

# TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

## THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

### SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: DETACHMENT, LOVE, SELFLESSNESS

I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love, and caused to spring forth by the hand of Thy bounty. This seed craveth, therefore, in its inmost being, for the waters of Thy mercy and the living fountain of Thy grace. Send down upon it, from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness, that which will enable it to flourish beneath Thy shadow and within the borders of Thy court. Thou art He Who watereth the hearts of all that have recognized Thee from Thy plenteous stream and the fountain of Thy living waters.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 178*

The principles of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah should be carefully studied, one by one, until they are realized and understood by mind and heart –so will you become strong followers of the light, truly spiritual, heavenly soldiers of God, acquiring and spreading the true civilization in Persia, in Europe, and in the whole world.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 22*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To know those principles from the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that are necessary for one's personal spiritual growth. Examples:
  - Independent search for truth
  - Elimination of all forms of prejudice
  - Administrative unity and doctrinal unity
  - Power of the Holy Spirit
  - Moral principles, such as: truthfulness, courtesy, chastity, humility, trustworthiness, refraining from backbiting, patience, kindness, etc.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have the students memorize the prayer, "I am, O my God, but a tiny seed..." Present the personal principles of Bahá'u'lláh as the means by which the seed will grow.
- Use visual aids to introduce the concepts of each of these principles.
- Have students work in groups to define the words used to name these personal principles.
- Use stories and the histories of the Faith to relate the effect of adherence to these principles on one's personal spiritual growth. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Have the students work in groups to research the Writings to discover principles from the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh related to personal spiritual growth.

### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that within the context of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh the only path to truth is by independent investigation
- To understand the important role of adherence to these principles for one's own spiritual growth

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share with the students passages from the Writings that relate to the principles necessary for one's personal spiritual growth.
- Examine 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talks in *Promulgation of Universal Peace* regarding the principle of the independent investigation of truth, then role play the process.
- Encourage the students to use various art media to demonstrate the role of these principles in one's personal spiritual growth.
- Have the students observe nature to create an analogy for the role of each of these principles in one's spiritual growth.
- Acquaint the students with examples from the history of the Faith that illustrate the importance of the independent investigation of truth. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**  
**TOPIC: THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

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## **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE**

- To perceive the necessity of adherence to these principles while undertaking all activities

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Role play various situations wherein one is provided an opportunity to incorporate one or more of these principles for spiritual growth.
- Use guided imagery to enable students to perceive themselves in situations that require adherence to these personal principles.
- Provide opportunities for the students to meditate on a selection from the Writings regarding living one's life according to these principles. How is the passage reflected in their own lives? See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Have the students trace some of the social ills of today's world to the lack of humanity's adherence to the personal principles taught by Bahá'u'lláh.
- Have students devise one of these principles as a goal to work on in their own life during a given Bahá'í month/year and bring themselves to account on their own progress.



## **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

- To apply these principles in all undertakings in one's life
- To use one's understanding and application of these principles to teach others about Bahá'u'lláh

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Assist the students in developing the practice of bringing oneself to account each day. Reflect on how one has applied Bahá'u'lláh's principles.
- Help the students plan and carry out service projects in their communities which reflect one or more of these principles.
- Provide opportunities for the students to give fireside talks on the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that provide for one's personal spiritual growth.

## TOPIC: THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

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### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY: REFLECTING THE LIGHT

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To have an understanding of the important role of adherence to these principles for one's own spiritual growth

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the essentiality of adherence to these principles while undertaking all activities

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- mirror
- lamp (optional)
- *Promulgation of Universal Peace* or quotations provided on p. 62 of this Lesson Planning Guide

1. Use a clean mirror to reflect sunlight outside, or a lamp inside. Read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comparison of the heart of a child to a mirror upon which no dust has fallen (*Promulgation of Universal Peace* p. 53). As it is read, have students assist in dropping "dust" (use lint from a dryer) on the mirror. Talk about what types of problems and tests each handful of lint could represent as it is dropped onto the mirror.
2. As the portion of the passage is read concerning man becoming pure through his strength, begin cleaning away the dust and polishing the mirror so it can shine again.
3. Suggest to the students that, as they know the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, they have the responsibility to keep their personal "mirrors" (hearts) clean, so that they can reflect the "light."
4. Read the final paragraph of *Promulgation of Universal Peace* on Resource Page 62.
5. Compare the reflection of the light in a clean mirror with the lack of reflection when a mirror is covered with lint.
6. Plan ways to clean the mirrors of our hearts by obeying the personal principles of Bahá'u'lláh. Before concluding the lesson today, adopt a specific line of action to more beautifully reflect the light of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings.

#### ACTIVITY: YE ARE THE STARS

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the essentiality of adherence to these principles while undertaking all activities

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of music

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- copies of Resource Page 63
1. Provide copies of Resource Page 63, "Ye Are the Stars." Read the words and discuss: How does it help us to know what God created us to be?
  2. Teach the song, "Ye Are the Stars."

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**ACTIVITY: PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know those principles from the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh that are necessary for one's spiritual growth

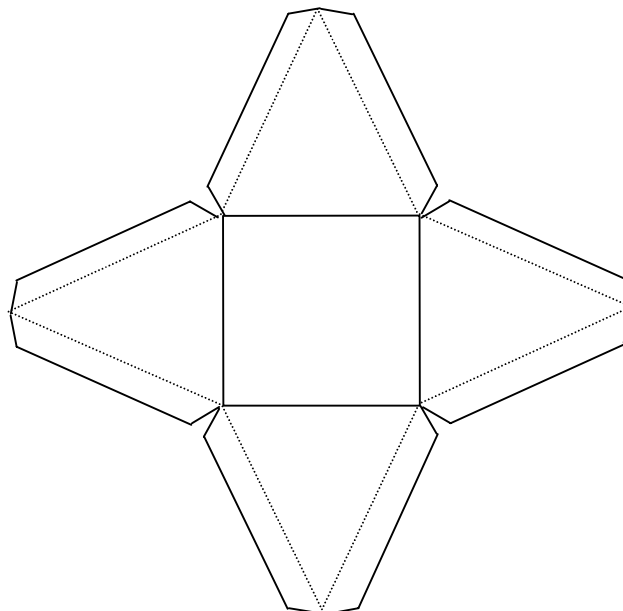
**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Sacred Writings; Engaging mind and heart; Use of science; Use of memorization; Use of power of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- enlarged polyhedron pattern provided on p. 64 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- shiny foil wrapping paper
- card stock
- permanent marker
- scissor, glue, string, paper, pencils, pens
- copies of Hidden Words, Words of Wisdom, Tarázát, Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih

1. Conduct an investigation into Bahá'u'lláh's Writings to discover what principles we should be reflecting. Use sources such as The Hidden Words, Words of Wisdom, Tarázát (Ornaments), Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih (Words of Paradise).
2. Have learners take notes, identifying specific virtues mentioned in the Writings, such as "knowledge," "trustworthiness," "helper of the poor," etc. Select one of the passages to memorize or memorize one of the quotations on p. 96 or p. 106 of *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*.
3. Create reflective ornaments of these principles: Use the polyhedron pattern provided. Glue shiny foil wrapping paper to light cardstock and trace the pattern onto this surface. Use permanent marker to write one of the personal principles or virtues on the shiny surface. Cut out and fold the three-dimensional shape together. Hang by a string in a window or near a light, so that the ornament can "reflect" that principle.
4. Compare ourselves with the ornaments, and how we must strive to shine forth with these personal principles in our daily lives.



## TOPIC: THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

### ACTIVITY: EXPRESSING THE PERSONAL PRINCIPLES OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that within the context of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh the only path to truth is by Independent Investigation

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*

1. Read and discuss the stories in *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, pp. 97-112. Refer to discussion questions on pp. 181-82 of that book.
2. Play Follow the Leader—everyone lines up behind the leader and imitates what the leader does. She might skip twice, hop once, and then crawl a few paces. She might go up some steps and down the steps. Wherever she goes, everyone must follow. The leader can walk like an elephant, or flap wings like a small bird, or cluck like a chicken. Encourage the leader to make the course especially challenging. Then find another leader. Repeat that game as desired.
3. Discuss the game: if the game were real life, what problems would there be in following a leader all the time? You might consult on the influences of peer pressure and gangs, and contrast these influences with obedience to parents and other authority. How can we tell the difference?
4. Ask: Why is it important to independently investigate the truth? Why is it also important to wholeheartedly adhere to the truth when we find it?

### ACTIVITY: REAL-LIFE MORAL DILEMMAS

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To apply these principles in all undertakings in one's life

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- props for role play
1. Have learners work in groups to create real-life situations in which someone must make a decision based on personal principles, rather than follow the actions of an individual or group with different values and standards.
  2. Create role-playing skits from these situations, as practice for handling these challenges in everyday life.
  3. Invite students to take one or more of the “ornaments” made earlier, to hang at home as a reminder of a personal principle of Bahá'u'lláh that they wish to reflect in their everyday life.

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**ACTIVITY: PLAN AND CARRY OUT A FIRESIDE PROGRAM**

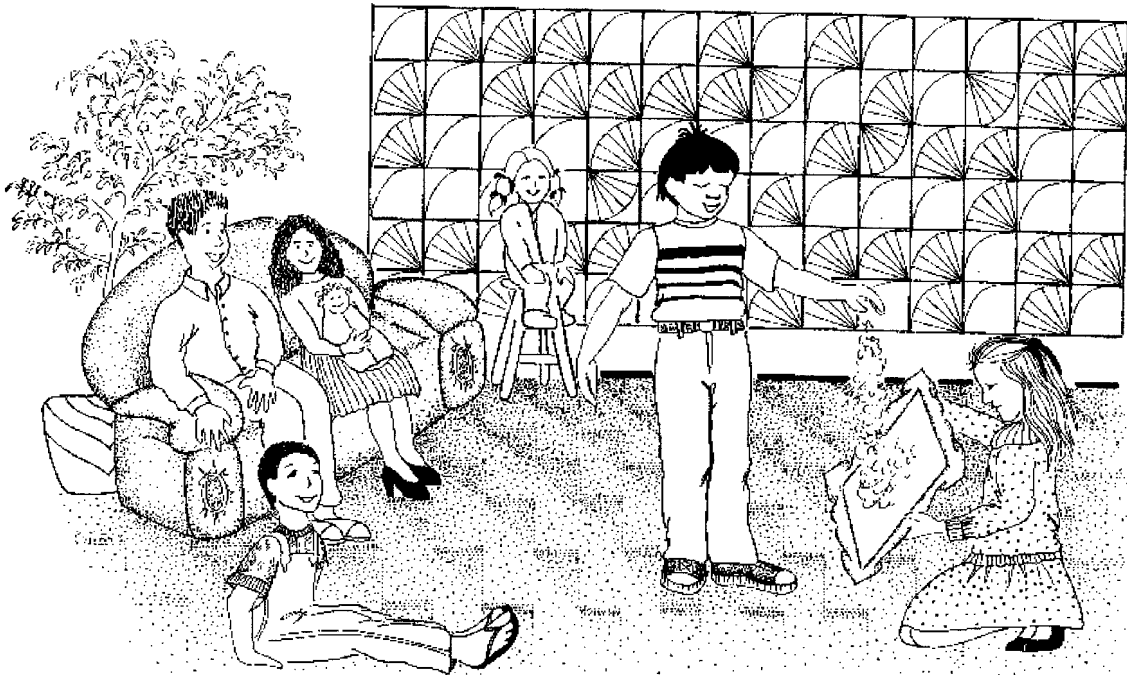
**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To use one's understanding and application of these Principles to teach others about Bahá'u'lláh

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- items from previous activities, as desired
1. Assist the students to plan a fireside for their friends, drawing upon the previous activities in this topic, such as the analogy of the mirror and the light, the Writings investigated on this topic, the stories from *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh Vol. Three*, and the role-playing situations that demonstrate the effect of Bahá'u'lláh's principles on an individual's behavior.
  2. Carefully plan these individual firesides: who will they invite? Will they invite their peers to assist or will they involve their families in a family-to-family fireside? Where and when will they convene their fireside?
  3. Remember to invite the students to share their successes and challenges with this fireside at the next class.



**Resource Pages**

**EXCERPTS FROM PROMULGATION OF UNIVERSAL PEACE**

The hearts of all children are of the utmost purity. They are mirrors upon which no dust has fallen. But this purity is on account of weakness and innocence, not on account of any strength and testing, for as this is the early period of their childhood, their hearts and minds are unsullied by the world. They cannot display any great intelligence. They have neither hypocrisy nor deceit. This is on account of the child's weakness, whereas the man becomes pure through his strength. Through the power of intelligence he becomes simple; through the great power of reason and understanding and not through the power of weakness he becomes sincere. When he attains to the state of perfection, he will receive these qualities; his heart becomes purified, his spirit enlightened, his soul is sensitized and tender - all through his great strength. This is the difference between the perfect man and the child. Both have the underlying qualities of simplicity and sincerity - the child through the power of weakness and the man through the power of strength.

*‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 53*

Your duty is of another kind, for you are informed of the mysteries of God. Your eyes are illumined; your ears are quickened with hearing. You must, therefore, look toward each other and then toward mankind with the utmost love and kindness. You have no excuse to bring before God if you fail to live according to His command, for you are informed of that which constitutes the good pleasure of God. You have heard His commandments and precepts. You must, therefore, be kind to all men; you must even treat your enemies as your friends. You must consider your evil-wishers as your well-wishers. Those who are not agreeable toward you must be regarded as those who are congenial and pleasant so that, perchance, this darkness of disagreement and conflict may disappear from amongst men and the light of the divine may shine forth, so that the Orient may be illumined and the Occident filled with fragrance, nay, so that the East and West may embrace each other in love and deal with one another in sympathy and affection. Until man reaches this high station, the world of humanity shall not find rest, and eternal felicity shall not be attained. But if man lives up to these divine commandments, this world of earth shall be transformed into the world of heaven, and this material sphere shall be converted into a paradise of glory. It is my hope that you may become successful in this high calling so that like brilliant lamps you may cast light upon the world of humanity and quicken and stir the body of existence like unto a spirit of life. This is eternal glory. This is everlasting felicity. This is immortal life. This is heavenly attainment. This is being created in the image and likeness of God. And unto this I call you, praying to God to strengthen and bless you.

*‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 470*



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## Ye Are the Stars

Spoken: Be not careless of the virtues with which ye have been endowed...neither be neglectful of your high station.

Music: Patti Murdrey  
Transcribed by Mimi McClellan

*Serenely*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 2/4 time signature. It consists of five staves of music. The lyrics are written below the notes. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets. The word 'Fine' is written above the end of the fourth staff, and 'D.C. al Fine' is written above the end of the fifth staff. The tempo marking 'Serenely' is at the beginning, and 'rit.' is placed above the fifth staff.

Ye are the stars of the heav-en of un-der-stand-ing— The breeze that  
stir-eth at the break of day. The soft flow-ing wa-ters— up-on which must de-  
pend the ver-y life— of all men.— Ye are the  
first a-mong men to be re-cre-a-ted by His spir-it— The first to a-  
dore and bow the knee be-fore— Him. The first to cir-cle round His throne of glo-ry.

*rit.* **Fine** **D.C. al Fine**

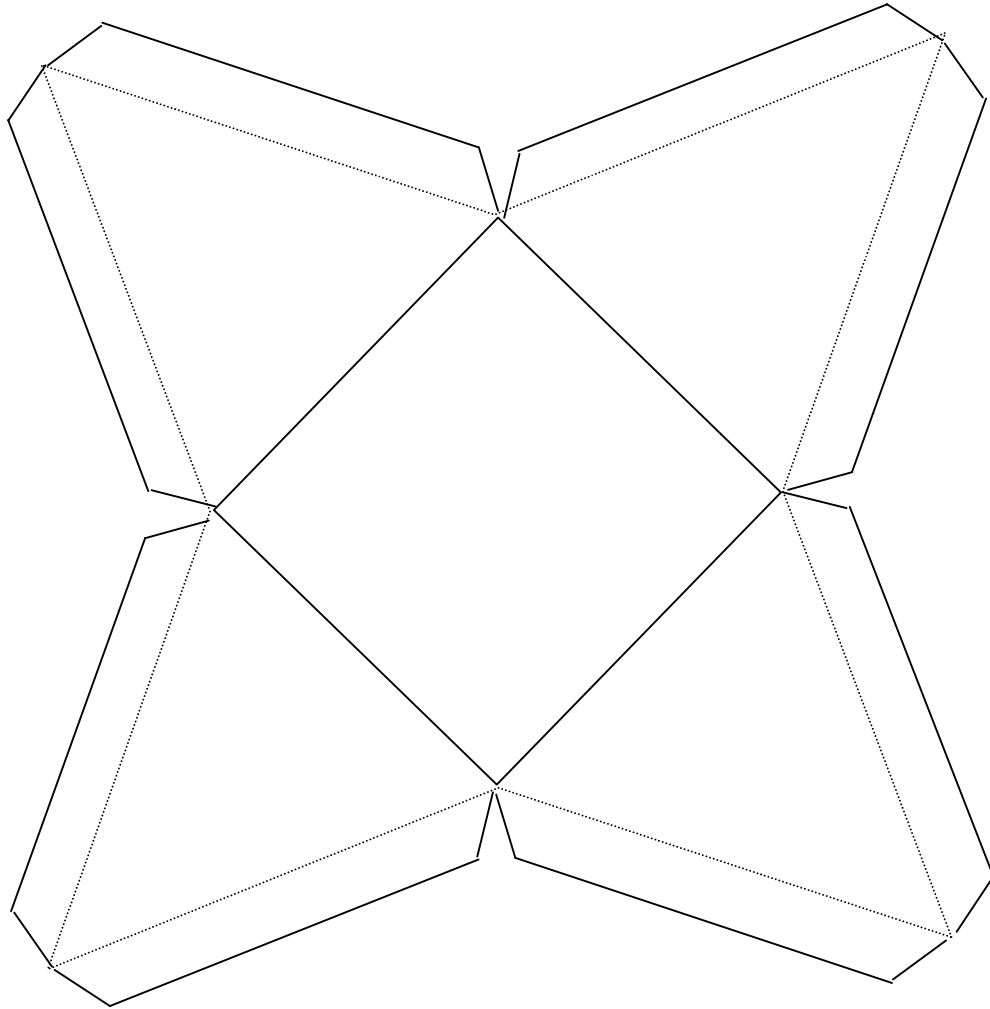
Words: Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings*, p.196

reprinted from Brilliant Star, January/February 1995

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

"Words Can Heal" Mar/Apr 02  
"What Does It Mean to Be Bahá'í?" Jan/Feb 02, p.18, 21, 24, 25  
"Virtuewoman: The Spices of Life" Nov/Dec 01  
"Stargazer: Linda Kavelin Popov" Nov/Dec 01  
"Virtuewoman: Finding Reverence" Sept/Oct 01  
"A Year of Service for Bahá'u'lláh" Jul/Aug 01  
"More than a Birthday" Jul/Aug 01  
"Virtueman: The Crooked Tree (Steadfastness)" Jul/Aug 01  
"Virtuewoman: Family Picnic (Forgiveness)" May/June 01  
"Virtuewoman: Just Ask (Independent Investigation)" Mar/Apr 01  
"Precious Jewels" Sept/Oct 00  
"Virtuewoman: Making It Happen (Purposefulness)" Sept/Oct 00  
"Virtuewoman: How Amethyst Served" Jul/Aug 00  
"Stargazer: Layli Miller Bashir" Jan/Feb 00  
"Virtuewoman: (Tolerance)" Jul/Aug 99  
"Virtueman (Service)" May/June 99  
"Questions and Answers with the McLaughlin Family" Mar/Apr 99  
"Virtuewoman (Courtesy)" Mar/Apr 99  
"The Truth Is Out There" Jan/Feb 99  
"Ruby Red's Dream" Nov/Dec 98  
"Virtuewoman (Caring)" Nov/Dec 98  
"A Small Sacrifice" Sept/Oct 98  
"Virtuewoman (Honesty)" Sept/Oct 98

"Mon Mahmudnizhad, Angel of Shiraz" Sept/Oct 98  
"Did You Ever See a Frog Flying?" Jul/Aug 98  
"Virtuewoman (Courage)" Jul/Aug 98  
"Promises Kept" May/June 98  
"Oh, Ella Bailey" May/June 98  
"God's Will" Jan/Feb 98  
"Source of Inspiration" Nov/Dec 97  
"A Bench for the Guardian" Nov/Dec 97  
"The Best Way to Teach" Sept/Oct 97  
"Honoring All Life" Jul/Aug 97  
"A Day to Remember" Jul/Aug 97  
"Y.W.C.A. Week without Violence" Jul/Aug 97

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three* (available Winter 2002)

Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Fruits of One Tree*, pp. 10-11, 23-34, 86-114,  
Danesh, Hossein, *The Promise, Vol. I*, p. 22-23, 26-27, 32-33., *Vol. II*, p. 15-19, 30-32, 36-39  
Furutan, 'Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 51, 56-58  
Heller, Wendy, *Clementine and the Cage*  
Niderost, Heather I., *The Light World*  
Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 70-79, 108-11, 170-77  
Popov, Linda Kavelin, *The Virtues Guide*  
Radley, Gail, *Second Birth, The Goal of Life*  
Taafaki, Irene, *Thoughts: Education for Peace and One World*

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star:*

"Virtues Treasure Hunt" Nov/Dec 01  
"What Do You Say?" Nov/Dec 01  
"Explore a Virtue" Nov/Dec 01  
"Virtues Alphabet Jumble" Nov/Dec 01  
"Dot-to-Dot: Work Is Worship" Jul/Aug 01  
"What Do You Say?" Jul/Aug 01  
"Behind the Veils" Jan/Feb 01  
"What do You Say?" Jan/Feb 01  
"My True Self" Jan/Feb 01  
"What Do You Say?" May/June 00  
"A World of Service" Jan/Feb 00  
"What Do You Say?" Jan/Feb 00  
"What Do You Say?" Jul/Aug 99  
"Teaching Toolbox Word Search" Jan/Feb 99

"Youth Can Move the World" Jul/Aug 98  
"What Does God Want Us to Do?" May/June 98  
"Show Your Love" Mar/Apr 98, p.5  
"The Essence of Wealth" Sept/Oct 96  
"More than Material Riches" Sept/Oct 96  
"Wealth Plan" Sept/Oct 96  
"The Light" Jul/Aug 96  
"Power Tools" Jan/Feb 96  
"My Teaching Kit" Jul/Aug 95  
"One Destiny Word-Puzzle," SpEd 95

Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 109, 111, 171, 173, 175, 177.,  
Nathesan, S. *Bahá'í Activities for Children*, pp. 8, 27, 28, 37

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### Activities:

#### *Brilliant Star:*

"Make a Virtues Calendar" Nov/Dec 01  
"Family Virtues Collage" Nov/Dec 01  
"Yoga with Liang" Sept/Oct 00  
"Mining Our Gems" SpEd 99  
"Spirit Masks" SpEd 98  
"Stand Ready: the Resolute Nickel" Jan/Feb 98  
"Clay of Love" Nov/Dec 97  
"Create Servants" Jul/Aug 97  
"Quality Tags" Mar/Apr 97  
"Be a Magnet for Bahá'u'lláh" Jan/Feb 97  
"Four Ways of Knowing" Jul/Aug 96  
"Weighty Matters" Mar/Apr 96  
"With Two Wings" Mar/Apr 96  
"Balance Your Life" Mar/Apr 96  
"Cooking Up a Plan" Mar/Apr 96

"Power of Attraction" May/June 95

"The Power Within You" SpEd 95

"Keys to Victory" SpEd 95

Coleman, Alonzo and Sandra and Petit, Diane  
Gobolub, *Hands On!* "Ed U Cation Puzzle,"

"Attributes of God Art Activity," "Order and  
Purpose Pencil Poke," "Order, Purpose and  
Beauty Awareness Activity," "Dress Your Best,"  
"Language is the Key Game," "What Would You  
Say, Dear," "Hungry for Attributes," "Hungry  
Harold Attribute Puppet"

Popov, Linda Kavelin, *The Virtues Guide*

Zavitz, Elaine, *Feast Activity Book*, "Feast of Masail,"  
p. 77, "Feast of Kalimát," p. 65, "True or False?,"  
p. 21, "Simon Says Please!," "Mirrors," p. 24

### Music:

#### *Brilliant Star:*

"Virtues Rap" Sept/Oct 99  
"The Backbiting Song" Jan/Feb 97  
"I Think You're Wonderful" Jan/Feb 96  
"Ye Are the Stars," Jan/Feb 95

*The Bahá'í Songbook*, "The Soul is the Sun"

*Sing a New Song*, "Consultation Means Finding Out  
Grammar, Red, *Teaching Peace (Songbook and CD)*

Hampton, Chris, *The Noble Thief*

Narges, *Desire of the Heart*

Russell, Jennifer, *The Virtues Songs*

### Drama:

#### *Brilliant Star:*

"Spirit upon Spirit" SpEd 98

"Everybody's Wonderful" Jan/Feb 96

"Do You Want Power or Unity?" Jul/Aug 95

"Princess Shayda" Jan/ Feb 94

"Tarred and Feathered" SpEd 93

"A Candle Play" Jul/Aug 90

Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Fruits of One Tree Activity Book*,

"Four Blind Mice," p. 89-91

### Poetry:

#### *Brilliant Star:*

"Which Wealth?" Sept/Oct 96

"The Light" Jul/Aug 96

"Taking Courage" Mar/Apr 94

"Dara of Deeds" Sep/Oct 93

"The Reluctant Seed" May/June 92

### Games:

#### *Brilliant Star:*

"Virtues Storytelling Game" Nov/Dec 01

"Serve the Servants" May/June 97

"Future Challenge Game" Nov/Dec 96

"Servant Game" May/June 96

"Customs of the Kingdom" Sept/Oct 95

"Unity Bingo" SpEd 95

"Helping Hands Game" May/June 95

"Travel and Teach" SpEd 94

"The Apostle Game" SpEd 94

"Mining Your Gems" SpEd 93

Coleman, Alonzo and Sandra and Petit, Diane

Bogolub, *Hands On!* "Granola Land Board

Game," "We Are Family Board Game," "Spirit of

Sacrifice Game," "Language is the Key Game"

Zavitz, Elaine, *Feast Activity Book*, "Virtue Card

Game," p. 19, "Courtesy Board Game," p. 17,

"Happy/Sad Board Game," p. 17, "Ring Around

the Temple," p. 16

### Lesson Plans:

Cox, Alice and Musacchia, Evelyn, *Bahá'í Teaching  
Guide for Children (Intermediate)*, "Hiding,"

"Noonday Prayer," "Never Tell A Bad Thing,"

"Cleanliness," "Work is Worship," "The Mirror of

the Heart," "The Kingdom of Man," "The Divine

Kingdom"

### Reference:

*The Divine Art of Living*