

TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION
OF THE BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS
THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
FRIENDLINESS, COURAGE, SERVICE

The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counselors to the number of Bahá. . . . It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 30

This Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any previous Prophet has previously established. . . .

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 145

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings in which Bahá'u'lláh established His administrative order

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and discuss the passages establishing the administrative order.
- Make a chart of the characteristics that Bahá'u'lláh delineates.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand from the writings of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice the importance of such a divine system in the world

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Divide the learners into pairs. Invite each pair to find five reasons why the Divine System is necessary and important from passages in the writings of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice.
- Read a short passage on the importance of a divine system. Discuss the main points. In small groups illustrate one of the points using art projects.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive one's own capacity for service in the divine system brought by Bahá'u'lláh
- To discern the difference between a system created by humans (which will be imperfect), and one established by God's Manifestation (which is infallible)

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Identify actions that one could take to promote the growth of Bahá'u'lláh's order.
- Working in small groups, use the Bahá'í writings to find ways to improve the imperfections in human systems. Invite each group to take one human system and determine how to improve it.
- Invite one group to create a body sculpture illustrating the imperfect system by humans and another group to create a body sculpture that illustrates the infallible system. Find examples in human history that show the imperfections of human systems and what caused their failure. They can then discuss how a divine system would have been different, such as more fair to all people.
- Develop short skits or plays showing the differences between the two systems.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To explain some characteristics of the Bahá'í administrative order
- To demonstrate understanding of the significance of the Bahá'í administrative order

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide opportunities for students to share with families and community their artwork, body sculptures, and skits. This can be used as a celebration for the Day of the Covenant or even a fireside.
- Offer some of the students' solutions based on the Bahá'í writings to a community organization such as a school.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: GUARDIANS FOR ALL THAT DWELL ON EARTH

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings in which Bahá'u'lláh established His administrative order

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand from the writings of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice the importance of such a divine system in the world

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 11 or copy and display the quotation on chart paper or chalkboard
- Space for movement in the classroom or outdoors
- One blindfold, optional
- Markers, crayons, or other art supplies as desired

1. Welcome the students and invite them to introduce themselves and say one thing that gave them the biggest smile or laugh this week. Listen attentively and encourage each response. Explain that Bahá'u'lláh desires “the good of the world and the happiness of the nations.”
2. Invite the students to think of a time recently (however simple or small) when they were able to bring a smile, a laugh, or happiness to someone else. Invite students to share these examples with each other in teams of two.
3. Then, encourage the students to re-introduce their partners to the class, and to share with the group one thing that person does to bring happiness to the world. Acknowledge all. Explain that the purpose of this class is to help us all become more powerful champions of “the good of the world” and “guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth.”
4. Explain a game to explore how we can be guardians for all people:
 - A. Clear furniture from the center of the room or move outdoors.
 - B. Ask for a volunteer to stand at one end of the room (or space). Ask that person to stand with arms up and palms out for protection, and eyes closed or blindfolded. The task will be to jog slowly across the room or designated space.
 - C. All other students spread out with their backs to the destination or side walls, with their eyes open and arms outstretched. Their sacred trust as guardians is to protect the jogger from bumping into a wall. They should silently concentrate and watch carefully to help the jogger reach the goal.
 - D. Take turns so that all students have the opportunity to serve as guardians and to jog. Allow repeats, if desired. If students have physical limitations, consult to find a creative way to allow all people to participate. The teacher may also take a turn.



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5. Debrief the game by posing the questions:
 - How did the guardians help the jogger?
 - What could happen if the guardians didn't do their job?
 - What difference can it make in the world when we act as “guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth”?
6. Listen attentively and affirm student responses. Explain that Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, brought a system for human happiness and that this system is called His administrative order. Distribute copies of Resource Page 11 or refer to the posted quotation.
7. Read the quotation aloud. Encourage students to listen and find new words in the quotation. Discuss the meaning of new words, then invite student volunteers to read the quotation again.
8. Ask questions such as the following to clarify understanding, allowing sufficient time for the students to think and to respond. Affirm student responses and provide information as needed. Students may choose to decorate Resource Page 11 as they discuss the questions. Here are some sample questions:
 - Where should Houses of Justice be established?
 - What is the name we use today for a local House of Justice? (Local Spiritual Assembly)
 - What is the number of Bahá? (9)
 - How many counselors (members) serve on a local spiritual assembly?
 - How should assembly members see themselves?
 - How should we see ourselves?
 - Why is it important to become the “the trusted ones of the Merciful” and to see ourselves “as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth”?
9. Then discuss:
 - What are some things that we can do here in our classroom so that we all serve as guardians for each of us?
 - What else should we do in our classroom to promote happiness?
 - How can our actions in this class help the world become a better place?
10. Invite students to discuss and then agree on actions that the class will take to promote the happiness and well-being of its members. List agreements on chart paper. Invite students to decorate as desired and post in the classroom for future reference.



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ACTIVITY 2: MAKING HEROIC FIGURES: GUARDIANS FOR ALL

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive one's own capacity for service in the divine system brought by Bahá'u'lláh

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of reflection; Use of arts and crafts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

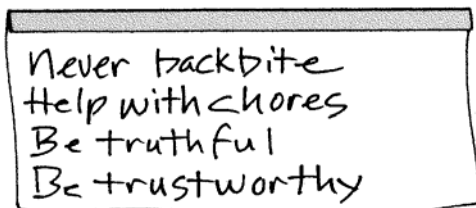
Materials Needed:

- Chalkboard and chalk or chart paper and markers
- Small pieces of paper (approximately 2" x 1")
- Pens or pencils
- Copies of instructions for making heroic figures, optional
- 12" pipe cleaners—1 and ½ pipe cleaner for each student
- Multicolored narrow yarn, embroidery floss, or thread—about 30" for each student
- Narrow cloth ribbon—about 48" for each student
- Small safety pin for each student
- Variety of small pieces of colored fabric, about 6" by 3" for each student
- 1 or 2 small fluffy feathers for each student, if desired
- Reference copies of Resource Pages 13–14 if desired

Advance Preparation: Consider preparing a model of the heroic action figure as a sample for students. This practice will make it easier for you to coach students as they make their own heroic figures.

1. Read aloud the quotation on Resource Page 11. Then read again the sentence, "It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth." Discuss the questions:
 - What are some heroic actions that we can take at home to be "the trusted ones of the Merciful" and "guardians of all that dwell on earth"?
 - What are some heroic actions that we could take at school or in sports or other activities as trusted ones of the Merciful and guardians for all?
2. Invite the students to reflect on all these ideas and choose ONE action that they want to take as a trusted guardian for all people. Then distribute the small pieces of paper. Encourage students to write a few words to create their own plan for heroic action, and then to carefully fold the paper into a tiny square. These papers will be needed to make heroic action figures.
3. Provide each student with the pipe cleaners and the following instructions: (You may wish to photocopy several copies of Resource Pages 13–14.)
 - a. Head, body, and legs: Fold the long pipe cleaner in half, making a ½" loop (to become the head) at the fold. Then, fold the two ends of the pipe cleaner up to the neck and twist them to secure in place. Tuck the folded paper with your promise into the "heart" of this little figure. Twist the legs to hold it in place.

Record responses on chart paper or chalkboard.



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b. Arms: Hold the ½ pipe cleaner across the neck. Fold each end back to the center and wrap around the neck to create arms.

c. Hair: Wrap colored yarn or floss around four of your fingers about 3 times. Hold the wrapped yarn as one piece, push it through the head loop, and tie it in a knot at the top of the head. Snip the loops with scissors and scrunch the yarn with your fingers to become wild hair.

d. Skin: Using your thumb, hold the ribbon 2" from one end to the neck of the figure. With your other hand, start wrapping the ribbon around the body, crossing over and under the arms to hold them in place. Keeping the ribbon flat and tight, wrap it up to the top of the head and then back down again. Wrap halfway down the body and then back up again. Tie the end of the ribbon to the 2" of ribbon saved at the beginning. Tie again. Cut the remaining piece and save it for a belt.

e. Robe: Use the pattern to cut a piece of fabric to form a robe for the figure. Cut fringe (as shown on the pattern) if you like. Then fold the robe in half and cut a tiny hole in the middle of the fold for the neck. Pull the robe over the figure's head. If desired, tuck a tiny feather into the neck hole to make a headdress. Position the safety pin on the back of the figure's robe and wrap the remaining ribbon to position the pin. Then tie it as a belt for the robe. Wear your heroic action figure as a reminder of your role as a guardian of all that dwell on earth.

4. Encourage students to think of one or more persons to whom they could show their pins before the next class. If they choose, they may also give their pin as a gift. In either case, encourage the students to explain to that individual their plan for serving as a guardian of all that live on earth. Remember to ask students to share the results of their actions at the next class.



ACTIVITY 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: Become familiar with the Bahá'í writings in which Bahá'u'lláh established His administrative order

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To explain some characteristics of the Bahá'í Administrative Order

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í writings; Use of consultation; Use of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Three pieces of posterboard and markers
- One copy of each of the quotations on Resource Pages 15–16

Advance Preparation: Draw a simple sketch of the earth on one side of a sheet of poster board. Then cut the poster board into 5–9 puzzle pieces, depending on the size of your class. Photocopy Resource Pages 15–16. Cut the quotations apart so that each student or small team of students will have one of the quotations.

1. Explain to the students that they will be learning more about some of the characteristics of the divine system that Bahá'u'lláh brought to bring happiness to all people.
2. Invite the students to work in teams of two (or individually if your class is very small). Provide each team with one of the quotations from Resource Pages 15–16. Encourage the teams to read their quotations aloud at least twice and discuss the meaning of their quotations with each other.
3. Circulate among the students while they work to answer questions and provide encouragement and assistance as needed.
4. After students understand the meaning of their quotations, provide each team with a puzzle piece. Ask the students to draw a simple picture to illustrate the importance of their quotation.
5. When the teams have completed their work, invite each team to show their puzzle pieces and explain the characteristic they studied in the whole group. They also may read all or part of their quotation, if desired.
6. After all groups have shared their characteristics, invite them to lay their puzzle pieces on one of the blank pieces of poster board. Encourage them to work together to assemble the puzzle.
7. Lay the other land poster board on top of the completed puzzle so that the puzzle lies between the 2 whole sheets. With student assistance, hold the pieces of poster board securely and turn over the puzzle. Remove the top sheet to display the image of the earth. Explain that all these characteristics of Bahá'í administration work together to unite all the people in the world.
8. Conclude the activity by inviting all students to make one true statement about the administrative order. Encourage the students to listen carefully to each other. Then ask the students to think of one person to whom they can talk about the importance of the administrative order before the next class. Encourage them to think about whom they might tell and when, where, and how they could tell it. Remember to invite students to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class session.

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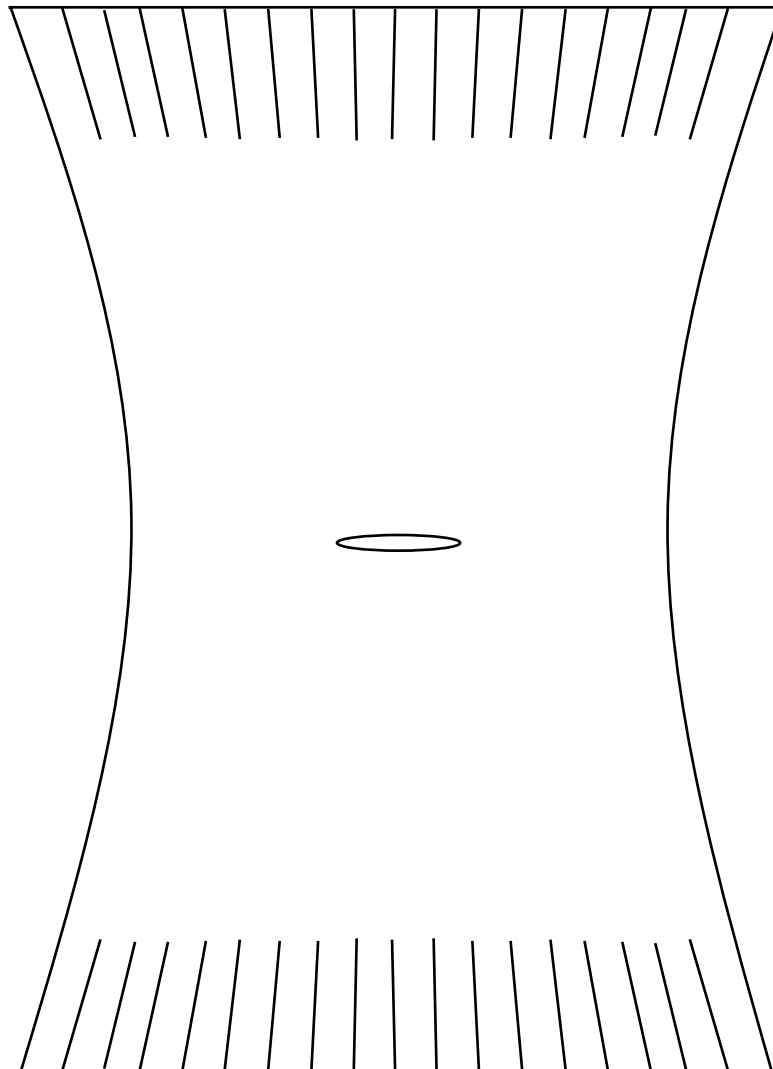
Resource Pages

The Lord hath ordained that in every city a House of Justice be established wherein shall gather counselors to the number of Bahá. . . . It behoveth them to be the trusted ones of the Merciful among men and to regard themselves as the guardians appointed of God for all that dwell on earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 30, p. 29


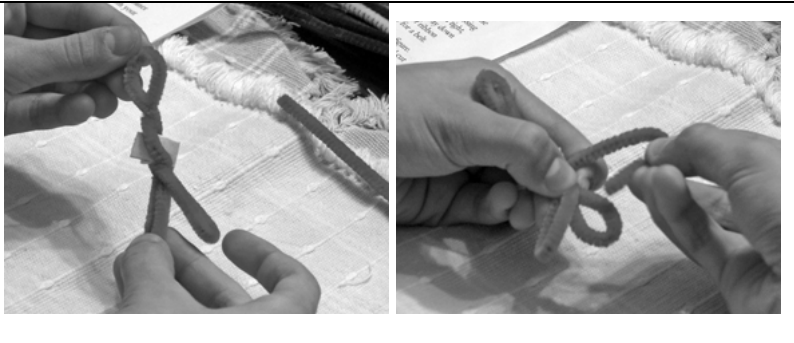
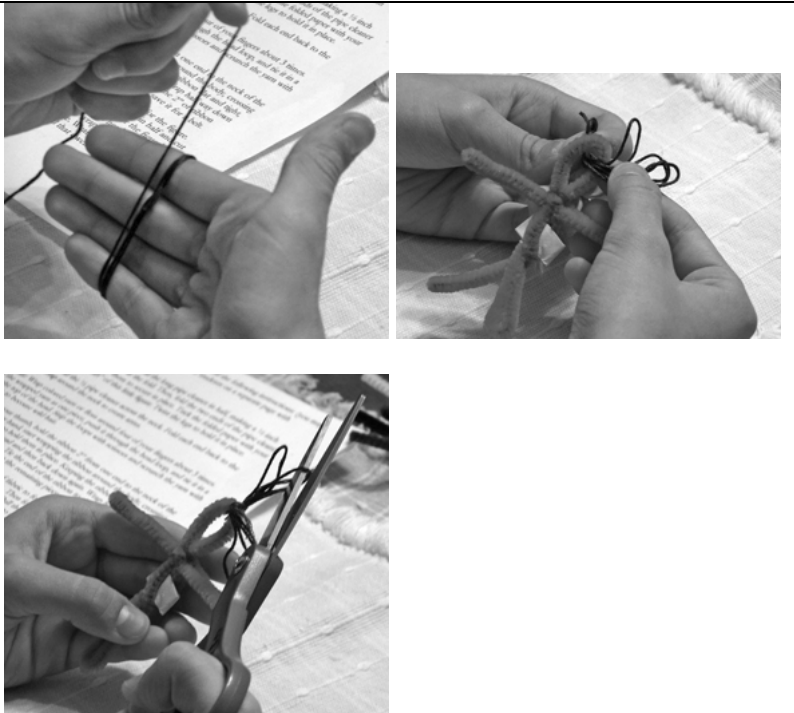
Heroic Figures: Guardians for All

Robe Pattern



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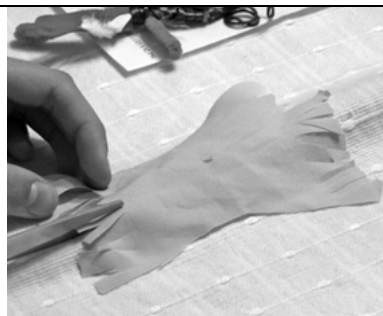
Heroic Figures: Guardians for All

<p>a. Head, body, and legs: Fold the long pipe cleaner in half, making a ½ inch loop (to become the head) at the fold. Then, fold the two ends of the pipe cleaner up to the neck and twist them to secure in place.</p>	
<p>Tuck the folded paper with your promise into the “heart” of this little figure. Twist the legs to hold it in place.</p> <p>b. Arms: Hold the ½ pipe cleaner across the neck. Fold each end back to the center and wrap around the neck to create arms.</p>	
<p>c. Hair: Wrap colored yarn or floss around four of your fingers about 3 times. Hold the wrapped yarn as one piece, push it through the head loop, and tie it in a knot at the top of the head. Snip the loops with scissors and scrunch the yarn with your fingers to become wild hair.</p>	

d. Skin: Using your thumb, hold the ribbon 2" from one end to the neck of the figure. With your other hand, start wrapping the ribbon around the body, crossing over and under the arms to hold them in place. Keeping the ribbon flat and tight, wrap it up to the top of the head and then back down again. Wrap half way down the body and then back up again. Tie the end of the ribbon to the 2" of ribbon saved at the beginning. Tie again. Cut the remaining piece and save it for a belt.



e. Robe: Use the pattern to cut a piece of fabric to form a robe for the figure. Cut fringe (as shown on the pattern) if you like. Then fold the robe in half and cut a slit in the middle of the fold for the neck. Pull the robe over the figure's head. If desired, tuck a tiny feather into the neck hole to make a headdress. Position the safety pin on the back of the figure's robe and wrap the remaining ribbon to position the pin. Then tie it as a belt for the robe.



Wear your heroic action figure as a reminder of your role as a guardian of all that dwell on earth.



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TOPIC: THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BAHÁ'Í ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

THE SOCIAL ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

The administration is the social order of Bahá'u'lláh. Without it all the principles of the Cause will remain abortive.

Shoghi Effendi, letter published in *US Bahá'í News*, No. 43, August 1930, p. 3

ORDAINED BY GOD

The bedrock on which this Administrative Order is founded is God's immutable Purpose for mankind in this day.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 156

UNIQUE IN HISTORY

. . . This Administrative Order is fundamentally different from anything that any Prophet has previously established, inasmuch as Bahá'u'lláh has Himself revealed its principles, established its institutions, appointed the person to interpret His Word and conferred the necessary authority on the body designed to supplement and apply His legislative ordinances.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 145

SPIRIT AND PATTERN FOR FUTURE LIFE OF HUMANITY

This Cause is a Cause which God has revealed to humanity as a whole. It is designed to benefit the entire human race, and the only way it can do this is to re-form the community life of mankind, as well as seeking to regenerate the individual. The Bahá'í administration is only the first shaping of what in future will come to be the social life and laws of community living.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 79

SOURCE OF THE PROGRESS OF HUMANITY

These Spiritual Assemblies are aided by the Spirit of God. . . . From them the spirit of life streameth in every direction. They, indeed, are the potent sources of the progress of man, at all times and under all conditions.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 80

LOVING SHEPHERD OF THE BAHÁ'Í FLOCK

The divinely ordained institution of the Local Spiritual Assembly operates at the first levels of human society and is the basic administrative unit of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order. . . . It protects the Cause of God; it acts as the loving shepherd of the Bahá'í flock.

Universal House of Justice, Naw-Rúz, 1974, to the Bahá'ís of the World

DEVOTED TO THE COMMON GOOD OF ALL

The members of these Assemblies, on their part, must disregard utterly their own likes and dislikes, their personal interests and inclinations, and concentrate their minds upon those measures that will conduce to the welfare and happiness of the Bahá'í Community and promote the common weal.

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 41

LIKE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN

These bodies [Spiritual Assemblies] have the sacred obligation to help, advise, protect and guide the believers in every way within their power.

. . . You should go to them as a child would to its parents. . . .

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Local Spiritual Assembly*, p. 16

EACH INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER IS IMPORTANT

. . . The individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. He . . . acts as one of the countless links in the mighty chain that now girdles the globe...Without his support, at once whole-hearted, continuous and generous, every measure adopted, and every plan formulated, by the body which acts as the national representative of the community to which he belongs, is foredoomed to failure.

Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, pp. 130–31

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: “Elected to Serve,” “Regional Bahá’í Councils” JF 02
“Local Spiritual Assemblies” MA 03
“A Gift From Bahá’u’lláh” SO 03
“Into the Future” SO 05

Books:

Bahá’í Administration, Shoghi Effendi
Principles of Bahá’í Administration, Shoghi Effendi
The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion,” Hatcher and Martin, pp. 146–154
Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, Shoghi Effendi

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “What Would the Bahá’ís Do. . . .” ND 00

Activities:

Brilliant Star: “Bahá’u’lláh’s Gift To the World,” “Light of/Covenant,” “Planning a Garden,” “Who Are You?” ND 95
“The Light of Bahá’u’lláh,” “All Together Now” SE 96
“The Institutions Pop-Up Page,” “Pattern of Growth,” “Plans in the Cause of God,”
“New World Construction Teams” SE 97

Music:

Brilliant Star: “Let Us Be About Our Father’s Business” JA 91

Games:

Brilliant Star: “The Assembly Game” ND 93
“Resources” SO 96
“Spiritual Assembly Quiz” MA 03

Poetry:

Brilliant Star: “The Invitation” SE 97

Videos:

Will and Testament of Abdu’l-Bahá: A Two Video Set with Derek Cockshut, Anisa Productions

Audio:

Will and Testament of Abdu’l-Bahá: 3 Cassette Set with Derek Cockshut, Anisa Productions

Other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Children’s Education and Resource Center, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.

TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION
OF THE BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS
RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR
ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
SEEING WITH ONE'S OWN EYES, HELPFULNESS, CREATIVITY

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are
the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 2, p. 20

Religion is verily the chief instrument for the establishment of order
in the world and of tranquility amongst its peoples. The weakening of
the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened
them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the
decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the
ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 63–64

TOPIC: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the development of the organizational structure of the major religions of the world
- To become familiar with the major secular political systems of the world's societies

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Each class time choose one major religion and learn about its administrative structure (experts from the general community may serve as a resource to the teacher or be invited to the class).
- Perform the activity “Holy Book of God” (Brilliant Star SE 92, p. 13).
- Create a world map showing political systems in various countries throughout the world.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To gain insight into the positive contributions of the world's secular and religious systems to the organization of human affairs

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Make a timeline of world civilization showing how advances in art and science relate to the appearance of new Manifestations of God.
- Each class time study the contributions of a given religious system to the communities in which they were spread, such as the positive work of early missionaries.
- Make artistic representations of these findings through the performing or fine arts.

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TOPIC: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF THE PAST



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the need for a recognized authority in the organization of human society
- To perceive the shortcomings of the secular and religious organizations of the past and their inability to meet the requirements of present society

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Role-play a situation where there is no authority and note the difference when an authority is present.
- Discuss the coming of age of humanity. Make analogies of how some childhood activities are not sufficient for older ages.
- Make posters of the problems in the world that cannot be solved by current organizations.
- Share stories about the need for independent investigation of truth and individual responsibilities at this point in history.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to explain the structures of some major religions and their contribution to the organization of human society
- To be able to explain the structures of the major secular administrations of the world and their contribution to the organization of human society

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Exhibit the class's timeline of world civilization for the Bahá'í community with each learner responsible for explaining one religion. This can be done in celebration of World Religion Day.
- Give a fireside on the need for religious systems and how, at each time in history and at each given geographical place, a religion contributed to civilization.

TOPIC: RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS OF THE PAST

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: CHAOS, ORDER, AND GOOD DEEDS

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To become familiar with the development of the organizational structure of the major religions of the world

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To gain insight into the positive contributions of the world's secular and religious systems to the organization of human affairs

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To discern the need for a recognized authority in the organization of human society

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To be able to explain the structures of some major religions and their contribution to the organization of human society

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; use of consultation; use of memorization; use of art

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Copies of Resource Page 28 if desired
- Small treat as a prize for the game if desired

Advance Preparation: Display the following quotation in the classroom or provide copies of Resource Page 28.

Religion is verily the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world and of tranquility amongst its peoples. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 63–64

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 2, p.19

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 115

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share one action they have done to bring happiness to other people over the past week. Applaud all efforts.
2. Invite the students to explore with you an important aspect of the administrative order by playing a very simple game. To play the game, gather the students outdoors or in a room that has some open space.

Explain that the game will last for exactly two minutes. For two minutes they may make any movements they like. At the end of the two minutes you will say “freeze” and all must immediately hold their positions. Get clear agreement from all students that they will stop moving as soon as they hear the word “freeze.” Say “go” to start the game. Observe the students and monitor the time closely. At the end of the 2 minutes say “freeze” to end the game.

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Alternatively, the game may be introduced in the same way, but after two minutes the teacher explains that the groups didn't achieve the goal and invites the students to try again. This process continues until the students themselves initiate or agree on some process for bringing order or coherence to their activity. If this alternative is selected, it would be good to provide a small treat to celebrate when the students achieve the goal of ordered activity.

3. Debrief the game by discussing the questions: What happened? How do you feel? After listening to the students, explain that this game illustrates chaos in human systems. Then briefly discuss: What would improve this game? Or, how did we make the game more fun?

4. Read aloud the following quotation twice:

Religion is verily the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world and of tranquility amongst its peoples. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 63–64

5. Discuss the questions: What are some examples of chaos and confusion that you have seen personally? What are some examples of order in your own life? How can order bring happiness? How does religion help you bring order and happiness to your life? And how does religion help all of us bring order and happiness to the world?
6. Then explore the questions: What are some of the religions in the world? Are they older or newer than the Bahá'í Faith? What do we know about the ways that these prior religions are organized? Listen carefully and record student responses on chart paper, listing the

names of some of the major religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and others as desired) and indicating how these systems are organized. Assist students to discern that many religious systems of the past have relied upon a system of clergy. Discuss: What are some of the important contributions of the clergy? Why do we think that Bahá'u'lláh has brought a new system based on elected institutions, consultation, study and learning, and responsibility for oneself?

7. Continue the discussion by posing the questions: Thinking about the organization and order of our own class, how do our choices about consultation, learning, and taking responsibility for oneself make a difference in the quality of our time together? What are some responsibilities of students? What are the responsibilities of a teacher? How are they the same and how are they different?
8. Through discussion, assist the students to understand that the positive choices of each individual make the class more and more self-disciplined, happier, and more powerfully able to contribute to the world.
9. Read aloud the following quotations, either posted in the classroom or from Resource Page 28.

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph. 9, p. 19

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doing of which was forced upon him.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 115

10. Continue the discussion: How can the bounds fixed by the Pen of the Most High be a breath of life to all created things? How can we use our power of choice to help ourselves and help

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others? Are there times when we must do good even when we wouldn't choose it ourselves? Why? And what difference does it make when we do make these positive choices? How can we explain the importance of boundaries and choice to others?

11. Encourage students to work in small groups to memorize one of these short quotations. Encourage them to practice reciting with eloquence and simple dignified gestures. After allowing time to work, invite students to recite their quotations for the whole group. Applaud all!

12. Consult as a class: When and where shall we share these quotations and our thinking about these ideas with others? Would we like to create a poster to share the words of these quotations and illustrate some of our ideas? Some possibilities include a presentation to another class, at a devotional meeting or Nineteen Day Feast, or selecting important informal opportunities to share with others. Remember to share the results of the presentations at the following class.

ACTIVITY 2: THE BREATH OF LIFE

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To gain insight into the positive contributions of the world's secular and religious systems to the organization of human affairs

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards God; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of science; Use of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: TWO 45-MINUTE CLASS PERIODS PLUS EXTRA TIME TO SET UP AND CHECK EXPERIMENTS

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 33 or copy it onto chart paper to display in the classroom
- Photographs, magazine pictures, web pages, or books to illustrate the effects of air pollution in contrast to the beauty of settings with pure clean air (if available)

Advance Preparation for Part One: Choose one or all of the experiments to explore the air quality in your town. Gather materials as listed on the Resource Pages 29–32 for each experiment.

Advance Preparation for Part Two: Gather resource materials so that students can identify groups that are making positive contributions to the environment, especially air quality: newspapers, phonebooks, websites, individuals that may be contacted by phone, etc. The goal is for students to be able to identify several individuals or groups that are taking positive actions to express appreciation to those individuals or groups. These could also include physicians, school nurses or community groups, or others that provide education or assistance to individuals with asthma or other breathing difficulties. Students will also need to find addresses for these individuals or groups.

PART ONE: Science Experiments

1. Welcome the students. Invite them to share the results of their positive choices over the past week: What are some examples of good deeds? How have they explained the power of choice to others?
2. Read aloud twice or recite from memory the following quotation:

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 2, p.19

Briefly discuss: What are some examples that we've seen with our own two eyes of the truth of this statement?

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3. Invite the students to reflect silently on their own experiences with the “breath of life” and then share their reflections with the group: What is it like to breath clean pure air—when and where have you had that experience? What was it like? How did you feel? Next, encourage the students to reflect again on their own experiences and the experiences of the people they know and then to share their reflection in the group: What is it like when the air is **not** clean and pure or it is very difficult to breath? How do you feel when that happens? How does it affect others? Some examples might include:
 - Asthma
 - Burning Eyes
 - Sore Throat
 - Unpleasant Smell
 - Smog
 - Ozone Alert Days
4. Distribute copies of Resource Page 33 with the class. Review the chart together. Students need not understand all of the technical terms on the chart. Help the class understand a few basic points:
 - The atmosphere is almost completely made up of invisible gaseous substances. Most major air pollutants are also invisible, although large amounts of them concentrated in areas such as cities can be seen as smog. Sometimes we can see pollution, but most of the time it’s invisible. Carbon dioxide is one of the gases that contributes to the greenhouse effect and is the primary gas that makes up smog.
 - There are a variety of types of air pollution, from many sources. Air pollution results from many everyday activities.
 - Except for smog most pollutants in the atmosphere are invisible. Even air that looks clean may be polluted.
 - Different types of air pollution have different effects on the environment and human health.
- Different pollutants mix together, drift all over the planet, and interact with each other.
5. If possible, invite students to select two pictures from those available. Encourage them to each select a picture of a place with pure clean air and a picture that illustrates harmful effects of air pollution. Invite them to share their pictures in the whole group.
6. Invite the class to investigate the different kinds of air pollution that exist in their community.
7. The class may choose to do any, or all, of the following experiments. The lessons will help students see that air pollution is all around us even if they can’t see it. It will also give them an idea of how air pollution levels differ in different places.
8. If possible, conduct experiments in different localities where it is easy to do so, and with permission. Often, class members or friends in the wider community live in different places across the city or area. With these collaborators’ assistance, it normally is possible to gather data from differing places:
 - Inside and outside
 - In places close to busy roadways and in quieter areas
 - Nearer industrial areas and further away from factories
9. As a group, either set up experiments near your classroom or make assignments and provide materials so that individual students or small teams set up the experiments before the next class. Provide a process so that students request permission from parents or other adults to set up their experiments. Create a plan to collect data from these experiments either as individuals, teams, or as a class so that the class has the data for Part Two of this activity.

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10. After conducting your experiment, setting up your experiment, or planning your experiment, read or recite again the following quotation and reinforce again the connection between clean air and the pure teachings of God.

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 2, p. 19

Encourage students to:

- Share this quotation with at least one other person before the next class as well as their ideas about the importance of following the teachings of God in our daily lives.
- Notice the good deeds of others working with “the bounds of the Most High.”
- Notice the quality of the air they breathe. When is it more or less pure?
- Monitor their experiments and bring data as specified on the Resource Pages.

Explain that you will invite them to share their observations at the beginning of the next class.



PART TWO: The Teachings of God in Action

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share the results of their efforts to share the teachings of God with others. Invite them also to share their observation of the good deeds of others and of the quality of the air they breathe. Briefly discuss again: How are the teachings of God like the “breath of life unto all created things”?
2. Encourage students to share the results of their experiments. Make a chart to compare the experimental results. Does the air seem to be cleaner in some places than others?
3. Read aloud the passage below with the class. Ask questions to assure that all understand the basic points of the passage.

Consider the virtues of the human world and realize that the oneness of humanity is the primary foundation of them all. Read the Gospel and the other Holy Books. You will find their fundamentals are one and the same. Therefore, unity is the essential truth of religion and, when so understood, embraces all the virtues of the human world. Praise be to God! This knowledge has been spread, eyes have been opened, and ears have become attentive. Therefore, we must endeavor to promulgate and practice the religion of God which has been founded by all the Prophets.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 32

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4. Remind the class that all the Prophets of God have taught the same essential truths, and that the oneness of humanity is the “primary foundation of them all.” Explain that the quality of the air affects all people and as the oneness of humanity has been especially emphasized in the Message of Bahá'u'lláh, we can promote unity by acknowledging the positive acts of other religious and secular groups to improve air quality.
5. Encourage students to work in small teams to investigate what various religions are doing to help solve environmental problems. Some ways to do this include:
 - Using local phone books, newspaper articles, or personal comments to contact different religious groups in your community to find out what they are doing locally, nationally, or internationally to help solve environmental problems.
 - Exploring websites that describe what different religious or secular groups are doing to help improve air supply.
6. After identifying the positive contributions of several groups or individuals briefly discuss: Why is it so important to work together for clear air? How can religious or secular administrative systems help individuals be more effective in their service?
7. Then encourage the class to work in small teams to write brief notes of appreciation to individuals or groups who have worked to assist others with the “breath of life.” Consider using all or part of one of the quotations studied for this topic. Consider using pictures of beautiful environments to decorate the notes. Plan to mail the cards immediately or hand deliver them within the coming week.



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Resource Pages

Religion is verily the chief instrument for the establishment of order in the world and of tranquility amongst its peoples. The weakening of the pillars of religion hath strengthened the foolish and emboldened them and made them more arrogant. Verily I say: The greater the decline of religion, the more grievous the waywardness of the ungodly. This cannot but lead in the end to chaos and confusion.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 63–64

. . . The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed . . . are the breath of life unto all created things.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 2, p. 19

Man reacheth perfection through good deeds, voluntarily performed, not through good deeds the doings of which was forced upon him.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 115

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Experiment 1: Rubber Band Test

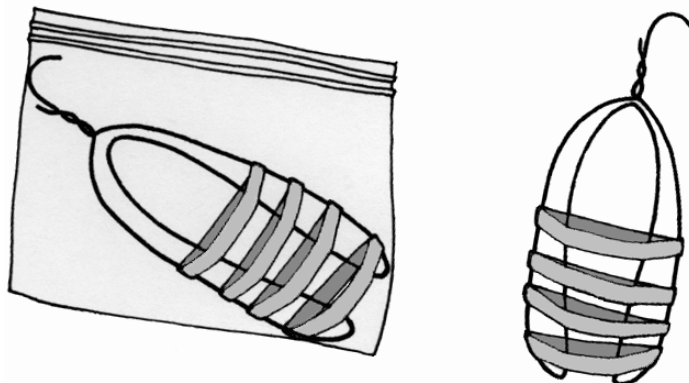
Materials:

- 8 small rubber bands (natural rubber)
- 2 wire clothes hangers
- Plastic bag
- Magnifying glass (optional)

NOTE: These are materials needed for one experiment. The class should try several experiments simultaneously, in different parts of their city or area, to compare pollution amounts in different locations. The numbers of rubber bands and clothes hangers needed should be increased proportionately to serve the number of experiments conducted.

Procedure:

1. Bend the hangers so that the rubber bands can be stretched tightly over them. A rectangle shape works well.
2. Slide four rubber bands onto each coat hanger, making sure they are tightly stretched.
3. Put one of the hangers (with stretched rubber bands) inside the plastic bag and seal the bag tightly. Put the bag on a shelf in a closet, or in a drawer. This is the 'control' for the experiment.
4. Hang the other hanger (with stretched rubber bands) outdoors in a shady place, where regular outdoor breezes can flow over it, but it is protected from weather, and is out of the sun. It is important that direct sunlight does not shine on this hanger.
5. Leave the hangers in their locations for two weeks.
6. When two weeks are up, look at the rubber bands. Do they look the way they did before, or are they cracked? Check with the magnifying glass too!
7. Touch the rubber bands. Do they feel the way they did before, or are they hard? If they look and feel the way they did before, then the air is quite clean. If they look cracked and feel hard, then the air is polluted.
8. Leave rubber bands out for a few more weeks. How many weeks pass before the bands break?



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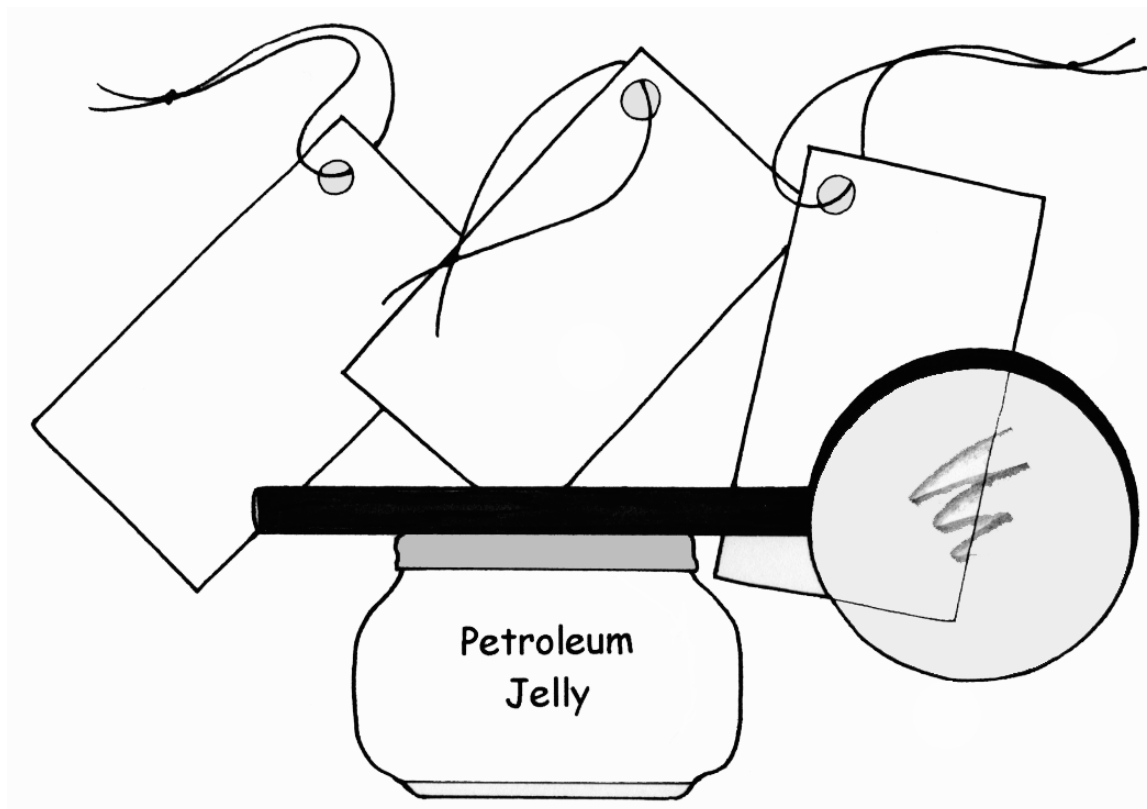
Experiment 2: Vaseline Test

Materials:

- Index cards, or other clean, white cardboard pieces (3 x 5 inch or larger). Old greeting cards, with at least one clean white side, may also be used.
- Petroleum jelly (Vaseline or similar)
- Magnifying glass

Procedure:

1. Coat the index cards with petroleum jelly.
2. Punch a hole through one corner of each card, so that it can hang by a string.
3. Hang the coated index cards in different places in the community. Hang the cards outdoors in a shady place, where regular outdoor breezes can flow over it, but it is protected from weather, and is out of the sun.
4. Leave the cards up for a week.
5. After taking down the cards:
 - Compare them with a plain card that was not used in the test. What differences do you see?
 - Inspect the test cards with a magnifying glass. What do you see?



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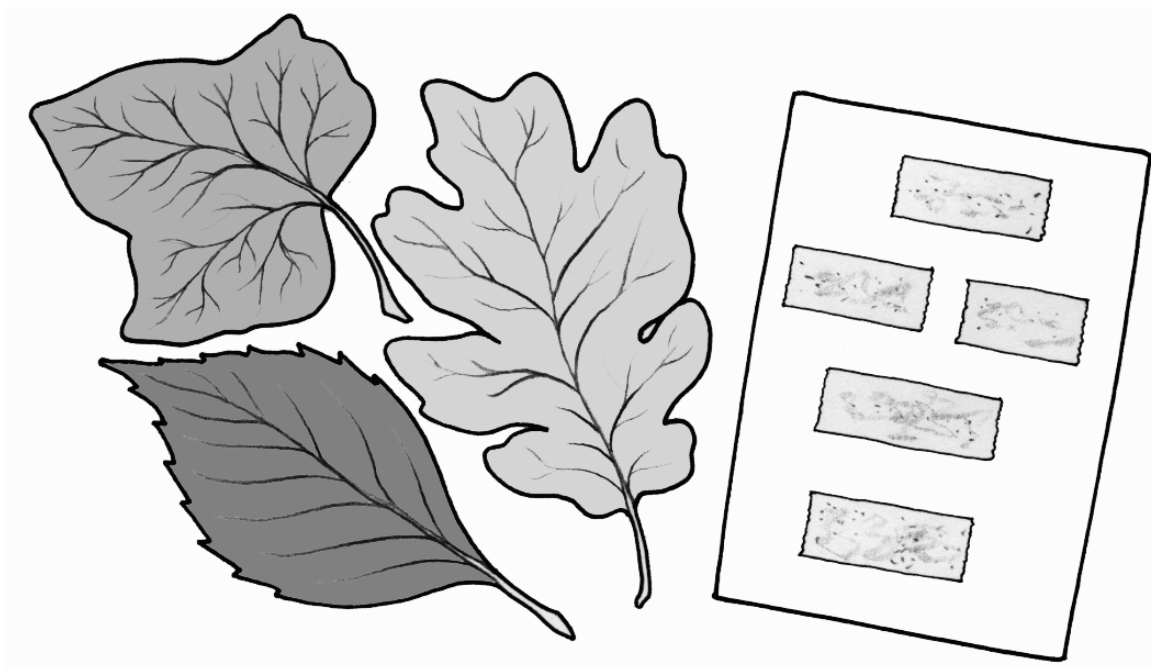
Experiment 3: Leaf Test

Materials:

- Transparent tape
- White sheet of paper
- Pen

Procedure:

1. Collect leaves from different areas of town. Take the leaves off of the trees, not from the ground. Only a few leaves are needed.
2. Do not touch the surface of the leaves with your hand. Hold them by the stem.
3. Record the locations where the leaves were taken.
4. Take a piece of transparent tape and stick firmly on the upper surface of a leaf and then peel it off gently.
5. Stick the tape on a clean sheet of white paper. Mark the location from which the leaf was taken under the tape.
6. The leaves will have collected soot and other air-borne particles on their surface. The tape will pick these particles up from the leaf and, when the tape is placed on the white paper, the particles will be visible.
7. Repeat for all the leaves. Notice the differing levels of particulate matter in the air at different locations.



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Experiment 4: Vacuum Cleaner Air Sampler

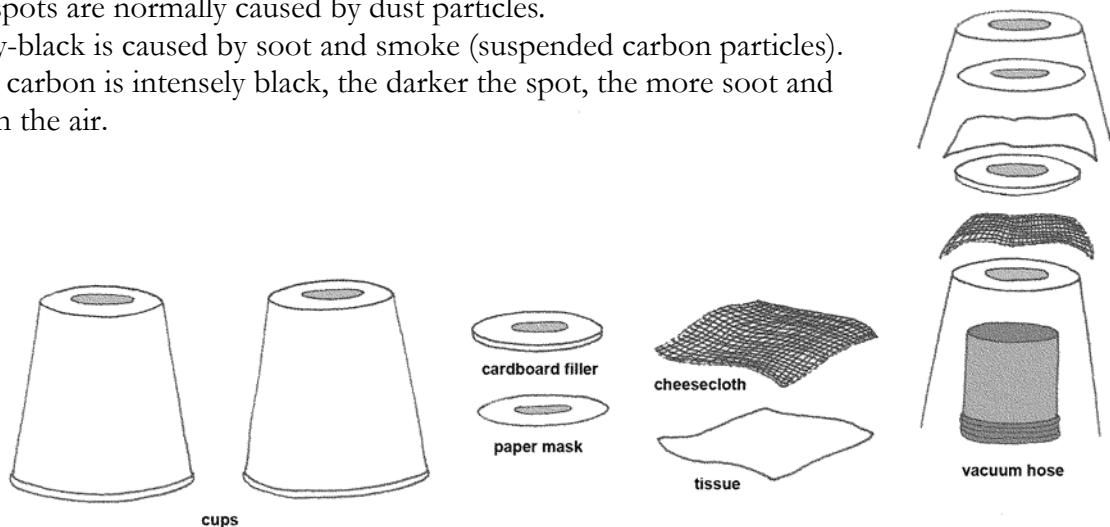
(more complicated project)

Materials:

- vacuum cleaner with hose attachment
- two paper cups
- sharp craft knife
- lightweight cardboard for filler
- cheesecloth or screen mesh
- facial tissue for filter
- paper for mask

Procedure:

1. Making the sampler:
Cut a 1" diameter hole through the bottom of each cup. Make sure the holes are aligned. Next, cut a disk of cardboard the same diameter as the bottom of the cups. Cut a 1" diameter hole in the cardboard disk. Cut a paper disk the same way. All of the holes should match up. Cut a piece of cheesecloth big enough to cover the bottom of the cup (inverted) with about 1/2" hanging over all sides. Cut a piece of facial tissue the same way. Fiberglass or wire screen may be cut to fit the cup bottom as an alternative. Assemble as illustrated.
2. Run the vacuum cleaner for approximately 30 minutes with the sampler in place. Remove the tissue filter after the sample has been run.
3. Airborne particles will appear as a spot on the tissue filter.
Spots are generally either brown or gray-black in color.
Brown spots are normally caused by dust particles.
The gray-black is caused by soot and smoke (suspended carbon particles).
Because carbon is intensely black, the darker the spot, the more soot and smoke in the air.



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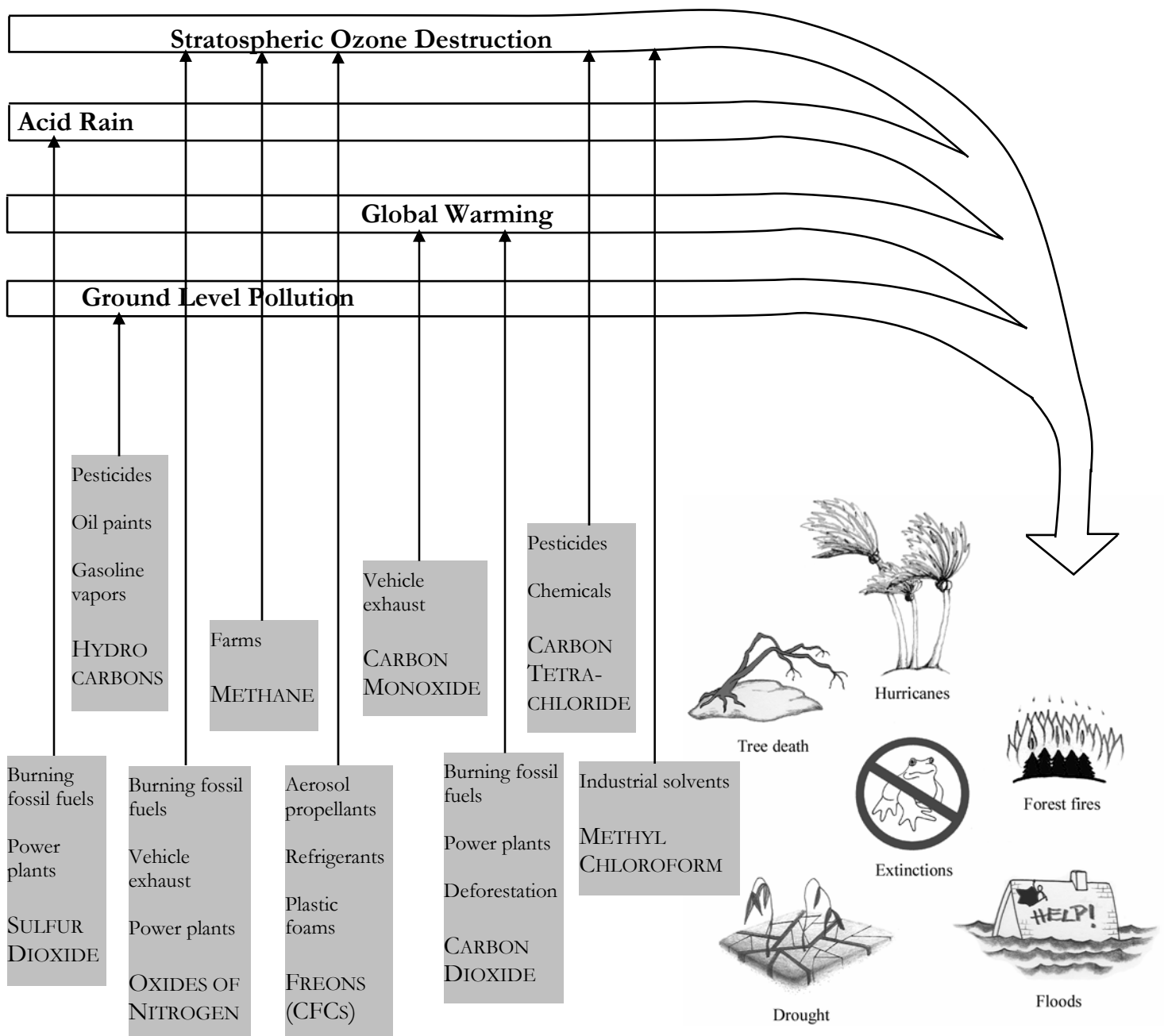
The Breath of Life

A Poisonous Brew in the Atmosphere

Billions of pollution sources, large and small, are emitting record amounts of polluting gasses. These pollutants are changing the very chemistry of our atmosphere. Major types of atmospheric pollution are shown in the diagram below.

Each of these pollutants plagues the earth in its own unique way. Each pollutant interacts with the others, accelerating change and producing effects that may be far greater than the sum of the parts.

... The bounds which the Pen of the Most High hath fixed ... are the breath of life unto all created things.
 Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 2, p.19



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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: “What Day is It?” “That Was Then, This Is Now” ND 99
An Anthology for Bahá'í Children, Abbas Afnan, “The Story of God’s Cause”

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “Holy Book of God” SE 93
The Garden of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19
Tablet of the Heart, God and Me, pp. 5, 9, 13, 25, 29, 49

Activities:

Brilliant Star: “Noah’s Ark” JA 91
“The Holy, Heavenly Manifestations” JA 98
“Holy Book of God” SE 93

Music:

Grover, Dick, *Rise Up and Sing*, “The Spirit’s the Same”
Lenz, Cameron and Sheper, *We Are Bahá'ís*, “Song of the Prophets”
Various Artists, *Jewel in the Lotus*, “Om Mani Padme Hom”

Games:

Brilliant Star: “Bahá'í Dominoes” JA 92

Books:

Bahá'í References to Judaism, Christianity and Islám, James Heggie
God and His Messengers, David Hofman
Thy Kingdom Come: A Biblical Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith, Thomas Tai-Seale
World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, Shoghi Effendi

Other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Children’s Education and Resource Center, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.

TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION
OF THE BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS
THE COVENANT AND THE
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
UNITY, SERVICE, STEADFASTNESS

If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 228

There is nothing to equal, nothing so effective as the Covenant of God to bring about and continue Unity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in Julia Grundy, Ten Days in the Light of 'Akká, p. 49

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that the purpose of the Covenant is to preserve the unity and cohesiveness of the Bahá'í Faith

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read short passages from the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi that illustrate the purpose of the Covenant.
- Use the *Brilliant Star* Special Edition 1992 on the Covenant to learn about the purpose of the Covenant in preserving the unity and cohesiveness of the Bahá'í Faith.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that without the Covenant there would be no single form of Administration, and the unity of the Faith would be lost

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Make a shield to emphasize that the Covenant is like a shield (*Brilliant Star* ND 92, pp. 6–7).
- Use artwork to illustrate the power of the Covenant to create and maintain unity.
- Do the “Center of the Covenant” activity (*Brilliant Star* ND 92, pp. 12–13).
- Find examples in nature of the unifying power of the Covenant.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the meaning of the Covenant as the “peerless potent instrument” for the unity and cohesiveness of the Bahá'í Faith
- To perceive the fragmentation that has occurred in other religious systems because of the violation of their Covenants

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Chart the breakup of various religions into denominations and relate it to violations of covenants.
- Use the analogy of the Covenant as the binding of a book that holds it together and have learners find other analogies in nature.
- Create a dance that demonstrates how fragmentation destroys unity.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to explain to others the power of the Covenant and how it protects the unity and integrity of the Bahá'í Faith.

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share with a partner one's understanding of the power of the Covenant through peer questioning. Learners can prepare their questions and then ask other learners.
- Exhibit artwork created to show the power of the Covenant to create and maintain unity.
- Perform dances created to show how fragmentation destroys unity at a gathering.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: AN UNSEEN ALL-EMBRACING POWER

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To discern the meaning of the Covenant as the “peerless potent instrument” for the unity and cohesiveness of the Bahá'í Faith

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To be able to explain to others the power of the Covenant and how it protects the unity and integrity of the Bahá'í Faith

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of play; Use of memorization; Use of art

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Paper, markers, and other art supplies, such as colored paper and glitter, as desired.
- Photographs of stars and galaxies, if available

Advance Preparation: Display the following quotation in the classroom:

If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 228

1. Welcome students and invite them to share their efforts to promote unity at home, at school, or in another setting over the past week. Applaud all!
2. Read aloud the following quotation.

. . . Co-operation among the constituent parts of the human body is clearly established, and these parts and members render services unto all the component parts of the body. For instance, the hand, the foot, the eye, the ear, the mind, the imagination all help the various parts and members of the human body, but all these interactions are linked by an unseen, all-embracing power, that causeth these interactions to be produced with perfect regularity. This is the inner faculty of man, that is his spirit and his mind, both of which are invisible.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablet to August Forel*, pp. 22–23

Briefly discuss: What are some examples of cooperation among the parts of the human body? Explain to the class that they are going to demonstrate the power of this inner faculty

that connects all the parts of the body and allows all the parts to function in harmony.

3. Demonstrate the activity with one student first. Teacher and student should stand (or sit) across from each other. Explain that the student is to “mirror” the teacher’s movements—being careful to follow the movements as exactly as possible. Do several movements until the student is exactly following what the teacher does. Use slow movements. Involve one hand, then other hand, then both hands, head, shoulders, etc. Then organize the class into pairs (using the teachers as partners, if necessary) and have the students do the same activity. Take turns so that all students function both as models and as mirrors.
4. Read the beginning quotation again. Briefly discuss: How did the mirroring activity illustrate the meaning of the quotation? How did an “invisible” faculty make it possible for them to see what their partner was doing and move their bodies in harmony with that other person?

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TOPIC: THE COVENANT AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

5. Then brainstorm a list of activities in which it is very important that movements of the body are carefully controlled and harmonized by the mind. Make sure that the list includes activities where the protection and safety of themselves or others depends on the mind's careful control of the body. Such examples might include:
 - flying an airplane
 - driving a car
 - medical surgery
 - cooking
 - crossing a busy street
6. Briefly discuss: Why is it so important for the mind to control the body and for the body to obey the guiding direction of the mind? What would the world be like if human beings had bodies but there was no mind to control those bodies?
7. Explain: 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that in the same way the human mind controls the human body, there is also an unseen Mind that directs and controls the entire universe. Offer examples such as the orderly movements of planets in their orbits, galaxies containing billions of stars that rotate together, etc. Photographs will enrich this concept, if available.
8. Read aloud the following quotation slowly and carefully:

. . . Look into this endless universe: a universal power inevitably existeth, which encompasseth all, directing and regulating all the parts of this infinite creation; and were it not for this Director, this Co-ordinator, the universe would be flawed and deficient. It would be even as a madman; whereas ye can see that this endless creation carrieth out its functions in perfect order, every separate part of it performing its own task with complete reliability, nor is there any flaw to be found in all its workings. Thus it is clear that a Universal Power existeth, directing and regulating this infinite universe.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 48–49
9. Briefly discuss: What would the universe be like without a Universal Power?
10. Then read aloud the following quotation:

If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 228
11. Work with the students to create simple dignified movements to accompany the words of the quotation. Using these dignified movements, recite the quotation over and over until all students have memorized it.
12. Encourage students to copy the quotation onto paper and use the materials provided to illustrate the forces of the universe serving the Covenant.
13. After allowing time to work, invite students to show their artwork and explain how their art illustrated the quotation. Encourage them to share their art and their explanation with at least one other person before the next class. Encourage them also to select and carry out a conscious act to promote unity at home or at school before the next class.

ACTIVITY 2: THE TREE OF THE COVENANT

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know that the purpose of the Covenant is to preserve the unity and cohesiveness of the Bahá'í Faith

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that without the Covenant there would be no single form of Administration, and the unity of the Faith would be lost

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of nature; Use of consultation; Use of service

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Writing paper, pens, or pencils
- Envelopes
- Stamps (optional)
- Other art supplies, if desired
- Access to an outdoor area, if possible. If not, try to gather a variety of tree leaves for students to observe.

1. Welcome students and invite them to share the results of their efforts to promote unity at home, at school, or in another setting over the past week. Invite them also to describe the conversations they had with others about the Covenant. Applaud all!
2. If possible, take the students outside to observe a tree. If this is not possible, observe one or more trees through a window or in photographs. Pose the question: How is this tree serving the Covenant? Listen carefully to all answers. Then affirm that the tree is following the Universal Power that regulates the universe. Remind the students that:

. . . All the forces of the universe . . . serve the Covenant.

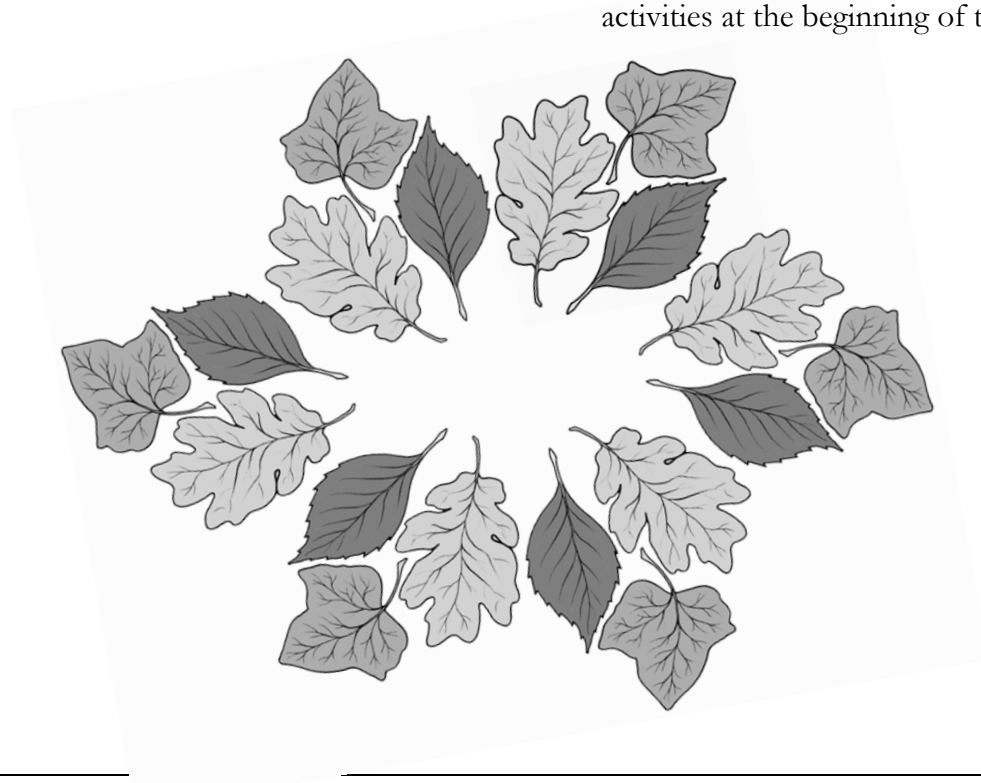
'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 228
3. Briefly discuss: How are we like the tree? How are we different? Does the tree always serve the Covenant? Do we always serve the Covenant? Why or why not? What are some Divine Laws that we **always** follow? (gravity, growth, etc.) What are some examples of Divine Law that we must choose to follow? (prayer, obedience to parents, etc.) Why do we think that God gave human beings the power of choice?
4. Then invite students to find some interesting examples of leaves and share them with the group. If indoors, encourage students to imagine and then sketch one or more leaves that might grow on a tree. Then briefly discuss: How are they alike? How are they different? Are any two leaves identical? How are people like leaves?
5. Explain that the Covenant is sometimes compared to a tree:

This Tree of Life is the Book of the Covenant.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in H.M. Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá—The Center of the Covenant*, p. 450
6. Share the following information as desired:
 - Trees have a superb structure that combines strength and flexibility that helps the tree survive in strong winds. Point out further that very diverse parts of the tree (leaves, bark, inner wood, roots, fruits, etc.) are unified and harmonized by obedience to a single unifying order. How does the tree's obedience to Divine Laws protect it and assure its survival as weather and seasons change?

GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION OF THE BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS
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- A fully grown oak grows—and sheds—roughly 250,000 leaves a year. All of these leaves have their own “individuality” and, although similar in many ways, are not identical to each other. All of these leaves also move differently in a breeze and absorb sunlight at a different angle. How does the tree’s obedience to Divine Laws help it to express unity in diversity?
7. Read aloud the following quotation:
- There is nothing to equal, nothing so effective as the Covenant of God to bring about and continue Unity.**
- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in Julia Grundy, Ten Days In the Light Of ‘Akká, p. 49*
8. Ask the students to choose any particular kind of tree they wish, and pretend to be that tree. Now tell them that a storm is coming. A strong wind is blowing. Have them move as a tree would move in a strong wind. Then have them move as if the wind is gentle. Finally encourage students to notice (or imagine) the slight movements of tree leaves on a calm day, and then sustain these small movements while discussing: If human beings are like the leaves of one tree, and the Covenant is like the tree, how does the Covenant preserve unity? If tests and difficulties are like a strong wind or a storm in human life, what are our responsibilities during these times of difficulty?
9. Encourage students to individually think of a person that they know who is experiencing some form of a test or difficulty. Invite students to individually write a short note of encouragement to that person, perhaps including part of a favorite prayer or quotation, perhaps also decorating the card with a leaf or a drawing of a leaf. Encourage students to deliver or send the note of encouragement as soon as possible after class. Remember to invite students to share the results of their activities at the beginning of the next class.



Resource Pages

Activity: The Tree of the Covenant

DIVERSITY IS AN ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTIC
OF THE UNIVERSAL SYSTEM

Each leaf has its own particular identity—so to speak, its own individuality as a leaf.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 285

. . . In the sensible world appearances are not repeated, for no being in any respect is identical with, nor the same as, another being. The sign of singleness is visible and apparent in all things. If all the granaries of the world were full of grain, you would not find two grains absolutely alike, the same and identical without any distinction. It is certain that there will be differences and distinctions between them.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 283

THE COVENANT MAKES POSSIBLE UNITY IN DIVERSITY

. . . The beings, whether great or small, are connected with one another by the perfect wisdom of God, and affect and influence one another. If it were not so, in the universal system and the general arrangement of existence, there would be disorder and imperfection. But as beings are connected one with another with the greatest strength, they are in order in their places and perfect.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, p. 246

If it is considered with insight, it will be seen that all the forces of the universe, in the last analysis serve the Covenant.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 228

There is nothing so equal, nothing so effective as the Covenant of God to bring about and continue Unity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in Julia Grundy, *Ten Days in the Light of ‘Akká*, p. 49

It is evident that the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the power of the Covenant and nothing else.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 49

GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE AND DISTINCTION OF THE BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS
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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- “A Covenant Is a Promise,” “Making Promises” SE 94
- “Sun Returns to Nightland” SE 92
- “Becoming an Apostle” MJ 97
- “I Believe!” MA 98
- “Show Your Love,” “The Majesty of the Covenant” MJ 98
- “Promises Kept,” “Walking in the Sunshine” SO 03
- “The First Written Covenant,” “The Center of the Covenant” ND 03

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

- “The Covenant is like the sea. . . .” SE 92
- “Covenant Is Like the Sea,” “ABC’s of the Covenant” MJ 98
- “Lifeboat” SO 03

Music:

Brilliant Star:

- “Covenant” SE 92
- “Bright Star” JA 00

Poetry:

Brilliant Star:

- “The Light” JA 96

Books:

- Bahá'í Administration*, Shoghi Effendi
- The Bahá'í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion*, Hatcher and Martin, pp. 146–154
- The Compilation of Compilations, vol. I*, section on “The Covenant”
- The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*, Adib Taherzadeh
- The Eternal Covenant*, Lowell Johnson
- Power of the Covenant*, The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada
- Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, Shoghi Effendi
- Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*
- World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, Shoghi Effendi

Other favorite resources:

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- “Ark of Salvation,” “Bahá'u'lláh's Gift to the World,” “Greater Covenant,” “Make a Bead Chain of. . . .,” “My Part of the Covenant” SE 92
- “Building Bridges,” “Candles of Unity,” “Firmness in the Covenant,” “Spirit of Obedience” SE 94
- “Light of the Covenant” ND 95
- “Light of Bahá'u'lláh,” “Temple Puzzle” SE 96
- “The Institutions Pop-Up Page,” “Protect Me!” SE 97
- “Gifts From Bahá'u'lláh” MA 98
- “What Is Our Part In the Covenant,” “My Covenant To-Do List,” “The Cord of the Covenant” MJ 98
- “Puzzle Their Minds” MJ 98
- “What Would You Give” SE 98
- “Teaching Toolbox” JF 99
- “Promise Practice,” “Search for the Covenant,” “Flags of the Fortress,” “Cave of the Covenant,” Seeking Firmness,” “Fruits of One Tree,” “What Do You Say,” “Spiritual Energy,” “Chameleon Crossword” SO 03
- “Celebrating ‘Abdu'l-Bahá” ND 03

Games:

Brilliant Star:

- “Heart of the World,” “Signs of the Covenant” SE 92
- “Apostle Game” SE 94
- “Keys to the Human Heart,” “Virtues Game” SE 96
- “ABC’s of the Covenant” MJ 98
- “Three Steps Relay” SO 03

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Children’s Education and Resource Center, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.