TO DEVELOP A DEEP LOVE FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: REVERENCE, CREATIVITY, SELF-DISCIPLINE

Let them strive by day and by night to establish within their children faith and certitude, the fear of God, and the love of the Beloved of the worlds, and all good qualities and traits.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, #95, pp.124-5

Let the love of God pervade their inmost being, commingled with their mother's milk.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, #99, p.127

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

K NOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

• To know some of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh and the importance of saying these prayers

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Teach some of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh using music.
- Teach reverence using different body postures.
- Discuss the importance of reciting the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh, using the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi to explain this importance.
- Provide children with the opportunity to explore the rich diversity of Bahá'u'lláh's prayers, including the prayers for special occasions.
- Have children memorize prayers of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Have children memorize verses from Bahá'u'lláh's writings.

Wisdom objectives

- To understand why we say the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh
- To understand the connection that we make with Him and with God when we use His Revealed Word

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share a story about how we make connections with Bahá'u'lláh when we pray. (See *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh,* Vol. One, pp. 11-16.)
- Create opportunities for children to enjoy reciting the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Assist the children to recognize the use of Bahá'u'lláh's prayers for communicating with Bahá'u'lláh and with God. Use examples of how talking to someone in their own language is more effective.
- Explore with children different methods of reflection and meditation.

- Provide children with time and space for meditation and reflection to encourage the development of this habit in their daily lives
- Have children decorate a favorite prayer by Bahá'u'lláh and meditate on the thoughts in the prayer while decorating the prayer. Play instrumental music and observe silence during this activity.

GOAL: TO DEVELOP A DEEP LOVE FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TOPIC: PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To recognize those prayers, and concepts within prayers, that have a special meaning for oneself
- To recognize and create an environment conducive to prayer and communion with Bahá'u'lláh

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Tell stories of how the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh have assisted others in their lives. (See The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, *Vol. One*, pp. 3-9.)
- Create opportunities for children to share favorite prayers with each other.
- Have children begin to create their own anthologies of favorite prayers of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Invite children to share stores from their own lives describing when prayers have been helpful to them.
- Present opportunities for children to recognize the importance of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh in their own lives.
- Have children choose a spiritual place and time at home to say daily private prayers.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To recite the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh from memory
- To formulate a regular pattern of daily prayers and meditation

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Encourage the children to pray on behalf of others and explain the importance of this act.
- Encourage the children to prepare prayers to recite at Feast, Holy Days, and teaching activities.
- Encourage children (especially those older than 10 years) to memorize obligatory prayers and establish a daily routine of prayer.
- Have children plan the devotional section of the feast or a spiritual meeting in their neighborhood.

TOPIC: PRAYERS AND MEDITATIONS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: THE SHORT OBLIGATORY PRAYER

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know some of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh and the importance of saying those prayers

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging heart and mind; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of music; Use of memorization; Use of recitation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

- · printed copy of noonday prayer
- dictionary
- basin and pitcher of water
- towels
- p. 10 of this Lesson Planning Guide



- 1. Discuss the fact that saying one of the three obligatory prayers is a law of Bahá'u'lláh, binding on every believer from the age of 15.
- 2. Provide beautifully printed copies of the noon prayer, if the children can read.
- 3. Read through the prayer, then look up or discuss the meanings of the words within it.
- 4. Have children perform ablutions, providing a basin, a pitcher of water and towels; remind the children that their clothing should also be spotless for prayer.

- 5. Have the children assist in determining in which direction Bahá'u'lláh's Shrine lies from where you are, possibly using a globe and a string.
- 6. Stand facing this direction.
- 7. Discuss the time each day (from noon until sunset) when one may say this prayer.
- 8. Recite or read the Short Obligatory Prayer.
- 9. As a group, memorize this prayer.

ACTIVITY: USES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S PRAYERS

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand why we say the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh. **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To recognize those prayers, and concepts within prayers, that have special meaning for oneself.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage mind and heart; Direct us of the Sacred Writings; Peer teaching; Using the power of reasoning; Use of consultation; Use of recitation.

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- inexpensive prayer book for each child
- slips of paper with instructions
- pictures of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh
- 1. Explain why Bahá'ís say prayers of Bahá'u'lláh.
- 2. Provide each child with an inexpensive Bahá'í prayer book: have them find the noonday prayer, then any other prayers by Bahá'u'lláh that they know, as a brief personal exploration of the book.
- 3. Have children work with a partner to discover prayers which might be used in particular circumstances.
- 4. Either ask the children aloud or give each pair a slip of paper with the instructions, "Find a prayer of Bahá'u'lláh's which you might say when: _____"
 - "...you first wake up."
 - "...you're in a scary situation."
 - "...you need courage to tell someone about the Bahá'í Faith." "...someone you know has passed away." etc
- 5. Ask the pairs to present their chosen prayer: one explains the situation, and why they chose this prayer; the other reads the prayer aloud.
- 6. Select one of the stories to read from *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume One*, Topic: Prayers and Meditations.

7. Return to the Short Obligatory Prayer: why do we face towards Bahjí? After children respond to this question share with them the words of Bahá'u'lláh:

"We have enjoined obligatory prayer upon you.... When you desire to perform this prayer, turn ye towards... the Point of Adoration...." (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 21)



- The Point of Adoration, or Qiblih, is the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, in Israel.
- 8. Share with the children scenes from the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Use illustrations from *The Central Figures:*Bahá'u'lláh, Volume One, slides from pilgrimage, portions of the Bahá'í Newsreel video of the 100th Anniversary of

Bahá'u'lláh's Ascension, or photos from Bahá'í History Calendar 1992, etc.

9. Have the children identify the concepts within the obligatory prayer that have special meaning for them.

ACTIVITY: CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE TO REVERENCE INSPIRED BY THE SHRINE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

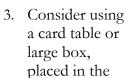
SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize and create an environment conducive to prayer and communion with Bahá'u'lláh

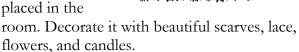
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Employing creativity and the arts

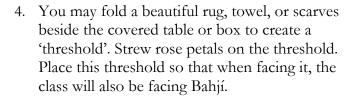
SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- rugs, towels, lace, and/or scarves
- flowers (real and/or silk) or other decorative items
- large box or card table
- candles
- flower petals
- · fresh oranges or rose water
- 1. Invite the students to work with you to plan and create an environment conducive to reverence. Discuss the meaning and importance of reverence. Then, consider using rugs, towels, lace, or scarves on the floor in layers like a Persian room, or create another beautiful setting that reflects the cultures of the children in the class.
- 2. Invite the children to use silk, real, or plastic flowers or other small items and arrange them in their own personal prayer places somewhere in the room.







5. Consider adding a pleasant fragrance such as sliced fresh oranges or rose-water in bowls around the room.

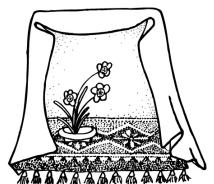
ACTIVITY: YOUR BLESSED SPOT

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the connection that we make with Him when we use His Revealed Word

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Use of consultation; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

- reverent environment, created in previous activity
- enough space for children to have a "blessed spot"
- pictures depicting reverence (optional)
- prayer books



- 1. When the environment is complete, invite the class to come outside the room to prepare themselves.
- 2. Remind the children of the prayer that begins, "Blessed is the spot...."
- 3. Demonstrate various reverent positions from different cultures and religions, or use pictures depicting these. Encourage the children to choose a position they would like to use for prayer and quiet reflection.
- 4. Have the children remove their shoes and place them outside the entrance to the special place as one way of showing reverence.

- 5. Have the children consider what prayer they might choose to recite at the special place and keep it in mind as they quietly enter that space.
- 6. Have the children go to their personal prayer place, reflect quietly on their chosen prayers, using the reverent positions they have chosen, and upon their own hearts' response to using Bahá'u'lláh's words in prayer.
- 7. The children may choose to approach the 'threshold' one at a time, prostrate themselves, and say their chosen prayer.
- 8. Allow a few moments of silence after the last prayer before leaving the room.

ACTIVITY: PERSONAL GOALS FOR PRAYER

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To formulate a regular pattern of daily prayers and meditation

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Use of consultation; Using the power of reason; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

- Kitáb-i-Aqdas or the quotation provided on p. 11 of this Planning Guide
- writing paper
- 1. Gather together to share how it felt to pray in a special prayer space for prayer. Encourage the children to share their feelings of love for God or for Bahá'u'lláh as a result of this experience.
- 2. Encourage the children to think of creating a special prayer space at their home. Assist in communicating their ideas with their families.
- 3. Read Bahá'u'lláh's words: "Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide," (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 73). Discuss the importance of connecting with God or Bahá'u'lláh through prayer before going to school, at noon, and before going to bed. Discuss how this connection affects our lives.
- Have the children create personal goals for:
 Creating an environment in their home conducive to prayer;
 The times that they will pray and read the Writings;
 Their memorization of prayers.
- 5. These goals could be planned in consultation or as personal journal entries. Invite class members, including the teachers, to share their progress toward these goals in future classes.

Resource Pages

SHORT OBLIGATORY PRAYER

I BEAR WITNESS, O MY GOD, THAT THOU HAS CREATED ME TO KNOW THEE AND TO WORSHIP THEE. I TESTIFY AT THIS MOMENT TO MY POWERLESSNESS AND TO THY MIGHT, TO MY POVERTY AND TO THY WEALTH. THERE IS NONE OTHER GOD BUT THEE, THE HELP IN PERIL, THE SELF-SUBSISTING.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Personal Goals for Prayers

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all. Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Read ye the sacred verses in such measure that ye be not overcome by languor and despondency. Lay not upon your souls that which will weary them and weigh them down, but rather what will lighten and uplift them, so that they may soar on the wings of the Divine verses towards the Dawning-place of His manifest signs; this will draw you nearer to God, did ye but comprehend.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, pp. 73-74

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories and Articles:

Brilliant Star:

"Practicing Prayerfulness," Nov/Dec 01

"Treasures in the Next World," "God's Answer," "Weaver of Souls" May/June 01

"An Unforgettable Teacher" Mar/April 01

"Opening Our Hearts to God," "Kids'

Thoughts on Prayer," "Bahá'í Prayers" Sept/Oct 98

"You Know the Love of Bahá'u'lláh" Mar/Apr 98

"The Art of Meditation" Mar/Apr 97

The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One,

"Saving the Silver-Tongued Nightingale," "A Prayer for Mirza Ja'far," "The Tree of Life"

Afnan, Abbas, An Anthology for Bahá'í Children, pp. 34-35

Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Fruits of One Tree*, pp. 12-13 Afshin, Mahnaz, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 20

Unity Flows from Every Color (coloring book)

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

"Blessed is the Spot" Jan/Feb 01

"Color and Memorize" Nov/Dec 00

"Thy Heart is My Home" Jan/Feb 00

"Blessed is the Spot Maze," "About Me and My Prayers,"
"Bahá'í Prayer Word Search," "A-Maze-ing Prayer"
Sept/Oct 98

"Musk-Scented Pen" Nov/Dec 97

"Me? Host a Devotional Meeting?" "A Matter of Spirit" Jan/Feb 97

Videos:

Lasting Remembrances, Second Bahá'í World Congress, The Power of Prayer Symbols of the Spirit

Reference:

Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers* Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*

List other favorite resources.

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

"Clara's Corner," "Sacred Memories Prayer Book" Sept/Oct 01

"Hidden in the Hearts Keepsake Box" Mar/Apr 01

"A Trip to 'Where Mention of God Hath Been Made'" SpEd 99

"Pop-O-Card" Jan/Feb 99

"Reverence Pouch" Nov/Dec 98

"Make Your Own Prayer Book," "Prayer Counts" Sept/Oct 98

"Power Verse" SpEd 98

"Gifts from Bahá'u'lláh" Mar/Apr 98

"Bless Every Spot" Sept/Oct 97

"The Art of Meditation" Jul/Aug 97

"Make a Meditation Journal," "Bahá'í Tangrams," Mar/Apr 97

"Me? Host a Devotional Meeting?" Jan/Feb 97

Music:

Brilliant Star: "O Son of Being" Sept/Oct 01

"Sweet Morning" Sept/Oct 98

"Hold Thou My Right Arm" Jul/Aug 98

"Ponder Awhile" Mar/Apr 97

Music of the Bahá'í World Congress

Bahá'í Gospel Singers, We Have Come to Sing Praises

Davis, Mary, On Wings of Prayer

Grammer, Red, intoned by, Tablet of Ahmad

Narges, Desire of the Heart

Parrish, Paul, Selections from the Bahá'í Writings

Price, Tom, Songs of the Ancient Beauty

Quinn, Christina, He Is the Healer

Sobhani, Mansoor, Beyond this World

Ward, Nancy, Melodies from the Sacred Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá

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

TO DEVELOP A DEEP LOVE FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: CARING, PATIENCE, LOVE

From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their hearts the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 53-54

...praise be to God! - you are the servants of God. The love of Bahá'u'lláh is in your hearts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 427

TOPIC: Loving Acts of Bahá'u'lláh

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



K NOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

To know that Bahá'u'lláh loved and cared for all people, and that He was known by his countrymen as "the Father of the Poor"

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Relate to the children stories of Bahá'u'lláh's kindness and loving actions.
- Consult about His title, "Father of the Poor." Share stories relating to this title.
- Have children work in small groups to read specific stories of Bahá'u'lláh's acts of loving kindness (e.g., The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One, pp. 22-25, 27-30).
- In groups, have children do research to discover the diversity of peoples and individuals who were directly affected by Bahá'u'lláh's loving acts. Make a list of who they were and how Bahá'u'lláh helped
- Memorize one of the Hidden Words that shows the Creator's love, e.g., "I loved thy creation, hence I created thee," The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One, p. 18.

Wisdom objective

To understand the events which demonstrated the loving acts of Bahá'u'lláh.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Encourage the children to use various art media to illustrate scenes from stories of Bahá'u'lláh's loving-kindness.
- Have children develop plays, mimes, or dances which describe the feelings and reactions of those people who were affected by Bahá'u'lláh's love and kindness*.
- Consult on specific loving acts of Bahá'u'lláh, exploring the ways in which He demonstrated His love. Delineate the virtues represented in each story.
- In groups, research, discuss, and share the many incidents in which Bahá'u'lláh showed love and kindness (e.g. types of problems, etc.).

*In creating plays, remember it is inappropriate to portray the Central Figures Themselves.

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the meaning of the personal love of the Manifestation for humanity
- To recognize that through one's faith and knowledge of the personal love of Bahá'u'lláh one gains strength

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Assist the children in relating Bahá'u'lláh's loving acts to the loving actions of their own parents.
- Use music to teach one of the Hidden Words which relates to His love for us, e.g., *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One,* p. 18.
- Provide opportunities for children to reflect on times when they felt Bahá'u'lláh's love. Consider how this love increases personal strength.
- Use stories, the Writings, and personal experience to explore the unconditional nature of Bahá'u'lláh's love for us, e.g., *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One*, pp. 27-30.
- Have children express their understanding of this love in an art form of their choice: painting, poetry, sculpture, music, dance.

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ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To integrate Bahá'u'lláh's love and care for others in one's own behavior
- To integrate the love felt for Bahá'u'lláh in daily interactions with others
- To formulate personal goals based on a deep love for Bahá'u'lláh

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the children make a presentation based on their research about Bahá'u'lláh's acts of loving-kindness.
- Have children prepare special devotions on the theme of love of Bahá'u'lláh and also exhibit their art work during the social portion of the Nineteen Day Feast.
- Have children prepare a gift for someone they do not know very well in the community out of love of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Have children follow the examples in the stories to prepare a personal gift of a deed (following the examples of stories read) for the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh. Then have them present these at the celebration with illustrations of their deeds on posters.

TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Sample Activities

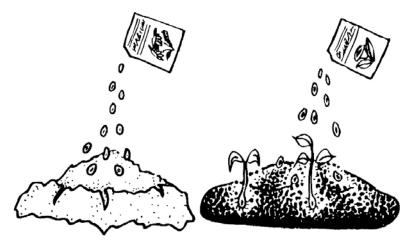
ACTIVITY: EXPLORE THE MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF THE LOVE OF THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD FOR HUMANITY

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES: To discern the meaning of the personal love of the Manifestation for humanity; To recognize that through one's Faith and knowledge of the personal love of Bahá'u'lláh one gains strength

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Use of music; Use of questioning; Investigation of the world of nature

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN. **Materials Needed:**

- 2 small plots of ground or two pots of soil, one hard and rocky.
- flower and/or vegetable seeds
- 1. If available, listen to the song "Did You Ever Wonder (why God sent us Bahá'u'lláh)?" on the *Come and Sing* album, or another song about love.
- 2. Ask the children, "What is love? Why is it so important? How does Bahá'u'lláh show His love for us?"
- 3. Use two small plots of ground outside, or two pots indoors. One plot should be hard, rocky, compacted, un-cared for -- compare it to our hearts without Bahá'u'lláh's love.
- 4. Become as loving gardeners to the other plot: loosen the soil, break it into small particles, pull out weeds, remove rocks and debris, soak it compare this preparation to our hearts being prepared by Bahá'u'lláh's love.
- 5. Toss some seeds (try radish, grass, sunflower, or marigold) on top of the hard plot; then carefully plant some seeds in the prepared soil, following instructions on the seed packet.
- 6. Ask the children what results they expect for each seed plot.



- 7. Compare the seeds to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh (world peace, elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, equality of men and women, etc.).
- 8. Ask the children whether or not they think that these teachings will grow and produce 'fruits' in hearts which have *not* been prepared with the love of God's Manifestations.
- 9. Encourage the students to watch the plots over the next several weeks, track the growth of the plants, and compare the growth of the healthy plants to their own growth in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

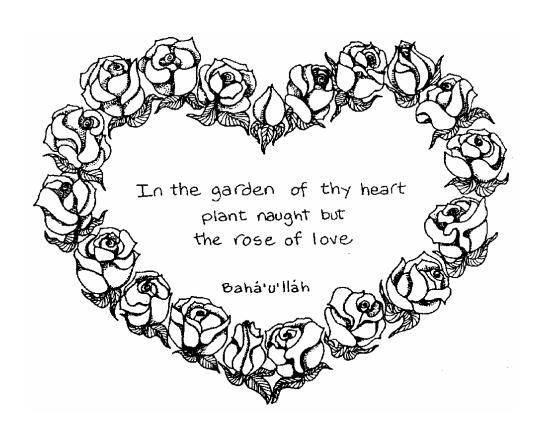
ACTIVITY: LEARN ABOUT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S ACTS OF LOVING-KINDNESS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that Bahá'u'lláh loved and cared for all people.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of stories; Employing creativity.

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 10 MIN.

- stories
- decorated passages from Writings
- 1. Share with the children a beautifully prepared passage dealing with love, such as often published in *Brilliant Star*. You may also use the quotation provided below and on p. 20 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
- 2. As the children decorate the passage, read aloud and discuss "The Friend at the Crossroads," from *Bahá'u'lláh, Volume One*, pp. 27-30. Alternatively, see *Prince of Peace*, p. 74-75, or *Bahá'u'lláh, King of Glory*, p. 151.



TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: RESEARCH THE LIFE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To understand events which demonstrated the love and caring of Bahá'u'lláh.

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards the recognition of God; Use of stories; Use of creativity and the arts; Use of drama.

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

- The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One or other stories
- art supplies
- props
- 1. Read aloud "Father of the Poor" and "One Meritorious Act" from *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One.*
- 2. Alternatively, you may have children work in small groups to explore other stories of the loving acts of Bahá'u'lláh. Give each group a photocopy of an anecdote from *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh* compiled by 'Alí-Akbar Furútan. (See pages 11, 19, 26-27, 30-34, 37-38, 40-41, 64, 67-69, 73-74, 85-86, 88-91, 96-98, 102-04). Some of these stories are included in this Lesson Planning Guide, p. 24.
- 3. Discuss how it would have felt to be the people who had these experiences with Bahá'u'lláh.
- 4. Encourage the children to find a way to share this example of Bahá'u'lláh's love with the whole group; they might choose to create a painting, montage story-board or other visual art, or they might choose to develop a skit, puppet play, or other performing art form.



- 5. Remind children that Bahá'u'lláh Himself may not be represented in any way. One way to tell a story about Bahá'u'lláh without representing Him is to create one's presentation so that the person involved is relating the incident to another person.
- 6. After completing the artwork, display it for the whole class. Find a way also to share this work with family, friends, and community.

GOAL: TO DEVELOP A DEEP LOVE FOR BAHÁ'U'LLÁH TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: REFLECT ON THE EXPERIENCE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES: To discern the meaning of the personal love of the Manifestation for humanity; To recognize that through one's faith and knowledge of the personal love Bahá'u'lláh one gain's strength

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards God; Use of meditation and reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN. **Materials Needed:**

· quiet music, if desired

- 1. Create an environment conducive to meditation, perhaps using quiet background music, dimmed lights, and comfortable positions.
- 2. Ask the children to close their eyes and think of their very favorite memory of a special time shared with their parents or someone else with whom they are very close. Try to go back in memory time to that experience and be there again, seeing, feeling, hearing, saying and doing the same things all over again. Ask them to save the warm feelings they're getting—that's the feeling of being loved. That love is the reflection of Bahá'u'lláh's love for us. Now
- remember a time that you felt that way when there wasn't another person involved. Maybe you felt that way after a prayer, or watching a bird soar, or listening to music, or reading a story about Bahá'u'lláh's life. Think about how that experience of love gave you strength or confidence or made you happy.
- 3. Allow time for reflection then invite the children to share memories or thoughts they had during this activity. Be sensitive to any child having sad or painful memories brought up during the meditation.

ACTIVITY: GOALS TO REFLECT BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S LOVE

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES: To integrate love and care for others in one's own behavior; To formulate personal goals based on a deep love for Bahá'u'lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of Sacred Writings; Use of memorization

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN. **Materials Needed:**

- memory verses previously decorated, or new ones.
- 1. Encourage the children to practice sharing with others a story of Bahá'u'lláh's loving acts that they studied earlier.
- 2. Memorize the verse they decorated or select new verses from *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One*, pp. 18, 26.
- 3. Ask the children to use these stories, the memorized verse, and their reflection experience to set a personal goal of reflecting Bahá'u'lláh's love to someone new. Invite the children to share their progress at future meetings.
- 4. Record the children's goals so that progress can be reviewed at future meetings.

TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

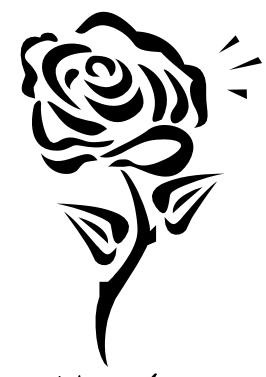
Resource Pages

In the garden of thy

heart plant naught

but the rose of love,





and from the
nightingale of
affection and
desire loosen not
thy hold.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Persian Hidden Words, no. 3)

Love

Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul. Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the one means that ensureth true felicity both in this world and the next. Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul. Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.

> 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 27

TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

RESEARCH THE LIFE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

From Stories of Bahá'u'lláh, compiled by 'Alí-Akbar Furútan

One night in Amul, as Bahá'u'lláh was on His way to visit the besieged Bábis at Shaykh Tabarsi, accompanied by some of His friends including Mulla Baqiri Tabriz, Haji Mírzá Jani of Kashan and Mírzá Yahya, His half brother, they were arrested and held by government officials. The divines were clamoring that they be put to death, until the acting governor, much embarrassed and attempting to hold them off for the governor's return, ordered that they be bastinadoed. At this point Bahá'u'lláh intervened. "These are only my companions," He said, "and they are blameless. Punish Me in their stead." The Blessed Beauty was bastinadoed so severely that His feet bled. (p. 7)

While living on a mountain named Sar-Galu, above Sulaymaniyyih, the Blessed Beauty encountered one day a student from school in Khaniqah sitting by the road weeping bitterly. When asked the reason for his sadness the boy explained, "Today, our schoolmaster gave all the other boys a copy to practice their writing, but me he dismissed and I have no copy." "If you will bring me your paper and pen," Bahá'u'lláh suggested kindly, "I shall set a copy for you." When on returning to his school, the lad showed this specimen of Bahá'u'lláh's exquisite penmanship to the teachers and students, everyone who saw it was astonished and the news spread throughout Sulaymaniyyih, as the copy was passed from hand to hand, arousing admiration and curiosity in all who saw it. (p. 19)

The Blessed Beauty was a source of great bounty and mercy for all, but particularly for the poor to whom He gave special attention. Always He bestowed gifts upon the disabled, the orphans and the needy whom He met during His walks in the city. One of these was a woman of eighty who lived in a deprived area through which Bahá'u'lláh often passed. Each day He walked from His house towards the coffeehouse of Sar-i-Jisr, she would wait for Him in the roadway. Bahá'u'lláh was exceedingly kind to her and always asked after her health. Although He would not let her kiss His hands, whenever she wanted to kiss His cheeks, because she was bent with age and short of stature, He would bend down so that she could realize her wish. Often He remarked, "Because I love this old woman so much, she also loves me." Throughout His time in Baghdad, He showered her with kindness, and before leaving for Constantinople He arranged an allowance for her to the end of her days. Whichever coffeehouse the Blessed Beauty frequented would be crowded with customers, bringing good fortune to its owner. (pp. 26-27)

One of the many believers was overcome with grief at the death of his father. Consoling him, the Ancient Beauty stated: "Your father has not died, but is a martyr in the path of the Almighty. I am your father." (p. 41)

Whenever any of the believers would lament their separation from Bahá'u'lláh, tears would flow down His cheeks, and if any of them, during the four-day journey to Gallipoli, strayed away from the group, fell asleep and was left behind or lost, the Blessed Beauty would dispatch horsemen in all directions to search for him, refusing meanwhile to proceed. (p. 41)

TOPIC: LOVING ACTS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- "Mysterious Signs" Mar/Apr 01
- "A Star Shining in the Arts" Jul/Aug 00
- "The Beautiful Writing" Mar/Apr 98
- "Trust in God" Nov/Dec 97
- "Musk-Scented Pen" Nov/Dec 97
- "Mas'ud Serves Bahá'u'lláh" May/Jun 96
- "Stranger in the Mountains" SpEd 91
- "A Plan Undone" Sept/Oct 87
- "Serving the Samovar" Sept/Oct 84
- "Hungry for the Love of God" May/Jun 84

The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One: "Father of the Poor," "One Meritorious Act," "The Friend at the Crossroads"

Afnan, Abbas, An Anthology for Bahá'í Children, pp. 23-24, 26-27, 36

Afshin, Mahnaz, The Blessed Beauty, pp. 21, 30, 36, 40, 43, 85, 96-97

Afshin, Mahnaz, The Fruits of One Tree, pp. 57, 62

Afshin, Mahnaz, The Story of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 14, 26, 37, 62

Furutan, Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 11, 19, 26-27, 30-34, 37-38, 40-41, 64, 67-69, 73-74, 85-86, 88-91, 96-98, 102-04, 109

Garst, Hitjo, From Mountain to Mountain, pp. 11, 22, 33, 73, 109, 139

Mehrabi, Jacqueline, The Love of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 13-62

Reed, Betty, Stories of Bahá'u'lláh as Told by Pokka, pp. 10-11, 26

Tafaaki, Irene, Horse of the Moonlight, p. 8

Worksheet/Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

"The Beautiful Writing" Mar/Apr 98

Music:

Brilliant Star:

"Trust in God" Nov/Dec 97

Engle, Susan and Marks, Jean White, Come and Sing, "Did You Ever Wonder?"

List 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 Develop a Deep Love for Bahá'u'lláh Bahá'u'lláh and the Children of His Household

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: LOVE, COMPASSION, GENEROSITY

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

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 173

God has created us, one and all - why do we act in opposition to His wishes, when we are all His children, and love the same Father?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, p. 120

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



K NOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

• To know about the loving relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children of His household

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Relate stories regarding Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His Household (e.g., *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One*, pp. 33-46).
- Have the children work in groups to study and recount specific stories of Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His household.
- Give children an opportunity to use art to describe the relationship, and to relate specific examples and stories.



WISDOM OBJECTIVE

To understand the loving nature of the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the children work in groups to research and identify elements of Bahá'u'lláh's relationships with the children.
- Encourage the use of drama to re-enact stories of the children of Bahá'u'lláh's household.
- Through consultation identify characteristics of the loving relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children.
- Have the children imagine what it would have been like to spend their childhood in the Most Great Prison. Draw, write poetry, or use other media to describe what this experience might mean.
- Use arts and crafts to make dioramas of the household of Bahá'u'lláh, notably the House of 'Abbúd, Mazra'ih, and the Mansion at Bahjí.

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN **OF HIS HOUSEHOLD**



Spiritual perception objectives

- To distinguish in one's own actions those actions that are a worthy reflection of one's love for Bahá'u'lláh.
- To recognize the station of children through examination of Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His household.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the children reflect on their actions to determine if these actions are a worthy reflection of their love for Bahá'u'lláh.
- Use music to reflect on and memorize a Hidden Word about reflecting His love (e.g., The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One, p. 32).
- Consult on the station of children: compare Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His household to the station and relationships of the children and adults in one's own household.
- Assist the children to investigate and learn about different types of family structures, across cultures and throughout history. Have them compare and contrast these with their own families, and with that of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Have the children role play how they would have acted if they were among the children in the household of Bahá'u'lláh in real life situations.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To describe to others the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's love for oneself and how that love directs personal actions.
- To describe one's understanding of this relationship with others.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the children make a presentation on the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children of His household for the commemoration of Universal Children's
- Set personal goals for applying one's understanding of this relationship to relationships within one's household. On an ongoing basis, share the results and bounties of these efforts.
- Create and perform a song, dance, or verse which reflects one's desire to become as one of the children of Bahá'u'lláh's household.
- Plan an event in which children dress up and role play life in the household of Bahá'u'lláh (include making and eating the food), by serving the members of the community as Bahá'u'lláh loved to serve the friends.

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know about the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children of His household

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume One storybook, or alternate sources for stories
- maps of Iran and the Holy Land; photographs of Bahá'í Holy Places
- 1. Read the three stories from storybook, *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume One*, in chronological order, as the children in earlier stories may be Bahá'u'lláh's own children, and in later stories may be His grandchildren. Alternatively, use stories listed under "Additional Resources."
- 2. Assist in learning the names of the children in the stories, and how to pronounce them.
- 3. Present the context of where each story took place using the map of Iran and the Holy Land on inside covers of the *Bahá'u'lláh* storybook for location. Use photographs of Bahá'í Holy Places in that book to identify the appearance of these places.

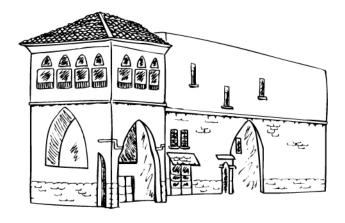
ACTIVITY: BUILD MODELS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know about the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children of His household

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of creativity; Use of arts; Use of manipulative; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

- 6 shoeboxes
- · photographs or illustrations of Bahá'u'lláh's homes
- Middle Eastern music
- art supplies
- · stories from the previous activity
- Have children work in groups to build a shoebox model of one of Bahá'u'lláh's homes. Include: His home in Tehran, a caravanserai along the exile route, the House of Abbud, the Most Great Prison (Ákká), Mazra'ih, the Mansion at Bahjí.



TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

- 2. Have students refer to photographs on p. 32 of this Lesson Planning Guide to direct their designs.
- 3. Set the mood by playing Middle Eastern music as they work.
- 4. Encourage the children to consider, as they are building and decorating, what it would have been like to live in the home of which they are making a model.
- 5. Connect each completed model to one of the stories heard earlier, to help children to understand who lived there with Bahá'u'lláh, when and where it was.

ACTIVITY: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHILDREN

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the loving nature of the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the children

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards the recognition of God; Use of questioning; Use of consultation; Use of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- quotation written on poster/chart paper
- copies of Resource Page 33
- 1. Ask the children:
 - What are some of the loving things Bahá'u'lláh did for children in His household?
 - How did these children feel towards Bahá'u'lláh?
 - How do you suppose they acted towards Him?
- 2. Share the following selection (also p. 40 of *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One* storybook) with the children and consult on the implications of this verse as it relates to Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His household:

He that bringeth up his son or the son of another, it is as though he hath brought up a son of Mine; upon him rest My glory, My loving-kindness, My mercy, that have compassed the world.

--Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 37

3. Teach the song "I Have Found Bahá'u'lláh," Resource Page 33.

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

ACTIVITY: A WRITING ASSIGNMENT

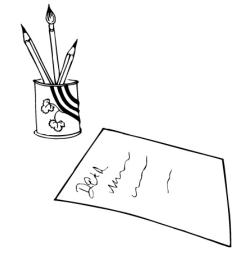
SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To distinguish in one's own actions those which are a worthy reflection of one's love for Bahá'u'lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward the recognition of God; Use of questioning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- writing paper
- · writing instruments for each child
- Ask the children to imagine that Bahá'u'lláh Himself is coming to live in their home in one week!
- 2. Have them write or dictate an imaginary letter to their best friend, telling him or her about it.
- 3. Encourage them to share their fears, as well as their hopes, with their friend. Ask, "What qualities in yourself do you hope will make Bahá'u'lláh happy? How would you like to prepare yourself before He came?"



4. Invite those who wish to share their letters aloud.

ACTIVITY: REVIEW AND CONSULT

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize the station of children through examination of Bahá'u'lláh's relationship with the children of His household

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of questioning; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

- Worksheet, Resource Page 34
- 1. Reflect back on the stories of the children in Bahá'u'lláh's household:
 - "What responsibilities did those children have?"
 - "How did they serve Bahá'u'lláh?"
 - "How did they teach His Faith?"
- 2. Consult about ways that a child of today can show his or her love for Bahá'u'lláh:
 - "How can we serve His Cause?"
 - "How can we teach?"

- 3. Distribute the worksheet, "I Want to Help!" from *Brilliant Star*, p. 34 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
- 4. Discuss roles children may have in your Bahá'í community.
- 5. Assist children to complete their worksheets and forward them to the local Spiritual Assembly.

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

ACTIVITY: A SCENE IN BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S HOUSEHOLD

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe to others the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's love for oneself and how that love directs personal actions

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward recognition of God; Establishing a loving environment; Use of consultation; Use of questioning; Use of creativity; Use of drama

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

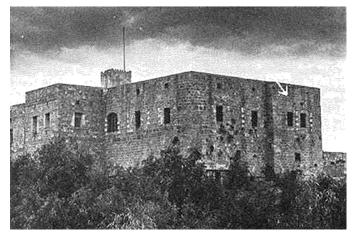
- flowers
- Persian music
- Persian food (optional)
- samovar (optional)
- props, period clothing
- art supplies
- 1. Have the children plan, perform, and serve at a Holy Day or other Bahá'í community gathering.
- Consider recreating a scene of one of the households of Bahá'u'lláh to present at a community teaching event or Holy Day commemoration.
- 3. Decorate the environment accordingly. For example, a caravanserai would be furnished much differently than Bahjí.
- 4. Bring in flowers such as roses or jasmine or use rose oil or incense.
- 5. Play Persian or Middle Eastern music.
- 6. Prepare and serve food from the region. You may consult a friend from Iran or a cultural cookbook.

- 7. Serve tea in a samovar, if available.
- 8. Have the children dress up in period-style clothing and tell stories about Bahá'u'lláh and the children of His household:
 - Tell the stories from the first-person, as if the incidents had happened to you;
 - Convey the deep love that particular child felt for Bahá'u'lláh, and its effect.
- 9. Include the song, "I Have Found Bahá'u'lláh," in your program. Close the program with chanted or sung prayers. If someone in your community can teach others how to chant in Farsí, try to learn a special prayer for this occasion.

TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN

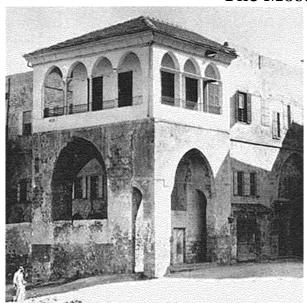
OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

Resource Pages





The Most Great Prison

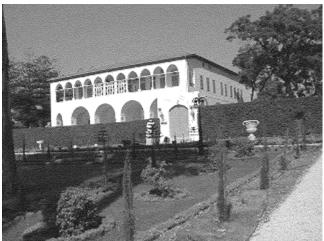




The House of Abbud



Mazra'ih



The Mansion at Bahji

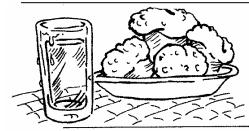
TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

I Want to Help!

by Pepper P. Oldziey

The Universal House of Justice has told us that now is the time for every man, woman, youth and child to work together to build the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. There are many things children can do for their Bahá'í Community. Here is a list of just some of the things you can do. Have you ever done some of these things? Look through the list and check off each one you have done. Are there other ways you could help you community?

Community Service Checklist



Host a Feast

- greet people at the door
- welcome people by saying "Alláh-u-Abhá"
- help people find seats
- serve food during the social portion
- during Feast, help a young child who has trouble being still by playing together in another room.

Prepare the Devotional Portion of Feast

- select prayers and passages from the Bahá'í Writings
- select music or songs from the Bahá'í Writings
- make a program that lists your selections and call readers in advance so they may prepare ahead to read
- ind things other children can do to help make Feast special





Prepare Refreshments for Feast

- plan and make the food
- plan and prepare the beverages
- decorate and set the food table



Host Firesides

- plan a date and invite your friends
- plan a topic to talk about
- prepare a short talk or choose a video to show
- invite a guest speaker
- prepare refreshments
- have Bahá'í booklets ready to give out

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Host a Children's Deepening

- ind out something the children in your community want to learn
- ind a guest speaker to talk or video to show
- plan a date and invite the guests
- □ look up more information on your topic

Serve on a Teaching Committee

Let your Spiritual Assembly know you are willing to serve. If you are appointed to a committee you may be asked to:

- go to meetings and offer your ideas
- help plan teaching activities
- help prepare teaching materials
- D help your community include children in all the teaching plans

illustrated by Carla Marlene



reprinted from Brilliant Star

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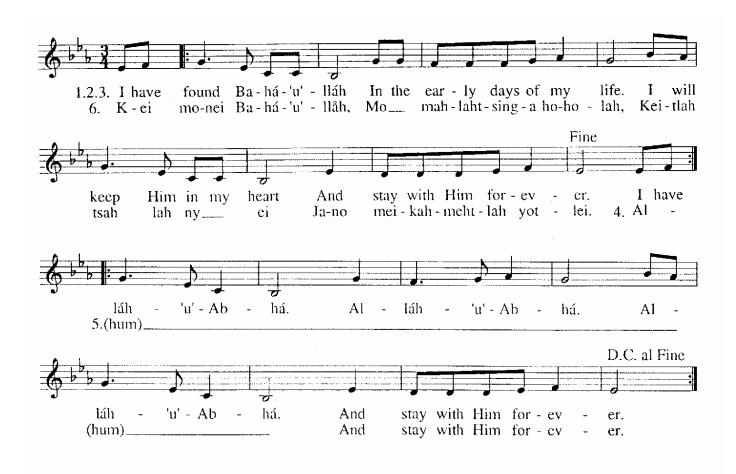
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TOPIC: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN

OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

I Have Found Bahá'u'lláh by Nosisana Velum



reprinted from Brilliant Star, March/April 1998

TOPIC: BAHÁ'u'LLÁH AND THE CHILDREN OF HIS HOUSEHOLD

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

"I Am Well-Pleased" May/Jun 01

The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One: "Summertime," "The Prison and the Garden," "The Power of Love"

Afnan, Abbas, *An Anthology for Bahá'í Children*, p. 25 Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Blessed Beauty*, pp. 90, 96 Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Story of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 29, 60-61 Furutan, Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 69-71, 107 Mehrabi, Jacqueline, *The Love of Bahá'u'lláh* Reed, Betty, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh As Told By Pokka*, , pp. 26-31 Witman, Debbie, *The Birth of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 18

List 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.