

TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
TRUTHFULNESS, FRIENDLINESS, LOVE, ORDERLINESS**

They must become thoroughly familiar with the language used and the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His public addresses throughout the West.

Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2, p. 416

Let us too bear in mind the example which our beloved Master has clearly set before us. Wise and tactful in His approach, wakeful and attentive in His early intercourse, broad and liberal in all His public utterances, cautious and gradual in the unfolding of the essential verities of the Cause, passionate in His appeal yet sober in argument, confident in tone, unswerving in conviction, dignified in His manners – such were the distinguishing features of our Beloved’s noble presentations of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, pp. 69-70

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that the manner of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was one of kindness and gentle humility
- To know that He was an eloquent speaker even when using an interpreter
- To know that He made a great impression on His listeners
- To know that when He taught, His words and deeds were lovingly designed to address the needs of each individual and to awaken the heart
- To know that He often made eye contact and smiled at individuals with whom He spoke

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (suggested sources can include *Vignettes* and *Thoughts*) and His interactions with other people.
- Analyze the talks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to understand His use of language, examples, stories and humor.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand how observing and experiencing the manner in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá treated other people assisted the early believers to become aware of how to treat others
- To reflect on the responses of some of the people who met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Help students compile a list of all the attributes demonstrated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that they can find in the stories we have of His visit to the West.
- Invite the students to express how each of these attributes may affect a person’s behavior.
- Assist the class to understand ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s techniques in teaching the Faith.

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Create a collage of pictures to demonstrate how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would like us to interact with others.
- Reflect on what it means to be humble and kind to others.
- Role-play situations with others to show the variety of ways people can act. Identify the ways ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would have acted.
- Reflect on the effect that one’s own manners and body language can have on others.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE

- To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Recite and memorize segments of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talks delivered in the West.
- Practice ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s techniques in teaching the Faith by preparing a talk or informal presentation on the Faith to give to a friend or small group. Deliver it and report the experiences.

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: REMEMBRANCE TIDBITS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that the manner of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was one of kindness and gentle humility; To know that He made a great impression on His listeners; To know that His words and deeds were lovingly designed to address the needs of each individual and awaken the heart

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of music; Use of research; Use of questioning and peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HOUR

Materials Needed:

- soft recorded music about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- “Remembrance Tidbits” (recollections of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) copied, pasted on firm paper and cut, with a candy attached to each – one per student. See pages 94-96 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- wide candle on base; matches or lighter
- fabric drape to hide candle
- photocopies of “Remembrance Tidbits Discussion Questions,” Lesson Planning Guide, page 97
- paper, pencils (optional)
- markers, flip chart (optional)
- material tidbits for each student (small items such as shells, polished rocks, trinkets, etc.)

1. Play reflective music softly in the background as students enter. Quietly guide students to sit in a circle facing away from one another with their eyes closed.
2. When all are seated, tell students to think of themselves as ‘sleepers’ who are about to be awakened. Explain that when the teacher comes to them, they should take what the teacher gives them, awaken, turn quietly to the center of the room and silently consider the remembrance they have received.
3. Uncover and light the candle in the center of the circle. Read aloud the prayer of Bahá’u’lláh:
I yield Thee thanks, O my Lord, that Thou hast wakened me from my sleep, and stirred me up, and created in me the desire to perceive what most of Thy servants have failed to apprehend. Make me able, therefore, O my Lord, to behold, for love of Thee and for the sake of thy pleasure, whatsoever thou hast desired. Thou art He to the power of Whose might and sovereignty all things testify. There is none other God but Thee, the Almighty, the Beneficent.
4. Gently place one Remembrance Tidbit in each student’s hand. Invite students to read their tidbits, around the circle. Note: If the group is large, duplicate sets of ‘tidbits’ can be made, each on different colored paper. Students go to the area with paper color that matches theirs, and share tidbits in groups; stay in same groups for the following step.
5. Divide the class into three groups. Provide one set of Discussion Questions (p. 97 of this Lesson Planning Guide) to each group. Allow the class 15 minutes in their groups to discuss the questions and develop a three-minute presentation to share the results of their discussion with the class. Encourage the students to emulate ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style and presentation in their presentations.
6. Bring the class together for presentations. Point out at least three positive aspects of each group’s presentation before the next group presents.

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7. Sing songs about the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (see Additional Resources). During singing, give each student a material tidbit such as a trinket, shell, polished stone, etc., which they can carry with them as encouragement to follow the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
8. Close with a teaching prayer by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

ACTIVITY: DISTINGUISHING FEATURES PUZZLE

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was an eloquent speaker even when using an interpreter; To know that He made a great impression on His listeners

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- phrases from the “Distinguishing Features” quotation by Shoghi Effendi (see p. 97), written in large strips on poster paper, then cut in half in varying designs. A dash inserted in the quotations below indicates where to cut.
- photocopies of complete “Distinguishing Features” quotation, page 97, Lesson Planning Guide

1. Mix up the quotation strips. Give each student one half of one quotation and have them find the person who has their match. Have them tape their completed strips on the board or the wall. Strips should read:
 1. Wise and tactful—in His approach
 2. Wakeful and attentive—in His early intercourse
 3. Broad and liberal—in all His public utterances
 4. Cautious and gradual—in unfolding the essential verities (of the Cause)
 5. Passionate—in His appeal
 6. Sober—in argument
 7. Confident—in tone
 8. Unswerving—in conviction
 9. Dignified—in His manners
2. Provide students with a copy of the full quotation, p. 97 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Ask one person to read it aloud.
3. Encourage students to use these words of Shoghi Effendi to identify the “distinguishing features” of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style and presentation, as they study the public addresses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the West.
4. Read the quotation again slowly, pointing out the phrases from the matching activity. Collectively define key concepts and terms in the quotation.



GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

ACTIVITY: MEMORIZE TALKS FROM *PARIS TALKS*

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was an eloquent speaker even when using an interpreter; To know that He made a great impression on His listeners

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES: To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN. + HOMEWORK + 40 MIN. THE FOLLOWING WEEK

Materials Needed:

- two photocopies each of the selections from *Paris Talks*, listed page 98, Lesson Planning Guide. As an alternate, you may consider selecting talks from *Promulgation of Universal Peace* or other books. As these talks are not included in this Lesson Planning Guide, it will be important to select talks that can be reproduced from an available book.
- highlighters
- dictionaries
- paper, pencils

1. Read aloud:

“They must become thoroughly familiar with the language used and the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His public addresses throughout the West.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2, p. 416.

2. Assign students to work in pairs to memorize one of the talks given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Give each pair a copy of a different talk. Provide information regarding the location and audience of each talk.
3. Encourage students to highlight words that are new to them and look up their definitions.
4. Ask students to identify examples of some of the “distinguishing features” of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presentation from the talk they are learning. Invite them to consider ways that the Master adjusted His presentation to varied circumstances and audiences.
5. Ask them to begin to memorize the first paragraph, using any systematic memorization technique that has been found effective for class. Then continue with subsequent paragraphs.

6. Ask the pairs to exchange phone numbers and arrange a time to call each other every night, if possible. Each person should take turns repeating to the other, over the phone, a portion of the paragraph until each has done this three times. As the known portion increases, repetition of that section decreases until it is said only once.
7. During next class, read aloud again the words of Shoghi Effendi that you used to introduce this activity. Applaud the students’ efforts to become familiar with the language used and the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His talks in the West. Then discuss: What additional distinguishing features can they identify in these talks? How has their appreciation for the talks deepened as they’ve become more and more familiar with His words and example?
8. Then invite the students to form two lines, partners facing each other. In these lines, invite students to practice standing very straight and reciting very eloquently their memorized paragraph to their partner.

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9. After this practice, invite the students in each line to form a group, so that partners are in different groups from each other. Ask the students to recite what they have memorized in this new group. Invite the members to encourage each other for all efforts and to watch for at least one specific action to applaud for each student.
10. With the whole class, create a plan to present these talks in their entirety at an upcoming devotional gathering, a public presentation (as explained in the next activity), the Nineteen Day Feast, or the weekly Bahá’í School.

ACTIVITY: CLASS PREPARATION FOR A PUBLIC PRESENTATION

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was an eloquent speaker even when using an interpreter; To know that He made a great impression on His listeners

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Establish bonds of unity and friendship; Use of memorization; Cooperative learning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HOUR

Materials Needed:

- photocopies of each talk from *Paris Talks* listed on p. 102 of this Lesson Planning Guide (or copies of the book)
- photocopy for each student of the introductory talk to the Theosophical Society of Paris, pp. 99-101 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- one copy of the entire Part Two of *Paris Talks* for the teacher
- photocopies of the “Outline for Presentation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Talk to Theosophical Society,” p. 102

1. Provide a copy of the first talk given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the Theosophical Society of Paris, pp. 99-101 Lesson Planning Guide, for each student. Read this talk aloud in the group and discuss its importance as an overview of some of the important principles of Bahá’u’lláh. Then show how the Master expands His discussion of these principles in the next 12 talks.
2. Invite the students to prepare a public presentation in which they each recite a portion of the first talk and prepare themselves to answer questions based on their studies of His subsequent talks to that group. See p. 102 Lesson Planning Guide, for a scripted outline of this public presentation. Adjust the script to create parts for each student in the class.
3. In class, encourage the students to work in teams of two so that each person memorizes one portion of the primary talk and each person provides support for another student’s efforts to memorize.
4. Then encourage the students each to study the subsequent talk that addresses the principle in their memorized portion. With their partner, practice answering questions related to this topic.
5. Also invite each student to identify at least three examples that the Master uses to illustrate the principle He is explaining. Practice sharing these examples with partners.

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ACTIVITY: TAPESTRY (BOOKMARK) WEAVING

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that when He taught, His words and deeds were lovingly designed to address the needs of each individual and to awaken the heart

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand how observing and experiencing the manner in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá treated other people assisted the early believers to become aware of how to treat others

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To realize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s style provides us with an example of how to interact with others

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To adapt one’s personal behavior and conduct toward others to the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

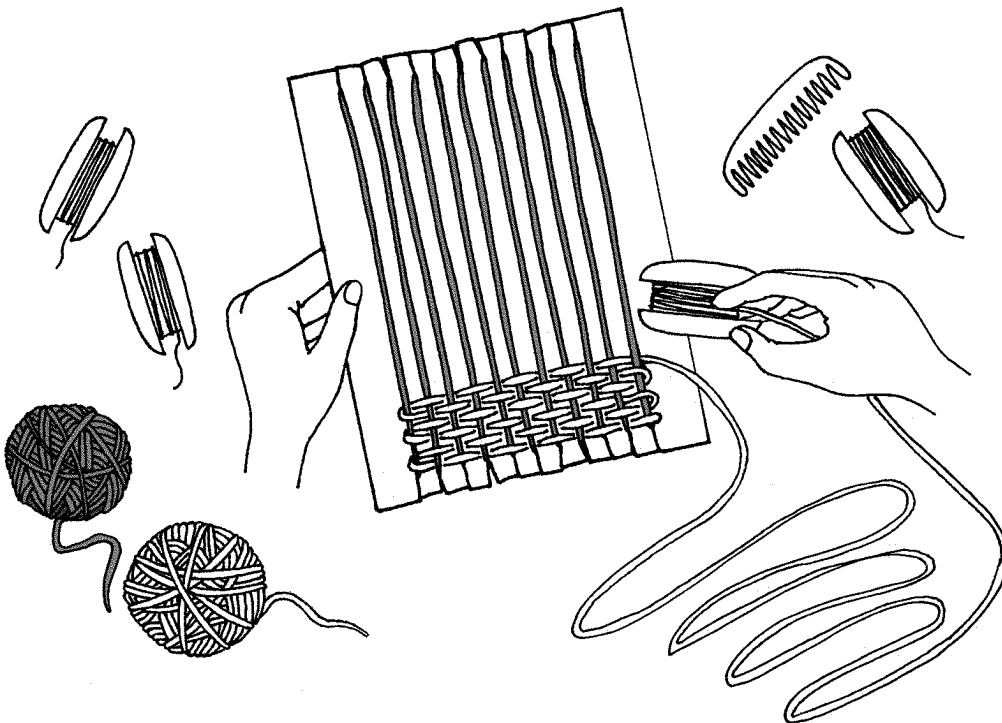
- Cardboard looms and “shuttles” (see instructions for making, below)
- X-acto knife, rulers, pencils
- yarn in various colors
- scissors
- small combs
- story from *239 Days*, p. 103 of this Lesson Planning Guide

1. In advance, make cardboard looms and many small shuttles. This is a lengthy process the first time, but you will then have looms available for future use. Alternatively, you may have the students make their own looms, following these simple instructions. To make looms:
 - Cut heavy cardboard into pieces measuring 2.5" x 5". With an X-acto or utility knife, cut notches ¼" deep, ¼" apart along all sides of the loom.
 - Prepare the “warp”: turn the loom vertically. Slide one end of a length of yarn into the top notch on the left side of the loom, leaving a “tail” of a few inches hanging in the back. Bring the yarn to the notch directly across, at the top of the right side of the loom, and pull yarn firmly into the notch, but not so tightly that the cardboard bends. Bring the yarn back up through the next notch on the same side, then carry it across to the corresponding notch on the left side.
 - Continue this pattern, back and forth across the face of the loom, until taut lines of yarn connect each notch on one side to the notch across from it on the other side. Cut the yarn, leaving a “tail” a few inches long on the back of the last notch. Both tails can be knotted.
 - Cut a piece of corrugated cardboard 1" x 5". Slide this, on its side, under the “warp” yarns, down the middle of the loom, to provide better support, space and tension during the weaving. Prepare each loom this way.
 - Make yarn shuttles: Cut thin cardboard into little flat “spools,” ½" x 1½". Cut out a block “U” from each end. Wrap selected yarn around the spool, but only until the yarn is about ½" thick. Make many of these, about 3 for each student, so they can share colors easily.

Now you are ready to weave!

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2. Teach students how to weave on a cardboard loom:
 - Choose a color desired from the selection of spools. Knot the end on the bottom “warp” yarn, at the far left side. (Left-handed students may prefer to work from the right side.) Move the thin spool as a “shuttle,” alternately over, then under, each line of the warp.
 - Once the top is reached, simply turn the shuttle around and weave back down the warp. Stop every two or three vertical lines woven and use a comb to evenly pack the yarns together by pushing them firmly towards the side from which you began.
 - To change colors, or when a shuttle is emptied, simply tie the end of that yarn onto the start of the new color, and continue weaving. When finished, knots can be pushed to the back.
3. As soon as students understand the process and are ready to begin independent weaving, tell them you are going to read a story about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey through America (from *239 Days*, p. 103 of this Lesson Planning Guide) while they weave. Ask them to think about the “spiritual threads” that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wove, and how His words and example while in America created the tapestry that we now understand as the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh.
4. After the story, invite the students to share with a partner a favorite anecdote from all their studies of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to the West. Compare these anecdotes to particular threads of their own weavings.
5. Have each student remove their completed weaving from their loom: slightly bend the sides of the loom inward, and slip the loops off the notches. Loops may then be cut to create a fringe.
6. Ask students to present their weaving to their partner, as a gift bookmark and reminder of the impact of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit.



Resource Pages

REMEMBRANCE TIDBITS

Selected from *239 Days: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Journey In America*, by Allan L. Ward.
Another good resource for Tidbits is *Vignettes from the Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, by Annamarie Honnold.

This servant of Bahá is a man with shrewd, kindly, courteous eyes that seem to look into you instead of at you, but that instinctively make you like them and all that goes with them... (p. 6)

From Howard University He rode to the Persian Embassy, where Ali-Kuli Khan was preparing a reception. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went upstairs to rest and to grant a few private interviews, including conversations with Admiral Peary and Alexander Graham Bell. Mrs. Hebe Stiven, who helped arrange the affair, recalling it years later, said that after the place cards had been arranged at the plates to seat people by strict Washington protocol, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the last minute gathered them all up, shuffled and redistributed them, and then brought Louis G. Gregory to the place of honor at the head of the table in the otherwise all-white gathering. He thus—literally in this gathering and symbolically for all occasions—abolished racial prejudice and social segregation. (p. 40-41)

Into this room of conventional elegance, packed with conventional people, imagine that Master striding with His free step, walking first to one of the many windows and, while He looked out into the light, talking with His matchless ease to the people. Turning from the window, striding back and forth with a step so vibrant it *shook* you. Piercing our souls with those strange eyes—uplifting them, glory streaming upon them. Talking, talking, moving to and fro incessantly. Pushing back His turban, revealing that Christ-like forehead; pushing it forward again almost down to His eyebrows, which gave Him peculiar majesty. Charging, *filling* the room with magnetic currents, with a mysterious energy. (p. 42)

Regard him well, my friends, for in him you behold one of the most significant figures in the religious world today. (p. 6)

On Wednesday morning, April 24, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke at Studio Hall at a reception for children which opened with songs by the children. He told the parents, “Know ye the value of these children for they are all my children.” He chanted a prayer especially for them, embraced each child, and gave each a piece of candy. (p. 42-43)

He then attended another of the daily receptions at the Parsons’ home, after which He proceeded to 13th Street N.W. to the home of Andrew J. Dyer. In his diary, Dr. Zia Bagdadi, who served as one of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s translators, wrote, “In the evening, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed the white and colored believers and their friends at the home of Mrs. Dyer, a member of the colored race...” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá concluded His address by saying, “When the racial elements of the American nation unite in actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of humanity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, the spirit of God encompass and the divine favors descend... This is the sign of the ‘Most Great Peace’...” (p. 43)

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In the late evening ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left the Dyers’ and took a streetcar to go to the home of Alexander Graham Bell. Mahmud recalled that, “He was very happy this day and was talking so loudly that His voice was heard over the din and noise of the tramcar. He said, ‘...O Bahá’u’lláh! How merciful art Thou! In what persecutions you spent your days! What troubles you suffered! But what solid foundations you laid! What a manifest standard you unfurled!” (p. 43)

Alexander Graham Bell had assembled his friends and fellow scientists in his home so that they might meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He spoke to them and answered their questions on science and other matters until midnight, when a late meal was served. Bell explained, as he introduced his wife, who was deaf and dumb, that through his efforts to develop a hearing device he invented the telephone. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá indicated that many discoveries came about in the same way, noting that many medicines came from alchemy and that America was discovered during the search for a route to the East. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed overnight as a guest of the Bells. (p. 43-44)

From the zoo He led the friends toward the lake, sat on a bench, motioned the friends to do likewise, and discussed unity with them. He said, “Some of you may have observed that I have not called attention to any of your individual shortcomings. I would suggest to you, that if you shall be similarly considerate in your treatment of each other, it will be greatly conducive to the harmony of your association with each other...” (p. 55)

On Sunday, He especially invited the children to be brought to the Large Parlor. He talked to each one of them, held them in His lap, embracing and kissing them, whispering in their ears. One observer wrote, “The children’s joy and his own happiness seemed to culminate when one dear little tot ran to him and fairly threw herself into his arms. When he let her go she stood for a second and then suddenly laughed aloud with perfect joy...” He told them, “You are all my children, my spiritual children.” He took a bouquet of flowers from the center table and divided it among the children and gave each one an envelope of rose petals, as He spoke to each individually again. Then He took them all out into the park for photographs. After a time He expressed His wish to be alone and walked over to the statue of Abraham Lincoln and stood gazing up at it. (p. 56)

On Monday morning, May 6, He left Chicago for Cleveland. Mahmud noted, “Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís were surrounding Him like moths...” (p. 57)

The secretary of the International Peace Society, in bidding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá good-bye, said he was sorry religion could not be included in the organization, since its members included Protestants, Catholics, Jews, and others, and all would object if others were favored. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “Your members may be compared to beams of different metals and you are trying to unite them as you would tie these fingers together with a string. See, no matter how you tie them, still they remain separate. But the only way to make these metals into one alloy, is to put them into a crucible and apply intense heat to melt them all. For our melting-pot, we use the fire of the love of God.” (p. 69)

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I have come to this country in the advanced years of my life, undergoing difficulties of health and climate because of excessive love for the friends of God... For service in love for mankind is unity with God... (p. 89)

...He talked for a long while to the people. But this I could see was pure sacrifice. His vitality seemed gone. At times He could scarcely bring forth the words, yet He gave and gave. When He had finished He hurriedly left the house and went again to “His Garden.” On the way to the bus I met Him returning alone. He stopped me, put out His hand and took mine, with indescribable tenderness smiling at me. (p. 89)

Then a writer for a national magazine visited Him, asking for detailed material on the Teachings of the Bahá’í Faith. Later that day Mahmud noted, “In these days, He often commanded the friends to teach the Cause of God and to travel in the neighboring countries. ‘They must teach the Cause of God,’ He said, ‘with great meekness and humility.’ To the group of friends who assembled He spoke of the dire necessity of reading the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, likening them to the prescription of the Divine Physician. Tuesday was the day of movie-making. Previously, a motion-picture company had filmed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the entrance of the Hotel Ansonia for national distribution. This gave the Bahá’ís the idea of making a more extensive film. On June 18, at the home of Mr. MacNutt, five different sequences were photographed. After that Mahmud noted, “He went to see a Jewish friend who was ill at his home, which was forty miles from Brooklyn. He returned exhausted at night to New York.” (pp. 91-92)

After the morning sessions on September 24 He walked through the park. Many people stopped and looked, and some took photographs as He passed by. One of the friends remarked that, with their diversity of Eastern and Western clothes, people were looking upon the sight as a comedy. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá laughed, “Yea, it is heavenly fun, a performance of the Kingdom and a wonderful theater.” (p. 153)

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had luncheon with us. We had placed a large comfortable chair at the table for Him, but He sat in a smaller chair. Another example of humility.” (p. 203)

Some people could not recall the specific things that went on in His presence but could remember the impact of His presence, as did Lucy Jane Marshall, who said of one meeting in California: “If he spoke or if anyone else was there, I do not recall; but O, in quiet times, the power of his presence, the peace of his face, and the steadfast eyes are with me still.” (p. 203)

At the Kinney home there were between three and four hundred souls waiting to receive His blessing. He came to each of us and took our hands in His with a loving greeting and a few words I did not understand. However I felt an electric shock that went from my head to my feet. This was a day I am sure that no one that was present will ever forget. (p. 206)

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Remembrance Tidbits Discussion Questions

Group One Discussion:

Using the Remembrance Tidbits or other stories you have heard, give examples of how the early believers learned to treat others by observing and experiencing the manner in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá treated other people. How can we use their observations and experiences to assist us in class, at home, at school, and in other settings? (Remember to let the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affect the manner in which you share this with the class.)

Group Two Discussion:

Give specific examples from the Remembrance Tidbits to show that when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught, His words and deeds were lovingly designed to address the needs of each individual, and awaken the heart. After discussion, decide as a group how to share your findings with the large group in a manner that demonstrates how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself taught.

Group Three Discussion:

What kind of impressions did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá make upon His listeners? How can you describe the impact that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had on others? How did His kindness and humility influence this impact? Present your findings to the group in a manner that follows the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Distinguishing Features

“Let us too bear in mind the example which our beloved Master has clearly set before us. Wise and tactful in His approach, wakeful and attentive in His early intercourse, broad and liberal in all His public utterances, cautious and gradual in the unfolding of the essential verities of the Cause, passionate in His appeal yet sober in argument, confident in tone, unswerving in conviction, dignified in His manners—such were the distinguishing features of our Beloved’s noble presentation of the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, pp. 69-70

Suggested Talks to Photocopy From *Paris Talks*

“The Power And Value Of True Thought Depend Upon Its Manifestation In Action”

~October 18th

“God Is The Great Compassionate Physician Who Alone Gives True Healing”

~October 19th

“The Need For Union Between The Peoples Of The East And West”

~October 20th

“The Imprisonment Of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá”

~October 25th

“God’s Greatest Gift To Man”

~October 26th

“The Spiritual Meetings In Paris”

~November 4th

“The Two Kinds Of Light”

~November 5th

“The True Meaning Of Baptism By Water And Fire”

~November 9th

“The Perfect Human Sentiments And Virtues”

~November 23rd

“The Cruel Indifference Of People Towards The Suffering Of Foreign Races”

~November 24th

SOME GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING

Community members both within and without the Bahá’í community are often very willing to either offer a workshop or provide guidelines for children. Most public libraries have books on basic public speaking skills.

Here are a few simple suggestions:

1. A technique to prevent us from speaking too quickly is to look around the room and find one person who is carefully listening. Speak directly to that person. Then find another person who is paying attention. Speak clearly to that person, make eye contact, watch for her response. Continue to look for individuals in the audience, focus on them one at a time, and convey the points one by one.

2. Practice enunciation and pronunciation.
3. Practice a slow cadence and deliberate movement.

Although these techniques may feel uncomfortable at first, they become keys to successful, fluid, and polished public speaking.

Remember that children and junior youth **DO HAVE** the capacity to memorize and to speak well in public, especially if practice is always done in a formal and respectful manner. You may also refer to the “Presenting” section of “Guidelines for Good Presentations, p. 80 of this Lesson Planning Guide.

Introductory Talk to the Theosophical Society of Paris

Since my arrival in Paris, I have been told of the Theosophical Society, and I know that it is composed of honoured and respected men. You are men of intellect and thought, men with spiritual ideals, and it is a great pleasure for me to be among you.

Let us thank God who has drawn us together this evening. It gives me great joy, for I see that you are seekers after truth. You are not held in bondage by the chains of prejudice, and your greatest longing is to know the truth. Truth may be likened to the sun! The sun is the luminous body that disperses all shadows; in the same way does truth scatter the shadows of our imagination. As the sun gives life to the body of humanity so does truth give life to their souls. Truth is a sun that rises from different points on the horizon.

Sometimes the sun rises from the centre of the horizon, then in summer it rises farther north, in winter farther south—but it is always the self-same sun, however different are the points of its rising.

In like manner truth is one, although its manifestations may be very different. Some men have eyes and see. These worship the sun, no matter from which point on the horizon it may dawn; and when the sun has left the winter sky to appear in the summer one, they know how to find it again. Others there are who worship only the spot from which the sun arose, and when it arises in its glory from another place they remain in contemplation before the spot of its former rising. Alas! these men are deprived of the blessings of the sun. Those who in truth adore the sun itself will recognize it from whatsoever dawning-place it may appear, and will straightway turn their faces towards its radiance.

We must adore the sun itself and not merely the place of its appearance. In the same way men of enlightened heart worship truth on whatever horizon it appears. They are not bound by personality, but they follow the truth, and are able to recognize it no matter from whence it may come.

It is this same truth which helps humanity to progress, which gives life to all created beings, for it is the Tree of Life!

In His teaching Bahá’u’lláh gives us the explanation of truth, and I wish to speak to you briefly about this, for I see that you are capable of understanding.

I. The first principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

The Search for Truth

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united.

II. The second principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

The Unity of Mankind

The one all-loving God bestows His divine Grace and Favour on all mankind; one and all are servants of the Most High, and His Goodness, Mercy and loving Kindness are showered upon all His creatures. The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.

All men are the leaves and fruit of one same tree, they are all branches of the tree of Adam, they all have the same origin. The same rain has fallen upon them all, the same warm sun makes them grow, they are all refreshed by the same breeze. The only differences that exist and that keep them apart are these: there are the children who need guidance, the ignorant to be instructed, the sick to be tended

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

and healed; thus, I say that the whole of humanity is enveloped by the Mercy and Grace of God. As the Holy Writings tell us: All men are equal before God. He is no respecter of persons.

III. The third principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

Religion should be the Cause of Love and Affection

Religion should unite all hearts and cause wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality, and bring life and light to each heart. If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act. For it is clear that the purpose of a remedy is to cure; but if the remedy should only aggravate the complaint it had better be left alone. Any religion which is not a cause of love and unity is no religion. All the holy prophets were as doctors to the soul; they gave prescriptions for the healing of mankind; thus any remedy that causes disease does not come from the great and supreme Physician.

IV. The fourth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

The Unity of Religion and Science

We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other; a bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless. Any religion that contradicts science or that is opposed to it, is only ignorance—for ignorance is the opposite of knowledge.

Religion which consists only of rites and ceremonies of prejudice is not the truth. Let us earnestly endeavour to be the means of uniting religion and science.

Ali, the son-in-law of Muhammad, said: ‘That which is in conformity with science is also in conformity with religion’. Whatever the intelligence of man cannot understand, religion ought not to accept. Religion and science walk hand in hand, and any religion contrary to science is not the truth.

V. The fifth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

Prejudices of Religion, Race or Sect destroy the foundation of Humanity

All the divisions in the world, hatred, war and bloodshed, are caused by one or other of these prejudices.

The whole world must be looked upon as one single country, all the nations as one nation, all men as belonging to one race. Religions, races, and nations are all divisions of man’s making only, and are necessary only in his thought; before God there are neither Persians, Arabs, French nor English; God is God for all, and to Him all creation is one. We must obey God, and strive to follow Him by leaving all our prejudices and bringing about peace on earth.

VI. The sixth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

Equal opportunity of the means of Existence

Every human being has the right to live; they have a right to rest, and to a certain amount of well-being. As a rich man is able to live in his palace surrounded by luxury and the greatest comfort, so should a poor man be able to have the necessities of life. Nobody should die of hunger; everybody should have sufficient clothing; one man should not live in excess while another has no possible means of existence.

Let us try with all the strength we have to bring about happier conditions, so that no single soul may be destitute.

VII. The seventh principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

The Equality of Men—equality before the Law

The Law must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized. Having attained solidarity, men will have found truth.

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

VIII. The eighth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

Universal Peace

A Supreme Tribunal shall be elected by the peoples and governments of every nation, where members from each country and government shall assemble in unity. All disputes shall be brought before this Court, its mission being to prevent war.

IX. The ninth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

That Religion should not concern itself with Political Questions

Religion is concerned with things of the spirit, politics with things of the world. Religion has to work with the world of thought, whilst the field of politics lies with the world of external conditions.

It is the work of the clergy to educate the people, to instruct them, to give them good advice and teaching so that they may progress spiritually. With political questions they have nothing to do.

X. The tenth principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

Education and Instruction of Women

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element. As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs.

XI. The eleventh principle of Bahá’u’lláh is:

The Power of the Holy Spirit, by which alone Spiritual Development is achieved

It is only by the breath of the Holy Spirit that spiritual development can come about. No matter how the material world may progress, no matter how splendidly it may adorn itself, it can never be anything but a lifeless body unless the soul is within, for it is the soul that animates the body; the body alone has no real significance. Deprived of the

blessings of the Holy Spirit the material body would be inert.

Here are, very briefly explained, some of the principles of Bahá’u’lláh.

In short, it behooves us all to be lovers of truth. Let us seek her in every season and in every country, being careful never to attach ourselves to personalities. Let us see the light wherever it shines, and may we be enabled to recognize the light of truth no matter where it may arise. Let us inhale the perfume of the rose from the midst of thorns which surround it; let us drink the running water from every pure spring.

Since I arrived in Paris, it has given me much pleasure to meet such Parisians as you are, for praise be to God, you are intelligent, unprejudiced, and you long to know the truth. You have in your hearts the love of humanity, and as far as you are able, you exert yourselves in the cause of charitable work and in the bringing about of unity; this is especially what Bahá’u’lláh desired.

It is for this reason that I am so happy to be among you, and I pray for you, that you may be receptacles for the Blessings of God, and that you may be the means of spreading spirituality throughout this country.

You already have a wonderful material civilization and in like manner shall spiritual civilization be yours.

Monsieur Bleck thanked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and he replied:

‘I am very grateful to you for the kind sentiments which you have just uttered. I hope that these two movements will ere long be spread all over the earth. Then will the unity of humanity have pitched its tent in the centre of the world.’

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 126-134

**Outline for Public Presentation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Talk
to Theosophical Society**

Provide photocopies of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk to the Theosophical Society for students to mark their lines. Partial quotations are provided below, to reference this talk.

Speaker One (serves as Master of Ceremonies): ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained eleven principles of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh while in Paris. He spoke, while an interpreter translated His words into French. The talks were recorded and then translated into English. The following presentation is from a talk He gave one evening at the Paris Theosophical Society. He further elucidated these principles over successive days. We have studied these subsequent talks as well. If you are interested in any of these principles, after the talk, please ask the individual who recites the related portion of the talk. He or she will be happy to share what we have gleaned from our studies. Thank you!

Speaker Two: (Begin with paragraph two. You may choose one student to recite the entire first section of 5 paragraphs. Alternately, rotate through speakers by paragraph.) *“Let us thank God...capable of understanding”*

Speaker One: (As Speaker Two steps back): *“The first principle of Bahá’u’lláh is The Search for Truth...”* (gestures to Speaker Three, who has risen and come to the microphone)

Speaker Three: *“Man must cut himself...find themselves united”* (returns to seat)

Speaker One: (as Speaker Three steps back and Speaker Four steps forward) *“The second Principle of Bahá’u’lláh is The Unity of Mankind...”*

Speaker Four: *“The one all-loving God...He is no respecter of persons”*

(Continue in this manner, rotating through speakers, until the speaker reading the Power of the Holy Spirit section finishes with *“...shall spiritual civilization be yours...”*)

Speaker One: *“Monsieur Bleck thanked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and he replied: ‘I am very...’”*

“Thank you for giving us your attention this (evening). You have been a very kind and generous audience. Enjoy your refreshments and, again, we welcome your questions regarding these Principles of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Story from *239 Days*

Finally, Thursday, December 5, the day of departure from America, came. Two hundred thirty-nine days had passed while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled across the North American continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, proclaiming Bahá’u’lláh’s Message for a new Era, promulgating universal peace, communicating to the hearts, opening spiritual eyes and ears and minds, deepening the friends, with little rest, in railway cars, assembly halls, His private rooms, the homes of the friends, and glittering embassies. He had cut across the forms and fetters of social class, race, and color. He had talked to university students and Bowery inhabitants; attended a Broadway play; toured the Hearst estate; and conversed with former President Theodore Roosevelt, inventor Alexander Graham Bell, and politicians, scientists, industrialists, and clergymen. He had chided reporters and joked with admirals and Supreme Court Justices; had spoken of Christ in synagogues and of Muhammad in churches; had been picketed at a meeting and evicted from His home; had refused lavish gifts; had bestowed tokens of wealth on the poor; had maintained an incredible flow of correspondence; and had notified repressed brethren in the East of victories in the West. He had loved the friends and disciplined them; had been gentle and firm; had walked with them through parks and a zoo; and had ridden in their cars and on streetcars and trains; and, as He gazed on green valleys, towering mountains, and rushing rivers, had called to memory the Blessed Perfection. He had uplifted, praised, and encouraged every sign of spiritual development shown by each soul.

In His autumn years that recalled a spring when there had been no classroom but the prison cell and the home of exile and no teacher but His Father, He had amazed experts in a variety of fields with His sagacity and wisdom. The Teachings of the perfect Instructor Bahá’u’lláh—a thousand or thousands of years of spiritual potential for the planet channeled into that single human form—were reflected in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the perfect Pupil, the kind and simple, the saintly, the single-minded, laughing, enduring mystery of a Man, Who had been appointed by that same Instructor as the pivot of the Covenant of God with all the earth. He performed in each small action the seed-planting for a millennium. The Exemplar, the Master, the Servant was now to leave the shores of America and return to the Threshold of the Holy Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh to serve out His remaining years on earth. All the future, all the coming ages, all the children yet unborn would be dependent on the spiritual threads He had woven during His journeys across this and other lands. Not one breath would be drawn in the future centuries, not one word spoken or deed performed in that earth-wide, centuries-long tapestry of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, whose strands would not ultimately reach back to the Divine Loom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant.

The friends were already looking back, as they would increasingly in the future, on the rich store of experiences that had been woven together and were recounting their memories and recalling the interviews, articles, and news stories that had packed the eight and one-half months.

Allan L. Ward, *239 Days: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Journey in America*, pp. 193-195

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: THE STYLE AND PRESENTATION OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

239 Days: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Journey in America

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Master, pp. 30-35

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London – Addresses and Notes of Conversations

Promulgation of Universal Peace, forward and introduction

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 BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
UNITY, LOVE, RESPECT, TOLERANCE**

My hope is that the Divine Light may shine here, and that the Heavenly Star of Bahá'u'lláh may strengthen you, so that you may be the cause of the oneness of humanity, that you may help to make the darkness of superstition and prejudice disappear and unite all creeds and nations.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 54

Let them call to mind, fearlessly and determinedly, the example and conduct of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá while in their midst. Let them remember His courage, His genuine love, His informal and indiscriminating fellowship, His contempt for and impatience of criticism, tempered by His tact and wisdom. Let them revive and perpetuate the memory of those unforgettable and historic episodes and occasions on which He so strikingly demonstrated His keen sense of justice, His spontaneous sympathy for the downtrodden, His ever-abiding sense of the oneness of the human race, His overflowing love for its members...

Shoghi Effendi, *Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 34-35

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught the principle of the oneness of humanity throughout His journeys to the West
- To know that racial unity is essential to the establishment of world peace

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share quotations from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about race unity.
- Teach the children songs about the oneness of mankind, e.g., “One Heart Ruby Red,” “Fruits of One Tree,” “World Citizens,” “Building Bridges,” “In Perfect Harmony,” “Hawaiian Unity Song.”
- Reflect on the effect true race unity will have on world peace.
- Share stories of the ways in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá demonstrated the principle of the oneness of humanity.
- Plan activities to bring learners of different cultural and racial groups together in positively structured ways, so that they can learn to know each other.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught us to appreciate differences and variety in peoples of the world
- To comprehend the meaning of unity in diversity
- To understand that the independent investigation of truth is an important step in the elimination of prejudice

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide opportunities for learners to share how they are alike/different from others in their group or community.
- Examine how ignorance is one of the chief contributors to the formation of prejudices.
- Create a visual display representing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s metaphors of mankind as flowers in a garden; fruits of one tree; waves of one ocean; etc.
- Share stories from a variety of cultures and races. Discuss how people are alike and different.
- Plan field trips to cultural events of varied racial and cultural groups.
- Learn the achievements of heroes and heroines of varied racial and cultural groups.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To recognize that it is our responsibility to follow the example set by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to work for the unification of the entire human race

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Learn the positive and negative uses of stereotypes. Learn how to identify negative stereotypes in books, pictures, film, etc.
- Consult about actions that encourage and promote race unity in our communities or schools.
- Share situations from daily life that involve different races. Role-play actions that would best exemplify ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s teachings.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE

- To demonstrate an appreciation for the oneness of humanity as exemplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Create a mural of people of many races and cultures joining hands in unity. Share with the community at Feast or at community teaching activities.
- Teach a friend or family member at least one new thing learned about another culture or race.
- Plan a devotional gathering or Unity Feast and encourage people of all backgrounds to attend.
- Memorize a prayer for unity revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: STORY OF THE DINNER PARTY

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught the principle of the Oneness of Humanity throughout His journeys to the West

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught us to appreciate differences and variety in peoples of the world

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- story of “The Dinner Party,” p. 114 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- box of assorted chocolate candies, a variety of colors

1. Read or tell the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at a dinner party, p. 114 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
2. At the end of the story, open the box of chocolates and invite the students to choose one. Does anyone have skin that’s the color of any of the candies? Invite the students to recall and recount another story in which the beloved Master demonstrates the principle of oneness through His actions.

ACTIVITY: TALKS ON RACIAL UNITY IN *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught the principle of the oneness of humanity throughout His journeys to the West

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize that it is our responsibility to follow the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to work for the unification of the entire human race

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Study of the Principles and Teachings of the Faith; Use of research; Cooperative learning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

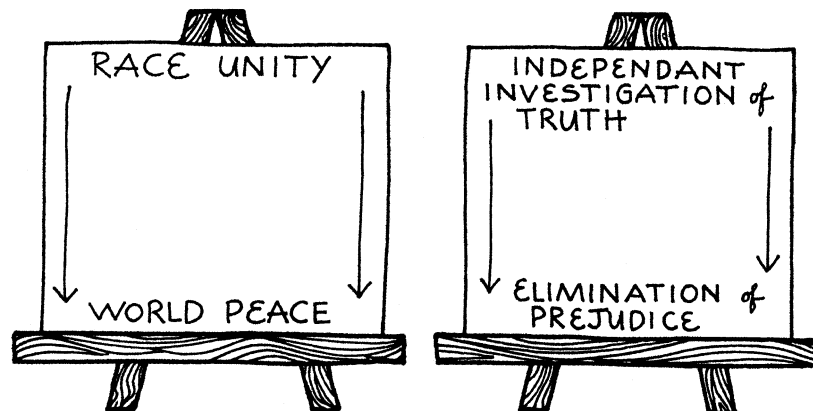
Materials Needed:

- photocopies of selected talks from *Promulgation of Universal Peace* (see list below) OR photocopies of p. 115 of this Lesson Planning Guide
 - two different colored highlighter pens per two or three students
1. Invite students to work in groups of two or three. Provide each group with two or three pages of text, from various talks given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the subject of racial unity, so that each group has a different talk to study from the following sections of *Promulgation of Universal Peace*. (For a briefer assignment, you may use p. 115 of this Lesson Planning Guide.)
 - pp. 44-46: 23 April 1912, Howard University
 - pp. 67-69: 30 April 1912, Hull House
 - pp. 69-70: 30 April 1912, NAACP
 - pp. 299-300: 1 Sept. 1912, Montreal paragraph beginning, “According to the teachings...”(p. 299) to paragraph beginning, “Bahá’u’lláh has announced that insasmuch as ignorance...” (p.300), inclusive.
 - pp. 425-428: 10 Nov. 1912: Hannen home

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

2. Explain that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá frequently spoke to the Americans about the oneness of humanity and racial unity. He explained to them how world peace couldn’t be achieved until the races, particularly the black and the white, were united. He also explained the importance of Bahá’u’lláh’s principle of independent investigation of the truth to help people get rid of their prejudices.
3. State that their research assignment is to read together the pages provided, locate and mark (with highlighters) passages that explain the connection between racial unity and world peace, or the independent investigation of truth and overcoming prejudice.
4. Ask each group to write the two categories, WORLD PEACE and INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH, at the top of their handout, then highlight the first phrase with one color and the second phrase with the other color, as a key to the markings they will make on their text.
5. Circulate through the groups as they work, assisting as needed with understanding and connecting the points brought up by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
6. After their research, give each group a few minutes to prepare, and then invite them to give an oral presentation of their findings to the full group.
7. As each group shares the passages they found, help summarize by charting key words and phrases. Use two charts, one with the words “RACIAL UNITY” large at the top, an arrow leading down, and the words “WORLD PEACE” large at the bottom, the other with “INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF TRUTH” large at top, with an arrow down leading to “ELIMINATION OF PREJUDICE” large at the bottom.
8. Give the assignments: Challenge the group to use one of the points listed on the first chart to explain to someone, this week, why racial unity is important to the establishment of peace in the world; and, choose one point listed in the second chart to practice for oneself, to consciously eliminate personal prejudices. Ask for reports on these actions during the next class.



GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

ACTIVITY: INTERPRETIVE DANCE

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught us to appreciate differences and variety in peoples of the world

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate an appreciation for the oneness of humanity as exemplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

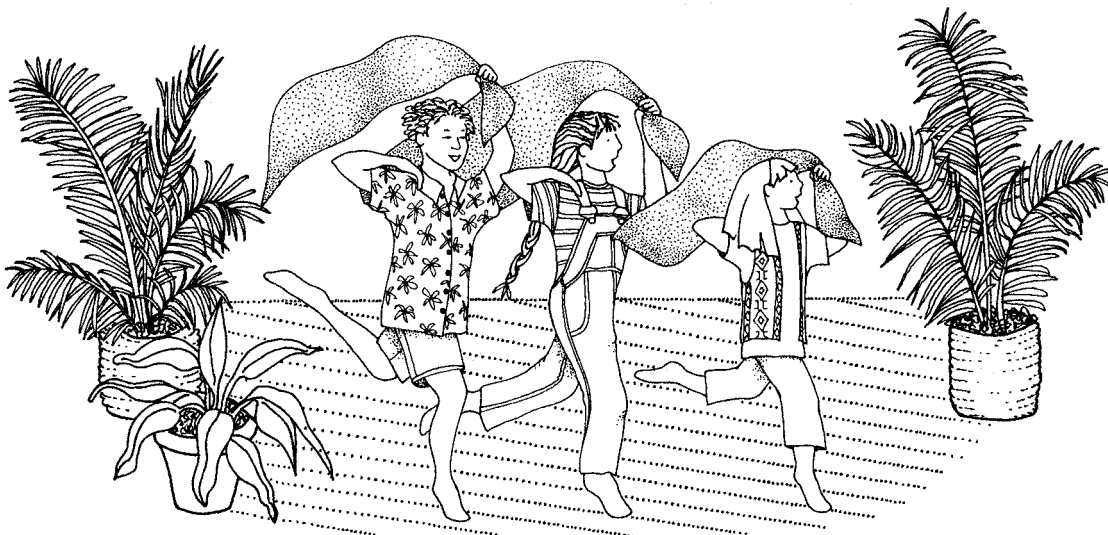
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of creativity and the arts; Cooperative learning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN. + PRESENTATION.

Materials Needed:

- photocopies of *Paris Talks*, pp.53-54 (see page 116 of this Lesson Planning Guide)
- pencils
- variety of instrumental music
- selection of cloths, scarves, etc.

1. Distribute copies of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words from *Paris Talks*, p. 116 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Read these aloud, round-robin style. Invite comments on the images ‘Abdu’l-Bahá used. Ask learners to identify specific steps ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave for our behavior in this talk.
2. Suggest that this passage lends itself to interpretive dance. They may have seen examples of this dramatic art form through Bahá’í Youth Workshops.
3. If your group is large, break up into smaller groups of four to six students.
4. Invite them to look at the passage again, line by line, and to suggest movements to demonstrate these words. Encourage them to pay attention to visual imagery used, or to specific actions mentioned. How could you demonstrate each of these?
5. Review the elements of consultation. Ask each group to designate a facilitator, who assures that each person’s opinion is heard. Ask one or more persons in each group to note the ideas for each line.



6. Encourage them to get up and experiment with some of the movements and transitions from one scene to another. Fine-tune your choreography and rehearse the dance!
7. Display a selection of instrumental music. Remind the friends that some people may feel that classical music conveys the message best, while others may believe a certain rap sets the tone. Any type of music may be used; a diversity of approaches and interpretations builds interest. Some groups may choose not to employ any music in their dance.
8. Suggest that one or more persons in each group may be employed as a narrator to read aloud the passage as the others dance. If everyone in a group is involved in dancing, offer to narrate for that group. Remember to synchronize the reading of the words with the movements for each phrase.
9. Offer scarves, cloths, or other props to enhance the dances.
10. When each group has at least a rough version completed, invite them to present their dance to the rest of the large group. Promote positive comments and suggestions for improvement.
11. Encourage each group to refine their performance. Continue to refine and rehearse, and make arrangements for presentation of dances at community events, such as the Unity in Diversity Fair described on page 117.

ACTIVITY: CIRCLES OF OURSELVES

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the meaning of unity in diversity

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate an appreciation for the oneness of humanity as exemplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Independent investigation and use of the power of reason; Use of questioning and peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- A large piece of paper and pencil for each student

1. Invite each student to write his or her name in a circle in the center of the paper and then draw a number of circles around this center circle. Ask the students to write the name of a group to which they belong in each of these circles. They may wish to consider groups such as family, friends, teams, classes at school, Bahá’í or other religious groups, gender, nationality, countries or ethnic groups of origin, neighborhood, languages spoken, physical characteristics, health, special abilities, etc.

Note: Many students will ultimately mention that they belong to the human family, the community of life on earth, or even the solar system or universe. The goal is to identify overlapping factors that may contribute to our sense of self.

2. After allowing time for the students to identify the many circles to which they belong, ask the group to form a sharing circle and invite each person in turn to respond to some of the following questions:

Activity continues on next page ➤

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

- What are some of the circles that are most important to me?
 - What are some of the circles that are important, but that I sometimes forget about?
 - Which circles bring me joy?
 - To which circles do I contribute? What do I contribute to these circles?
3. Invite the thoughtful reflection and careful listening of each student. With time and care, this period of sharing can assist the students to more fully appreciate the oneness and wholeness of the entire human race.
4. After each person has had the opportunity to discuss their circles, invite the group as a whole to briefly discuss the questions:
- How do I benefit from the circles that some of my friends have listed, but aren't shown on my paper?
 - How do I contribute to all the circles that have been mentioned?
 - How do these circles demonstrate the principle of unity in diversity?
 - How do these circles demonstrate the oneness of the human family?

5. Read aloud and discuss the following quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in light of the circles of ourselves:

Compare the nations of the world to the members of a family. A family is a nation in miniature. Simply enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of nations, and you have all humanity. The conditions surrounding the family surround the nation. The happenings in the family are the happenings in the life of the nation. Would it add to the progress and advancement of a family if dissensions should arise among its members, all fighting, pillaging each other, jealous and revengeful of injury, seeking selfish advantage? Nay, this would be the cause of the effacement of progress and advancement. So it is in the great family of nations, for nations are but an aggregate of families.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 157

Invite the students to individually write their response to these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the back of their papers and then to write their answers to these questions:

- What specific actions can I take this week to demonstrate my appreciation of the diversity of the human family?
 - How can I use my words and actions this week to teach the principle of oneness to my friends?
6. At the next class period, invite the students to share their reflections on their experiences teaching the principle of oneness over the past week.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY: UNITY IN DIVERSITY FAIR

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the meaning of unity in diversity

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate an appreciation for the oneness of humanity as exemplified by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN. OR MORE FOR PLANNING AND RESEARCH, + EVENT

Materials Needed:

- multicultural histories, crafts books and cookbooks (see Additional Resources)
- multicultural clothes, decorations, music
- arts and crafts supplies
- tables for booths

1. Discuss with the students the importance of the contributions of people from around the globe for an ever-advancing civilization. Invite the students to recall and name some of the gifts that various people have contributed to humanity as a whole. Read aloud together the following passage:

The stronger the ties of fellowship and solidarity amongst men, the greater will be the power of constructiveness and accomplishment in all the planes of human activity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 338
2. Invite the students to use multicultural crafts books and local human resources to explore the contributions to human civilization made by various peoples and cultures. Ask them to describe these contributions of humanity whether scientific, artistic or educational.
3. Depending on the needs and interests of your class, prepare simple or more elaborate displays highlighting these contributions.
4. Plan a Unity in Diversity Fair to provide a showcase for arts, sciences, music and food from many diverse cultures. Consider inviting individuals, groups, and local organizations of different cultural groups to present some aspect of their culture.
5. Plan publicity for the event. Invite guests personally by delivering a hand-written invitation. Consider photographing the event and submitting an article to a local newspaper.
6. Plan displays, hands-on crafts, arts or science projects that guests can experience. Plan musical/dance performances, including the interpretive dances based on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words in *Paris Talks*. Plan a diverse menu of foods from around the world. Choose decorations and publicity that will welcome guests into an atmosphere of world unity while celebrating diversity.
7. After the Unity in Diversity Fair, write notes of appreciation to each individual and group that contributed to the event.
8. Consult about the elements of your process that promoted success and plan to build on it for future events.
9. As you complete the learning experiences in this Lesson Planning Guide, plan your next steps of study and service, as individuals and as a group.

Resource Pages

The Dinner Party

from *Vignettes from the Life of Abdu’l-Bahá* by Annamarie Honnold, p. 111 (1997 edition)

The Master’s every act was meaningful. On one auspicious occasion in Washington, D.C. He demonstrated what justice and love can do. The chargé d’affaires of the Persian Legation in the city and his wife had arranged a luncheon in His honour. Their guest list included members of the social and political life in the capital, as well as a number of Bahá’ís.

Louis Gregory, a cultivated gentleman and employee of the government—he later became the first black Hand of the Cause—had been invited to visit the Master. He was surprised at the time scheduled for a visit, as he knew of the luncheon plans, but naturally he arrived on time. Their conference seemed to go on and on—as if indeed the Master might be prolonging it deliberately.

Eventually the butler announced that luncheon was being served. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá led the way, the invited guests following closely behind. Mr. Gregory was perplexed: should he leave or wait for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to return? The guests were seated when suddenly the honoured Guest rose, looked around and then asked in English, ‘Where is My friend, Mr. Gregory?’, adding ‘My friend, Mr. Gregory, must lunch with Me!’ It just so happened that Louis Gregory had not been on the luncheon list, so naturally he had remained behind. Now the chargé d’affaires hastened after him. The Master rearranged the place setting at His right, the seat of honour, of course—ignoring utterly the delicate laws of protocol—and the luncheon started only after Mr. Gregory had been seated. Then, in a most natural manner, as if nothing at all unusual had happened in the capital that day in 1912, with tact and humour, the Master ‘electrified the already startled guests’ by talking about the unity of mankind.

~Austin, *The Story of Louis G. Gregory*, pp. 11-12

Selections from *PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE*

Humanity is one kind, one race and progeny, inhabiting the same globe. In the creative plan there is no racial distinction and separation such as Frenchman, Englishman, American, German, Italian or Spaniard: all belong to one household. These boundaries and distinctions are human and artificial, not natural and original. All mankind are the fruits of one tree, flowers of the same garden, waves of one sea. (p. 118)

God, the Almighty, has created all mankind from the dust of earth. He has fashioned them all from the same elements: they are descended from the same race and live upon the same globe. He has created them to dwell beneath the one heaven. As members of the human family and His children He has endowed them with equal susceptibilities. He maintains, protects and is kind to all. He has made no distinction in mercies and graces among His children. (p. 297)

He [Bahá'u'lláh] has said, and has guarded His statement by rational proofs from the Holy Books, that the world of humanity is one race, the surface of the earth one place of residence and that these imaginary racial barriers and political boundaries are without right or foundation. (p. 232)

Prejudices of all kinds—whether religious, racial, patriotic or political—are destructive of divine foundations in man. All the warfare and bloodshed in human history have been the outcome of prejudice. This earth is one home and native land. God has created mankind with equal endowment and right to live upon the earth. As a city is the home of all its inhabitants although each may have his individual place of residence therein, so the earth's surface is one wide native land or home for all races of humankind. (p. 287)

It is evident, therefore, that the foundation of real brotherhood, the cause of loving cooperation and reciprocity and the source of real kindness and unselfish devotion is none other than the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Without this influence and animus it is impossible. We may be able to realize some degrees of fraternity through other motives, but these are limited associations and subject to change. When human brotherhood is founded upon the Holy Spirit, it is eternal, changeless, unlimited. (p. 392)

Therefore, in the world of humanity it is wise and seemly that all the individual members should manifest unity and affinity. In the clustered jewels of the races may the blacks be as sapphires and rubies and the whites as diamonds and pearls. The composite beauty of humanity will be witnessed in their unity and blending. How glorious the spectacle of real unity among mankind! How conducive to peace, confidence and happiness if races and nations were united in fellowship and accord! The Prophets of God were sent into the world upon this mission of unity and agreement: that these long-separated sheep might flock together. (p. 57)

Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity. He has caused various nations and divergent creeds to unite. He has declared that difference of race and color is like the variegated beauty of flowers in a garden. If you enter a garden, you will see yellow, white, blue, red flowers in profusion and beauty—each radiant within itself and although different from the others, lending its own charm to them. Racial difference in the human kingdom is similar. If all the flowers in a garden were of the same color, the effect would be monotonous and wearying to the eye. Therefore, Bahá'u'lláh hath said that the various races of humankind lend a composite harmony and beauty of color to the whole world. Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement between them. (pp. 68-69)

Phrases from *Paris Talks*, pp. 53-54

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

If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness.

Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.

Likewise, when you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them.

All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto.

Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one.

Do not allow difference of opinion, or diversity of thought to separate you from your fellow-men, or to be the cause of dispute, hatred and strife in your hearts.

Rather, search diligently for the truth and make all men your friends.

Every edifice is made of many different stones,

yet each depends on the other to such an extent that if one were displaced the whole building would suffer;

if one is faulty the structure is imperfect.

Bahá'u'lláh has drawn the circle of unity,

He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples,

and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent of universal unity.

This is the work of the Divine Bounty, and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst,

and as we work, so will strength be given unto us.

Leave all thought of self, and strive only to be obedient and submissive to the Will of God.

In this way only shall we become citizens of the Kingdom of God, and attain unto life everlasting.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 53

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: “The Black Rose” JA 99
“White/Black” MA 93
“Pebbles on the Beach” MA 93
“Divine Courtesy” ND 92
“Dearly Beloved Children” ND 91
“Ruby” ND 91
“Unity Ribbons” MA 93
“Most Challenging Strawberries” MA 93
“Make a Unity Spinner” MA 93
“Hands of Humanity” MA 93
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 179-180, 228-229, 268-269, 320, 424
Pupil of the Eye, African Americans in the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh
To Move the World
Toward Oneness -- A Compilation on Racial and Cultural Issues
Written in Light, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the American Bahá’í Community 1898-1921, p. 30
Promulgation of Universal Peace
The Black Rose, A Story about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in America
“The Black Rose,” The Beloved Master, p.54

Race and Man
‘Abdu’l-Bahá in America
Agnes Parsons Diary
Star of the West
Ready-to-Use Multicultural Activities, by Saundrah Clark
Crafts from other Cultures, written and illustrated by Judy Hierstein
Tales Alive! Multicultural Folktales with Activities, as retold by Susan Milord
Global Art, by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter
American Legacy (Winter 2001)
The Secret in the Garden, by Winifred Barnum Newman
From Far Away, by Robert Munsch
All the Colors of the Earth, by Sheila Hamanaka
Are you Happy? by Patti Rae French
Peace Begins with You, by Katherine Scholes
Brother Eagle, Sister Sky, A message By Chief Seattle
Something Beautiful, by Sharon Dennis Wyeth
Amazing Grace, by Mary Hoffman
People, by Peter Spier
Lakota Hoop Dancer, by Jacqueline Lefthand Bull, Suzanne Haldane

Music:

Open Circle, by Kevin Locke, Josephine Baker
Global Celebrations
Various artists presented by Ellipsis Arts
Cravan Spirit, “*We Are One*”
Free Falling, Red Grammer, “*One Family*”
In a Quiet Room II, Dan Seals, “*We Are One*”
Teaching Peace, Red Grammer, “*Listen*”
Unity in Diversity, Gordi Munro, “*Unity in Diversity*”
We Recycle, “*Family Tree*”

Games:

Brilliant Star: “The Race Unity Game” MA 95

Poetry:

Another Song, Another Season, “Louis G. Gregory”
Brilliant Star: “My Skin” MA 93
“Hooray for Skin” ND 91

Drama:

Brilliant Star: “The Marhabá News” MA 95

Activities:

Brilliant Star: “My Prejudice-Free Calendar” MA 95

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 BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE PUBLIC ADDRESSES OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

TOPIC: ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AND RACIAL UNITY

Page for NOTES