

# EQUALITY IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

## EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
PEACEFULNESS, FAIRMINDEDNESS, DETERMINATION**

He [Bahá'u'lláh] promulgated the adoption of the same course of education for man and woman. Daughters and sons must follow the same curriculum of study, thereby promoting unity of the sexes. When all mankind shall receive the same opportunity of education and the equality of men and women be realized, the foundations of war will be utterly destroyed. Without equality this will be impossible because all differences and distinction are conducive to discord and strife. . . . There is no doubt that when women obtain equality of rights, war will entirely cease among mankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 175

. . . In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration. Assuredly, woman will abolish warfare among mankind. Inasmuch as human society consists of two parts, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected. Therefore, the standard and status of man and woman must become equalized.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 107

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the Bahá'í writings on the role of gender equality in establishing world peace
- To know the Bahá'í writings on the role of women in establishment of world peace
- To become aware of the example of the Greatest Holy Leaf as a worker for world peace

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Create posters with these quotations and decorate them for display at a feast or a public meeting on this topic.
- Memorize one of these quotations.
- Research this topic in the Peace Statement.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that establishing the equality of women and men is a necessary prerequisite to world peace
- To understand that all members of society have the responsibility to bring about equality and empower women to carry out their role in the path toward peace
- To understand the interconnection between men's role in this process and the realization of this role

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Work in small groups to develop skits that show how world peace is not possible if women are not given their equal place (half of the group), and skits that show how world peace is possible with this principle applied (other half of the group).
- Write essays and poetry illustrating the writings on this topic.
- In pairs or small groups, prepare arguments on why this principle is pivotal to world peace.
- In pairs, create sculptures that illustrate the centrality of this principle in establishment of world peace.
- Discuss the students' research results from the Peace statement.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on one's own role in establishing world peace through the practice of equality
- To perceive one's own role in assisting others to help bring about world peace by working for the equality of women and men

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Encourage students to reflect on steps to take in their personal lives that will realize this principle and their role in it.
- Invite students to create an image of their personal journey to world peace and demonstrate how they would carry out their role in this.
- Create artwork or poetry that represents the ideas in the peace statement on this topic. This can be done individually or as a mural.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to demonstrate one's understanding of the role of equality of the sexes and women's role in bringing about world peace
- To demonstrate one's understanding of the centrality of this principle in the establishment of world peace
- To demonstrate these understandings in one's own life

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide opportunities to exhibit students' work and create dialogues with them on their learning in this area.
- Invite students to make a written or oral and visual report to the Local Spiritual Assembly about their accomplishments in this path.
- Create a series of public meetings on this topic hosted and carried out by students.
- Encourage students to make a presentation or fireside on the Peace Statement and its coverage of this topic. They may use their artwork along with oral presentations.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: WOMEN AND PEACE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá'í writings on the role of gender equality in establishing world peace

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate one's understanding of the centrality of this principle in the establishment of world peace

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of peer teaching; Use of the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 170 and 171
- Poster paper
- Art supplies as desired

1. Welcome students. Invite them to sit on the floor in teams of two, facing each other, feet touching, and clasp each other's hands.
2. Encourage the teams to pull themselves into a standing position, still facing each other. Applaud all!
3. Then encourage students to work in teams of 3, and then teams of 4 or even more, to accomplish the same task. Briefly debrief: What enables our success?
4. Explain that according to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, "the honor of one is the honor of all," and that rather than putting each other down, we lift each other up. Briefly discuss: What are some ways that we can uplift each other?
5. Explain that in the past, people often believed that people could lift themselves by putting others down. Briefly discuss: Why is this thinking not accurate?
6. Remind students that gender is one of the ways that people have separated into groups—one group to lift up, the other group to put down. Briefly discuss: What are some of the ways that women and girls have been put down?
7. Explain that 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that establishing the equality of women and men will bring about world peace. Briefly discuss: How can this be true?
8. Organize students into 2 teams. Provide each team with copies of Resource Page 170 or Resource Page 171. Encourage each team to read aloud their quotation and discuss the focus questions.
9. Encourage each team to create a poster or visual aid to use to explain their quotation to the other team. Encourage them to incorporate a portion of the quotation into their poster. Suggest that they create this poster with the idea of communicating these important ideas to people who are not in this class.
10. The teams may choose to select a particular group of people with whom they'd like to share their ideas. These groups could be other classes at Bahá'í school, the local Bahá'í community, a group of friends, a sports team, their academic school, or other.
11. Invite teams to present their posters and share their answers to the focus questions in the whole group. Applaud all!

## TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

12. Briefly discuss: Where could we display these posters so that others can see the importance of this principle of Bahá'u'lláh? Do we need to ask permission to post them in our desired location?
13. Consult as a group and agree on a location to display the posters. Decide on a way to request permission if needed to display the posters in the suggested area. When permission is obtained, display the posters as planned.
14. Encourage students to select one of the actions identified in their teams to complete before the class.

### ACTIVITY 2: THE PROMISE OF WORLD PEACE

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that establishing the equality of women and men is a necessary prerequisite to world peace

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on one's own role in establishing world peace through the practice of equality

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of reflection; Use of consultation; Use of drama

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 172

1. Welcome students. Invite them to silently reflect on actions they have taken since the last class to promote peace by uplifting the equality of women and men. Encourage students to maintain silence as they look within themselves and find at least one action that has promoted peace and equality. Suggest that they give a signal—such as touching their chins—when they have a specific example in mind. Then read aloud the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:
 

Is any larger bounty conceivable than this, that an individual, looking within himself, should find that by the confirming grace of God he has become the cause of peace and well-being, of happiness and advantage to his fellow men? No, by the one true God, there is no greater bliss, no more complete delight.
2. Briefly discuss: Why is it important for us to look within ourselves to find that by the grace of God we may have been the source of peace and happiness to others? How do we know that it is the grace of God that helps us to do these things? Do we always need to tell others what we do? Why or why not?
3. Explain that the Universal House of Justice wrote a letter to the peoples of the world that explains how to achieve world peace. This letter is called The Promise of World Peace and it includes an explanation of the relationship between equality and world peace. Distribute copies of Resource Page xx, which includes two important paragraphs from this letter. In the whole group, read Resource Page 172 aloud twice. Then discuss the focus questions.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 2–3

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4. In the whole group, brainstorm a list of answers to the following question:  
  
What are some situations at home, school, sports, or even Bahá'í class in which we've seen attitudes of superiority with our own eyes?  
  
Please do not give any names while describing these situations.  
  
Record this list on chart paper.
5. Organize students to work in teams of 2 or 3. Invite each team to select one of the situations listed on chart paper and come up with answers to the following questions:
  - a. Who are the main characters in this situation? What are they thinking? What are they feeling? What are they doing? What is the drama or potential conflict in this moment?
  - b. What dramatic pose (human sculpture or freeze-frame image) could illustrate the thoughts, feelings, and actions of these characters?
6. Invite the teams to take turns displaying their poses. Debrief each pose in turn: If we are holy souls in the next world, what inspiration, good ideas, or advice could we offer the main characters in this scene? After listening to the advice of all these “good angels” invite each team to strike one more dramatic pose that illustrates the happy outcome of this good advice. Applaud all!

7. In the whole group briefly discuss: How can we be “good angels” in real life to help ourselves and our friends promote equality when these difficult situations arise?
8. Play quiet background music. Encourage students to think silently to themselves: What would a peaceful world look like? Provide students with paper or ask them to work in their journals to draw their personal images of a peaceful world. Then encourage students to imagine themselves taking one step after another toward equality and peace and to incorporate images of these steps to peace in their drawings.
9. After allowing time for students to work, invite them to share their images with the class if they like.
10. Conclude the activity by re-reading the quotation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided in Step 1 above.

NOTE: If the class will be completing the following activity in this Lesson Planning Guide, invite them to bring an object to the next class as described in Advance Preparation for Activity 3: A Campaign for Equality and World Peace.

## TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

### ACTIVITY 3: A CAMPAIGN FOR EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive one's own role in assisting others to help bring about world peace by working for the equality of women and men

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to demonstrate one's understanding of the role of equality of the sexes and women's role in bringing about world peace

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Involve service to humanity; Use of consultation; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. PLUS TIME TO CARRY OUT SELECTED LINES OF ACTION

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Other materials as decided below

**Advance Preparation:** Invite students to bring to class an object, however simple or small, that has meaning and importance for them in their own lives. The teacher should also bring an important object.

Consider displaying the quotation in Step 5 in the classroom.

1. Welcome students. Convene a sharing circle in which students and teacher take turns showing the important object they brought to class and explaining what makes the object personally meaningful. The teacher may speak first to provide a model of open and brief sharing. If students have not brought objects, provide them with time to think about what object they might have brought. They may then participate in the sharing circle by telling about that object.
2. After the sharing circle is complete, briefly discuss: What makes objects meaningful? If we want to share something that is very important with others, how can we use images, objects, words, and actions to communicate these important ideas? Record student ideas on chart paper.
3. Then discuss: Thinking about all the people we know and the groups we're in, who would we most like to teach about the relationship between equality and world peace? Please consider groups at school, sports teams, special activity groups, Bahá'í school, the Bahá'í community, a particular neighborhood, younger children, etc. Briefly discuss: Why should we select a particular group to serve rather than try to serve all people at the same time?
4. After identifying a group the class would like to serve, discuss: What do we know about the people in this group? What is important and meaningful for them? What do they already know about equality? What would be the best ways to share with them the importance of equality for world peace? How could we engage their minds and hearts through our words and actions? Record student ideas on chart paper. If desired, add ideas to their list such as: a poster campaign; advertisements or inspirational messages in a school or community newsletter or newspaper; a song, rap, or drama at an assembly or other meeting; a presentation in another class; a word of mouth campaign; an open consultation at the Nineteen Day Feast or other gathering; a series of inspirational emails.

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5. After listing student ideas, read aloud the following quotation twice:

Unsheathe the sword of your tongue from the scabbard of utterance, for therewith ye can conquer the citadels of men's hearts. We have abolished the law to wage holy war against each other. God's mercy, hath, verily, encompassed all created things, if ye do but understand. Aid ye your Lord, the God of Mercy, with the sword of understanding. Keener indeed is it, and more finely tempered, than the sword of utterance, were ye but to reflect upon the words of your Lord. Thus have the hosts of Divine Revelation been sent down by God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting, and thus have the armies of divine inspiration been made manifest from the Source of command, as bidden by God, the All-Glorious, the Best-Beloved.

Baha'u'llah, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 22

Briefly discuss: What makes words more powerful than swords of steel? In what ways could the "sword of understanding" be even more powerful than the "sword of utterance"? How can we draw on the power of divine inspiration, the sword of understanding, and the sword of utterance to promote equality and world peace? In what way is the promotion of equality and world peace a service to humanity?

6. Then use consultation to select 3 distinct lines of action, using varied means of communication, to complete as part of a

campaign for equality and peace. Organize students into small teams or working groups to complete their selected lines of action. Briefly discuss: How can using more than one means of communication and more than one line of action help our campaign be successful? How can we support each other so that we're all successful in our outreach and service? Do we need permission or support from others to carry out some of our plans? If so, how will we request the permission or support we need? How will we be able to monitor the success of our campaign?

7. Provide encouragement and support to working groups as needed to complete their selected lines of action. Decide on a specific time period (possibly 2–3 weeks) for the duration of this campaign. Note that some lines of action may be completed outside of the normal classroom period, other lines of action may be sustained while the class moves on to other topics, and still others will require focused classroom time. The class may also choose to draw on the work they completed while studying other topics related to the theme of equality.
8. Upon the completion of your campaign, debrief the experience by discussing: What did we do that was especially successful? What changes do we see in ourselves and in the people we served? How can we build on this service in the future?



## ACTIVITY 4: CALL ON HIM

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that all members of society have the responsibility to bring about equality and empower women to carry out their role in the path toward peace

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of reflection; Use of music

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 173, CD and CD player, or other means of sharing music

**Advance Preparation:** Learn the song “Call on Him,” available on the CD *Fruits of the Spirit*. You may order this CD from the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore, 810-653-5033, or email Louhelen@usbnc.org.

1. Welcome students. Read aloud the following quotation at least twice.  
  
By the righteousness of God! Whoso openeth his lips in this Day and maketh mention of the name of his Lord, the hosts of Divine inspiration shall descend upon him from the heaven of My name, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. On him shall also descend the Concourse on high, each bearing aloft a chalice of pure light. Thus hath it been foreordained in the realm of God's Revelation, by the behest of Him Who is the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.  
  
*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 280*
2. Invite students to reflect on their own experiences and then briefly discuss: What are some examples of times that we were especially aware of divine inspiration in our own lives?
3. Then teach the song “Call on Him” using Resource Page 173 or the CD *Fruits of the Spirit* available from Louhelen Bahá'í School.
4. Encourage students to sing this song to help them remember that God is always ready to assist us in our work toward equality for all.
5. Consider incorporating this song in an upcoming devotional meeting or other community event.

JIGSAW ACTIVITY 5: THE GREATEST HOLY LEAF WORKS FOR PEACE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become aware of the example of the Greatest Holy Leaf as a worker for peace

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on one's own role in establishing world peace through the practice of equality

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of stories; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 174–76 or Core Curriculum storybooks, Bahá'u'lláh vols. 1 and 2
- Access to the outdoors or a collection of leaves
- Student journals, index cards, or plain paper and pens

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their adventures in the path of service to the cause of equality and world peace since the last class. Encourage them also to share the positive actions they've noticed in others. Briefly discuss: What have we noticed about the power of divine assistance for this work?

2. Remind students that Bahá'u'lláh wrote:

Exalted, immensely exalted is He Who hath removed differences and established harmony. Glorified, infinitely glorified is He Who hath caused discord to cease, and decreed solidarity and unity. Praised be God, the Pen of the Most High hath lifted distinctions from between His servants and handmaidens, and, through His consummate favours and all-encompassing mercy, hath conferred upon all a station and rank of the same plane. He hath broken the back of vain imaginings with the sword of utterance and hath obliterated the perils of idle fancies through the pervasive power of His might.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Compilation of Compilations* vol. 2, p. 357

Briefly discuss: What are some of the vain imaginings about women that God has destroyed through the sword of Bahá'u'lláh's utterance?

3. Listen carefully. Acknowledge all answers then remind students that Bahá'u'lláh's own daughter, Bahíyyih Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, lived in a time and in places where the restrictions on women were very severe. Briefly discuss: What were some of those restrictions? Where do women and girls still face these same restrictions today? How did these restrictions affect the Greatest Holy Leaf?

4. Then share the following observation: "She had molded her life to the bounds of her sphere, pouring into it the resources of her own spirit, and had found scope for all her qualities."<sup>1</sup>

Briefly discuss: How it is possible for a person to find scope for all her qualities when restricted by some many oppressive customs? What examples have we seen with our own eyes of people showing powerful spiritual qualities even when the world seems to want to hold them back?

5. Then explain that Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, describes Bahíyyih Khánum as "a source of spiritual illumination for the whole world . . . a shining example, an object of emulation for all mankind."<sup>2</sup> Briefly discuss: What does it mean to be an object of emulation for all mankind?

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<sup>1</sup> Marjorie Morton, "The Passing of Bahíyyih Khánum, in *Crystallizations*, p. 167

<sup>2</sup> On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 84

**TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE**

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6. Organize students into small study groups. Provide each study group with one of the stories of the Greatest Holy Leaf on Resource Pages 174–76, or in the Core Curriculum storybooks, Bahá'u'lláh vol. 1, pp. 100-101, and vol. 2, pp. 41-44. Invite each team to read the story, review the facts described in the story, and answer the question: How did the actions of the Greatest Holy Leaf promote peace? Circulate among groups to provide assistance or encouragement as needed.
7. Reorganize the students into new teams so that there is one member of each of the previous study groups on these new teams. Encourage students to retell their stories to each other while in their new teams.
8. After students have had the opportunity to retell their stories and listen to the stories of others in their new teams, briefly discuss in the whole group: How did the actions of the Greatest Holy Leaf promote real peace and understanding in all these different circumstances?
9. Invite students to go outside and find one leaf—or to select one leaf from a set of leaves provided by the teacher—that reminds them of the powerful actions of the Greatest Holy Leaf.
10. Invite them to glue the leaf in their journals, or onto an index card or plain paper, and encourage them to think of a specific action that they can take as champions of equality and peace, inspired by the powerful actions of the Greatest Holy Leaf. Encourage them to write their actions plans beside their leaves.
11. Conclude the activity with prayers for divine assistance.

Resource Pages

Activity 1: Women and Peace

Focus questions:

How will the equality of women and men abolish war?

What is something that we can do now to promote equality?

. . . In the estimation of God there is no distinction of sex. The one whose heart is most pure, whose deeds and service in the Cause of God are greater and nobler, is most acceptable before the divine threshold—whether male or female. In the vegetable and animal kingdoms sex exists in perfect equality and without distinction or invidious estimate. The animal, although inferior to man in intelligence and reason, recognizes sex equality. Why should man, who is endowed with the sense of justice and sensibilities of conscience, be willing that one of the members of the human family should be rated and considered as subordinate? Such differentiation is neither intelligent nor conscientious; therefore, the principle of religion has been revealed by Bahá'u'lláh that woman must be given the privilege of equal education with man and full right to his prerogatives. That is to say, there must be no difference in the education of male and female in order that womankind may develop equal capacity and importance with man in the social and economic equation. Then the world will attain unity and harmony. In past ages humanity has been defective and inefficient because it has been incomplete. War and its ravages have blighted the world; the education of woman will be a mighty step toward its abolition and ending, for she will use her whole influence against war. Woman rears the child and educates the youth to maturity. She will refuse to give her sons for sacrifice upon the field of battle. In truth, she will be the greatest factor in establishing universal peace and international arbitration. Assuredly, woman will abolish warfare among mankind. Inasmuch as human society consists of two parts, the male and female, each the complement of the other, the happiness and stability of humanity cannot be assured unless both are perfected. Therefore, the standard and status of man and woman must become equalized.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 107

### Activity 1: Women and Peace

Focus questions:

- How will the equality of women and men abolish war?
- What is something that we can do now to promote equality?

The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly. Until womankind reaches the same degree as man, until she enjoys the same arena of activity, extraordinary attainment for humanity will not be realized; humanity cannot wing its way to heights of real attainment. When the two wings or parts become equivalent in strength, enjoying the same prerogatives, the flight of man will be exceedingly lofty and extraordinary. Therefore, woman must receive the same education as man and all inequality be adjusted. Thus, imbued with the same virtues as man, rising through all the degrees of human attainment, women will become the peers of men, and until this equality is established, true progress and attainment for the human race will not be facilitated.

The evident reasons underlying this are as follows: Woman by nature is opposed to war; she is an advocate of peace. Children are reared and brought up by the mothers who give them the first principles of education and labor assiduously in their behalf. Consider, for instance, a mother who has tenderly reared a son for twenty years to the age of maturity. Surely she will not consent to having that son torn asunder and killed in the field of battle. Therefore, as woman advances toward the degree of man in power and privilege, with the right of vote and control in human government, most assuredly war will cease; for woman is naturally the most devoted and staunch advocate of international peace.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 375

Activity 2: The Promise of World Peace

Focus questions:

Why is the education of girls so important?

What is an example of a harmful attitude or habit that could be carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations?

What are some examples of helpful attitudes or habits that could be carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations?

The emancipation of women, the achievement of full equality between the sexes, is one of the most important, though less acknowledged prerequisites of peace. The denial of such equality perpetrates an injustice against one half of the world's population and promotes in men harmful attitudes and habits that are carried from the family to the workplace, to political life, and ultimately to international relations. There are no grounds, moral, practical, or biological, upon which such denial can be justified. Only as women are welcomed into full partnership in all fields of human endeavour will the moral and psychological climate be created in which international peace can emerge.

The cause of universal education, which has already enlisted in its service an army of dedicated people from every faith and nation, deserves the utmost support that the governments of the world can lend it. For ignorance is indisputably the principal reason for the decline and fall of peoples and the perpetuation of prejudice. No nation can achieve success unless education is accorded all its citizens. Lack of resources limits the ability of many nations to fulfil this necessity, imposing a certain ordering of priorities. The decision-making agencies involved would do well to consider giving first priority to the education of women and girls, since it is through educated mothers that the benefits of knowledge can be most effectively and rapidly diffused throughout society. In keeping with the requirements of the times, consideration should also be given to teaching the concept of world citizenship as part of the standard education of every child.

The Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, pp. 11–12

GOAL: EQUALITY IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

# Call On Him

Words and Music: Ernestine Atkins

Soprano

Alto

Baritone

Dm

3

3

call on Him in the mor-nin' You can call on Him in the eve-nin' You can

You can call on Him in the mor-nin' You can call on Him in the eve-nin' You can

3

3

call on Him in the mor-nin' You can call on Him in the eve-nin' You can

S

A

B

3

C

Dm

call on Him a - ny time 'a day. You can

call on Him a - ny time 'a day. You can

call on Him a - ny time 'a day. You can

Activity 5 Jigsaw: The Greatest Holy Leaf Works for Peace

**Episode 1**

Bahíyyih Khánum describes her childhood terror when Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned in the Síyáh-Chál:

Every morning one or more of these brave and devoted friends would be taken out to be tortured and killed in various ways of horror. . . .

These terrible sounds I well remember, as we three children clung to our mother, she not knowing whether the victim was her own adored husband. She could not find out whether he was still alive or not until late at night, or very early in the morning, when she determined to venture out, in defiance of the danger to herself and to us, for neither women or children were spared.

How well I remember cowering in the dark, with my little brother, Mírzá Mihdí, the Purest Branch, at that time two years old, in my arms, which were not very strong, as I was only six. I was shivering with terror, for I knew of some of the horrible things that were happening, and was aware that they might have seized even my mother.

So I waited and waited until she should come back.

The spoken chronicle of Bahíyyih Khánum, in Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 42–43

**Episode 2**

During the time He lived in Baghdad, Bahá'u'lláh trusted His teenaged daughter with important missions that no one else her age could, or would be willing to, perform. Despite the challenges of these tasks, the Greatest Holy Leaf saw each and every one of these missions through to their completion with enthusiasm, courage, and joy. At times, the Holy Family endured extremely heart-rending troubles caused by the ignorance and ill-will of Bahá'u'lláh's own half-brother, Mírzá Yahyá. He circulated wild rumors saying that Bahá'u'lláh had said and done things that were totally untrue. The disunity created by these false charges so troubled Bahá'u'lláh that He withdrew for a time to the mountains of Sulaymáníyyih. During Bahá'u'lláh's absence, His youthful daughter showed both the great courage and, at the same time, deep tenderness and care that her family sorely needed.

Adapted from *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 33



**Episode 3**

When Bahá'u'lláh was banished to the Prison City of 'Akká, the His Family was confined within the walls of the City and subjected to violent opposition both from some in the local population and also disloyal members of Bahá'u'lláh's family. Great dangers surrounded the Holy Family. Thus Bahíyyih Khánum was called upon to dedicate her life toward serving and protecting the well-being of all the members of the Holy Family's household. In her management of the daily affairs of the Holy Household, she stood resolutely by the side of her brother, 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the defense of the Cause against its enemies. She used her highly refined social skills in the service of her warm and kindly heart to serve the daily human needs of all those who relied on her careful, wise management. Wishing to devote all her energies to serving the Cause, she determined not to marry and, throughout her life applied her unrivaled intelligence, courage, generosity, friendliness, and kindness, to the service of Her Father's Cause.

Adapted from *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 34

**Episode 4**

When World War I broke out, the Holy Family was again placed in great danger and deprivation. In these dark and dangerous days, the Greatest Holy Leaf once again showed the strength of her character and the energy of her heart. The circumstances of the war, as well as incompetence and injustice of the government officials in charge of Haifa in those days, left many people in poverty and want. Throughout the war, a stream of hungry men, women, and children came to the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa seeking help. The Greatest Holy Leaf helped all of these victims out of the abundance of her heart, assuring them of material help and spiritual care. She gave words of cheer and comfort, as well as food, money, clothing, and various remedies which she herself prepared and applied. In all these ways, she comforted those who were in need. Few, if any, gave as freely and with as little self-interest as she did; and few had a nobler spiritual impact on those they served.

Adapted from *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 39

### Episode 5

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away, the provisions of His Will named Shoghi Effendi as Guardian—the world-wide leader of the Faith. The loss of his Beloved Grandfather and having the responsibilities of leading the Cause thrust upon him was a tremendous shock. In ill health and with the weight of the Guardianship so suddenly placed upon his shoulders, the pressure on the young Shoghi Effendi was intolerable. In these circumstances he decided to leave the Holy Land for a few months, to pray and commune with his Lord in solitude, regain his strength and confidence, and return to the duties waiting him at the World Centre. In a letter written at the time he announced that he had left the affairs of the Cause “under the headship of the Greatest Holy Leaf” until he returned to his duties in the Holy Land.

Adapted from *Bahíyyih Khánum*, p. 19

The Guardian’s wife, Rúhiyyih Khánum, described the spiritual strength the Greatest Holy Leaf during this difficult and dangerous period:

She had already—so frail, so quiet, so modest at all times—shown herself in these past weeks to be a strong rock to which the believers clung in the midst of the tempest that had so suddenly burst upon them.

Rúhiyyih Khánum, *The Guardian of the Baba’i Faith*, p. 13

### Episode 6

Marzieh Gail writes:

On this first pilgrimage of mine, the third anniversary of the Master’s passing came due. The wound was raw, and there was a great outburst of Eastern grief: tears, loud cries and sobs; and seeing the adults in disarray, the children began whimpering and running about, not knowing where to turn. The house was full of people, and the sounds of weeping were all about, when I happened to walk by the open doorway of a lighted room, and there, through the door, was the Greatest Holy Leaf. She was seated in the midst of the children, they standing close to her as if all were in her embrace; she still and quiet, sitting there detached from the storm, her face composed, a comfort and safe haven. . . .

All I can find to say is that she was a quietness, a focal point of peace; that she pervaded the room like a sweet scent, or lit her corner like a sun-ray shining through a crystal vase; that despite her rank and great dignity, she was self-effacing, gentle-voiced; and that she spoke little, but you remembered.

Marzieh Gail, *Khánum, The Greatest Holy Leaf*, pp. 15, 20

GOAL: EQUALITY IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY  
**TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE**

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| “Prejudice to Peace” Mar/Apr 95        | “Star Kids: The Winners” May/June 02           |
| “Peace Will Come” Jan/Feb 02           | “Virtueman: The Home of Peace” May/June 02     |
| “Steps to Peace” Jan/Feb 02            | “Star Kids: Peaceful Neighbors” Jul/Aug 03     |
| “You Can Help Bring Peace!” Jan/Feb 02 | “From Outer Space” Jul/Aug 03                  |
| “Children Pray for Peace” May/June 02  | “Candles of Unity” Jul/Aug 03                  |
| “A Prisoner’s Vision” May/June 02      | “Peace in Action” Jul/Aug 03                   |
| “Kid’s Thoughts” May/June 02           | “The Case of the Missing Peace” Jul/Aug 03     |
| “Steps to Peace” May/June 02           | “Women’s Equality Around the World: Jul/Aug 93 |
| “How Do You Say Peace” May/June 02     | “Solutions to Every Problem” Sep/Oct 95        |
| “Signs of Peace” May/June 02           | “Working for Equality . . . World” Mar/Apr 99  |

*Herald of the South,*

- Special Woman’s Issue: “Women in the Bahá’í Faith,” “Protection of Women’s Rights,” “Advancing the Rights of Women,”  
“Running on a Dream,” Jan 1994,  
“The Changing Role of Women,” Jul 1997  
“The Peace Connection—Women, the Peacemakers,” Apr 1992

*Women & Men: Partnership for a Healthy Planet* (pamphlet)

*A Woman’s Place*, Janet Khan

*Advancement of Women*, Janet Khan

*Equality, Oneness, Unity: The Way to Racial Peace*, Robert C. Henderson

*Light of Unity, The: The Equality of Women and Men*

*Two Wings of A Bird*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Working Together” Mar/Apr 99  
“. . . Perfect Unity and Peace . . .” Jul/Aug 03

*Garden of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 85, 95, 179

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| “Decode It” Mar/Apr 99                      | “Peaceful Parkway” Jul/Aug 03      |
| “Pray for Peace” Sep/Oct 01                 | “Peace is Like a . . .” Jul/Aug 03 |
| “Puppets for Peace” Nov/Dec 01              | “The Promise of Peace” Jul/Aug 03  |
| “My Vision of a Peaceful World” May/June 02 | “Chameleon Crossword” Jul/Aug 03   |
| “Peace Puzzlers” May/June 02                | “Getting Along” Jul/Aug 03         |
| “Be a Peace Builder” Jul/Aug 03             | “Bird of Peace” Sep/Oct 05         |
| “Peace Safari” Jul/Aug 03                   | “Standing for Peace” May/June 02   |
| “Wearing . . . Spectacles” Jul/Aug 03       | “True or False” Mar/Apr 99         |
| “A Hole in the Middle” Jul/Aug 03           | “Working Together” Mar/Apr 99      |

## GOAL: EQUALITY IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

# TOPIC: EQUALITY AND WORLD PEACE

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### Music:

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Ensign of the Most Great Peace” SE 95

“With Two Wings” Sep/Oct 02

“Equal But Not the Same” Mar/Apr 99

Cameron, Doug, *C'mon Rise Up*, “Jubilation”

Davis, Mary, *The Promise of World Peace*, “The Promise of World Peace,” “The Key to Peace,” “When We Grow Up”

Dozier, Eric and Friends, *To the Glory of God*, “Daughters of the Kingdom”

Grammer, Red, *Teaching Peace*, “With Two Wings,” “Teaching Peace”

Peace Moves, *It's Just One World*, “Peace Moves,” “Peace on Earth,” “Peace Moves (It's Just One World),” “Peace Will Come”

Van Manens, *Barley Bread and Reindeer Milk*, “Imagine a Peaceful World,” “Peace Will Come”

Van Manens, *Healthy Planet, Healthy People*, “Peace Like a River”

Van Manens, *Wage Peace*, “Let Us All Pray,” “Wage Peace,” “We are the Answer”

Van Manens, *We Recycle*, “What is Peace?”

Ward, Nancy, *To the Planters of Trees*, “Women”

“The Key to Peace,” Mary Davis

“World Peace Song,” Jean Marks & Susan Engle

### Games:

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Peace Process” Jan/Feb 93

“Peace on the Playground” May/June 02

### Videos:

*Family: The Seeds of World Peace*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

### Other favorite resources:

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 74-77, 108, 133-34, 175, 280-84, 374-75, 394-95, 455

Danesh, H.B., *Unity: The Creative Foundation of Peace*

Khan, Janet A. and Peter J., *Advancement of Women: A Bahá'í Perspective*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1998.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, *Two Wings of a Bird, The Equality of Women and Men*, Wilmette, IL: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1997.

Perkins, Mary, *Growing into Peace: A Manual for Peace-Builders in the 1990s and Beyond*

Rutstein, Nathan, *The Invisible Hand: Shaping the New World Order*

Sabet, Huschman, *The Way Out of the Dead End: A Plea for Peace*

Tyson, J., *World Peace and World Government: From Vision to Reality*

Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1985

Various, *Circle of Unity: Bahá'í Approaches to Current Social Issues*

Various, *Cooperative Peace Strategies*

Various, *Peace: More than an End to War: The Bahá'í Approach to the Organic Process Leading to an Enduring Peace*

Various, *Toward the Most Great Justice: Elements of Justice in the New World Order*

Various, *Waging Peace: Selections from the Bahá'í Writings on Peace*

As you find additional resources, please notify the Office of Education and Schools at the Bahá'í National Center.