

TO UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
UNITY, SERVICE, TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Now that they (the believers) have erected the administrative machinery of the Cause they must put it to its real use—serving only as an instrument to facilitate the flow of the spirit of the Faith out into the world.

Shoghi Effendi, *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 2

The friends must never mistake the Bahá'í administration for an end in itself. It is merely the instrument of the spirit of the Faith. 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, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 59

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the purpose, structure, and form of the institutions of the Faith; the local, national, and international institutions; the institution of the Nineteen Day Feast and its function in the Bahá'í community

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and discuss “Kids and the Administration” (*Brilliant Star* MJ 91, p. 24).
- Read from the Administrative Order by Shoghi Effendi. Each group can prepare and present to the rest one aspect of the institutions of the Faith, i.e., local Spiritual Assembly, unit convention, Nineteen Day Feast.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the relationship and purpose of the levels of Bahá'í administration, and the means for communication between the various levels
- To understand the form of the Nineteen Day Feast, and its relationship to the administrative institutions of the Faith

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Make drawings showing various levels of administrative order (avoid purely linear models).
- Use the monument of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf to understand the relationships among the institutions of the Faith.
- Make models of the monument of the Greatest Holy Leaf.
- Use body sculptures to show understanding of the interrelationship between the institutions and individual Bahá'ís, i.e., how an individual can be in communication with both the Local Spiritual Assembly and the Universal House of Justice.
- Discuss what a Bahá'í city of the future would be like; construct the city in clay or make a mural on the wall.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the interconnection between the spiritual nature of the Faith and its institutions
- To compare and contrast Bahá'í administrative institutions with those of other religious and secular organizations

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Consult on the unique characteristics of Bahá'í institutions creating a flip chart or board list.
- Create a puzzle with pieces being characteristics of the Bahá'í administrative order and those of other religions; place the pieces in the proper category.
- Use a drawing to show one's personal role in the complex web of the institutions of the Faith.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate understanding of the purpose, structure, and form of Bahá'í administrative institutions

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Prepare short talks about the Bahá'í administrative order for firesides using the various art activities from classes.
- Hold a Nineteen Day Feast entirely planned and executed by the learners. A special gathering such as a Model Feast or a Unity Feast may be planned to include family and friends of all students.

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To become familiar with the purpose, structure, and form of the institutions of the Faith; the local, national, and international institutions; the institution of the Nineteen Day Feast and its function in the Bahá'í community

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the relationship and purpose of the levels of Bahá'í administration, and the means for communication between the various levels

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate understanding of the purpose, structure, and form of Bahá'í administrative institutions

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards God; Use of consultation; Use of reasoning; Use of arts and crafts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Pens or pencils
- Paper plates, at least 9 inches in diameter (stiff plates without dividers are best)
- Yarn
- One large bead (with small sticky label or use permanent marker to write directly on the bead)
- Smaller beads (optional, as desired for decoration)
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- NOTE: Beads and yarn can be as simple or as colorful as desired

Advance Preparation: copy the quotations on Resource Pages 115–16 and cut them apart so that each student or small team of students studies a different set of quotations.

1. Welcome the students and encourage them to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Explain that Bahá'u'lláh has established new structures of happy and united community life. This wonderful structure balances freedom and order, individual initiative and institutional guidance. Briefly discuss: What are some examples of balance? Of a balance between freedom and order?
3. Invite students either individually or in small teams to strike poses that demonstrate balance. Applaud all!
4. Distribute one or more of the quotations on Resource Pages 115–16 to each student or team of students. Encourage them to read their quotations carefully and then to share the main point of the quotation in the whole group. Organize students so that a capable reader is in each team or provide assistance as needed to assure success.
5. Then discuss the following questions with the class:
 - What are some of the different functions of the various institutions in a local Bahá'í community?
 - Why is it important for individuals to take initiative and also to consult with others?
 - How does Bahá'u'lláh's Order provide a system for addressing the different needs of different people?

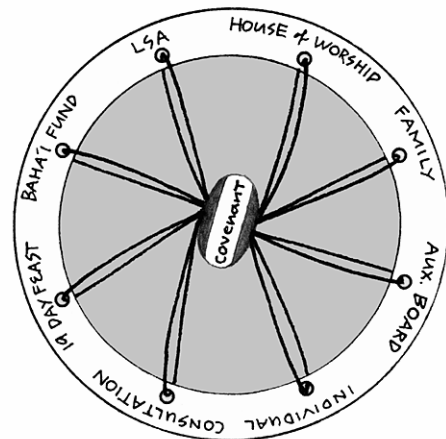
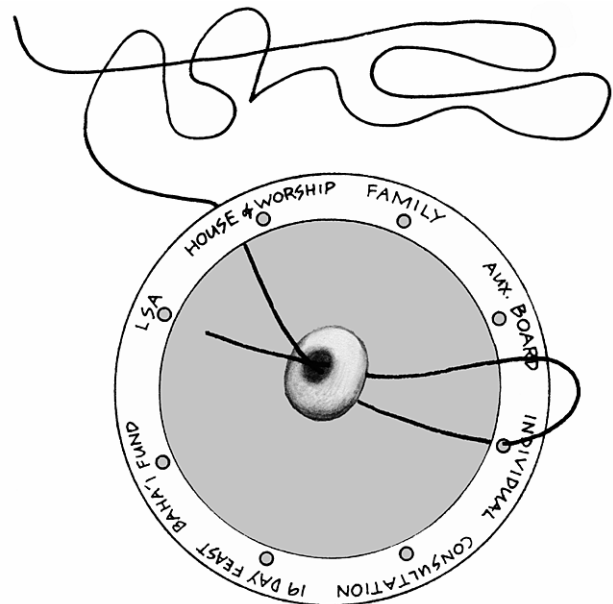
TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

6. Work in the whole group to make a simple drawing on chart paper to show how these different participants in Bahá'í community life work together and support each other. How could the image of a web represent all these different institutions?
7. Then invite students to use the image of a web to show the strength and beauty of these spiritual connections.

Web Making Procedure:

- Draw a ring inside the rim of the paper plate. Cut out the center of the plate to the inside edge of the ring.
- The outside rim of the plate (to the outside edge of the ring) can be removed, or not, as desired.
- Punch 8 holes around the ring.
- Above the holes write the names of the participants in Bahá'í community life (all except the Covenant) from Resource Pages 115–16.
- Write “Covenant” on the sticky label and place the label on the large bead or use permanent marker to write on the bead.
- Wrap masking tape around one end of the yarn (to make the end work like a needle).
- Push the taped end of the yarn first through the large Covenant bead, then through another hole. This illustrates how the participants are related, through the power of the Covenant.
- Making sure that each pass of the yarn also passes through the Covenant bead, continue crisscrossing the yarn in similar fashion, linking hole to hole and showing the linkages between all participants.
- End the web-building by bringing the taped end of the yarn back through the first hole and tying to the other end.
- Depending on the interests of the class and other circumstances, smaller beads and decorations may be added to make the web colorful. Then use yarn to make a hanger for this web.

8. When the web-making project is complete, review the linkages and interrelationships among the participants in Bahá'í community life to assure understanding. Briefly discuss: How does this system create a strong network of connections to help all people build a better world?
9. Encourage students to share their webs and their explanations with at least one other person before the next class. Could they also share their work at an upcoming Nineteen Day Feast, devotional gathering, or cluster meeting?



TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

ACTIVITY 2: CITIES OF THE FUTURE

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the relationship and purpose of the levels of Bahá'í administration, and the means for communication between the various levels

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To discern the interconnection between the spiritual nature of the Faith and its institutions

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate understanding of the purpose, structure, and form of Bahá'í administrative institutions

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engaging mind and heart; Use of science; Use of independent investigation; Use of reasoning; Use of arts and crafts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. FOR EACH OF TWO CLASS PERIODS

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Copies for each student of one or more Resource Pages 117–19
- A recording of beautiful background music and/or rosewater or other beautiful fragrance as desired
- Outdoor space for a large chalk drawing, if available, or other large paper and markers

FIRST CLASS:

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Briefly discuss: Why are our acts of service so important for us as individuals and also for the community?

Then explain that the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh:

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, *The Compilation of Compilations*,
vol. 2, p. 59

3. Briefly discuss: What are some things that we remember about Bahá'í administration and community life? How will Bahá'í principles help re-form community life and benefit the entire human race?
4. Invite students to reflect: What do we think our towns and cities will be like in the future when they are shaped by these beautiful new teachings of God? Allow time for students to reflect silently, then encourage them to share their ideas

with each other in pairs, and then in the whole group. Record student ideas on chart paper.

5. Explain that our interaction with the world of nature provides one example of the sorts of changes that will benefit all people. Share the information that:
 - The average American generates about 4.3 pounds of solid trash per day—every man, woman, and child.
 - o Construction debris and sludge from sewage-treatment plants brings the total amount of waste to 6 pounds per person per day. This amount is over 200 million tons of garbage each year—enough to fill a fleet of garbage trucks encircling the earth six times! That's just the United States, not counting any other country.
 - The average American uses between 80–100 gallons of water per day—every man, woman, and child.
 - o On average, a person only drinks about one-half gallon of water per day—less than 1% of the water people use. An average person needs to consume about two and a half quarts of water per day (from all sources, i.e. water, food, etc.) to maintain good health.

- The average American drives a car about 8,000 miles per year.
 - Each gallon of gasoline that is burned contributes about 22 pounds of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere—explaining why automobile emissions account for about 30% of the carbon dioxide buildup in the atmosphere that is contributing to global warming.¹
- How much water does our household use in one week?
 - Instruct students to develop a reasonable ‘guess-timate’ about the amount of water their household uses over five days. Use the Household Water Survey form to record their findings. Report the findings back to the class.

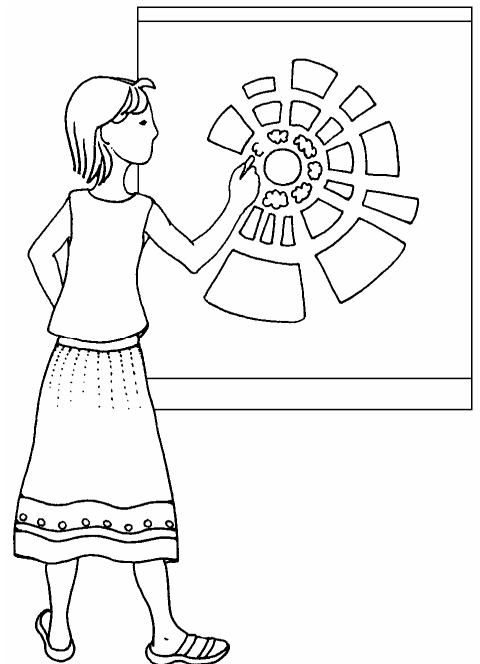
6. Share the following quotation:

We need a change of heart. . . . The inward life of man as well as his outward environment have to be reshaped if human salvation is to be secured.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 85

- 7. Then explain that we can investigate these facts for ourselves. Three possible surveys are provided on Resource Pages 117–19. Organize the class so that each student conducts one or more of these surveys over the coming week.
 - How much trash does our household generate in one week?
 - Instruct students to sort through the trash their own household produces for five days. Use the Household Trash Survey form to record their findings. Report the findings back to the class. Discuss the results.
- 8. Review the forms and how to use them in the whole group. Then discuss: How will we explain our research project to our families so that we promote unity while we’re learning about our households’ use of natural resources?
- 9. Read again the quotations provided in step 2 and step 6 of this activity. Briefly discuss: If we were to make a map of our city of the future, what should we be sure to include? Then invite students to work in small teams to sketch their ideas for a city of the future.

Save these sketches for the next class.



¹ If desired, you may additionally explain: A gallon of gasoline weighs about 6 pounds. Gasoline is made of carbon and hydrogen. When it burns, the carbon and hydrogen separate. The carbon then combines with oxygen from the atmosphere to create carbon dioxide (CO₂). The weight of the oxygen combines with the weight of the carbon to release approximately 22 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The extra carbon dioxide in the atmosphere acts like a greenhouse, keeping the sun’s heat close to the earth and thereby contributing to global warming

SECOND CLASS:

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share the results of their research: What did we do to promote unity in our families? What did we learn?
2. As a group record each person's survey data on chart paper. Summarize the results. Then read again:

We need a change of heart. . . . The inward life of man as well as his outward environment have to be reshaped if human salvation is to be secured.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 85

Briefly discuss: How did our research change our own hearts? Do we see actions that we can individually do to help the environment while we also work for unity in our families and in our community? Why is it so important to work for unity while we also work to improve the environment?

3. Then play beautiful background music. Invite students to close their eyes and silently reflect on the spiritual quality of beauty while they listen to the music. Continue this silent period of reflection while you pass a vial of rosewater or other fragrance near the students' noses. Then invite them to imagine something very, very beautiful, the most beautiful place or thing they have ever seen—beautiful physically and beautiful spiritually. Encourage the students to nod their heads when they have this beautiful image clearly in mind. After all students have nodded, invite them to open their eyes and describe their beautiful images to each other in teams of two, small groups, or the whole group as desired.

Discuss: What will make our cities of the future truly beautiful? Record student comments on chart paper.

4. Return to the sketches started in the previous class. Invite student teams to share their sketches. Then in the whole group work together to map your class's city of the future on chart paper, butcher paper, or other surface. Consider using sidewalk chalk to draw the map in a parking lot, making a mini-city in which they could walk.

As you work discuss: How will our city be different that it is now? How will Bahá'í institutions be represented? What will people do to make our city more friendly to the environment? How will waste be handled? How will water be used? Where will food be obtained? How will transportation be provided? How will people live, work, and enjoy life in ways that are environmentally sustainable in the future? How will we be sure that all people enjoy the benefits of our city? How will our city contribute to other cities around us? What will beautify our city physically and spiritually?

5. As a group, discuss: How can we share our vision of the future with others? Work with the students to decide if they will offer tours of their city to their families, other classes, at an upcoming community gathering, or by other means. Would the class like to send a copy of their maps to the local Spiritual Assembly or perhaps the local newspaper?



Resource Pages

SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

COVENANT

. . . The pivot of the oneness of mankind is nothing else but the power of the Covenant.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 238

THE INDIVIDUAL

. . . At the very root of the Cause lies the principle of the undoubted right of the individual to self-expression, his freedom to declare his conscience and set forth his views.

Shoghi Effendi, *Principles of Bahá’í Administration*, p. 43

CONSULTATION AND SACRIFICE

The unfettered freedom of the individual should be tempered with mutual consultation and sacrifice. . . .

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations* vol. 2, p. 88

NINETEEN DAY FEAST

Verily, it is enjoined upon you to offer a feast, once in every month, though only water be served; for God hath purposed to bind hearts together, albeit through both earthly and heavenly means.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitab-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 57, p. 80

There is a time set aside at the Nineteen Day Feasts for the Community to express its views and make suggestions to its Assembly; the Assembly and the believers should look forward to this happy period of discussion. . . .

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Compilation of Compilations* v. II, p. 51

BAHÁ’Í FUND

In educating the friends to be conscious of contributing to the fund as a fundamental element of Bahá’í life, the Assembly should make them aware of the individual believer’s prerogative of contributing directly to all the funds of the Faith: international, continental and national as well as local.

Letter written by the Universal House of Justice, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 259

BAHÁ'Í ELECTIONS AND LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

A blessed letter hath been received from you, telling of the election of a Spiritual Assembly. . . .

Now must those elected representatives arise to serve with spirituality and joy, with purity of intent, with strong attraction to the fragrances of the Almighty, and well supported by the Holy Spirit. Let them raise up the banner of guidance, and as soldiers of the Company on high, let them exalt God's Word, spread abroad His sweet savours, educate the souls of men, and promote the Most Great Peace.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 77

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

Although to outward seeming the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár [House of Worship] is a material structure, yet it hath a spiritual effect. It forgoeth bonds of unity from heart to heart; it is a collective center for men's souls. . . . Even if, in some small village, a house was designated as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it produced a marked effect; how much greater would be the impact of one especially raised up.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 95–96

THE FAMILY

A family is a nation in miniature. Simply enlarge the circle of the household, and you have the nation. Enlarge the circle of nations, and you have all humanity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 157

AUXILIARY BOARD MEMBERS AND THEIR ASSISTANTS

. . . Auxiliary Board members and their assistants . . . prompt and encourage individuals, institutions, and communities to act with dispatch, constancy, and enthusiasm.

Universal House of Justice, Letter, 14 January 2001

GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

HOUSEHOLD TRASH SURVEY

Instructions:

1. Empty all of the trash receptacles in the household, to provide a “zero point” from which to begin.
2. Each day, for five days, sort household trash into the different types of materials listed below.
3. Collect all the different types of materials into separate containers where the accumulating trash can be kept until the five-day period is complete. These might be plastic garbage bags, trash cans, cardboard boxes, etc.
4. Weigh the collection containers when they are empty, before you start filling them with trash. This will be important for the final results in your survey.
5. After the five-day collection period is over, weigh each category of trash to determine how much of each type was produced.
6. Record the results on the chart below. Consider the question: How can less trash help the environment?

Types of Trash / Weight of Each Type

Glass

Aluminum

Paper

Plastic

Food Waste

Hazardous Wastes (examples: batteries, aerosol cans, paint, motor oils, cleaning solutions, pesticides, garden chemicals, etc.)

Other

Oversize Items (too large to weigh, such as discarded appliances, furniture, etc.)

Total Weight Per Person Daily Average
(pounds/days/number of people in household)

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

HOUSEHOLD WATER SURVEY

Instructions:

1. Each day, for five days, keep a record of the ways your household uses water.
2. Place a record keeping sheet by each of the water use places in the household. Ask each member of the household to help keep track of the water use.
3. Record the results on the chart below. Consider the question: How does conserving water help the environment?

TYPES OF WATER USE (based on national averages)		GALLONS USED		
Toilet Flushes	Number of flushes		x 4 =	
Shower Bathing (5 minutes)	Number of showers		x 25 =	
Bathtub Bathing	Number of baths		x 30 =	
Faucets Open	Minutes Faucet Open		x 3.5 =	
Dishwasher Use	Number of Uses		x 10 =	
Clothes Washer Use	Number of Uses		x 30 =	
Home Car Washing	Minutes Faucet Open		x 6 =	
Lawn Watering If you water a lawn, total up all the gallons used above, and multiply by .80 = (lawn watering accounts for an average of 80% of water use in a household)				
Other	Use Above Examples to Guess =			
TOTAL GALLONS USED				
PER PERSON DAILY AVERAGE (gallons/days/number of people in household)				

TOPIC: STRUCTURE AND FORM OF THE INSTITUTIONS

HOUSEHOLD TRANSPORTATION SURVEY

Instructions:

1. On the first day, write down the mileage from the speedometer on all household vehicles.
2. After five days, write down the mileage from the speedometer on all household vehicles again.
3. Record the results on the chart below.
4. Find the total carbon dioxide produced using the formula below.* Consider the question: How does reducing the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere help the environment?

TRANSPORTATION USED

Vehicle #1

Starting Mileage = _____ Ending Mileage = _____ Total Miles = _____

Vehicle #2

Starting Mileage = _____ Ending Mileage = _____ Total Miles = _____

Vehicle #3

Starting Mileage = _____ Ending Mileage = _____ Total Miles = _____

TOTAL MILES DRIVEN = TOTAL POUNDS OF CARBON DIOXIDE = _____ POUNDS OF CARBON DIOXIDE¹

For comparison purposes, consider the following examples:

City Bus _____ 300 miles @ 4 miles per gallon = 75 gallons
 Carrying 50 people = 1.5 gallons per person

Jet Plane _____ 300 miles @ .2 miles per gallon = 1500 gallons
 Carrying 300 people = 5 gallons per person

Motorcycle _____ 300 miles @ 59 miles per gallon = 5 gallons
 Carrying 1 person = 5 gallons per person
 Carrying 2 persons = 2.5 gallons per person

Personal Car _____ 300 miles @ 22 miles per gallon = 14 gallons
 Carrying 1 person = 14 gallons per person
 Carrying 5 persons = 2.8 gallons per person

Scooter _____ 300 miles @ 80 miles per gallon = 3.8 gallons
 Carrying 1 person = 3.8 gallons per person

Bicycle _____ No fuel needed

* How does this formula make sense? Consider this background information:
 Current average miles per gallon for all U.S. private vehicles is about 22 miles per gallon. If you'd like to be more precise, ask the drivers of the vehicles to help you find the miles per gallon for each vehicle. Each gallon of gasoline that is burned adds about 22 pounds of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. The buildup of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contributes to global warming.

Total miles ÷ 22 miles per gallon x 22 pounds CO₂ = x miles • $\frac{1 \text{ gallon}}{22 \text{ miles}}$ • $\frac{22 \text{ pounds}}{\text{gallon}}$ = x pounds CO₂ released into the atmosphere

Notice that the number of miles driven approximately equals the number of pounds of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere.

Sources: <http://www.nhtsa.gov/> and <http://www.fueleconomy.gov/>

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- “Bahá’u’lláh’s Gift To the World” ND 95
- “What Would the Bahá’ís Do” ND 00
- “Elected to Serve,” “Spiritual Assemblies” JF 02
- “Local Spiritual Assemblies. . .” MA 03
- “Into the Future” SO 05

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “Heart to Heart” SO 97

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- “Heart to Heart” SO 97
- “Help the Institutions Grow!” JF 98
- “The Institutions Pop-Up Page” SE 97
- “Spiritual Assembly Quiz” MA 03

Music:

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

Games:

Brilliant Star:

- “Assembly Game” ND 93
- “The Rulers and the Learned,” “Union and Harmony Balance Game” SE 97
- “Play the ‘Helping Hands’ Game” MJ 01
- “Resources” SO 96

Books:

The Bahá’í Electoral Process, Daniel Jordan

The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion, Hatcher and Martin, pp. 152-154

Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1, sections on “Bahá’í Elections,” “Establishment of the Universal House of Justice”

Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 2, sections on “Local Spiritual Assemblies,” “The Local Spiritual Assembly,” “National Spiritual Assembly”

Videos:

Elections—The Bahá’í Model

The Local Spiritual Assembly

A Miracle of Governance—The Local Spiritual Assembly

Will and Testament of Abdu’l-Bahá: A Two Video Set

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 STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER THE LEARNED AND THE RULERS

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
UNITY, BALANCE, SERVICE**

Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá.

Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 221

In this holy cycle the “learned” are, on the one hand, the Hands of the Cause of God, and, on the other, the teachers and diffusers of His teachings who do not rank as Hands, but who have attained an eminent position in the teaching work. As to the “rulers” they refer to the members of the Local, National and International Houses of Justice.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, quoted by the Universal House of Justice,
Messages from the Universal House of Justice 1963–1986, p. 215

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know from the Bahá'í writings the distinct but complimentary roles and functions of the institutions of the rulers and the learned
- To become familiar with the structure of the institution of the Counselors

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Invite students to make lists of the roles and functions of each institution.
- Study the writings of the Guardian on the roles, functions, and characteristics of these two institutions.
- Study the structure of the institution of the learned, such as the International Teaching Center, Counselors, Auxiliary Board members, and their assistants.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the need for the two vital arms of the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh, the institutions of the learned and the rulers, and how they work together for the progress of the Cause and the well-being of the Bahá'í community
- To reflect on the lives of some of the heroes and heroines of the Bahá'í Faith in the institution of the Counselors

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Play a game equating the two arms of the body with the rulers and the learned.
- Read “Take Me to Your Leader” (*Brilliant Star* SO 93, p. 8). Build a model that requires two pillars to stand.
- Use analogies from nature to demonstrate the duality and the balance.
- Learn about the appointment of the Hands of the Cause by the Central Figures and the Guardian.
- Use an art form to demonstrate understanding of the institution of the Counselors.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the balance that the administrative order possesses and strive for balance in one's own life
- To reflect on the lives of the members of the institution of the Counselors as an example for our lives

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use a balance scale and compare the two sides to the rulers and the learned.
- Choose one member of the institution of the learned to study.
- Invite an Auxiliary Board member to visit learners and consult with them about understanding the dual nature of the administrative order.
- Research the life of a hero of the Faith from the institution of the learned and illustrate this hero's example for our lives.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To share one's understanding of the complimentary roles of the elected and appointed institutions with others
- To commit to render service to both institutions as part of one's Bahá'í life

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Relate in stories the complimentary roles of the rulers and the learned.
- Plan a deepening or a fireside on the dual structure of the administrative order.
- Prepare an exhibit of the artwork for a community gathering.

TOPIC: THE LEARNED AND THE RULERS

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: COMPLEMENTARY FUNCTIONS, WORKING TOGETHER

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know from the Bahá'í writings the distinct but complimentary roles and functions of the institutions of the rulers and the learned

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the need for the two vital arms of the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh, the institution of the learned and the rulers, and how they work together for the progress of the Cause and the well-being of the Bahá'í community

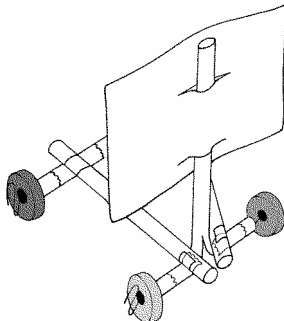
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed toward God; Use of analogies; Use of arts and crafts; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Independent investigation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 127 (save these for Activity 2 as well)
- Nonbendable, plastic drinking straws, for car framing and blow tubes to propel car
- Lifesavers candy for car wheels
- 8 ½" x 11" sheet of paper for sail
- Paper clips
- Masking tape
- Scissors

1. Welcome students and invite them to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. In the whole class group, read aloud Resource Page 125. Discuss: What are some benefits of having two types of institutions—the rulers and the learned? Why is it so important for them to work together?
3. Organize the class into small teams and invite these teams to explore this idea further by building a car from the materials listed above, and with the aid of instructions on Resource Page 128.
4. Set up a test track by putting a strip of masking tape on a smooth surface, such as an uncarpeted floor or a tabletop. Mark a starting line and one-foot intervals on the tape to allow students to see how far their cars can go.
 - See how far they can go with one blow.
 - See how few blows it can take to go 6 feet.
5. Discuss with the class:
 - The car frame and sail are very different from each other. Yet both fulfill essential functions to empower the car to fulfill its purpose. How is this similar to the twin arms of the Bahá'í administrative order?
 - The air blowing in the sail to make the car go is like the Word of God that guides and empowers the Bahá'í administrative institutions. How does the combination of the sail and the car frame make it easier to guide the car down the track, as opposed to just blowing on the car frame without the sail, or the sail without the frame?



6. Read again the words of Bahá'u'lláh on Resource Page 127. Discuss: What questions do we have about the rulers and the learned? Record the questions on chart paper.
7. As a class, decide how to find answers to your questions. Would you like to divide the

questions among students and teachers? Could a student or teacher look up one or more answers from authoritative texts to share at the next class? Could students work in teams or seek research assistance from other members of the community?

ACTIVITY 2: COMPLEMENTARITY AND BALANCE

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the need for the two vital arms of the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh, the institutions of the learned and the rulers, and how they work together for the progress of the Cause and the well-being of the Bahá'í community

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To discern the balance that the administrative order possesses and strive for balance in one's own life

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To commit to render service to both institutions as part of one's Bahá'í life

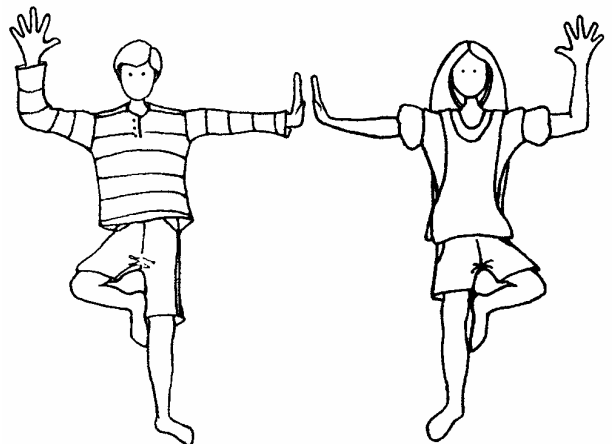
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of nature; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 127 (saved from Activity 1)
- Outdoor area to find small objects from nature (Alternatively, bring small objects such as leaves, blades of grass, twigs, etc., that illustrate duality and balance)
- Card stock or heavy paper
- Glue
- Markers

1. Invite students to share the results of their service as well as their answers to research questions from the previous activity. Applaud all!
2. Invite students to reflect silently on the concept of balance: When is it needed? Why is it important? After this period of reflection, invite them to share their ideas in the group. Then discuss: What are some actions or some objects that require balance?
3. Invite students to individually—and then in small teams—strike poses to demonstrate balance. Briefly discuss: What does it take to have good balance?



Activity continued on next page ➡

TOPIC: THE LEARNED AND THE RULERS

4. In the whole group, review Resource Page 127. Work together to create lists of the responsibilities of the learned and the rulers on chart paper. Briefly discuss: What is the same about these lists? What is different? How do they balance each other? How do they work together to protect the Bahá'í Faith and help it grow?
5. Then discuss: What are some things that we balance in our own lives? Consider such things as: work and play; school and home; activity and rest; vegetables and dessert; friends and family. The possibilities are limitless! Assist students to understand that in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, all things have their proper place and balance each other and that this principle of balance applies to our personal lives as well as the way the community is organized.
6. Invite students to walk outside to find a small object from nature that demonstrates complementarity and balance.
7. Encourage students to describe how their objects demonstrate balance. Then invite them to glue their objects to heavy paper. Encourage them to carefully copy these words on their paper:

Blessed are the rulers and the learned among
the people of Bahá.

Bahá'u'lláh
8. On the back of the paper, invite each student to record an act of service to carry out in the coming week. Encourage them to consider how they will balance this service with their other responsibilities. Remember to invite them to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.

Resource Pages

Twin Arms of the Administrative Order

Blessed are the rulers and the learned among the people of Bahá. They are My trustees among My servants and the manifestations of My commandments amidst My people.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 221

Abase not the station of the learned in Bahá and belittle not the rank of such rulers as administer justice amidst you.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 138–39

The administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh is a system of institutions, each with its defined sphere of action.

The central governing body is the Universal House of Justice. The Universal House of Justice guides the affairs of the Bahá'í community and supervises the work of local and national spiritual assemblies.

Decision-making authority is exercised by elected bodies—the “rulers”—the Universal House of Justice, national spiritual assemblies, regional Bahá'í councils, and local spiritual assemblies. The rulers use consultation to make decisions about the growth and protection of the Bahá'í Faith and its service to all people.

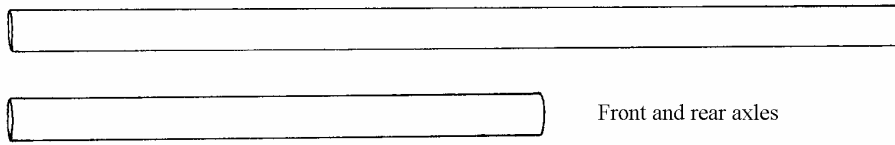
Advice and encouragement is provided by appointed individuals—the “learned”—the Hands of the Cause of God, the Continental Counselors, the members of the Auxiliary Boards, and their assistants.

The learned protect the Bahá'í Faith and help it grow by advising the believers and helping them understand the decisions of the rulers.

Summary based on a letter written by the Universal House of Justice, *The Institution of the Counselors*, p. 1

TOPIC: THE LEARNED AND THE RULERS

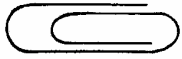
Assembling your sail car



Front and rear axles



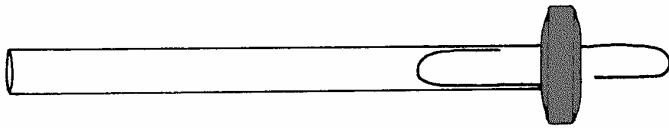
Lifesavers (4)



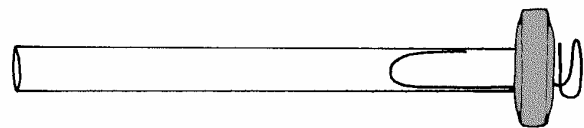
Paperclips (4)



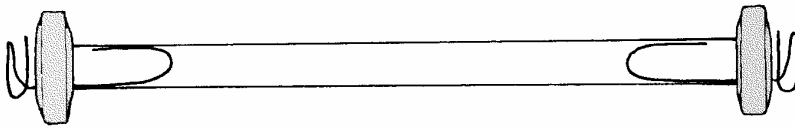
Open paperclips and insert into axles.



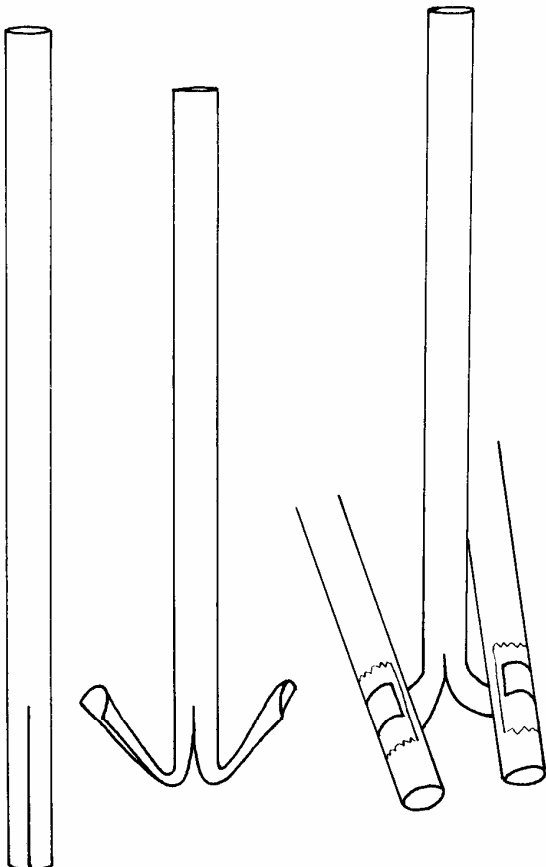
Add lifesavers.



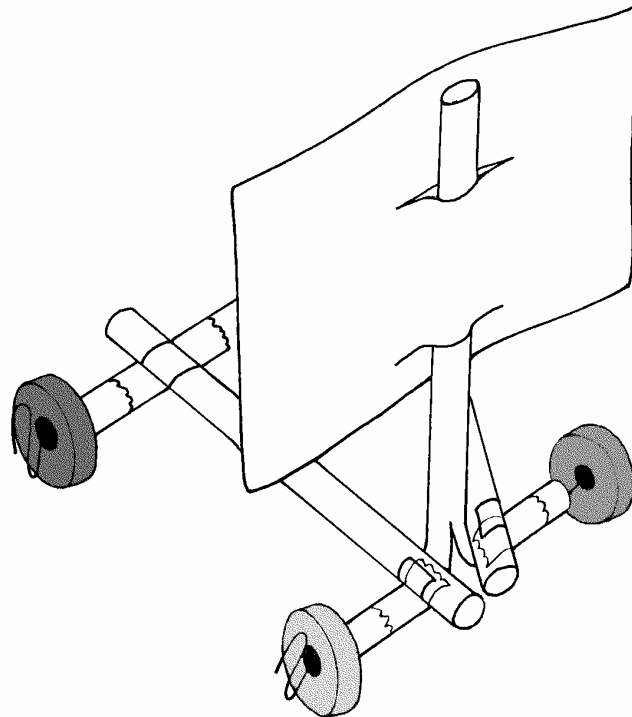
Bend paperclips to secure lifesavers.



Finished axle



Attach ends of mast to side pieces.



Assemble as shown.

Cut end of mast with scissors.

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- “A Right and Proper King,” “Kids and the Administration” MJ 91
- “Take Me to Your Leader, 1,” “Take Me to Your Leader, 2” MJ 91
- “Juana Conrad” MJ 98
- “Robert Henderson” SE 99
- “What Would the Bahá’ís Do . . . ” ND 00
- “Spiritual Assemblies,” “Elected to Serve” JF 02
- “Local Spiritual Assemblies” MA 03
- “A Gift From Bahá’u’lláh” SO 03
- “Into the Future” SO 05

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star: “Heart to Heart” SO 97

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- “Omid’s Problem” SE 93
- “New World Construction Teams,” “The Institutions Pop-Up Page” SE 97
- “Help the Institutions Grow!” JF 98
- “Profile of a Leader” JF 01
- “Spiritual Assembly Quiz” MA 03

Videos:

- Crossing Frontiers: Portrait of a World Citizen: Hand of the Cause of God Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khanúm*
- The Hands of the Cause of God, Vol. 1: Heroic Age through 1951*
- The Hands of the Cause of God, Vol. 2: The Institution of the Hands of the Cause of God*
- William Sears*

Books:

- The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion*, Hatcher and Martin, pp. 152–154
- The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, sections on “Bahá’í Elections,” “Establishment of the Universal House of Justice”
- The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, sections on “Local Spiritual Assemblies,” “The Local Spiritual Assembly,” “National Spiritual Assembly”
- Continental Boards of Counselors, Letters, Extracts from Letters and Cables from the Universal House Of Justice*
- The Great Adventure*, Florence Mayberry

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 STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER LOCAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
LOVE, SERVICE, RESPECT, UNITY**

The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 87–88

... The friends are called upon to give their whole-hearted support and cooperation to the Local Spiritual Assembly, first by voting for the membership and then by energetically pursuing its plans and programs, by turning to it in time of trouble or difficulty, by praying for its success and taking delight in its rise to influence and honor. This great prize, this gift of God within each community must be cherished, nurtured, loved, assisted, obeyed and prayed for.

Letter written by the Universal House of Justice, Naw-Rúz, 1974; Lights of Guidance, p. 77

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings regarding the role and functions of Bahá'í local and national institutions

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Divide into groups; have each group study a section of the compilations on the National Spiritual Assembly and the Local Spiritual Assembly and present findings to the entire class using visual aids.
- Memorize short passages about the Local Spiritual Assembly and National Spiritual Assembly.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the ways in which the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith assist individuals and the community
- To understand that assemblies are everywhere in the Bahá'í world regardless of their cultural diversity
- To gain insight from the writings regarding the spiritual nature of Bahá'í institutions

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Look through old Bahá'í magazines to see pictures of assemblies from around the world.
- Have a mock election for a local spiritual assembly and role play a functioning assembly.
- Play the “Assembly Game” (*Brilliant Star* ND 93, p. 22).
- Read and discuss “Take me to your Leader” (*Brilliant Star* SO 93, p. 6). Make a list of all the functions of local and national assemblies.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive one's own relationship to the institutions of the Faith
- To gain insight from the writings regarding the essentially spiritual nature of Bahá'í institutions

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Consult on the difficulties of being ruled by one individual versus by an assembly.
- Have someone who has been to the Bahá'í national center describe how it functions.
- Invite members of the local spiritual assembly to share functions and roles with the class (prepare questions ahead of time).
- Read the writings regarding the spiritual nature of the local and national Bahá'í institutions.
- Reflect on one's relationship to local and national institutions of the Faith; write reflections in a journal.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate one's personal understanding of the role and function of the Bahá'í local and national institutions

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the significance of the prayer for assembly meetings.
- Practice explaining one or more principles for the functioning of spiritual assemblies.
- Say regular prayers for assisting the growth and work of the assembly.

TOPIC: LOCAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: THE FIRST CONDITION—MEMORY VERSE

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings regarding the role and functions of Bahá'í local and national institutions

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate one's personal understanding of the role and function of the Bahá'í local and national institutions

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Advance Preparation: Write the memory verse in large print on the board or on several pieces of chart paper: "The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden."

1. Read aloud the following quotation twice:

The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. They must be wholly free from estrangement and must manifest in themselves the Unity of God, for they are the waves of one sea, the drops of one river, the stars of one heaven, the rays of one sun, the trees of one orchard, the flowers of one garden. Should harmony of thought and absolute unity be nonexistent, that gathering shall be dispersed and that assembly be brought to naught.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 87–88

2. Briefly discuss:

What are some of the images that 'Abdu'l-Bahá uses to describe the members of a spiritual assembly? How do these images help us understand the importance of love and unity in the assembly? What does he say will happen if the members are not unified? Why is unity so important to the functioning of a spiritual assembly?

3. Work together to memorize: "The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly." Consider reciting the words over and over in a rhythmic pattern, then add the second sentence: "They must be wholly free. . . ." Continue reciting rhythmically. Gradually add simple dignified motions to the words or a simple melody that you create. When the memorization is complete, applaud all!
4. Encourage students to work in pairs to practice explaining this same quotation in their own words. Then encourage them to share their explanations with at least one other person before the next class.

ACTIVITY 2: THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To gain insight from the writings regarding the spiritual nature of Bahá'í institutions

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive one's own relationship to the institutions of the Bahá'í Faith

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To demonstrate one's personal understanding of the role and function of the Bahá'í local and national institutions

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards God; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of independent investigation; Use of the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. PLUS VISIT WITH A LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OR ITS REPRESENTATIVE

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Letter paper and art supplies

Advance Preparation: This activity may be conducted according to your local circumstances. As written, the activity suggests that the class will prepare an invitation to the local spiritual assembly to delegate one or more of its members to meet with the class on behalf of the institution. Alternatively, the class may request a brief meeting with the institution as a whole. If there is no local spiritual assembly in your community, you may conduct the activity with a nearby assembly.

1. Welcome students and invite them to share the results of their service since the last class.
Applaud all!
2. Read aloud the following passage:

. . . The friends are called upon to give their whole-hearted support and cooperation to the Local Spiritual Assembly, first by voting for the membership and then by energetically pursuing its plans and programs, by turning to it in time of trouble or difficulty, by praying for its success and taking delight in its rise to influence and honor. This great prize, this gift of God within each community must be cherished, nurtured, loved, assisted, obeyed and prayed for.
3. Discuss the following questions. Record your answers on chart paper or chalkboard:
 - Who is being addressed? Who are “the friends”?
 - What are “the friends” being called upon to do? List specific actions.
 - What are some examples of what the requested actions might look like in real life?
 - The Universal House of Justice describes a local spiritual assembly as a “great prize” and “gift of God.” In what ways is it a great prize and a gift of God? How does this idea affect our feelings about our relationship to our Local Spiritual Assembly?

Letter written by the Universal House of Justice,
Naw-Rúz, 1974; *Lights of Guidance*, p. 77

Activity continued on next page ➡

TOPIC: LOCAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

4. After this discussion, suggest that the students write a letter to the local spiritual assembly to invite it to delegate one or more of its members to come to their class so that they can learn about the role and functioning of the local spiritual assembly first-hand.
5. Use art supplies to make a beautiful invitation card. Then consider the best way to deliver the invitation. Could the class, or a delegation from the class, hand-deliver the invitation, perhaps at a Nineteen Day Feast?
6. Work together to plan for the assembly member's visit. Consider including the following elements within the visit plan, and assign class members to be responsible for various parts of the plan:
 - Does the class wish to serve refreshments?
 - Would the class like to offer a simple gift to the assembly? For example, the quotation at the beginning of this activity or one of the prayers for spiritual assemblies could be prepared as a beautiful, hand-adorned card—perhaps one for each member of the assembly.
 - Read the following interview questions that the students may ask the assembly member during the visit. Add additional questions if desired. Include a copy of the class's questions with the invitation to help the assembly member prepare for the visit. Spontaneous questions may be added during the visit.
 - o How long has there been a local spiritual assembly in this community?
 - o What are some of the assembly's plans and hopes at this time?
 - o What is it like for you to serve as a member of the local spiritual assembly? What have been some real high points for you as an assembly member? Why did these experiences mean so much to you?
 - o When you think about our local spiritual assembly's service to the whole community, what are some particular aspects of this that make you especially happy?
 - o The class has studied a quotation from the Universal House of Justice that tells us what we can do to assist the Assembly. (Share the quotation from Step 2 of this activity.) As you consider this quotation from your perspective as an assembly member, what insights or comments would you like to offer?
 - o Our class wants to offer service that would help the assembly in a tangible way. One idea that we have is to help make our Bahá'í classes more and more open to all the people in our community. What advice does the assembly have for us to help us be successful with this goal? Are there other services that our assembly would like from us?
7. Review your preparations as the time for the visit draws close. Discuss: How should we greet this member of our local spiritual assembly? How do we want to share our questions? How will we show that we are learning from the answers? What would be a nice way to end the meeting?
8. Debrief your experience after the visit: What did you learn? How can you build on this experience in the future?

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- “Take Me to Your Leader, 1” SO 93
- “Juana Conrad” MJ 98
- “Robert Henderson” SE 99
- “What Would the Bahá’ís Do” ND 00
- “Spiritual Assemblies” JF 02
- “Local Spiritual Assemblies. . . .” MA 03
- “Into the Future” SO 05

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Garden of Bahá’u’lláh

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- “Omid’s Problem” SE 93
- “New World Construction Teams,” “The Institutions Pop-Up Page” SE 97
- “Profile of a Leader” JF 01
- “Spiritual Assembly Quiz” MA 03

Music:

Games:

Brilliant Star:

- “Assembly Game” ND 93
- “Resources” SO 96

Poetry:

Brilliant Star: “The Invitation” SE 97

Videos:

The Local Spiritual Assembly

A Miracle of Governance—The Local Spiritual Assembly

Books:

The Bahá’í Faith: The Emerging Global Religion, Hatcher and Martin, pp. 146–54

The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 1, sections on “Bahá’í Elections”

The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 2, sections on “Local Spiritual Assemblies,” “The Local Spiritual Assembly,” “National Spiritual Assembly”

Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities: Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies

Local Spiritual Assembly Handbook, National Spiritual Assembly of Australia

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.