

TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION
OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

THE KITÁB-I‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
REVERENCE, OBEDIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 221

Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My Beauty, hath repudiated My Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants.

Bahá’u’lláh, quoted in *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 43

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that the Kitáb-i‘Ahd is the Will and Testament of Bahá’u’lláh, in which He appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of His Covenant
- To know that Kitáb-i‘Ahd is Arabic for “The Book of the Covenant”

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the purpose of a will.
- Present the Kitáb-i‘Ahd as Bahá’u’lláh’s Will and Testament and discuss the meaning of the Arabic title.
- Provide learners with the opportunity to look through the Kitáb-i‘Ahd and select passages to share orally.
- Have the learners investigate the historical context of Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation of the Kitáb-i‘Ahd and prepare reports of their findings.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the significance of the gift given to us by Bahá’u’lláh when He appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to be the Center of the Covenant in the Kitáb-i‘Ahd
- To understand the uniqueness of the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the entire religious history of the world

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Compare the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant in the Kitáb-i‘Ahd to a gift we have been given.
- Tell stories from the world’s religions to illustrate the various ways in which the Manifestations have appointed successors.
- Research the Writings for passages which relate to the significance of Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, and have students begin to make their own compilations on the Covenant and the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To relate Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant with us to our own personal covenant with Bahá’u’lláh

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Explore with the learners the different covenants they have with other people (i.e., contracts with teachers, receiving allowance for doing chores, etc.).
- Guide the learners in the preparation of a covenant with the teacher and their parents. Then provide opportunities for them to monitor their own responsibilities and observe the responsibilities of the other parties in this covenant.
- Give the students the opportunity to share what they see as their parts in the Covenant with Bahá’u’lláh, and to make a personal covenant with Bahá’u’lláh. Monitor and evaluate on a regular basis.
- Invite learners to share their thoughts about how the Will and Testament of Bahá’u’lláh helps preserve unity in our families and our Bahá’í communities.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To show reverence for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- To adhere to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretations of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh
- To be able to tell others about the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrate respect for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by knowing how to display His picture, how to behave while His prayers are being read or recited, and how to behave at Bahá’í gatherings.
- Share with our families what it means when we say that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Center of the Covenant.
- Discuss ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s promise to be present at all Bahá’í gatherings, and explore the implications of this promise for our behavior in His Presence.
- Plan and carry out a celebration of the Day of the Covenant

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: STUDY THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd is the Will and Testament of Bahá’u’lláh, in which He appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant; To know that the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd is Arabic for “The Book of the Covenant”

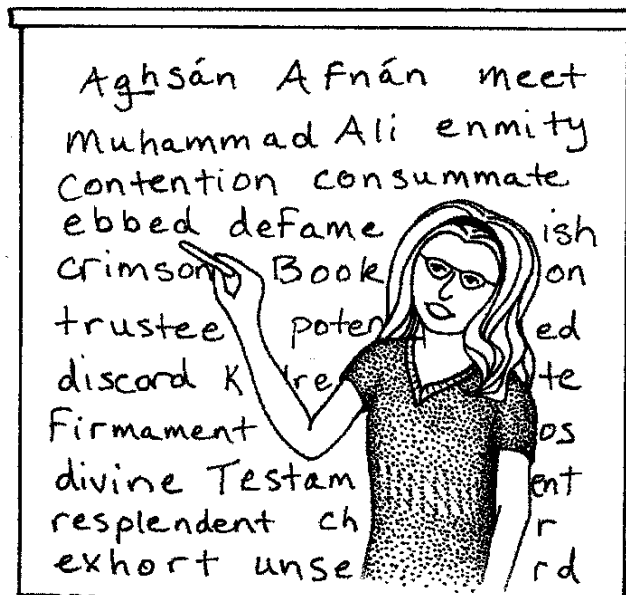
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Private study of the Writings; Cooperative learning; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- story of Bahá’u’lláh’s Ascension, p. 10 of this Lesson Planning Guide or use the story “The Passing of Bahá’u’lláh” in the Core Curriculum Storybook, *The Central Figures: Bahá’u’lláh* Volume 3.
- copies of the *Kitáb-i-‘Ahd*, reproduced from pages 11-12 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- dictionaries (1 per 5-6 students)
- highlighter pens, pencils, notepaper

1. Read aloud the story of the Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh leading up to the reading of the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd.
2. Divide class into groups of 5 or 6. Provide each group with copies of the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd, a dictionary, highlighter pens, pencils and notepaper. Share the meaning of the Arabic word, the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd, for students—the Book of the Covenant. Give groups the assignment to study this Tablet carefully. Ask each group to read, round robin style, the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd aloud, stopping after each paragraph to discuss it and take notes. Ask that unfamiliar words be defined and placed on a “word wall.” Tell students that they may mark and make notes on this copy.
3. Re-group when studies are completed. Ask: What was the purpose of the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd? (It is Bahá’u’lláh’s Will and Testament. It extends the Covenant.) Ask students to identify and read the paragraph that appoints ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant (“The Will of the divine Testator is this: the All-Informed....”)



GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

ACTIVITY: CREATING A GIFT OF THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To appreciate the significance of the gift given to us by Bahá’u’lláh when He appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to be the Center of the Covenant in the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Employ Bahá’í Writings; Use of art

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- nice photocopy of the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd for each student, pp. 11-12 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- presentation folder for each student
- stickers, rubber stamps and ink pads, gift wrap, ribbon

1. Discuss what might have happened if Bahá’u’lláh had not left His Will and Testament. Ask each student to think of analogies in the world that might serve as an example, e.g., a bicycle without handlebars, a house without walls, etc.
2. Provide each student with a quotation, such as those below, that describes the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Invite students to read their quotes and discuss what a wonderful gift ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was to mankind.
“...He is the Trust of God amongst you...”
“...He is the most great Favor unto you...”
“...the most perfect bounty upon you...”
3. Provide each student with a nice photocopy of the Kitáb-i-‘Ahd to decorate, using stamps, stickers or other art supplies, and/or mounting it on fancy paper. Instruct them to place their decorated Kitáb-i-‘Ahd in a presentation folder, wrap their book with gift wrap and ribbon, and select someone in the community to whom they will give this gift.
4. Invite the students to plan the courteous manner and words of explanation they will use as they present this gift. Invite them to share the response of the person receiving the gift at the next class period.

Bahá’u’lláh, quoted in *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 135

TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

ACTIVITY: ELECTRICITY ANALOGY FOR THE COVENANT AND PERSONAL PLEDGES

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To apply Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant with us to our own personal covenant with Bahá’u’lláh

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To adhere to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpretations of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of science; Use of creativity

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 35 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- 6-volt lantern battery, test fixture with 5-6 volt light (sold separately)
- 5 to 6 tester wires with alligator clips attached, available at electric component supply stores
- stationery with envelopes, postage stamps

1. Use electricity to demonstrate the importance of staying connected to the power of the Covenant: Set up a simple electric current by attaching two alligator clips with wire to a 6-volt lantern battery and assembled tester light. It is important that the battery’s voltage be close to the voltage of the bulb, which can be easily checked at the store.
2. Make the analogy between staying firm in the Covenant, which makes our souls shine, to the electrical connection making the light shine. Disconnect one of the wires – ask students to suggest an analogy for this: some way an individual might be unfaithful to the Covenant. (For instance, back-biting.) What happens to the light? What happens to your soul? Ask them to identify analogies for the various pieces of equipment. Where is the role and power of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as Center of the Covenant, in this experiment?
3. Bring out more wires and clips. Challenge students to create a larger and more intricate circuit by adding more and more wires, which will still enable the light bulb to shine. Involve everyone! With each new connection, they must suggest another way to show firmness in the Covenant, for example, a personal, spiritual law, a way of upholding the Administrative Order, etc.



4. Also explore what happens when making breaks at various points in the current. With each break, they must state a way that someone could be unfaithful to the Covenant, and what would be the effect. They should then describe what actions would restore the condition of faithfulness while restoring the electrical connection.
5. Ask students to reflect on their own personal covenant with Bahá’u’lláh. Provide stationery and pens, and have them write a commitment to Bahá’u’lláh in the form of a letter to themselves. Invite them to place their letter in an envelope, seal it and address it to themselves, but give to the teacher to collect.
6. Mail their letters one week after class, as a reminder of their commitment to follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s example.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

ACTIVITY: PRESENT THE DAY OF THE COVENANT OBSERVANCE

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES: To demonstrate reverence for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; To be able to tell others about the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Establish bonds of unity and friendship; Peer Involvement; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN. + OBSERVANCE

Materials Needed:

- copies of the Kitáb-i’Ahd
- music
- refreshments

1. Ask students to plan the commemoration of the Day of the Covenant Holy Day, utilizing the Kitáb-i’Ahd as selected Writings. Assist them in also selecting the music (including sing-alongs) and refreshments.
2. If this class happens at a time of the year when it is not practical to assist the students to plan the community celebration of the Day of the Covenant, find an alternate occasion such as a fireside for their peers, a devotional gathering for the community, or an upcoming Nineteen Day Feast.
3. At the class period immediately following this event, guide the class in a self-assessment of the experience, acknowledging all success and identifying ways to build on that success for future celebrations.

The Ascension of Bahá’u’lláh

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 221

Already nine months before His ascension Bahá’u’lláh, as attested by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, had voiced His desire to depart from this world. From that time onward it became increasingly evident, from the tone of His remarks to those who attained His presence, that the close of His earthly life was approaching, though He refrained from mentioning it openly to any one. On the night proceeding May 8, 1892, He contracted a slight fever which, though it mounted the following day, soon after subsided. He continued to grant interviews to certain of the friends and pilgrims, but it soon became evident that He was not well. His fever returned in a more acute form than before, His general condition grew steadily worse, complications ensued which at last culminated in His ascension, at the hour of dawn, on May 29, 1892, eight hours after sunset, in the 75th year of His age. His spirit, at long last released from the toils of a life crowded with tribulations, had winged its flight to His “*other dominions,*” dominions “*whereon the eyes of the people of names have never fallen,*” and to which the “*Luminous Maid,*” “*clad in white,*” had bidden Him hasten.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

KITÁB-I-‘AHD

(Book of the Covenant)

Although the Realm of Glory hath none of the vanities of the world, yet within the treasury of trust and resignation We have bequeathed to Our heirs an excellent and priceless heritage. Earthly treasures We have not bequeathed, nor have We added such cares as they entail. By God! In earthly riches fear is hidden and peril is concealed. Consider ye and call to mind that which the All-Merciful hath revealed in the Qur’án: ‘Woe betide every slanderer and defamer, him that layeth up riches and counteth them.’(1) Fleeting are the riches of the world; all that perisheth and changeth is not, and hath never been, worthy of attention, except to a recognized measure.

The aim of this Wronged One in sustaining woes and tribulations, in revealing the Holy Verses and in demonstrating proofs hath been naught but to quench the flame of hate and enmity, that the horizon of the hearts of men may be illumined with the light of concord and attain real peace and tranquillity. From the dawning-place of the divine Tablet the day-star of this utterance shineth resplendent, and it behoveth everyone to fix his gaze upon it: We exhort you, O peoples of the world, to observe that which will elevate your station. Hold fast to the fear of God and firmly adhere to what is right. Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men. Lofty is the station of man! Not long ago this exalted Word streamed forth from the treasury of Our Pen of Glory: Great and blessed is this Day - the Day in which all that lay latent in man hath been and will be made manifest. Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being.

Every receptive soul who hath in this Day inhaled the fragrance of His garment and hath, with a pure heart, set his face towards the all-glorious Horizon is reckoned among the people of Bahá in the Crimson Book. Grasp ye, in My Name, the chalice of My loving-kindness, drink then your fill in My glorious and wondrous remembrance.

O ye that dwell on earth! The religion of God is for love and unity; make it not the cause of enmity or dissension. In the eyes of men of insight and the beholders of the Most Sublime Vision, whatsoever are the effective means for safeguarding and promoting the happiness and welfare of the children of men have already been revealed by the Pen of Glory. But the foolish ones of the earth, being nurtured in evil passions and desires, have remained heedless of the consummate wisdom of Him Who is, in truth, the All-Wise, while their words and deeds are prompted by idle fancies and vain imaginings.

O ye the loved ones and the trustees of God! Kings are the manifestations of the power, and the daysprings of the might and riches, of God. Pray ye on their behalf. He hath invested them with the rulership of the earth and hath singled out the hearts of men as His Own domain.

Conflict and contention are categorically forbidden in His Book. This is a decree of God in this Most Great Revelation. It is divinely preserved from annulment and is invested by Him with the splendour of His confirmation. Verily He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

It is incumbent upon everyone to aid those daysprings of authority and sources of command who are adorned with the ornament of equity and justice. Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá. They are My trustees among My servants and the manifestations of My commandments amidst My people. Upon them rest My glory, My blessings and My grace which have pervaded the world of being. In this connection the utterances revealed in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are such that from the horizon of their words the light of divine grace shineth luminous and resplendent.

O ye My Branches! A mighty force, a consummate power lieth concealed in the world of being. Fix your gaze upon it and upon its unifying influence, and not upon the differences which appear from it.

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Muhammad Ali] to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen ‘the Greater’ after ‘the Most Great’, as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.

It is enjoined upon everyone to manifest love towards the Aghsán, but God hath not granted them any right to the property of others.

O ye My Aghsán, My Afnán and My Kindred! We exhort you to fear God, to perform praiseworthy deeds and to do that which is meet and seemly and serveth to exalt your station. Verily I say, fear of God is the greatest commander that can render the Cause of God victorious, and the hosts which best befit this commander have ever been and are an upright character and pure and goodly deeds.

Say: O servants! Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord. We fain would hope that the people of Bahá may be guided by the blessed words: ‘Say: all things are of God.’ This exalted utterance is like unto water for quenching the fire of hate and enmity which smouldereth within the hearts and breasts of men. By this single utterance contending peoples and kindreds will attain the light of true unity. Verily He speaketh the truth and leadeth the way. He is the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the Gracious.

It is incumbent upon everyone to show courtesy to, and have regard for the Aghsán, that thereby the Cause of God may be glorified and His Word exalted. This injunction hath time and again been mentioned and recorded in the Holy Writ. Well is it with him who is enabled to achieve that which the Ordainer, the Ancient of Days hath prescribed for him. Ye are bidden moreover to respect the members of the Holy Household, the Afnán and the kindred. We further admonish you to serve all nations and to strive for the betterment of the world.

That which is conducive to the regeneration of the world and the salvation of the peoples and kindreds of the earth hath been sent down from the heaven of the utterance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. Give ye a hearing ear to the counsels of the Pen of Glory. Better is this for you than all that is on the earth. Unto this beareth witness My glorious and wondrous Book.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: “Following the Footsteps of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” SO 92
“In the Master’s House” ND 92
“Our Shield” ND 92
“I Want to Be Just Like You” SE 96
“The Power of Example, Learning to Pray with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” SO 98
“Admiring Nature with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” MJ 99
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Master, pp. 15-21
An Early Pilgrimage, pp. 25-26
Are You Happy?, Patti Rae French, One World Publications, 1992
God Passes By, pp. 221-233
In His Presence, Visits to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 61-63
My Pilgrimage to Haifa, November 1919, pp. 38-40
Stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 27-36, 45-47
The Dynamic Force of Example, pp. 17-25
The Scottish Visitors, A Story About ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Britain

Music:

Artists for the Arc, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”
Happy Ayyám-i-Há, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”
Heroes, Saints and Martyrs, “The Master”
Loving Hands, “Make Me More Like You”
Music of the World Congress, “Dastam Begir, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” “Look at Me, Follow Me,” “Tribute to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”
Narges, “Dastam Begir, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”
Tear Down These Borders, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”
The Greatest Moments, “Walking in the Footsteps”

Poetry:

Brilliant Star: “Most Great Branch” ND 92
“Mystery of God” SE 92
Voices From a Borrowed Garden, “The Master”
Another Song, Another Season, “Glimpses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” pp. 63-73

Activities:

Brilliant Star: “He is Our Shelter” ND 92
“Photograph of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá” ND 92
“Look at Me, Follow Me, Be as I Am” SE 96

Drama:

Herald of the South, “Heralds of the Covenant”

Worksheet/Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “Look at Me, Follow Me, Be as I Am” SE 96

List of other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE KITÁB-I-‘AHD OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

Page for NOTES

TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
REVERENCE, THANKFULNESS, FAITHFULNESS**

In accordance with the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá'u'lláh hath made the Center of the Covenant the Interpreter of His Word—a Covenant so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 44

He is, and should for all time be regarded, first and foremost, as the Center and Pivot of Bahá'u'lláh's peerless and all-enfolding Covenant, His most exalted handiwork, the stainless Mirror of His light, the perfect Exemplar of His teachings, the unerring Interpreter of His Word, the embodiment of every Bahá'í ideal, the incarnation of every Bahá'í virtue, the Most Mighty Branch sprung from the Ancient Root, the Limb of the Law of God, the Being "round Whom all names revolve," the Mainspring of the Oneness of Humanity, the Ensign of the Most Great Peace, the Moon of the Central Orb of this most holy Dispensation - styles and titles that are implicit and find their truest, their highest and fairest expression in the magic name ‘Abdu'l-Bahá.

Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 134

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that Bahá’u’lláh appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant
- To know that Bahá’u’lláh bestowed the title the Most Great Branch upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- To know that Bahá’u’lláh revealed special prayers in honor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Teach the students that Bahá’u’lláh referred to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant and the Most Great Branch.
- Point out where these titles are used in the Writings.
- Use songs about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to teach the Station conferred upon Him by Bahá’u’lláh.
- Share a special prayer Bahá’u’lláh revealed in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s honor, and discuss why He may have revealed this prayer. Provide opportunities to read and/or memorize the prayer and decorate a frame for it.
- Discover the Titles bestowed on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Bahá’u’lláh in His Writings.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of the term ‘Center of the Covenant’
- To understand the consequences for turning away from the Covenant
- To reflect on Bahá’u’lláh’s use of the terms ‘branches’ and ‘leaves’ to describe the stations of members of the Holy Family

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Brainstorm about the meanings of the word “covenant.” Use the dictionary.
- Explore which meaning best applies to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.
- Discover how Bahá’u’lláh’s use of metaphors from the world of nature assists us to understand the Covenant.
- Use art and craft activities, such as “Mod-Podge” or decoupage, to adhere a copy of the prayer for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on a piece of wood, symbolizing that He is the Most Great Branch.
- Consult about the possible consequences of turning away from the Covenant.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- To appreciate the value of firmness in the Covenant

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share stories about early believers who were firm in the Covenant.
- Create opportunities for the learners to compare events in their own lives to stories about the early believers.
- Reflect on the meaning of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s title, Center of the Covenant, and the impact it has on their own lives.
- Investigate and share how being firm in the Covenant assists ourselves or someone we know.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To accept the authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and be obedient to Him
- To demonstrate our love for God and Bahá’u’lláh by showing love, loyalty, and obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- To describe to others the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share songs about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the Bahá’í community.
- Demonstrate understanding of the quality of obedience (i.e., show obedience to parents, teachers, Bahá’í Institutions).
- Consult about ways to show obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Covenant.
- Recite at Feast a special prayer revealed by Bahá’u’lláh in honor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- Plan service projects to reflect the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These can be carried out by individuals, groups, or the whole class, and can also involve families.
- Plan and participate in the program for the Day of the Covenant.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: INTRODUCE SPECIAL QUALITIES OF THE “CENTER”

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that Bahá’u’lláh appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards God; Employ the Sacred Writings

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- box of chocolate candies

1. Warmly welcome each student by offering a tray of special candies – a type with a delectable center inside, as a pleasant surprise.
2. Ask students to appreciate the wonderful sweetness of their candy’s center. Use that as an analogy to consider how precious and special must be the Center which Bahá’u’lláh chose for His Covenant with mankind: His eldest Son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

ACTIVITY: READ AND REFLECT ON BAHÁ’Í SCRIPTURE REGARDING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that Bahá’u’lláh appointed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant; To know that Bahá’u’lláh bestowed the title the Most Great Branch upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; To know that Bahá’u’lláh revealed a special prayer in honor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To appreciate the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Study of the Writings; Cooperative learning; Use of art

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- copies of “Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” p. 25 of this Lesson Planning Guide
 - copies of “A Prayer Revealed in Honor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” p. 24 of this Lesson Planning Guide
 - glitter, markers, stickers, etc.
 - inexpensive frames (optional)
1. Provide each student with a copy of the verses on “Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” included on page 25 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Read these verses aloud together as devotions, showing reverence and beauty.
 2. After reading these verses on the Covenant, remind the friends that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is the Center of the Covenant and the Most Great Branch. Discuss the meaning of these titles.

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

3. Introduce the fact that Bahá’u’lláh revealed special prayers for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These prayers written by Bahá’u’lláh for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá testify to His love for His successor.
4. Invite the students to read the Prayer Revealed in Honor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá included on page 24 of this Lesson Planning Guide and discuss its meaning.
5. Invite students to decorate the prayer in some way that they would find reverent and beautiful. (Various materials – glitter, markers, stickers, small gems, sequins, etc. – could be used.) Inexpensive frames could be purchased to place the prayer within it for continual display.
6. Tell stories (see next activity) as the students decorate the prayer.

ACTIVITY: REFLECT ON STORIES ABOUT SOME OF THE EARLY BELIEVERS

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the consequences of turning away from the Covenant

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To appreciate the value of firmness in the Covenant

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of parables and stories; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- selected books (see below)
1. While the students are decorating their prayers, tell stories about early believers who were firm in the Covenant. Many such stories are included in the Core Curriculum Storybook Series. Additional possibilities for stories include the biographies of such heroes, heroines and Hands as Martha Root, William Sears, Dr. Muhajir, and Lua Getsinger which are collected in books such as *Lights of Fortitude* and *A Love that Cannot Wait*.
 2. Discuss the questions: How did these friends demonstrate firmness in the Covenant? How can we show firmness in the Covenant in our own lives? What does it mean to turn away from the Covenant? How does firmness in the Covenant help ourselves and help others?
 3. After this short discussion affirm the fact that firmness in the Covenant includes our obedience to the laws and ordinances established by Bahá’u’lláh, confirmed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and expressed through the decisions of the sacred Institutions of our Faith.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

ACTIVITY: DISCOVER SYMBOLS FOR THE COVENANT IN ART

WISDOM OBJECTIVES: To understand the meaning of the term Center of the Covenant; To understand the consequences of turning away from the Covenant

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe to others the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of art; Use of nature

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- art books from library or a selection of magazines.
- drawing paper and art supplies

1. Bring a collection of art books or magazines to class. Invite the class to look through these books or magazines to find art or designs that direct the attention of the viewer to the center of the piece. Discuss the function of this ‘center’ in the piece.
2. Look again in the books and magazines to find illustrations of the natural world that demonstrate this center. Again, discuss the function of this center. Some possible examples include the sun as the center of the solar system, the stem of a plant, the center of a spiral shell, etc.
3. Ask the students to consider the following statement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and then to compare their examples of the importance of a ‘center’ in art and nature with the function of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.

“...Bahá’u’lláh desired that there should not be any ground or reason for disagreement among the Bahá’ís. Therefore, with His own pen He wrote the Book of His Covenant, addressing His relations and all people of the world, saying, ‘Verily, I have appointed One Who is the Center of My Covenant. All must obey Him; all must turn to Him; He is the Expounder of My Book, and He is informed of My purpose. All must turn to Him. Whatsoever He says is correct, for, verily, He knoweth the texts of My Book. Other than He, no one doth know My Book.’ The purpose of this statement is that there should never be discord and divergence among the Bahá’ís but that they should always be unified and agreed.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 323

4. Invite the students to use the paper and art supplies to create their own design that represents the importance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.
5. After allowing time for the students to work, invite them to share their designs with others in the class and then to plan how they can share these important ideas with others, while using their designs to illustrate the concept.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

ACTIVITY: DISCOVER METAPHORS FOR THE COVENANT IN NATURE

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that Bahá'u'lláh bestowed the title the Most Great Branch upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

WISDOM OBJECTIVES: To reflect on Bahá'u'lláh's use of the terms ‘branches’ and ‘leaves’ to describe the stations of members of the Holy Family.

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe to others the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of art; Use of nature; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- chart paper or chalkboard
- nature area
- drawing paper or sketchpads and pencils

1. Remind the students of the role of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant. Then point out that Bahá'u'lláh also gave ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the title The Most Great Branch.
2. Bahá'u'lláh gave titles of leaves and branches to depict members of the Holy Family. Briefly discuss the questions: What is the function of leaves and branches in the world of nature? In what ways might the members of the Holy Family be like leaves and branches in our Faith?
3. Identify the names and titles of members of the Holy Family. Write these on the board for students to copy:

Bahá'u'lláh – Ancient Root, the Tree beyond which there is no passing

‘Abdu’l-Bahá – The Most Great Branch
(Bahá'u'lláh's eldest Son)

Bahíyyih Khánum – The Greatest Holy Leaf
(Bahá'u'lláh's daughter, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's sister)

Mírzá Mihdí – The Purest Branch
(Bahá'u'lláh's Son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's brother)

4. Send students outdoors on a solitary reflection walk, on which they will choose one tree to study. Ask them to reflect on each of the titles used by Bahá'u'lláh for members of His Holy Family, and consider how their particular tree

serves as a symbol for those titles. Ask them to sketch their tree, and label the various parts with the titles of members of the Holy Family.

5. After their walks, invite several students to take the whole class to their tree, to show and explain how they see these symbols within it.



GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

ACTIVITY: ENGAGE IN A SCAVENGER HUNT FOR ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S TITLES

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe to others the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of games; Use of research

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- selected books (see below) or copies of pp. 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- long strip of paper to hang on wall

1. Encourage small groups of students to discover other titles of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Resources include: *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, section entitled ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp.131-139; *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 41-50; “The Kitáb-i’Ahd” from *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 210-223; *The Mystery of God*, compiled by Mrs. Iran F. Muhajir. Consider giving each team a different book. Alternatively, you may refer the students to “Selections from *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
2. Assign each team to a long strip of paper hanging on the wall. As each title is found, a team member writes it down. Celebrate clever sleuthing to find these titles!
3. Alternately, one strip of all the compiled titles of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could be created, decorated, and used as a decoration in future classes or for other events.
4. As the teams research titles, ask them also to make notes on the topics listed below. Consider assigning one topic to each group. Possible topics include:
 - The authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá;
 - The need to be obedient to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá;
 - How love, loyalty and obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá demonstrate our love for God and Bahá’u’lláh;
 - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.
5. Invite each group to provide a brief oral presentation on their assigned topic as they display the titles they’ve identified. Be sure to include each team member in the group presentation to the class.

ACTIVITY: CHORAL READING OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH’S WORDS REGARDING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe to others the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Manifest faith and thoughts in deeds; Use of drama; Study of the Writings

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN. + PRESENTATION

Materials Needed:

- Copies of pages 135-6 of *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, reprinted on pp. 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- highlighter pens

1. Present copies of the paragraphs describing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Station, reproduced from pages 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide, pp. 135-136 of *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*.

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

2. Introduce the concept of a choral reading, in which different voices, and numbers of voices, dramatically read aloud portions of a piece. In consultation with the students, decide who would like to read independently, and who would like to read aloud in twos, threes, or more. Write possible names and combinations on the board.
3. Look over the passage together: identify sections (phrases or sentences) that would be most effective read solo, others for small groups, perhaps some for the whole group to read as a whole. Together, select readers for these sections. Provide highlighters or pens for students to mark the sections that they will be reading.
4. Work on staging: choose a “front stage center” and places for each group. Do you want to include any simple and dignified movements to enhance the effect of your reading?
5. Rehearse one or two times, making changes to your initial ideas as needed. Remember to use the principles of consultation!
6. Make a master list of assignments. Assure that each reader understands the meaning of these priceless words and phrases. Encourage them to practice outside of class, so that the beauty and meaning of the passage will be expressed to the listeners.
7. Perform your choral reading at a community event, such as the Nineteen Day Feast, or a Holy Day associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
8. Consider also including in your presentation the lists of titles of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and brief oral presentations prepared in the previous activity.

ACTIVITY: ONGOING STUDY AND SERVICE

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES: To accept the authority of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and be obedient to Him; To demonstrate our love for God and Bahá’u’lláh by showing love, loyalty and obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Involve service to humanity; Use of consultation; Use of research

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN. + SERVICE AND ONGOING STUDY

Materials Needed:

- selected books of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

1. Invite students to consult about a long-term service they could perform collectively or individually using ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as our example. Consider offering service to younger children, to the parents of young children, to help care for your Bahá’í school, and to the community at large. Remember that a small service faithfully conducted on a regular basis represents a very valuable contribution to the life of the community. Create a plan, carry it out, consult about your results, then repeat the cycle as an on-going part of the class.
2. Display several books written about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. (See Additional Resources for suggestions.) Invite learners to consider selecting a book about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to read over the course of several months. For those learners that select a book, remember to check in with them on a regular basis and assist them to plan and prepare a book report, complete with visual aids, about their book for the class, for a fireside presentation, or for the Nineteen Day Feast.

**A PRAYER REVEALED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
IN HONOR OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ**

Thou knowest, O my God, that I desire for Him naught except that which Thou didst desire, and have chosen Him for no purpose save that which Thou hadst intended for Him. Render Him victorious, therefore, through Thy hosts of earth and heaven... Ordain, I beseech Thee, by the ardor of My love for Thee and My yearning to manifest Thy Cause, for Him, as well as for them that love Him, that which Thou hast destined for Thy Messengers and the Trustees of Thy Revelation. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 136

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

QUOTATIONS FOR REFLECTION

“The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful. Verily God hath ordained the station of the Greater Branch [Muhammad ‘Alí] to be beneath that of the Most Great Branch [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. He is in truth the Ordainer, the All-Wise. We have chosen ‘the Greater’ after ‘the Most Great,’ as decreed by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Informed.”

Bahá’u’lláh, Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh: Kitáb-i’Ahd, pp. 221-222

“When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended,” proclaims the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, “turn your faces towards Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.” And again, “When the Mystic Dove will have winged its flight from its Sanctuary of Praise and sought its far-off goal, its hidden habitation, refer ye whatsoever ye understand not in the Book to Him Who hath branched from this mighty Stock.”

Shoghi Effendi: World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, p. 134

“Question: What relation do you sustain to the founder of your belief? Are you his successor in the same manner as the Pope of Rome?” “Answer: I am the servant of Bahá’u’lláh, the Founder; and in this I glory. No honor do I consider greater than this, and it is my hope that I may be confirmed in servitude to Bahá’u’lláh. This is my station.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 167

SELECTIONS FROM *WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH* FOR CHORAL READING

In the Kitáb-i-’Ahd, moreover, Bahá’u’lláh solemnly and explicitly declares: “It is incumbent upon the Aghsán, the Afnán and My kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch. Consider that which We have revealed in Our Most Holy Book: ‘When the ocean of My presence hath ebbed and the Book of My Revelation is ended, turn your faces toward Him Whom God hath purposed, Who hath branched from this Ancient Root.’ The object of this sacred verse is none other except the Most Mighty Branch (‘Abdu’l-Bahá). Thus have We graciously revealed unto you our potent Will, and I am verily the Gracious, the All-Powerful.”

In the Suriy-i-Ghusn (Tablet of the Branch) the following verses have been recorded: “There hath branched from the Sadratu’l-Muntaha this sacred and glorious Being, this Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow. Verily the Limb of the Law of God hath sprung forth from this Root which God hath firmly implanted in the Ground of His Will, and Whose Branch hath been so uplifted as to encompass the whole of creation. Magnified be He, therefore, for this sublime, this blessed, this mighty, this exalted Handiwork!... A Word hath, as a token of Our grace, gone forth from the Most Great Tablet - a Word which God hath adorned with the ornament of His own Self, and made it sovereign over the earth and all that is therein, and a sign of His greatness and power among its people ...Render thanks unto God, O people, for His appearance; for verily He is the most great Favor unto you, the most perfect bounty upon you; and through Him every mouldering bone is quickened. Whoso turneth towards Him hath turned towards God, and whoso turneth away from Him hath turned away from My beauty, hath repudiated My

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

Proof, and transgressed against Me. He is the Trust of God amongst you, His charge within you, His manifestation unto you and His appearance among His favored servants... We have sent Him down in the form of a human temple. Blest and sanctified be God Who createth whatsoever He willeth through His inviolable, His infallible decree. They who deprive themselves of the shadow of the Branch, are lost in the wilderness of error, are consumed by the heat of worldly desires, and are of those who will assuredly perish.”

“O Thou Who art the apple of Mine eye!” Bahá’u’lláh, in His own handwriting, thus addresses Abdu’l-Bahá, “My glory, the ocean of My loving-kindness, the sun of My bounty, the heaven of My mercy rest upon Thee. We pray God to illumine the world through Thy knowledge and wisdom, to ordain for Thee that which will gladden Thine heart and impart consolation to Thine eyes.” “The glory of God rest upon Thee,” He writes in another Tablet, “and upon whosoever serveth Thee and circleth around Thee. Woe, great woe, betide him that opposeth and injureth Thee. Well is it with him that sweareth fealty to Thee; the fire of hell torment him who is Thine enemy.” “We have made Thee a shelter for all mankind,” He, in yet another Tablet, affirms, “a shield unto all who are in heaven and on earth, a stronghold for whosoever hath believed in God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing. God grant that through Thee He may protect them, may enrich and sustain them, that He may inspire Thee with that which shall be a wellspring of wealth unto all created things, an ocean of bounty unto all men, and the dayspring of mercy unto all peoples.”

Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 134-136

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, THE CENTER OF THE COVENANT

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: “I Want to Be Just Like You” SE 96

“The Majesty of the Covenant” MJ 98

“ABC’s of the Covenant” MJ 98

“Firmness in the Covenant” SE 94

“A Covenant is a Promise” SE 92

“The Ark of Salvation” SE 92

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 50-52

Bahá’u’lláh, The King of Glory, p. 420

The Beloved Master, pp. 22, 91-94

The Covenant for Young People

The Covenant, A Compilation of Extracts from the Bahá’í Writings

The Covenant, Its Meaning and Origin and Our Attitude Toward It

God Passes By, pp. 237-243

The Mystery of God, p. 25

The Power of the Covenant

Servant of the Glory, pp. 25-27, 40-42, 72-73, 88, 92-93, 104-105, 113, 122, 209-211, 228, 237, 247

Written in Light, pp. 58, 114-115

Poetry:

Brilliant Star:

“Most Great Branch” ND 92

“The Mystery of God” SE 92

Activities:

Brilliant Star: “Center of the Covenant” ND 92

“He is Our Shelter” ND 92

“Our Shield” ND 92

“Center of the Covenant” SE 92

“My Covenant To-Do List” MJ 98

“The Cord of the Covenant” MJ 98

“ABC’s of the Covenant Word Search” MJ 98

“Making Promises” SE 92

“Bahá’u’lláh’s Gift to the World” SE 92

“The Covenant in the World of Nature” SE 92

“The Center of the Covenant” SE 92

“My Part of the Covenant” SE 92

“Mighty Covenant Training Camp,” SE 98

Worksheet/Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: SE 92 p. 1

Music:

Stand Up For Love, “Your New Family”

Brilliant Star: “The Covenant” SE 92

Lote Tree, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”

Games:

Brilliant Star:

“Becoming an Apostle of Bahá’u’lláh” SE 94:

“Mighty Covenant Training Camp” SE 98

“Signs of the Covenant” SE 92

List of other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.

TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION
OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE
APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
LOYALTY, FAITHFULNESS, STEADFASTNESS

Emphatically and explicitly, He had appointed the beloved Master as the sole Interpreter of His Word. When the friends received this great news, they were calmed, and with hearts full of hope, they arose to raise the banner of servitude and uphold it with their utmost strength.

Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, *Stories from the Delight of Hearts*, p. 121

The cloud of despondency that had momentarily settled on the disconsolate lovers of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh was lifted. The continuity of that unerring guidance vouchsafed to it since its birth was now assured. The significance of the solemn affirmation that this is ‘*the Day which shall not be followed by night*’ was now clearly apprehended. An orphan community had recognized in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in its hour of desperate need, its Solace, its Guide, its Mainstay and Champion.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 245

TOPIC: THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that most Bahá’ís were loyal to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and rejoiced in His appointment
- To know that others (including some members of His immediate family) rejected ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment and became covenant breakers
- To know the definition of the term “Covenant Breaker”
- To know the events in religious history surrounding the Ascensions of some of the former Manifestations of God, and the consequences when there was no clear or written appointment of a successor

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share stories from Bahá’í histories about the overwhelmingly positive response of early believers to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment.
- Tell stories about some of the members of the Holy Family who were not happy about the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- Investigate the writings of Shoghi Effendi regarding the term “Covenant Breaker.”
- Discuss what behavior might be considered Covenant Breaking.
- Research Bahá’í literature to read and share additional stories about how other early believers reacted to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the meaning of the term “Covenant Breaker”
- To understand the difficulties for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which were caused by those who disobeyed the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh
- To understand why some people became Covenant Breakers
- To understand the consequences of jealousy and the desire for power

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Talk about jealousy and how it makes us feel. Role-play situations that might cause jealousy and describe resultant feelings.
- Share stories about the difficulties ‘Abdu’l-Bahá faced because of the Covenant Breakers.
- Solve dilemmas about possible situations involving disobedience, which can result in Covenant Breaking.
- Explore possible reasons the believers might have become Covenant Breakers. Be sure to include the desire for power/leadership.

TOPIC: THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To appreciate the values of loyalty and devotion, and understand their application to loyalty to the Institutions of the Cause
- To identify these qualities in oneself
- To recognize the effects of jealousy and the desire for power
- To examine one’s own feelings of jealousy and desire for power and recognize their source

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have learners bring stories from world literature that demonstrate examples of loyalty and devotion.
- Discuss the subjects of loyalty and devotion.
- Create and perform plays with themes of loyalty and devotion.
- Discuss what loyalty and devotion to the Covenant means to us as Bahá’ís.
- Write a poem or story about loyalty.
- Discuss situations where the students have felt jealousy or wanted to be in control. Encourage them to think about the reasons why. What was the result when they acted jealously? Explore alternative possibilities for handling those situations.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate loyalty to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by being obedient to His guidance and grateful for His Example and Writings
- To be able to control jealousy and the desire for power
- To be able to recount to others some of the reactions to the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Invite learners to share with a partner at least one story they’ve heard about the reactions of early believers to the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.
- Play a game that requires cooperation and emphasizes non-competitive objectives (demonstrating the control of jealousy and of the desire for power).
- Present a play showing the difficulties caused for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by Covenant Breakers, and how He may have responded as indicated in Bahá’í literature. In creating plays about the Central Figures, remember that it is inappropriate to portray the Central Figures or other members of the Holy Family.

GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: INSPIRATION REGARDING ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ’S APPOINTMENT

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To appreciate the values of loyalty and devotion, and understand their application to loyalty to the Institutions of the Cause

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Study of the Writings; Use of meditation and reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- prepared devotions from pages 134-136 of *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh* (pp. 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide)
1. Share together pre-planned devotions using phrases from “Selections from *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*,” pp. 26-27 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Consider duplicating phrases onto beautiful paper. Ask different students to read these passages in order, showing reverence to uplift the spirit.
 2. Discuss the quotation: What are some of the especially beautiful words Bahá’u’lláh uses to extol ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Station and Bahá’u’lláh’s love for Him? What promises does Bahá’u’lláh make to those who obey ‘Abdu’l-Bahá? What warnings does He give to any who would oppose ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

ACTIVITY: USE ELECTRICITY TO DEMONSTRATE COVENANT BREAKING

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the definition of the term “Covenant Breaker”

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the definition of the term “Covenant Breaker”

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Employ the sacred Writings; Use of science; Use of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- 6 volt lantern battery
 - 5 tester wires (lengths of insulated electric wire with alligator clips on the ends)
 - 5-6 volt tester light (small ceramic light base with small light bulb)
 - small label cards and tape
1. Set up a science demonstration to represent the power of the Covenant, starting with a dry cell lantern battery. As pieces are added in the following illustration, discuss each step along the “chain” of authority, and the followers’ reactions: acceptance of or rebellion towards the next Authority in the history of our Faith.
 2. Clip the first wire directly to a battery terminal. Tape a small label, THE BĀB, to the center of the length of wire. Clip the other end of the wire to a screw on the tester light, which represents the community of believers. The light goes on, demonstrating God’s guidance lighting the lives of the believers.

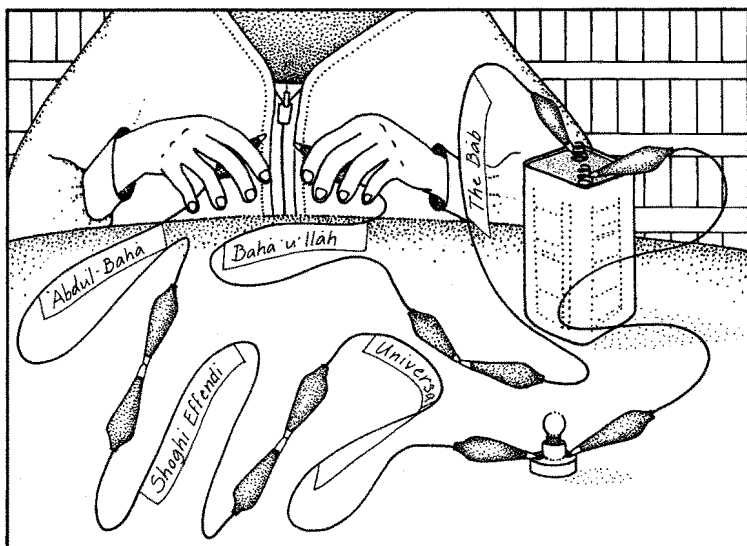
TOPIC: THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

3. Ask students, “For Whom did the Báb prepare the early believers?” As they reply, “Bahá’u’lláh,” unhook the clip from the light, and add the second wire, connecting one end to the end of “The Báb” wire, and the other to the light. Tape the label, BAHÁ’U’LLÁH on this wire. Note that God’s guidance lights up the believers first through The Báb and now through Bahá’u’lláh.
4. Ask students, “Did all the Bábís accept Bahá’u’lláh as Him Whom God shall make manifest?” The overwhelming majority did accept Him, but some did not. Demonstrate how, by not accepting Bahá’u’lláh, these Bábís broke the Covenant, the promise of God’s continuing guidance, by unhooking the clips joining “The Báb” wire with the “Bahá’u’lláh” wire – the light goes out.
5. Explain that Covenant Breakers extinguish God’s light in their own souls, and if they were successful in subverting God’s Plan, they would disconnect the souls of the rest of the believers.
6. Ask students, “Who did Bahá’u’lláh appoint as His Successor, the Center of His Covenant?” As they reply, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá,” disconnect the “Bahá’u’lláh” wire from the light. Connect it to the third wire, and hook that one up to the light. Place the label, ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, on this third wire. Invite comments about the passage of time, the naming of a successor upon the death of the previous Source of God’s illumination. Also point out how the light of the lamp is just as strong, no matter how many links there are between it and the power source, the battery.
7. Ask, “Did all the Bahá’ís turn to, and accept ‘Abdu’l-Bahá after Bahá’u’lláh’s Ascension?” They may not know that, sadly, not all did. Demonstrate what happened to these Covenant Breakers, by disconnecting the clips connecting the “Bahá’u’lláh” and “‘Abdu’l-Bahá” wires. (Point out that these souls were unable to benefit even from Bahá’u’lláh’s Light, after they broke His Covenant.)
8. Continue in this manner, adding wires and labeling them SHOGHI EFFENDI and the UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE. With each, discuss how their Authority was established at the passing of the previous Authority, and demonstrate how Covenant Breakers at each stage of this chain of authority have tried to disrupt its flow, only extinguishing their own lights.

9. Share with your students the following analogy, from *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 210. Ask them to picture waves of the sea depositing foam and debris along the beach while you read:

“These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, which is one of its inseparable features; but the ocean of the Covenant shall surge and cast ashore the bodies of the dead, for it cannot retain them...”

Conclude the activity by once again focusing on the light and our connection to it.



GOAL: TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE STATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE REACTION OF OTHERS TO THE APPOINTMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

ACTIVITY: RESEARCHING REACTIONS OF EARLY BELIEVERS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that most Bahá’ís were loyal to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and rejoiced in His appointment; To know that others (including some members of His immediate family) rejected ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment and became Covenant Breakers; To know the definition of the term “Covenant Breaker;” To know the events in religious history surrounding the Ascensions of some of the former Manifestations of God and the consequences when there was no clear or written appointment of a successor

WISDOM OBJECTIVES: To understand the meaning of the term “Covenant Breaker;” To understand the difficulties of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which were caused by those who disobeyed the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh; To understand why some people became Covenant Breakers

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To be able to recount to others some of the reactions to the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Study of the Writings; Use of research; Independent investigation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN

Materials Needed:

- Bahá’í history research sources. Have a variety of resources available such as: *The Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 141-154 by Adib Taherzadeh; *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh* by Adib Taherzadeh; *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh* (also found in *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*) by Shoghi Effendi; *God and His Messengers* by David Hofman; *Some Early Bahá’ís of the West* by O.Z. Whitehead. You may also provide copies of p. 37 of this Guide.
- **NOTE:** Please observe caution in referring students to the Internet for research on this topic, as modern-day covenant-breaking materials are widely available on the Internet. The Master has written, “One of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers....”
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament*, p. 20

1. Divide the class into four groups. Ask students to select a topic area, from the choices below. Depending on time available, some research may be given as a homework assignment.
2. Invite each group to present their findings to the full group. Encourage the inclusion of creative elements, such as dramatic skits or artwork, in addition to their verbal report.
3. Assign homework: Ask students to share with a family member one of the stories about the reaction of believers when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was appointed as Bahá’u’lláh’s successor. Invite the students to share the outcomes of these family discussions at the next class.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment. Most believers were joyous about His appointment and were loyal. What is the result of their loyalty?

- B. Find stories from Bahá’í history about the few early believers who had a NEGATIVE response to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s appointment. How was the situation resolved?
- C. Find stories of members of the Holy Family who were not happy about the appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and became COVENANT BREAKERS. What harm did they cause ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Faith?
- D. Research the fact that this is the first time in religious history that a successor was clearly named. What happened in OTHER RELIGIONS after the Ascension of their Founder?

TOPIC AREAS:

- A. Find stories from Bahá’í history about the POSITIVE response of early believers to

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ACTIVITY: REFLECT ON LOYALTY AND DEVOTION VERSUS JEALOUSY
AND THE DESIRE FOR POWER

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the consequences of jealousy and the desire for power

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES: To appreciate the values of loyalty and devotion, and understand their application to showing loyalty to the Institutions of the Cause; To identify these qualities in oneself; To recognize the effects of jealousy and the desire for power; To examine one’s own feelings of jealousy and the desire for power and recognize their source

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES: To demonstrate loyalty to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by being obedient to His guidance and grateful for His Example and Writings; To be able to control jealousy and the desire for power

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of art; Use of consultation; Use of music; Use of meditation and reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- art materials
- chart paper or chalkboard
- recorded meditation music
- photographs, recorded music or video about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- writing journals and pens/pencils
- dictionaries

1. Assign individual students to look up and then read aloud to the class, dictionary definitions for the following terms: loyalty, devotion, jealousy, power.
2. Brainstorm what loyalty and devotion, jealousy and the desire for power mean, based on both the definitions and personal experience or observation. Create webs or mind maps for each term, on a chart. Discuss what each quality looks like and feels like.
3. Play quiet music in the background. Ask students to create an artistic or written response to these terms, perhaps contrasting these terms with each other. Invite them to write, draw, paint, or create a collage of what each one looks like and feels like. They may wish to write poetry or song lyrics to accompany their visual art.
4. Create a space in which to display the art. Invite students to describe their pieces, and the feelings they represent, to the full class.
5. Discuss these spiritual conditions, in relation to remaining firm in God’s Covenant:
 - Why should we fear jealousy and the desire for power?
 - Why should we pray daily for firmness in the Covenant?
 - How can jealousy and the desire for power be controlled?
 - How do our prayers and efforts for self-control show our loyalty to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and our gratefulness for His example and guidance?

ACTIVITY CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE ➤

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6. Ask for a moment of reflection: Ask students to imagine how they would feel if they could visit with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá personally. Display a series of photographs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, especially during His visits with the early Bahá’ís in America, while playing a song about Him. Alternatively, play part of a video of Day Two of the Second World Congress, featuring ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to New York City.
7. Invite students to use their journals to describe what loyalty and devotion means to them. Ask them to give examples of how they personally strive to display loyalty and devotion, overcome jealousy and the desire for power, and stay firm in the Covenant by following the guidance given to us by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
8. Follow-up these personal commitments by encouraging students’ active participation in Bahá’í community life and in the plans and goals of both their Local and National Spiritual Assemblies. Continue your ongoing discussions about community service in light of the Covenant.

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Resource Pages

Short Stories of Others’ Reactions to the Appointment of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

from *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, by H. M. Balyuzi

Bahá’u’lláh had entrusted His Will and Testament to the care of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. On the ninth day after His ascension its contents became known. Earlier in the day nine of the Bahá’ís, including members of Bahá’u’lláh’s family who were chosen by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, gathered to witness the breaking of the seal and to learn the counsel of the Testament. Later, the same day, within the walls of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, Mírzá Majdí’d-Dín – the son of Mírzá Músá, Bahá’u’lláh’s faithful brother and valiant supporter throughout forty years, then alas deceased – stood up to read the Will. No doubt could be entertained. It was evident to Whom the Bahá’ís had to turn, and Whom they had to obey, on Whose shoulders the mantle of total authority now rested. No one expressed dissent. Everyone who was there, and heard that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the successor to Bahá’u’lláh, submitted to what He had ordained. Tarázu’lláh Samandarí vividly recalled that felicitous day, and the obedience that was unquestionably rendered to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. (p. 51)

from *Some Early Bahá’ís of the West*, by O.Z. Whitehead

During those periods of the First World War when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was unable to communicate with the friends in the United States of America because of His isolation in the Holy Land, some Covenant-breakers, who had settled there, renewed their efforts to destroy the American Bahá’í Community. Two weeks before His passing the Master revealed a most persuasive Tablet for the American friends, in which He warned them about those who had risen against the Centre of the Covenant, and pleaded with the friends to be vigilant and awake.

In her invaluable study of the Guardian, *The Priceless Pearl*, the Hand of the Cause Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum records that on 8th November ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “cabled Roy Wilhem, His trusted correspondent, ‘How is situation and health friends?’ to which Mr. Wilhelm, the next day was obliged to reply: ‘Chicago, Washington, Philadelphia agitating violation centering Fernald, Dyer, Watson. New York Boston refused join, standing solidly constructive policy.’”

On November 12, the Master cabled Roy to inform the friends telegraphically, to stay away from the violators. Later on that same day He sent to Roy what was to be His last message to the American community: “I implore health from divine bounty.” As Hand of the Cause Hasan Balyuzi has simply stated: “The American Bahá’í community remained firm and undivided.”

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 52-61

The Beloved Master, pp. 20-26, 34-40

The Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 141-154

The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh

The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh (also in *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*)

God and His Messengers

God Passes By, pp. 244-252

Servant of the Glory, pp. 99-127

Written in Light

Music/Video:

Bahá’í World Congress Commemorative Video

Lasting Remembrances – Video Day Two

“Behold A Candle,” *Lasting Remembrances* (CD from World Congress)

“Dastam Begir,” *Lasting Remembrances*

List of other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.