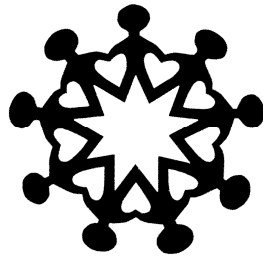


# *The Covenant*



*Level Three*



# TO APPRECIATE THE UNIQUENESS OF THE LESSER COVENANT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FIRMNESS IN THE COVENANT, OBEDIENCE, TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Today, the most important affair is firmness in the Covenant because firmness in the Covenant wards off differences . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 116

As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Baha’u’llah, a specific teaching not given by any of the Prophets of the past: It is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision He has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schisms, making it impossible for anyone to create a new sect or faction of belief.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 455–56

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that obedience to the Covenant preserves the unity of the Bahá'í Community, and assures its strength and progress

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Learn the definition of “obedience” and talk about our responsibility to be obedient to the Covenant.
- Discuss how the links in a chain can represent the Covenant. Obedience is necessary to keep the chain strong and unified.
- Invite children to share their ideas on how obedience strengthens the Bahá'í community.
- Memorize quotations from the Bahá'í writings about obedience to the Covenant.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that obedience to the Covenant will protect the Bahá'í Faith from schism and disunity

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share stories from the history of the Faith that show what happened when people obeyed or disobeyed the Covenant.
- Provide opportunities for the students to express their thoughts about unity, and what it is like to experience unity.
- Encourage children to share how they have felt when they obeyed or disobeyed their parents or a teacher.
- Use historical examples to illustrate how various religions divided into different groups.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive the effect of obedience to the Covenant on the relationships within one's own family and one's own personal life

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Role-play situations from daily living that illustrate obedience, or disobedience transformed into obedience. Discuss the effect of these behaviors on family members and identify practical methods for restoring unity and obedience.
- Provide opportunities for students to demonstrate obedience in their daily lives.
- Encourage students to share how they feel when their actions promote family unity.
- Invite students to create artwork illustrating their understanding of the relationship between obedience to the Covenant and one's daily life.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To articulate stories from the history of the Faith and from one's own life as examples of obedience and disobedience to the Covenant

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide opportunities for students to retell stories from the history of the Faith that illustrate obedience or disobedience to the Covenant.
- Encourage students to recite a daily prayer for firmness in the Covenant.
- Invite students to share with others in the class what happened when they consciously demonstrated obedience in their families.
- Assist students to plan and carry out a fireside on the importance of the Lesser Covenant for the development of human civilization.

## TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: A COVENANT FOR UNITY

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that obedience to the Covenant preserves the unity of the Bahá'í community and assures its strength and progress

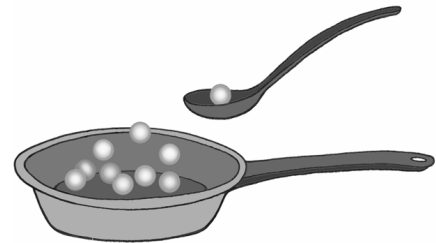
**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the effect of obedience to the Covenant on the relationships within one's own family and one's own personal life

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- For each team of 3 students: 1 mixing bowl; 1 large cooking pot; 1 large spoon; 1 blindfold; 1 bag of cotton balls or small balls of crumpled newspaper, leaves, or other clean, lightweight objects
- Chart paper and markers



**Advance Preparation:**

Decide how to organize teams for the game described below in Steps 2 and 3. If you do not have even groups of 3 students, you may adjust the game to use teams of 2 by combining the roles of the holder and the coach. If your class is very small, the activity will work if you have even 1 small team.

Display the quotations in Steps 7 and 9 in the classroom.

1. Welcome students to class. Invite them to think of one quality that makes them unique, something that may not be the same as others in the class. After allowing some time to think, introduce yourself as the teacher and share one interesting fact about yourself that students may not know. Then invite students to introduce themselves and share something unique about themselves with the class. Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: How can we celebrate all these unique gifts while also working together as a unified group? How can we make new students or guests feel welcome when they join our class? Record student ideas on chart paper. Explain that the class will return to these questions after exploring these ideas through a game.
2. Organize students into teams of 3. Each team will have 3 roles: a lifter, a holder, and a coach. Explain that the goal of the teams is to move these objects (refer to cotton balls or other small objects) from the bowl into the pot. No one may actually touch the objects to be moved.

The lifter:

- sits with the bowl of objects on the lap.
- uses the large spoon to lift the objects from the bowl into the pot held overhead.
- is blindfolded and is the only person who may touch the bowl and the spoon.
- remains silent.

The holder:

- stands holding the pot over the head of the lifter.
- remains silent.

The coach

- is the only one who may speak.
- may not touch other team members, the bowl, pot, spoon, or objects to be moved, but must observe the team's movement and coach the lifter to a successful conclusion.

After explaining these parameters, signal the teams to start and time them for 2 minutes. At the end of 2 minutes, invite each team to count the number of objects moved successfully into the pot. Applaud all!

## TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

- Briefly discuss: What helped us to achieve our goal? How can we strengthen the unity of our teams? How can we increase the effectiveness of both our individual roles and the team as a whole?
- Invite teams to guess how many more objects could be moved in the next 2 minutes after this short consultation. Time the teams for a second round. Invite teams to count the number of objects moved in this second round. Applaud all!
- Discuss again: How did the teams utilize the strengths of the different roles? How did the power of unity help the teams? How did this game illustrate the sorts of words and actions that promote unity?
- Refer to the ideas recorded by students in Step 1. Continue the discussion: Thinking again about ourselves as individuals in a group, what would we like to add to our list? Would we like to agree to all of these ideas or should we discuss some of them further? After the class consults and agrees on ways to build the unity of the group and to welcome newcomers, explain that the class has just created—or renewed—its covenant as a class. Briefly discuss: What is a covenant? What is the purpose of a covenant?
- Listen carefully to student comments. Then read aloud the following quotations twice:

The purpose of religion as revealed from the heaven of God's holy Will is to establish unity and concord amongst the peoples of the world. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 129

The purpose of the Blessed Beauty in entering into this Covenant and Testament was to gather all existent beings around one point so that the thoughtless souls, who in every cycle and generation have been the cause of dissension, may not undermine the Cause.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 209

Today, the most important affair is firmness in the Covenant, because firmness in the Covenant wards off differences.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 116

Briefly discuss: What are some of the ways that religion promotes unity and concord among the peoples of the world? How can the Covenant ward off differences?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤



**TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY**

---

8. Listen carefully to student responses. Review the definition of a Covenant:

A Covenant in the religious sense is a binding agreement between God and man, whereby God requires of man certain behavior in return for which He guarantees certain blessings, or whereby He gives man certain bounties in return for which He takes from those who accept them an undertaking to behave in a certain way. There is, for example, the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fullness of time a new Manifestation will be sent, and taking from them the undertaking to accept Him when this occurs. There is also the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him. If they do so, the Faith can remain united and pure. If not, the Faith becomes divided and its force spent. It is a Covenant of this kind that Bahá'u'lláh made with His followers regarding 'Abdu'l-Bahá and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá perpetuated through the Administrative Order. . . .

The Universal House of Justice  
*The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 111

Briefly discuss: What is a Covenant in a religious sense? How is it the same and how is it different from other uses of the word "covenant"? What are some examples of the Greater Covenant? What are some examples of the Lesser Covenant?

9. Then read aloud the following quotation:

The primary characteristic of true believers is trustworthiness. . . .

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 339

Briefly discuss: What might be the relationship between trustworthiness and firmness in the Covenant? What might trustworthiness look like for our own classroom agreement? What about trustworthiness at home or at school? What can we do as a group to develop trustworthiness? What should we do to help ourselves remember our classroom covenant?

10. Invite students to return to their teams, reread the 4 posted quotations, select one, and memorize it using oral repetition, rhythm, writing it over and over, or other favorite means for memorization.
11. Allow time for teams to work and then to recite their quotations in the whole group. Applaud all!
12. Encourage students to discuss with their parents or other adults the following questions before the next class: What are some of the important agreements in our family or in our household? Can you think of a time that someone in our family upheld an important agreement even when it was difficult? What happened? Why was this important?
13. Encourage students to recite their memorized quotations each day between now and the next class. Encourage them also to look for examples of trustworthiness in their daily lives.
14. Consider concluding the class with prayers for firmness in the Covenant.



## TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

### ACTIVITY 2: COVENANTS IN THE FAMILY

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that obedience to the Covenant preserves the unity of the Bahá'í community and assures its strength and progress

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the effect of obedience to the Covenant on the relationships within one's own family and one's own personal life

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Butcher paper, large chalkboard, or several sheets of chart paper
- Note paper and envelopes
- Markers and pens
- Other art supplies, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Arrange for a large writing surface such as a large chalkboard, butcher paper, or several sheets of chart paper that can be placed side by side.

Display the following quotation in the classroom.

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. 156

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share what they've learned from their family members or friends about agreements in the family. Invite them to recall examples of trustworthiness that they've noticed in the people around them. Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: How are all these examples of trustworthiness and family agreements aspects of different sorts of covenants?
2. Then encourage students to recite the quotations memorized in the previous activity. Applaud all! Briefly discuss: What are some of the spoken or unspoken "covenants" among family members?
3. In the whole group, pose the question: Who are the members of your family or people in your household? As students answer, record the titles of different members of the family across the top of a large sheet of butcher paper, chalkboard, or several sheets of chart paper, listing all relationships that are mentioned. Answers may include: mother, father, sister, brother, baby, grandmother, stepfather, friend, etc. Below each title, list the roles and responsibilities of each member of the household, as suggested by students. Use arrows to indicate relationships among the various members of the household.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

**TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY**

---

4. Read aloud the following descriptions of family roles and responsibilities:

Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 168*

The members of a family all have duties and responsibilities towards one another and to the family as a whole, and these duties and responsibilities vary from member to member because of their natural relationships. The parents have the inescapable duty to educate their children—but not vice versa; the children have the duty to obey their parents—the parents do not obey the children. . . .

*On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 2, p. 384*

Briefly discuss: With these quotations in mind, what would we like to add to our chart? Why is it important for parents to educate their children? Why is it important for children to obey their parents? What would happen if children didn't obey their parents or parents educate their children?

5. Organize students into small teams. Provide students with a few minutes to plan a brief role-play to demonstrate how family covenants benefit human civilization. These role-plays should be about 2 minutes in length. They may very briefly demonstrate what happens when family members don't uphold their responsibilities, and then correct that situation by showing how young people can help families progress when they uphold their own responsibilities.

6. After allowing a brief period of preparation, invite teams to present their role-plays. Applaud all!

7. Read aloud the following quotations:

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. 156*

Transformation is the essential purpose of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, but it lies in the will and effort of the individual to achieve it in obedience to the Covenant.

*The Universal House of Justice, A Wider Horizon: Selected Letters 1983–1992, p. 203*

Briefly discuss: How do our actions to uphold our family responsibilities help to transform human civilization?

8. Refer again to the chart created in Step 3. Invite students to reflect on their own families or households and think of ways that people are striving to uphold their responsibilities to the family. Encourage students to write a note of appreciation to one or more members of their household. Suggest that they copy the posted quotation to include as part of their note.
9. Encourage students to deliver their notes of appreciation after class. Encourage them to find a time before the next class to consciously apply additional will power and effort to fulfill their family responsibilities, and to notice how they feel when they do so.
10. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers, perhaps prayers for the family.

## TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

### ACTIVITY 3: THE UNIFYING POWER OF THE COVENANT

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that obedience to the Covenant will protect the Baha'i Faith from schism and disunity

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the effect of obedience to the Covenant on the relationships within one's own family and one's own personal life

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To articulate stories from the history of the Faith and from one's own life as examples of obedience and disobedience to the Covenant

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Yellow pages telephone directory, or religion section of the local newspaper that lists weekly services
- Copies of Resource Page 23
- Different colors of embroidery floss cut into 24" lengths, with a different color for each student, if possible
- A brick, or a stone about the size and shape of a brick
- Chalkboard or chart paper and markers
- Student journals and pens or pencils

**Advance Preparation:**

Copy the following metaphors for the Covenant onto small pieces of paper. Fold them and provide a different metaphor for each team of 2 or more students in Step 8.

- Fortified fortress of the Cause of God
- Pivot of the oneness of humanity
- Lifeboat and ark of salvation
- An artery pulsating in the body of the world
- A standard or flag
- The sea, and believers are fishes in the sea
- A firm pillar
- A cord between earth and heaven

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share how they felt when they used the strength of their will to uphold their family responsibilities. Invite them also to describe what happened when they gave their notes of appreciation to members of their family. Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: How do the habits that we practice in our families help us contribute toward the transformation of human civilization?
2. Invite students to recall the meaning of a covenant in the religious sense. Briefly discuss: What is the Greater Covenant? What is the Lesser Covenant? How does firmness in the Covenant promote unity in the human family?
3. Bring out the local telephone directory and turn to the yellow pages under "Churches," or turn to the local newspaper's "Religion" section. Invite students to count how many different Christian denominations exist, just in their own town or community. Listen to student responses; then explain that there are over 22,000 Christian sects in the world today.<sup>1</sup> Briefly discuss: Why are there so many branches of Christianity today? How did this happen?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, edited by E. Fahlbusch, et al., Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999, vol. 1, p. 800

**TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY**

---

- Listen to student comments; then affirm that there was no binding central authority to which all Christians turned after the time of Christ. As disagreements arose regarding interpretations of His Teachings, different groups formed their own churches. This is a natural expression of a previous stage in humanity's development.
4. Explain that this pattern of breaking into many different groups is true of all religions in the world—except the Bahá'í Faith. Briefly discuss: Why might this be true?
  5. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 23. In the whole group read aloud the quotations and discuss the focus questions.
  6. After this short discussion, place a brick or stone on the table. Explain that this brick is like our local community and that we have the power to move this brick. When we move our brick, it can become part of the structure of a united world. Provide each student with one strand of different colored embroidery floss. Challenge students to use their single strand to lift the brick. What happens?
  7. Provide students with a second strand of their colored embroidery floss. Encourage them to twist all their strands together to form a single multi-colored strand. Invite them to lift the brick with this new strand. What happens? Briefly discuss: How does this floss demonstrate the power of the Covenant?
  8. Organize students into small teams. Provide each team with one of the covenant metaphors listed in Advance Preparation.
  9. After allowing a few minutes for reflection, encourage teams to devise a “human sculpture”—a dramatic pose or tableau—to represent their metaphor. Invite each group to present their human sculpture, while the others try to guess their symbol. If you have a small group of students, repeat until all the cards have been dramatized. Applaud all!

10. When each symbol is correctly identified, ask the performers to read aloud their written metaphor for the Covenant. List these symbols on chart paper. Repeat Steps 8–10, if desired.
11. After all symbols have been presented, encourage students to reflect on the metaphors that best illustrate the Covenant to them personally.
12. Provide students with plain paper or journals. Play background music and invite them to write their reflections beginning with the statement, “The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh is like a (chosen analogy) in my life because . . .”
13. After allowing time for students to record their reflections on the Covenant, encourage them also to write one action that they intend to complete before the next class to demonstrate firmness in the Covenant.
14. Conclude the activity by inviting students to read or recite their favorite prayers.



ACTIVITY 4: THE CIRCLE OF UNITY

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that obedience to the Covenant will protect the Bahá'í Faith from schism and disunity

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To articulate stories from the history of the Faith and from one's own life as examples of obedience and disobedience to the Covenant

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 24
- Copies of the Core Curriculum storybook *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3, or Resource Pages 25–26 so that each team has access to one of these stories:
  - “Once Poor, Once Wealthy,” pp. 131–35, *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3
  - “Mírzá Haydar Ali's Greatest Wish,” pp. 149–51, *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3
  - “Mrs. Corinne True's Faithfulness,” Resource page 25
  - “Dr. Youness Khan's Question,” Resource page 26
- Chart paper and markers

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their effort to demonstrate firmness in the Covenant. Acknowledge all.
2. Read aloud the following quotation twice.

Bahá'u'lláh has drawn the circle of unity, He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples, and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent of universal unity. This is the work of the Divine Bounty, and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst, and as we work, so will strength be given unto us. Leave all thought of self, and strive only to be obedient and submissive to the Will of God. In this way only shall we become citizens of the Kingdom of God, and attain unto life everlasting.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 53

Briefly discuss: What is ‘Abdu'l-Bahá asking us to do? When does it mean to leave all thought of self and be obedient to the Will of God? How do we know the Will of God? What should we do when we hear one of our Bahá'í friends say something that we think might not be the Will of God?

3. Listen carefully to student responses; then provide copies of Resource Page 24. Explain that a pilgrim is a person that takes a special journey, or pilgrimage, to the Holy Land. In the time of Bahá'u'lláh, pilgrims had the great honor of meeting Him and telling others about their experiences after they went home. Later in time, pilgrims met ‘Abdu'l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi. Now pilgrims have the honor of meeting members of the Universal House of Justice. Pilgrims often share stories about these important experiences with others. At the same time, it is important to remember that verbal messages or stories conveyed by pilgrims are not authoritative: ‘Abdu'l-Bahá explains that only the written texts—the Bahá'í writings—are to be considered authoritative.
4. In the whole group, invite students to read aloud the quotations of Resource Page 24 and discuss the focus questions.
5. Organize students into small teams. Provide each team with one of the stories from a Core Curriculum storybook or Resource Pages as described above.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

## GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE UNIQUENESS OF THE LESSER COVENANT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

### TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY

6. Encourage the teams to read their stories aloud and identify examples of firmness in the Covenant. Circulate as needed among the teams to assure reading comprehension.
7. As teams complete their reading, provide each team with a sheet of chart paper and markers. Encourage students to use this chart paper to note some main elements of their story, using the formula:
  - a. Once there was a . . .
  - b. And then one day . . .
  - c. And then . . .
  - d. And then . . .
  - e. Finally . . .
8. After teams have completed their charts, invite teams to practice telling their stories, with each person contributing either words or visual images to the story.
9. Invite teams to share their stories in the whole group. Applaud all!
10. Briefly discuss: How do these stories help us understand how to show firmness in the Covenant in our own lives? What are some things that we can do when we feel confused about directions from the authoritative institutions of the Faith? Or confused about instructions from our parents or teachers? What can we do when we feel confused about things our friends are telling us?
11. Encourage students to retell their stories to at least one other person before the next class.
12. Consider concluding the class with the following activity.

### ACTIVITY 5: LITTLE BY LITTLE, DAY BY DAY

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the effect of obedience to the Covenant on the relationships within one's own family and one's own personal life.

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 27, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Learn the song “Kam Kam” by Bob Simms, available on the Louhelen CD *Fruits of the Spirit*, so that you can teach it to the class. You may also hear the melody of the song on the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

1. Invite the students to consider these questions: “How can we achieve our spiritual goals of firmness in the Covenant? How long will it take us? What is required of us?”
2. Listen to their responses, then read aloud the following guidance attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:  
  
To an individual who asked how to achieve the many qualities required of a Bahá'í, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “*Kam Kam. Rúz bih rúz*”—little by little; day by day.
3. Inform the students that we’re going to learn a song to help us achieve our goals. Teach the song “Kam Kam” using one of the methods taught in the Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshop 8, or another method of your choosing.
4. Encourage the students to sing this song at an upcoming community event, or any time they wish to increase their joy as they achieve their goals.

Annamarie Honnold, ed., *Vignettes from the Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 27

## Resource Pages

### Activity 3: The Unifying Power of the Covenant

Focus Questions:

Why must we be united?

How does the Covenant protect the unity of the Bahá'ís?

How does our firmness in the Covenant serve humanity?

---

The great and fundamental teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the oneness of God and unity of mankind. This is the bond of union among Bahá'ís all over the world. They become united among themselves, then unite others. It is impossible to unite unless united.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 155

Today, the most important affair is firmness in the Covenant because firmness in the Covenant wards off differences. . . .

In case of differences, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá must be consulted. All must revolve around His good-pleasure. After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, whenever the Universal House of Justice is organized it will ward off differences.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 14, p. 237

As to the most great characteristic of the revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, a specific teaching not given by any of the Prophets of the past: It is the ordination and appointment of the Center of the Covenant. By this appointment and provision He has safeguarded and protected the religion of God against differences and schisms, making it impossible for anyone to create a new sect or faction of belief.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 455–56

If ye will follow earnestly the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, ye shall indeed become the light of the world, the soul for the body of the world, the comfort and help for humanity, and the source of salvation for the whole universe.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 113

**Activity 4: The Circle of Unity**

Focus Questions:

Why are pilgrim's notes helpful? How can they also be harmful?

What should we do when we listen to others? How should we express our own views?

How to these guidelines help us to stay firm in the Covenant?

---

Thou hast written concerning the pilgrims and pilgrim's notes. Any narrative that is not authenticated by a Text should not be trusted. Narratives, even if true, cause confusion. For the people of Bahá, the Text, and only the Text, is authentic.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by the International Teaching Center, letter of 1 July 1984

One might liken Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to a sphere; there are points poles apart, and in between the thoughts and doctrines that unite them. . . .

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 228

The friends must therefore learn to listen to the views of others without being overawed or allowing their faith to be shaken, and to express their own views without pressing them on their fellow Bahá'ís.

The Universal House of Justice, *Messages from the Universal House of Justice: 1963–1986*, p. 88



#### Activity 4: The Circle of Unity

Corinne True worked with enthusiasm and devotion to spearhead the building of the first Bahá'í House of Worship in North America—the “Mother Temple of the West” in Wilmette, Illinois. As this great project was beginning, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá directed that questions about the Temple project should be directed to Mrs. True saying, “Consult with Mrs. True—I have given her complete instructions.” From that point on, for over twenty years, Corinne served as the financial secretary for the Bahá'í Temple Unity, the administrative body charged with building the House of Worship.

As financial secretary, Corinne endlessly promoted the Temple project and constantly encouraged the friends. She had no helpers and carried on this immense task alone—managing the finances for the massive project, keeping detailed records, and writing thousands of letters. For many years, Corinne was not only the “spiritual mother” of the Temple project, but the day-to-day manager of countless practical details to move the project forward.

All this time ‘Abdu’l-Bahá nurtured the growth of the Bahá'í administration. Part of this nurturing created spiritual tests for Corinne. In 1920, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá directed that all matters concerning the Temple project should be referred to the annual Temple convention. Whatever that convention decided through a majority vote must be accepted. The Master believed that the American Bahá'ís were mature enough to administer their affairs.

Corinne accepted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wise command, and continued to work tirelessly for the success of the project. At age 91, Corinne attended the dedication of the completed Temple. The project was finished.

Also at age 91, Corinne took her last pilgrimage (1952). At one of the meetings with the pilgrims, the Guardian seated Corinne at the place of honor and, with a twinkle in his eyes, said to her, “I understand Mrs. True, you had something to do with the Temple in the United States.”

“Yes, Shoghi Effendi,” she said, rather puzzled, since she had worked closely with the Guardian on the project for many years.

“Didn’t you have something to do with the money?”

“Yes, I received the money and was the financial secretary.”

At that point the Guardian handed Corinne the purse carried by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when he visited America. Shoghi Effendi, obviously moved, urged her to open the purse. Inside was a five-dollar gold piece inscribed with the date 1907—the year of her first pilgrimage. Later the same evening, the Guardian’s eyes twinkled as he described how Corinne had “learned to be spiritual and at the same time get things done.”

He went on to tell the assembled pilgrims: “It should be stated that Mrs. True is to be regarded as the most venerable figure among the pioneers of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the West.” Corinne had been a “pioneer” in helping the American Bahá'í community to mature, expand its capacities to complete great projects, and achieve great institutional development. Tests and challenges had seemed overwhelming at times; nevertheless, she had persevered. Whatever she had been asked to do, and whatever she had initiated, she had done with a spirit of devotion to the Covenant and determined follow-through.

Adapted from Nathan Rutstein,  
*Corinne True, Faithful Handmaid of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

Activity 4: The Circle of Unity

Dr. Youness Afroukhteh, known in the West as Dr. Yunis Khán, was a trusted secretary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This story from his memoirs illustrates his love and obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and his firmness in the Covenant. The story takes place after Mírzá Áqa Ján, who had served as a secretary to Bahá’u’lláh, betrayed the Covenant by writing letters against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These letters fell into the hands of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

“After Mírzá Áqa Ján’s revolt, his papers remained scattered on the table outside ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s [reception room] while the believers read them. . . . At times . . . ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would say a few words about them. One day, as He picked through the papers with His own blessed hands, He found a document that caught His eye. He read it aloud and showed the signature and seal to the friends. I was standing at some distance, listening. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked me to move closer and witness the seal [a sign of authenticity] on the document. I bowed at His command and took a few steps closer. But again He insisted, “Come and look.” I took another step and bowed again. With that I meant to imply that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s remark was of course correct. The third time, He was emphatic as He invited me to “Come closer and look!” Helpless, I approached ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and peered down at the signature and seal as He had instructed. Afterwards I began to wonder why the Master had been so insistent that I should actually move closer and witness the signature and the seal for myself. What was the wisdom of His insistence, when for me His words were the very essence of God’s will?

And while my eyes and ears could be subject to human error, His words were the quintessence of truth. I concluded that there must be a defect or at least a weakness in my faith of which I was unaware.

“In brief, dark thoughts agitated my mind and continued to torture me. Every time such thoughts occurred, I prayed to be protected . . . and that the wisdom of this matter might be revealed to me. This continued until my return to Iran. One day, in a conversation with a friend regarding Mírzá Áqa Ján, I was asked about some details of that event which, because of my first-hand knowledge, I was able to clarify and remove all doubts. I then realized the wisdom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s insisting that I should examine the document closely, for armed with that knowledge I had been able to apprise a group of uninformed friends of the truth of the matter. My joy and contentment knew no bounds and I praised God for such a blessing.

“When I mentioned that I had actually witnessed the signature myself . . . he was astonished. He said, ‘If the heavenly angels had related that story I would not have believed them. But since you tell me this story from your personal experience, I must accept it, and I am grateful to for having set the matter straight and my mind at rest.’ In return I thanked him for his understanding and acceptance, and my peace of mind. . . .”

Dr. Youness Afroukhteh,  
*Memories of Nine Years in ‘Akká*, pp. 74–75, 94

GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE UNIQUENESS OF THE LESSER COVENANT OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH  
**TOPIC: ITS PURPOSE TO PRESERVE UNITY**

Activity 5: Little by Little, Day by Day

**Kam Kam**

Bob & Linda Simms

Verse

Voice

There are \_\_\_ times \_\_\_ we get dis-cour-aged. \_\_\_ Our faults are ma-ny, \_\_\_ our strengths are few. \_\_\_ Not e-nough time \_\_\_ to do what \_\_\_ we should, we want to give up, \_\_\_ there's so much to do. \_\_\_ That's when we lis ten to the Mas ter, for - get a-bout self \_\_\_ and the world to-day. \_\_\_ That's when we lis ten to the Mas ter's words of en-cour - age ment, He would say: KamKam, Ruz Beh Ruz. \_\_\_ Lit-tle by lit - tle, \_\_\_ day by day. \_\_\_ Kam Kam, Ruz Beh Ruz. \_\_\_ Lit - tle by lit - tle, \_\_\_ day by day. \_\_\_

Verse 2

Joy gives wings, let's be happy, pray those troubles all away.  
 When hearts are filled with praise and gratitude, there will be time enough, He would say.  
 So, don't forget to listen to the Master, patiently he showed us the way.  
 Don't forget to listen to the master's words of encouragement every day.

Chorus

**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

---

**Stories, Books, and Articles:**

*The Essence of the Covenant*, Shahin Vafai

*The Covenant for Young People*, Enoch Tanyi

*The Covenant: Its Meaning and Origin and Our Attitude Toward It*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, pp. 47–70

*The Eternal Covenant*, Lowell Johnson, pp. 68–73, 168–73, 178–84

*The Power of the Covenant*, Part 1, pp. 31–39, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1982

*The Power of the Covenant*, Part 3, The Face of Opposition, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, 1982

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Vision of a New World,” Sp Ed 1997

“Common Visions,” Sp Ed 1997

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“New World Construction Teams,” Sp Ed 1997

“Stand Ready: The Resolute Nickel,” Jan/Feb 1998

“Mighty Covenant Training Camp,” Sp Ed 1998

“Search for the Covenant,” “Cave of the Covenant,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Games:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Your Heart Beats Faster,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Covenant,” Sp Ed 1992

“Mankind Is One,” May/Jun 2004

**Other Favorite Resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Bahá'í Education Task Force, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

**TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND  
TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ AS THE CONTINUANCE OF  
THE COVENANT OF BAHÁ’U’LLÁH  
DIVINE AUTHORITY IN THE GUARDIANSHIP  
AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FIRMNESS IN THE COVENANT, FRIENDLINESS, GENEROSITY**

The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter of unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 11

The deepening and enrichment of the spiritual life of the individual believer, his increasing comprehension of the essential verities underlying his Faith, his training in its administrative processes, his understanding of the fundamentals of the Covenants established by its Author and the authorized Interpreter of its teachings should be made the supreme objective of the national representatives responsible for the edification, the progress and consolidation of these communities.

Shoghi Effendi, in *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, p. 25, no. 86

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the fact that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in order to protect the Bahá’ís from division after His passing, wrote a Will and Testament in which He appoints Shoghi Effendi to be the Guardian or Head of the Faith
- To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote a Will and Testament in which He clearly described the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, the relationship between the two, and the responsibilities of the Bahá’ís toward them
- To know that the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice have both been invested with divine authority

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Review the purpose of a will.
- Read the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and outline the relationships between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice.
- Read what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote about our responsibilities to these institutions.
- Consult about what it means to be invested with divine authority.
- Explain that the Guardianship and Universal House of Justice are alike, yet different, and both are of divine origin and called twin institutions.
- Read and study passages from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that discuss the importance of obedience.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand and appreciate the significance of the role of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the establishment of the world order of Bahá’u’lláh
- To understand that God’s Lesser Covenant with humanity continues through the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice
- To understand that obedience or disobedience to either of these two institutions is the same as obedience or disobedience to God

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Consult about the meaning of unity. Discuss how the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá can prevent dissension among the Bahá’ís.
- Design a poster to show how the Guardianship and Universal House of Justice are a part of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh and how they are the pillars that support the unity and progress of the Bahá’í world.
- Review the idea that the Covenant is like an umbrella offering protection to us or like a canal that brings the life-giving Revelation.
- Create artwork that shows the twin institutions as a part of the Covenant.
- Study quotations from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that explain the importance of obedience.
- Consult about ways we can show obedience to the twin institutions.

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

 **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES**

- To perceive the purpose and meaning of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in one’s personal life
- To perceive how turning to the writings of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice protects us, and provides guidance for our lives

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Invite students to share stories of times in their lives that they have needed help and support from parents or teachers. Explain that, similarly, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament is a written guide left for us when He is not personally here to give us guidance.
- Find specific guidelines that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has given us in His Will and Testament.
- Encourage students to share how those guidelines might be applied to situations in their daily lives. Role-play those situations.
- Create a role-play that illustrates the guidance in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and its effects on our lives.
- Consult about ways we can obtain guidance from the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice. Each pair or small group can make a list to share with the class.
- Provide opportunities for the students to become familiar with some of the books and letters written by the Guardian.
- Show the children some copies of letters from the Universal House of Justice.

 **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

- To articulate the significance of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and its various components
- To demonstrate the responsibility entrusted to each individual Bahá’í to continually strive to deepen one’s understanding of the importance of obedience to the Guardian and to the Universal House of Justice
- To confidently assert that the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are both invested with divine authority as stated in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and that obedience or disobedience to either of these is the same as obedience or disobedience to God

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Provide opportunities for children to tell other community members what they have learned about the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
- Present the role-play of using guidance from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in daily situations during the social portion of the Nineteen Day Feast, or at another community gathering.
- Encourage children to study some of the writings of Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice on a regular basis and to present their reflections to the class.
- In pairs, prepare presentations to share at the Nineteen Day Feast about one of the books or letters of the Guardian or of the Universal House of Justice.

**Sample Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand and appreciate the significance of the role of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the establishment of the world order of Bahá’u’lláh

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive that an understanding of the purpose and meaning of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is an important necessity in one’s personal life

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of manipulatives

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Blindfolds, if available
- 20- to 50-piece construction sets, such as Lego® bricks, Tinkertoy®, or K’nex® with instruction diagrams, or boxed jigsaw puzzles or baby marshmallows and toothpicks for each group of 3–4 students
- Gift copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, if available
- Rose water or other fragrance

**Advance Preparation:**

You may be able to borrow a sufficient number of construction kits to supply each team with a kit complete with instructions. If so, select in advance a particular model for the students to create using the instruction book. If instruction books are not available, you may choose to write your own instructions for creating a particular model. A model with moving parts is ideal for this activity, although other models will also work.

If students work with jigsaw puzzles, the picture on the cover of the box provides sufficient “instructions” for the activity.

If students work with baby marshmallows and toothpicks, create in advance a model that you’d like the students to copy. Write instructions for building that model and provide students with these instructions (but not the model) in Step 5 of the activity.

Post a copy of the prayer in Step 1 so students will be able to see it.

1. Welcome students. Read aloud the following prayer as part of your opening devotions:

O Lord, my God! Assist Thy loved ones to be firm in Thy Faith, to walk in Thy ways, to be steadfast in Thy Cause. Give them Thy grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of Divine Guidance. Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Self-Subsisting, the Bestower, the Compassionate, the Almighty, the All-Bountiful.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 15*

2. Invite students to share their efforts to be firm in God’s Faith, to walk in His ways, and to be steadfast in His Cause. Briefly discuss: What are we learning from our own efforts and from the efforts we see in others?

3. Organize students into small teams. Provide blindfolds and invite them to blindfold each other or simply to close their eyes.
4. Provide each group with pieces for a small construction model—without instruction—as described in Advance Preparation above.
5. Describe in glowing terms the particular model that their pieces will build, and warmly invite them to construct it. Pause for a few moments to allow students to raise questions if they like. Encourage them to begin to work while blindfolded.



**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

6. After a short time, invite students to remove their blindfolds. Briefly discuss: What was our experience with these construction projects? Is it enough to have all the pieces? What else is needed?
7. Provide teams with their instruction booklets or step-by-step diagrams of how to build their model. Encourage them to use the diagrams to create the model.



8. When teams have successfully built their models, invite them to share their models in the whole group. Applaud all!

Briefly discuss: What made the first part of this experience so challenging?

9. Listen carefully to student responses. Acknowledge all. Then invite them to reflect on the world around us. Explain that many, many people want to build a better world but experience frustration, just as we experienced frustration with this activity. Explain that:

- Bahá’u’lláh refers to His world order as, “. . . this wondrous System, the like of which mortal eyes have never witnessed.”<sup>1</sup>

(With blindfolds, we couldn’t see what we were going to make.)

- Shoghi Effendi affirms that, “. . . Bahá’u’lláh has Himself . . . established its institutions. . . .”<sup>1</sup>  
(We had all the pieces we needed, and were told what it was going to become, just as Bahá’u’lláh gave us the institutions for world order.)

- Shoghi Effendi states that, with the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “The moment had now arrived for that undying, that world-vitalizing Spirit . . . to incarnate itself. . . .” and this was “. . . the Age . . . destined to witness its efflorescence. . . .”<sup>2</sup>

(When we finally removed our blindfolds, the model could become incarnate or given form, and effloresce or culminate and flower.)

- Regarding Bahá’u’lláh’s world order, Shoghi Effendi states that,

“Its features ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, its great Architect, delineated in his Will and Testament. . . .”<sup>3</sup>

(We ultimately received instructions for building our structure.)

- Shoghi Effendi further states that “. . . The members of the . . . Bahá’í communities . . . arose with clear vision and inflexible determination . . . by laying the foundations of that world-embracing Administrative system . . . the erection . . . of the administrative machinery provided for the preservation of the unity and the efficient conduct of the affairs of a steadily expanding community. . . .”<sup>4</sup>

(When we had the plans, our groups swiftly laid the foundations and erected the necessary machinery or design!)

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤**

<sup>1</sup> Bahá’u’lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 325

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 145

<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 324

<sup>3</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 325

<sup>4</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 329

10. How important were the plans or diagrams for successfully building our models? Why is it important also to have plans delineated for building the world order of Bahá’u’lláh?
11. Explain that we are living in:  
... the Formative Period, the Iron Age ... in which the institutions, local, national and international, of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh [are] to take shape, develop and become fully consolidated, in anticipation of ... the Golden Age destined to witness the emergence of a world-embracing Order ... the establishment of a world civilization and ... the Kingdom of the Father upon earth as promised by Jesus Christ Himself.<sup>1</sup>
12. Briefly discuss: What instructions do we need to build the framework of this wondrous System, this world-embracing Order in our own community and in the world?
13. Acknowledge student comments and record them on chart paper, if desired. After students have shared their ideas, present them with their copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in a dignified way, if student copies are available, or refer to a display copy of the Will and Testament. Explain that students will have the opportunity to study this important document in the next several classes. If students have individual copies of this document, encourage them to write their names in them and keep them in class for this study.
14. Refer to the prayer read in Step 1 at that beginning of class. Explain that this prayer is one of the prayers revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament. Briefly discuss: What are some of the actions described in this prayer? What are some examples of ways that we can follow these instructions in our own lives and begin to do our part to build this wondrous System?
15. Encourage students to select one specific action to take or habit to develop as a contribution toward building the world order of Bahá’u’lláh. Assist students to find this same prayer in their prayer books or to copy it on plain paper. Encourage them to say this prayer each day between now and the next class and focus their attention on developing the spiritual qualities necessary for building the world order of Bahá’u’lláh.

---

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 324

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

**ACTIVITY 2: SELECTIONS FROM THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES:** To know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote a Will and Testament in which He clearly described the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice, the relationship between the two, and the responsibilities of the Bahá’ís toward them; To know that the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice have both been invested with divine authority

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand and appreciate the significance of the role of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the establishment of the world order of Bahá’u’lláh

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To articulate the significance of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and its various components

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of peer teaching; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Personal copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or photocopies of Resource Pages 44–46, as described in Step 2
- Pencils or highlighter pens
- Chart paper and markers

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their adventures in service. Encourage them also to share their insights gained through prayer and reflection on their role in building a better world.
2. Read aloud the following prayer, revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament:  

O God, my God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of self and passion, protect them with the watchful eye of Thy loving kindness from all rancor, hate and envy, shelter them in the impregnable stronghold of Thy care and, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, make them the manifestations of Thy glorious Signs, illumine their faces with the effulgent rays shed from the Dayspring of Thy Divine Unity, gladden their hearts with the verses revealed from Thy Holy Kingdom, strengthen their loins by Thy all-swaying power that cometh from Thy Realm of Glory. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the Protector, the Almighty, the Gracious!
3. Explain that students will have the opportunity to take a closer look at some of the important instructions that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá outlined in His Will and Testament for preserving the unity and promoting the growth of the Cause of God.
4. Organize the class into 3 teams. Provide each team with copies of Resource Page 44, 45, or 46 or assign those selected paragraphs in student copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Assure that a capable reader is on each team. Encourage teams to read aloud their selected paragraphs and write their answers to the focus questions. Circulate among student teams as they work to provide assistance and encouragement as needed.

After student discussion of Resource Page 44, you may explain that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi are the only authoritative interpreters of the Bahá’í writings. Individuals are encouraged to study the Bahá’í writings and share their understanding with each other but no one has authority to impose this understanding on others.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 9

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ➤

After student discussion of Resource Page 45, you may explain that the Universal House of Justice appoints members of the institution of the Counselors to carry out the functions of the Hands of the Cause of God today.

After student discussion of Resource Page 46, you may explain that the Guardian’s interpretations explain the meaning of the Bahá’í holy books; the Universal House of Justice legislates on matters that were not revealed in the Bahá’í holy books; and that neither infringes on the domain of the other.

5. After allowing time for student work, invite teams to read aloud their questions and answers in the whole group. Applaud all!
6. In the whole group, discuss the questions:
  - Why did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá write a Will and Testament?
  - Who did He appoint as Guardian and Head of the Faith?
  - How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the Institution of the Guardianship?
  - How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the Institution of the Universal House of Justice?
  - How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá describe the relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice?
  - What responsibilities do individual Bahá’ís have towards the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice?
  - How is the relationship between the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice maintained today?
7. Listen carefully to student responses; then read aloud the following quotations in the whole group:

They [Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] have also, in unequivocal and emphatic language, appointed those twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship as their chosen Successors, destined to apply the principles, promulgate the laws, protect the institutions, adapt loyally and intelligently the Faith to the requirements of progressive society, and consummate the incorruptible inheritance which the Founders of the Faith have bequeathed to the world.

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 19–20

. . . Under the Covenant of God, Shoghi Effendi was, during his ministry as Guardian of the Cause, the point of authority in the Faith to which all were to turn. . . . The same thing applies to the position occupied by the Universal House of Justice in its relationship to the friends.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice,  
*The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 121

Briefly discuss: How do these quotations clarify our understanding of the relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice? How do they clarify our own responsibilities toward both institutions?

8. Encourage students to work in small teams to create a human sculpture or dramatic pose to illustrate the relationship of the twin institutions of the Universal House of Justice and the Guardianship to the peoples of the world.
9. After allowing a short period of preparation, invite teams to share their poses in the whole group. Applaud all!
10. Remind students that, like the Hands of the Cause of God, our role is to:

. . . strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world . . . that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 13

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

11. Encourage students close their eyes and think carefully about the people they know in their neighborhoods, at school, and in other activities. Encourage them to think to themselves: What would it look like if we were truly “one people”? Encourage them to imagine themselves reaching out in friendship to a new person and diffusing the fragrance of the love

of God. While students have their eyes closed, open the fragrance and carry it by the students, so that each can smell it in turn. Encourage them to think of one particular action they can take and to hold that action in their heart while you read aloud the prayer provided in Step 1. Conclude the activity by inviting students to read or recite favorite prayers.

**ACTIVITY 3: THE WILL AND TESTAMENT AND ME**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the purpose and meaning of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in one’s personal life

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 47 or student copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá
- Two pieces of construction paper, cardstock, or heavy paper for each student
- Chart paper and markers
- Rulers
- Scissors
- Ribbon or string
- Other art supplies, as desired



**Advance Preparation:**

Create a sample Friendship Box to show students, as described in Step 8. Note that Resource Page 48 shows the shape to cut to make this box.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to reach out in friendship to others. Invite them also to share examples of acts of friendship that they have observed in others. Acknowledge all.
2. Remind students that the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh protects the Cause of God from division. Briefly discuss: How does the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá promote unity and protect the Cause of God from division?
3. Acknowledge student responses. Then explain that in addition to appointing Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith and explaining how the Universal House of Justice would be elected, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá provided some very special guidance for us in His Will and Testament. We are His heirs too.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

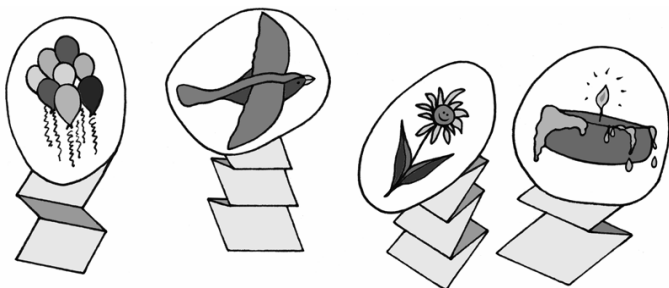
4. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 47 or encourage them to turn to the designated paragraphs in their copies of the Will and Testament. In the whole group, invite volunteers to read these paragraphs aloud. Pause after each paragraph and briefly discuss: What is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructing us to do? What is He telling us not to do? Then encourage students to think of examples of obedience to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instructions from their own lives, their own community, or people they know personally. List student examples for each paragraph on chart paper.
5. Organize students into small teams. Encourage each team to focus on one of the paragraphs on Resource Page 47. Refer each team to the examples of obedience that the class identified for that paragraph. Encourage the team to develop one of these examples into a short role-play or dramatic sketch to illustrate the application of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s guidance in our everyday lives.
6. After allowing some time for preparation, invite teams to share their dramatic sketches in the whole group. Applaud all!
7. Encourage students to think about the application of this guidance in their own lives. Encourage them to think about friends, family members, and other people in their lives. Invite students to select one individual to whom they can show an extra measure of friendship. This could be a person that they feel has wronged them, a person they feel they’ve wronged, a person they want to teach, or a person that simply needs a friend.
8. Provide instructions for creating a friendship box:
  - Glue two pieces of construction paper, cardstock, or heavy paper together to make one very heavy sheet of paper. Consider using two different colors of paper. Using a ruler, carefully measure twice, and then draw vertical lines to divide the paper in thirds.
  - Measure twice again and draw horizontal lines to divide the paper into fourths. The paper will have a grid with 12 squares. Using the diagram on Resource Page 48 as a guide, cut away the squares indicated to leave the shape of a “t.” Fold along the lines you made to show the shape of a box.
  - Decorate the inside and outside of this box with a message of friendship.
  - Consider accordion-folding a strip of heavy paper and creating a simple cut-out image to make a pop-up surprise for the inside of the box.
  - Consider selecting a portion of a favorite quotation to include in the message. Remember phrases that have touched your heart, or look through Bahá’í holy books to find phrases like:

Refresh and gladden my spirit

Be calm, be strong, be grateful

Laugh, smile, and rejoice

Tread ye the path of justice
9. Encourage students to make a plan to deliver this box before the next class. Invite students to share their plans with the class if they like.
10. Consider concluding the class with one of the prayers revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Will and Testament, printed on pp. 32 and 35 of this Lesson Planning Guide or other favorite prayers or songs.



**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

**ACTIVITY 4: THE CANALIZATION OF HEAVENLY FORCES**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that God’s Lesser Covenant with humanity continues through the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of science and nature; Use of consultation; Involve service

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. OR LONGER WITH SERVICE

**Materials Needed:**

- Sandbox, beach, or other outdoor area, or large plastic container and sand, dirt or clay, or sealed sturdy plastic bag of sand, soil, or similar material
- Water source (see descriptions below)
- Shovels or hand trowels, if outdoors
- Drip irrigation tubing, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Think creatively about the best way to conduct this activity as a service project. If you are not able to find a garden to water, you may also complete it as a demonstration.

- **Outdoor service:** If the class meets at a home or other location with a garden, use this activity to water the garden. Involve students in digging small irrigation channels, laying drip-irrigation tubing, or carrying buckets of water from the water source to all areas of the garden, following the pattern that you describe as the channel of the Covenant. If students dig channels, the channels will need to have a gradual slope to carry the water from the water source to all parts of the garden. Consider your possibilities to clearly demonstrate the metaphor of the Covenant as a canal that carries the spiritual forces of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh to all parts of the garden of humanity.
- **Outdoor demonstration:** Use a sand box with pre-dampened sand, a beach, or other outdoor area
- **Indoor demonstration:** Loosely fill a large sturdy plastic bag with sand, soil, or similar material, or partially empty and re-seal a large bag of sand or potting soil. Place this sealed bag in a sink or sturdy plastic container. Use hands to press the shape of the “reservoir” and “canals” onto the surface of the sealed bag.
- **Indoor messy demonstration:** Use a large, shallow, waterproof container, such as a plastic storage tub. Fill the container half-full with damp sand or dirt (clay-like soil works well).
- Consider practicing the explanation and skills of service in the garden or practicing the indoor or outdoor demonstration so that ideas are clearly conveyed to students.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts be a powerful source of unity and friendship with all people. What was something surprising or unusual that happened this week? Acknowledge all.
2. Remind students that when God reveals His Message to humanity, that message is intended for every member of the human race. As the Guardian’s secretary wrote on his behalf:

God surely wants them all, as He created them all.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi,  
*The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 311

3. Invite students to consider how all people on earth can have access to this Message from God by moving to the service or demonstration area. Briefly discuss: In what way are people like the flowers of a garden? What do flowers need to live?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

4. If in the garden, invite students to work with you to plan a system to distribute water to each flower in the garden. After this period of planning and discussion, the class will dig irrigation channels, lay irrigation tubing, use hoses, or carry buckets of water to carry out the plan. Encourage students to help gather supplies in preparation for this discussion: a water source, a large bucket placed at the center of one end of the garden, and shovels, smaller buckets, hoses, or drip-irrigation tubing.

If conducting a demonstration, encourage students to prepare the sand or soil (in a sealed bag, a container, or in an outdoor area) by smoothing the surface into a flat plain. Create a “reservoir” for water by hollowing out a depression in the center at one end of the plain, using 15–20% of the surface for this depression.

5. Encourage students to pause for the following explanation or demonstration. Encourage them to listen carefully as you pour water into the large bucket at one end of the garden or into the “reservoir” created for your demonstration and read aloud Bahá’u’lláh’s invitation to all people:

The Hand of Divine bounty proffereth unto you the Water of Life. Hasten and drink your fill.

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

Briefly discuss: What might it mean to drink our fill of the Water of Life? In what way is the Water of Life like a heavenly force in our lives?

6. Explain that part of God’s gift to humanity in this new age of human maturity is the Covenant, which is designed to keep the teachings of God pure and not mixed with all sorts of human ideas. Briefly discuss: How does the Covenant keep the heavenly teachings pure?
7. Explain that the Covenant also provides the means for distributing this pure water, this heavenly force, to all people. Read aloud the following words of Shoghi Effendi, which use the verb “canalize” to describe the Covenant

functioning as a canal for these pure teachings, this heavenly force:

To direct and canalize these forces let loose by this Heaven-sent process, and to insure their harmonious and continuous operation after His ascension, an instrument divinely ordained, invested with indisputable authority, organically linked with the Author of the Revelation Himself, was clearly indispensable. That instrument Bahá’u’lláh had expressly provided through the institution of the Covenant.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 236

8. In the garden: After reading these words, indicate the placement of an irrigation trough, hose, or buckets of water that will be carried from the water source into the center of the garden. Briefly discuss: In what ways are the example and writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Center of the Bahá’u’lláh’s Covenant, like this main canal into the center of our garden?

As a demonstration: after reading these words, create a main “canal” by tracing one bold furrow, with a spoon or hand trowel, from the edge of the reservoir into the center of the plain, so that water flows into it. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, through His interpretation and explanation of His Father’s teachings, brought the Message to mankind.

Briefly discuss: In what ways are ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s example and writings like this main canal down the center of our plain?

9. Encourage students to listen carefully as you read aloud the following quotation that further describes this system of canals:

To direct and canalize the forces released by His Revelation He instituted His Covenant whose power has preserved the integrity of the Faith, maintained its unity and stimulated its worldwide expansion throughout the successive ministries of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. It continues to fulfill its life-giving purpose through the agency of the Universal House of Justice. . . .”

The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice, pp. 3–4



**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

10. In the garden: Indicate how students will extend the central canal from the center of the garden to the far end of the garden, by digging a trough, laying drip-irrigation tubing, or using hoses or buckets.

As a demonstration: Extend the main central canal from the center of the plain all the way to the end.

In either setting, briefly discuss: In what way does the extension of this canal demonstrate the complementary roles of the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice?

11. In the garden: Indicate the placement of several new irrigation lines to intersect the main canal at right angles.

As a demonstration: Create furrows to intersect the main canal at right angles, allowing water to flow into these new channels. Add more water to the reservoir as needed.

In either setting, briefly discuss: How are these channels like our National Spiritual Assemblies?

12. In the garden: Indicate the placement of additional irrigation lines extending from the channels created in Step 11.

As a demonstration: Create additional furrows extending from the furrows created in Step 11.

In either setting, briefly discuss: How are these channels like our Local Spiritual Assemblies all over the world?

13. Read aloud the following explanation:

We urge you ever to bear in mind that the purpose of Bahá’í administration is primarily to lend strength and directive to the teaching work and to promote the establishment of the Faith. It should never be regarded as an end in itself but purely as a means to canalize and make effective a spiritual vitality generated by the Word of God in the hearts of the believers.

The Universal House of Justice, in *Lights of Guidance*, p. 1

Briefly discuss: Why must we always remember that administrative institutions are “a means to canalize and make effective a spiritual vitality generated by the Word of God in the hearts of the believers”? Which of these institutions are mentioned in the writings of Bahá’u’lláh? Which are mentioned in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

14. Remind students that these canals indicate the line of authoritative institutions. Briefly discuss: On which of these institutions has Bahá’u’lláh conferred infallible guidance? To which of these institutions do we owe our love and obedience?

15. Remind students that the functions of the Hands of the Cause of God are carried out by Counselors appointed by the Universal House of Justice. The Counselors, Auxiliary Board Members, and their Assistants do not have authority, but carry out the vital functions of encouraging us to do our part in the plan of God, protecting the Faith, and helping it grow. Read aloud the following quotation:

The Universal House of Justice, which the Guardian said would be regarded by posterity as “the last refuge of a tottering civilization,” is now, in the absence of the Guardian, the sole infallibly guided institution in the world to which all must turn, and on it rests the responsibility for ensuring the unity and progress of the Cause of God in accordance with the revealed Word.

The Universal House of Justice,  
*Wellspring of Guidance: Messages 1963–1968*, p. 90

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ➤

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**

## **TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

Briefly discuss: In what way does an infallibly guided institution help us know that the purity of God’s life-giving teachings will reach all people? What is our part in making that happen?

16. After this discussion period, carry out the service project as designed, watering thoroughly the entire garden, then cleaning the area and putting away tools.
17. Conclude the activity by inviting students to find a way to continue strengthening friendship with a new person, striving to show love and obedience to parents, or sharing the beauty of the teachings of God for this day with another person.

### **ACTIVITY 5: THE GUARDIAN AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that the twin institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice have both been invested with divine authority

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To confidently assert that the institutions of the Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice are both invested with divine authority as stated in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and that obedience or disobedience to either of these is the same as obedience or disobedience to God

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Student copies of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or copies of Resource Page 49
- Highlighter pens, if available

**Advance Preparation:**

Identify a community gathering in which student may present the choral reading practiced in this class.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their reflections on the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh since the last class: What new insights have they gained? What new questions have arisen?
2. Continue discussion: How many of us have thought about the importance of tests? What kinds of tests have we experienced? What does it take to pass a test in life? What does it take to pass a test at school?
3. Acknowledge student comments and then affirm that a test provides us with the opportunity to prove to ourselves and to the world—God, of course, already knows—what we know and what we’re able to do. Briefly discuss: What evidence do we have from our own lives that this is true?

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

4. Remind students that the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calls on the Guardian to appoint the next Guardian from his children or other relatives. However, our beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi had no children and all of his relatives had already tried to destroy the unity of the Cause of God.
5. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to explore the question of what happened with Shoghi Effendi’s relatives when we study the topic “Covenant-Breakers,” p. 89 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Continue to explain that after the Guardian’s passing in 1957, there was no will. This was a great test for the Bahá’ís. Briefly discuss: What do we think the Bahá’ís should do to pass that test? What do we think they did?
6. Listen carefully to student comments. Explain that the Hands of the Cause of God displayed magnificent heroism at this time and guided the Cause of God until the Universal House of Justice was elected in 1963. This story is told on page 54 in the Lesson Planning Guide *World Order of Bahá’u’lláh: The Institutions, Level Three*. Briefly discuss: In what way does the Covenant provide for the Universal House of Justice to function without a living Guardian?
7. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to memorize a part of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that will help us always remember that the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice are forever under the protection of the Covenant and it is to them that we must always turn. Distribute copies of Resource Page 49.
8. Read the passage aloud, with a new reader reading each new line.
9. Then invite students to devise a way to powerfully share this passage with others. The following option can be shared with the class, if desired.
  - Two readers share the opening section: Reader One reads line 1; Reader Two reads line 2; Together, they read line 3–6. Other students can create a protective umbrella with their arms over the photographs of the Guardian and the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as lines 3 to 6 are recited.
  - Students can then form two teams, facing each other. Each team reads aloud in unison, alternating lines with the other team: One team says, “who . . . him,” and the other team responds, “hath . . . God.”
10. Distribute highlighter pens so that students may mark their lines for easy reference.
11. Practice until the passage is dramatically and powerfully expressed. Arrange to present this choral reading at a community gathering or fireside.
12. After discussing plans for the class to share this choral reading with the community, briefly discuss: How does it make us feel to know that we’re under the protection of the Covenant of God?
13. Encourage students to recite their portion of the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá each day until the choral reading or recitation. Conclude the activity with prayers for firmness in the Covenant.
14. Encourage students also to continue finding ways to:

Consort with all the peoples, kindreds, and religions of the world with . . . friendliness. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Will and Testament*, p. 14

## Resource Pages

### Activity 2: Selections from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

#### Appointment of the Guardian

Focus Questions:

Who did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appoint as Guardian and Head of the Bahá’í Faith?

Who interprets the sacred writings of the Bahá’í Faith today?

---

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon that primal branch of the Divine and Sacred Lote-Tree, grown out, blest, tender, verdant and flourishing from the Twin Holy Trees; the most wondrous, unique and priceless pearl that doth gleam from out the Twin surging seas . . . for behold! he is the blest and sacred bough that hath branched out from the Twin Holy Trees. Well is it with him that seeketh the shelter of his shade that shadoweth all mankind.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 3

O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches),<sup>1</sup> the Afnán (Twigs)<sup>2</sup> of the Sacred Lote-Tree,<sup>3</sup> the Hands (pillars)<sup>4</sup> of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty<sup>5</sup> to turn unto Shoghi Effendi—the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness,—as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the Interpreter of the Word of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendants.

The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty,<sup>1</sup> under the shelter and unerring guidance of the Exalted One<sup>2</sup> (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 11

O ye the faithful loved ones of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 25

---

<sup>1</sup> The family of Bahá’u’lláh

<sup>2</sup> The family of the Báb

<sup>3</sup> The Manifestation of God

<sup>4</sup> Believers appointed to serve the Head of the Faith

<sup>5</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

<sup>1</sup> Bahá’u’lláh

<sup>2</sup> The Báb

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

**Activity 2: Selections from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

**Hands of the Cause of God**

Focus Questions:

What are the obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God?

Who carries out the functions of the Hands today?

---

O friends! The Hands of the Cause of God must be nominated and appointed by the Guardian of the Cause of God.

All must be under his shadow and obey his command. Should any, within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God disobey and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him, for he will have caused a breach in the true Faith of God.

The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.

This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savors of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, that contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, pp. 12–13*

Activity 2: Selections from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The Universal House of Justice

Focus Questions:

What is the relationship between the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice?

What body is the head of the Bahá’í Faith today?

---

And now, concerning the House of Justice which God hath ordained as the source of all good and freed from all error, it must be elected by universal suffrage, that is, by the believers. Its members must be manifestations of the fear of God and daysprings of knowledge and understanding, must be steadfast in God’s faith and the well-wishers of all mankind. By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one. Unto this body all things must be referred. It enacteth all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit Holy Text. By this body all the difficult problems are to be resolved and the Guardian of the Cause of God is its sacred head and the distinguished member for life of that body.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 14

It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House of Justice) to gather in a certain place and deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book. Whatsoever they decide has the same effect as the Text itself. Inasmuch as the House of Justice hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same. Thus for example, the House of Justice enacteth today a certain law and enforceth it, and a hundred years hence, circumstances having profoundly changed and the conditions having altered, another House of Justice will then have power, according to the exigencies of the time, to alter that law. This it can do because these laws form no part of the divine explicit Text. The House of Justice is both the initiator and the abrogator of its own laws.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 20

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**  
**TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

**Activity 3: The Will and Testament and Me**

According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are commanded to show forth peace and amity, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world. We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just king as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 8

In these days, the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world. Teaching the Cause is of utmost importance for it is the head corner-stone of the foundation itself. This wronged servant has spent his days and nights in promoting the Cause and urging the peoples to service. He rested not a moment, till the fame of the Cause of God was noised abroad in the world and the celestial strains from the Abhá Kingdom roused the East and the West. The beloved of God must also follow the same example. This is the secret of faithfulness, this is the requirement of servitude to the Threshold of Bahá!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 10

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God’s grace. It is incumbent upon everyone to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and sincere kindness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world, be they friends or strangers. So intense must be the spirit of love and loving kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly. Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon everyone.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 13

Wherefore, O my loving friends! Consort with all the peoples, kindreds and religions of the world with the utmost truthfulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindness, goodwill and friendliness, that all the world of being may be filled with the holy ecstasy of the grace of Bahá, that ignorance, enmity, hate and rancor may vanish from the world and the darkness of estrangement amidst the peoples and kindreds of the world may give way to the Light of Unity. Should other peoples and nations be unfaithful to you show your fidelity unto them, should they be unjust toward you show justice towards them, should they keep aloof from you attract them to yourselves, should they show their enmity be friendly towards them, should they poison your lives, sweeten their souls, should they inflict a wound upon you, be a salve to their sores. Such are the attributes of the sincere! Such are the attributes of the truthful.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 14



CUT AWAY

If desired, you may use this page as a pattern for the friendship box on p. 37.

It may be equally easy to measure and cut the paper as described in Step 8, p. 38.



CUT AWAY



CUT AWAY



CUT AWAY



GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ  
TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

---

Activity 5: The Guardian and the Universal House of Justice

The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God,  
as well as the Universal House of Justice, to be universally elected and established,  
are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty,  
under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One  
(may my life be offered up for them both).  
Whatsoever they decide is of God.

Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them,  
hath not obeyed God;  
whoso rebelleth against him and against them  
hath rebelled against God;  
whoso opposeth him  
hath opposed God;  
whoso contendeth with them  
hath contended with God;  
whoso disputeth with him  
hath disputed with God;  
whoso denieth him  
hath denied God;  
whoso disbelieveth in him  
hath disbelieved in God;  
whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turneth aside from him  
hath in truth deviated, separated himself and turned aside from God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 11

**GOAL: TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ**

## **TOPIC: THE GUARDIANSHIP AND UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

---

### **LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

---

#### **Stories, Books, and Articles:**

*God Passes By*, Shoghi Effendi, pp. 323–32

*The Covenant: Its Meaning and Origin and Our Attitude Towards It*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, pp. 35–46

*The Covenant for Young People*, Enoch Tanyi

*The Eternal Covenant*, pp. 45–49, 88–100, 106–07, 206–07

*The Guardianship and the Universal House of Justice*

*The Power of the Covenant*, Part One, pp. 22–30

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Center of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh*, H.M. Balyuzi, pp. 484–93

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“The Buildings on the Arc,” Mar/Apr 2000

“What Would the Bahá’ís do without Shoghi Effendi?” Nov/Dec 2000

“Sacred and Youthful Branch,” Sep/Oct 2003

#### **Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Bahá’u’lláh’s Gift To the World,” Nov/Dec 1995

“Light of the Covenant,” Nov/Dec 1995

#### **Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“To Elect the House of Justice,” May/June 1998

#### **Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Let Us Be About Our Father’s Business,” Jul/Aug 1991

“The Covenant,” Sep/Oct 1992

“Reverence,” Nov/Dec 1995

*Lift Up Your Voices and Sing*, “We Are Soldiers in God’s Army”

*Lote Tree*, “Shoghi Effendi”

#### **Other Favorite Resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Bahá’í Education Task Force, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

**TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S  
INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT  
COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH  
AND HIS REVELATION**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
LOVE, OBEDIENCE, RESPECT FOR ELDERS**

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behooveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 1

The fear of God hath ever been the prime factor in the education of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained thereunto!

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 27

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh is loyalty to God, and that our loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh and His writings fulfills our part of the Covenant of God

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Review the idea that a Covenant is an agreement between two parties; each has a responsibility to the other.
- Consult about ways in which we can show our loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh and fulfill our part of the Covenant.
- Review the meaning of the Manifestation of God, and how our relationship with the Manifestation of God is a reflection of our relationship with God.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that our connection with God is through our love for and knowledge of His Manifestation, and through obedience to the laws and teachings of the Manifestation of God

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use a bright light and spotless mirror as an analogy for the Manifestation of God perfectly mirroring the reality of God and bringing us the laws and teachings of God.
- Encourage students to silently reflect on the fact that we can demonstrate our love for Bahá'u'lláh by obeying His laws and teachings. Share these thoughts and reflections with a partner.
- Describe the laws of God using the analogy of the rays of the sun. We benefit from these laws just as we benefit from the sun.
- Use stories from Bahá'í history to show the connection between love for Bahá'u'lláh and obedience to His laws and teachings.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive that the greater one's efforts to fulfill our part of the Covenant, the greater will be one's spiritual growth and development
- To recognize that the more one strives to fulfill our part of the Covenant, the more one is guided and protected by God

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Shine a light on a dusty mirror. Then polish the mirror and again shine a light on its surface. Relate obedience to God and the fulfillment of our part of the Covenant to keeping this mirror clean. The cleaner the mirrors of our hearts, the more light, guidance, and protection we can receive from God.
- Provide time for students to reflect on occasions when they could clearly recognize positive results from their efforts to obey the laws of Bahá'u'lláh. Illustrate these experiences through poetry, drawings, or drama.
- Pray together for continuing spiritual growth and firmness in the Covenant..
- Challenge students to set goals of even greater loving obedience to Bahá'u'lláh's laws and teachings.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To articulate one's understanding of the Station of the Manifestation
- To explain our own part in the divine Covenant

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Provide opportunities for students to explain the Covenant to adults in the community using the analogy of light shining in a mirror.
- Exhibit for the community students' artwork on fulfilling our part of the Covenant of God through loving obedience to Bahá'u'lláh.
- Assist students to prepare a program in celebration of the Day of the Covenant.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: ONE'S PERSONAL COVENANT WITH GOD

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh is loyalty to God, and that our loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh and His writings is the fulfillment of our part of the Covenant of God

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that our only connection with God is through our love for and knowledge of His Manifestation, and through obedience to the laws and teachings of the Manifestation of God

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To explain our own part in the divine Covenant

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Prayer book for the teacher, or a memorized prayer
- Blank paper and pencils
- Space, preferably in nature, for personal prayer
- Water and towel for ablutions
- Copies of Resource Page 63
- Telephone access, if available
- Telephone numbers for elders or other adults in the local Bahá'í community, if available

**Advance Preparation:**

Post the text of the short obligatory prayer in the classroom where students can read it.

Find a way to provide students with private space for prayer while also providing adequate supervision for their safety.

**Short Obligatory Prayer**

To be recited once in twenty-four hours, at noon

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth.

There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

—Bahá'u'lláh

1. Welcome students. Invite them to reflect and then to share with one other person a spiritually significant moment over the past week. Allow time for this pair sharing; then briefly discuss: How do these moments of spiritual significance help us align with our true purpose?
2. Encourage students to listen and reflect as you pose the question: Have you ever wondered, "Why was I created? What is the purpose of my being here?" After a period of silent reflection listen carefully to student comments. Then share these words from Bahá'u'lláh:

The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 70

3. Briefly discuss: How can we know our Creator? How can we attain His Presence? Listen carefully to student comments, and then continue the passage:

Whoso hath recognized the Day Spring of Divine guidance and entered His holy court hath drawn nigh unto God and attained His Presence.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 70*

4. Discuss the questions:

If we think of the words “Day Spring” in the physical world, what might we have in mind?

If we think of the words “Day Spring” in a spiritual sense, what might we have in mind?

In what way is the physical world a metaphor for the world of the spirit?

Who is the Day Spring of divine guidance for this Day?

How can we enter His holy court?

5. In the whole group read aloud these two passages again. Continue the discussion:

Based on these quotations, what can we say is our purpose in life?

Listen carefully to student comments, then eloquently read twice the following quotation, in which Bahá'u'lláh describes His Station:

This is the Voice of God, if ye do but hearken. This is the Day Spring of the Revelation of God, did ye but know it. This is the Dawning-Place of the Cause of God, were ye to recognize it. This is the Source of the commandment of God, did ye but judge it fairly.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 33*

Briefly discuss:

In the time of Moses, who spoke with the Voice of God?

In the time of Jesus Christ, who spoke with the Voice of God?

In the time of Muhammad, the Messenger of God, who was the Day Spring of the Revelation of God?

In the time of the Blessed Báb, who was the Dawning-Place of the Cause of God?

If we judge fairly, where do we find the Source of the commandment of God?



6. Remind students that Bahá'u'lláh gave us obligatory prayers, which restate our personal relationship with God. Refer to the posted short obligatory prayer in the classroom. Study the prayer carefully together, phrase by phrase, applying the previous discussion to these verses. Note that Bahá'u'lláh, in answer to a question, has explained that this prayer may be said at any time between noon and sunset.
7. Explain that students will have the opportunity to privately commune with God, reciting this prayer. Encourage students to carefully copy this prayer onto blank paper.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤**

**TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

---

8. Provide water for performing ablutions. Show students how to determine the direction of the Qiblih, the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, towards which we face for obligatory prayer.

9. Briefly discuss: When we really want to pray or really *need* to pray, how do we prepare ourselves spiritually for our prayers? Listen carefully to student responses and share your own approach to prayer. Then read aloud the story on Resource Page 63.

Briefly discuss: How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá teach Mr. M. to pray?

10. Acknowledge that the Master teaches us to love by loving us. He teaches us to pray by praying with us and for us. Explain that while in the role of teacher you strive to follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá's example. Explain that at this moment you would like to read or say a prayer for this class. At this point select a favorite prayer to say with lowliness and fervor. Consider selecting the Tablet of Visitation for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The purpose of this step is to provide a model for prayer by really praying. The purpose also is to pray for heavenly confirmations for your students.

11. Invite students to each find a secluded, private spot, outdoors in nature if possible, where they may individually recite the short obligatory prayer. Note that teachers are responsible for student safety at all times.

12. Invite students to return to the whole group after saying their individual prayers. Briefly discuss: How does prayer, particularly obligatory prayer, help us to attain the presence of our Creator?

13. Explain that this relationship between the Creator and the individual soul is a Covenant between the individual and God, a Covenant between each of us and God's Manifestation in this Day, Bahá'u'lláh.

14. Explain that as individual human souls, we are part of the movement of the entire human race to embrace this message from God. We draw on a sacred history of firmness in the Covenant. Briefly discuss: Who are the oldest Bahá'ís in our community? List them. If your community has no elderly Bahá'ís, list the adults in the community. The point is to identify the oldest members of the local Bahá'í community who have responded to this Message from God.

Alternatively, if your class is primarily junior youth who are not from Bahá'í families or Bahá'í elders are not known to your class, you may pose the question: Who are the oldest people that we know that show their love and obedience for God in their lives? Create a list of these people.

15. Explain that we can learn more about the Covenant by talking with these important people in our community. Discuss as a group ways that students might be able to visit these people in teams of 2 or 3. Identify which students might be able to visit which elders. Explain that students will have the opportunity to plan this visit during the next class. Encourage students to contact these elders and request the privilege of visiting them shortly after the next class. These appointments may be made by phone while students are still gathered in this class.

16. Encourage students to begin to pray for these community elders as part of their daily prayers. Encourage students also to focus on strengthening their own prayer lives by reciting daily the short obligatory prayer<sup>1</sup> with pure-hearted devotion and to strive to translate the words of the prayer into action.

---

<sup>1</sup> Teachers may also refer to medium and long obligatory prayers, if desired.



ACTIVITY 2: LOCAL HEROES AND HEROINES OF THE COVENANT

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that our connection with God is through our love for and knowledge of His Manifestation, and through obedience to the laws and teachings of the Manifestation of God

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION:** To perceive that the greater one's efforts to fulfill one's own part of the Covenant, the greater will be one's spiritual growth and development; To recognize that the more one strives to fulfill one's part of the Covenant, the more one is guided and protected by God

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. PLUS STUDENT INTERVIEWS WITH ELDER OR OTHER ADULT

**Materials Needed:**

- Materials to set a devotional atmosphere inspired by the Shrines and gardens in the Holy Land, such as: photographs of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; inspirational live or recorded music; flowers, candles, rose petals, rose water, beautiful cloths; video clips of the Holy Land, television and video player
- Gift quotations, if desired
- Any of the Core Curriculum storybooks or other favorite story about Bahá'u'lláh

**Advance Preparation:**

Create a devotional atmosphere in the classroom, another room, or outdoors, so that students may gain the feeling of the Holy Land as they enter. Options to consider:

- Drape cloths inside the doorway, so that students enter as if through a curtain.
- Lay cloths on the floor, from the doorway to the opposite corner of the room, as a walkway.
- Place chairs in a semi-circle or rows, as needed, on either side of the walkway, facing the far corner of the room.
- Place candleholders with candles in secure positions on the cloth on the floor bordering the walkway, and light them immediately before students enter the class.
- Strew rose petals or other flowers on the walkway, and sprinkle rose water or other scent in the room.
- Prepare a reverential display in the far corner of the room with photographs of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh or other scenes from the Holy Land. Cover stands or tables with beautiful cloths and place vases of flowers. If using a video clip in the presentation, drape the television with cloths until using it.
- Select powerful devotional live or recorded music to be sung or played as students enter the room. See the List of Additional Resources for some musical options.

Practice reading or retelling a favorite story, to be able to powerfully share it with the class.

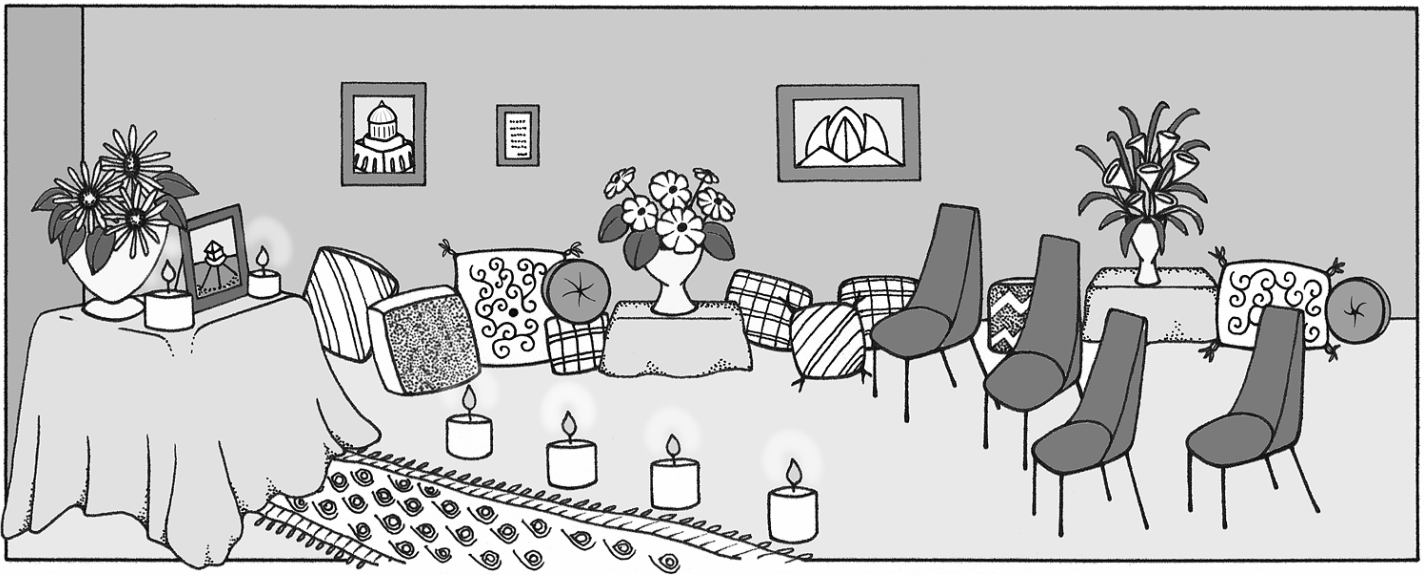
Consider making a gift quotation for students by carefully copying a favorite quotation about the Creator's love for His creatures onto nice paper. Consider using one of the Hidden Words, such as:

O SON OF BEING!

Love Me, that I may love thee. If thou lovest Me not, My love can in no wise reach thee.  
Know this, O servant.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic no. 5

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤



1. Greet students outside the prepared room. Encourage them to remove their shoes as they would prior to entering Shrines in the Holy Land, open their hearts, and enter the room in silence, focusing their attention on the Covenant of God, that mysterious connection between our own hearts and the Blessed Beauty, that Day Spring of the Revelation of God, Bahá'u'lláh.
2. Invite students to seat themselves in silence and open their eyes, ears, minds, and hearts to a short devotional period that may include some of the following:
  - Prayers.
  - Live or recorded music.
  - A favorite story about Bahá'u'lláh from one of the Core Curriculum storybooks.
  - A 5-minute video segment showing beautiful scenes from the Holy Land, with the sound muted so students can hear inspirational music sung or played.
  - Photographs taken in the Holy Land or downloaded from online sources such as <http://media.bahai.org>.
  - Other favorite stories.
3. Conclude this short inspirational program by presenting each student with the gift quotation you prepared, if desired. Invite students to continue reflecting on their own relationship with Bahá'u'lláh, the Voice of God for this Day, while listening to one last musical selection.
4. Alter the room's environment slightly, by turning on the lights, blowing out the candles, and inviting students to turn their chairs facing into a circle for discussion. Briefly discuss: What is it that helps us to be conscious of the love in our own hearts for our Beloved? What are some times and places when we feel this love most strongly?
5. Read aloud the following quotations:

**Observe My commandments for the love of My beauty.**

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 332*

They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples. . . . These are the breath of life unto all created things. The seas of Divine wisdom and Divine utterance have risen under the breath of the breeze of the All-Merciful. Hasten to drink your fill, O men of understanding! . . . O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures.

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

Discuss the questions: How do we know that God's precepts or teachings are the breath of life unto all created things? What is it that makes us want to obey His commandments? Are there times when we've found ourselves assisted to obey the teachings of God even when it seemed easier to do otherwise? What is it that helps us choose to turn our hearts to God?

6. Explain that life's challenges can also help us turn towards God. Briefly discuss: How is this so?
7. Explain that the elders in our community have had this experience time and again. The class will have the opportunity to learn from the experiences of these souls striving to fulfill their personal covenant with Bahá'u'lláh. At the same time, the class will be performing a service by recording the oral history of the growth of the Cause of God in our community.
8. Review the appointments students made in the last class to visit community elders (or other adults) in teams of two. If some appointments still need to be made, consider phoning them at this time. Suggest that the visits be completed before the next class. Discuss transportation arrangements as necessary. Encourage students also to take photographs if they have access to a camera. If they have access to a tape recorder, they may also record the interview.

9. Distribute copies of Resource Page 64 or 65 (alternate form if the adults to be interviewed are not Bahá'ís). Read aloud the interview questions. Briefly discuss: Would we like to use these questions as they're written or are there changes that we'd like to make? What are some ways that we can show our genuine respect for the people we interview? What are some ways that we can show our appreciation for the honor of learning from their experience? Record student comments on chart paper.
10. Organize students into interview teams. After a few minutes' preparation, invite each team to demonstrate how they will greet the elder with respect, introduce the questions, and show appreciation for the visit. Acknowledge all. Gently offer kind suggestions as needed for students to effectively demonstrate respect to the elders they will visit.
11. If time permits, encourage these same teams to practice interviewing each other and carefully writing the answers.

During the actual interview, students may choose to take turns reading the questions and writing the elder's answers. Call attention to the need to accurately record details of the answers. They may use the back of the paper if they need more room to write. Remind students that they are documenting the spiritual history of their community and that it is quite appropriate for them to courteously request that people speak more slowly or repeat themselves.

12. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

NOTE: Teachers may need to provide follow-up assistance for students to successfully complete their interviews before the next class.

## TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

### ACTIVITY 3: COVENANT STORIES

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that our connection with God is through our love for and knowledge of His Manifestation, and through obedience to the laws and teachings of the Manifestation of God

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To explain our part in the divine Covenant

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of creativity; Use of peer teaching; Involve service

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60–90 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Lined paper and pencils
- Copies of Resource Page 66
- Thank-you cards or other note cards
- Gift folder, as described in Step 9
- Access to computer and printer, if available

**Advance Preparation:**

This activity uses the interviews that students conducted with elders or other adults as described in the previous activity.

1. Welcome students.
2. Invite students to share the results of their visits with members of the community: What was a particular high point of that experience? What surprised you? How did the person respond to your visit? Were you able to take photographs?
3. After listening to students recount their experiences, read aloud twice the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 3

Discuss the question: How can the commandments of God be like lamps of His loving providence and keys of His mercy? What evidence did we hear in our interviews to confirm the truth of this statement?

4. Explain to students that they will have the opportunity to record this oral history as a service to their community and as a gift to the person they interviewed.

5. Provide copies of Resource Page 66 and invite students to write answers to the questions as a first step to writing their report about the person they interviewed. If you have new students, invite each student to join a team.
6. As students finish writing, encourage them to read their work to another team and invite that team to offer friendly feedback or suggestions.
7. Encourage students to rewrite their reports in the form of short stories or essays that take into account the suggestions from other teams as well as their own ideas for improvement. Provide lined paper for this second draft of the story. If a computer is available, students may also type their reports.
8. As time permits, encourage students to read their finished work in the whole group.
9. Encourage students to create a title page for their reports that includes their names, the name of the person interviewed, the date of the interview, an appropriate title, and perhaps a favorite quotation of the person interviewed. Encourage students also to write a short note of appreciation to the person interviewed that may be included when they present the report.

9. In the whole group decide how to present these reports to the community and to the people interviewed: Do you want to present the copies at a Nineteen Day Feast or other community gathering? Do you also want to request permission to read the reports aloud at that gathering? Consider photocopying the reports to give the original to the person interviewed, a copy to the Local Spiritual Assembly, and copies for the students who conducted the interview. Consider placing all Assembly copies in a gift folder before presentation.
10. After plans are complete, briefly discuss: What did we learn from our interviews? How can learning about the experiences of others help us more deeply understand the relationship between love and obedience? How can it help us develop our own firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh?
11. Encourage students to select one special action to take or habit to cultivate inspired by their interviews.
12. Conclude the activity with prayers selected by the students.

#### **ACTIVITY 4: A COVENANT SANDPAINTING**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh is loyalty to God, and that our loyalty to Bahá'u'lláh and His writings fulfills our part of the Covenant of God

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To recognize that the more we strive to fulfill our part of the Covenant, the more we are guided and protected by God

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

##### **Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 67
- Items on the list from Brilliant Star magazine, Resource Page 68 of this Lesson Planning Guide
- Copies of Resource Page 69
- Authentic sandpainting, if available
- Core Curriculum storybooks *The Báb*, vol. 2, and *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3, if available
- Recorded music of indigenous American Bahá'ís such as Kevin Locke, if available

##### **Advance Preparation:**

Note that the cover of the Level 3 Oneness of Humanity Lesson Planning Guide shows a photograph of a sandpainting similar to the design on Resource Page 68.

Consider selecting stories about indigenous believers from Core Curriculum storybooks to read aloud as students work. These stories tell about Lakota and Inuit Bahá'ís, whose arts and cultures are distinct from the Navaho (or Dine) people. The stories are suggested because 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words apply to all the indigenous peoples of America:

- "The Warmth of Alaska," pp. 6–9, *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3
- "The Promise," pp. 16–20, *Bahá'u'lláh*, vol. 3
- "The Naming," pp. 3–7, *The Báb*, vol. 2

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to love and serve God by loving and serving people. Briefly discuss: What changes in our lives when we recognize the Manifestation of God for this day? Acknowledge all.
2. Distribute copies of Resource Page 69. Invite volunteers to read aloud the quotation twice. Then discuss the focus questions.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE** ➤

3. Affirm that the power of these holy verses transforms us. When we turn to the Manifestation of God and follow His teachings, we become part of the light that illuminates the world. These holy verses illumine the talents of all individuals and all nations. In the Tablets of the Divine Plan, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote that when the indigenous population of America embraces the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, “they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world.”<sup>1</sup>
4. One of the traditional arts of Navaho people is sandpainting. Navaho believers have contributed the art of sandpainting to all the world. Read aloud the introduction to sandpainting on Resource Page 67.
5. Distribute copies of Resource Page 68. Read through the sandpainting instructions carefully in the whole group. Provide materials and invite students to make their own sandpaintings as a reminder of the power of the Covenant in their own lives.
6. Consider playing background music or reading aloud stories about indigenous American Bahá’ís while students work.
7. As students complete their work, they may enjoy taking a turn reading to others or beginning to put away supplies and clean the work area.
8. Conclude the activity by reading again the quotation on Resource Page 69 and inviting students to record their personal plan for reading the verses of God each morning and evening. Then invite students to select favorite prayers for closing devotions.

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 31

**GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT**  
**TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

---

**Resource Pages**

**Activity 1: One's Personal Covenant with God**

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in New York, He called to Him an ardent Bahá'í and said, "If you will come to Me at dawn tomorrow, I will teach you to pray."

Delighted, Mr. M. arose at four and crossed the city, arriving for his lesson at six. With what exultant expectation he must have greeted this opportunity! He found 'Abdu'l-Bahá already at prayer, kneeling by the side of the bed. Mr. M. followed suit, taking care to place himself directly across.

Seeing that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was quite lost in His Own reverie, Mr. M. began to pray silently for his friends, his family and finally for the crowned heads of Europe. No word was uttered by the quiet Man before him. He went over all the prayers he knew then, and repeated them twice, three times—still no sound broke the expectant hush.

Mr. M. surreptitiously rubbed one knee and wondered vaguely about his back. He began again, hearing as he did so, the birds heralding the dawn outside the window. An hour passed, and finally two. Mr. M. was quite numb now. His eyes, roving along the wall, caught sight of a large crack. He dallied with a touch of indignation but let his gaze pass again to the still figure across the bed.

The ecstasy that he saw arrested him and he drank deeply of the sight. Suddenly he wanted to pray like that. Selfish desires were forgotten. Sorrow, conflict, and even his immediate surroundings were as if they had never been. He was conscious of only one thing, a passionate desire to draw near to God.

Closing his eyes again he set the world firmly aside, and amazingly his heart teemed with prayer, eager, joyous, tumultuous prayer. He felt cleansed by humility and lifted by a new peace. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had taught him to pray!

The "Master of 'Akká" immediately arose and came to him. His eyes rested smilingly upon the newly humbled Mr. M. "When you pray," He said, "you must not think of your aching body, nor of the birds outside the window, nor of the cracks in the wall!"

He became very serious then, and added, "When you wish to pray you must first know that you are standing in the presence of the Almighty!"

Annamarie Honnold, ed., *Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 131–32

**Activity 2: Local Heroes and Heroines of the Covenant**

**Local History Interview: Love and Obedience to God**

Adult's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Student Interviewer Names \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for allowing us to visit you today. We're very interested in learning about your experiences as a Bahá'í. May we begin?

1. How did you first learn about Bahá'u'lláh?
2. When and how did you decide to become a Bahá'í?
3. What changed in your life as a result of your decision to follow the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh?
4. We're studying the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh and the relationship between love for Bahá'u'lláh and obedience to His teachings. Could you tell us about a time that your love for God helped you to obey His teachings or to pass a spiritual test?
5. Please also tell us about one of your favorite experiences teaching the Faith.
6. What are your favorite Bahá'í writings?
7. What changes have you seen in our Bahá'í community over the years?
8. What changes do you anticipate in our community over the next 10 years?
9. What advice do you have for us as Bahá'ís?

After the interview is complete, read back your answers to your host. Make any corrections or additions that they suggest. Thank the person for sharing with you.



**GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT**  
**TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

---

**Activity 2: Local Heroes and Heroines of the Covenant**

**Local History Interview: Love and Obedience to God  
(Alternate Form)**

Adult's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Student Interviewer Names \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for allowing us to visit you today. We're very interested in learning about your experiences as a person of faith. May we begin?

1. How did you first learn about God?
2. When and how did you decide to live the life of the spirit?
3. What changed in your life as a result of your decision to follow the teachings of God?
4. We're studying the Covenant of God and the relationship between love for God and obedience to His teachings. Could you tell us about a time that your love for God helped you to obey His teachings or to pass a spiritual test?
5. Please also tell us about one of your favorite experiences telling others about your faith.
6. What are your favorite sacred writings?
7. What changes have you seen in our community over the years?
8. What changes do you anticipate in our community over the next 10 years?
9. What advice do you have for us as people of faith?

After the interview is complete, read back your answers to your host. Make any corrections or additions that they suggest. Thank the person for sharing with you.



Activity 4: A Covenant Sandpainting

***"The power of the Covenant is as the heat of the sun which quickeneth and promoteth the development of all things on earth."***

— 'Abdu'l-Bahá  
Quoted in *God Passes By*, p. 239

# The Covenant in the World of Nature

Reprinted from Brilliant Star magazine. Used with permission.

Written and illustrated by Mitchell Silas  
©1992

There are many ways to learn about the Covenant. One of the ways that the Navajo people teach about God's Covenant is with a sandpainting. A sandpainting is more than a work of art. A sandpainting is like a prayer. It shows us how God made our world and how we should live in it.

This sandpainting is surrounded by a rainbow Yei. Yeis are spiritual messengers. They are represented as many things in nature and were created by Diyin as His helpers. Diyin is a Navajo name for God. The rainbow is a symbol of the Covenant protecting the people who remain within it.

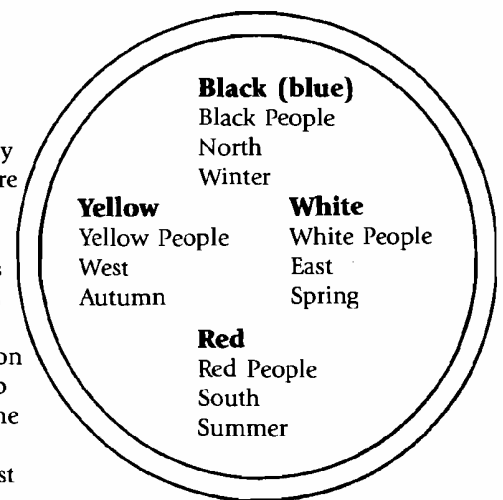
Often the circle of feathers is in groups of five for the five-fingered people. In this picture they are in groups of nine for unity.

The four sacred plants represent life. Corn is for sustenance and prayer. Corn pollen is used in prayer. Tobacco is for prayer and medicine. It is used only in prayer and is not like tobacco bought in stores. Beans and squash are food.

In the center is the face of the sun. The sun stands for the Holy Spirit. The two black triangles are the eyes and the bottom line is the mouth.

The figure in the very center is called Pollen Boy. He represents the patient to be healed. The center is also the seventh direction (after north, south, east, west, up and down). It is the soul and the true self. The Pollen Boy is protected by the rainbow Yei, just like we are all protected by the Covenant.

When you use a color, think of its many meanings.



*This is a prayer from the Navajo people. Think about what it means as you work on your sandpainting.*

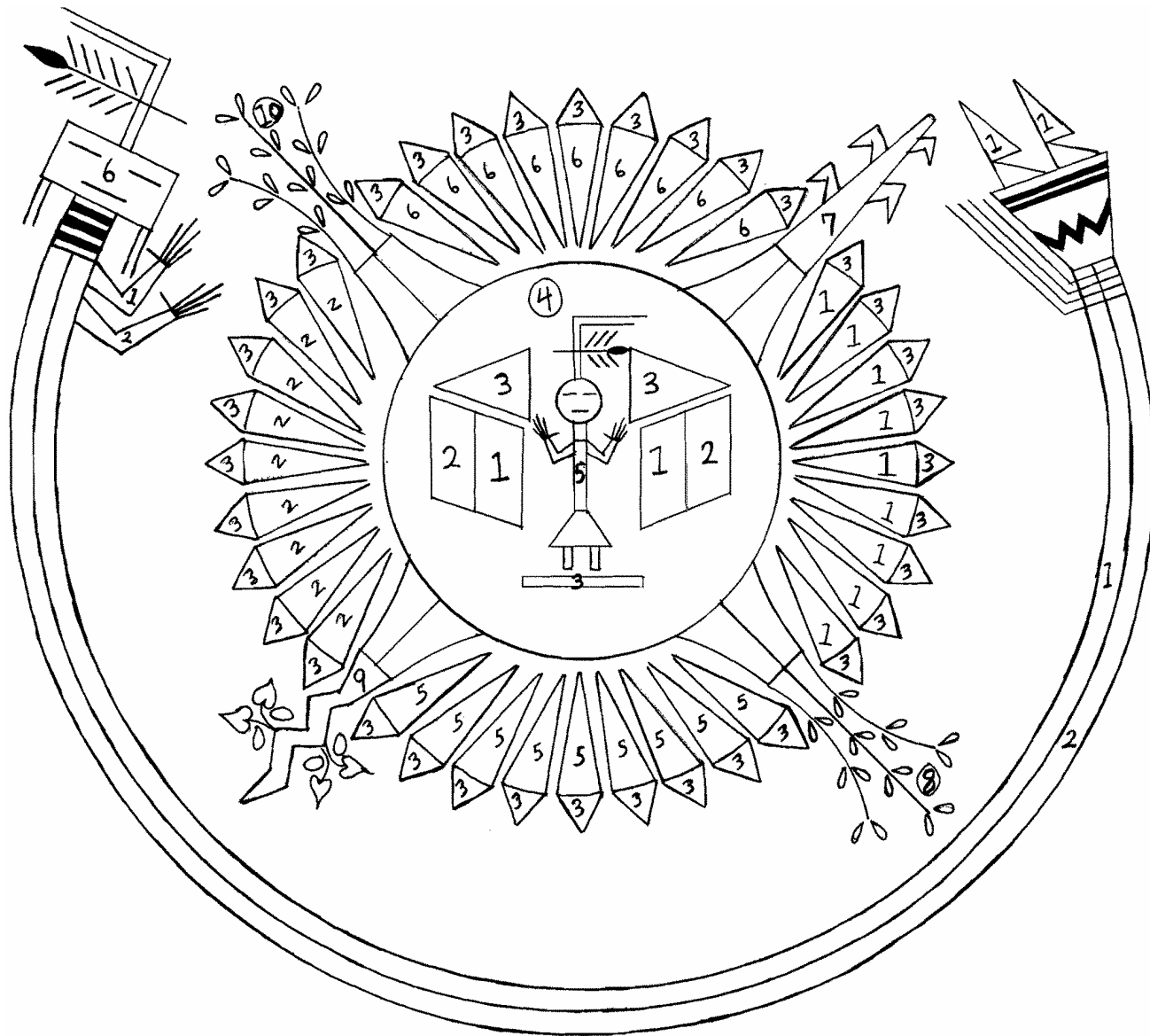
Today I will walk out, today everything evil will leave me.  
I will be happy forever, nothing will hinder me;  
I walk with beauty before me, I walk with beauty behind me,  
I walk with beauty below me, I walk with beauty above me,  
I walk with beauty around me, my words will be beautiful.  
My words will be beautiful.  
It is done in beauty.  
It is done in beauty.



### Color Key for Sandpainting

- 1 Red
- 2 Turquoise or Blue
- 3 Black
- 4 Light Blue
- 5 Yellow
- 6 White
- 7 Green (corn)
- 8 Brown (tobacco)
- 9 Orange (squash)
- 10 Brown (beans)

Activity 4: A Covenant Sandpainting



### How to Make a Sandpainting

**Materials:** fine brown sandpaper, glue, water, paintbrushes, colored sand from craft stores, awls or compass points to scratch in the design.

1. Cut a piece of fine sandpaper the same size as this page, 8½" by 11". Use this picture as a guide to scratch the design into a piece of sandpaper with an awl or compass point. Very carefully draw the rest of the design lightly on the sandpaper.
2. Mix a paste of ½ glue and ½ water. Stir with a paintbrush.

3. Paint lightly and evenly with the glue over the area in the center. Make the large round center of the sun first.
4. Carefully pour the colored sand over the glue mixture. Cover completely with extra sand.
5. Carefully tip the cardboard on its side onto a piece of clean paper that has been folded in the middle. Pour the sand that falls off back into the container for the next person to use.

6. Work with one color at a time from center to outer edge so that you do not touch the wet sand places. Turn the picture when you need to.
7. When the center is dry you can put on the face, Pollen Boy, and rainbow.
8. Put in a safe place to dry.

Making sandpaintings is a skill that takes many hours of practice to perfect. Don't be critical of your beginning efforts. ★

**GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE’S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT**  
**TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ’U’LLÁH**

---

**Activity 4: Covenant A Sandpainting**

Focus Questions:

What are the verses of God?

Why should we recite the verses of God every morning and evening?

Why is it better to recite a single verse with joy and radiance than to read all the Holy Books wearily?

What are some practical ways to help ourselves fulfill this obligation?

What happens if we forget one morning? Are there ways to try again?

---

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all. Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Read ye the sacred verses in such measure that ye be not overcome by languor and despondency. Lay not upon your souls that which will weary them and weigh them down, but rather what will lighten and uplift them, so that they may soar on the wings of the Divine verses towards the Dawning-place of His manifest signs; this will draw you nearer to God, did ye but comprehend.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 149

Lassitude—n. A state or feeling of weariness, diminished energy, or listlessness.

Languor—n. Lack of physical or mental energy; listlessness.

Despondency—n. Depression of spirits from loss of hope, confidence, or courage; dejection.

Definitions from The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition  
Copyright © 2000 by Houghton Mifflin Company.  
Published by Houghton Mifflin Company. All rights reserved.

## GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE’S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT

# TOPIC: COMPLETE LOYALTY TO BAHÁ’U’LLÁH

---

### LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

#### Stories, Books, and Articles:

*The Covenant for Young People*, Enoch Tanyi

*The Covenant: Its Meaning and Origin and Our Attitude Towards It*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, pp. 59–70

*The Essence of the Covenant*, Shahin Vafai

*The Eternal Covenant*, Lowell Johnson, pp. 75–86, 147–66

*The Power of the Covenant*, Part One, pp. 12–18

*In Search of Certitude: Deepening Our Understanding, Strengthening Our Faith*, Extracts from the Bahá’í Writings, Nine Pines Publishing  
*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Might Covenant Training Camp,” Sp Ed 1998

“Forbidden Questions,” Mar/Apr 2001

“Powerful Protection,” Jan/Feb 2001

“The Case of the Mysterious Marriage,” Jul/Aug 2001

“The Case of the Missing Meals,” Mar/Apr 2001

“I Am Well Pleased,” May/June 2001

“Walking in the Sunshine,” Sep/Oct 2003

“The First Written Covenant,” Sep/Oct 2003

#### Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“A Fortress for Well-Being,” Mar/Apr 1999

“Dig Deep for Meaning,” May/June 1997

#### Activities:

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Might Covenant Training Camp,” Sp Ed 1998

“Flags of the Fortress,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Fruits of One Tree,” Sep/Oct 2003

#### Music:

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“I Have Found Bahá’u’lláh,” Mar/Apr 1998

“Bahá’u’lláh, I Long to Praise Thee,” Jan/Feb 1998

#### Other Favorite Resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Bahá’í Education Task Force, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

# TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
SINCERITY, LOVE, FAITHFULNESS**

Should any one of you enter a city, he should become a centre of attraction by reason of his sincerity, his faithfulness and love, his honesty and fidelity, his truthfulness and loving-kindness towards all the peoples of the world, so that the people of that city may cry out and say: "This man is unquestionably a Bahá'í, for his manners, his behavior, his conduct, his morals, his nature, and disposition reflect the attributes of the Bahá'ís." Not until ye attain this station can ye be said to have been faithful to the Covenant and Testament of God. For He hath, through irrefutable Texts, entered into a binding Covenant with us all, requiring us to act in accordance with His sacred instructions and counsels.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 71*

His brotherly advice to you, and to all loyal and ardent young believers like you, is that you should deepen your knowledge of the history and of the tenets of the Faith, not merely by means of careful and thorough study, but also through active, whole-hearted and continued participation in all the activities, whether administrative or otherwise, of your community.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 2, p. 424*

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To know that obedience to the institutions of the Faith is an important aspect of the fulfillment of our part of the Lesser Covenant

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Compare national Bahá’í institutions to “pillars” supporting the “roof” or international administrative order of the Faith.
- Through drawing and constructing models, learn the various levels and pillars of Bahá’í administration, using the model of the resting place of the Greatest Holy Leaf.
- Teach students briefly the titles and functions of each part of the administrative order.
- Show the role of the individual in supporting this structure.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand that the strength and growth of the administrative order and our Bahá’í communities depend upon individual obedience to the institutions of the Faith

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Identify ways we can demonstrate obedience to the institutions of the Faith.
- Compare these ideas to the base of the pillars. With our support, the local and national institutions provide strong support for the Universal House of Justice.
- Demonstrate the individual’s role in upholding the administrative order, and therefore the Covenant to Bahá’u’lláh, through dance or human sculptures.
- In pairs, research the writings of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice about the role of the individual in the Lesser Covenant and share these findings with the group.





## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To perceive that in this Dispensation all individuals have the responsibility, through constant effort to live the life, to fulfill our part in the administrative order

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Present the idea that individuals, like bricks or stones, are the foundation under the pillars. Invite students to build a structure to represent their community, using enough bricks or blocks to represent all community members by name. If each of us does our individual part to support the institutions, then the administrative order will be remain strong and unified.
- Encourage students to share what they think their responsibilities to support the administrative order include, and what they might do to meet those responsibilities.
- Provide the opportunity for students to meet with the Local Spiritual Assembly to offer their services for a community project.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE

- To articulate ways in which one is actively fulfilling one's part in the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Build a model or create a visual display to demonstrate the analogy of a building with the administrative order as the roof.
- Review the “brick” analogy. Invite students to write down ways they can, as individuals, support the roof of the administrative order.
- Provide assistance to the Local Spiritual Assembly for a community project, such as planning a Nineteen Day Feast or Holy Day observance, participating in a teaching project, etc.
- Encourage students to give quarterly reports of their participation in the community projects planned by the Local Spiritual Assembly.

## TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that obedience to the institutions of the Bahá’í Faith is an important aspect of the fulfillment of our part of the Lesser Covenant

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the strength and growth of the administrative order and our Bahá’í communities depend upon individual obedience to the institutions of the Faith

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive that in this Dispensation all individuals have the responsibility, through constant effort to live the life, to fulfill our part in the administrative order

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of creativity and the arts; Use of reflection

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 81, cut into team assignments
- Copies of Resource Page 82

**Advance Preparation:**

Consider copying the quotation in Step 2 on chart paper to display in the classroom.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share highlights of their experiences in supporting the administrative order since the last class. Acknowledge all.

2. Briefly discuss: Thinking about ourselves at home, at school, in sports, riding in cars, seeing our doctor, and so on, what are some important times that we CHOOSE to obey? Why do we make that choice?

Acknowledge all. Explain that in the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Bahá’u’lláh writes:

The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws. . . . It behooveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 1

Briefly discuss: Why is our first duty to recognize the Manifestation of God? Why is our

obedience so important? In what way are these duties inseparable? How is it that obedience to Bahá’u’lláh includes obedience to His Covenant? If a person has not yet recognized the Manifestation of God, or maybe has not even yet heard of the Blessed Beauty, Bahá’u’lláh, are that person’s responsibilities the same or different from someone who has already embraced the Message of Bahá’u’lláh? Why or why not?

Then briefly discuss: Shoghi Effendi says that it is “the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community.”<sup>1</sup> Why do we think this is true? Acknowledge all.

3. Organize students into teams of two or more. Provide each team with one of the descriptions—fabric, chain, or edifice—that describe the role of the individual in the administrative order of Bahá’u’lláh.
4. Circulate as teams work to provide encouragement or assistance as needed for the groups to complete the steps suggested on

<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 130

TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

Resource Page 81. Allow about 15 minutes for this group work.

5. Invite the teams to share their work and then to read aloud their quotation in the whole group. Applaud all!
6. Point out that these descriptions all come from the same letter written by Shoghi Effendi. Encourage students to listen carefully the following statements that follow those descriptions:

Without [the individual’s] support, at once whole-hearted, continuous and generous, every measure adopted, and every plan formulated . . . is foredoomed to failure.

Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 130

Briefly discuss: In what way can the plans of institutions be “foredoomed to failure” without the support of the individual? What might this support look like? How might this support demonstrate our firmness in the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh?

7. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 82. Invite capable readers to read this quotation aloud twice.

Briefly discuss: How can our inner character show our firmness in the Covenant? How can our outward behavior show our firmness in the Covenant? What is the relationship between our inner character and outward behavior?

8. Encourage students to silently read again the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on Resource Page 82. Provide time for individuals to: select one of the spiritual qualities such as sincerity, faithfulness, love, etc., as a focus for their own inner character for the coming week; think of ways to show this quality through their outward behavior; write their plans to attract others to the Cause of God through this quality. Teachers may also record their plans on Resource Page 82. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.
9. Invite students to select favorite prayers to conclude the activity. You may also choose to include the following activity in this same class.

ACTIVITY 2: THE FIRST CONDITION

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the strength and growth of the administrative order and our Bahá’í communities depend upon individual obedience to the institutions of the Faith

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 83, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Learn the melody “The First Condition” from the CD *King of Days*, to be able to teach the class. You may also hear the melody on the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

1. Invite the students to consider the question: How can we achieve and maintain unity among the Bahá’ís?
2. Listen to their responses; then read aloud the following guidance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

## GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE’S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT

# TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

---

The first condition is firmness in the Covenant of God. For the power of the Covenant will protect the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. . . . Therefore, in the beginning the believers must make their steps firm in the Covenant so that the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh may encircle them from all sides. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 51

3. Explain that we’re going to learn a melody to help us memorize this quotation. Use one of the methods taught in the Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshop 8, or another method of your choosing.
4. Encourage the students to sing this melody at an upcoming community event.

### ACTIVITY 3: THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER, OUR LIFELINE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that obedience to the Institutions of the Faith is an important aspect of the fulfillment of our part of the Lesser Covenant.

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the strength and growth of the administrative order and our Bahá’í communities depend upon individual obedience to the Institutions of the Faith.

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive that in this Dispensation all individuals have the responsibility, through constant effort to live the life, to fulfill our part in the administrative order

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of questioning; Use of reason

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

#### Materials Needed:

- Prayer book
- Large map of the world, if available
- Photograph or postcard of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, or a copy of Resource Page 84
- Photograph or postcard of your nearest Bahá’í House of Worship, or a copy of Resource Page 84
- Photograph or sketch of your Local Spiritual Assembly or a copy of Resource Page 84
- Copies of current Ridván letter, national plan, local plan or report, etc.
- 3 colors of ribbon, yarn, or paper, 100’ each
- Transparent tape and scissors

#### Advance Preparation:

Consider updating the information about the number of National Spiritual Assemblies in the world by checking online at <http://www.bahai.us/bahai-administration>, or in the most recent volume of the Bahá’í World.

Consider updating the information about the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in your country. In the United States, you may find this information online at <http://www.bahai.us/bahai-statistics>. This information may also be published in the Bahá’í World. Many statistics can also be found online at <http://www.bahai-library.com>.

You may find copies of the most recent Ridván letter of the Universal House of Justice online at <http://www.usbnc.org> under “Communications.” You may find copies of past Ridván letters at <http://www.bahai-library.com>.

In the United States, national plans and reports are available at <http://www.usbnc.org>. You may also be able to learn about your national and local plans from your Auxiliary Board Member or a member of your Local Spiritual Assembly.

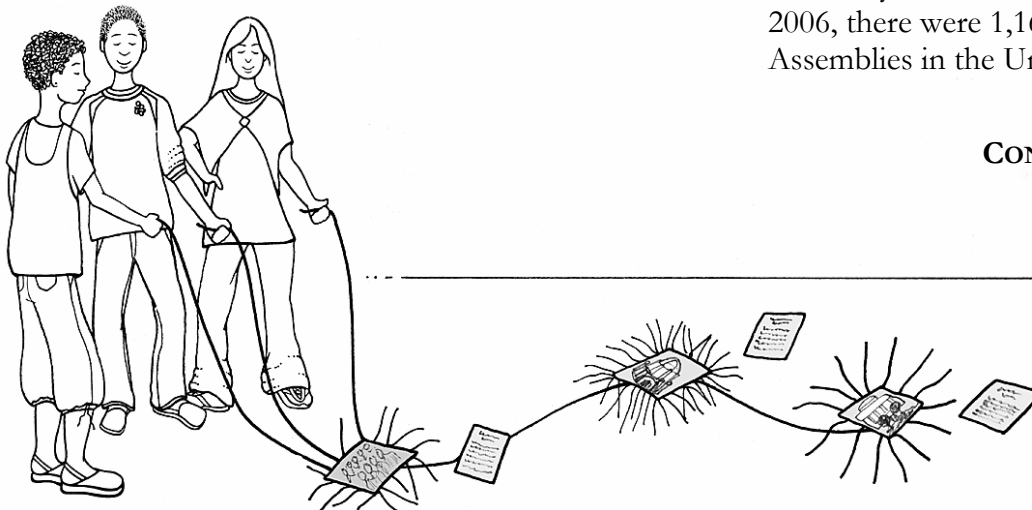
TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to show firmness in the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh by developing their inner character and outward behavior. Have they noticed divine assistance for their efforts? Have they noticed their friends becoming attracted to the Cause of God through their actions? Acknowledge all. Teachers may also share the results of their personal actions.
2. Spread a large map of the world on a table or the floor, if available. Invite students to gather around.
3. Bring out the photograph or postcard of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice. Ask students to identify this building. Invite a student to place it on the map, approximately at Israel. If working without a map, place it at the center of the work area. Invite another student to read aloud the following quotation:  

The channel of Divine guidance, providing flexibility in all the affairs of mankind, remains open through that institution which was founded by Bahá'u'lláh and endowed by Him with supreme authority and unfailing guidance.

*The Universal House of Justice, Wellsprings of Guidance, p. 13*
4. Remind students that the Universal House of Justice provides divine guidance for the entire world. It gives direction to all the National Spiritual Assemblies in the world. As of 2006, there were 182 National Spiritual Assemblies.
5. Involve students in taping short pieces of yarn or ribbon to the back of the Universal House of Justice picture, so that one end of each piece of yarn radiates out from the photograph. To cut many short pieces of yarn, students may wrap yarn many times around their hand and cut through the entire wrap. Ten or more short pieces of yarn may be taped with a single piece of tape to the back of the photograph. The number of ribbons does not need to be exact.
6. Encourage students to imagine that these short pieces of yarn connect the National Spiritual Assemblies in all countries on every continent, and on all islands in the oceans, to the Universal House of Justice.
7. Encourage students to connect one long length of yarn or ribbon from the photograph of the Universal House of Justice to the location of your nearest Bahá'í House of Worship. If you are not using a map, simply use a longer piece of yarn. In the United States the Mother Temple of the West is in Wilmette, near Chicago, Illinois. Tape the other end of this piece of yarn or ribbon to the back of the photograph of your nearest House of Worship. In the United States, the National Spiritual Assembly meets across the street from this beautiful House of Worship.
8. Invite students to guess the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies in your country, all under the jurisdiction of your National Spiritual Assembly. Confirm the current number. As of 2006, there were 1,163 Local Spiritual Assemblies in the United States.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤



**TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE**

---

9. Involve students in cutting this number of short pieces of yarn or ribbon in a second color. You may decide to have each piece represent 10 Spiritual Assemblies. Tape these pieces of yarn to the back of the House of Worship photograph so that ends radiate all around it.

10. Encourage students to imagine that these short pieces of yarn connect our National Spiritual Assembly to cities and towns throughout the country. All of these communities depend on guidance from our National Spiritual Assembly, and are connected through it to the guidance from the Universal House of Justice, the supreme institution of our Faith.

11. Encourage students to connect a longer piece of yarn from the photograph of the House of Worship to the approximate location of your own community (or at a distance of about 2 feet further, if not using a map).

Tape the other end of this yarn to the back of a photograph of the members of your Local Spiritual Assembly, or to the back of one of the illustrations to represent a Local Spiritual Assembly on Resource Page 84.

12. Call students' attention to the photograph of the seat of the Universal House of Justice. Place a copy of this year's Ridván letter near it. Explain that Ridván letters are one of the many important ways the Universal House of Justice guides humanity.

13. Place a copy of a letter from your National Spiritual Assembly near the photograph of the House of Worship. Explain that our National Spiritual Assembly provides guidance to all areas of the country. Imagine the power of unity spreading throughout the planet!

14. Call students attention to the photograph or drawing which represents the Local Spiritual Assembly. Place it near a copy of your community teaching plan, annual report, newsletter, or local flyer. Explain that each Local Spiritual Assembly guides the local community.

Briefly discuss: Who is responsible for supporting the local plan by teaching their friends, joining junior youth groups or study circles, holding devotional gatherings, teaching children's classes, contributing to the Fund, and reaching out in friendship to all people?

15. Bring out the third color of yarn or ribbon. Encourage students to cut enough short pieces for each member of the local community, including children, youth, and adults, including those who have declared themselves as Bahá'ís as well as seekers and like-minded groups, to tape to the back of the local picture. Encourage students to cut a long piece to reach from the picture to themselves.

Encourage students to hold their pieces of yarn or ribbon and to stand with you around the map or display area. Call attention to the strong unbroken connection that links each and all with the authoritative institutions of the Faith: the Local Spiritual Assembly, the National Spiritual Assembly, and the Universal House of Justice. The yarn represents the sacred Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh that will eventually embrace and protect every member of the human race.

Briefly discuss: How do all these connections help bind us all into a single family, infinitely diverse and wholly unified? What is our role in the Covenant? What happens if we drop our connection? How can we restore it and continually strengthen it? How can we share it with others?

16. Conclude the activity by inviting one or more students to read a prayer for your Local Spiritual Assembly. Invite students to consider saying this prayer each day between now and the next class, in addition to other actions they select as part of their daily deeds of constructive spiritual living.

ACTIVITY 4: PARTICIPATION IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that obedience to the institutions of the Faith is an important aspect of the fulfillment of our part of the Lesser Covenant

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that the strength and growth of the administrative order and our Bahá'í communities depend upon individual obedience to the institutions of the Faith

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive that in this Dispensation all individuals have the responsibility, through constant effort to live the life, to fulfill our part in the administrative order

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To articulate ways in which one is actively fulfilling one's part in the administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of peer teachings; Use of drama; Involve service

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 75 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 85–86
- Chart paper and markers, for student posters
- Copy of Resource Page 87, cut into individual scenarios

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share acts of service they've noticed in the people around them—without mentioning names. Invite them also to share their reflections on their own life of service. Acknowledge all.

2. Read aloud the following quotations:

Once a Bahá'í has the profound conviction of the authority from God, vested in the Prophet, passed on the Master, and by Him, to the Guardians, and which flows out through the Assemblies and creates order based on obedience—once a Bahá'í has this, nothing can shake him.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 188

His brotherly advice to you, and to all loyal and ardent young believers like you, is that you should deepen your knowledge of the history and of the tenets of the Faith, not merely by means of careful and thorough study, but also through active, whole-hearted and continued participation in all the activities, whether administrative or otherwise, of your community. The Bahá'í community life provides you with an indispensable laboratory, where you can translate into living and constructive action the principles which you imbibe from the Teachings. By becoming a real part of that living organism you can catch the real spirit which runs throughout the Bahá'í Teachings. To study the principles, and to try to live according to them, are, therefore, the two essential mediums through which you can ensure the development and progress of your inner spiritual life and of your outer existence as well. May Bahá'u'lláh enable you to attain this high station, and may He keep the torch of faith for ever burning in your heart!"

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi,  
*The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 424–25

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤

**TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE**

---

Briefly discuss: In what way is the Bahá’í community like a laboratory in which we can translate our study of the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh into action? How do these efforts help us fulfill our part of the Covenant?

3. Organize students into 2 teams. Provide each team with copies of one of the following Resource Pages:
  - Individuals and the Assembly.
  - Children and Junior Youth in the Cause of God.
4. Encourage each team to carefully study their Resource Page. Suggest that they mark important points as they read. Encourage teams to write or draw key points on a piece of chart paper. Circulate among teams to answer questions, provide encouragement, and offer assistance as needed.
5. Encourage teams to present their key points in the whole group. Invite students to ask questions about the other team’s presentation as desired. Applaud all!
6. Reorganize students into new groups so that each new group has at least one member of each of the two previous teams.
7. Invite each new group to draw one of the role-playing scenarios on Resource Page 87. In these new groups, encourage students to:
  - Read aloud the situation.
  - Take turns sharing quotations studied in their previous teams that might apply to this situation.
  - Consult together as a group and decide how individuals could apply a truly Bahá’í spirit in this situation.
8. Circulate among students as they work. After each group has completed the 3 actions described in Step 7, encourage them to create a brief role-play to demonstrate how they could apply a truly Bahá’í spirit in this situation.
9. In the whole group, invite these small groups to first read aloud the situation and then present their role-play to demonstrate how they can apply a truly Bahá’í spirit to this situation. Invite discussion of the situations and their solutions as desired. Applaud all!
10. In the whole group, brainstorm ways that students—both individually and as a class—could serve the plans of their Local Spiritual Assembly or cluster. Consider such actions as inviting friends to Bahá’í class, participating in another junior youth group, hosting a devotional meeting for their friends, reaching out to make friendships across social barriers, and other possibilities. List these ideas on chart paper.
11. Invite students to individually select one of the actions to complete. If desired, select an additional service as a class. Encourage students to share their plans with the Local Spiritual Assembly or other institution during consultation at the Nineteen Day Feast, in a letter, or by other means. Decide how, when, and where to share this information. Remember to follow-up as needed to assure completion of this step.
12. Conclude the activity by inviting students to say favorite prayers, including prayers for firmness in the Covenant.



**GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT**  
**TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE**

---

**Resource Pages**

**Activity 1: The Importance of the Individual in the Administrative Order**

---

**Team: Fabric**

It is “the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. He it is who constitutes the warp and woof on which the quality and pattern of the whole fabric must depend.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 130

1. Read aloud this quotation 3 times.
2. Discuss: What exactly is Shoghi Effendi telling us?
3. Think of examples that illustrate the truth of this statement.
4. Use drama, visual art, music, rap, storytelling, or another art to teach the rest of the class about this important truth.

Warp—The threads that run lengthwise in a woven fabric, crossed at right angles to the woof.\*

Woof—The threads that run crosswise in a woven fabric, at right angles to the warp threads.\*

---

**Team: Chain**

It is “the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. . . . He it is who acts as one of the countless links in the mighty chain that now girdles the globe.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 130

1. Read aloud this quotation 3 times.
2. Discuss: What exactly is Shoghi Effendi telling us?
3. Think of examples that illustrate the truth of this statement.
4. Use drama, visual art, music, rap, storytelling, or another art to teach the rest of the class about this important truth.

**Team: Edifice**

It is “the individual believer on whom, in the last resort, depends the fate of the entire community. . . . He it is who serves as one of the multitude of bricks which support the structure and insure the stability of the administrative edifice now being raised in every part of the world.”

Shoghi Effendi, *Citadel of Faith*, p. 130

1. Read aloud this quotation 3 times.
2. Discuss: What exactly is Shoghi Effendi telling us?
3. Think of examples that illustrate the truth of this statement.
4. Use drama, visual art, music, rap, storytelling, or another art to teach the rest of the class about this important truth.

Edifice—1) A building, especially one of imposing appearance or size. 2) An elaborate conceptual structure.\*

\*The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004.



# The First Condition

Words: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, pp. 51–52

Music: Barb Shanks

Chorus

Voice

“The first con - di - tion is firm - ness in the Cov - en - ant of

God. For the pow - er of the Cov - en - ant will pro - tect the Cause of Ba -

há - 'u - 'lláh...”

Verse

“There - fore, in the be - gin - ning [one] must

make [his] steps firm in the Cov - en - ant so that the con - fir - ma - tions of Ba -

há - 'u - 'lláh may en - cir - cle . . . from all sides”

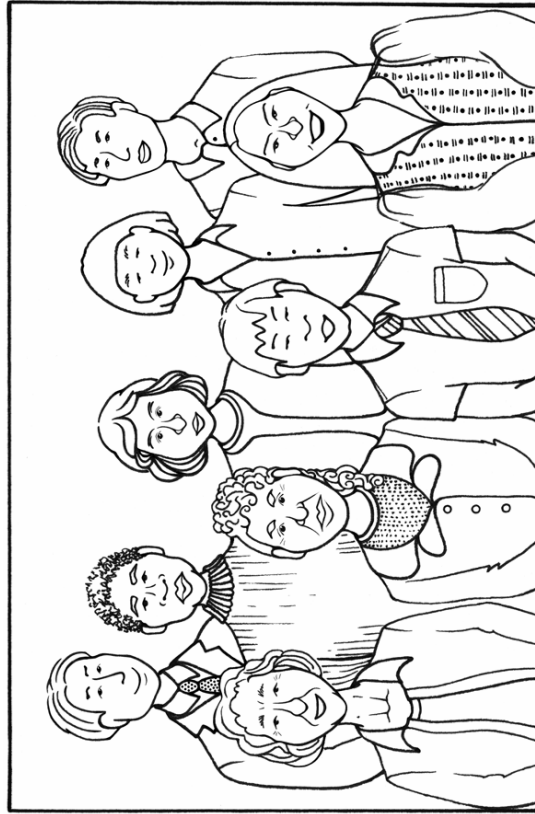
“The

The musical score is written in 3/4 time and consists of five staves of music. The first staff is the vocal line, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lyrics are: "The first con - di - tion is firm - ness in the Cov - en - ant of". Above the staff are chord markings: C, G, C, F. A double bar line with repeat dots is placed after the first measure. The second staff continues the vocal line with lyrics: "God. For the pow - er of the Cov - en - ant will pro - tect the Cause of Ba -". Chord markings above are C, G, C, F, C. The third staff begins with a double bar line and the word "Verse" above it. The lyrics are: "há - 'u - 'lláh...” "There - fore, in the be - gin - ning [one] must". Chord markings above are G, C, C. The fourth staff continues the vocal line with lyrics: "make [his] steps firm in the Cov - en - ant so that the con - fir - ma - tions of Ba -". Chord markings above are Am, C. The fifth staff continues the vocal line with lyrics: "há - 'u - 'lláh may en - cir - cle . . . from all sides” "The". Chord markings above are F, C, G7, C. The score ends with a double bar line.

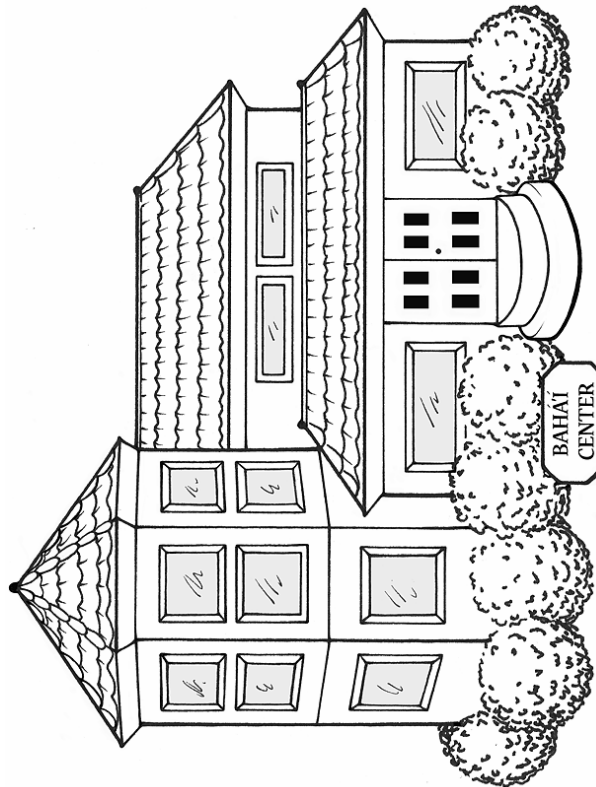
Verse 2: “O ye apostles of Bahá’u’lláh,—May my life be a ransom to you!  
 . . . strive ye with heart and soul. . . that ye may. . . be established on the throne of. . . glory.”

TOPIC: PARTICIPATION AND OBEDIENCE

Activity 3: The Administrative Order, Our Lifeline



Source: media.bahai.org. Reprinted with permission of the Bahá'í International Community.



#### Activity 4: Participation in the Administrative Order

##### Individuals and the Assembly

. . . Every one should conscientiously take an active part in the election of these Assemblies, abide by their decisions, enforce their decree, and cooperate with them wholeheartedly in their task of stimulating the growth of the Movement throughout all regions.

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

The Guardian believes that a great deal of the difficulties from which the believers . . . feel themselves to be suffering are caused by their neither correctly understanding nor putting into practice the administration. They seem—many of them—to be prone to continually challenging and criticizing the decisions of their assemblies. If the Bahá'ís undermine the very leaders who are, however immaturely, seeking to coordinate Bahá'í activities and administer Bahá'í affairs, if they continually criticize their acts and challenge or belittle their decisions, they not only prevent any real rapid progress in the Faith's development from taking place, but they repel outsiders who quite rightly may ask how we ever expect to unite the whole world when we are so disunited among ourselves! There is only one remedy for this: to study the administration, to obey the assemblies, and each believer seek to perfect his own character as a Bahá'í. We can never exert the influence over others which we can exert over ourselves. If we are better, if we show love, patience, and understanding of the weaknesses of others, if we seek to never criticize but rather encourage, others will do like-wise, and we can really help the Cause through our example and spiritual strength.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *The National Spiritual Assembly*, pp. 34–35

The authority to direct the affairs of the Faith locally, nationally and internationally, is divinely conferred on elected institutions. However, the power to accomplish the tasks of the community resides primarily in the mass of the believers. The authority of the institutions is an irrevocable necessity for the progress of humanity; its exercise is an art to be mastered. The power of action in the believers is unlocked at the level of individual initiative and surges at the level of collective volition. . . . To realize its highest purpose, this power needs to express itself through orderly avenues of activity.

Letter from the Universal House of Justice to a National Spiritual Assembly, 19 May 1994

You had asked whether the believers have the right to openly express their criticism of any Assembly action or policy; it is not only the right, but the vital responsibility of every loyal and intelligent member of the Community to offer fully and frankly, but with due respect and consideration to the authority of the Assembly, any suggestion, recommendation or criticism he conscientiously feels he should in order to improve and remedy certain existing conditions or trends in his local community, and it is the duty of the Assembly also to give careful consideration to any such views submitted to them by any one of the believers. The best occasion chosen for this purpose is the Nineteen Day Feast. . . .

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *Bahá'í Meetings/The Nineteen Day Feast*, pp. 27–28

Activity 4: Participation in the Administrative Order

Children and Junior Youth in the Cause of God

Yea, certain persons shall in this divine dispensation produce heavenly children and such children shall promulgate the teachings of the Beauty of Abhá and serve His great Cause. Through a heavenly power and spiritual confirmation they shall be enabled to promote the word of God and to diffuse the fragrances of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas*, vol. 3, pp. 647–48

Just because you are children does not mean you cannot serve the Faith, and teach it, by your example. . . .

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Education*, p. 71

Our Faith is just as much for children as for older people, and it rejoices his heart when he sees both working together to bring this great Message of good to all mankind.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Family Life*, (India) p. 42, (Canada) p. 23

Any Bahá'í can give to the Cause's Funds, adult or child. No statement is required on this subject; Bahá'í children have always given to the Cause, everywhere. Whatever situation may arise in a class which non-Bahá'í children attend is for the teacher of the class to solve. No ruling should be made to cover such things.

Shoghi Effendi, *Funds Compilation* (Canada), p. 16

. . . The House of Justice has instructed us to say that children should be trained to understand the spiritual significance of the gatherings of the followers of the Blessed Beauty, and to appreciate the honor and bounty of being able to take part in them, whatever their outward form may be.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, *Stirring of the Spirit: Nineteen Day Feast*, no. 63, p. 29

Activity 4: Participation in the Administrative Order

ROLE-PLAYING SCENARIOS

You heard at the Nineteen Day Feast that a social and economic development project involving after-school tutoring may have to close down, as the family which has been the main supporters are moving out of the area soon. You'd like to help this project continue.



Your Local Spiritual Assembly has been asked to host the Unit Convention. There was a plea in the community newsletter for assistance with refreshments, childcare, and greeting the friends on arrival. You and your friends think you'd like to get involved.



You made a recommendation at the last Nineteen Day Feast that there be a teaching project at the city park, and you learn at this Feast that the Local Spiritual Assembly decided not to implement your idea because the Assembly was concerned that it would not be a dignified presentation of the Faith. What do you do?



Weekly devotional meetings have been regularly hosted at another Bahá'í home, but that family is expecting a baby soon. You know that having devotional gatherings is an important part of the current plan, and you have enjoyed attending them. How can you help?



**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

---

**Stories, Books, and Articles:**

*The Covenant for Young People*, Enoch Tanyi

*The Essence of the Covenant*, Shahin Vafai

*The Eternal Covenant*, Lowell Johnson, pp. 102–32

*In Search of Certitude: Deepening Our Understanding, Strengthening Our Faith*, Extracts from the Bahá’í Writings, Nine Pines Publishing

*The Power of the Covenant*, Part One, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, pp. 19–22

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“The Arc on Mt. Carmel,” Sp Ed 1992

“The Rulers and the Learned,” Sp Ed 1997

“Let’s Go! Four Year Plan!” Sp Ed 1997

“The Armor of His Laws,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Maze-Craze,” Nov/Dec 1998

“Lifeboat,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Make Thy Protection My Armor,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Might Covenant Training Camp,” Sp Ed 1998

“Help the Institutions Grow!” Jan/Feb 1998

“Union and Harmony Balance Game,” Sp Ed 1997

“New World Construction Teams,” Sp Ed 1997

“Consultation Helpers,” Sp Ed 1997

“The Institutions and Me,” Sp Ed 1997

“Pattern of Growth,” Sp Ed 1997

“Protect Me!” Sp Ed 1997

“Promise Practice,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Search for the Covenant,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Cave of the Covenant,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Seeking Firmness,” Sep/Oct 2003

“Fruits of One Tree,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“The Invitation,” Sp Ed 1997

**Drama:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Plans in the Cause of God,” Sp Ed 1997

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

“Light the Candle” Jul/Aug 92

“It’s Up to Me!” Sp Ed 98

*Stand Up For Love*, “Your New Family”

**Other Favorite Resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Bahá’í Education Task Force, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).



# TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE'S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT COVENANT-BREAKERS

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
HONESTY, STEADFASTNESS, LOVE**

... In the beginning the believers must make their steps firm in the Covenant so that the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh may encircle them from all sides, the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse may become their supporters and helpers, and the exhortations and advices of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, like unto the pictures engraved on stone, may remain permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of all hearts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 52

He feels that in your contact with the believers and in teaching new souls, you should help them to obtain a full knowledge and understanding of the Covenant and the Will and Testament. This will strengthen them to meet every test, and to understand the nature of the spiritual disease which afflicts those who turn against the Institutions of the Faith. These are, indeed, times of testing and of trial, for the whole world and for the believers too.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 226

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know that every period of Bahá'í history has been disturbed by individuals who have chosen to disobey the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh, and have actively tried to cause disunity and division in the Bahá'í community
- To know the circumstances surrounding the major incidents of Covenant-breaking, and the consequences in the lives of the Covenant-breakers of their actions

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read from the Bahá'í writings about Covenant-breaking.
- Consult about the definition of a Covenant-breaker.
- Recount stories from the history of the Faith about those who chose to disobey the Covenant.
- Discuss what happened as a result of the disobedience of the Covenant-breakers.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the significance of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the strongest protection for the Bahá'í community from any injury and disunity caused by the activity of Covenant-breakers
- To understand that Covenant-breaking is the dark shadow that is cast by God's bright light

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Recite and memorize quotations from the Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh and have discuss how these words can shield the individuals and communities.
- Research quotations from the Bahá'í writings to understand ways that we should and should not address situations involving Covenant-breakers.
- Read or recite prayers for firmness in the Covenant.
- Provide opportunities for students think about and identify the many opportunities that the Head of the Faith provided for Covenant-breakers to correct their actions and remain firm in the Covenant.
- Discuss the dangers of vain imaginings and how they can separate us from the Covenant.

## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To realize that one's services and activities in the Faith must be undertaken out of love for Bahá'u'lláh and a desire to serve His Cause, rather than for the satisfaction of one's ego
- To recognize that Covenant-breaking, like all shadows, is without substance or power

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Role-play situations in daily life in which an individual's ego creates challenges, and how it is resolved.
- Memorize quotes from the Bahá'í writings about humility.
- Encourage students to memorize and regularly recite the short obligatory prayer.
- Use analogies to perceive the power of the Covenant and identify ways to serve this Covenant out of love for Bahá'u'lláh.

## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to articulate the meaning of fidelity, steadfastness, and firmness in the Covenant
- To be able to define and explain what it means to break the Covenant
- To be able to recount examples of Covenant-breaking from the history of the Faith
- To be able to explain how Covenant-breaking affects both the Bahá'í community and the lives of the Covenant-breakers

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share with a partner a story from Bahá'í history involving Covenant-breakers and how this Covenant-breaking could have been prevented.
- Encourage students to develop the daily habit of praying and reading the Bahá'í writings in the morning and evening, and reciting one of the three obligatory prayers.
- Invite students to develop a personal plan of selfless service to others and to establish a pattern of bringing themselves to account regularly to measure their progress towards achieving this plan.

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: THE NATURE OF COVENANT-BREAKING

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to define and explain what it means to break the Covenant

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of reflection; Use of consultation; Use of reasoning; Use of memorization; Use of the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

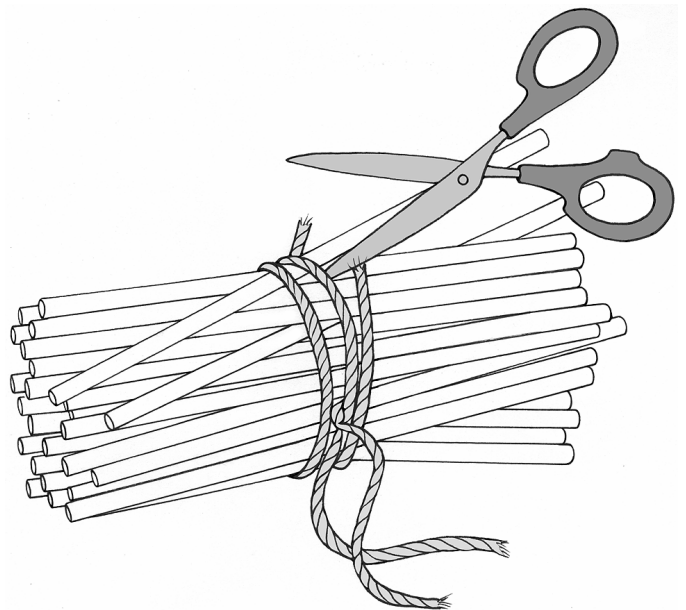
**Materials Needed:**

- Pick-up sticks, 50 drinking straws, or other straw
- Thick yarn and scissors
- Copies of Resource Pages 105–107
- Soft instrumental music
- Clean paper and art materials, as desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Gather materials for stick or straw demonstration and carefully review steps, practicing as needed.

1. Welcome students warmly and invite them to say their favorite prayers.
2. Encourage students to close their eyes to be able to use their mind’s eye more clearly. Encourage them to silently think back over the day’s events as if creating a “video” of their day so far. Invite them to put this video in the video player in their minds and push the “play” button. Encourage them to “fast-forward” through scenes they’d rather skip; “rewind” if they’d like to see a particular scene a second time; and “pause” to take a closer look at important moments when they seem to feel happier, more focused, and more in tune with their purpose. Encourage them to remember these scenes on which they pause.
3. When students finish reviewing the video of the day, invite students to mentally enlarge one of the pictures on which they paused. Encourage them to describe the scene in the whole group: What were they doing? Who else was there? What sights and sounds make this scene important? If this picture were printed and framed, where would they hang it? Acknowledge all. Teachers may wish to share first to provide a model of meaningful brief descriptions.
4. Remind students that our reality as human beings is essentially spiritual and that these thoughts, feelings, and memories are very real parts of who we are. Briefly discuss: How can focusing our attention on the times that our actions align with our true purpose help us develop spiritually? And if we make a choice to do something that we later regret, how can our powers of memory, insight, and volition help protect us from making that same mistake in the future?



5. Suggest that these powers help us as we explore ways to fulfill our purpose as lovers of God and servants of humanity. Briefly review: What is the prime and pivotal principle of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh? Acknowledge all. Affirm that the pivot of all Bahá'u'lláh's teachings is the oneness of humanity.
6. Display a bundle pick-up sticks or drinking straws, tightly bound with thick yarn. Briefly discuss: If these sticks (or straws) represent humanity, what is the yarn? Acknowledge all comments; then affirm that the yarn can represent the Covenant, which unites us.
7. Read aloud the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As you read the words, "in one day," cut the yarn with scissors, allowing the sticks to fall and scatter on the floor.

Were it not for the protecting power of the Covenant to guard the impregnable fort of the Cause of God, there would arise among the Bahá'ís, in one day, a thousand different sects as was the case in former ages.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 128

8. Then read aloud these words of the Universal House of Justice

The seriousness of Covenant-breaking is that it strikes at the very centre and foundation of the unity of mankind. If God were to allow the instrument to be divided and impaired, how then would His purpose be achieved?

The Universal House of Justice, from a letter to an individual, 23 March 1975, in *Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities: Guidelines for Local Spiritual Assemblies*, p. 5.14

9. Assure students that God will not allow this to happen, as Bahá'u'lláh proclaims:

The Hand of Omnipotence hath established His revelation upon an unassailable, an enduring foundation. Storms of human strife are powerless to undermine its basis, nor will men's fanciful theories succeed in damaging its structure.

Bahá'u'lláh, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 109

10. Remind students that humanity has reached a new stage of development. Each Messenger of God has brought a central Message. The Message for this Day is the message of unity. Briefly discuss: Why do we think the Covenant is so much stronger in this age?
11. Explain that individuals have tried to undermine the Head of the Faith—Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the Universal House of Justice—but the Faith itself has been undivided. 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains:

One of the enemies of the Cause is he who endeavors to interpret the Words of Bahá'u'lláh and thereby colors the meaning according to his capacity, and collects around him a following, forming a different sect, promoting his own station, and making a division in the Cause.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 130

The Universal House of Justice clarifies:

When a person declares his acceptance of Bahá'u'lláh as a Manifestation of God he becomes a party to the Covenant and accepts the totality of His Revelation. If he then turns around and attacks Bahá'u'lláh or the Central Institution of the Faith he violates the Covenant.

The Universal House of Justice, from a letter to an individual, 23 March 1975

12. Distribute copies of Resource Page 105. Encourage students to work in teams of 2 to mark the statements True or False. After allowing time for student work, distribute copies of Resource Page 106. In the whole group, read aloud the first statement on Resource Page 105; then read aloud the answer and explanation on Resource Page 106, continuing with each true or false statement. Discuss each statement and explanation further, as desired.

## GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE’S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT

### TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

13. Briefly discuss: What additional questions do we have about Covenant-breaking? List these questions on chart paper. Save this list for future reference. Assure students that they will have opportunities to explore these questions in a future class.
14. Distribute copies of Resource Page 107. Invite capable readers to read these quotations aloud in the whole group. Encourage the class to read along and listen for quotations that might answer the questions they listed above. Discuss questions and answers as desired.
15. Invite students to select a favorite quotation from Resource Page 107 and tell at least one other person why they made their selection.
16. Encourage students to copy this quotation onto clean paper in their best handwriting as the first step toward memorizing the quotation.
17. Encourage students to work in small teams to memorize their selected quotations. As time permits, invite students to create a decorative border for the quotation, perhaps representing some of the visual images suggested by that quotation.
18. Encourage students to share their selected quotation with at least one other person before the next class, explain why they selected that quotation, and practice reciting it each day.
19. Invite students to continue using their imaginary video cameras, as desired, as they strive to fulfill the obligation of calling ourselves to account regarding our own behavior each day. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

### ACTIVITY 2: THE LIGHT OF THE COVENANT

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that every period of Bahá’í history has been disturbed by individuals who have chosen to disobey the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, and have actively tried to cause disunity and division in the Bahá’í community

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that Covenant-breaking is the dark shadow that is cast by God’s bright light

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To recognize that Covenant-breaking, like all shadows, is without substance or power

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To explore the contrast of light and shadow, identifying the source of power

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of stories; Use of science; Use of independent investigation; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

#### Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Pages 108–110 for the class
  - Pencils
  - Strong flashlight or other light source
  - Dark colored construction paper
  - Small objects such as leaves, seashells, keys, etc.
  - Reference books, if available: *God Passes By*; *Bahá’u’lláh: The King of Glory*; *A Basic Bahá’í Chronology*; *A Basic Bahá’í Dictionary*
  - An English dictionary
1. Welcome the class warmly. Begin class with favorite prayers. Consider including prayers for the triumph of the Cause of God as part of your opening devotions.
  2. Invite students to recite memorized quotations, as desired, and to share their observations on their process of calling themselves to account. Did any of them enjoy using their imaginary video cameras for this purpose?

3. Invite the class to review some fundamental concepts by briefly discussing: Based on everything we know, what is the Covenant of God and what is our part in this Covenant? What is our responsibility in the Lesser Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh? Why might some individuals choose to break the Covenant?
4. Continue the discussion by asking if anyone knows the name of Bahá'u'lláh's half-brother who was the arch-breaker of the Covenant of the Báb. Briefly discuss: Did he succeed in dividing the Cause of God? Was he able to stop Bahá'u'lláh from giving us His Message from God?
5. If available, invite students to look up the entry for Mírzá Yahyá in *A Basic Bahá'í Dictionary* and read the entry aloud. If the Bahá'í dictionary is not available, explain the Mírzá Yahyá was a younger half-brother who turned against Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Yahyá claimed to be a successor to the Báb and broke the Báb's Covenant by refusing to accept Bahá'u'lláh. He and a handful of Bábís caused no end of trouble for Bahá'u'lláh. Mírzá Yahyá was eventually exiled to Cypress, where he died in 1912. Point out that Mírzá Yahyá's actions were shadowy and that his only source of power was Bahá'u'lláh.
6. Provide students with a strong flashlight or refer to a sunny window, lamp, or other light source. Encourage them to experiment with casting shadows from the light while briefly discussing: What do we know about the science of light and shadow? What are shadows? Why do they exist? What happens to a shadow as the light gets brighter? Are shadows matter, energy, or something else? Acknowledge student responses, and then affirm that shadows are neither matter nor energy; they are the absence of light energy. The brighter the light, the darker the shadow.
7. Distribute copies of Resource Page 108, *Light and Shadow*. Invite volunteers to take turns reading aloud the actions of Bahá'u'lláh and Mírzá Yahyá.  
  
Briefly discuss: What sorts of things did Bahá'u'lláh do? What sorts of things did Mírzá Yahyá do? What do we notice about the contrast of action between Bahá'u'lláh and Mírzá Yahyá? Listen carefully to student responses. Point out that none of Mírzá Yahyá's shadowy actions would have had any meaning at all without the power of Bahá'u'lláh's light.
8. Distribute Resource Pages 109 and 110. Encourage students to fill in the blanks on the *Shadowy Word List* to create the words for the *Shadowy Word Search*. Once students complete the word search, encourage them to shade over all the shadowy words to reveal the real source of power.
9. Distribute construction paper to the class. Invite students to create a sun print:
  - Place the construction paper near a sunny window.
  - Place an object with an interesting shape (i.e., sea shell, key, leaf) on the paper.
  - Leave the paper and object without moving for several days. If space permits, these sun prints may be left in the classroom until the next class. If not, students may take them home to place in an undisturbed location.
  - After several days at home or at the next class, remove the object to reveal an image. Bring sun prints made at home to the next class.
  - Think about whether the image was created by the object or the sun.
10. As time permits, refer students to the reference books provided. Encourage them to use these books or the internet (if available) to research the actions outlined on Resource Page 108 in more depth.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤**

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

11. Refer to the list of questions about Covenant-breaking created in the previous activity. Did any of these questions get answered today? As time permits, invite students to add questions to their list, if desired.
12. Encourage students to weigh their own actions each day in the light of the Sun of Truth. Encourage them to notice actions in others that also reflect the light. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

### ACTIVITY 3: THE FOUL SMELL AND THE FRAGRANCE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the circumstances surrounding the major incidents of Covenant-breaking, and the consequences in the lives of the Covenant-breakers of their actions

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the significance of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the strongest protection for the Bahá'í community from any injury and disunity caused by the activity of Covenant-breakers

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES:** To be able to recount examples of Covenant-breaking from the history of the Faith; To be able to articulate the meaning of fidelity, steadfastness, and firmness in the Covenant

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 111 and 112
- Two identical clear glasses: one containing water, one containing white vinegar
- Scarf or bandana for a blindfold
- A glass containing approximately 4 ounces of milk
- Attar of roses or rose water and cotton balls
- Snack-sized zip-up plastic bags

1. Welcome students warmly and open with the following prayer:

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! Rain down, I beseech Thee, from the clouds of Thine overflowing grace, that which shall cleanse the hearts of Thy servants from whatever may prevent their beholding Thy face, or may prevent them from turning unto Thee, that they may all recognize Him Who is their Fashioner and Creator. Help them, then, O God, to reach forth, through the power of Thy sovereign might, towards such a station that they can readily distinguish every foul smell from the fragrance of the raiment of Him Who is the Bearer of Thy most lofty and exalted name, that they may turn with all their affections toward Thee. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh, *Prayers and Meditations*, XCV, p. 159

2. Invite students to show the class any sun prints that they have created. Briefly discuss: What power actually creates the prints? Acknowledge student responses. Affirm that the image of the shadow only exists through the brightness of the sun, just as Covenant-breakers only exist in contrast to the light of the Covenant. Display sun prints in the classroom.
3. Ask the class whether Covenant-breaking ended with the passing of Bahá'u'lláh. Explain that, unfortunately, an increase in Covenant-breaking activity followed. Invite the class to learn about these severe challenges to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Distribute copies of Resource Page 111.



Invite a volunteer to record main points identified by the class on chart paper while teachers or student volunteers read each paragraph aloud. Pause after each paragraph for students to discuss its meaning and summarize it into one or two short statements. Separate the long fourth paragraph into manageable parts to read and summarize with bulleted items.

4. Briefly discuss: How do we imagine that these activities must have affected ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and those who were close to Him? How could it be possible for people to follow Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí?

Point out that our powers of perception are not perfect. Invite the class to experiment.

5. Present the two identical glasses to the class. Ask volunteers to identify the contents by smell. They will be able to recognize both the water and vinegar. Ask for a volunteer who does not mind being blindfolded. Once blindfolded, invite this student to identify first the water, then the vinegar. Ask the student to indicate when you have switched back to the water. Move the glasses around a little, but keep the vinegar glass under the student’s nose. Within a short time the student will believe that you have switched back to the water.
6. Any students who have been close and smelling the vinegar might be fooled, even without a blindfold. Ask the class what happened. (Once we have been exposed to an odor for some time, we lose perspective in our sense of smell.) Once the volunteer has incorrectly identified the vinegar as water, encourage that person to remove the blindfold and pour half the milk into the glass of vinegar and the other half into the glass of water. Briefly discuss: What happened? How were we fooled into thinking the vinegar was water? What does the acid—vinegar—do to milk? What does acid do to other things? How is Covenant-breaking like an acid? How should we respond to Covenant-breaking? Why?

7. Read aloud the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from His Will and Testament:

And now, one of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 20

8. Dispose of the vinegar and open the container of rose scent. Play beautiful background music and distribute copies of Resource Page 112. Offer to put rose scent on the hands of any students who wish to have it, while students take turns reading *Fragrances*.
9. Briefly discuss: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encourages all of us to “diffuse the divine fragrances.”<sup>1</sup> What do we think He means? What might it look like for us to “diffuse the divine fragrances?” What words, actions, and attitudes might help? Record student ideas on chart paper.
10. Present students with gift bags of rose-scented cotton balls. Invite them to offer their friends the gift of rose fragrance and a verse from the *Fragrance* page. Encourage them also to complete one or more additional actions that they select from their list of ideas.
11. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 140

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

### ACTIVITY 4: EXAMPLES OF COVENANT-BREAKING IN BAHÁ’Í HISTORY

- KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the circumstances surrounding the major incidents of Covenant-breaking, and the consequences in the lives of the Covenant-breakers of their actions
- WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the significance of the writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as the strongest protection for the Bahá’í community from any injury and disunity caused by the activity of Covenant-breakers
- SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To realize that one’s services and activities in the Faith must be undertaken out of love for Bahá’u’lláh and a desire to serve His Cause, rather than for the satisfaction of one’s ego
- ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES:** To be able to articulate the meaning of fidelity, steadfastness, and firmness in the Covenant; To be able to recount examples of Covenant-breaking from the history of the Faith
- INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of stories; Use of peer teaching; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

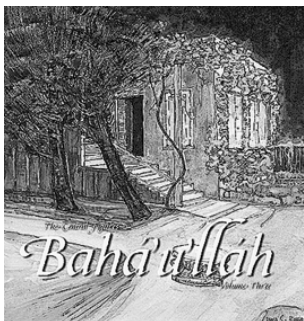
**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 113–16
- Chart paper and markers
- Copies of Bahá’í Prayers
- Copies of the Core Curriculum storybook *Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 3, if available

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their actions to diffuse the divine fragrances over the past week. Acknowledge all.
2. Read aloud the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Verily, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inhalet the fragrance of the love of God from every meeting place where the Word of God is uttered, and proofs and arguments set forth that shed their rays across the world, and where they recount the tribulations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the evil hands of those who have violated the Covenant of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 92



3. Organize students into small study groups. Provide each team with copies of one of the stories on Resource Pages 113–16 or with access to the Core Curriculum storybook *Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 3, for the following stories:
  - “Out of Constantinople,” pp. 41–43.
  - “In the House of God’s Command,” pp. 44–49.
  - “Accepting the Challenge,” pp. 51–54.
4. Explain that these stories are examples of the sorts of actions that the same people did again and again, causing great suffering to Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi.
5. Encourage students to:
  - Read their story aloud and underline key points as they read.
  - Look for answers to the questions: Where is the light of truth? What shadowy actions are shown? Why do we think these people made these choices? What other choices could they have made?

- Write or draw these key points on chart paper.
- Prepare to retell the story in the whole group.

6. Invite teams to share their stories in the whole group. Acknowledge all. Explain that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá described Covenant-breakers as:

. . . souls that are deprived of the Spirit of God and are lost in passion and self and are seeking leadership.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, no. 185, p. 210

7. Briefly discuss: What spiritual qualities are needed to remain firm in the Covenant? Record student ideas on chart paper. Explain that that when we truly recognize the Manifestation of God, these qualities—especially the quality of humility—grow in us. Share the following example:

There is a beautiful Persian story in verse which elucidates this point quite vividly. It concerns a drop of rain falling down from the clouds. The drop knew itself to be the water of life, the most precious element that God had created, and so it was proud of itself. Boasting all the way down it suddenly saw that it was falling into an ocean beneath. Suddenly it recognized its own insignificance and exclaimed: ‘If this exists then what am I?’ When the ocean heard this expression of humility it attracted the drop to itself and, as a reward, made it a companion of the pearl.

Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 263

8. Explain that our obligatory prayers help us remember our own reality in relationship to our Creator. Invite a volunteer to recite the short obligatory prayer or you may recite the following words of this prayer:

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Bahá’í Prayers*, 1991 U.S. edition, p. 4

Briefly discuss: How does this prayer help us remember who we are, and who God is? What are some practical ways that we can remember to say this prayer each day between noon and sunset—or the medium or long obligatory prayer according to the instructions for those prayers?

9. Refer to the list of questions students created about Covenant-breaking in Activity 1 for this topic. Check the questions that have been answered. Invite students to add questions to this list if they like. Remind students that they will have the opportunity to further explore these questions in the next class.
10. Encourage students to redouble their efforts to say one of the obligatory prayers each day. Encourage students to continue finding ways to share the divine fragrances of God’s message for today. Encourage them to look for signs of light in the people around them.
11. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

### ACTIVITY 5: COVENANT DILEMMAS

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the significance of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá as the strongest protection for the Bahá'í community from any injury and disunity caused by the activity of Covenant-breakers

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To realize that one's services and activities in the Faith must be undertaken out of love for Bahá'u'lláh and a desire to serve His Cause, rather than for the satisfaction of one's ego

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to define and explain what it means to break the Covenant

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 117–118 for each student
- Reference copies of Resource Pages 106–108, 112
- Reference copies of *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Lights of Guidance*, or other sources, if available
- Journals or writing paper; pencils or pens

**Advance Preparation:**

Post the following questions where students can see them:

- Where is the light in the story?
- How did each person feel?
- Why did people choose the actions that they took?
- What might have been better choices of action?
- Was anyone a Covenant-breaker?
- How can you resolve this situation with light?

Refer to the list of questions generated by students in Activity 1 and subsequent activities for this topic. Consider the Bahá'í writings available to you in books and on the internet. Are you able to refer students to quotations that will help them answer their questions? If not, consider requesting help from your Auxiliary Board Member or the Bahá'í National Center to be able to respond to these questions.

1. Welcome the class warmly. Consider including the following prayer as part of your opening devotions:

O my Lord and my Hope! Help Thou Thy loved ones to be steadfast in Thy mighty Covenant, to remain faithful to Thy manifest Cause, and to carry out the commandments Thou didst set down for them in Thy Book of Splendors; that they may become banners of guidance and lamps of the Company above, wellsprings of Thine infinite wisdom, and stars that lead aright, as they shine down from the supernal sky.

Verily art Thou the Invincible, the Almighty, the All-Powerful.

*‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 259*

2. Invite students to share their observations of spiritual light in the people around them, without mentioning names. Invite them also to share the results of their efforts to diffuse divine fragrances and to faithfully recite their obligatory prayers. Acknowledge all. Teachers may also share.
3. Invite the class to reflect briefly upon the challenges that Covenant-breakers provided to Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Explain that this same process continued throughout the life of Shoghi Effendi and has even occurred during the time of the Universal House of Justice. Briefly discuss: Does this problem continue today? Do we think it is possible that someone in our class might encounter Covenant-breaking? Acknowledge student responses. Remind the class that the more intense the light, the deeper the shadows and we're all working as hard as we can to spread the light!
4. Invite the class to examine and resolve some spiritual dilemmas. Some may be Covenant-breaking and some may not. In the whole group, read each of the following dilemmas aloud. Pause to discuss the questions below after reading each dilemma. Provide reference copies of Resource Pages 117–118 for students to use in discussing these questions. Encourage students also to refer to Resource Pages 106, 107, 108, 112, or other Bahá'í writings as they respond to the questions:
  - Where is the light in the story?
  - How did each person feel?
  - Why did people choose the actions that they took?
  - What might have been better choices of action?
  - Was anyone a Covenant-breaker?
  - How can we resolve this situation with light?

**Dilemma 1**

The Nineteen Day Feast will be held three doors down from your house. Your television program will end just as Feast is beginning. Upstairs, your little brother is having a grooming meltdown and is going to be late to Feast. You decide to finish your show and walk over with him. At Feast, prayers have already begun and you are met with a stern look from Mrs. Griglak. Everything at Feast is beautiful and you are feeling spiritually renewed until Mrs. Griglak takes you and your brother aside during refreshments. She says that 'Abdu'l-Bahá became very angry with Shoghi Effendi for being late once, and he was never late again. She tells you both that you are not being obedient to Bahá'u'lláh AND you are making 'Abdu'l-Bahá very angry. You wish you had stayed home from Feast entirely.

**Dilemma 2**

During the consultative portion of the Nineteen Day Feast, the Local Spiritual Assembly secretary asks for everyone to support a great new teaching plan. The community will use the funds they had been spending on a weekly newspaper advertisement, to participate in a local street fair. You, your brother, and your sister volunteer to make balloon animals and pass out literature. On the way home you hear Mr. Grey tell his wife that was a stupid decision and he will pay for the newspaper advertisement himself.

**Dilemma 3**

You cannot wait to talk to Payam. You just overheard Elizabeth telling Joel that you got into trouble for being late to the Nineteen Day Feast. You see red as you tell him how horrible Elizabeth is for backbiting. Tanisha overhears you and tells Elizabeth what you are saying about her. Help!

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

### Dilemma 4

You are having great fun in an online chat room, teaching the Faith and talking with other Bahá’ís. One person calling himself a Bahá’í has been confusing you. He says he is an orthodox Bahá’í and talks about the Guardian as if he is still alive. You know he must be a real Bahá’í because he is so friendly and talks about unity, but he keeps saying things that don’t seem right.

5. Refer again to the list of questions generated by the class in Activity 1 of this topic. Briefly discuss: How can we answer these questions? What real-life dilemmas have been perplexing us? Please describe the dilemma without mentioning the names of the people involved.

6. Use Bahá’í writings to discuss these questions. If unanswered questions remain, create a plan to answer these questions with the help of local, regional, or national Bahá’í institutions.
7. Provide students with journals or plain paper. Play background music and invite students to write or draw personal dilemmas in their journals, along with new solutions which focus on the Light of Bahá’u’lláh. After allowing some time for students to write, encourage them also to write their plans for spreading the Light of Bahá’u’lláh during the coming week.
8. Conclude the activity with favorite prayers.

## ACTIVITY 6: THE POWER OF LOVE

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To realize that one’s services and activities in the Faith must be undertaken out of love for Bahá’u’lláh and a desire to serve His Cause, rather than for the satisfaction of one’s ego

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

### Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Pages 119 and 120, if desired

### Advance Preparation:

Learn the melodies “What a Power Is Love” and “There Is No Power” from the CD *Singing with Ernestine*, available from the Louhelen Bahá’í School bookstore (phone 810-653-5033 or email [Louhelen@usbnc.org](mailto:Louhelen@usbnc.org)), or listen to these melodies on the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

1. Briefly discuss: How can the power of love for Bahá’u’lláh assist us to serve the His Cause? Where is the Source of that power of love? Listen carefully to student responses.
2. Explain that the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Báb tell us about the power of love and the Source of that power, and that we will sing 2 melodies to help us remember.
3. Teach the melodies “What a Power is Love” and “There Is No Power” using one of the methods in the Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshop Number 8, or another effective method.
4. Practice singing the melodies until students are comfortably familiar with the words. Encourage them to sing these melodies often, perhaps at an upcoming community gathering.

ACTIVITY 7: PLEDGING FIRMNESS IN THE COVENANT

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To realize that one’s services and activities in the Faith must be undertaken out of love for Bahá’u’lláh and a desire to serve His Cause, rather than for the satisfaction of one’s ego

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of reflection; Use of creativity and the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Candle and matches
- Pencils
- Option 1: Pieces of soapstone (available at hobby stores) or sandstone; small chisels and safety goggles (available at hardware stores and some “dollar” stores); hammers
- Option 2: Clay that can be shaped by hand, engraved with a nail, and then air-dried or baked to harden, available from art supply stores, such as [www.dickblick.com](http://www.dickblick.com).
- Option 3: Metal lids from frozen juice cans for each student; hammer and nail; ribbon
- Option 4: Heavy-duty aluminum foil; inexpensive embroidery hoops; satin ribbon; push pins or small nails

**Advance Preparation:**

Select one of the options above as a means for students to engrave a symbol of the advice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and gather materials as needed.

1. Welcome students. Consider including the following selection as part of your opening devotions.

O Thou our Provider! Send down Thine aid, that each one gathered here may become a lighted candle, each one a center of attraction, each one a summoner to Thy heavenly realms, till at last we make this nether world the mirror image of Thy Paradise.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 78*

2. Light a candle and read the quotation again. Call students’ attention to the words of this prayer. Explain that these descriptions of ourselves—a lighted candle, a center of attraction, a summoner to heavenly realms—describe our true reality. Encourage them to think of a specific example of a time this week that their actions reflected this truth. Encourage them to think until they have a particular example in mind. When everyone is ready, encourage students to share these reflections in pairs. Then students may also share their reflections in the whole group, as desired. Acknowledge all.

3. Read aloud the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

. . . In the beginning the believers must make their steps firm in the Covenant so that the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh may encircle them from all sides, the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse may become their supporters and helpers, and the exhortations and advice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, like unto the pictures engraved on stone, may remain permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of all hearts.

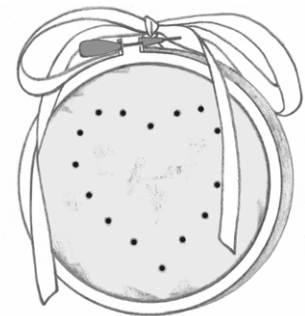
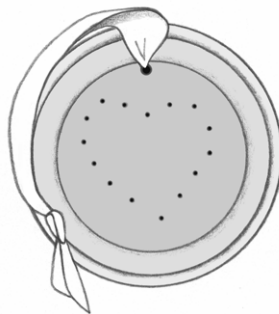
*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Tablets of the Divine Plan, p. 52*

4. Read the quotation a second time and then invite students to create for themselves reminders of these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Encourage students to think of a very simple design, such as a star, a candle, a heart, or other symbol of the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá engraved on their own hearts. Encourage them to sketch this design on paper.
5. Depending on your circumstances and the materials available, provide one or more of the following sets of instructions:

**TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS**

---

- Option 1: Provide soapstone, chisels, and hammers. Students may copy their design in pencil on the soapstone, and then carefully use the hammer and chisel to chip away at the stone to engrave the picture, as suggested by the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
  - Option 2: Provide oven-bake or air-dry clay. Encourage students to form it into the desired shape and then use a nail to engrave their design. Harden clay as suggested in package instructions.
  - Option 3: Explain that metal is from the mineral kingdom and was once in the form of a stone. Encourage students to use their design in pencil as a pattern to engrave the metal lid of a frozen juice can by punching holes in the lid with a hammer and nail. A simple design with relatively few holes may be most effective. Before distributing the lids, ensure that there are no sharp edges and that caution is used to avoid cuts. Punch a hole for a ribbon and hang the engraving from the ribbon. Hang in a window to let light through the holes.
  - Option 4: Explain that aluminum foil is from the mineral kingdom and was once in the form of a stone. Tear off a piece of heavy-duty foil that is larger than the embroidery hoop. Place the inside of the hoop on top of the foil and wrap it around the edges. Carefully place the top of the hoop around the foil and tighten the hoop. Using the design sketched on paper as a pattern, gently punch holes in the foil with a push pin or small nail. Note that many holes will obscure the design. Glue ribbon around the hoop and make a bow or loop to use for hanging. Hang in a window to let the light through the holes.
6. Invite students to share their work with the class when complete. Briefly discuss: Where can we place our engravings so that they will be a constant reminder of our firmness in the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, with “the exhortations and advice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá . . . permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of all hearts”?
  7. Conclude by inviting students to recite memorized prayers and quotations.





Resource Pages

Activity 1: The Nature of Covenant-Breaking

TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ ON COVENANT-BREAKING

|  | TRUE  | FALSE |
|--|-------|-------|
| 1. A Covenant-breaker is someone who breaks Bahá'í law.  | _____ | _____ |
| 2. Someone who withdraws from the Faith is a Covenant-breaker.   | _____ | _____ |
| 3. A Covenant-breaker is someone who, after accepting Bahá'u'lláh, attacks Him or His divinely ordained institutions.                                    | _____ | _____ |
| 4. The decision to expel someone as a Covenant-breaker rests with the Local Spiritual Assembly.  | _____ | _____ |
| 5. A person who no longer believes that Bahá'u'lláh is the Manifestation of God for this Day and withdraws from the Faith because is a Covenant-breaker. | _____ | _____ |
| 6. Bahá'ís should shun and avoid entirely a Covenant-breaker.  | _____ | _____ |
| 7. Covenant-breakers don't realize what they are doing.  | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Covenant-breakers have been successful in the past in disrupting the unity of the Bahá'í Faith.   | _____ | _____ |
| 9. Covenant-breaking is a spiritual disease.   | _____ | _____ |

GOAL: TO BECOME AWARE OF ONE’S INDIVIDUAL ROLE IN THE COVENANT

TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

Activity 1: The Nature of Covenant-Breaking

ANSWERS AND EXPLANATIONS FOR THE TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ ON COVENANT-BREAKING

|   | TRUE     | FALSE    |
|---|----------|----------|
| 1. A Covenant-breaker is someone who breaks Bahá’í law.<br>A Covenant-breaker is someone who, after declaring his or her belief in Bahá’u’lláh, attacks Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi or the Universal House of Justice and Their Authority.<br>... A believer failing in his duties in living the Bahá’í life would be a breaker of God’s Eternal Covenant, in the general sense of becoming heedless in following the way of God, not in the sense of being a Covenant-breaker of Bahá’u’lláh’s Lesser Covenant deserving to be identified as such. ...<br><i>On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, letter of 4 March 1981</i> | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 2. Someone who withdraws from the Faith is a Covenant-breaker.<br>See notes after Statement 1.  | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 3. A Covenant-breaker is someone who, after accepting Bahá’u’lláh, attacks Him or His divinely ordained institutions.<br>See notes after Statement 1.   | <u>X</u> | ___      |
| 4. The decision to expel someone as a Covenant-breaker rests with the Local Spiritual Assembly.<br>The International Teaching Centre . . . must investigate all cases of incipient Covenant-breaking . . . and decide whether the offender should be expelled from the Cause, submitting the decision to the Universal House of Justice for its consideration. It follows a similar procedure for the reinstatement of a contrite Covenant-breaker.<br><i>The Universal House of Justice, The Institution of the Counselors, p. 4</i>   | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 5. A person who no longer believes that Bahá’u’lláh is the Manifestation of God for this Day and withdraws from the Faith because is a Covenant-breaker.<br>See notes after Statement 1.  | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 6. Bahá’ís should shun and avoid entirely a Covenant-breaker.<br>... One of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers.<br><i>‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 20</i>   | <u>X</u> | ___      |
| 7. Covenant-breakers don’t realize what they are doing.<br>It is not that they ignore what they do—they are perfectly aware and still they exhibit opposition. ...<br><i>‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in Star of the West, vol. 10, p. 246</i>   | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 8. Covenant-breakers have been successful in the past in disrupting the unity of the Bahá’í Faith.<br>... Although individuals have broken the Covenant . . . they have never succeeded in destroying the Covenant itself: it remains inviolable . . . this it the Day that shall not be followed by Night.<br><i>The Universal House of Justice, letter of 23 March 1975</i>   | ___      | <u>X</u> |
| 9. Covenant-breaking is a spiritual disease.<br>... They are afflicted with what we might try and define as a contagious spiritual disease.<br><i>Shoghi Effendi, in U.S. Bahá’í News, “Power of the Covenant,” Part Two, p. 34</i>   | ___      | <u>X</u> |

Activity 1: The Nature of Covenant-Breaking

1 O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 22

2 These agitations of the violators are no more than the foam of the ocean, which is one of its inseparable features; but the ocean of the Covenant shall surge and cast ashore the bodies of the dead, for it cannot retain them.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 210

3 Bahá’u’lláh and the Master . . . have told us to shun entirely all Covenant-breakers. . . . It has nothing to do with “unity” in the Cause; if a man cuts a cancer out of his body to preserve his health and very life, no one would suggest that for the sake of unity it should be reintroduced into the otherwise healthy organism.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Principles of Bahá’í Administration*, p. 22

4 Probably no group of people in the world have softer tongues, or proclaim more loudly their innocence than those who in their heart of hearts, and by every act, are enemies of the Center of the Covenant.

Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 188

5 . . . The believers are commanded to shun Covenant-breakers for the same reason as healthy people do not associate with a person suffering from a serious contagious illness. A contagiously sick person cannot catch health from a thousand healthy people, but, on the contrary, he can infect them with his illness. Therefore such a person is quarantined and only those few people qualified to attend him do so. . . .

The Universal House of Justice, letter of 23 March 1975,  
in *Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities: Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies*, p. 5.14

6 The seriousness of Covenant-breaking is that it strikes at the very center and foundation of the unity of mankind. If God were to allow the instrument to be divided and impaired, how then would His purpose be achieved?

The Universal House of Justice, letter of 23 March 1975,  
in *Developing Distinctive Bahá’í Communities: Guidelines for Spiritual Assemblies*, p. 5.14

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

### Activity 2: Light of the Covenant

#### Light and Shadow

- 1852 **The Maid of Heaven comes to Bahá'u'lláh in the Siyáh-Chál, announcing that He is the Manifestation of God for this day.**  
When the Bábís face difficulties, Mírzá Yahyá flees for his own safety, eventually hiding out in Baghdád.
- 1854 **Bahá'u'lláh retreats to the wilderness of Kurdistán to prevent Himself from being at the center of any disunity.**  
Jealous of Bahá'u'lláh and guided by Siyyíd Muhammad, Mírzá Yahyá, circulates many lies and rumors with the attempt to discredit Bahá'u'lláh.
- 1856 **Bahá'u'lláh remains in Kurdistán for two years until many Bábís, including Mírzá Yahyá, beg Him to return.**  
Mírzá Yahyá allows Siyyíd Muhammad to lead a band of street thieves, refusing to meet with the Bábís, as 25 different men claim to be the Promised One.
- 1856–62 **Bahá'u'lláh reveals the Seven Valleys, the Four Valleys, the Hidden Words, and the Kitáb-i-Íqán.**  
Angered by those who refute his claims to be the successor to the Báb, Mírzá Yahyá orders the murder of devoted Bábís including Dayyán and Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar.
- 1863 **Bahá'u'lláh declares His Mission to His followers in the Garden of Ridván.**  
Mírzá Yahyá disobeys Bahá'u'lláh's instruction to travel to Iran to teach the Báb's writings, and instead sneaks after the caravan to Constantinople in disguise.
- 1865 **Bahá'u'lláh reveals the Tablet of Ahmad and other Tablets.**  
Mírzá Yahyá plots to assassinate Bahá'u'lláh with poison, causing Him a month of severe illness and a permanent tremor in His hand.
- 1866 **Bahá'u'lláh reveals a Tablet, the Súriy-i-Amr, to Mírzá Yahyá, clarifying His Mission and demanding a reply.**  
Mírzá Yahyá deceitfully requested time to study the Súriy-i-Amr, in order to prepare a presumptuous counterclaim that he had received an independent divine revelation.
- 1867 **Bahá'u'lláh refuses an allowance from the Ottoman government, instead selling His belongings to finance household expenses. He sends Mírzá Yahyá furniture, money, and sacred relics of the Báb.**  
Mírzá Yahyá sends his wife to the governor, where she denies that they received the money from Bahá'u'lláh, claims starvation, and begs for more. Mírzá Yahyá writes slanderous letters about Bahá'u'lláh to believers in Iran and Iraq.
- All Through Life **Bahá'u'lláh reveals thousands of verses of God's sacred message to mankind.**  
Mírzá Yahyá makes blasphemous additions to the Báb's writings, identifying himself as the Godhead and breaking the Báb's Covenant.

**Activity 2: Light of the Covenant**

**Shadowy Word List**

Mírzá Yahyá runs to Baghdád where he is in \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá sneaks after the caravan to Constantinople in \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá tries to discredit Bahá'u'lláh with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá tries to kill Bahá'u'lláh with \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá wants to discredit Bahá'u'lláh because he is \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá's additions to the Báb's writings are \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá's counterclaim of being the Promised One is \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá's lying claims are Covenant \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá's plot against Bahá'u'lláh is to \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

Mírzá Yahyá's request for additional time to study the Súriy-i-Amr is made \_\_\_\_\_.

Mírzá Yahyá's wife \_\_\_\_\_ money was received from the government and \_\_\_\_\_ for more.

Siyyíd Muhammad, one of Mírzá Yahyá's henchmen, leads a band of \_\_\_\_\_.

When Bahá'u'lláh sends Mírzá Yahyá to Iran, he \_\_\_\_\_.

When the Bábís ask to meet with Mírzá Yahyá, he responds by \_\_\_\_\_.

When the Bábís face trouble and need leadership, Mírzá Yahyá \_\_\_\_\_.

TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

Activity 2: Light of the Covenant

Shadowy Word Search

T J E A L O U S H E L I  
B L A S P H E M O U S G  
E D I S O B E Y S R R P  
G H T A O F T H E U E O  
S D I S G U I S E M F I  
P R E S U M P T U O U S  
C T H I E V E S O R S O  
F D E N I E S V E S I N  
N L A A B R E A K I N G  
N T E T O H I D I N G F  
D E C E I T F U L L Y B  
A L I E S H A U L L A H

Circle the words from your Shadowy Word List.  
When you have found all 17 words, shade in the circles.  
What do you have when the shadows are removed?

\*Clue: Print all the remaining letters in a row. Draw a slash “/” between each word.

Shadowy Word List  
Answers

Teachers: fold back  
this part of the sheet;  
then make copies of  
the Word Search for  
students.

HIDING

DISGUISE

LIES

RUMORS

POISON

JEALOUS

BLASPHEMOUS

PRESUMPTUOUS

BREAKING

ASSASSINATE

DECEITFULLY

DENIES

BEGS

THIEVES

DISOBEYS

REFUSING

FLEES

Activity 3: The Foul Smell and the Fragrance

**A Foul Smell**

An envy as blind as that which had possessed the soul of Mírzá Yahyá, as deadly as that which the superior excellence of Joseph had kindled in the hearts of his brothers, as deep-seated as that which had blazed in the bosom of Cain and prompted him to slay his brother Abel, had, for several years, prior to Bahá'u'lláh's ascension, been smoldering in the recesses of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí's heart. . . .

Gradually and with unyielding persistence, through lies, half-truths, calumnies and gross exaggerations, this "Prime Mover of sedition" succeeded in ranging on his side almost the entire family of Bahá'u'lláh, as well as a considerable number of those who had formed his immediate entourage. . . .

To friend and stranger, believer and unbeliever alike, to officials both high and low, openly and by insinuation, verbally as well as in writing, they represented 'Abdu'l-Bahá as an ambitious, a self-willed, an unprincipled and pitiless usurper. . . .

And yet it was this same Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí who . . . had, in the lifetime of Bahá'u'lláh, so openly and shamelessly advanced in a written statement, signed and sealed by him, the very claim [to be a Manifestation of God] now falsely imputed by him to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that his Father had, with His own hand, chastised him. He it was who, when sent on a mission to India, had tampered with the text of the holy writings entrusted to his care for publication. . . . He it was who . . . had, while Bahá'u'lláh's body was still awaiting interment, carried off, by a ruse, the two satchels containing his Father's most precious documents, entrusted by Him, prior to His ascension, to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He it was who, by an exceedingly adroit and simple forgery of a word recurring in some of the denunciatory passages addressed by the Supreme Pen to Mírzá Yahyá, and by other devices such as mutilation and interpolation, had succeeded in making them directly applicable to a Brother Whom he hated with such consuming passion. And lastly, it was this same Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí who, as attested by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will, had, with circumspection and guile, conspired to take His life. . . .

The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh had, by acts such as these, and others too numerous to recount, been manifestly violated. Another blow, stunning in its first effects, had been administered to the Faith and had caused its structure momentarily to tremble. . . .

Though the rebellion of Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí precipitated many somber and distressing events, . . . yet the entire episode, viewed in its proper perspective, proved to be neither more nor less than one of those periodic crises which, since the inception of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, and throughout a whole century, have been instrumental in weeding out its harmful elements, in fortifying its foundations, in demonstrating its resilience, and in releasing a further measure of its latent powers.

Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 246–52

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

### Activity 3: The Foul Smell and the Fragrance

#### Fragrances



O Friend! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love, and from the nightingale of affection and desire loosen not thy hold. Treasure the companionship of the righteous and eschew all fellowship with the ungodly.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Persian no. 3



It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors. Fix your gaze upon Him Who is the Temple of God amongst men. He, in truth, hath offered up His life as a ransom for the redemption of the world. He, verily, is the All-Bountiful, the Gracious, the Most High. If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause. We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counseleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us. To this beareth witness every man of true understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 315–16



How vast the number of the loved and chosen ones of God who have lamented and moaned by day and by night that haply a sweet and fragrant breeze might blow from the court of His good-pleasure and dispel altogether the loathsome and foul-smelling odors from the world.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 176



The aim of the appearance of the Blessed Perfection—may my life be a sacrifice for His beloved ones!—was the unity and agreement of all the people of the world. Therefore, my utmost desire, firstly, is the accord and union and love of the believers and after that of all the people of the world. Now, if unity and agreement is not established among the believers, I will become heartbroken and the afflictions will leave a greater imprint upon me. But if the fragrance of love and unity among the believers is wafted to my nostrils, every trial will become a mercy, every unhappiness a joy, every difficulty an expansion, every misery a treasure and every hardship a felicity.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Bahá’í World Faith*, pp. 402–03



#### Activity 4: Examples of Covenant-Breaking in Bahá'í History

##### Mírzá Yahyá and the Barber

Mírzá Yahyá was a younger half-brother of Bahá'u'lláh. He was also called Subh-i-Azal or Azal. He caused no end of troubles. In Adrianople, he tried to kill Bahá'u'lláh with poison. Bahá'u'lláh didn't die, but He suffered all His life from the effects of the poison. Azal tried again.

Salmání, Bahá'u'lláh's barber, loved Him very much. He attended Bahá'u'lláh at the public bath. One day, Salmání went to the bath to serve Bahá'u'lláh. Azal came in first.

"Last night," Azal said to Salmání, "I had a dream. I saw a person with a broom in his hand, and he was sweeping up all around me." He implied that the person with the broom was Bahá'u'lláh.

Salmání didn't understand what Azal meant. He felt very uncomfortable and confused. Then Azal's friends began to talk against Bahá'u'lláh.

When another bath day arrived, Salmání again was waiting for Bahá'u'lláh. As before, Azal arrived first. And as before, Azal began to talk. He told a story about a boy that killed a governor. Then Azal said, "How wonderful is courage. How much needed now, to save the Cause of God!"

Salmání realized that Azal wanted him to kill the Blessed Beauty!

When Salmání realized this, he became ill. He was not able to speak. He went away by himself and thought, "I will go back into the bath, and I will cut off his [Azal's] head. Then let whatever happens, happen."

Then he thought, "After murdering this fellow, if I should go and stand in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, and if He should say to me, 'Why did you kill him?' what answer could I give?"

These thoughts ended Salmání's idea of attacking Azal. Instead, he stormed back to the bath and raged at Azal, "Get up and get out. God send you to hell!" In a panic Azal fled from the bath. Salmání never laid eyes on him again.

Nothing could calm Salmání down. At last he told 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "Today Azal said thus and so. I was in a fury and wanted to kill him. But in the end, I did nothing."

The Master replied, "You discovered this matter for yourself. Do not make any mention of it. Best that it should remain hidden."

Salmání asked Bahá'u'lláh's secretary to report it to the Blessed Beauty. Bahá'u'lláh advised, "Say nothing of this anywhere."

Salmání gathered up Azal's letters and other writings. He showed them to everyone, so they could see that they were the writings of Azal. Then he burned them all. "Until today," he said, "I have always worshipped the house of this Azal. Today, so far as I am concerned, he is less than a dog!"

Sources:  
Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 114  
Ustád Muhammad-'Alí-i-Salmání, the Barber,  
*My Memories of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 49–53

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

### Activity 4: Examples of Covenant-Breaking in Bahá'í History

#### Muhammad-‘Alí and the Shaykh

From the time of Bahá'u'lláh, Covenant-breakers caused no end of grief. Bahá'u'lláh always treated them with kindness, but wouldn't let them take over the Faith. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá took the same approach. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave more than enough money to support His family members who broke the Covenant. He gave them everything they had.

Despite the Master's generosity, the Covenant-breakers spread rumors that ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was starving them. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá gave them plenty of money. They said that the Master didn't help them. They wanted people to turn against the Master. But their plan back-fired. Here's how it happened.

One afternoon, the Master was hosting a meeting of pilgrims and residents. Suddenly a very important leader, the Shaykh of ‘Akká, arrived. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá welcomed him and listened carefully while he spoke. At last the Master turned to the group and said, “Áqá Shaykh has a strange tale to tell, and I would like all of you to hear it from his own lips.”

The Shaykh said that earlier that same day, a citizen of ‘Akká had come to his office. This person said that he had heard terrible things about ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. He said that he had previously greatly respected ‘Abdu'l-Bahá.

“But today I was with Muhammad-‘Alí. . . . He complained a great deal about his brother [‘Abdu'l-Bahá]. . . . These poor people have fallen into the abyss of misery and misfortune.

. . . The children are crying and asking for bread, but there is none to be found in the house.”

The Shaykh had told his friend not to worry. He said that he could give Muhammad-‘Alí all the money he needed. In fact, the Shaykh was keeping Muhammad-‘Alí's money safe for him. But the Shaykh's friend didn't know this. He continued to worry about the Covenant-breakers.

“Excuse me,” the Shaykh said at last, “but in fact what he (Muhammad-‘Alí) does have is money and what he is devoid of is integrity.”

The Shaykh's friend shook his head. He thought that the Shaykh did not understand.

“Let's do something else,” the Shaykh replied. He opened his safe-deposit box and showed his friend that Muhammad-‘Alí had plenty of money. “Now go to Muhammad-‘Alí and tell him to stop his begging, for no one will pay him the least attention,” the Shaykh concluded.

That is the reason the Shaykh visited ‘Abdu'l-Bahá that day. “I have come to apologize on his behalf, and later he will come himself. But, Beloved, you should know that in this world you have only one enemy, and that is none other than your own brother.”

Source:  
Youness Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in ‘Akká*,  
pp. 188–92

#### Activity 4: Examples of Covenant-Breaking in Bahá'í History

##### Muhammad-‘Alí and the Commission of Investigation

In 1904 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was building the Shrine of the Báb. Muhammad-‘Alí, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s half-brother, told the authorities that the Master was building a military fortress to fight with the government. Muhammad-‘Alí and some others said that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had secretly recruited an army of 30,000 men. They even wrote a Bahá'í phrase on a piece of cloth and said that it was the flag ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had made for His army!

The Covenant-breakers claimed that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had purchased land to form a kingdom. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told the officials that it would be a miracle, if He, a prisoner, constantly spied upon, could establish a kingdom!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá carried on His work. He wrote as many as 90 letters a day giving advice and encouragement to people everywhere. He continued building the Shrine of the Báb.

Muhammad-‘Alí’s hatred grew. His lies also grew. Finally the Sultan appointed a commission to investigate the matter. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained how ridiculous the charges were. The case was dismissed.

The Covenant-breakers kept lying. In 1907 the Sultan sent another commission to investigate. Friendly officials were dismissed. Spies were planted around the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Even the poor of ‘Akká dared not visit the Master to receive His gifts. Witnesses were found to swear to the false charges. The commission was bribed.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá calmly repaired His house. He bought fuel for the winter. He planted trees. The people were astonished and asked, “For whom do you plant this tree?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “Those who preceded us planted and we have enjoyed the fruit. It is our duty to do the same to benefit those who come after us.”

One night a friendly official came to the Master. He had arranged safe passage on a ship for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He urged ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to save Himself. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “The Báb did not run away, and I shall not run away.”

Finally the commissioners came to a decision. They began sailing from Haifa toward ‘Akká, apparently to take ‘Abdu’l-Bahá away. Anxious friends watched the ship come closer and closer.

Suddenly, the ship changed direction and made for the open sea. There had been an attempt on the Sultan’s life. The Commission of Enquiry left at once for the capital. When they tried to make their report, the Sultan was no longer interested. He was afraid for his life!

Before long a revolution overthrew the Sultan. The new government ended ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s forty-year imprisonment. The Master was free at last.

Sources:

H.M. Balyuzi, *Abdu’l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 111–19

Adib Taherzadeh, *Child of the Covenant*, pp. 233–40

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

### Activity 4: Examples of Covenant-Breaking in Bahá'í History

#### Dr. Kheiralla's Wish

Ibráhím George Kheiralla [or Khayru'lláh] lived 1849–1929. He was a Christian Arab doctor who became a Bahá'í while living in Egypt. In 1892 Kheiralla went to New York on business. While he was there, he began to teach people about the Bahá'í Faith. Soon he moved to Chicago.

He believed that he had spiritual healing powers, so he decided to open a healing practice. Although he had attended some college in Lebanon, he did not have a degree or medical training recognized in the United States. He purchased a college diploma for \$20 to give him the official title of “Doctor.” Then he began treating patients. He also introduced his patients to the Bahá'í Faith.

The new believers and Kheiralla founded the first Bahá'í community in the United States. These new Bahá'ís brought their friends and relatives to meet Kheiralla and to learn about their new faith. The new believers turned to Kheiralla to answer all their questions.

Kheiralla taught a series of thirteen lessons about the Bahá'í Faith. In the last lesson Kheiralla described the lives of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He showed that the prophecies of all the world's religions told about the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

Kheiralla taught many early American Bahá'ís who served the Faith with great distinction. Hundreds of people became Bahá'ís. Because of these victories, 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to Kheiralla as “Bahá's Peter,” “the Second Columbus,” and “Conqueror of America.” Kheiralla believed that he would soon be the supreme leader of the Bahá'í community in America.

In December 1898, he went on pilgrimage with some American believers to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land. In the warmth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love, the Americans all turned to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant.

Kheiralla couldn't accept 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of the Covenant, appointed by Bahá'u'lláh Himself. He still wanted to be the supreme leader of the American Bahá'ís. He joined the Covenant-breakers and thought the Americans would follow him. But the American believers remained firm in the Covenant. Kheiralla died in obscurity, forgotten.

Source:

H.M. Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*

Activity 5: Covenant Dilemmas

O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic no. 2

. . . If any soul speak ill of an absent one, the only result will clearly be this: he will dampen the zeal of the friends and tend to make them indifferent. For backbiting is divisive, it is the leading cause among the friends of a disposition to withdraw. If any individual should speak ill of one who is absent, it is incumbent on his hearers, in a spiritual and friendly manner, to stop him, and say in effect: would this detraction serve any useful purpose? Would it please the Blessed Beauty, contribute to the lasting honor of the friends, promote the holy Faith, support the Covenant, or be of any possible benefit to any soul? No, never! On the contrary, it would make the dust to settle so thickly on the heart that the ears would hear no more, and the eyes would no longer behold the light of truth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 230–31

The Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh and the Will and Testament of the Master clearly and explicitly indicate that the Interpreter of the Word was the Center of the Covenant and now is the Guardian. There are no other Interpreters whatsoever and no individual may interpret. This is strictly forbidden.

Divine Truth is relative and that is why we are enjoined to constantly refer the seeker to the Word itself—and why any explanations we make to ease the journey of the soul of any individual must be based on the Word—and the Word alone.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 314

Whenever we find a person who opposes some fundamental of our Faith, such as the Institution of the Guardianship, we must first be sure this is not due to ignorance or lack of proper training, before we take action. We must not suppose immediately that that person is necessarily tainted by the spirit of the Covenant-Breakers. If, however, this should prove to be the case, then strong action must be taken by the Assembly.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 187

## TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

---

The greatest need it seems everywhere inside the Cause is to impress upon the friends the need for love among them. There is a tendency to mix up the functions of the Administration and try to apply it in individual relationships, which is abortive, because the Assembly is a nascent House of Justice and is supposed to administer, according to the Teachings, the affairs of the Community. But individuals towards each other are governed by love, unity, forgiveness and a sin-covering eye. Once the friends grasp this they will get along much better, but they keep playing Spiritual Assembly to each other and expect the Assembly to behave like an individual.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Directives of the Guardian*, pp. 41–42

The friends should, of course, ignore any materials produced by Covenant-breakers which they may receive unsolicited by email or happen on while exploring the World Wide Web. With regard to your concerns over the content of the message, you are advised to turn to your Local Spiritual Assembly or an Auxiliary Board member for assistance in dealing with the spurious claims advanced in that message.

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, 7 October 1997,  
in *Non-Association with Covenant-Breakers*, a compilation from the Continental Board of Counselors,  
available online: <http://bahai-library.com/unpubl.compilations/nonassociation.html>

The greatest protection to the Cause will, of course, be through ongoing deepening of the Bahá'í community in the Covenant and the history and teachings of the Faith. To facilitate this, you may wish to bring attention to the availability of the Sacred Text on the Web site "The Bahá'í World" [<http://www.bahai.org>] and on the Bahá'í World Centre FTP server [<http://reference.bahai.org>].

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, 4 June 1997, quoted in *A Compilation: Non-Association with Covenant-breakers*,  
From the Continental Board of Counselors to the NSAs of Alaska, Canada and the US, December 7, 1999  
<http://www.bahai-library.com/unpubl.compilations/nonassociation.html>

The duty of the concourse of the faithful in this day should be but one duty, their purpose but one purpose, their aim but one aim, and the object of their endeavor but one object, and this is none other than to foster the spirit of unity and harmony, to serve and teach His Cause and to promote His Word. Such is the meaning of true faithfulness; and in this lies the good-pleasure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Bahíyyih *Khánum*, *Bahíyyih Khánum*, pp. 173–74

Activity 6: The Power of Love

# What a Power is Love!

Words: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 179

Music: Ernestine Atkins

$\bullet = 80$   
D A

Voice

What a pow - er is love! What a pow - er

7 D  
is love! What a pow - er is love! Love is the

13 G D G D  
most won - der-ful pow - er. Love is the most won - der-ful pow - er. Love is the

17 G D A D  
most won - der-ful pow - er. The great-est of all liv - ing pow - ers.

23 D A D  
What a pow - er is love! What a pow - er is

30 G  
love! What a pow - er is love! Love is the most won - der-ful

36 D G D G  
pow - er. Love is the most won - der-ful pow - er. Love is the most won - der-ful

40 D A D  
pow - er. The great-est of all liv - ing pow - ers.

*Sing 4 times through. Verses 2-4, add harmony. Verse 3-4, add gospel ad lib.*

# TOPIC: COVENANT-BREAKERS

## Activity 6: The Power of Love

# There is No Power

Words: the Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 190

Music: Ernestine Atkins

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of three systems of two staves each. The top staff of each system is for the Soprano (S) and the bottom staff is for the Alto (A). The lyrics are: "There is no pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God. There is no pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God. There is no pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God. There is no pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines.

Soprano  
There is no pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God. There is no

Alto

4  
S  
pow-er — nor strength exc-ept in God. There is no pow-er — nor

A

9  
S  
strength exc-ept in God. There is no pow - er nor strength exc-ept in God.

A



LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

---

**Stories, Books, and Articles:**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Center of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*, H.M. Balyuzi, pp. 85–89
- The Beloved Master*, Afshan Mahnaz, pp. 21–22, 34–35, 37–38, 43
- Blessed Beauty, Bahá'u'lláh*, Afshan Mahnaz, pp. 28, 54–59
- The Covenant: Its Meaning and Origin and Our Attitude Towards It*, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, pp. 71–80
- The Covenant for Young People*, Enoch Tanyi
- The Eternal Covenant*, Lowell Johnson, pp. 184–91
- The Power of the Covenant*, Part Two, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States
- The Story of the Covenant*, p. 19
- Day of Glory: The Life of Bahá'u'lláh*, Mary Perkins:
- “Woes at Their Blackest,” pp. 68–73
  - “Days of Stress,” pp. 113–19
  - “A Rising Splendor,” pp. 81–94
  - “In the Wilderness,” pp. 74–80
  - “A Fresh Danger,” pp. 149–53
  - “In Constantinople and Adrianople,” pp. 34–39
  - “In the Desolate City,” pp. 58–60
  - “In Darkest Days,” pp. 69–72
  - “This Calamitous Day,” pp. 101–03
  - “Alone and Unaided,” pp. 109–11, 114–16
  - “So Momentous a Development,” pp. 117–20
  - “The Covenant Breakers Announce Themselves,” pp. 121–27
  - “Souls Arise as Promised,” pp. 142–45
  - “Confined to ‘Akká Once Again,” pp. 146–47
  - “Days of Great Trouble,” pp. 159–63
  - “In Very Great Danger,” pp. 170–75
  - “The Fire of War and Carnage,” pp. 268–69
  - “An Ominous Threat,” pp. 278–81
- From Mountain to Mountain*, Hitjo Garst, pp. 30–32, 37–44, 71–79, 85–89, 127–31
- Brilliant Star* magazine:
- “Sacred and Youthful Branch,” Sep/Oct 2003

**Other Favorite Resources:**

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Bahá'í Education Task Force, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, [www.core-curriculum.org](http://www.core-curriculum.org).