this workshop:

Be patient, for thy Lord is patient.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 134

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the Laws of God.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*, #14, p. 3

If desired, please share the results of your efforts to address the capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs of your students. You may also share brief reports of your research into the special needs of students.

**Advance Preparation:** Please bring with you the Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guide and Storybook you are currently using in your Bahá'í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Know Bahá'í concepts of patience and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.
- Know some key points in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Kalímát.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the scope of Core Curriculum strands and themes, and the materials for lesson planning.
- Understand how to adapt lessons to student needs.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the quality of patience.
- Gain insight into the importance of binding the hearts of the students to the love of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Reflect on one's own skills in lesson planning.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- To become more skillful in planning lessons and teaching children and junior youth.

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## Spiritual Quality

### Patience

1. As we know, ‘Abdul-Bahá gives us the perfect example of all the spiritual qualities that will help us in our role as teachers. Enjoy the following story in which we see the results of His patience.

There was a Christian merchant in ‘Akká who, like many of his fellow-citizens, held the Bahá’ís in scant respect. It happened that he came upon a load of charcoal which some of the Bahá’ís had been permitted to buy outside ‘Akká. (Inside the town they were denied such purchases.) The merchant, noticing that the fuel was of a fine grade, took it for his own use. For him Bahá’ís were beyond the pale, and so their goods could be impounded. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá heard of the incident, He went to the place where the merchant transacted his business to ask for the return of the charcoal. There were many people about in that office, bent on their trade, and they took no notice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He sat and waited. Three hours passed before the merchant turned to Him and said: “Are you one of the prisoners in this town?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that He was, and the merchant then enquired: “What was the crime for which you were imprisoned?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “The same crime for which Christ was indicted.” The merchant was taken aback. He was a Christian, and here was a man speaking of similarity between His action and the action of Christ. “What could you know of Christ?” was his retort. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calmly proceeded to tell him. The arrogance of the merchant was confronted by the patience of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rose to go, the merchant also rose and walked with Him into the street, betokening his respect for this Man—one of the detested prisoners. From then on, he was a friend, even more, a stout supporter.’ But regarding the charcoal, the merchant could only say, “The coal is gone—I cannot return you that, but here is the money.”

HONNOLD, *VIGNETTES FROM THE LIFE OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, PP. 26-27

2. Organize your group into small teams of 2–3 people.

In these teams, read the page of quotations on patience and discuss the focus question.

3. Then, select one of the quotations and develop a brief dramatic sketch that demonstrates patience in a classroom setting.
4. Share your dramatization in the whole group.

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### Process the Activity

Using your journal, reflect on the spiritual quality of patience and identify your own steps toward becoming ever more patient.

#### **Purpose:**

Know the Bahá’í concept of patience and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

## PATIENCE

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**Focus Question:** What are the implications of these writings in your role as a teacher?

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1 Be patient, for thy Lord is patient.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 134

2 O Son of Man! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *ARABIC HIDDEN WORDS*, #48, p.15

3 Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation. . . .

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, LXVI, p. 129

4 Let thine heart be patient, and be thou no dismayed. Follow not in the way of them that are sorely agitated.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, LXII, p. 120

5 He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, LXVI, p. 129

6 The virtues and attributes pertaining unto God are all evident and manifest, and have been mentioned and described in all the heavenly Books. Among them are trustworthiness, truthfulness, purity of heart while communing with God, forbearance, resignation to whatever the Almighty hath decreed, contentment with the things His Will hath provided, patience, nay, thankfulness in the midst of tribulation, and complete reliance, in all circumstances, upon Him. These rank, according to the estimate of God, among the highest and most laudable of all acts.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXXXIV, p. 290

7 If anyone revile you, or trouble touch you, in the path of God, be patient, and put your trust in Him Who heareth, Who seeth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 24

8 . . . Without patience the wayfarer on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal. Nor should he ever be downhearted; if he strive for a hundred thousand years and yet fail to behold the beauty of the Friend, he should not falter.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *SEVEN VALLEYS AND FOUR VALLEYS*, p. 5

9 Be patient, until thou beholdest a new creation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, QUOTING THE BÁB, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 152

10 I hope that ye will attain the utmost patience, composure and resignation. . . .

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, 1982 ED., #169, p.200

## *Building Skills: Using Lesson Planning Guides and Expanding Suggested Activities*

1. Enjoy beautiful meditative music as you listen to a story read by your facilitator.
2. As you recall, the first content strand developed in the Core Curriculum was the one on the life, laws, and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Briefly discuss: What is the importance of binding the hearts of children and junior youth, both Bahá'ís and others, to the love of Bahá'u'lláh as a prime purpose of a spiritual education curriculum?
3. As we know, binding the hearts to the love of the Manifestation of God for this Day can be done in a variety of ways, taking into account the character and circumstances of our particular community. Naturally, we also consider the capacity, capability, interests, and special needs of our students.
4. Let's review the structure of the curriculum, its strands, and themes:

### **Purpose:**

Gain insight into the importance of binding the hearts of the students to the love of Bahá'u'lláh.

Understand the scope of Core Curriculum strands and themes, and the materials for lesson planning.

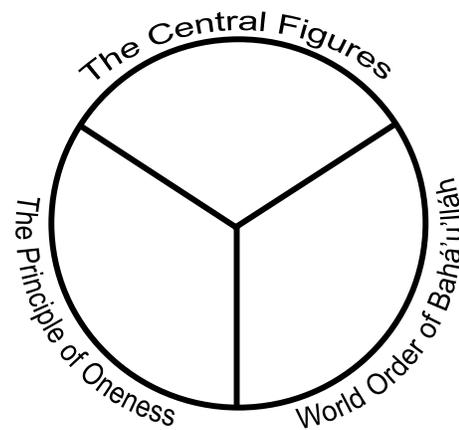
### Strands of the Curriculum

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the Laws of God.

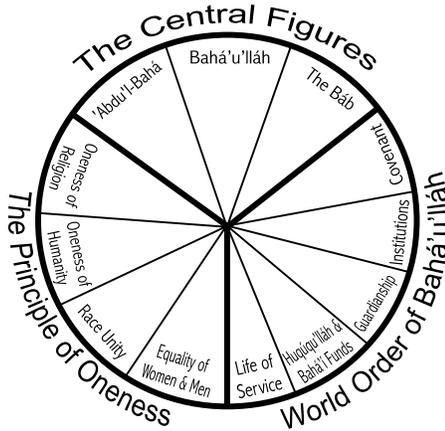
BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION*

Following this exhortation of Bahá'u'lláh, the content of the Core Curriculum is organized into three “strands,” or major categories of study:

- The **Central Figures** of the Faith
- The **Principle of Oneness**
- The **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh**



## Themes of Study



Each strand has several themes:

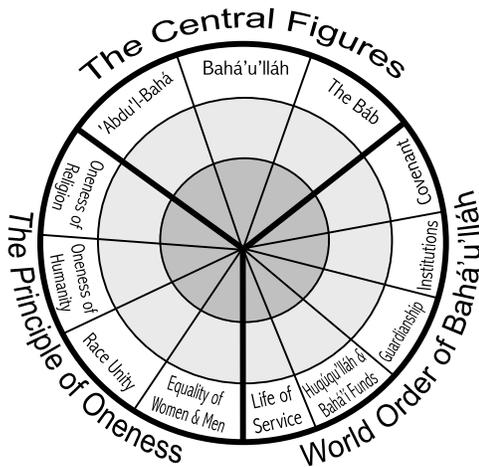
**The Central Figures** includes “The Báb,” “Bahá’u’lláh,” and “Abdu’l-Bahá.”

**The Principle of Oneness** includes “The Oneness of Religion,” “The Oneness of Humanity,” “Race Unity,” and “The Equality of Women and Men.”

**The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh** includes “The Covenant,” “The Institutions of the Faith,” “The Guardianship,” “Huqúqu’lláh and the Bahá’í Funds,” and “A Life of Service.”

Within each theme, specific learning goals and topics systematically guide the learner to increasingly deeper levels of knowledge, understanding, spiritual insight, and action.

## Three Levels of Study



The Core Curriculum provides three levels of study. All of the themes of study are organized into a nine-year sequential curriculum for children and junior youth through age 14:

Level One, for children aged 6–8,

Level Two, for children 9–11,

Level Three, for junior youth 12–14.

These three levels of study may be adapted to meet the needs of learners of all ages and varied backgrounds. In a growing community, this flexibility enables beginning learners to start with the concepts of Level One, using age-appropriate activities.

The spiritual education of each learner is carefully documented in a comprehensive Spiritual Education Record.

- As we recall, the Bahá’í sacred writings provide the guidance for prioritizing the study of particular content, as well as all the goals and topics of the Core Curriculum.
- Also recall that prioritization and sequencing of content may be adjusted in classes designed for the community at large:

While Bahá’í religious teachings are part of the programme of child education in Bahá’í classes, the design of the programme, particularly the sequencing of content, may make it more attractive to non-Bahá’ís.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, IN A LETTER TO A SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY, 25 SEPTEMBER, 2001

## Lesson Planning Guides and Storybooks

An effective spiritual education process must not only systematically proceed through the entire curriculum, but also engage the hearts and minds of learners to result in active lives of service to God and humanity. Richly detailed Lesson Planning Guides provide teachers with learning objectives and fully-developed sample activities utilizing the arts, sciences, crafts, and other learning methods suggested in the Bahá'í writings. A system of careful training and hands-on practice supports teachers to become fully adept at using these materials to teach children and junior youth. A growing collection of illustrated children's storybooks enhances the lessons being taught. Please take a few moments to become familiar with any new Lesson Planning Guides or Core Curriculum storybooks that may be introduced by your facilitator.

5. Using your journal, reflect on ways your classes with children and junior youth will be transformed by the systematic use of this curriculum.

Consider also the effect on our communities as a whole when we extend this curriculum to the children in the community at large.

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### *Planning Lessons to Meet Student Needs*

Let's also recall the difference between activities and lessons:

- A lesson is a structured learning experience with a beginning, middle and end designed to accomplish one or more specific objectives. It may include several activities. For example, a single lesson may include activities such as recite a prayer, sing a song, memorize a quote, and listen to a story. While some activities may be common to the whole class (such as prayers and songs), not all students have to be engaged in the same activities throughout the lesson.
- The kind of activity engaging an individual or group depends on their stage of maturity, capacity, capability, interests, and special needs.
- Look again through a Lesson Planning Guide. Identify the sample activities. As we know, one or more of the sample activities, when accompanied by a beginning and an ending experience, can make up a simple lesson.
- As we also know, Lesson Planning Guides have both *sample* activities and *suggested* activities that we can use to meet the objectives of each topic.

## ***Building Skills***

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### **Understanding the Format of Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides**

For the next few minutes we will be exploring the format of the curriculum materials. You may use any Lesson Planning Guide for this exercise.

1. Select one of the Goals from your Lesson Planning Guide.
2. Then select one Topic from that Goal.
3. Note how the Topic page is organized:
  - a. Name of Topic at the top
  - b. Spiritual Qualities relevant to the topic
  - c. Two quotations related to the study of the topic
4. Turn to the next two pages for your Goal and Topic, containing the Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities.
5. Taking turns with another participant, read aloud each of your Learning Objectives and Suggested Learning Activities. Notice that all the Goals in all the levels of the Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides follow the same format.
6. Turn to the sample activities that meet the goals of your chosen topic. These sample activities identify the objectives, provide a suggested time for the activity, list the materials needed, and the steps to follow in order to complete the activity. Take a few moments to skim over the sample activity pages for your goal.
7. Then, turn to the resource pages for your Goal/Topic. These pages provide, to the extent possible, specific materials listed for the sample activities.
8. Finally, refer to the List of Additional Resources.
9. Enjoy listening to quiet music as you look more closely at the lesson planning guide.
10. As we know, additional learning materials are currently in development and the current ones will be refined as a result of feedback from the teachers like yourselves who use them for the spiritual education of children and junior youth. The National Bahá'í Education Task Force deeply appreciates this collaboration.

## *Building Skills*

### Planning Lessons

The teacher must provide lessons that engage learners and systematically lead them through the entire learning framework. All Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides will do just that.

#### Planning

1. Organize yourselves into working groups of 2–3. If possible, team so that teaching partners work together.
2. In your teams, you will use these Lesson Planning Guidelines and a Lesson Planning template to plan a lesson to engage the capacities, capabilities, and interests, and meet the special needs of your students. These lessons will include at least 2 activities, with at least one activity including a story from a Core Curriculum storybook.
3. Then, still in these same teams, you will practice teaching a 10-15 minute segment from this lesson, using all materials needed.

#### **Purpose:**

Know how to write a lesson plan and use the Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guides and storybooks.

#### Lesson Planning Guidelines

1. Now, working in your teams, begin your planning process by praying for divine assistance.
2. Next, fill in the following areas of your Lesson Planning Template:
  - a. Ages of learners
  - b. Number of learners
  - c. Key characteristics of learners—this is where you will record brief notes about your students’ capacities, capabilities, interests, and any special needs. Refer to the Working Grid for Capacities, Capabilities, Interests and Special Needs completed in Teacher Development Workshop Three, as desired.
3. With your students in mind and heart, select a Goal from your Lesson Planning Guide.
4. Select a Topic from your Lesson Planning Guide.
5. Turn to the Topic page in the Lesson Planning Guide. Record the Strand, Theme, Topic, and Spiritual Qualities on your Lesson Planning Template.
6. Turn to the Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities page for your topic. Select a knowledge objective, a wisdom objective, a spiritual perception objective, and an eloquent speech objective. Record these on your Lesson Planning Template. You will identify activities to teach two of these objectives in this lesson. The other objectives may be addressed in a subsequent lesson.

7. Turn to the Sample Activities pages in the Lesson Planning Guide. Select a detailed *sample* activity from the Sample Activities pages that addresses one of the objectives you selected, again remembering to keep your students' capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs in your mind and heart.
  - Record the page number and activity title of your selected activity on page 2 of the Lesson Planning Template: "Activities."
  - Record the materials needed and time needed.
8. In the Lesson Planning Guide, return to your selected Goal/Topic's "Objectives and Suggested Activities" pages.
  - Read through the objectives and suggested activities.
  - Consult with your partner(s) and choose one *suggested* activity to address a second learning objective that you have already recorded on your Lesson Planning Template.
  - Work together to create and record your own detailed plans for that activity in the "Activities" section of template.
9. Now complete the following: Opening, Welcome, Motivating the Lesson, Conclusion, Action assignments, and Closing.
10. Review your lesson to be sure that this lesson includes attention to one or more of the spiritual qualities relevant to this topic. Adjust your lesson, if necessary.
11. Calculate and note the time needed to organize your materials and prepare to teach this lesson. Also calculate and record the time needed to teach your lesson.
12. Now, share your lesson with another team. Explain the student capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs that you addressed. Invite friendly feedback and suggestions. Adjust your lesson as desired.

**Reminder:**

- Objectives from all four parts of the learning cycle (K, W, SP, ES) are not always utilized in each lesson; the Core Curriculum learning framework is not linear, and may be used appropriately in any order.
- A lesson may include several activities. While some activities may be common to the whole class (prayers and songs are good examples), there also may be times when small groups of students engage in different activities at the same time.

**Assess your teaching strategy:**

- What instructional methods will you use?
- What learning tools will students use?
- How will you get the attention and engage the interest of the learners in the topic you are going to teach?

**Use the Instructional Methods and Learning Tools checklist** to assure you have included a diversity of strategies appropriate to the stage of maturity, capacity, capability, and interests of the students.

Revise your plan after your assessment, if necessary.

Congratulations on completing your lesson plan!

**LESSON PLANNING TEMPLATE**

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Strand \_\_\_\_\_ Theme \_\_\_\_\_

Goal \_\_\_\_\_ Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Spiritual Qualities Relevant to this Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Ages of learners \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Learners \_\_\_\_\_

Key Characteristics and Special Diversities of Learners:

Time needed to prepare to teach this lesson:

Time needed to actually teach this lesson:

**Objectives for this lesson:** (Use relevant objectives from the Lesson Planning Guide)

*At the end of this lesson the learners will be able to:*

Knowledge: (Become Informed)

Wisdom: (Understand)

Spiritual Perception: (Reflect and Apply)

Eloquent Speech: (Act/Teach/Serve)

**Instructional Methods and Learning Tools:** (Use the checklist to assure diverse strategies)

**Materials/Resources needed** to teach this lesson:

**Procedure for this lesson:**

Opening prayers and music:

Welcome, review of previous lesson and action assignments:

Motivating the lesson: *(How will you engage the interest/curiosity/attention of the students?)*

Use sample activities and/or develop suggested activities:

Activities

Materials needed

Time needed

Conclusion: *(How will you bring the activities in the lesson to an end?)*

Action assignments to be completed before the next class:

Closing prayers and music:

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## ALTERNATIVE LESSON PLANNING TOOL

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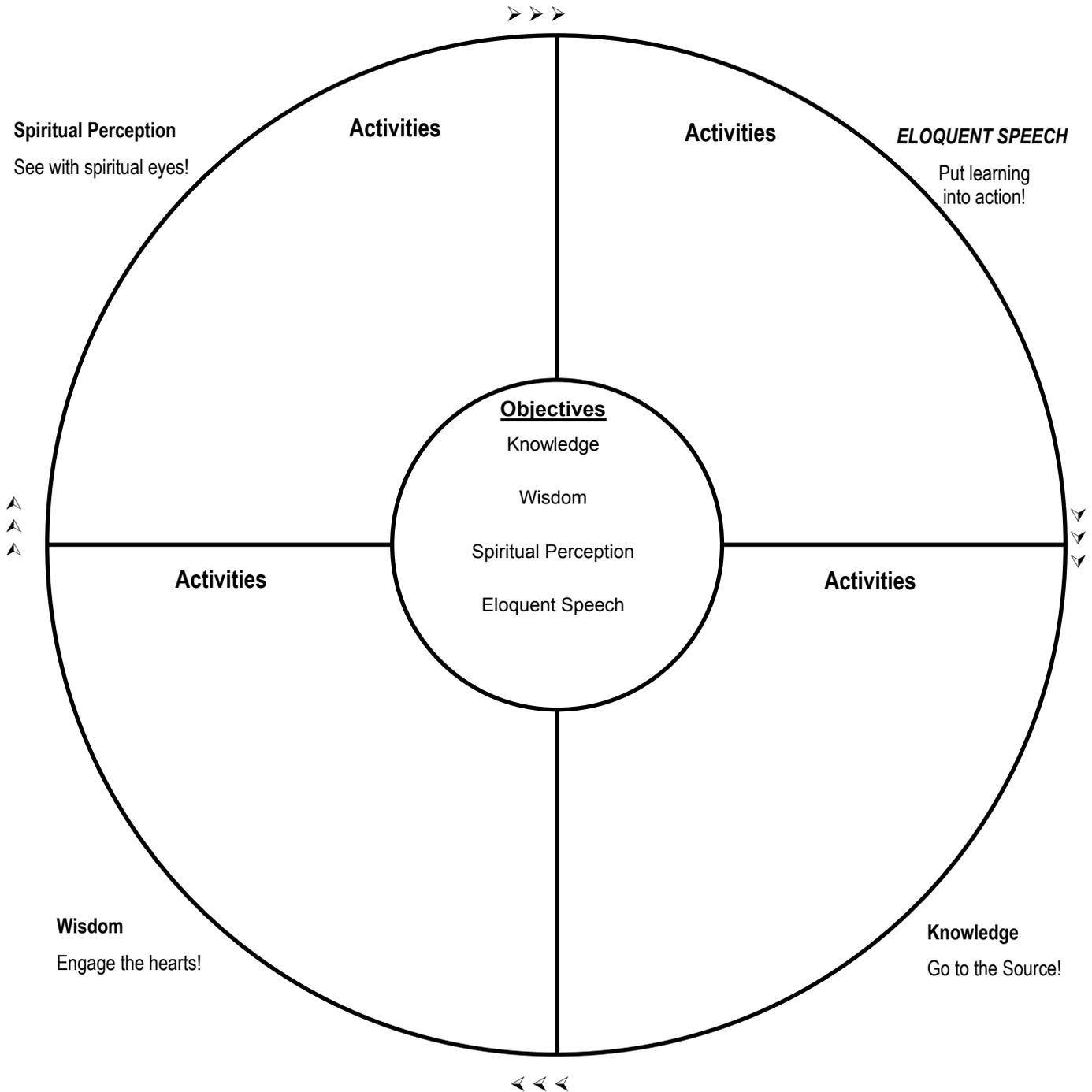
Strand:

Theme:

Topic:

Goal:

Spiritual Qualities:





## *Practice Teaching—Feedback and Support*

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**Purpose:**

Practice teaching a portion of a children's class.

Assess skill areas for improvement.

1. Determine the order in which your small groups will demonstrate your lesson plans.
2. Present a 10–15 minute segment of your lesson. You will actually teach this segment to your fellow participants. When in the role of participant, please give your full and courteous attention to each demonstration.
3. Before beginning your presentation, inform the group of key information:
  - What is the stage of maturity (age) of this class?
  - What special interests and needs did you plan for?
  - What topic did you choose?
4. At the end of each demonstration:
  - On chart paper list the Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception, Eloquent Speech elements that participants observed within the lesson. Identify the Knowledge, Wisdom, Spiritual Perception, Eloquent Speech elements that address objectives for the chosen topic. Remember that some elements of the learning framework may not be addressed within this lesson and that this 10–15 minute demonstration does not make up the entire lesson. Invite presenters to briefly describe activities that might be included in other lessons of their unit to complete the learning cycle. Allow other participants to contribute ideas.
  - Use index cards or small pieces of paper and the “Sentence Starters for Feedback Notes” to provide encouraging feedback notes to your “teachers.” Please identify a particular excellence demonstrated in each lesson.

### **SENTENCE STARTERS FOR FEEDBACK NOTES**

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

Thank you for sharing your lesson on \_\_\_\_\_

- You really got my attention when . . .
- This idea came across very clearly because . . .
- I enjoyed the . . .
- At the close of the lesson I . . .
- The activity made me want to . . .

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## *Processing and Self-Assessment*

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1. Use the “Self-Assessment Tool” below to assess your teaching of the lesson. Identify what you would do the same and what you might do differently next time. Feel free to use the Self-Assessment as an ongoing personal learning tool to continuously refine and improve your lessons.

**Purpose:**

Assess skills and areas for improvement.

### **Self-Assessment Tool**

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Review your objectives and assess the degree to which you judge your lesson and its activities to have met your objectives by answering these questions:

1. What did you enjoy about teaching this lesson?
2. To what extent did the activities in the lesson match the interests of the learners?
  - Did the learners actively participate? If not, why?
  - Did the learners ask questions to extend their learning? If not, why?
  - Did the learners answer questions with enthusiasm?
  - Did the learners exhibit a sense of pleasure and satisfaction in the results of their work?
  - Did the learners express interest in learning more?
3. To what extent did the activities in this lesson match the capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs of the learners?
  - Did all learners understand your instruction? If some did not, why?
  - Did all complete their assignments? If some did not, why?
  - Did the learners remain focused on the activities for most of the time? If some were distracted, why do you think that was?
  - Did you feel the level of the lesson was appropriate? Were the tasks too difficult or complex? Or too simple for any individual, or group?
  - What might you do differently next time to ensure all learners enjoyed their learning?
4. If you were to teach this lesson again, in what ways would you revise your plan?

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### **Process the Activity:**

How can we know when to match learners’ capacity, capability, interests, and needs and when to encourage learners to stretch themselves in new directions?

Play some quiet music. Read your feedback notes, and reflect in your journal on what you learned about the teaching and learning process as a result of your practice, your encouraging feedback notes, and your self-assessment. What next steps can you plan for your own growth in lesson planning, teaching, and giving and receiving feedback?

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

Settle all things, both great and small, by consultation. Without prior consultation, take no important step in your own personal affairs. Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another's projects and plans. Grieve over one another. Let none in the whole country go in need. Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all. . . .

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*, VOL. I, P. 98

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá’u’lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop session you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer’s challenge could be handled. Some options include planning lessons to address learners’ capacities, capabilities, interests, and special needs, as well as our own self-development as teachers.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentences might begin:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***The Tablet of Kalimát (Words of Paradise)**

These Holy Words and teachings are the remedy for the body politic, the divine prescription and real cure for the disorders which afflict the world. Therefore, we must accept and partake of this healing remedy in order that complete recovery may be assured.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 204

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Kalimát.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá’u’lláh.

As a group, decide if you’d prefer to set individual schedules or if you’d enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the entire text of the Tablet of Kalimát between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Whether individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation on one of the sets of “Leaves” indicated below. Plan to share your 1–2 minute presentation at the beginning of the next Teacher Development Workshop.

- a. First Leaf, Second Leaf, Third Leaf
- b. Fourth Leaf, Fifth Leaf, Sixth Leaf
- c. Seventh Leaf, Eighth Leaf
- d. Ninth Leaf
- e. Tenth Leaf, Eleventh Leaf

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions as you read:

- What are the implications of this Tablet for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use the contents of this Tablet to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts gleaned from the Tablet of Kalimát in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children’s Education and Research Center.

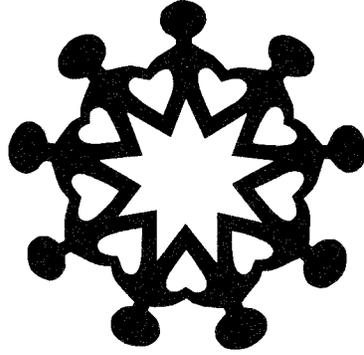
Consider also bringing a favorite passage from your extended study to contribute to the opening devotions of the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include continuing your increased outreach and inclusion efforts, ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth.
2. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Excellence

**Building Skills**

Systematic Use of the Scope and Sequence,  
Student's Spiritual Education Record,  
and Teacher's Spiritual Education Plan

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Tablet of Tajalliyát (Effulgences)

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Five**

Using the Scope and Sequence

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please also contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Tablet of Kalímát as well as the following quotations that highlight the themes for this workshop:

. . . In every art and skill, God loveth the highest perfection.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION* (1976), #18, p. 5

Systematization ensures consistency of lives of action based on well-conceived plans.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, RIDVÁN 155 B.E.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Know the Bahá'í concept of excellence and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.
- Become familiar with the Core Curriculum continuum, Scope and Sequence, Student's Spiritual Education Record, and Teacher's Spiritual Education Plan.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of developing the quality of excellence in working with children and junior youth.
- Understand the importance of a systematic spiritual education process.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the spiritual quality of excellence.
- Perceive ways to use the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence to enhance the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in the use of the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence, Student's Spiritual Education Record, and Teacher's Spiritual Education Plan.
- Participate in a teacher support network that facilitates growth in skills of teaching.

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## *Spiritual Qualities*

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### Excellence

**Purpose:**

Know the Bahá'í concept of excellence and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

1. In the whole group read aloud all the quotations on the following page. As you're reading, mark the passages that most particularly apply to your work with children and junior youth. Please also select one or two passages that indicate actions or attitudes you'd like to strive to implement at this time.
2. Then, enjoy listening to a personal recollection of Hand of the Cause of God, Ugo Giachery, describing his own observations of Shoghi Effendi's vision of excellence and tireless labor to beautify the land surrounding the sacred Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Next, consider your own striving for excellence. In pairs, describe a personal situation in which going the extra step to achieve excellence made it possible to achieve a goal more completely.
4. Working in groups of 3–4, select one of the quotations about excellence, consult on the steps necessary to achieve the performance described in the chosen passage, and record your action steps on chart paper.
5. Please share your chart in the whole group.
6. Return to the passages that you marked in Step 1 above. Select some of these words and phrases and arrange them in the form of a poem that reflects your personal aspirations toward excellence. You may insert additional short words or phrases as you like, while keeping your primary focus on the words of the quotation themselves. Copy your “found poem” onto nice paper and decorate it as time permits.
7. When all poems are completed, please silently walk by each as if in a gallery, perhaps with quiet music playing.

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### Process the Activity

Create your own action plan that indicates your steps for striving for excellence in your personal life or your service as a teacher. Please also include a process for tracking your own progress.

## EXCELLENCE IN ALL THINGS

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1 Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest ye walk in the ways of them whose words differ from their deeds. Strive that ye may be enabled to manifest to the peoples of the earth the signs of God, and to mirror forth His commandments. Let your acts be a guide unto all mankind, for the professions of most men, be they high or low, differ from their conduct. It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others. Through them the brightness of your light can be shed upon the whole earth. Happy is the man that heedeth My counsel, and keepeth the precepts prescribed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXXXIX, p. 305

2 . . . In every art and skill, God loveth the highest perfection.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *BAHÁ'Í EDUCATION* (1976), #18, p. 5

3 I swear by Him Who hath caused Me to reveal whatever hath pleased Him! Ye are better known to the inmates of the Kingdom on high than ye are known to your own selves. Think ye these words to be vain and empty? Would that ye had the power to perceive the things your Lord, the All-Merciful, doth see—things that attest the excellence of your rank, that bear witness to the greatness of your worth, that proclaim the sublimity of your station! God grant that your desires and unmortified passions may not hinder you from that which hath been ordained for you.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXLVII, p. 317

4 The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #103, p. 129

5 For the inner reality of man is a demarcation line between the shadow and the light. . . .With education it can achieve all excellence; devoid of education it will stay on, at the lowest point of imperfection.

Every child is potentially the light of the world—and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #103, p. 130

6 The essence of Bahá'u'lláh's Teaching is all-embracing love, for love includeth every excellence of humankind. It causeth every soul to go forward. It bestoweth on each one, for a heritage, immortal life. Erelong shalt thou bear witness that His celestial Teachings, the very glory of reality itself, shall light up the skies of the world.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #31, p. 66

7 While the children are yet in their infancy feed them from the breast of heavenly grace, foster them in the cradle of all excellence, rear them in the embrace of bounty. Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #102, p. 129

8 Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way ye train them. Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals, so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like brilliant candles on the world, and will not be defiled by lusts and passions in the way of animals, heedless and unaware, but instead will set their hearts on achieving everlasting honour and acquiring all the excellences of humankind.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #110, p. 136

9 From amongst all mankind hath He chosen you, and your eyes have been opened to the light of guidance and your ears attuned to the music of the Company above; and blessed by abounding grace, your hearts and souls have been born into new life. Thank ye and praise ye God that the hand of infinite bestowals hath set upon your heads this gem-studded crown, this crown whose lustrous jewels will forever flash and sparkle down all the reaches of time.

To thank Him for this, make ye a mighty effort, and choose for yourselves a noble goal. Through the power of faith, obey ye the teachings of God, and let all your actions conform to His laws.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #17, p. 35

10 Therefore I say that man must travel in the way of God. Day by day he must endeavor to become better, his belief must increase and become firmer, his good qualities and his turning to God must be greater, the fire of his love must flame more brightly; then day by day he will make progress, for to stop advancing is the means of going back. The bird when he flies soars ever higher and higher, for as soon as he stops flying he will come down. Every day, in the morning when arising you should compare today with yesterday and see in what condition you are. If you see your belief is stronger and your heart more occupied with God and your love increased and your freedom from the world greater then thank God and ask for the increase of these qualities. You must begin to pray and repent for all that you have done which is wrong and you must implore and ask for help and assistance that you may become better than yesterday so that you may continue to make progress.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*, VOL. 1, p. 376

## THE GUARDIAN'S VISION OF EXCELLENCE

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Everyone was working with alacrity and high spirits, as we were conscious of the process of purification of that holy ground—often blessed by the presence of God's Manifestat—and of the creation of the 'Haram-i-Aqdas', to surround forever that Most Sacred Spot. Each one was doing a chore; personally, I was helping Shoghi Effendi with the tracing of the paths and the star-shaped flower beds. I was so entranced with his speed and resolution in giving form to a life-long dream that I had no eyes for anything else but him.

The word magic cannot well define what was taking place at every moment. It was like a powerful and ever-present force of enchantment creating beauty in a hundred places at the same time. Shoghi Effendi was moving about directing, counseling, cautioning, encouraging, explaining, demonstrating how to do apparently impossible things, and rejoicing in the transformation of the land under our very eyes. In the afternoon a drizzle came down but he would not leave the grounds, determined to accomplish as much as was possible before sunset. Markers and trees placed by the previous owners, who had never permitted either the purchase of the land or extensions of the gardens around the Shrine, were removed. Young trees were brought in and planted along the paths; the outer semicircular line was doubled to make a side tree-bordered avenue. Iron gates, steps, stone decorations, flowering plants, top soil and grass seeds were brought from Haifa, from Mt. Carmel, the Ridván Garden, and the Master's House to give consistency to the superb embellishment plan.

During the night Shoghi Effendi developed a cold but in the morning he returned to work, feverish and suffering from all the inconvenience brought by the rheum. For three additional days he did not give up; there was ground to level, trees and borders to plant, and a hundred other details, all well established and correlated in his mind, and which only he would be able to accomplish. The sand was disappearing; the stones from the demolished buildings were already covered with good soil; hedges, pedestals and flower-beds were in place, and the neglected area, which for over half a century had been a scourge to the sanctity of the Holy Tomb, was not only cleansed and purified but had acquired also the beauty and the fragrance of a true 'Holy Court', worthy of the 'Dust' of the Founder of God's Most Holy Faith!

By the end of the fourth day, the sacred precincts of the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world had taken on the appearance of a beautiful, entrancing garden, looking as if it had been there from ancient times, and much as we see it today. Our triumphal return to Haifa could be compared to the return of the Argonauts after securing the Golden Fleece.

UGO GIACHERY, *SHOGHI EFFENDI—RECOLLECTIONS BY*, PP. 128-129

## *The Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence*

As we recall:

Systematization ensures consistency of lines of action based on well-conceived plans. In a general sense, it implies an orderliness of approach in all that pertains to Bahá'í service, whether in teaching or administration, in individual or collective endeavour. While allowing for individual initiative and spontaneity, it suggests the need to be clear-headed, methodical, efficient, constant, balanced and harmonious.

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All the strands, themes, and goals of the Core Curriculum have been outlined in a comprehensive Scope and Sequence table. “Scope” and “sequence” have been defined in this way:

**Scope**—extent covered; range

**Sequence**—series; chronological order of events; succession, progression

Read aloud the *Scope and Sequence Purpose* statement with the whole group.

**Purpose**—The Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence is designed to assist teachers and communities in planning curriculum for Bahá'í classes. It creates an integrated sequential program across all published core curriculum strands. Following this tool throughout the nine years of instruction ensures that the full range of content is covered, and can:

- Assist Local Spiritual Assemblies and education committees in providing guidance for structuring a systematic spiritual education
- Provide teachers with a tool for sequencing curricular units of study in Bahá'í education (Teacher's Spiritual Education Plan)
- Keep parents informed through a feedback tool that shows what a child or youth has studied or will study (Student's Spiritual Education Record)
- Ensure consistency in quality and content of spiritual educational program throughout the Bahá'í community
- Ensure that students and youth maintain a consistent spiritual education program after moving from one community to another
- Enable new students to be easily incorporated into a systematic Bahá'í educational program

This sequential approach presents a well-balanced division of all available topics of study, flexibly applied over a nine-year curriculum. Criteria for this division includes diversity of topics and average capacities and capabilities of learners.

Note the layout of the Scope and Sequence table on the following pages. Going across the page from left to right the contents of the curriculum are listed in rows for each level. Going down the table, the content of each theme is displayed across levels. Although it is possible to find the same goal of a given theme mentioned in more than one level, a specific topic is only assigned to one level.

**Purpose:**

Understand the use of the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence.

# CORE CURRICULUM FOR SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND JUNIOR YOUTH

	Strand: Principle of Oneness				Strand: The Central	
	ONENESS OF RELIGION	ONENESS OF HUMANITY	RACE UNITY	EQUALITY OF WOMEN AND MEN	THE BÁB	BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
L E V E L 1	<p><b>Understanding of the Oneness of God:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Meaning of Divine Unity</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding of the Major Religions of the Past:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Nature and Purpose of Religion</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Prime and Pivotal Teaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Prime and Pivotal Principle</li> </ul> <p><b>To Know that Human Reality Is Spiritual:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ No Distinction or Separation</li> <li>○ All Are Born with Potential</li> </ul>	<p><b>Understanding the Principle of Unity in Diversity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Beauty and Purpose of Diversity in the Realm of Creation</li> </ul> <p><b>Eliminating Racial Prejudice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Following the Example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá</li> </ul>	<p><b>Equality and How It Differs from Being the Same:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Equal in Value, not Appearance</li> </ul> <p><b>Equality In Family and Community:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Roles of Fathers, Mothers, Wives and Husbands</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of Heroes and Heroines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Holy Family</li> </ul>	<p><b>Historical Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Religious Awakening in Anticipation</li> <li>○ Mullá Husayn's Search</li> </ul> <p><b>The Station of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Titles of the Báb</li> </ul> <p><b>The Life of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Early Life of the Báb</li> <li>○ Declaration of the Báb</li> </ul> <p><b>The Writings of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prayers of the Báb</li> </ul>	<p><b>Love for Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prayers and Meditations</li> <li>○ Loving Acts</li> <li>○ Children of His Household</li> </ul> <p><b>The Station of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ... as Stated by 'Abdu'l-Bahá</li> </ul> <p><b>His Life &amp; Ministry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Childhood of Bahá'u'lláh</li> <li>○ Youth and Early Manhood</li> </ul> <p><b>The Principles of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Oneness of God and of Humanity</li> </ul>
L E V E L 2	<p><b>Understanding of Oneness of God:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ To Be a True Seeker</li> </ul> <p><b>Understanding of Major Religions of the Past:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Mission of the Prophets</li> <li>○ The History, Laws, and Teachings of Major Religions</li> </ul> <p><b>The Greatest Means for Unity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Essential Foundation of All Religions</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Prime and Pivotal Teaching:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ For the Peoples of the World</li> </ul> <p><b>The Diversity of Humanity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Appreciating Diversity</li> </ul> <p><b>The Importance of the Principle of the Elimination of All Prejudices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A Barrier to Oneness and World Peace</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Unity and Equality of the Races:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Created from the Same Dust</li> <li>○ A Composite Harmony and Beauty</li> </ul>	<p><b>Equality and How It Differs from Being the Same:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Equality in Nature</li> </ul> <p><b>The Principle of Equality as it is Reflected in Bahá'í Teachings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The History of Equality and Inequality</li> </ul> <p><b>Equality In Family and Community:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Collaborative Family Life</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of Heroes and Heroines:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Expressing Equality</li> </ul>	<p><b>Historical Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The World of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century</li> <li>○ Iran in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century</li> </ul> <p><b>The Station of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Herald of Bahá'u'lláh</li> </ul> <p><b>The Life of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Letters of the Living</li> <li>○ The Ministry of the Báb After His Declaration</li> <li>○ Conference at Badasht</li> </ul> <p><b>The Writings of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Development of the Bahá'í Calendar</li> </ul>	<p><b>Love for Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Suffering and Sacrifices</li> <li>○ Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá</li> <li>○ The Holy Family</li> </ul> <p><b>The Station of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ... as Stated by the Báb</li> <li>○ ... as Stated by His Own Pen</li> </ul> <p><b>His Life &amp; Ministry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Bahá'u'lláh in the Siyáh-Chál</li> <li>○ Banishment to Iraq</li> <li>○ Declaration in the Garden of Ridván</li> </ul> <p><b>Proofs &amp; Evidences of His Station</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Progressive Revelation</li> </ul> <p><b>The Principles of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Social Principles</li> </ul> <p><b>Writings of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Significance of the Writings</li> </ul>
<b>JUNIOR YOUTH: COMING OF AGE</b>						
L E V E L 3	<p><b>Understanding of the Oneness of God:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Progressive Revelation – The Prophetic Cycle</li> </ul> <p><b>The Greatest Means for Unity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Religious Prejudice as Cause of War and Hatred</li> <li>○ Religion Must Be Cause of Love and Unity</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Diversity of Humanity:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Principle of Unity in Diversity</li> </ul> <p><b>The Importance of the Principle of the Elimination of All Prejudices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All Must Strive to Overcome Prejudice</li> <li>○ True Unity as the Outcome of the Elimination of All Prejudice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Eliminating Racial Prejudice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Most Vital and Challenging Issue</li> <li>○ Spiritual Qualities and Responsibilities Needed</li> <li>○ Promised Outcomes</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Principle of Equality as it is Reflected in Bahá'í Teachings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Role of the Institutions</li> </ul> <p><b>Equality in Family and Community:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Development of Human Economy</li> <li>○ Equality and World Peace</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Station of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Islamic Prophecies</li> </ul> <p><b>The Life of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Martyrdom of the Báb</li> <li>○ Upheavals Associated with the Ministry of the Báb</li> <li>○ The Shrine of the Báb</li> </ul> <p><b>The Writings of the Báb:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Major Writings</li> </ul>	<p><b>The Station of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ ... as Stated in the Holy Books of Previous Religions</li> <li>○ ... as Stated by Shoghi Effendi</li> </ul> <p><b>His Life &amp; Ministry:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Exiles - Constantinople, Adrianople</li> <li>○ Exile to the Holy Land</li> </ul> <p><b>Proofs and Evidences of His Station</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proofs and Evidences Found in Divine Religions of the Past</li> </ul> <p><b>The Principles of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Personal Principles</li> </ul> <p><b>Laws of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Need for Laws</li> <li>○ The Kitáb-i-Aqdas</li> </ul> <p><b>Writings of Bahá'u'lláh:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Mysteries and Hidden Meanings</li> <li>○ Major Texts</li> </ul>

**- Scope and Sequence -**

**Learning Goals are in bold** Topics in regular type

Figures						
Strand: World Order of Bahá'u'lláh						
'ABDU'L-BAHÁ	THE COVENANT	THE GUARDIANSHIP	HUQÚQU'LLÁH / BAHÁ'Í FUNDS	INSTITUTIONS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH	A LIFE OF SERVICE	
<b>The Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ The Childhood of 'Abdu'l-Bahá ○ 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Life of Service ○ The Mother Temple of the West <b>The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ Tablets and Talks Addressed to Children	<b>A Divine Covenant:</b> ○ The Definition of a Divine Covenant <b>The Greater Covenant:</b> ○ How the Manifestations have been Received by Humanity	<b>The Life of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi:</b> ○ Lineage and Early Life, Childhood, Early Youth, Schooling <b>Guardian's Contributions:</b> ○ Development of the World Center	<b>The Bahá'í Fund:</b> ○ The Bahá'í Fund	<b>The Structure and Function of the Administrative Order:</b> ○ The Nineteen Day Feast	<b>The Purpose of Living a Life of Service:</b> ○ The Purpose of Life <b>Caring for One's Body:</b> ○ The Relationship between physical cleanliness and spirituality <b>Developing Intellectual Faculties:</b> ○ Excellence and Education <b>Developing Spiritual Capacity:</b> ○ Spiritual Foundations <b>Developing Social Life:</b> ○ Daily Deeds of Service	LEVEL 1
<b>Station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Exemplar ○ 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Interpreter <b>Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ Youth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá ○ The Sacrifices of 'Abdu'l-Bahá <b>The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ Major Topics and Titles ○ <i>Memorials of the Faithful</i> <b>Journeys and Talks in the West:</b> ○ Significance to the Western Believers ○ Important Principles Emphasized	<b>The Greater Covenant:</b> ○ The Covenant of the Báb ○ The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh <b>The Lesser Covenant:</b> ○ First of Its Kind in Religious History	<b>The Life of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi:</b> ○ Character of the Guardian and His Excellence in All Things <b>Guardian's Contributions:</b> ○ Translation and Interpretation of the Writings, Correspondence with the Bahá'ís of the World, and His Writings ○ The Appointment of Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith	<b>The History of Huqúqu'lláh:</b> ○ Unique Nature of Huqúqu'lláh <b>Purpose of the Law of Huqúqu'lláh for Institutions:</b> ○ Reciprocity, Mutual Assistance and Cooperation ○ Building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh <b>Purpose of the Law of Huqúqu'lláh for the Individual:</b> ○ Personal Aspects of the Law ○ Outcomes for the Individual	<b>Significance and Distinction of the Institutions:</b> ○ The Administrative Order ○ Administrative Systems of the Past ○ The Covenant <b>Development of the Administrative Order:</b> ○ Heroic and Formative Ages ○ Institution of the Learned ○ The Bahá'í World Centre <b>Structure and Function of the Administrative Order:</b> ○ Structure and Form ○ The Learned and the Rulers ○ Local and National Institutions <b>Citizenship:</b> ○ Individual's Relationship to Institutions ○ Service to the Institutions	<b>The Purpose of Living a Life of Service</b> ○ The Power of Action <b>Caring for One's Body</b> ○ Chastity and Purity <b>Developing Intellectual Faculties:</b> ○ The Needs of our Time <b>Developing Spiritual Capacity:</b> ○ Spiritual Habits <b>Developing Social Life:</b> ○ Serving the World and Humanity ○ Teaching through Words and Deeds	
<b>JUNIOR YOUTH: COMING OF AGE</b>						
<b>The Station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ The Kitáb-i-Ahd ○ The Center of the Covenant ○ The Reactions of Others <b>Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ Themes in... ○ Bahá'í Administrative Order <b>The Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ <i>Some Answered Questions</i> <b>Public Addresses:</b> ○ Style and Presentation	<b>The Lesser Covenant:</b> ○ Its Purpose to Preserve Unity <b>The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:</b> ○ The Will and Testament of ○ Guardianship and the Universal House Of Justice <b>The Individual &amp; the Covenant:</b> ○ Complete Loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh ○ Participation and Obedience ○ Covenant-Breakers	<b>The Life of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi:</b> ○ Family Relationships: Marriage, Greatest Holy Leaf, Covenant Breakers ○ Passing of the Guardian <b>Guardian's Contributions:</b> ○ Expansion and Implementation of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, Design, Implementation ○ The Institution of the Guardianship	<b>The History of Huqúqu'lláh:</b> ○ The Development of the Institution of Huqúqu'lláh ○ The Trusteeship of Huqúqu'lláh <b>Purpose of the Law of Huqúqu'lláh for Institutions:</b> ○ The Disbursement of Huqúqu'lláh <b>Application of the Law of Huqúqu'lláh:</b> ○ The Features of Huqúqu'lláh ○ Calculating Huqúqu'lláh <b>The Bahá'í Fund:</b> ○ Distinction Between the Bahá'í Fund and Huqúqu'lláh	<b>Development of the Administrative Order:</b> ○ 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Role as Architect <b>Structure and Function of the Administrative Order:</b> ○ The Universal House of Justice ○ Bahá'í Elections <b>Consultation:</b> ○ The Role of Consultation ○ Spiritual Prerequisites ○ Decision Making ○ The Steps Used in Consultation <b>Citizenship:</b> ○ America's Spiritual Destiny <b>The Mission and Future of the Faith:</b> ○ Purpose and Mission of Bahá'u'lláh ○ Unfolding Destiny	<b>Developing Intellectual Faculties:</b> ○ The Kitáb-i-Aqdas ○ Heroes and Heroines <b>Developing Spiritual Capacity:</b> ○ Spiritual Practices <b>Developing Social Life:</b> ○ Community Service ○ Preparation for Marriage ○ Teaching our Peers	LEVEL 3

## *Systematic Spiritual Education*

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**Purpose:**

Understand the importance of a systematic spiritual education process.

1. In the whole group, read the following quotations:

The Sunday school for the children in which the Tablets and Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are read, and the Word of God is recited for the children is indeed a blessed thing. Thou must certainly continue this organized activity without cessation, and attach importance to it, so that day by day it may grow and be quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. If this activity is well organized, rest thou assured that it will yield great results. Firmness and steadfastness, however, are necessary, otherwise it will continue for some time, but later be gradually forgotten. Perseverance is an essential condition. In every project firmness and steadfastness will undoubtedly lead to good results; otherwise it will exist for some days, and then be discontinued.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #124, p. 143-4

These children must be given a good training from their earliest childhood. They must be given a systematic training which will further their development from day to day, in order that they may receive greater insight, so that their spiritual receptivity be broadened.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE BAHÁ’Í WORLD*, VOL. IX, p. 543

2. Then read 1/29/03 letter written by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.
3. After reading the quotations and the letter, briefly discuss the following questions:
  - What is the value of a comprehensive and systematic spiritual education curriculum?
  - Why is it essential to persevere in the spiritual education of children?
  - How does the flexible use of a systematic curriculum benefit children of Bahá'í families and all others?

**NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY  
OF THE  
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES**

536 SHERIDAN ROAD, WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-2849 • (847) 869-9039 • EMAIL: SECRETARIAT@USBNC.ORG

January 29, 2003

To the American Bahá'í Community

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

In its recent message to the Bahá'ís of the World, dated January 17, 2003, the Universal House of Justice observes that opening children's classes to the wider community through a variety of well-conceived and imaginative means is attracting a growing number of seekers. These seekers are often eager to attend firesides and join study circles, many going on to declare their Faith in Bahá'u'lláh. It goes on to say that "This outward-looking orientation is one of the finest fruits of the grassroots learning taking place."

As communities strive to attract a wider attendance to Bahá'í children's classes, the question often arises as to whether the curriculum taught should focus primarily on Bahá'í principles or virtues so as to be more appealing to non-Bahá'ís. There are a growing number of initiatives across the country that are inspired by the Bahá'í teachings, and focus on topics such as moral education, race unity, peace, world religions, and the like. Such programs also often include literacy training or academic tutoring, and attract a broad non-Bahá'í audience. Important as these Bahá'í inspired programs for children are to the growth and development of the Bahá'í community, they cannot take the place of Bahá'í children's classes which must address the full scope and depth of Bahá'í curriculum.

A message to a Local Spiritual Assembly, dated September 25, 2001, written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice states:

*"In its message dated 9 January 2001, however, the House of Justice refers specifically to Bahá'í children's classes as also being open to non-Bahá'í children. In the case of these classes, which are intended to address the complete spiritual education of Bahá'ís, it would not be possible to eliminate Bahá'í religious teachings, and topics such as Bahá'í history, Bahá'í laws, and the Covenant would be an integral part of these classes."*

**NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES**

536 SHERIDAN ROAD, WILMETTE, ILLINOIS 60091-2849

There are many techniques that may be used to insure that lessons taught at Bahá'í children's classes address the interests and capacities of a diverse student body. No less than twenty six examples of diverse instructional methods and learning tools may be found in the Bahá'í Writings, and are compiled in the book, *Foundations for Spiritual Education*. Becoming skillful in the employment of a variety of instructional methods, utilizing flexible student groupings and peer tutoring, and sequencing curriculum to better address the background of a class of students will all help to assure the quality of spiritual education classes for all children, no matter what their background.

When inviting friends and acquaintances to participate in Bahá'í children's classes, Bahá'ís should be clear about the nature and content of the curriculum. We have received many encouraging reports from across the country about non-Bahá'í parents who are happy to have their children involved in a full program of Bahá'í education.

The importance of Bahá'í children's classes cannot be overstated. Their development is a primary focus of the Bahá'í community during the Five Year Plan. The research of the National Teaching Committee has identified regular participation in children's classes throughout the life of a child as the greatest single determining factor for their later retention in the Faith. In addition, spiritual education for their children is one of the primary interests of seekers that have responded to the media campaign.

The National Spiritual Assembly has spent the last fifteen years developing the Core Curriculum for the spiritual education of children covering a range of topics, including the Central Figures of the Faith, its history and pivotal principles as well as its administrative order. It is our sincere hope that Bahá'í communities across the country will continue to develop their skill in presenting the full scope of this curriculum to the children in our community.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Robert C. Henderson  
Secretary General

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## *Systematic Use of the Scope and Sequence*

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### A Continuum of Learning

As we know, a **continuum** is a sequence of things in regular order.

As we have seen, it is important to present the full scope of the spiritual education curriculum. Many factors, such as the choice of instructional methods, a welcoming environment, and ideas explored in Teacher Development Workshop Two, increase the accessibility of our Bahá'í classes to all the children in our communities. In addition, some communities choose to align their major outreach efforts to the public with their presentation of the topics in the Oneness Strand. As more and more communities implement the full scope of the curriculum, and as their Bahá'í classes become more established, we will also become increasingly successful integrating children and junior youth from all backgrounds into these classes. In fact, that is a major purpose of these Teacher Development workshops!

#### **Purpose:**

Define continuum.

Identify applications for the continuum.

1. For this next discussion, please organize your group so that all participants in the same community are in the same working group.
2. In your working groups, review the Core Curriculum Scope and Sequence along with any Spiritual Education Plans put in place by your community. As your spiritual education classes currently operate:
  - What are the numbers and ages of children and junior youth in these classes? How do we anticipate these numbers increasing over the coming weeks and months? Is there a particular time that you anticipate an influx of children in response to your community's outreach efforts?
  - When do the classes meet? For how long? How many classes are held each year?
  - Does your community need to increase the number or the duration of classes to be able to address the full scope of the curriculum?
  - At present, what is your current schedule for studying the curriculum strands, themes, and topics? Looking at the Scope and Sequence document, do you see any changes that you'd like to suggest to your Bahá'í school or Local Spiritual Assembly?
  - Sample curriculum plans created by 3 different communities are included on pp. 92-94. Refer briefly to these plans: do they offer ideas that you'd like to consider including in your draft plan?
3. Please record your ideas and suggestions on the Curriculum Planning Worksheet on p. 95. Then, create a plan to share your ideas and suggestions with your local Bahá'í school or Local Spiritual Assembly.

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### **Process the Activity**

Why is it important to share your draft plans with your sponsoring institution with humility, detachment, and love?

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**SAMPLE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM PLAN #1**


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<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Fall Term</b> <i>Oneness</i>	<b>Winter Term</b> <i>Central Figures</i>	<b>Spring Term</b> <i>World Order of Bahá'u'lláh</i>
1	Equality of Women and Men <i>level one</i>	The Báb <i>level one</i>	The Bahá'í Funds <i>level one</i> Life of Service: Physical cleanliness and spirituality
2	Oneness of Humanity <i>level one</i>	Bahá'u'lláh <i>level one</i>	Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith <i>level one</i> Life of Service: Daily deeds of service
3	Race Unity <i>level one</i>	'Abdu'l-Bahá <i>level one</i>	The Guardianship <i>level one</i> Life of Service: Spiritual foundations; Excellence and education
4	Oneness of Religion <i>level one</i>	The Báb <i>level two</i>	The Covenant <i>level one</i> Life of Service: The power of action
5	Race Unity <i>level two</i> Equality of Women and Men <i>level two</i>	Bahá'u'lláh <i>level two</i>	Huqúqu'lláh and Bahá'í Funds <i>level two</i> Life of Service: The power of action
6	Oneness of Humanity <i>level two</i>	'Abdul-Bahá <i>level two</i>	Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith <i>level two</i> Life of Service: The needs of our time; Spiritual habits
7	Oneness of Religion <i>level two</i>	The Báb <i>level three</i>	The Covenant <i>level two</i> The Guardianship <i>level two</i> Life of Service: Chastity and purity; Serving the world and humanity; Teaching through words and deeds
8	Race Unity <i>level three</i> Equality of Women and Men <i>level three</i>	Bahá'u'lláh <i>level three</i>	Huqúqu'lláh and Bahá'í Funds <i>level three</i> Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith <i>level three</i> Live of Service: The Kitáb-i-Aqdas; Heroes and heroines; Spiritual practices
9	Oneness of Religion <i>level three</i> Oneness of Humanity <i>level three</i>	'Abdu'l-Bahá <i>level three</i>	The Covenant <i>level three</i> The Guardianship <i>level three</i> Life of Service: Community service; Preparation for marriage; Teaching our peers

## SAMPLE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM PLAN #2

<b>L E V E L  O N E</b>	Age	Central Figures	Principle of Oneness	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
	6	Bahá'u'lláh	Oneness of Religion	Life of Service Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith
	7	'Abdu'l-Bahá	Oneness of Humanity	Life of Service Huqúqu'lláh and Bahá'í Funds
	8	The Báb	Race Unity Equality of Women and Men	Life of Service The Covenant The Guardianship
<b>L E V E L  T W O</b>	Age	Central Figures	Principle of Oneness	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
	9	Bahá'u'lláh	Oneness of Religion	Life of Service Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith
	10	'Abdu'l-Bahá	Oneness of Humanity	Life of Service Huqúqu'lláh and Bahá'í Funds
	11	The Báb	Race Unity Equality of Women and Men	Life of Service The Covenant The Guardianship
<b>L E V E L  T H R E E</b>	Age	Central Figures	Principle of Oneness	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
	12	Bahá'u'lláh	Oneness of Religion	Life of Service Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith
	13	'Abdu'l-Bahá	Oneness of Humanity	Life of Service Huqúqu'lláh and Bahá'í Funds
	14	The Báb	Race Unity Equality of Women and Men	Life of Service The Covenant The Guardianship

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**SAMPLE COMMUNITY CURRICULUM PLAN #3**


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Strands, Themes	Age 6 Level One topics	Age 9 Level Two topics	Age 12 Level Three topics
	Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh		
	Principle of Oneness: Oneness of Religion		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Life of Service		

Strands, Themes	Age 7 Level One topics	Age 10 Level Two topics	Age 13 Level Three topics
	Central Figures: 'Abdu'l-Bahá		
	Principle of Oneness: Oneness of Humanity		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Huqúqu'lláh and the Bahá'í Funds		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Life of Service		

Strands, Themes	Age 8 Level One topics	Age 11 Level Two topics	Age 14 Level Three topics
	Central Figures: The Báb		
	Principle of Oneness: Race Unity		
	Principle of Oneness: Equality of Women and Men		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: The Covenant		
	World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: The Guardianship		
World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Life of Service			

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**CURRICULUM PLANNING WORKSHEET**


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Age	Total Number of Children	# from Bahá'í families	#from seeker families
Pre-K			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
Youth			
Adults			
How will current community outreach efforts increase numbers in future?			
<p>When and where do classes currently meet?</p> <p>Length of classes: _____ Number of classes per year: _____</p> <p>Are these times and places welcoming to seekers? Are there other possibilities?</p> <p>Total number of classroom hours per year: _____</p>			
What is the current schedule for presenting the full scope of the curriculum?			
What adjustments might be made to the curriculum schedule, now or in the future?			

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

The question of consultation is of the utmost importance, and is one of the most potent instruments conducive to the tranquility and felicity of the people. For example, when a believer is uncertain about his affairs, or when he seeketh to pursue a project or trade, the friends should gather together and devise a solution for him. He, in turn, should act accordingly. Likewise in larger issues, when a problem ariseth, or a difficulty occurreth, the wise should gather, consult, and devise a solution. They should then rely upon the One true God, and surrender to His Providence, in whatever way it may be revealed, for divine confirmations will undoubtedly assist. Consultation, therefore, is one of the explicit ordinances of the Lord of mankind.

*‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION, #14, P. 7*

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá’u’lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop session you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer’s challenge could be handled.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentence-starters might include:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***The Tablet of Tajalliyát (Effulgences)**

These Holy Words and teachings are the remedy for the body politic, the divine prescription and real cure for the disorders which afflict the world. Therefore, we must accept and partake of this healing remedy in order that complete recovery may be assured.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 204

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Tajalliyát.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá’u’lláh.

As a group, decide if you’d prefer to set individual schedules or if you’d enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the entire text of the Tablet of Tajalliyát between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Whether individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation on one of the “Effulgences” indicated below. Plan to share your 1–2 minute presentation at the beginning of the next Teacher Development Workshop.

- a. The First Tajalliyát
- b. The Second Tajalliyát
- c. The Third Tajalliyát
- d. The Fourth Tajalliyát

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions as you read:

- What are the implications of this Tablet for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use the contents of this Tablet to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts gleaned from the Tablet of Tajalliyát in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children’s Education and Research Center.

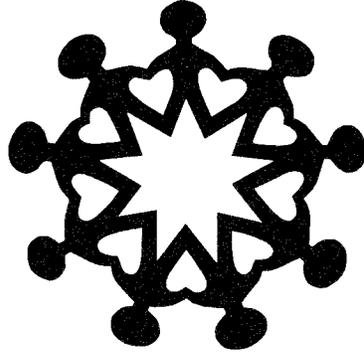
Consider also bringing a favorite passage from your extended study to contribute to the opening devotions of the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action that you have identified during your personal development planning to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth.
2. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Unity

**Building Skills**

A Teacher of Love in a School of Unity  
Setting Standards in the Classroom  
Creating a Climate of Encouragement

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Tablet of Ishráqât (Splendours)

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

---

**Workshop Six**

Setting Standards in the  
Classroom

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Tablet of Tajalliyát as well as the following quotation that highlights the themes for this workshop:

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 14

The children's school must be a place of utmost discipline and order . . . so that, in his earliest years, within the very essence of the child, the divine foundation will be laid and the structure of holiness raised up.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #111, p. 136

Please also share a highlight from your Bahá'í classes open to all.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Know some of the Bahá'í writings on unity.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of unity in the classroom.
- Understand the importance of an encouraging classroom environment.
- Understand the importance of joy in our classrooms.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Perceive ways that classroom organization can promote unity.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in applying some techniques for setting standards in the classroom.

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*Spiritual Qualities*

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**Unity**

1. In the whole group read aloud the quotations on unity, perhaps while listening to quiet music. Then, individually re-read these quotations, reflecting on their application to yourself as a teacher of children or junior youth.
2. After a brief period of reflection, share your reflections with the person sitting beside you. What are the implications of these writings for your role as a teacher?
3. Then, working with a fellow participant, select one of these passages to memorize. After you have made progress with your memorization, use the art supplies provided to create a beautiful copy of this quotation either to display in your classroom or in another place where you'll see it regularly. Consider sharing your reflections on the power of unity with your students during your next class.

**Purpose:**

Understand the importance of unity in the classroom.

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**Process the Activity**

Take a few minutes to record your reflections and your plans in your journal.

## UNITY

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1 He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherished in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE SUMMONS OF THE LORD OF HOSTS*, p. 80

2 So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 14

3 O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 163

4 O people! Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 21

5 O Children of Men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE ARABIC HIDDEN WORDS*, No. 68

6 I charge you all that each one of you concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, restfulness and content.

Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and happiness.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 29

7 Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which runlet and transcendent the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO'L-BAHÁ*, p. 291

8 The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 129

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## *Building Skills: A Teacher of Love in a School of Unity*

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1. Take a moment to read aloud this quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

O thou spiritual teacher! In thy school, instruct thou God’s children in the customs of the Kingdom. Be thou a teacher of love, in a school of unity. Train thou the children of the friends of the Merciful in the rules and ways of His loving-kindness.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ’Í EDUCATION: A COMPILATION*, 1989 ED., #64, PP. 24

**Purpose:**

Perceive ways that classroom organization can promote unity.

2. This teacher development workshop introduces some practical strategies that can assist us as we strive day by day to become “a teacher of love in a school of unity.”
3. In your group, play a game suggested by your facilitator.
4. Then, read the quotations on the following page and discuss the focus questions. Record your ideas on chart paper.
5. Next, refer to the suggestions on p. 105. Would you like to add any of these ideas to your list?
6. Considering your list, please select one or two items that you’d like to address at this time. What action steps entirely within your own control—whether individually or as a teaching team—can you take to move toward your goal of increasing the organization, discipline, and order in your Bahá’í classes?

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### **Process the Activity**

Why is it important to first focus on action steps that are entirely within our own control?

## ORGANIZATION AND ORDER

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**Focus questions:** How can we enhance the cleanliness and other physical arrangements for our Bahá'í classes? What strategies for classroom organization would assist the children and junior youth in our classes, whether Bahá'í or other, to become “the pride of the human race”?

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1 As to the organization of the schools: if possible the children should all wear the same kind of clothing, even if the fabric is varied. It is preferable that the fabric as well should be uniform; if, however, this is not possible, there is no harm done. The more cleanly the pupils are, the better; they should be immaculate. The school must be located in a place where the air is delicate and pure. The children must be carefully trained to be most courteous and well-behaved. They must be constantly encouraged and made eager to gain all the summits of human accomplishment, so that from their earliest years they will be taught to have high aims, to conduct themselves well, to be chaste, pure, and undefiled, and will learn to be of powerful resolve and firm of purpose in all things. Let them not jest and trifle, but earnestly advance unto their goals, so that in every situation they will be found resolute and firm.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO’L-BAHÁ*, #110, p. 135

2 The children’s school must be a place of utmost discipline and order, that instruction must be thorough, and provision must be made for the rectification and refinement of character; so that, in his earliest years, within the very essence of the child, the divine foundation will be laid and the structure of holiness raised up.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO’L-BAHÁ*, #111, p. 136

3 Make ye every effort to improve the Turbinate School and to develop order and discipline in this institution. Utilize every means to make this School a garden of the All-Merciful, from which the lights of learning will cast their beams, and wherein the children, whether Bahá'í or other, will be educated to such a degree as to become God’s gifts to man, and the pride of the human race.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS VOL. I*, p. 277

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## SOME IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION

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1. **Plan lessons** appropriate to your learners' capacities, capabilities, interests, and needs, as practiced in Teacher Development Workshops 3 and 4. This strategy alone will help most students focus their energy on the lessons.
  
2. Teach your students **everyday routines**, such as:
  - a. Entering the classroom
  - b. Signals for attention
  - c. Prayers, stories, group instruction, individual or team work
  - d. Where to keep student work or student possessions (coat, etc.)
  - e. Drink, snack, or washroom protocols
  - f. Daily clean up (including how to use and where to keep cleaning supplies)
  - g. Concluding the class
  - h. Departing the classroom
  - i. What are some other classroom routines that you'd like to teach?
  - j. How specifically do you plan to teach these routines?
  
3. Teach your students how to recognize and **manage transitions**:
  - a. What transitions take place during a class? Please list them.
  - b. Have supplies ready to minimize delays. What else can limit delays?
  - c. Have sponge activities ready to absorb time, if the class completes a lesson rapidly.
  - d. Have challenge activities ready to engage individual students as needed.
  - e. What are some other strategies for smoother transitions or minimizing delays?

## *A Climate of Encouragement*

---

**Purpose:**

Understand the importance of an encouraging classroom climate.

In our classrooms, we promote unity by creating a climate of encouragement. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains:

The reality of man is his thought, not his material body. . . .

If a man’s thought is constantly aspiring towards heavenly subjects then does he become saintly; if on the other hand his thought does not soar, but is directed downwards to centre itself upon the things of this world, he grows more and more material until he arrives at a state little better than that of a mere animal.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, PP. 17-8

1. Let’s explore the power of our thoughts through a simple demonstration explained by your facilitator.
2. After completing the activity, re-read the quotation by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and briefly discuss the questions:
  - How does this activity demonstrate the power of thought?
  - Why is it so important for us to cultivate an encouraging climate in our classroom?
  - What are some practical examples of an encouraging climate in a Bahá’í class?

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### **Process the Activity**

In your journals please identify at least one practical action step that you can use to create an encouraging climate in your classroom.

What would be the value of this sort of activity with our students?

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## *Setting Standards in the Classroom*

---

### Joy Gives Us Wings

An important means for promoting unity, order, and discipline in the classroom is to involve your students in the process of setting standards for the classroom. It engages their interest, assists them to learn from each other, establishes unity of thought, and enables the teacher and the students to return to these standards when necessary.

The following activity provides an example of the sort of activity to build unity of thought on the important question of classroom standards. Enjoy participating in the activity, then discuss how you could use it (or a similar activity) in your classroom.

1. Post all or part of the following quotation on chart paper in your classroom. Read aloud twice, or invite capable students to read aloud the read aloud this passage by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Encourage your students to listen with care for the main points. Then RE-READ the sentences in **bold type**:

“...In this world we are influenced by two sentiments, Joy and Pain.

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

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *PARIS TALKS*, PAGES 109-10

2. Invite your students to individually and silently reflect on their experience as a spiritual being. Ask:

What have been the high points for you?

Select one high point, a time when you felt most alive, most happy; a time when you felt you were making a difference and serving God and humanity. What was it? Who else was involved? What were you doing? What did you achieve?

Take a few moments to reflect on your experience, then share the **STORY** of your experience with your group.

#### **Purpose:**

Understand the importance of joy in our classrooms.

Become more skillful in applying some techniques for setting standards in the classroom.

3. After some or all of your students have shared their happy memories with the whole group, ask:

What can we do in our classrooms to assure that we each experience joy while we're here?

4. List the items on chart paper and discuss as a group how these actions promote joy. Then, the teacher may add any important items that weren't mentioned by the group and explain why they need to be added, e.g., they are Bahá'í principles, they are required for health or safety or unity, or perhaps they are requirements of the sponsoring institution.
5. After discussing how all these actions promote joy, invite the entire group to agree that these will be the standards that guide us while we're together.

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### **Process the Activity**

Who might we adjust this activity for very young children?

What adjustments, if any, might we make to this activity if we wish to introduce it long after the classes have been in process?

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## *Alternate Activity for Setting Community Standards*

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This activity provides an alternate form for setting standards when a sponsoring institution, such as a local Bahá'í School committee or Local Spiritual Assembly has already provided a list of standards for the school. This activity may be combined with the previous activity if desired.

1. As a group, read aloud the community standards. Discuss them so that everyone understands these standards.
2. Discuss the question: How do these standards assist us to **promote joy** while we are together?
3. As a group, decide on one practical action that your group will offer the entire group to **promote joy in every heart**, while we are here together. Be prepared to share this plan with the whole group.

Here's one example of Community Standards used in several of the permanent Bahá'í schools in the United States.

### **Community Standards—Health and Safety**

- Stay on campus.
- Stay with your group at all times.
- Obey curfew.
- Observe cleanliness and purity (no smoking, drinking, drugs, etc.).

### **Community Standards—Unity**

- Befriend others.
- Include others (no exclusive pairs or cliques).
- Speak with courtesy (no gossip, backbiting, arguing, etc.).
- Overlook the faults of others.
- Cultivate friendships (no electronic entertainment, such as CD/tape players, TVs, video games).

### **Community Standards—Chaste and Holy Life**

- Build friendships with all, no exclusive 'pairs.'
- Dress modestly (examples: no short shorts, tank tops, midriff tops, etc. for either male or female).
- Only males permitted in lodging assigned to males; only females permitted in lodging assigned to females.
- Cultivate moderation in speech, recreation, etc.

### **Community Standards—Moral Rectitude**

- Begin and end the day with devotions.
- Begin and end scheduled activities punctually.
- Participate whole-heartedly in all activities.
- Obey all Bahá'í laws and principles.
- Obey legitimate authority (parents, teachers, dorm counselors, school administrators).
- Respect yourself, others, and property.
- Strive for excellence.

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, #3, p. 1

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment when you really knew that the Blessed Beauty was helping you to connect with the children and bind their hearts to Bahá'u'lláh, to assist them to learn, and to arise and to serve His Cause. If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. At this point in each Teacher Development Workshop session you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by cultivating a climate of encouragement, setting standards in the classroom, organizing classroom routines, or by adapting lessons to the capacities, capabilities, interests, and needs of the learners.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentences might begin:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***The Tablet of Ishráqát (Splendours)**

These Tablets—mighty and final effusions of His indefatigable pen—  
must rank among the choicest fruits which His mind has yielded.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *GOD PASSES BY*, p. 216

**Purpose:**

To know some  
key points in  
Bahá'u'lláh's  
Tablet of Ishráqát.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá'u'lláh.

As a group, decide if you'd prefer to set individual schedules, read together in small groups, or if you'd enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the entire text of the Tablet of Ishráqát between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Whether individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation on one of the sets of “Splendours” indicated below. Plan to share your 1–2 minute presentation at the beginning of the next Teacher Development Workshop.

(page numbers from Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh):

- a. Pages 101–106.
- b. Pages 106–112.
- c. Pages 112–116.
- d. Pages 116–120.
- e. Pages 120–125.
- f. Pages 125–130.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions, whether in the form of a simple report or a brief artistic presentation:

- What are the implications of this Tablet for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use the contents of this Tablet to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts gleaned from the Tablet of Ishráqát in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children's Education and Research Center.

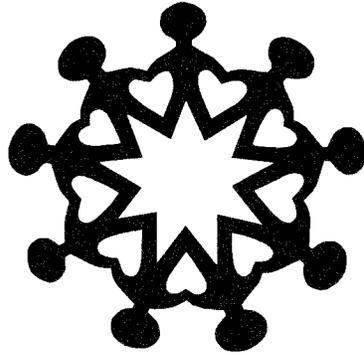
Consider also bringing a favorite passage from your extended study to contribute to the opening devotions of the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, outreach to others, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, increased systematization in planning meaningful lessons and units, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth.
2. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Love

**Building Skills**

Classroom Management

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Tablet of Bishárát

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

---

**Workshop Seven**

Classroom Management

## *Opening Devotions*

---

Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please also contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Tablet of Ishráqát as well as the following quotation that highlights the themes for this workshop:

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 27

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

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 179

Please also share a recent highlight from your Bahá'í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with the Bahá'í writings on love.
- Know some techniques for classroom management.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of utilizing the quality of love in working with children and junior youth.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the quality of love.
- Reflect on spiritual foundations for classroom management.
- Reflect on one's own skills in classroom management and identify strategies to practice using in the classroom.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in the application of some techniques for classroom management.
- Become more effective in showing love to all children and junior youth.

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## *Spiritual Qualities*

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### Love

1. In your group, read aloud the quotations on love. As you read, underline the passages that “jump out” at you about the concept of love.
2. Think of a child or junior youth that you have found especially easy to love and consider:
  - How do you show your love for that individual?
  - How does your love for that person teach you how also to show love to others?
3. Turn to the person beside you and, in 60 seconds, share your insights with your partners.
4. After sharing your responses with each other, think of a child or junior youth that somehow has seemed to us to be more difficult to love.
5. Individually re-read the quotations and consider specific actions to show love to that child or junior youth.
6. Share your ideas with the person beside you.
7. Next, individually make a drawing, poem, or beautifully written quotation illustrating the power of love, as a gift of for the child or junior youth identified.

**Purpose:**

To know the Bahá'í concept of love and how it relates to our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

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### Process the Activity

In your journal, respond to the question, “How am I going to make sure that I am ‘a teacher of love?’”

## LOVE

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**Focus Questions:** How do you show your love for that individual?

How does your love for that person teach you how also to show love to others?

---

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, PGS. 179-80

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, P. 93

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, P. 218

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 180

5 In thy school, instruct thou God’s children in the customs of the Kingdom. Be thou a teacher of love, in a school of unity. Train thou the children of the friends of the Merciful in the rules and ways of His loving-kindness. Tend the young trees of the Abhá Paradise with the welling waters of His grace and peace and joy.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ’Í EDUCATION*, #61, p. 24

## ***Building Skills: Creating a Positive Learning Environment***

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**Purpose:**

Reflect on spiritual foundations for classroom management.

In this Teacher Development Workshop we will explore a wide variety of intervention strategies that can assist us to guide our students to uphold classroom standards. As we will see, all these strategies are based on selections from the Bahá'í writings. Before beginning that study, let's recall the power of establishing an encouraging environment.

Please share examples of your actions or your students' actions that have helped cultivate an encouraging environment in your Bahá'í classes.

Most students respond positively in a structured positive learning environment. In addition to cultivating a true recognition of our students' spiritual reality, a positive learning environment includes positive words, positive choices, and opportunities for reflection on one's own actions.

### **Mention What Is Good**

As we know, Bahá'u'lláh encourages us to speak about what is good:

Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 219

Read aloud the following two statements:

“Yes, we'll certainly have snack when everyone's ready.”

“No. No snacks until everyone is ready!”

Then briefly discuss the questions:

- What are the similarities and differences between these two statements?
- What feelings does each statement evoke?
- What are some examples of positive statements that teachers make in the classroom?
- What are some examples of negative statements that teachers make in the classroom?
- How can we transform these negative statements into positive statements that “mention what is good”?
- How does a climate of encouragement promote learning?

## Good Deeds, Voluntarily Performed

Read the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed,  
not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #79, p. 115

Discuss the question:

- How can offering students a choice between two positive actions help them to engage their volition in a positive direction?

Brainstorm at least a dozen examples of positive choices that we can offer students. Record your ideas on chart paper.

## Bring Oneself to Account

Carefully read the following quotations twice in your whole group:

It behoveth every ruler to weigh his own being every day in the balance of equity and justice and then to judge between men and counsel them to do that which would direct their steps unto the path of wisdom and understanding.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH*, pp. 166-7

O Son of Being! Bring thyself to account each day. . . .

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *THE ARABIC HIDDEN WORDS*, No. 31

Set before thine eyes God’s unerring Balance and, as one standing in His Presence, weigh in that Balance thine actions every day, every moment of thy life.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *THE SUMMONS OF THE LORD OF HOSTS*, p. 213

Briefly discuss the questions:

- While the first of these three passages describes the responsibilities of a ruler, do we see any way that it might also apply to the responsibility of a teacher? When might it be important for us as teachers to call ourselves to account before we “judge” our students?
- When we assist our students to assess their actions, what should be our goal?
- How can providing a structure for students to call themselves to account help guide them to the path of wisdom and understanding?
- How does teaching students to reflect on what they’re learning from their own experiences help to cultivate a positive learning environment?
- What are some examples of practical ways that we can encourage our students to reflect on their own actions in a variety of settings?

## ***Building Skills: Loving Discipline***

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Consider the importance of loving discipline to assist children and junior youth to fulfill their destiny before God.

...the children's school must be a place of utmost discipline and order...

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #111, p. 137

Laws and regulations, schools, colleges and universities have for their purpose the training of man and his uplift from the dark borderland of the animal kingdom.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ: *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 329

Discipline of some sort, whether physical, moral or intellectual, is indeed indispensable, and no training can be said to be complete and fruitful if it disregards this element. The child when born is far from being perfect. It is not only helpless, but actually is imperfect, and even is naturally inclined towards evil. He should be trained, his natural inclinations harmonized, adjusted and controlled, and if necessary suppressed or regulated, so as to ensure his healthy physical and moral development.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS: VOL 1*, p. 303

1. Reflect on a spiritually transforming learning experience in your own life that included interaction with another person. Pair with another participant and share your experiences.
2. Then, in the whole group, identify the factors that made this transforming experience possible. Capture these factors on chart paper.
3. In the whole group, read aloud the headings on all the pages of quotations labeled “Loving Discipline.” Notice the many, many options provided for us in this Revelation!
4. Using the index cards provided, individually write one example of a challenging situation that you have encountered in a class of children or junior youth. When complete, give these cards to your facilitator.
5. Then, organize yourselves into four groups so that each group studies a different page of quotations. In your group, read the quotations and briefly discuss their importance for fostering spiritual discipline in children and junior youth.



## LOVING DISCIPLINE

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### Group One

#### Power of Love

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, PAGE 179

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS: VOLUME 2*, PAGE 2

#### Power of Unity

Welcome all with the light of oneness.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, IN *ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE*, PAGE 37

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS I*, 273

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS II*, 415

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, PAGE 168

#### Power of Self Control

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS: VOLUME 2*, PAGES 3-4

#### Power of Example

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

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

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *BAHÁ’Í ADMINISTRATION*, PAGE 66

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**LOVING DISCIPLINE**
**Group Two**
**Power of Perception**

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *ARABIC HIDDEN WORDS*, NO. 3

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #144, p. 169

If a pupil is told that his intelligence is less than his fellow pupils, it is a very great drawback and handicap to his progress. He must be encouraged to advance by the statement, "You are most capable, and if you endeavor, you will attain the highest degree."

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, pp. 76-77

**Power of Divine Assistance**

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *THE KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, PAGE 33

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #22, p. 51

**Power of Cooperation**

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI: *DIRECTIVES OF THE GUARDIAN*, PAGE 27

**Power of Consultation**

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, PAGE 168

## LOVING DISCIPLINE

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### Group Three

#### Power of Joy and Happiness

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 109

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

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #100, p. 127

#### Power of Encouragement

Whosoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart. . . .

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #95, p. 125

#### Power of Words

Whosoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child’s character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, # 95, p. 125

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

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH*, p. 173

#### Power of Silence

Let deeds, not words, be your adorning.

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *PERSIAN HIDDEN WORDS*, No. 5

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

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *PERSIAN HIDDEN WORDS*, No. 36

#### Power of Listening—A Personal Recollection

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

HOWARD COLBY IVES, *PORTALS TO FREEDOM*, PAGES 194-95

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**LOVING DISCIPLINE**
**Group Four**
**Power of Obedience to Authority**

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the laws of God. For lacking this, the fear of God cannot be inculcated, and lacking the fear of God an infinity of odious and abominable actions will spring up, and sentiments will be uttered that transgress all bounds... parents must exert every effort to rear their offspring to be religious, for should the children not attain this greatest of adornments, they will not obey their parents, which in a certain sense means that they will not obey God. Indeed, such children will show no consideration to anyone, and will do exactly as they please.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*: VOLUME 1, PAGE 248

The parents have the inescapable duty to educate their children—but not vice versa; the children have the duty to obey their parents—the parents do not obey the children.

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*: VOLUME 1, PAGE 414

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*: VOLUME 2, PAGE 114

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

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, 19 MAY 1994 LETTER

**Power of Flexibility**

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

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*: VOLUME 2, PAGES 125-126

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

UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS*: VOLUME 1, PAGE 47

**Power of Justice**

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, PAGE 67

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, P. 27

## ***Building Skills: Classroom Management— Summarize Tips, Strategies, and Goals***

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In your whole group, read aloud through the pages “Some Proactive Management Tips” and “Intervention Strategies.” These pages summarize many of the strategies presented in Workshops 6 and 7. Consider marking these pages and refer to them if needed in the future.

### **Some Proactive Management Tips**

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Use true consultation to establish clear expectations and rules.

Teach routines.

Praise appropriately and often.

Involve everyone in active participation.

Set high expectations.

Constantly monitor the group (to be able to respond when a problem is small).

Maintain a positive atmosphere.

Minimize disruptions.

Plan activities to draw out the strengths of each participant.

Have sponge activities ready to ‘absorb’ time.

### **Managing Classroom Routines**

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Entering the classroom.

Signals for attention.

Prayers and stories in room.

Daily clean-up.

Where to keep your stuff.

Supporting each other.

Managing time to arrive punctually for class and various activities.

### **Transitions**

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Recognize transition times. List transitions in your class.

Brainstorm a list of activities or techniques for smoother transitions.

Minimize delays.

### **Use the Smallest Effective Intervention**

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Automatic Scanner	Ignore	Physical Closeness
Pause	‘The Look’	Gentle Touch
Gesture	Ask for Response	Cueing
Ask questions, listen	Nagging Reminder	Humor
Direct Request	Re-teach	

“First this, then that” statements

Catch the child ‘being good’

Praise desired behavior

Consult with child

Consult with classroom group.

Consult at teachers meeting.

Consult with school administration.

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## **Intervention Strategies**

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### **1. Love, listen, learn, influence.**

Since we control only ourselves, we seek first to control our own selves and, through words and deeds, influence others. To have influence, it is necessary to have a relationship. The goal of intervention is usually to increase the strength of the relationship, so that it is possible to influence the other person’s decision making process. Approach with love. Listen to learn their experience and perceptions of the situation. Offer information to assist the person to make a better choice.

### **2. Promote justice and fairness.**

The needs of the group are always more important than the wants of the individual. It is necessary to prevent individuals from dominating a group or other individuals, or from preventing the purposes of the class from being accomplished. Get help as soon as you need it, the sooner the better, so that a small intervention can correct the problem before it disrupts the entire class or results in disciplinary action.

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### **Some possible intervention approaches:**

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Are you well?

Are you happy?

How may I serve you?

How can I assist?

What’s our agreement?

Which Bahá’í principles apply?

Is what you’re doing OK now?

What’s your job now?

When will you be ready to start?

What can I do to help you so you can...?

What’s the community standard at in our class? What should you do now?

It looks like you have a problem? How could I help you solve it?

Do you want to figure out a better way? How can I help you?

Is what you’re doing right now helping or hurting your goals for this session?

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

In all things it is necessary to consult. This matter should be forcibly stressed by thee, so that consultation may be observed by all. The intent of what hath been revealed from the Pen of the Most High is that consultation may be fully carried out among the friends, inasmuch as it is and will always be a cause of awareness and of awakening and and a source of good and well-being.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *CONSULTATION: A COMPILATION*, #5, p. 3

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment in your Bahá'í class. Can you think of a time when everything seemed to come together and you all felt you were aligned with the divine purpose? If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. If desired, you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by using skills learned in this workshop or other approaches to setting and maintaining standards in the classroom.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentence-starters might include:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***The Tablet of Bishárát (Glad Tidings)**

These Tablets—mighty and final effusions of His indefatigable pen—must rank among the choicest fruits which His mind has yielded.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, GOD PASSES BY, P. 216

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet of Bishárát.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of these important works of Bahá'u'lláh. As a group, consider the possibility of adding a systematic element of personal study to your personal development plan.

As a group, decide if you'd prefer to set individual schedules, read together in small groups, or if you'd enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the entire text of the Tablet of Bishárát between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Whether individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation on one of the sets of "Glad-Tidings" indicated below. Plan to share your 1–2 minute presentation at the beginning of the next Teacher Development Workshop.

- a. The First, Second, and Third Glad-Tidings.
- b. The Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Glad-Tidings.
- c. The Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth Glad-Tidings.
- d. The Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Glad-Tidings.
- e. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Glad-Tidings.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions, whether in the form of a simple report or a brief artistic presentation:

- What are the implications of this Tablet for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use the contents of this Tablet to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts gleaned from the Tablet of Bishárát in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children's Education and Research Center.

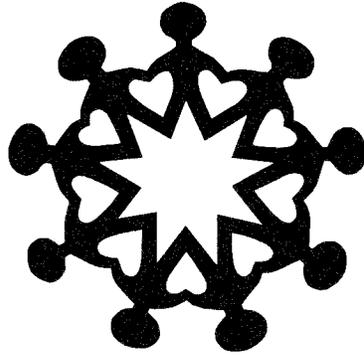
Consider bringing a favorite passage from the Bishárát to include in the opening devotions for the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, setting and maintaining standards in the classroom, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth. Take a few moments to record your plan in your journal or on this page.
2. Conclude the workshop with prayers for divine assistance, music, and fellowship.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Joy

**Building Skills**

Music as an Instrument of Teaching

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

---

**Workshop Eight**

Music as an Instrument of  
Teaching

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Tablet of Bishárát as well as the following quotations:

Let your joy be the joy born of My Most Great Name, a Name that bringeth rapture to the heart, and filleth with ecstasy the minds of all who have drawn nigh unto God.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, PARAGRAPH 51

What a wonderful meeting this is! These are the children of the Kingdom. The song we have just listened to was very beautiful in melody and words. The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 52

Please also share a recent highlight from your Bahá'í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with examples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interactions with others.
- Become familiar with the Bahá'í writings on the importance of music for spiritual development.
- Know some techniques for teaching songs to children and junior youth.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of teaching singing to children and junior youth.
- Understand that science reinforces the Bahá'í writings regarding the importance of music.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Perceive ways to bring joy to the hearts of children and junior youth.
- Appreciate the power of music to move the human heart.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Experience the power of learning the writings with music.
- Become more skillful in the use of music in the classroom and other settings.
- Be able to teach a song to a small group using the techniques presented.

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## Spiritual Qualities

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### Joy

1. Enjoy listening while a member of your group reads aloud the description of Dorothy Baker's meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 135. Then discuss the questions:
  - How did young Dorothy Baker respond to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - How do you think she felt when she realized that she'd turned to face 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  - How do you think she felt when she wrote the letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?
  
2. Mirza Mahmúd-i-Zarqání, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary during His travels in the United States, records in his diary that people listening to 'Abdu'l-Bahá "sat spellbound like iguanas sitting in the sun, overwhelmed by the Master's talk. . . ."<sup>4</sup>
  - What do you think he was observing?
  
3. Marion Jack had the bounty of staying in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home for about six months. As so many others, she wrote about His never-ending service to the poor. And she observed the household as 'Abdu'l-Bahá returned to His home:
 

"I know the never-ending joy it was for every single member of that household to hear the beauty of His voice as He came joyously within ear shot—Servants and everyone rushed to the windows when He drew near."

JAN TEOFIL FASION, *NEVER BE AFRAID TO DARE*, p. 40

  - Have you ever run to a window when you hear someone coming? On what occasions?
  - How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá make people feel?
  - What do we want our children and junior youth to feel as they're preparing for Bahá'í class, participating in class, and returning home?
  - What are some specific ways that we could cultivate those feelings?

Please record your ideas on chart paper.

#### Purpose:

Become familiar with examples of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interactions with others.

Perceive ways to bring joy to the hearts of children and junior youth

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<sup>4</sup> *Mahmúd's Diary*, translated by Mohi Sobhani, p. 43

4. Turn to the quotations on the spiritual quality of joy. Read them aloud in the whole group. Then read them again silently. As a group, discuss the questions:
  - What are some elements of joy described in these quotations?
  - What might be the relationship between the spiritual quality of joy and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s admonition that children must “not jest and trifle, but earnestly advance unto their goals, so that in every situation they will be found resolute and firm”?<sup>5</sup>
  - Are there ideas that you’d like to add to the list you created in step 3 above?
  
5. Please take a few moments to silently create your own plan for bringing joy to the hearts of the children or junior youth in your Bahá’í class.

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<sup>5</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 135

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**DOROTHY BAKER MEETS ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**

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“Abdu’l-Bahá turned His majestic head toward the door as more people entered. He smiled at Ellen Tuller Beecher, the woman he had addressed as “Mother Beecher” two months before, and motioned to the child with her to a footstool next to His chair. Dorothy, without looking up from the floor, stepped around the people who had by now encircled Him. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued to speak she sat on the stool near Him but kept her eyes on her own little black shoes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not look at her nor did she dare even glance at Him. Instead Dorothy tried to concentrate on the folds of her leggings, hoping they would keep her from falling into the dimension of the unknown that seemed so close; hoping they would remind her the world was real, she was real. But instead of feeling transferred from fear of some immense unknown to the comfortable acceptance of life in the here and now, Dorothy’s fear changed to desperate longing, a longing that felt strange but familiar. She had known it before, but only in dreams. . . . Dorothy yearned, in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for her own soul to be lost in the immensity of His love, melted into the luminous presence that surrounded her.

Anxiety gave way to this greater force. She could not be separate another moment. In ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s loving eyes she found the connection that unites the unknown worlds beyond, that had once frozen her in fear, with the life of this reality below. Unaware that she had even moved, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá finished speaking, Dorothy found herself facing Him, elbows on her knees, chin in hands, unwilling and unable to remove her gaze from His face.

Dorothy could never remember the subject of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk that day, but for days after she could think of nothing but that face, that voice. Finally, no longer able to suffer her love alone, she wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, begging to be allowed to serve Him and the cause of His Father. She signed her letter, “Your little follower, Dorothy Beecher.” On the second page of her letter she received an answer written in His own hand. “Dearest child, Your goal is great and God is All-Bountiful. My hope is this: that you succeed in your desire.”

DOROTHY FREEMAN, *FROM COPPER TO GOLD*, pp. 9-10

## Joy

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1 The Promised Day is come and the Lord of Hosts hath appeared. Rejoice ye with great joy by reason of this supreme felicity. Aid Him then through the power of wisdom and utterance.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 239

2 Let your joy be the joy born of My Most Great Name, a Name that bringeth rapture to the heart, and filleth with ecstasy the minds of all who have drawn nigh unto God.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, PARAGRAPH 51

3 Thy might beareth me witness! Were it not to celebrate Thy praise, my tongue would be of no use to me, and were it not for the sake of rendering service to Thee, my existence would avail me not. But for the pleasure of beholding the splendours of Thy realm of glory, why should I cherish sight? And but for the joy of giving ear to Thy most sweet voice, of what use is hearing?

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 113

4 It behoveth them that are endued with insight and understanding to observe that which will cause joy and radiance.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 71

5 Ye have written as to the meetings of the friends, and how filled they are with peace and joy. Of course this is so; for wherever the spiritually minded are gathered together, there in His beauty reigneth Bahá'u'lláh. Thus it is certain that such reunions will yield boundless happiness and peace.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 92

6 A man living with his thoughts in this Kingdom knows perpetual joy.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, p. 110

7 Let us put aside all thoughts of self; let us close our eyes to all on earth, let us neither make known our sufferings nor complain of our wrongs. Rather let us become oblivious of our own selves, and drinking down the wine of heavenly grace, let us cry out our joy, and lose ourselves in the beauty of the All-Glorious.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 236, #195

8 I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, p. 203, #174

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*Music as an Instrument of Teaching*

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**Part One**

1. Listen again to selections #16 and #17 from the Core Curriculum CD, *Teaching Songs with Children and Youth* that were included in the opening devotions for this workshop.
2. Consider that you have just experienced a short devotional gathering with music as its base. This Teacher Development Workshops provides skill practice in the use of music in the classroom.
  - How long do you think the children and youth rehearsed before recording these songs?
  - Do you recognize any of the passages?
  - Why do you think this is an effective method for teaching the principles of our faith and committing the writings to memory?
3. Turn to the quotations, “Music and Singing,” that highlight the importance of teaching music to children and junior youth.
4. In pairs, read the passages and discuss the focus questions.
5. While still sitting in your teams of two, individually reflect on your own experiences: Identify a time in your life, or in the life of your family, friends, or community, when you observed the truth discovered in these writings on music reflected in people’s actions or behavior.
6. Then, shares your memory with your partner. The partner’s responsibility is to listen and then to connect that memory with a concept described in one of these quotations.
7. After both have shared, work with your partner to choose one story and one quotation to share with the whole group.
8. Enjoy listening to the group’s stories and quotations!

**Purpose:**

Know some techniques for teaching songs to children and junior youth.

Become more skillful in the use of music in the classroom and other settings.

## MUSIC AND SINGING

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1 We have made it lawful for you to listen to music and singing. Take heed, however, lest listening thereto should cause you to overstep the bounds of propriety and dignity. Let your joy be the joy born of My Most Great Name, a Name that bringeth rapture to the heart, and filleth with ecstasy the minds of all who have drawn nigh unto God. We, verily, have made music as a ladder for your souls, a means whereby they may be lifted up unto the realm on high; make it not, therefore, as wings to self and passion. Truly, We are loath to see you numbered with the foolish.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, PARAGRAPH 51

2 Teach your children the verses revealed from the heaven of majesty and power, so that, in most melodious tones, they may recite the Tablets of the All-Merciful in the alcoves within the Mashriqu'l-Adhkárs. Whoever hath been transported by the rapture born of adoration for My Name, the Most Compassionate, will recite the verses of God in such wise as to captivate the hearts of those yet wrapped in slumber.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *THE KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, PARAGRAPH 150

3 The musician's art is among those arts worthy of the highest praise, and it moveth the hearts of all who grieve. Wherefore, O thou Shahnaz,<sup>6</sup> play and sing out the holy words of God with wondrous tones in the gatherings of the friends, that the listener may be freed from chains of care and sorrow, and his soul may leap for joy and humble itself in prayer to the realm of Glory.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO'L-BAHÁ*, #74, p. 112

4 Praised be God, ye two have demonstrated the truth of your words by your deeds, and have won the confirmations of the Lord God. Every day at first light, ye gather the Bahá'í children together and teach them the communions and prayers. This is a most praiseworthy act, and bringeth joy to the children's hearts: that they should, at every morn, turn their faces toward the Kingdom and make mention of the Lord and praise His Name, and in the sweetest of voices, chant and recite.

These children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.

Blessedness awaiteth you, and a fair haven.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ABDO'L-BAHÁ*, #115, p. 139

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<sup>6</sup> Shahnaz, the name given to the recipient of this Tablet, is also the name of a musical mode.

5 What a wonderful meeting this is! These are the children of the Kingdom. The song we have just listened to was very beautiful in melody and words. The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit. Through the power and charm of music the spirit of man is uplifted. It has wonderful sway and effect in the hearts of children, for their hearts are pure, and melodies have great influence in them. The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music. Therefore, you must exert yourselves to make them proficient; teach them to sing with excellence and effect. It is incumbent upon each child to know something of music, for without knowledge of this art the melodies of instrument and voice cannot be rightly enjoyed. Likewise, it is necessary that the schools teach it in order that the souls and hearts of the pupils may become vivified and exhilarated and their lives be brightened with enjoyment.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 52

6 Among some of the nations of the Orient, music and harmony was not approved of, but the Manifested Light, Bahá’u’lláh, in this glorious period has revealed in Holy Tablets that singing and music are the spiritual food of the hearts and souls. In this dispensation, music is one of the arts that is highly approved and is considered to be the cause of the exaltation of sad and desponding hearts.

Therefore . . . set to music the verses and the divine words so that they may be sung with soul-stirring melody in the Assemblies and gatherings, and that the hearts of the listeners may become tumultuous and rise towards the Kingdom of Abhá in supplication and prayer.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *BAHÁ’Í WORLD FAITH*, REV. ED. 1976, p. 378

7 Thank thou God that thou art instructed in music and melody, singing with pleasant voice the glorification and praise of the Eternal, the Living. I pray to God that thou mayest employ this talent in prayer and supplication, in order that the souls may become quickened, the hearts may become attracted and all may become inflamed with the fire of the love of God!

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS VOL II*, p. 74

8 Music is an important means to the education and development of humanity, but the only true way is through the Teachings of God. Music is like this glass, which is perfectly pure and polished. It is precisely like this pure chalice before us, and the Teachings of God, the utterances of God, are like the water. When the glass or chalice is absolutely pure and clear, and the water is perfectly fresh and limpid, then it will confer Life; wherefore, the Teachings of God, whether they be in the form of anthems or communes or prayers, when they are melodiously sung, are most impressive.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS VOL II*, p. 77

## *Music as an Instrument of Teaching*

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### **Part Two**

1. Enjoy an activity led by your facilitator to explore the question:
  - What are the greatest barriers that prevent people from teaching singing to children?
2. After this discussion, briefly review the points on the following page regarding music and science.
3. With your facilitator, enjoy learning a simple song to learn a prayer revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

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### **Process the Activity**

After learning songs with your facilitator, take the time to write your own plan for teaching music, perhaps with the Core Curriculum CD, in your classroom or even in their communities. Start with the songs you learned today!

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## MUSIC AND SCIENCE

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- **Musical arts and benefits for learners**—Neurobiologist Mark Jude Tramo of Harvard Medical School has stated, “Music is biologically part of life, just as music is aesthetically part of human life.” Compelling evidence suggests that training in the musical arts may provide lasting, positive, and significant benefit for learners.
- **Music and our “biological history”**—There are cave paintings that depict the use of music that date back of 70,000 years. Flutes have been found in France that date as far back as 30,000 years. There is evidence that music was used in ancient communities for intra-group communication, which may have increased group safety and identification.
- **Is our brain “hard-wired” for music?**—Studies in neurobiology suggest that music may have contributed to changes in the brain (i.e. verbal memory, counting, listening skills). Human brain appears to have highly specialized structures for music. For example, Sutter & Schreiner, (1991) found that *melodic contour* has corresponding brain cells that process it, and that cells in the mammalian auditory cortex have been found that process specific harmonic relationships.
- **Music and cognition**—Music making contributes to the development of essential cognitive systems which include reasoning, creativity, and problem-solving. The strongest studies support the value of music making in spatial reasoning, creativity, and generalized mathematical skills. When learners are engaged in the musical arts they activate and synchronize neural firing patterns that coordinate and connect multiple “brain sites” or neurons. This complex coordination, that Jensen terms “neural synchrony,” which are found in the frontal, parietal, temporal lobes and the cerebellum, increases the brains efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Music increases brain coherence**—Brain coherence enables the brain to function as a whole not just in random electrical discharges. Although considered a relatively new concept, “coherence” is hypothesized to be the key to higher brain functions. Studies completed in Russia have demonstrated that toddlers who listened to just one hour per day of music demonstrated measurable brain reorganization.

## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, p. 168

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment in your Bahá'í class. Can you think of a time when everything seemed to come together and you all felt you were aligned with the divine purpose? If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. If desired, you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by using skills learned in these Teacher Development Workshops or other approaches.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentence-starters might include:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

*Extended Study***Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh**

. . . He feels that the young Bahá'ís should gain a mastery of such books as the “Gleanings”, “The Dawn-Breakers”, “God Passes By”, the “Íqán”, “Some Answered Questions” and the more important Tablets.

WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS* VOL. I, P. 227

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of some important works of Bahá'u'lláh. This workshop we begin our study of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As a group, decide if you'd prefer to set individual schedules, read together in small groups, or if you'd enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the sections I through XL (pp. 3–90) between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Either individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation of one particularly meaningful section of the Gleanings to share at the next Teacher Development Workshop on the following portions of this important work:

- a. Sections I–XIII.
- b. Sections XIV–XVIII.
- c. Sections XIX–XXX.
- d. Sections XXXI–XL.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions, whether in the form of a simple report or a brief artistic presentation:

- What are the implications of your selected portion for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use these writings to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts from the Gleanings in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children's Education and Research Center.

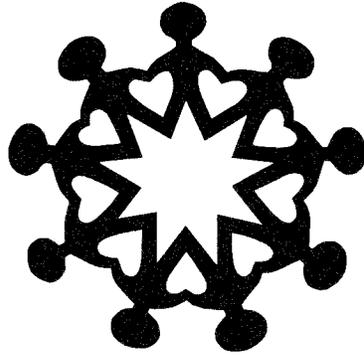
Consider bringing a favorite passage from the Gleanings to include in the opening devotions for the next workshop.

## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, using music in your Bahá'í classes, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth. Take a few moments to record your plan in your journal or on this page.
2. **Advance Preparation:** Please bring your copies of your Core Curriculum storybooks to the next workshop.
3. Conclude the workshop with interspersing prayers for the triumph of the Cause with your singing of the two passages from the writings that you learned in this workshop.



**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Sacrifice

**Building Skills**

Using Storytelling for Spiritual Education

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Nine**

Storytelling

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Gleanings as well as the following quotations that highlight the themes of this workshop:

Whoso openeth his lips in this Day and maketh mention of the name of his Lord, the hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend upon him from the heaven of My name, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CXXIX, p. 280

To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will vanish.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, pp. 178-179

Please also share a recent highlight from your Bahá’í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with some of the Bahá’í writings on sacrifice.
- Know some practical strategies for telling stories well.
- Study the contents of the Gleanings.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the value of storytelling and literature in our role as teachers of children and junior youth.
- Understand the importance of utilizing the quality of sacrifice in working with children and junior youth.
- Understand the wisdom within the Gleanings as it relates to education of children and junior youth.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one’s own development of the quality of sacrifice.
- Reflect on one’s own skills in using storytelling and literature.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in the application of some techniques for using storytelling for the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

## *Spiritual Qualities*

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### **Sacrifice**

1. Enjoy listening to the story read by your facilitator.
2. Then, work in pairs to read the quotations, “The Spiritual Path” on p. 148 and discuss the focus questions. If desired, you may also share any personal stories of sacrifice, suffering, and subsequent spiritual growth.
3. Reconvene in the whole group. Share your own stories of times with the joy of your service to children and junior youth may have been mingled with suffering and sacrifice in this sacred path of service.
4. Conclude the activity by singing or listening to beautiful music.

**Purpose:**

Become familiar with some of the Bahá'í writings on sacrifice.

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### **Process the Activity**

In your journals, respond to the question: How can sacrifice bring us joy?

## THE SPIRITUAL PATH

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**Focus Questions:** What are some of the necessary components for our spiritualization? How do suffering and sacrifice assist spiritual growth?

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1 To optimize the use of these capacities [to teach the Faith], the individual draws upon his love for Bahá'u'lláh, the power of the Covenant, the dynamics of prayer, the inspiration and education derived from regular reading and study of the Holy Texts, and the transformative forces that operate upon his soul as he strives to behave in accordance with the divine laws and principles. In addition to these, the individual, having been given the duty to teach the Cause, is endowed with the capacity to attract particular blessings promised by Bahá'u'lláh. "Whoso openeth his lips in this Day," the Blessed Beauty asserts, "and maketh mention of the name of his Lord, the hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend upon him from the heaven of My name, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. On him shall also descend the Concourse on high, each bearing aloft a chalice of pure light."

TO THE BAHÁ'IS OF THE WORLD  
EXCERPTS FROM THE RIDVÁN LETTER OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, 153 B.E.

2 The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most.

Question—He who through suffering has attained development, should he fear happiness?

Through suffering he will attain to an eternal happiness which nothing can take from him. The apostles of Christ suffered: they attained eternal happiness.

Question—Then it is impossible to attain happiness without suffering?

To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will vanish.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PARIS TALKS*, PP. 178-179

3 Self-sacrifice means to subordinate this lower nature and its desires to the more godly and noble side of our selves. Ultimately, in its highest sense, self-sacrifice means to give our will and our all to God to do with as He pleases. Then He purifies and glorifies our true self until it becomes a shining and wonderful reality.

FROM A LETTER DATED 10 DECEMBER, 1947, WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI TO AN INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER, THE COMPILATIONS, VOLUME 2, P. 19

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## *Using Storytelling for Spiritual Education*

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### Sharing Experiences

5. In your whole group, read aloud the following quotations:

Divine things are too deep to be expressed by common words. The heavenly teachings are expressed in parable in order to be understood and preserved for ages to come. When the spiritually minded dive deeply into the ocean of their meaning they bring to the surface the pearls of their inner significance. . . .

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ IN LONDON*, p. 80

...A chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. It demands daily vigilance in the control of one’s carnal desires and corrupt inclinations.

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE*, p. 30

6. Then, enjoy this comment from capable storytellers:

“Lewis Carroll once called stories “love gifts.” It was an apt description, for telling a story is indeed, giving a gift. Storytelling brings to the listeners heightened awareness, a sense of wonder, of mystery, of reverence for life. This nurturing of the spirit self comes first. It is the primary purpose of storytelling, and all other uses and effects are secondary.”

AUGUSTA BAKER, ELLEN GREEN, *STORYTELLING, ART AND TECHNIQUE*, p. 17

7. Discuss the questions: What is the role of storytelling in spiritual development? How can we help our students to exercise moderation in the stories shared in Bahá’í classes and other community events?
8. Take a few moments to recall a particularly happy childhood memory of listening to a story in your family or another setting.

After this period of reflection please share your happy memory in the whole group. Record some highlights of these experiences on chart paper, then identify the elements that made these experiences happy ones. What makes these experiences memorable? The meaning and importance of the story? A warm or spiritual connection with the storyteller? The setting or manner in which the story was told? What else stands out in your memory?

#### **Purpose:**

To understand the value of storytelling and literature in our role as teachers of children and junior youth.

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### **Process the Activity**

As storytellers, what can we learn from these memories to enhance the experience for our listeners?



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## *Using Storytelling for Spiritual Education*

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### Practice for Success

**Advance Preparation:** Please bring your copies of your Core Curriculum storybooks to this workshop.

### Finding Your Story

1. The first step in telling your story is to find a story that you **love**. Storytellers often select stories from folktales, literary tales, or true stories from your own life, the life of someone you know, or from history.
2. Take time to browse through the **Core Curriculum storybooks** to find short story, 1-3 pages in length, with:
  - Strong characters
  - Clear action and clear structure
  - Attraction for your listeners.
3. After selecting your story, share your choice and the reason for your choice with the whole group.

#### Purpose:

To know and practice some elements for successful storytelling.

### Preparing Your Story

1. It will be important to learn the story well, so that it becomes second nature to you and you can easily tell it. In the whole group, brainstorm strategies for learning your story and record your ideas on chart paper.
2. Working from the list of ideas for learning your story, create a plan that fits you—so that you learn the story very, very well.
3. Then, working in teams of two, refine your plans to learn your stories, using the following steps:
  - Identify specific parts of your story to memorize word for word.

Beautiful beginnings

Colorful expressions

Beautiful endings

Rhymes

Important dialog

Repeated phrases

Short quotations from the

Bahá'í writings

- Visualize the specific “picture frames” of your story. Do you even want to draw them?
  - Determine your practice strategy. What will help you see what you are doing? A mirror? An audio recorder? A video recorder? A friend?
4. Begin your first practice session to learn your story, and then tell your stories to each other.

### Enhancing Your Story

1. In your teams, consider ways to use your voice to enhance your story:

Thinking about the excellent storytellers you know, what are some ways they use their voices to enhance the story? Consider such factors as timing, intonation, fluency and articulation in speech, loudness or softness of speech, pitch and tone of the voice, speed and rhythm in speaking, the use of pauses, rhymes, and other elements of the story. How do they vary their presentation? How do they help the listener focus on the meaning and purpose of the story? Remember to breath deeply enough to be able to project your voice to listeners across the room.

2. Then, consider ways to use your body to enhance your story:

What simple and natural gestures might enhance your story without being overly dramatic?

What simple props might you find or make to strengthen an important point? Do you want to hold the book and refer to the illustrations?

3. Next, consider the important characters in your story:

What spiritual qualities do they demonstrate or lack? How do they interact with each other or with the Central Figures? What sorts of people are they? How can you show their character to your listeners using your voice, face, or posture—without overdoing it? If your story includes a dialogue between two people, consider having each one face a different 45-degree angle. Remember NOT to portray God, a Manifestation of God, or a member of the Holy Family.

4. Consider your listeners—as you tell your story focus your attention first on an individual who appears to be responding most attentively to your story, then gradually turn your attention to other listeners in turn. What are some ways that you can create a sense of warmth or intimacy with your listeners?
5. After discussion the story enhancers in points 1–4 above, individually select one technique to practice as you retell your story with your partner. Share your choice with your partner.
6. Take turns practicing your stories.
7. When you're the listening partner, be sure to offer your focused attention and encouragement to the storyteller.

**A “Tell-a-Bration”**

1. Organize yourselves into larger groups of 3–4. In these new groups, take turns telling your stories. As a listener, provide encouragement to each storyteller, and take notes on the use of successful storytelling elements.
2. After the storytelling is complete, applaud all storytellers!
3. Briefly note the Storytelling Resources on the following pages.
4. If desired, you may choose to share one or two stories in the whole group.

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**Process the Activity:**

What success elements will I consciously strive to cultivate as I tell stories in my Bahá'í classes?

## STORYTELLING RESOURCES

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### Web Sites

StoryNet—[www.storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org)

Home page of the National Storytelling Network.

International Storytelling Center—[www.storytellingcenter.com](http://www.storytellingcenter.com)

Includes “Storytelling for Peace.”

Children’s Literature Web Guide—[www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown](http://www.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown)

Operated by David K. Brown of the University of Calgary.

E-Gems Library—[www.egemslibrary.org](http://www.egemslibrary.org)

eGEMS Library provides educational resources dedicated to supporting character development.

### Email Lists

Storytell—[www.libraryschool.net/storytell.htm](http://www.libraryschool.net/storytell.htm)

Storytellers— [www.aatchoo.com/storytellers.htm](http://www.aatchoo.com/storytellers.htm)

Yahoo storytellers—[groups.yahoo.com/group/storytellers](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/storytellers)

US Storytellers—<http://camarilla.white-wolf.com/mailman/listinfo/us-storytellers>

### Associations

National Storytelling Network

[www.storynet.org](http://www.storynet.org)

101 Courthouse Square

Jonesborough, TN 37659 USA

800-525-4514

423-913-8201

Society for Storytelling— [www.sfs.org.uk](http://www.sfs.org.uk)

P.O. Box 2344

Reading, RG7 7FG

ENGLAND

+44 (0) 118 935 1381

National Association of Black Storytellers Inc.

[www.nabsnet.org](http://www.nabsnet.org)

P.O. Box 67722

Baltimore, MD 21215

### Storytelling Guides

*Caroline Feller Bauer’s New Handbook for Storytellers*, by Caroline Feller Bauer, American Library Association, 1993 (revised edition of Handbook for Storytellers).

*The Storyteller’s Start-Up Book: Finding, Learning, Performing, and Using Folktales*, by Margaret Read MacDonald, August House, 1993.

*Storytelling Professionally: The Nuts and Bolts of a Working Performer*, by Harlynn Geisler, Libraries Unlimited, 1997.

*Storytellers’ Research Guide: Folktales, Myths, Legends*, by Judy Sierra, Folkprint, 1996.

*The World of Storytelling*, by Anne Pellowski, H. W. Wilson, 1991 (revised edition).

*The Storyteller’s Sourcebook, 1961-1982*, Margaret Read MacDonald, Neal-Schuman/Gale, 1982

*The Storyteller’s Sourcebook, 1983-1999*, Margaret Read MacDonald and Brian W. Sturm, Gale Group, 2001.

*About Story: Writings on Stories and Storytelling, 1980 to 1994*, by Ruth Stotter, Stotter Press, 1996.

*More About Story: Writings on Stories and Storytelling, 1995-2001*, Speaking Out Press, 2002.

*Shadow Spinner*, by Susan Fletcher, Aladdin, 1999.

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## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, P. 168

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment in your Bahá'í class. Can you think of a time when everything seemed to come together and you all felt you were aligned with the divine purpose? If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. If desired, you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by using skills learned in these Teacher Development Workshops or other approaches.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentence-starters might include:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

## *Extended Study*

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### **Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh**

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

. . . He feels that the young Bahá'ís should gain a mastery of such books as the “Gleanings”, “The Dawn-Breakers”, “God Passes By”, the “Íqán”, “Some Answered Questions” and the more important Tablets.

WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS* VOL. I, P. 227

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of some important works of Bahá'u'lláh. This workshop we begin our study of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As a group, decide if you'd prefer to set individual schedules, read together in small groups, or if you'd enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the sections XLI through XC (pp. 90–179) between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Either individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation of one particularly meaningful section of the Gleanings to share at the next Teacher Development Workshop on the following portions of this important work:

- a. Sections XLI–LV.
- b. Sections LVI–LXVI.
- c. Sections LXVII–LXXIX.
- d. Sections LXXX–XC.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions, whether in the form of a simple report or a brief artistic presentation:

- What are the implications of your selected portion for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use these writings to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts from the Gleanings in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children's Education and Research Center.

Consider bringing a favorite passage from the Gleanings to include in the opening devotions for the next workshop.

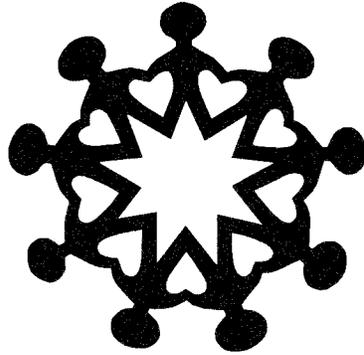
## *Closing Activity*

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### **Determine a Line of Action**

1. Recall the activities during this workshop and select a specific line of action to complete before the next workshop. This line of action could include ongoing personal development, mutual collaboration and support for other teachers, using music in your Bahá'í classes, as well as exciting new lessons for children or junior youth. Take a few moments to record your plan in your journal or on this page.
2. Conclude the workshop with interspersing prayers for the triumph of the Cause with your singing of the two passages from the writings that you learned in this workshop.





**Core Curriculum for  
Spiritual Education  
and Training**

**Spiritual Qualities**

Humility

**Building Skills**

Using Nature and Science for Spiritual Education

**Knowledge and Spiritual Insights**

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

**Teacher  
Development  
Workshops**

*Part One*

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**Workshop Ten**

Nature and Science

## *Opening Devotions*

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Welcome! Begin your workshop with opening devotions and music. Please contribute your favorite passages from your study of the Gleanings as well as the following quotations that highlight the themes of this workshop:

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

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *KITÁB-I-AQDÁS*, p. 49

Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading into His knowledge, a sign of His sovereignty, a revelation of His names, a symbol of His majesty, a token of His power, a means of admittance into His straight Path. . . .

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, LXXXII, p. 160

Please also share a recent highlight from your Bahá'í class.

## *Learning Objectives*

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Read aloud the learning objectives for this workshop.

### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Become familiar with the some of the Bahá'í writings on humility.
- Know some strategies for incorporating the use of science and nature in spiritual education.
- Study the contents of the Gleanings.

### **WISDOM**

- Understand the importance of utilizing the quality of humility in working with children and junior youth.
- Understand the wisdom within the Gleanings as it relates to education of children and junior youth.

### **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

- Reflect on one's own development of the quality of humility.
- Reflect on the application of the contents of the Gleanings to one's work with children and junior youth.
- Perceive approaches to spiritual reality in the material world.

### **ELOQUENT SPEECH**

- Become more skillful in the application of some techniques for using science and nature for the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

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*Spiritual Qualities*

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**Humility**

1. Enjoy a demonstration planned by your facilitator.
2. Then, work in pairs to read the quotations on humility and discuss the focus questions:
  - What is the relationship between humility and purity of motive?
  - What is the relationship between humility and effectiveness in service?
  - Recalling the power of humility to touch the human heart, can you think of some situations in which you've seen examples of humility with your own eyes?
3. Share one of your examples of humility and service in the whole group and enjoy listening to the examples shared by others.

**Purpose:**

To understand the relationship between humility, purity, and our service as teachers of children and junior youth.

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**Process the Activity**

In your journals, record your reflections on the spiritual quality of humility. Can you think of ways to cultivate this spiritual quality in your own life and in your service to children and junior youth?

## HUMILITY

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**Focus Questions:** What is the relationship between humility and purity of motive? What is the relationship between humility and effectiveness in service? Recalling the power of humility to touch the human heart, can you think of some situations in which you've seen examples of humility with your own eyes?

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1 This is the Day whereon the Ocean of God's mercy hath been manifested unto men, the Day in which the Day Star of His loving-kindness hath shed its radiance upon them, the Day in which the clouds of His bountiful favor have overshadowed the whole of mankind. Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.

They who are the beloved of God, in whatever place they gather and whomsoever they may meet, must evince, in their attitude towards God, and in the manner of their celebration of His praise and glory, such humility and submissiveness that every atom of the dust beneath their feet may attest the depth of their devotion. The conversation carried by these holy souls should be informed with such power that these same atoms of dust will be thrilled by its influence. They should conduct themselves in such manner that the earth upon which they tread may never be allowed to address to them such words as these: "I am to be preferred above you. For witness, how patient I am in bearing the burden which the husbandman layeth upon me. I am the instrument that continually imparteth unto all beings the blessings with which He Who is the Source of all grace hath entrusted me. Notwithstanding the honor conferred upon me, and the unnumbered evidences of my wealth—a wealth that supplieth the needs of all creation—behold the measure of my humility, witness with what absolute submissiveness I allow myself to be trodden beneath the feet of men. . . ."

Show forbearance and benevolence and love to one another. Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindness and good-will. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, V, pp. 7-8

2 Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *EPISTLE TO THE SON OF THE WOLF*, p. 29

3 Yet it behoveth the people of truth that the signs of humility should shine upon their faces, that the light of sanctity should radiate from their countenances, that they should walk upon the earth as though they were in the presence of God and distinguish themselves in their deeds from all the dwellers of the earth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GEMS OF DIVINE MYSTERIES*, p. 59

4 O honoured lady! 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 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 consider himself as learned and others ignorant. Such a thought breedeth pride, and pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #15, p. 30

5 Wherefore must the friends of God, with utter sanctity, with one accord, rise up in the spirit, in unity with one another, to such a degree that they will become even as one being and one soul. On such a plane as this, physical bodies play no part, rather doth the spirit take over and rule; and when its power encompasseth all then is spiritual union achieved. Strive ye by day and night to cultivate your unity to the fullest degree. Let your thoughts dwell on your own spiritual development, and close your eyes to the deficiencies of other souls. Act ye in such wise, showing forth pure and goodly deeds, and modesty and humility, that ye will cause others to be awakened.

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ*, #174, p. 203

#### 'Abdu'l-Bahá—A Personal Note

6 Once when a child asked ['Abdu'l-Bahá] why all the rivers of the earth flowed into the ocean, He said, "because it sets itself lower than them all and so draws them to itself."

GEORGE TOWNSHEND, "THE WAY OF THE MASTER," *THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD*, VOL. 4, p. 340

## *Building Skills: Use of Science and Nature*

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**Purpose:**

Become more skillful in the use of science and nature in the spiritual education of children and junior youth.

1. In the whole group, carefully read the selected quotations on the physical creation as a door to the spiritual world, and on the importance of science in education.
2. Reflect on your own experiences. Think of a time you experienced the power and wonderment of nature as a door to the world of the spirit. Were you alone or with other people? Where were you? What did you see, hear, smell, or taste? Did you feel the warmth of sunshine, the fresh night air, or perhaps even the tingle of snow on your face? In what way did this experience function as a door to spiritual reality? When you have your own experience clearly in mind, please share your experiences in teams of two.
3. After listening to your partner and sharing your own experience, stay in this same team to discuss the following questions:
  - How, specifically, can we assist children and junior youth to experience the whole universe as a door leading to the Knowledge of God?
  - Why in this day might the acquisition of science be counted as worship?
  - How is it possible for us to assist all the children and junior youth in our Bahá'í classes to learn in a month what others might learn in a year?

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## PHYSICAL CREATION AS A DOOR TO THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

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1 Every created thing in the whole universe is but a door leading into His knowledge, a sign of His sovereignty, a revelation of His names, a symbol of His majesty, a token of His power, a means of admittance into His straight Path. . . .

*BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, LXXXII, p. 160*

2 The whole universe reflecteth His glory, while He is Himself independent of, and transcendeth His creatures. This is the true meaning of Divine unity. He Who is the Eternal Truth is the one Power Who exerciseth undisputed sovereignty over the world of being, Whose image is reflected in the mirror of the entire creation.

*BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, LXXXIV, p. 166*

3 In every age and cycle He hath, through the splendorous light shed by the Manifestations of His wondrous Essence, recreated all things, so that whatsoever reflecteth in the heavens and on the earth the signs of His glory may not be deprived of the outpourings of His mercy, nor despair of the showers of His favors. How all-encompassing are the wonders of His boundless grace! Behold how they have pervaded the whole of creation. Such is their virtue that not a single atom in the entire universe can be found which doth not declare the evidences of His might, which doth not glorify His holy Name, or is not expressive of the effulgent light of His unity. So perfect and comprehensive is His creation that no mind nor heart, however keen or pure, can ever grasp the nature of the most insignificant of His creatures; much less fathom the mystery of Him Who is the Day Star of Truth, Who is the invisible and unknowable Essence.

*BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, XXVI, p. 62*

4 I am well aware, O my Lord, that I have been so carried away by the clear tokens of Thy loving-kindness, and so completely inebriated with the wine of Thine utterance, that whatever I behold I readily discover that it maketh Thee known unto me, and it remindeth me of Thy signs, and of Thy tokens, and of Thy testimonies. By Thy glory! Every time I lift up mine eyes unto Thy heaven, I call to mind Thy highness and Thy loftiness, and Thine incomparable glory and greatness; and every time I turn my gaze to Thine earth, I am made to recognize the evidences of Thy power and the tokens of Thy bounty. And when I behold the sea, I find that it speaketh to me of Thy majesty, and of the potency of Thy might, and of Thy sovereignty and Thy grandeur. And at whatever time I contemplate the mountains, I am led to discover the ensigns of Thy victory and the standards of Thine omnipotence.

*BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS, pp. 271-272*

## IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

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1 How vast the number of people who are well versed in every science, yet it is their adherence to the holy Word of God which will determine their faith, inasmuch as the fruit of every science is none other than the knowledge of divine precepts and submission unto His good-pleasure.

*THE BĀB, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE BĀB, p. 88*

2 Although to acquire the sciences and arts is the greatest glory of mankind, this is so only on condition that man's river flow into the mighty sea, and draw from God's ancient source His inspiration. When this cometh to pass, then every teacher is as a shoreless ocean, every pupil a prodigal fountain of knowledge. If, then, the pursuit of knowledge lead to the beauty of Him Who is the Object of all Knowledge, how excellent that goal; but if not, a mere drop will perhaps shut a man off from flooding grace, for with learning cometh arrogance and pride, and it bringeth on error and indifference to God.

*'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, #72, p. 110*

3 In this new and wondrous Age, the unshakeable foundation is the teaching of sciences and arts. According to explicit Holy Texts, every child must be taught crafts and arts, to the degree that is needful.

*'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, #109, p. 134*

4 It is incumbent upon Bahá'í children to surpass other children in the acquisition of sciences and arts, for they have been cradled in the grace of God.

Whatever other children learn in a year, let Bahá'í children learn in a month. The heart of Abdu'l-Bahá longeth, in its love, to find that Bahá'í young people, each and all, are known throughout the world for their intellectual attainments. There is no question but that they will exert all their efforts, their energies, their sense of pride, to acquire the sciences and arts.

*'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, #119, p. 141*

5 . . . In accordance with the divine teachings the acquisition of sciences and the perfection of arts are considered acts of worship. If a man engageth with all his power in the acquisition of a science or in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in churches and temples.

*'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, #126, p. 144*

6 Many elementary sciences must be made clear to them in the nursery; they must learn them in play, in amusement.

*'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, THE BAHÁ'Í WORLD, VOL. 9, p. 543*

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## *Metaphors and Analogies of Science in Spiritual Education*

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1. In the whole group, refer to the selected analogies used by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which invite the use of science in spiritual education. Using the materials provided, please physically demonstrate one or more of these analogies.
2. Note that science as a presentation by the teacher can work in both directions:
  - Moving from physical phenomena to spiritual truths;
  - Distilling the essence of spiritual principles, demonstrating with physical means

These demonstrations are best when they are repeatable by the students; also science as investigation by students. Students may also use science for investigation of the world around them. In what ways does the scientific method prepare students for the independent investigation of truth?

3. Then, work in small groups to rotate through sample science learning stations designed to complement specific Learning Objectives from the Central Figures Strand (instructions attached).
4. Finally, refer to the lesson planning guide you are currently using with your students. Can you find examples of science activities? Can you also see ways to expand the suggested activities with science? Refer to the page “Science Projects for Spiritual Principles” and find a way to reinforce an upcoming lesson with science.

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### **Process the Activity**

Why is it important for us to become increasingly effective in using science for spiritual education?

## ANALOGIES AND METAPHORS OF SCIENCE IN SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

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1 Make Thou their words to move hearts which are even as solid rock.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #2, p. 5

2 . . . May they spread wide the pinions of unity and by their aid soar upward to the Kingdom of Thy singleness.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #2, p. 6

3 The time hath come when...ye should draw ever nearer to the Lord, your God, becoming magnetized to such a degree... that your holy melodies in praise of the Beloved will reach upward to the Company on high.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #7, p. 19

4 . . . Universal fellowship, close and warm and unalloyed love, and spiritual relationships, will connect all the hearts in the world.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #7, p. 19

5 . . . The splendours of heaven will make the human heart to be even as a mine veined richly with the love of God.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *SELECTIONS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ*, #7, p. 20

6 Behold a candle how it gives its light. It weeps its life away drop by drop in order to give forth its flame of light.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, QUOTED BY H. M. Balyuzi in  
*‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ—THE CENTRE OF THE COVENANT*, p. 73

7 . . . Consider the substance we call iron. Observe its qualities; it is solid, black, cold. These are the characteristics of iron. When the same iron absorbs heat from the fire, it sacrifices its attribute of solidity for the attribute of fluidity. It sacrifices its attribute of darkness for the attribute of light which is a quality of the fire. It sacrifices its attribute of coldness to the quality of heat which the fire possesses; so that in the iron there remains no solidity, darkness or cold. It becomes illumined and transformed having sacrificed its qualities to the qualities and attributes of the fire.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, p. 452

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## INSTRUCTIONS FOR SAMPLE SCIENCE LEARNING STATIONS

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### CREATING ORDER

1. Share the following quotation:

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH*, CLV, P. 331

2. Two people hold a sheet of white paper flat between the two of them. Pour 2-3 spoonfuls of **iron filings** onto the paper. Compare the filings to the people of the world. Then, gently tilt the paper to one side and the other, taking care that no filings fall off. Compare this movement to the ups and downs, hardships and tests of life. Observe the movement of the filings.
3. Next, hold the paper level again. Compare a **horseshoe or bar magnet** to the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh: they both have a power that is invisible. Bring the magnet up underneath the underside of the paper. Watch its effects on the filings: observe patterns, move the magnet around, watch how the filings respond. Make comparisons between the patterns created in the filings by the magnet, with the patterns of living caused by the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh.
4. Again tilt the paper from side to side, but this time with the magnet underneath. Discuss the magnet's effect on keeping the filings secure, compare this to how the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh help us “hold on” during difficult times.
5. After all partners in your team use the magnet to create order and patterns, read aloud again the quotation from Gleanings.

STRAND: The  
Central Figures:  
Bahá'u'lláh

GOAL: The Laws of  
Bahá'u'lláh

TOPIC: The Need  
for Laws to Govern  
Our Physical, Social  
and Spiritual Lives

LEARNING  
OBJECTIVE:  
(Spiritual Perception):  
To understand the  
importance of the  
Laws of Bahá'u'lláh  
in relation to current  
events and social  
conditions.

## HIDDEN WORDS CHEMISTRY

STRAND: The  
Central Figures:  
Bahá'u'lláh

GOAL: The Writings  
of Bahá'u'lláh

TOPIC: The  
Mysteries and  
Hidden Meanings in  
the Writings of  
Bahá'u'lláh

LEARNING  
OBJECTIVE:  
(Knowledge): To  
know that there are  
hidden mysteries  
within Bahá'u'lláh's  
Writings

1. Read the following quotation from The Hidden Words:

O MY FRIEND IN WORD! Ponder awhile. Hast thou ever heard that friend and foe should abide in one heart? Cast out then the stranger, that the Friend may enter His home.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: PERSIAN HIDDEN WORDS, NO. 26

2. What have we thought about the message of this beautiful Hidden Word? Sometimes we can understand the hidden meanings of Bahá'u'lláh's writings by making comparisons with things in the physical creation.
3. Notice **2 glass jars**—these can represent two “hearts.” Observe a demonstration provided by your teacher.
4. Pour  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup **white vinegar** into each jar. Compare the vinegar to the “foe” or the “stranger.” What might be some of the unpleasant attributes of vinegar?
5. Notice a box of **baking soda**. Compare this to the “friend.” What are some friendly uses for baking soda?
6. Recall that the passage asked: *“Hast thou ever heard that friend and foe should abide in one heart?”* Measure out a heaping tablespoonful of baking soda. Add it all at once to one of the jars of vinegar. (The acid and base will immediately react and bubble out of the jar!)
7. Recall what Bahá'u'lláh said to do: *“Cast out then the stranger, that the Friend may enter His home.”* Take the other jar—pour its vinegar down the sink, rinse it out thoroughly and then dry it. Now see if this “heart” is ready for the “Friend” to enter it. Pour a spoonful of baking soda into the clean, empty jar. Do you see a reaction?
8. Discuss together what the experiment shows about the meaning of this Hidden Word. What are some other ways to utilize analogies for discovering the hidden mysteries in other of Bahá'u'lláh's writings?

## SORTING IT OUT

1. Read the following quotation:

Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, QUOTED BY SHOGHI EFFENDI IN *THE ADVENT OF DIVINE JUSTICE*, p. 37

2. People seem to like to put things into categories. This can be very useful if you are a scientist trying to classify a plant or animal species. But often, people themselves are put into categories by others. This can hurt—especially when we are judged and separated because of some way that we are different from others.
3. In this activity you will be able to experiment with different ways that things can be sorted - and perhaps make some discoveries about the whole idea of sorting!
4. Individually, take a sheet of white paper and one colored pencil.
5. Notice the large bowl full of a multi-bean and seed mix (such as that used to make a “15-Bean Soup”). Each person will take a large handful of the bean mix and place it in the center of their paper.
6. Working independently, decide how you would sort this mixture, and separate the beans into little piles of different categories on your paper. Draw a circle around each pile with your colored pencil. You may choose to label or name each category, writing it on the paper beside each pile.
7. Then, mix up all your beans again, and find a completely new way to categorize them. Use a different color pencil to draw the circle around and label these new piles.
8. Repeat the exercise a total of 3-4 times. Then return all the beans to the bowl and share your paper with all others in your group. Describe the various categories you created, and why. How many different ways to sort the beans did the whole group find? How many different groups could the same bean have gone in to? Was there a “best” or “right” way to sort the beans?
9. Compare the sorting of the beans to the way that we categorize people. What is the purpose of the sorting? Do people belong more in one group than another? Would the same individuals be categorized the same by different observers? Would we want ourselves to be grouped? Why or why not? For what reasons and by whom?
10. What would be the results if we followed Bahá'u'lláh's directions to “Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness?”

Follow the activity with an opportunity to appreciate the diversity of the beans: cook them in a soup, or use them for an art project!

STRAND: The Central Figures - Bahá'u'lláh

GOAL: The Principles & Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

TOPIC: The Social Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:  
(Spiritual Perception):  
To see the power of the application of the principle of the elimination of all forms of prejudice as a solution to the social principles of this age.

## NATURAL PATTERNS AS A PROOF OF GOD

STRAND: The  
Central Figures:  
Bahá'u'lláh

GOAL: The Writings  
of Bahá'u'lláh

TOPIC: The  
Mysteries and Hidden  
Meanings in the  
Writings of  
Bahá'u'lláh

LEARNING  
OBJECTIVE:  
(Spiritual Perception):  
To realize that one's  
understanding of the  
mysteries in the  
Writings depends on  
one's level of spiritual  
awareness

1. Read aloud the following quotation from the *Kitáb-i-Íqán*:

Whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is a direct evidence of the revelation within it of the attributes and names of God, inasmuch as within every atom are enshrined the signs that bear eloquent testimony to the revelation of that most great Light.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH: *THE KITÁB-I-ÍQÁN*, p. 100

2. Discuss the questions:
  - If every single created thing has signs of God within it, why does anybody doubt the existence of God?
  - What does it mean to be spiritually aware?
  - How can we find the signs of God in every created thing?
3. Many scientists are convinced of the existence of God simply because of the order, the patterns, that they see in the world of nature. You may have never noticed these patterns. But once you're spiritually aware of them, you'll start seeing them everywhere!
4. Imagine that you have a friend who isn't sure that there really is a God. By sharing with him some of these patterns found in nature, you can prove that there is an Intelligence, a Planner of the Universe—whom we call God.
5. Refer to a tray of natural items that's been assembled. Discover the patterns in these items. As time permits, take a nature walk to find more examples of these and other patterns.
6. Discuss the questions:
  - How being aware of these patterns helps one to find even more?
  - In what ways does an awareness of the hidden mysteries in Bahá'u'lláh's Writings help us discover them and learn more and more?

## ELECTRONIC QUIZ BOARD

1. Conduct research into the previous religions. Make small cards for the fact questions that will be matched up with correct answers. Make your own, or photocopy from the “Progressive Revelation” game in the Lesson Planning Guide, *The Central Figures: Bahá’u’lláh*, Level Two, pp. 87-88. Each Manifestation’s name can be matched to His “Teachings” for example. Color-code the index cards, all the Manifestations’ Names on one color, all the Teachings on another.
2. Simple electronics can help students become familiar with the basic facts of each religion, and create a tool whereby they can teach others: an electronic quiz board!

You'll need:

2'x 3' piece of pegboard (lumber store)	1 piece posterboard
20' insulated wire	colored index cards, or posterboard cut
25-30 brass paper fasteners	masking tape
dry cell battery	colored markers
2 alligator clips	wire stripper or knife
small light bulb & holder or buzzer	

3. Using masking tape on the backs of the fact cards, attach them to the front of the pegboard, as desired. Push a fastener through a hole next to each card. Using markers, draw a line on the back of the pegboard connecting each fastener with the fact card(s) it matches up to. This will serve as your guide for wiring.
4. Cut pieces of wire 2-3" longer than each line drawn. Strip off the insulation 1" from both ends on each piece of wire. Wrap the bare wire on one end around one “arm” of the paper fastener, on the back side of the board; wrap the other end of bare wire around the fastener by its matching card, using your drawn lines as a guide. Fold the fastener end firmly around the wire to secure it. Continue until all matching cards' fasteners have been connected with wires.
5. Place the dry cell battery in front of the board (but to one side, for visibility's sake). Cut a piece of wire that can connect one post of the battery to the light or buzzer (either of these can be mounted on the board, or set on a table in front of the board). Cut two longer pieces of wire. Connect one to the other post of the battery, and attach the alligator clip to the other end. This wire must be long enough to reach from the battery to any card's fastener head. Connect the other long wire to the other post of the light or buzzer, and attach an alligator clip to its other end. This wire must be long enough to reach from the light/buzzer to any card's fastener head.
6. To use: touch the alligator clips to two correctly matching cards and the light or buzzer goes on!

STRAND: The Central Figures

GOAL: The Proofs and Evidences of the Station of Bahá’u’lláh

TOPIC: Progressive Revelation

LEARNING OBJECTIVE:

(Wisdom): To know the basic facts of previous religions within the Adamic/ Prophetic Cycle

(Eloquent Speech): To communicate the concept of Progressive Revelation to others as proof and evidence of Bahá’u’lláh's Mission.

## SCIENCE PROJECTS FOR SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES

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### LIGHT

- Flashlights & Mirrors: Prophets, attributes, purity
- Prism: Unity & diversity, beauty, attributes of God
- Light & Color: Cooperation, one light source
- Magnifying glass: meaning of "magnified", prayer
- Polarized lenses: submission to God's Will

### MAGNETISM

- Magnet & Compass: guidance, Will of God
- What Is, What Isn't: teaching, independent investigation
- Iron Filings: God's Will, compassion, order
- Electromagnet: Transformation, power of Word of God
- Magnets & Nails: World order, consolidation, attraction, submission

### OTHER

- Planting Seeds: Growth, transformation, life-giving light
- Oil & Water: Bahá'u'lláh's unifying message, diversity
- Soda & Vinegar: consultation, unity & diversity, volition
- Sugar, Yeast & Water: Interdependence, cooperation, love
- Candle & Flame: Generosity, renewing message, Writings as spiritual nutrition, sacrifice
- Electricity: Illuminating power, Will of God, cooperation
- Static Electricity: attraction, enthusiasm, love, power
- Float & Sink: Independent investigation, non-prejudice
- Planetarium: Worlds of God, life cycles, omniscience of God

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## *Teachers Helping Teachers*

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The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, TABLETS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, p. 168

1. Reflect for a moment and identify an especially successful moment in your Bahá'í class. Can you think of a time when everything seemed to come together and you all felt you were aligned with the divine purpose? If you wish, share your success story with the whole group.
2. If desired, you now have an opportunity to give a short description of a situation you would like to change in the classroom.
3. Teachers who have had successes handling similar challenges may briefly share their experiences. Those sharing successes might role play how the volunteer's challenge could be handled successfully by using skills learned in these Teacher Development Workshops or other approaches.
4. If you volunteered a situation to be changed, you may choose to role play a new approach to practice in the classroom, perhaps based on one or a combination of possibilities offered by others.
5. Express appreciation to all who offer challenges and successes. Appreciation sentence-starters might include:
  - I learned . . .
  - I felt . . .
  - I have the same problem, so now I can try . . .
  - I know how hard it is to share . . .
  - Thank you for . . .

**Purpose:**

Discern the importance of a teacher support network in problem-solving.

## *Extended Study*

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### Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

**Purpose:**

To know some key points in Gleaning from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

. . . He feels that the young Bahá'ís should gain a mastery of such books as the “Gleanings”, “The Dawn-Breakers”, “God Passes By”, the “Íqán”, “Some Answered Questions” and the more important Tablets.

WRITTEN ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *THE COMPILATION OF COMPILATIONS* VOL. I, P. 227

In these Teacher Development Workshops, we have the opportunity for extended study of some important works of Bahá'u'lláh. This workshop we begin our study of Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As a group, decide if you'd prefer to set individual schedules, read together in small groups, or if you'd enjoy agreeing on a reading schedule that you will all strive to follow to read the sections XCI through CXXV (pp. 179–270) between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop.

Either individually or in teams, prepare a brief presentation of one particularly meaningful section of the Gleanings to share at the next Teacher Development Workshop on the following portions of this important work:

- a. Sections XCI–XCIX.
- b. Sections XC–CXI.
- c. Sections CXII–CXVII.
- d. Sections CXVII–CXXV.

Whether you decide to study individually or set a schedule for the group, consider the following questions, whether in the form of a simple report or a brief artistic presentation:

- What are the implications of your selected portion for teaching children and junior youth?
- How can we use these writings to teach children and junior youth how to live their lives?

Consider incorporating a plan to teach at least one of the concepts from the Gleanings in one of your spiritual education classes between now and the next Teacher Development Workshop. Please share your plans with each other as well as the National Children's Education and Research Center.

Consider bringing a favorite passage from the Gleanings to include in the opening devotions for the next workshop.

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## *Our Duty to Teach*

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### Closing Activity

As we conclude this first volume of Teacher Development Workshops, we once again turn to our own experiences to reflect on the goals we've accomplished and plan our next steps of service. This period of reflection and consultation provides an opportunity to harvest our learning from our extended period of action and service.

1. As a group, consult on the following questions:
  - To what extent have we noticed ourselves increasing our capabilities to serve children and junior youth as effective teachers? What have been our most important victories?
  - To what extent have we progressed in our efforts to reach out to our friends and neighbors, and the community at large, to include them in Bahá'í classes open to all? What ideas do we have for continuing to progress in this area?
  - In what ways have we been able to assist our community to implement the whole scope of the spiritual education curriculum for children and junior youth? Do we see some next steps for development?
  
2. Then, recall personal development plan you made in Teacher Development Workshop One. If available, open the letter you wrote to yourself on that occasion and review your goals. Reflect on the following questions:
  - What progress have you noticed as a result of your dedicated action in service to children and junior youth? Please select a particular high point in your experience—how could you build on it and take your service to the next higher level?
  
  - How did your goals evolve over time? Did you adjust them in light of your experiences? What do you see as your next steps for continued progress? Do you see obstacles to overcome either in your own self or in your circumstances? How can you draw on the power of divine assistance and build on your success as you address those obstacles?
  
3. After allowing time for reflection, consider the following pilgrim's note about Hand of the Cause of God Mr. Ali Akbar Furutan's last night at the pilgrim house.

#### **Purpose:**

Reflect on knowledge, spiritual insights, and skills developed through these Teacher Development workshops.

Understand our duty to teach.

Plan for ongoing personal development and service.

## OUR DUTY TO TEACH

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It wasn't our first meeting with him. First time I saw him was on the first day of pilgrimage, the 24th of November. He gave a marvelous speech and promised us to come every other day. He said that before he used to come every day to meet with pilgrims, as Shoghi Effendi had said that pilgrims were the guests of Bahá'u'lláh. But now doctors recommended that he come once every two days because of his age. He asked us to come on Wednesday with children, as he was going to speak about teaching the Faith.

Now you can imagine our disappointment, when we were told that Mr. Furutan wouldn't come. Then I remembered that when he first came to meet with pilgrims, he looked very weak and fragile. It seemed to me that his energy was slowly disappearing. Of course, the first thing I thought was that he was not able to come because of the state of his health.

Many pilgrims decided to go to their hotels, but some of us, among whom were Nabil and me, decided to stay, hoping that the meeting will still take place. How happy I was when ten minutes to six we were told that Mr. Furutan would come, after all. As soon as this unique person entered the room, it became clear what effort it took for him to come here. He looked very pale and even transparent. It seemed that he no longer belonged to this world. However, notwithstanding this weakness, he himself went up the stage and to the microphone.

Mr. Furutan's speech was dedicated to the duty to teach the Faith. First he read the quotation of Bahá'u'lláh from the *Gleanings*:

Say: Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Bahá, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds. Such a deed is acceptable only when he that teacheth the Cause is already a firm believer in God, the Supreme Protector, the Gracious, the Almighty. He hath, moreover, ordained that His Cause be taught through the power of men's utterance, and not through resort to violence. Thus hath His ordinance been sent down from the Kingdom of Him Who is the Most Exalted, the All-Wise.

Then the Hand of the Cause shared with us his understanding of the word “duty”. As an example, he told us a story. It happened in Russia, when Nikolai the II was the tsar. One day Nikolai the II was walking in the courtyard of his palace. He noticed the guard, who looked very ill—his face was red and swollen. He approached him and asked what illness he had. The guard answered that he had malaria. Then the tsar told him that he had to undergo some treatment and that he could go home. But the guard replied that he was not able to leave his post without the senior officer's permission and that it was his duty to guard the palace till the last breath. Then Nikolai the II took his gun and told him, that in such case, he would replace him at his post till the senior officer came and he would inform him that he personally let the guard go and that he had fulfilled his duty.

“This is what duty means,” Mr. Furutan said. “The reason I came here today is because it was my duty to come. And if it is a duty, you have to fulfill it.”

Many people know that Mr. Furutan lived and studied in Russia and that he still loves to speak Russian and loves those who speak Russian. Fortunately, all the Russian-speaking friends were present at the gathering. And when he was telling the story, he often translated some words into Russian, and especially, the words “duty” and “responsibility.” When the Hand of the Cause finished his speech, he immediately approached the Russian speaking pilgrims and asked in Russian: “Friends, did you understand what I said? Did you understand what is duty and responsibility?”

These words were almost the last words in his life, as in a few minutes he passed away. He died before our eyes, peacefully and with dignity, in the pilgrims’ arms, whom he appreciated so much. His life and his death became for me an example of true servitude, steadfastness in the Covenant, and faithfulness to the Cause of God. By his own life he showed us what duty is and how we have to fulfill it till the last breath!

4. Dear friends, after reading this story, turn again to your reflections:
  - What do you see as your duty?

As you record your goals, hopes, and plans recall these words of our beloved Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, spoken in Washington DC during the period of Ridván, 1912:

I give you my advice, and it is this: Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man. The life of man is useful if he attains the perfections of man. If he becomes the center of the imperfections of the world of humanity, death is better than life, and nonexistence better than existence. Therefore, make ye an effort in order that these children may be rightly trained and educated and that each one of them may attain perfection in the world of humanity. Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children.

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *THE PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*, P. 53-54

5. When you have completed your personal reflections, complete the course evaluation form, share it with your facilitator and with the National Children’s Education and Research Center.
6. Then, discuss as a group:
  - When shall we begin volume two of our Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshops?
7. Conclude your workshop with prayers for the children and junior youth in your community and with singing.

**Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education**

Beginning date

Ending date

**Teacher Development Workshops**

in

*Part One*

facilitated by

**Evaluation**

sponsored by

This opportunity to work with you has truly been a pleasure. Please candidly share your feelings and reactions. This information will be invaluable to us in planning future workshops.

	Exceptional	Very good	Fair	Poor
The presenters were organized and clear in their presentation.				
The purpose of the training and the individual workshops was made clear.				
The materials were supportive of the presentations.				
Adequate time was provided for reflection upon and recording of your observations.				
The training demonstrated the use of different teaching methods, teaching tools and modalities of learning.				
The Sacred Writings were sufficiently utilized to elevate the spirit of the participants and lay the foundation for the work before them?				
The expectations and directions for your role as a teacher was made clear and seems sufficient?				

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 delivery of the teacher development workshops.

What was most helpful to you?

What was least helpful to you?

What would you recommend for future workshops?