

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

**THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
COMPASSION, LOVE, HUMILITY**

...Those words that have streamed forth from the source of power and descended from the heaven of glory are innumerable and beyond the ordinary comprehension of man.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 5

The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. This is evidenced by those who, today, though without a single letter of the accepted standards of learning, are occupying the loftiest seats of knowledge; and the garden of their hearts is adorned, through the showers of divine grace, with the roses of wisdom and the tulips of understanding. Well is it with the sincere in heart for their share of the light of a mighty Day!

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 211

TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh come from God
- To know that there are hidden mysteries within Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Relate descriptions from the histories of the Faith referring to the manner in which the Verses were revealed through Bahá'u'lláh.
- Read stories about the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Demonstrate analogies from the Writings that explain the relationships between God, the Manifestation, and humankind, i.e., mirror and sun, rays of sun, ring stone symbol, etc.
- Use analogies from the Writings to demonstrate that there are hidden meanings within the Word of God (e.g. gems in mountains, pearls in oceans, etc.), which can be discovered through study, reflection, and meditation. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Discuss with the students the meaning of the title of Bahá'u'lláh's book, Hidden Words, and read the introductory paragraph by Bahá'u'lláh.



WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand that one will never unravel all the mysteries in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Physically demonstrate an analogy of the concept of continually discovering new secrets and treasures of meaning.
- Have the students work in groups to define words Bahá'u'lláh uses when describing the hidden meanings to be found in His Writings, e.g., illimitable, inherent, potentialities, searching eye, myriad, etc.
- Have students use measurements of thimble, cup and gallon to introduce concepts of capacity.
- Share with the students selections from Bahá'u'lláh's Writings explaining the inability of the finite to comprehend the Infinite.
- Discuss with the students the reasons why we may exchange our various understandings of the Writings, but may not impose our interpretations on one another.

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
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SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive that one's understanding of the mysteries in the Writings depends on one's level of spiritual awareness
- To perceive that one's understanding of the divine mysteries of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh is limited by one's human capacities

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Make correlations between one's physical and intellectual growth with the process of one's spiritual growth.
- Have students identify acts and experiences that increase one's spiritual awareness, i.e., prayer, study and reflection of God's Word, obedience to God's Laws, service, virtuous living, sacrifice, teaching, etc.
- Invite students to experience how music may uplift one's soul and increase spiritual understanding of the Writings.
- Share with the students a single passage from the Writings (e.g. a Hidden Word). Have students reflect, then compare with one another the many meanings each has derived from just one short passage.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE

- To formulate a daily habit of meditating and reflecting on the mysteries in the Writings

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Assist the students to create the physical space, and conditions conducive to, the habit of daily meditation and reflection on the mysteries in the Writings.
- Assist students to identify and locate portions of the Writings, the mysteries of which they wish to disclose.
- Provide opportunities for the students to share together their understanding of the Writings.
- Have students prepare a presentation for the community demonstrating how Bahá'u'lláh uses various words to have different meanings (can be a group activity).

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

TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: THE POWER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS: A WORLD OF MYSTERY

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that there are hidden mysteries within Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of reflection and meditation; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of questioning; Use of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 25 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- bookmarks, prepared in advance
- collection of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings (as many as possible)

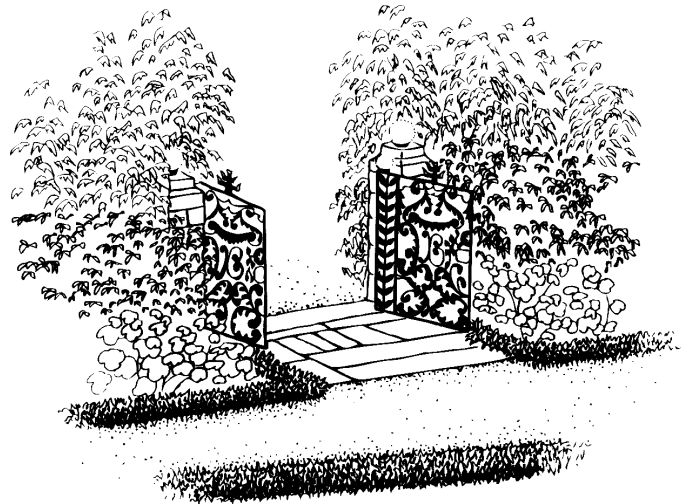
1. Conduct a guided visualization in which the student sees himself on a path that comes to a locked gate. He receives the key, labeled "Word of God" and on which is inscribed the verse,

The Word is the Master Key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked.

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

The key opens the gate, to unveil glorious, beautiful worlds. At the end of the visualization, the student keeps the key, knowing that he may return at any time.

2. When all the students have completed the visualization, remind them that they still have the key: the Word of God. Present each with a bookmark (shaped like, or with a drawing of, a key) on which is printed the verse read in the visualization.
3. Discuss together how God's words are like a key to our hearts, and our hearts are like heaven. When we share these Words with others and they respond, we create more and more of this heaven on earth. Think of times when you've enjoyed the heavenly experience of sharing Bahá'u'lláh's words with others in Bahá'í class, at a devotional meeting, a fireside, a Nineteen Day Feast, morning or evening prayers with family, or one-to-one with a seeker or another friend. Encourage the students to share these happy memories with the group.



4. Present to the students a collection of as many of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings as available. Open *Gleanings* to page 95 and read aloud:

"Through the power released by these exalted words He hath lent a fresh impulse, and set a new direction, to the birds of men's hearts..."

Briefly discuss and envision the power of Bahá'u'lláh's words and their effect on the "birds of men's hearts."
5. Open and leaf through one of Bahá'u'lláh's books, showing students the pages. Discuss the question: Do these words look any different than the words in any other book? What is the power they have? How do they unlock the doors of our hearts? What examples can we think of and share about the power of these words? Think of stories that we've enjoyed in this class. Which stories describe the power of Bahá'u'lláh's words to change our actions? How can we choose to align ourselves with this power?

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TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: AN ANALOGY FOR THE MANIFESTATION

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh come from God

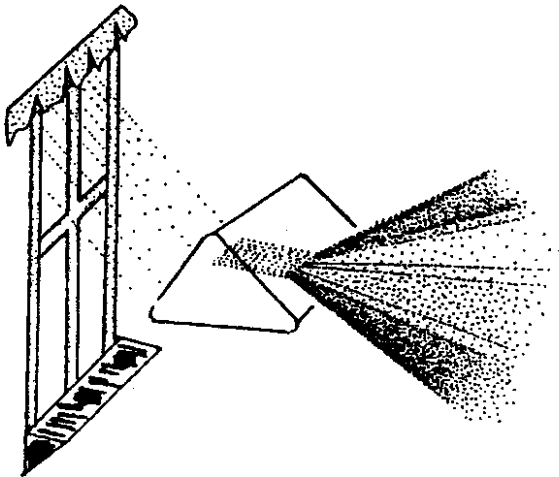
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of science; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Engaging mind and heart; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of questioning; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- crystal prism

1. Compare sunlight coming through a window as our thoughts and ideas: the source of the light is the sun (God), and we use it to see (understand, explain things, etc.) but we don't create anything new out of it: it's just white sunlight.
2. Hold a crystal prism up to the sunny window: compare the prism to the Manifestation. His Light, His Words reveal to us all the hidden meanings and secrets of God as no human can. The colors were always there within the sunlight, but alone and unaided we cannot see them.
3. Discuss: Does the crystal create the colors? Where do they come from? Where do Bahá'u'lláh's Words come from? Does He make them up Himself? Share some of Bahá'u'lláh's Words concerning Whose Words He speaks, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 11:



O King! I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.

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

TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: INNER MEANINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that one will never unravel all the mysteries in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive one's understanding of the mysteries in the Writings depends on one's level of spiritual awareness

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of science

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- paper, toothpicks, lemon juice
- candle
- selected quotations

1. Tell students that while Bahá'u'lláh reveals the mysteries and hidden meanings of God's Message, it is up to each of us to search them out.

2. Hold up a piece of paper on which you have previously written, using a toothpick dipped in lemon juice, a message such as the following verse from *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 188:

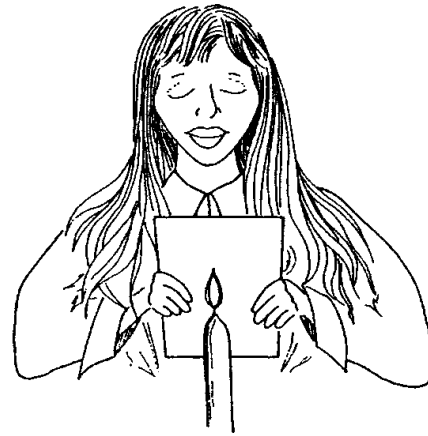
In these words the mysteries of Divine Wisdom have been treasured.

The paper appears to be blank.

3. Tell the learners that without striving, working hard to develop spiritual eyesight, the words in these Books will be as empty of meaning as this page. Share with them this passage from a prayer for the Fast, also in *Prayers and Meditations* p. 83:

Number me not with them who read Thy words and fail to find Thy hidden gift which, as decreed by Thee, is contained therein, and which quickeneth the souls of Thy creatures and the hearts of Thy servants.

4. Using a candle as the "lamp of search," move the paper back and forth above the flame until the secret message is revealed.



5. Share Bahá'u'lláh's assertion, *Kitáb-i-Iqán*, p. 255, that

We speak one word, and by it We intend one and seventy meanings; each one of these meanings We can explain.

6. Give examples in which Bahá'u'lláh explains several meanings for a verse. For instance in the *Kitáb-i-Iqán* between pages 33 and 42, He gives four meanings for one Biblical prophecy. (See "Several Meanings" on p. 96 of this Lesson Planning Guide.)
7. Have students work in pairs or small groups. Provide a choice of pre-selected passages (such as those on pp. 97-98 of this Guide) from books such as *The Hidden Words*, *The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys*, *Prayers and Meditations*, or *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, to read, ponder, and discuss together, seeking some possible meanings for the passages they've chosen. Provide ample time for in-depth exploration.

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8. Invite each group to share some of the meanings they discovered.
9. Memorize the passage on p. 156 of *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, included on p. 89 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
10. Read and discuss one or more of the stories in *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, pp. 149-62. Then ask, “In what ways did the characters in these stories discover the mysteries and hidden meanings in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh?”

ACTIVITY: MEANINGS IN A SINGLE VERSE

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To formulate the daily habit of meditating and reflecting on the mysteries in the Writings

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

1. Pose the question: What if you read the same passage every day? Would you ever stop learning from it?
2. Add up all the words in one sentence of one passage. Multiply the total by 71. “That many meanings in a single sentence! Would anyone ever learn all there was to discover in **all** of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings?!”
3. Share Bahá'u'lláh's admonition to “recite the verses of God every morn and eventide.” Compare this to a twice-daily visit through the gate into the beautiful world in their visualization. Explain that our bodies need food several times a day to stay healthy. In the same way our souls need the spiritual sustenance that comes from the Word of God.
4. In closing, encourage each student to select one of Bahá'u'lláh's books in which they will immerse themselves that very evening, or provide inexpensive copies of a Bahá'í book, or discuss with the students how they can use the books available in their homes.
5. Provide opportunities to share feelings and discoveries concerning the Writings on a regular basis.

TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Resource Pages

SEVERAL MEANINGS

And now, concerning His words - "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." By the terms "sun" and "moon," mentioned in the writings of the Prophets of God, is not meant solely the sun and moon of the visible universe. Nay rather, manifold are the meanings they have intended for these terms. In every instance they have attached to them a particular significance. Thus, by the "sun" in one sense is meant those Suns of Truth Who rise from the dayspring of ancient glory, and fill the world with a liberal effusion of grace from on high....

In another sense, by these terms is intended the divines of the former Dispensation, who live in the days of the subsequent Revelations, and who hold the reins of religion in their grasp...

In another sense, by the terms 'sun', 'moon', and 'stars' are meant such laws and teachings as have been established and proclaimed in every Dispensation, such as the laws of prayer and fasting...

Moreover, in the traditions the terms "sun" and "moon" have been applied to prayer and fasting...

Bahá'u'lláh: *The Kitáb-i-Iqán*, pp. 33-39

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TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

EXPLORE THE HIDDEN MEANINGS

Incline your ears to the sweet melody of this Prisoner. Arise, and lift up your voices, that haply they that are fast asleep may be awakened. Say: O ye who are as dead! The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill. Whoso hath been re-born in this Day, shall never die; whoso remaineth dead, shall never live.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 213

THE VALLEY OF SEARCH The steed of this Valley is patience; without patience the wayfarer on this journey will reach nowhere and attain no goal. Nor should he ever be downhearted; if he strive for a hundred thousand years and yet fail to behold the beauty of the Friend, he should not falter. ...

It is incumbent on these servants that they cleanse the heart - which is the wellspring of divine treasures - from every marking, and that they turn away from imitation, which is following the traces of their forefathers and sires, and shut the door of friendliness and enmity upon all the people of the earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, Seven Valleys and Four Valleys, p. 5

O SON OF DUST! Blind thine eyes, that thou mayest behold My beauty; stop thine ears, that thou mayest hearken unto the sweet melody of My voice; empty thyself of all learning, that thou mayest partake of My knowledge; and sanctify thyself from riches, that thou mayest obtain a lasting share from the ocean of My eternal wealth. Blind thine eyes, that is, to all save My beauty; stop thine ears to all save My word; empty thyself of all learning save the knowledge of Me; that with a clear vision, a pure heart and an attentive ear thou mayest enter the court of My holiness.

Bahá'u'lláh, Persian Hidden Words, p. 11

TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

O FRIEND! 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. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.

Bahá'u'lláh: *Persian Hidden Words*, p. 3

O MY BROTHER! Hearken to the delightsome words of My honeyed tongue, and quaff the stream of mystic holiness from My sugar-shedding lips. Sow the seeds of My divine wisdom in the pure soil of thy heart, and water them with the water of certitude, that the hyacinths of My knowledge and wisdom may spring up fresh and green in the sacred city of thy heart.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Persian Hidden Words*, p. 33

Suffer me not, O my Lord, to be deprived of the knowledge of Thee in Thy days, and divest me not of the robe of Thy guidance. Give me to drink of the river that is life indeed, whose waters have streamed forth from the Paradise (Ridván) in which the throne of Thy Name, the All-Merciful, was established, that mine eyes may be opened, and my face be illumined, and my heart be assured, and my soul be enlightened, and my steps be made firm.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 4

I implore Thee, O Thou Who art the Supreme Ordainer, not to suffer me to be deprived of the breezes which are wafted in Thy days, the days whereon the sweet smell of the raiment of Thy mercy hath been shed abroad. Neither do Thou keep me back from Thy most great Ocean, every drop of which crieth out and saith: “Great is the blessedness that awaiteth him who hath been awakened from his sleep by the breath of God which, from the source of His mercy, hath blown over all such of His creatures as have set themselves towards Him!”

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, p. 52

GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
TOPIC: THE MYSTERIES AND HIDDEN MEANINGS
IN THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- "An Unforgettable Teacher" Mar/Apr 01
 - "Mysterious Signs" Mar/Apr 01
 - "Discover Seeds of Health" Sept/Oct 00
 - "The Amazing Body" Sept/Oct 00
 - "Kids' Thoughts about the Sacred Writings" Nov/Dec 98
 - "Ocean of his Words" Nov/Dec 98
 - "The Joy and Wonder" Nov/Dec 98
 - "Manifestations" May/June 97
 - "The Art of Meditation" Mar/Apr 97
 - "Between Two Worlds" May/June 93
 - "My Forever Friends" May/June 93
 - "The Flight of Birds" May/June 93
 - "The Garden of Happiness" May/June 93
 - "The Messenger of Joy" May/June 93
 - "The Mysteries of Dreams" May/June 93
 - "The Sea of Light" May/June 93
 - "Travels of the Spirit" May/June 93
 - "You're Born Twice But You Only Die Once" May/June 93
 - "Some Plants Grow in the Writings" May/June 92
 - "The Nightingale" Nov/Dec 88
- The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*
Fshin, Mahnaz, *A Journey through the Hidden Words*
Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Story of Bahá'u'lláh*, "Memorable Incidents"
- Furutan, 'Ali-Akbar, *Stories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 24-25, 43
- Garst, Hitjo, *From Mountain to Mountain*, pp. 50-51, 112
- Radley, Gail, *The Quest*

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

- "In a Single Breath" Jan/Feb 01
- "Solving Mysteries" Nov/Dec 98
- "The Pearl" Nov/Dec 98
- "Solve the Mystery" May/June 97
- "Dig Deep for Meaning" May/June 97
- "A Matter of Spirit" Jan/Feb 97
- "Hidden Word Circles" May/June 93
- "Memory Pictures" May/June 92

Games:

- Brilliant Star:* "The Same Game" SpEd 95

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- "A Sign from God" SpEd 98
 - "Power Verse" SpEd 98
 - "Accord'n to My Heart!" Nov/Dec 98
 - "Butterfly Light Catcher" Nov/Dec 97
 - "Glorious Colors" Nov/Dec 97
 - "Clay of Love" Nov/Dec 97
 - "Peep Art" Nov/Dec 97
 - "Dig Deep for Meaning" May/June 97
 - "The Art of Meditation" Mar/Apr 97
 - "Make a Meditation Journal" Mar/Apr 97
 - "Walk with the Same Feet" SpEd 95
 - "The Shining Cloak" Nov/Dec 95
 - "Secret Essence Picture," Nov/Dec 94
 - "What Do You See?," Nov/Dec 94
 - "Dry in the Sea," Nov/Dec 94
 - "Catch a Fragrance," Nov/Dec 94
 - "Robes of Courtesy," SpEd 93
 - "The Garden of Happiness," May/June 93
 - "Dream Jewels Book," Mar/Apr 92
 - "These Children Are Pearls" Mar/Apr 92
 - "One and Seventy Meanings" Mar/Apr 92
- Firman, Mary, *Journey into Exile*, p13
- Zavitz, Elaine, *Feast Activity Book*: "Feast of Izzat, alternate material," "Feast of Kalimát"

Music:

Brilliant Star:

- "Ponder Awhile" Mar/Apr 97
 - "The Pearl" Nov/Dec 98
 - "The Soul Is The Sun," May/June 93
- Music of the Bahá'í World Congress*
Official Opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Bab
- Bahá'í Gospel Choir, *We have Come to Sing Praises*
- Grammer, Red, intoned by, *Tablet of Ahmad*
- Mackay, Caroline, *O Most Mighty Ocean: Selected Passages from the Kitab-i-'Aqdas*
- Munro, Gordi, *Unity in Diversity*
- Narges, *Desire of the Heart*
- Parrish, Paul, *Selections from the Bahá'í Writings*
- 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-Baha*
- Wright, Susan Lewis, *Bird*

Lesson Plans:

- The Word of God*

**TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH
THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
THE MAJOR TEXTS OF
THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
LOVE, HUMILITY, FAITH**

O friend of mine! The Word of God is the king of words and its pervasive influence is incalculable. It hath ever dominated and will continue to dominate the realm of being. The Great Being saith: The Word is the master key for the whole world, inasmuch as through its potency the doors of the hearts of men, which in reality are the doors of heaven, are unlocked.

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

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.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 73

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To know the titles of the major texts revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, their major content, focus and the circumstances of their revelation:
 - Tablets Revealed in “Akká
 - Letters to the Kings and Rulers
 - The Hidden Words
 - The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys
 - The Summons of the Lord of Hosts
 - The Kitáb-i-Aqdas
 - The Kitáb-i-Íqán
 - The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf
 - Tablets and Prayers, etc.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Present each of Bahá'u'lláh's major texts individually, allowing students to hold, look through and become sensorially acquainted with each book.
- Recount the story of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation of each Text and the circumstances surrounding it. Make use of maps and visual aids to locate the place of the revelation of each. See *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three* for some of these stories and for a map of Bahá'u'lláh's travels.
- Have students work in groups to outline the main focus of the various Texts. Have each student develop a spiritual notebook where they keep notes about each of the texts.
- Create a permanent library of the major texts of Bahá'u'lláh, accessible to the students.

WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand the great wealth of spiritual guidance within His Writings

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use analogies for the great wealth contained in all of these Texts (e.g. treasures, an ocean, perfume, etc.)
- Compare the revealed Word of God found in the world's previous religions with the wealth of the vast Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh. Reflect on the effect of this outpouring of revelation on humanity, considering the effects previous Revelations have had.
- Provide an activity wherein students select pages from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, discovering inspiration and guidance on any page. See quotations in *The Central Figures, Bahá'u'lláh, Volume Three*.
- Have students work in groups to discover that Bahá'u'lláh's Writings cover a vast range of topics.

TOPIC: MAJOR TEXTS OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To recognize the joy of communion with the texts of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Sing and/or listen to verses of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings set to music.
- Have students choose portions of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings that they find personally motivating, and use the medium of dance or other art forms to express the emotions evoked.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To develop the habit of turning to the Writings for inspiration and guidance
- To strive “to translate that which hath been written into reality and action”

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Assist the students to structure their daily lives so that time is given, morning and evening, for reading and reflecting on the Writings.
- Model the habit of continually turning to the Writings for guidance, development, strength and inspiration, and have students share with each other these experiences.
- Assist students in building their own personal library of the major texts of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Provide opportunities for the students to present and read from various texts of Bahá'u'lláh at the Nineteen Day Feast and other devotional programs. At each feast, one of the students can introduce one of the texts and talk about its revelation, its content, and read a passage from it.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S REVELATION AND ME

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize the joy of communion with the texts of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To develop the habit of turning to the Writings for inspiration and guidance

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of stories; Use of questioning; Direct use of Sacred Writings; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- several books of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings or copies of selected quotations, one set of readings for each student. You may also consider asking students to bring one of their own books to class for this activity.
- *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*
- access to the out-of-doors, if possible
- student journals or writing paper and pen for each student

1. Read the story, "The Revelation of Tablets," pp. 164-65, and the quotations on p. 166 and 174, *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*. Discuss the questions: How is it possible for us to draw close to Bahá'u'lláh today? Encourage the students to share their own personal experiences studying the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Discuss: What are some of our happy memories of reading the Word of God? What are some changes that we have made in our own lives as a result of studying the Word of God? What are some acts of service that the Word of God inspires in our daily lives or on special occasions? What are some specific ways that we can create time and space for this sacred study?
3. After a brief discussion period, invite the students to leave the classroom individually and in silence to find a quiet space to read and reflect on Bahá'u'lláh's Words. Encourage them to use Bahá'u'lláh's Words to draw close to Him. Ask each student to find a space, outdoors if possible, to be alone with these Writings. Observe silence and solitude for this period of reading, then re-convene the group.
4. Invite them to record their reflections in their journals. Encourage them also to return to their plan for regular reading and study of the Sacred Text. What progress have they made? What obstacles have they encountered? What strategies can they devise to overcome these obstacles? How can we support each other in this process? What victories have we seen?

TOPIC: MAJOR TEXTS OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: RESPONDING TO THE WORD OF GOD

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the great wealth of spiritual guidance within His Writings

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize the joy of communion with the texts of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of stories; Use of consultation; Use of peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

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

1. Invite the students to work in three groups: Assign each group to read and discuss one of the stories, "Papers in the River," "A Radiant Point of Light," or "Out of the Box," and discuss the appropriate questions, p. 182 in *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*.
2. After reading and discussing the story, ask each group to tell the story to the class and explain why they think this story assists us to understand the importance of reading the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.
3. Encourage the students to read the stories that their group was not assigned outside of class.

ACTIVITY: A "BAHÁ'Í-BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH-CLUB"

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the titles of the major texts revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, their major content, focus and circumstances of their Revelation

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the great wealth of spiritual guidance within His Writings

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To recognize the joy of communion with the texts of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To develop the habit of turning to the Writings for inspiration and guidance

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct us of the Sacred Writings; Engaging mind and heart; Use of stories; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of creativity; Use of arts



SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30-60 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Books and Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
- poster paper, art materials

1. Have students work together in groups to review a different book or tablet of Bahá'u'lláh each Bahá'í month.
2. Assist the students to use as resources *The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, Volumes 1-4* by Adib Taherzadeh, *God Passes By* by Shoghi Effendi, as well as the actual book or tablet they are reviewing.

Activity continues on next page ⇒

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

TOPIC: MAJOR TEXTS OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

3. Ask the learners to discover the following information about their book or Tablet, and prepare a verbal report or an article in the community's newsletter that includes:
 - The book or Tablet's title in the original Arabic or Farsí, and in English.
 - The story of when, where, to whom and under which circumstances it was revealed.
 - Its major themes (and in the case of a longer book, the themes of its sections).
 - Select a few of the group's favorite passages from the book or Tablet.
 - Describe when or why you would turn to this Book or Tablet, and why others would wish to do so.
4. Also ask each group to create a dignified and beautiful poster for their book or Tablet.
5. As an encouragement for individual and community deepening, present one book or Tablet at each Nineteen Day Feast.
6. Arrange for the students to meet the community librarian, or manager of a Bahá'í bookstore, to explore the promotion of a Bahá'í-Book-of-the-Month which could include the students' poster and written review, and a special display of that text.
7. Arrange for the students to meet with the individuals responsible for Bahá'í book sales at Unit Convention or other meetings. Discuss the possible use of all the posters, and the students' own knowledge of the books, in setting up the display.

ACTIVITY: CREATE A TIME LINE OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH'S WRITINGS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the titles of the major texts revealed by Bahá'u'lláh and the circumstances of their Revelation

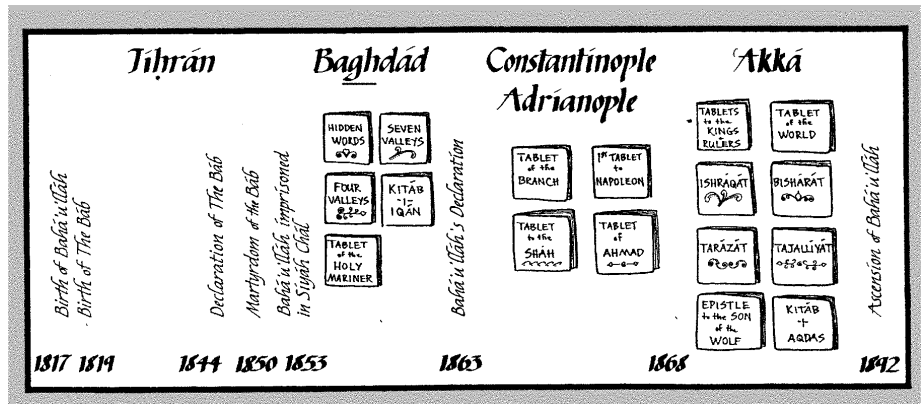
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward recognition of God; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of manipulatives

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- butcher paper or large display material
- paper cut-out book shapes
- Books and Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh

1. From the students' research of where and when each of the major Texts were revealed, create a large time line representing Bahá'u'lláh's life. Refer to p. 109 of this Guide as desired.
2. Determine the scale to be used, and mark important dates in His life and Ministry.
3. Label and color-code the time-line to show the different places Bahá'u'lláh lived at various stages of His Ministry. The first section should read "Tíhrán," then "Baghdád," "Constantinople," "Adrianople" and "Akká."



4. Using the resources listed earlier, determine the approximate dates and location of the revelation of the major books and tablets. Make paper cut-out book shapes for each text, and place it on the time line in its correct place.
5. Create a display of the actual books and tablets themselves, grouped according to the time and place each was revealed.

TOPIC: MAJOR TEXTS OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

ACTIVITY: TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT THE WORD OF GOD

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To develop the habit of turning to the Writings for inspiration and guidance

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Sacred Writings; Service to humanity; Use of creativity; Use of arts; Use of reflection; Use of peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. PREPARATION PLUS 45 MIN. ACTIVITY WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Materials Needed:

- sources for favorite passages from Writings
- paper and other materials for making booklets

1. Plan an occasion to teach younger children about the importance of the Word of God. Discuss whether the class would like to prepare a lesson for a younger class at the Bahá'í School, an activity for younger children in the community, or an outreach activity for children of individuals just learning about the Bahá'í faith: Where and when could you offer this service? Would you serve refreshments? How would you offer invitations? Would you go to them or invite them to come to you? Would you host them in a home or at a Bahá'í center?
2. To prepare materials for teaching children:
 - Divide a favorite passage into several brief phrases. For each phrase, draw a simple picture, or visual symbol, to illustrate the meaning of that phrase.
 - Compile a small booklet that has the words on the left-side page, and its corresponding picture or symbol on the right side of the page.
3. When your teaching booklets are ready, plan the details of the lesson: Would you like to select prayers, readings, and music that the children would enjoy so that you can begin the lesson with a short devotional program? Would you like to select one of the stories from your book, *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Vol. Three*, to re-tell in simpler language for the children? Is there another story that you'd prefer to read or tell the children? How will you engage their interest in the story? Do you need any supplies or equipment? Who will bring them?
4. When meeting with the children, encourage the students to:
 1. Lovingly greet the children and provide introductions if necessary.
 2. Share their short devotional program and story.
 3. Sit with a younger child in a comfortable place, so that one student and one younger child can work together.
 4. Read your teaching booklet together, drawing the child's attention to the words and the symbols.
 5. Memorize the passage with the child, by first reading the words and looking at the drawings, and then looking only at the drawings and remembering the words.
 6. Encourage the child to say prayers and read the Writings on a daily basis.
 7. Present the teaching booklet as a gift to the child.
 8. Before saying goodbye, make a plan for the student to check in with the child about a week later to continue to encourage the children in their daily readings and prayers.
5. After concluding this activity with younger children, discuss with the students the successes and challenges of this meeting. Continue to cultivate bonds with these younger children over time.

ACTIVITY: TRANSLATING WORDS INTO DEEDS

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To strive “to translate that which hath been written into reality and action”

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward recognition of God; Service to humanity; Use of memorization and reflection; Use of parables and stories

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY:

Materials Needed:

- student journals or writing paper and pens for each student

1. Remind the students that the process of spiritual education continues throughout our lives as we strive to learn more about the Revelation of God for this day, to develop spiritual qualities, and to contribute our share to bettering the world through service and teaching His Cause.
2. Carefully discuss the meaning of this quotation:
It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 166
3. Memorize this quotation.
4. Share the following brief story told by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about a time when the eloquent Tahirih was staying in Bahá'u'lláh's home in Tíhrán:
One day the great Siyyid Yahyá, surnamed Vahid, was present there. As he sat without, Tahirih listened to him from behind the veil. I was then a child, and was sitting on her lap. With eloquence and fervor, Vahid was discoursing on the signs and verses that bore witness to the advent of the new Manifestation. She suddenly interrupted him and, raising her voice, vehemently declared: “O Yahyá! Let deeds, not words, testify to thy faith, if thou art a man of true learning. Cease idly repeating the traditions of the past, for the day of service, of steadfast action, is come. Now is the time to show forth the true signs of God, to rend asunder the veils of idle fancy, to promote the Word of God, and to sacrifice ourselves in His path. Let deeds, not words, be our adorning!”

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 201
5. Provide the students with a copy of the requisites for spiritual growth, summarized by the Universal House of Justice, and provided on p. 110 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
6. Encourage the students to reflect back on their study of the topics of *The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Level Three*. They may refer to their journals or simply recall their experience. Invite them to acknowledge their successes, monitor their progress toward long-term goals, and either select a new goal or refine their line of action for achieving a current goal. Invite them to use mutual collaboration and support so that the entire group progresses together.
7. After their plans are recorded, conclude this unit of study with singing, prayers for divine assistance, happy fellowship, and plans to begin the next unit of study at a particular time and place.

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

Resource Pages

SOME OF THE MAJOR WORKS REVEALED BY BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

BAGHDÁD EXILE (1853 – 1863)

The Four Valleys
The Seven Valleys
The Hidden Words (circa 1858)
The Kitáb-i-Íqán (1862)
Tablet of the Holy Mariner (Naw-Rúz 1863)

ADRIANOPE EXILE (1863-1868)

Tablet of Ahmad
Tablet of Bahá
First Tablet to Napoleon III
Tablet to Násiri'd-Dín Sháh
Súriy-i-Mulúk (Tablet of the Kings)
Prayers for Fasting

'AKKÁ EXILE (1868-1877)

Kitáb-i-Aqdas
Tablet of the Czar
Tablet to Queen Victoria
Second Tablet to Napoleon III
Tablet to the Pope
The Fire Tablet (circa 1871)

MAZRA'IH AND BAHJÍ (1877-1892)

Bishárát (Glad Tidings)
Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (1891)
Ishráqát (Splendours)
Words of Paradise
Kitáb-i-Ahd (1892)
Lawh-i-Aqdas
Tablet of Carmel (1891)
Tajalliyát (1885-86)
Tarázát

REQUISITES FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Bahá'u'lláh has stated quite clearly in His Writings the essential requisites for our spiritual growth, and these are stressed again and again by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His talks and Tablets. One can summarize them briefly in this way:

1. The recital each day of one of the Obligatory Prayers with pure-hearted devotion.
2. The regular reading of the Sacred Scriptures, specifically at least each morning and evening, with reverence, attention and thought.
3. Prayerful meditation on the Teachings, so that we may understand them more deeply, fulfil them more faithfully, and convey them more accurately to others.
4. Striving every day to bring our behaviour more into accordance with the high standards that are set forth in the Teachings.
5. Teaching the Cause of God.
6. Selfless service in the work of the Cause and in the carrying on of our trade or profession.

The Universal House of Justice, *Messages 1963 to 1986*, p. 589

TOPIC: MAJOR TEXTS OF THE WRITINGS OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- "My Covenant To-Do List" May/June 98
- "The Most Holy Book," SpEd 93
- "The Right of God," SpEd 93
- "The Sun of Bahá Has Set," Mar/Apr 92
- "A Covenant is a Promise," SpEd 92

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

- Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Blessed Beauty*, pp. 48, 59, 64, 87
- Afshin, Mahnaz, *A Journey through the Hidden Words*
- Afshin, Mahnaz, *The Story of Bahá'u'lláh:*
 - "Proclamation to the Kings and Rulers" and p. 16
- Cox, Alice and Musacchia, Evelyn, *Bahá'í Teaching Guide for Children (Intermediate)* "Bahá'u'lláh—All People in the World Are Neighbors"
- Danesh, Hossein, *The Promise (#1)* pp.16-19, 39 *The Promise (#2)* pp. 8-9
- Garst, Hitjo, *From Mountain to Mountain*, "The Book of Certitude (I)," "The Most Holy Book, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas," also pp. 88, 115, 121, 152, 157
- Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 34-37, 122-23
- Radley, *The Quest*
- Wittman, Debbie D., *The Birth of the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 20

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

- "A Book of Hidden Treasures" Mar/Apr 02
- "Seven Valleys" Jan/Feb 01
- "My Covenant To-Do List" May/June 98
- "Memory Pictures," May/June 92
- "Memory Passage: Kitáb-i-Iqán, Jan/Feb 90, Mar/Apr 90
- Oldziej, Peter, *The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh* pp. 35, 37, 123
- Nathesan, S., *Bahá'í Activities for Children*, pp. 4, 7, 37

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- "The Dawn of a New Day" Nov/Dec 01
- "Hidden in the Hearts Keepsake Box" Mar/Apr 01
- "Power Verse" SpEd 98
- "Make a Memory Tape" Mar/Apr 90

Music:

Brilliant Star:

- "Blessed is the Spot," Sep/Oct 86
- "Arabic Hidden Word #4," May/June 88
- Sing A New Song*, "O Son of Spirit"
- "Thou Art My Lamp"
- "O Son of Being"
- "Love Me That I May Love Thee"
- "Be Thou Content With Me"
- "Rejoice in the Gladness of Thine Heart"
- The Bahá'í Songbook:* "Thy Heart Is My Home"
- Dawn Song*, "Be Thou Content," "O Son of Spirit," "Deny Not Thy Servant"
- Music of the Bahá'í World Congress*
- Official Opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb*
- Bahá'í Gospel Choir, *We have Come to Sing Praises*
- Grammer, Red, intoned by, *Tablet of Ahmad*
- Mackay, Caroline, *O Most Mighty Ocean: Selected Passages from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*
- Munro, Gordi, *Unity in Diversity*
- 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*
- Sears, Hand of the Cause William, narrated by, with various artists, *Lote Tree*, "Seven Valleys"
- Sobhani, Mansoor, *Beyond this World*
- Ward, Nancy, *Melodies from the Sacred Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá*
- Wright, Susan Lewis, *Bird*

Games:

- Brilliant Star:* "Pick a card, Any Card" Nov/Dec 98
- Zavitz, Elaine, *Feast Activity Book:* "Find the Quotation," p. 25

Lesson Plans:

- Cox, Alice and Musacchia, Evelyn, *Bahá'í Teaching Guide for Children (Intermediate)*, "Bahá'u'lláh—All People in the World Are Neighbors"

Reference:

- Bahá'u'lláh, *The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, a Compilation*

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