

TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS
OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS
OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
REVERENCE, FAITH, LOVE, JOY

Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation—a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God. He verily hath knowledge of all things.

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 80

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 84

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the manner in which the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh were revealed
- To know that the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh exceed 100 volumes and that they are all preserved in their original form

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Relate stories from the histories of the Faith referring to the manner in which Bahá'u'lláh revealed His Writings, *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Two*, pp. 163-67.
- Explain and role play the work of an amanuensis.
- Relate stories of His revelation of specific books (Kitáb-i-Íqán, in 48 hours; The Hidden Words, while walking along the banks of the Tigris, etc.).
- Compare the vastness of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings with the revealed Word available to followers of former religions, (i.e. red letter edition of the Holy Bible, the Qur'án).
- Have the students investigate the rigorous and exacting work of translating the Writings (first by Shoghi Effendi, now by a committee to the Universal House of Justice), and how this rigor guarantees the preservation of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings in their original form.



WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand that all of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings are the source of guidance for at least 1,000 years

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Demonstrate in a visual, sequential manner the duration and effect of guidance from the Holy Books of previous religions and the promised duration of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.
- Use a scaled time line to visually demonstrate our current proximity to Bahá'u'lláh's announcement and the span of time before another Manifestation appears.
- Share Bahá'u'lláh's statements regarding the duration of time we will be guided by the Books He revealed.
- Present the Books of Bahá'u'lláh to the students with great reverence and make them accessible for their study and meditation.

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To recognize that understanding of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh depends on one's detachment, steadfastness and purity of heart
- To discern the joy of immersing oneself in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh
- To recognize that true study and understanding of the Writings comes about through action

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Consult on the meaning of the Báb's Words concerning "those who have ears yet hear not" (*Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 165).
- Use art media to symbolize the effect of God's Words falling upon hearts that are pure and detached. Compare to the effect of the Writings on hearts turned towards the world.
- Demonstrate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's metaphor of a mirror turned toward the earth, or turned toward the light.
- Consult with the students to help each find her/his own place and method that enables her/him to read, meditate and reflect on the Writings.
- Read to the learners the Writings about the importance of deeds and putting faith into action. Through telling stories of their own experiences, explore how true unity results from actions.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To formulate a regular personal plan of reading and reciting the Words of Bahá'u'lláh
- To develop a way of sharing one's readings from the Writings with others

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the learners prepare audiotapes of passages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Work with the learners to prepare an environment in their homes that is conducive to daily reading and recitation of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Have learners report on the results of their daily readings and what they have been able to put into action at the beginning of each meeting time.
- Have students develop ways of sharing what they read in the Writings with their teacher and peers.

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: THE WORLD'S HOLY BOOKS

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that all of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings are the source of guidance for at least 1,000 years

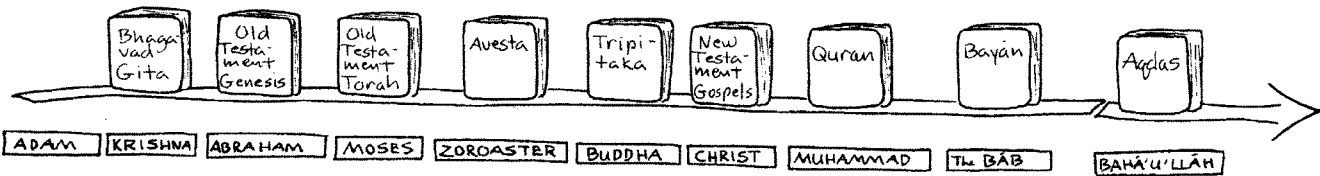
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of manipulatives; Use of power of reasoning; Use of questions

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- 5 yards of ribbon or yarn
- another ribbon, as long as possible
- one copy of each Holy Book; cards for the names of each Holy Book
- cards for names of each Prophet who revealed the Holy Book
- Marker

1. Announce that you will be taking a look at the power of God's Word throughout history. Unfurl and lay out a ribbon, 5 yards long, as a time-line. Each yard roughly equals 1,000 years, the approximate time between Adam and the Báb—the Prophetic Cycle—being 5,000 years.
2. Beginning at one end of the ribbon, explain that Teachings of the earliest religions are unknown to us because they were so long ago and not written down. Place a name card for Adam. As you move down the ribbon, reverently place a copy of each Holy Book (or a card with its name), at its place on the time-line, along with the Name of its Author. Briefly mention that Book's manner of being recorded, and the influence it played on the world.



3. At this point, announce that the Báb fulfilled the Prophetic Cycle, ushering in the Age of Fulfillment with the coming of Bahá'u'lláh! Bring out a new ribbon (as long as is obtainable). Attach it to the end of the old one, placing The Kitáb-í-Aqdas there. Tell children that this ribbon would have to be 500 yards long to show how long the world will be influenced by His Revelation—500,000 years. Stretch the ribbon out as far as it goes, then pace out the remaining distance to reach 500 yards.
4. Return to where The Kitáb-í-Aqdas is. Remind children that Bahá'u'lláh says that there **will** be another Messenger from God, in not less than 1,000 years. Place a card with '?', 1 yard past The Kitáb-í-Aqdas. Explain that for the next 500,000 years the Manifestations of God will be under the shadow of Bahá'u'lláh's Dispensation. See p. 115 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
5. Where are we on the time-line? Place a marker 3" beyond The Kitáb-í-Aqdas. Discuss how close we are to the beginnings of this Dispensation, and how long afterwards humanity will turn to Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh exceeded 100 volumes and that they are all preserved in their original form

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of power of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- one copy of as many of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings in English as able to obtain
- one or more copies of Bahá'í books in Persian or Arabic
- photograph of Shoghi Effendi, p. 114 of this Lesson Planning Guide

1. Share copies of Bahá'í books in Persian or Arabic. If available, have a Persian believer write and/or read aloud some verses, and share personal stories related to the challenges of translating from these languages into English.
2. Show a photograph of the Guardian. Describe how he became a master of the English language at Oxford University. Discuss the importance of his great care in assuring that the Writings were translated accurately.
3. Send students on a hunt: Find out how many Bahá'í Scriptures say, "Translated by Shoghi Effendi" on their title pages or include passages translated by the Guardian listed at the back of the book. Discuss the results of their investigation.
4. Display all of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings thus far translated into English. Discuss the fact that this is only a small percentage of all His Writings.
5. Compare these Books with what we have from all the previous Dispensations combined. Then imagine the far-reaching influence of these great teachings of peace and justice in the world.

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: THE MANNER IN WHICH BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS WERE REVEALED

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the manner in which the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh were revealed

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Photograph of Bahá'u'lláh's own writing, p. 116 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- Pencil/pen and paper for each child

1. Share photographs of Bahá'u'lláh's own writing, Tahez-zadeh's *Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. One*, or p. 116 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
2. Share the story of how Mírzá Yahyá poisoned Bahá'u'lláh, whose hands afterwards shook when He wrote, producing wavy lines in His Writing, which could never be copied exactly by Bahá'u'lláh's enemies.
3. Share the story of how Bahá'u'lláh revealed the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* in only 48 hours, and that His amanuensis wrote it all down as Bahá'u'lláh spoke the words. Remind students that they can read about this Book in the stories "The Letter of Certainty" and "A Letter from Baghdad" in *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Two*.
4. Read and discuss the stories "Bamba and the Rainstorm" and "Changing the Heart" from *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Two*, pp. 163-67 and 169-72. Discuss the questions on p. 175 of the storybook.
5. Have students work in pairs or small groups: one slowly tells a short story while the other(s) write it down. When finished, the speaker checks the written work, correcting any errors before placing a stamp on it to verify its accuracy.
6. Compare this experience to the process that Bahá'u'lláh used to verify and mark with His seal the Words recorded by His amanuensis to guarantee their authenticity.



ACTIVITY: UNDERSTANDING BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize that an understanding of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh depend on one's detachment, steadfastness, and purity of heart

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of meditation; Use of reflection

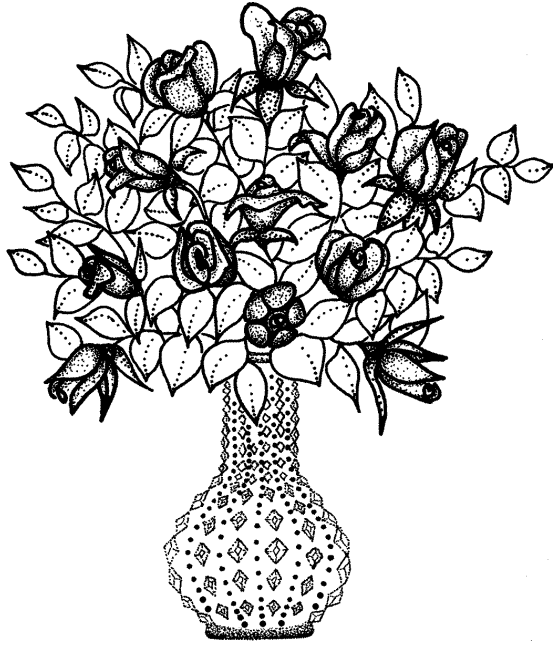
SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- vase or other object
- soft music
- books of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings; photocopies of p. 117 of this Lesson Planning Guide for each student
- pillows, rugs, fabric, lace, mats

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

1. Place a beautiful object, such as a vase, in the center of the group. Close your eyes and deny that it is there. Ask if this denial affected the truth of its existence.



2. Play soft music. Ask everyone to make lots of noise. Loudly exclaim that there is no music playing. At a signal, stop the noise: the music is again audible.

3. Use these exercises as analogies for the verse:

Hearts have they, with which they understand not, and eyes with which they see not!

Kitáb-i-Íqán p. 113

Discuss conditions conducive to reading or hearing Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.

4. Invite students to create personal spaces in which to read and reflect on the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Provide materials such as pillows, rugs, fabric, or lamps.
5. Display books of Bahá'u'lláh and have photocopies of short excerpts from these books, p. 117 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
6. Provide 15-20 minutes of quiet, unstructured reading and reflection time.
7. Afterwards, ask students to come together to share their thoughts or feelings that resulted from this period of reading and reflection.

ACTIVITY: A BOOK OF DAILY READINGS

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To formulate a regular habit of reading the Words of Bahá'u'lláh

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- books of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings and short excerpts from these books (p. 117 of this Lesson Planning Guide)
- writing paper and pens

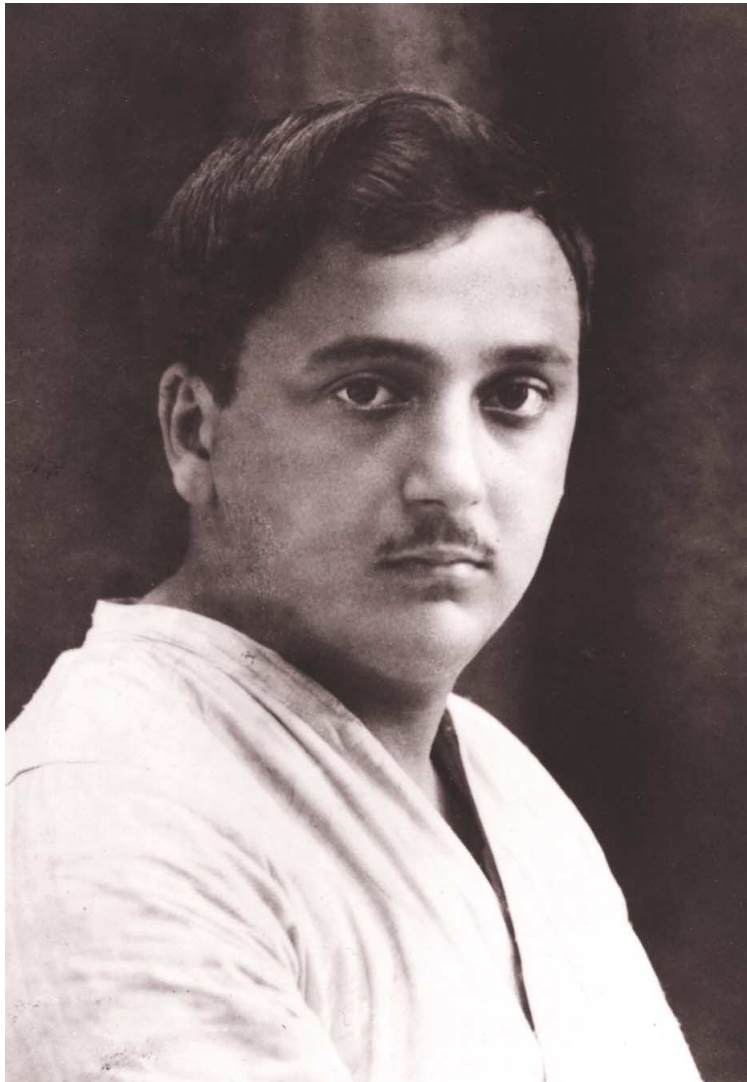
1. Ask each student to select several passages from the selections of Bahá'u'lláh's Books provided, for the class to compile into a book of daily readings.
2. Consider including two selections (one for morning and one for evening) for each day of the next Bahá'í month. Photocopy the collected writings, compile into booklets, and provide each student with a copy of the completed publication.

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Resource Pages

PHOTOGRAPH OF SHOGHI EFFENDI



DURATION OF THE BAHÁ'Í CYCLE

Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 32

Briefly, we say a universal cycle in the world of existence signifies a long duration of time, and innumerable and incalculable periods and epochs. In such a cycle the Manifestations appear with splendor in the realm of the visible until a great and supreme Manifestation makes the world the center of His radiance. His appearance causes the world to attain to maturity, and the extension of His cycle is very great. Afterward, other Manifestations will arise under His shadow, Who according to the needs of the time will renew certain commandments relating to material questions and affairs, while remaining under His shadow.

We are in the cycle which began with Adam, and its supreme Manifestation is Bahá'u'lláh.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 161

From this thou canst imagine the magnitude of the Bahá'í cycle—a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years.

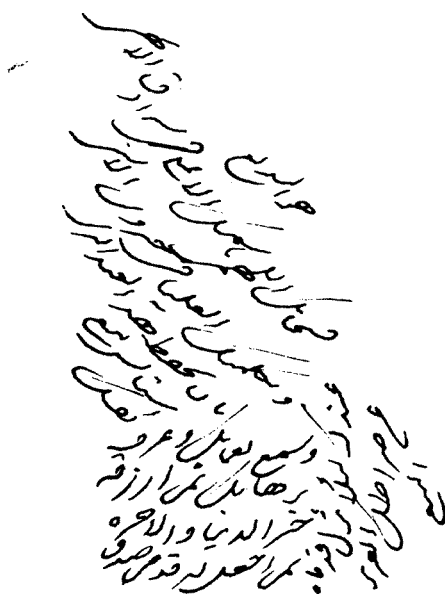
Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 102

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

TABLET OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
in His own handwriting

Intended for Háji Muhammad-Táhir-i-Málmírí



reprinted from *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. 1*, by Adib Taherzadeh
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TOPIC: SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SHORT EXCERPTS FROM BOOKS WRITTEN BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

O Son of Spirit!

My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words*, no. 1

O Son of Spirit!

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

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words*, no. 2

O Children of Men!

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

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words*, no. 68

O Son of Spirit!

Noble have I created thee, yet thou hast abased thyself. Rise then unto that for which thou wast created.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Arabic Hidden Words*, no. 22

Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 87

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 21

Through the movement of Our Pen of glory We have, at the bidding of the omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 92

From the sweet-scented streams of Thine eternity give me to drink, O my God, and of the fruits of the tree of Thy being enable me to taste, O my Hope!

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 258

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- “Who Is Bahá’u’lláh?” Jan/Feb 02
- “The Day of God” May/Jun 01
- “God’s Will” Jan/Feb 98
- “These Fruitless Strifes . . .,” SpEd 91
- “What the Kings Lost,” Mar/Apr 90
- “Salman, Courier for the King of Glory,” Jan/Feb 87
- “At the Prison Gates,” Jul/Aug 87
- “In the Midmost Heart of the Ocean,” Nov/Dec 86

The Central Figures: Bahá’u’lláh, Vol. Two: “Bamba and the Rainstorm,” “Changing the Heart”

Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Blessed Beauty*, “The True Paradise,” “Proclamation to the Kings and Rulers,” “The Most Holy Book,” “Fate of the Oppressors”

Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Story of Bahá’u’lláh*, “The Fate of the Oppressors”

Furutan, ‘Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 45, 72-73, 88, 99

Garst, Hitjo, *From Mountain to Mountain*, pp. 48-49, 64, 96-97

Wittman, Debbie, *The Birth of the Bahá’í Faith*, p. 16

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “Bahá’u’lláh’s Message” May/Jun 01

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- “These Children Are Pearls,” “One & Seventy Meanings,” Mar/Apr 92

Music:

Brilliant Star: “Greater Is God Than Every Great One” Jul/Aug 87

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.