

**TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION  
AS A FOUNDATION AND BASIC LAW OF THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

**THE ROLE OF CONSULTATION**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FELLOWSHIP, CANDOR, SEARCH FOR TRUTH**

Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way and is the bestower of understanding.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 168

The principle of consultation, which constitutes one of the basic laws of the Administration, should be applied to all Bahá'í activities which affect the collective interests of the Faith, for it is through cooperation and continued exchange of thoughts and views that the Cause can best safeguard and foster its interests.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, *Consultation: A Compilation*, no. 31, p. 15

## TOPIC: THE ROLE OF CONSULTATION

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### Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



#### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings that describe consultation as one of the basic laws of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh
- To know the ways that consultation is used in the Administrative Order

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read a quotation about the nature and function of consultation.
- List various situations for which the writings suggest consultation as an approach.
- Memorize a passage about consultation as a powerful tool of understanding.



#### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the purpose of consultation as a means to create love and unity, and to receive God's guidance
- To understand how consultation enables the inclusion and participation of all members of the community

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Pass a ball of yarn to each learner and let each holding the ball give an opinion on a matter. Compare this to consultation.
- Play "Feast Puzzle" (*Brilliant Star*, Jan/Feb 1993, p. 20) to intensify our conception of consultation.
- Liken consultation to an art (such as playing the piano) that must be practiced. Note that the combination of various notes produce a melody and the contributions of various instruments create the rich beauty of an orchestra.
- Listen to a piece of orchestral music, pointing out the contribution of each instrument.
- Show how each opinion or answer is a piece of a puzzle in understanding an issue. Practice this by progressively using clues to understand a given concept and then create artwork to show the process.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the differences between Bahá'í consultation and other forms of group interaction
- To reflect on the value of consultation as an approach to arriving at a better understanding of any issue and as a way of solving one's personal concerns

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Invite students to stand in a circle. Pass a ball of yarn around the circle, asking each student to grasp a piece of the yarn before passing the rest of the ball on to the next person. Then ask the group to try to rewind the yarn into a ball without releasing their grasp of the yarn. After experiencing that tangled process, let them try again, this time allowing them to let go of their grasp as they wind up the yarn. Explain that this is how consultation works: we must remain detached from our personal ideas—our piece of string—to find successful solutions as a group.
- Use Bahá'í consultation to find solutions to issues in the class.
- Reflect on the group consultations students have had in class and how these discussions have helped them deepen their understanding or solve problems. Invite learners to consult with their peers about questions or challenges they wish to explore and to reflect on the value of consultation.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to describe Bahá'í consultation in the Administrative Order
- To research, experience, or recount processes and outcomes of consultation

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Invite an Assembly member to discuss the importance of consultation and its outcomes with the class.
- Display artwork portraying the art of consultation.
- Recite memorized passages at Feast as an opening to community consultation.
- Explain consultation in the Administrative Order.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION  
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**Sample Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1: TAKE COUNSEL IN ALL MATTERS**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings that describe consultation as one of the basic laws of the Administrative Order of Bahá'u'lláh

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand how consultation enables the inclusion and participation of all members of the community

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Copies of Resource Pages 83–84, one set for every 2–4 students
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Glitter, feathers, sequins, and other art supplies (optional)
- Sheet of colored paper 11 x 17
- Glue or tape
- Background music, if available

**Advance Preparation:**

Make enough photocopies of Resource Pages 83–84 so that each group of 2–4 students has one set.

Plan to save the student's comments about consultation on chart paper until you have completed your series of lessons on this topic. Note that there are four topics in this Lesson Planning Guide that address the importance of consultation. Whether you complete some or all of these topics, please return to the question "What is consultation?" on the day that your class completes its study of consultation. Posing the question after student study will provide them with the opportunity to acknowledge their new learning on the topic.

1. Welcome students. Encourage them to reflect on the past week and think at least 2 examples of positive actions that they've noticed in other people. Encourage them to think about people other than members of their families or close friends, such as people they don't know very well, people who are younger or older, from a different social group, or other individuals with whom they don't interact on a daily basis: What have we noticed these diverse individuals doing to contribute in a positive way to the world around them? What are some things we can learn from noticing the good deeds of other people?
2. Explain that this class begins an exploration of the topic of consultation and that consultation requires the positive contributions of a group of people. Write the word "Consultation" at the top of a piece of chart paper. Pose the question: What is consultation? Invite students to describe what they believe consultation is and what it is not. Record student comments in two columns under this heading. Explain that the class will return to this question after exploring the topic more deeply over a period of several weeks.

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3. Organize the class into teams of 2–4 students and distribute art supplies and copies of Resource Pages 83–84 to each team. Explain that the class will begin exploring of the topic of consultation by experiencing the beauty of diverse contributions that different people can make to a single subject.
4. Read aloud this quotation in the whole group. Taking these words of Bahá'u'lláh as a guide, ask each team to decide how to organize itself so that each person can reach the art supplies provided and participate fully in the process of illuminating the beautiful words of Bahá'u'lláh and decorating each piece in the border. Encourage teams to discuss how they will allow team members to express their own individuality in decorating, while also ensuring that end result represents the team as a whole. Consider playing background music or recordings of Bahá'í songs while students work.
5. After all groups have finished, invite them to glue their completed work to a large piece of colored construction paper and share their illumination with the class. Display the teams' quotations together where all can see. Briefly discuss How does the contribution of each group—and of each individual—highlight the beauty of this quotation?
6. Read the quotation aloud in the whole group. Briefly discuss: When should we use consultation? Why should we use consultation? How can consultation help us?
7. In the whole group, memorize this quotation by reading it aloud again and again. Consider covering individual words throughout the quotation as the students continue to repeat the quotation. Continue this process until the students can recite the quotation without reading any of the words. Alternatively, you may choose another favorite method to memorize this quotation, such as setting it to music, encouraging individuals to write it over and over, etc.
8. After students have memorized this quotation, encourage them to think of a time when they used consultation in their own lives to help them increase understanding or make an important decision. Invite individuals to share their memories if they like. Teachers may also share examples.
9. Encourage students to pay attention to the way that they consult with others during the coming week and to bring one example of effective consultation to share at the beginning of the next class. Encourage them also to recite their memorized quotation each day and to reflect on its meaning as they recite it.
10. Save the completed artwork to display in the classroom throughout the class's study of consultation. The class will have the opportunity to share it at a community gathering planned during the topic "The Steps Used in Consultation," pages 117–25 in this Lesson Planning Guide.

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**ACTIVITY 2: THE GIFT OF UNDERSTANDING**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand how consultation enables the inclusion and participation of all members of the community

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of stories; Use of peer teaching, Use of reflection; Use of consultation; Engaging mind and heart

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Paper and pencils
- Scarves, hats, other simple props for role play, if available
- Copies of Core Curriculum storybooks, one book for each 2 students

**Advance Preparation:**

Select stories from Core Curriculum storybooks so that each team of 2 students takes responsibility for a different story. Consider students' reading levels when assigning stories, so that each team will achieve success. Remember that the shortest stories in these books are the easiest to read. Select stories with few unfamiliar names of people and places if your students are new to Bahá'í class. Consider selecting stories from the following list:

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume 1*

- "Father of the Poor," pp. 19–21
- "The Prisoner with Power," pp. 49–53
- "Thank You Isfandiyar," pp. 103–08

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume 2*

- "Waiting for the Master," pp. 19–23
- "The Mother of Consolation," pp. 31–34
- "In Search of a Kindred Spirit," pp. 41–44

*The Central Figures: Bahá'u'lláh, Volume 3*

- "The Warmth of Alaska," pp. 6–9
- "The Promise," pp. 16–20
- "Am I Not Your Lord?" pp. 157–62

*The Central Figures: The Báb, Volume 1*

- "He Was Trustworthy," pp. 72–73
- "The Power of Sacrifice," pp. 107–12
- "A Potion in the Tea," pp. 43–48

*The Central Figures: The Báb, Volume 2*

- "The Naming," pp. 3–7
- "I Want to Read," pp. 9–13
- "Táhirih Teaches the Thousands," pp. 83–86

Display the following quotation in the classroom.

Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Consultation: A Compilation*, p. 3

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share examples of effective consultation that they have observed over the past week. Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: How do these examples show the power of consultation to increase understanding, discover truth, and make decisions?
2. If students memorized the quotation suggested in the previous activity, invite the class to recite it again in unison. Invite students to share their additional reflections about this quotation. Acknowledge all.

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3. Provide each student with a sheet of paper and pencil. Explain that this activity begins with five minutes of silent reflection and writing. Invite them to carefully reflect and then write about or draw an example of giving. Remind the class that giving comes in many forms—gifts are not always things.
  - How could I use the expression on my face, my posture, and simple gestures to show that spiritual quality?
  - What sorts of language does this character use?Encourage students to practice portraying the individuals they selected.
4. After allowing time for students to write or draw, invite them to share their examples in the whole group. Acknowledge all.
5. Organize the class into pairs. Provide each team with a different story from a Core Curriculum storybook and ask them to read the story together. Ask them to identify and list examples of giving that are in the story they read.
6. Encourage students to show you their lists as they complete them. As each team brings you their list, listen to their examples and ask them to pick characters from the story that they could portray in a role-play consultation. Encourage them to continue working in their team to find ways to put themselves in the mindset of their characters and speak from their points of view. Ask the students to consider how they can best express their character's attitudes about giving in the role they will play. Remind students not to portray the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith or any of the Manifestations of God.
7. After all teams have shown you their lists and each student has identified a character to portray, inform the class that a role-play consultation has been called for these characters to explore the ways that a community is made better by all the different ways that people give.
8. Allow each team time to discuss the details of their story and to decide how they will portray the characters they have chosen. Encourage the teams to consider:
  - What is a spiritual quality that this character shows?
  - How does he or she show that quality in the story?
9. Introduce the role-play by reading aloud the posted quotation. Ask the students to assume their roles, introduce themselves in character, and respond to the question:
  - How can we share the gift of our own understanding through consultation?
10. Then pose the following questions for the all the role-play participants to discuss:
  - What are some of the important ways that different people, whether young or old, contribute to the community?
  - How is the community richer when we appreciate the gifts of all people?
11. Conclude the role-play by thanking the characters for sharing their insights. Debrief the role-play by discussing:
  - How do these different examples and perspectives expand our concept of what it means to give?
  - How did the inclusion of all the different views in the consultation increase our understanding?
  - How did this role-play increase our understanding of consultation?
12. Encourage students to reflect on the process of consultation as practiced in the role-play: How was it similar and how was it different from consultation in real life? How was consultation enriched by the spiritual qualities of the characters portrayed?
13. Encourage students to continue practicing the spiritual quality of their character—or another spiritual quality of their choice—in their own lives over the coming week. Encourage them also to continue their observations of consultation over the coming week.

## **TOPIC: THE ROLE OF CONSULTATION**

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### **JIGSAW ACTIVITY 3: CONSULTATION AND THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on the value of consultation as an approach to arriving at a better understanding of any issue and as a way of solving one's personal concerns

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To research, experience, or recount processes and outcomes of consultation

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

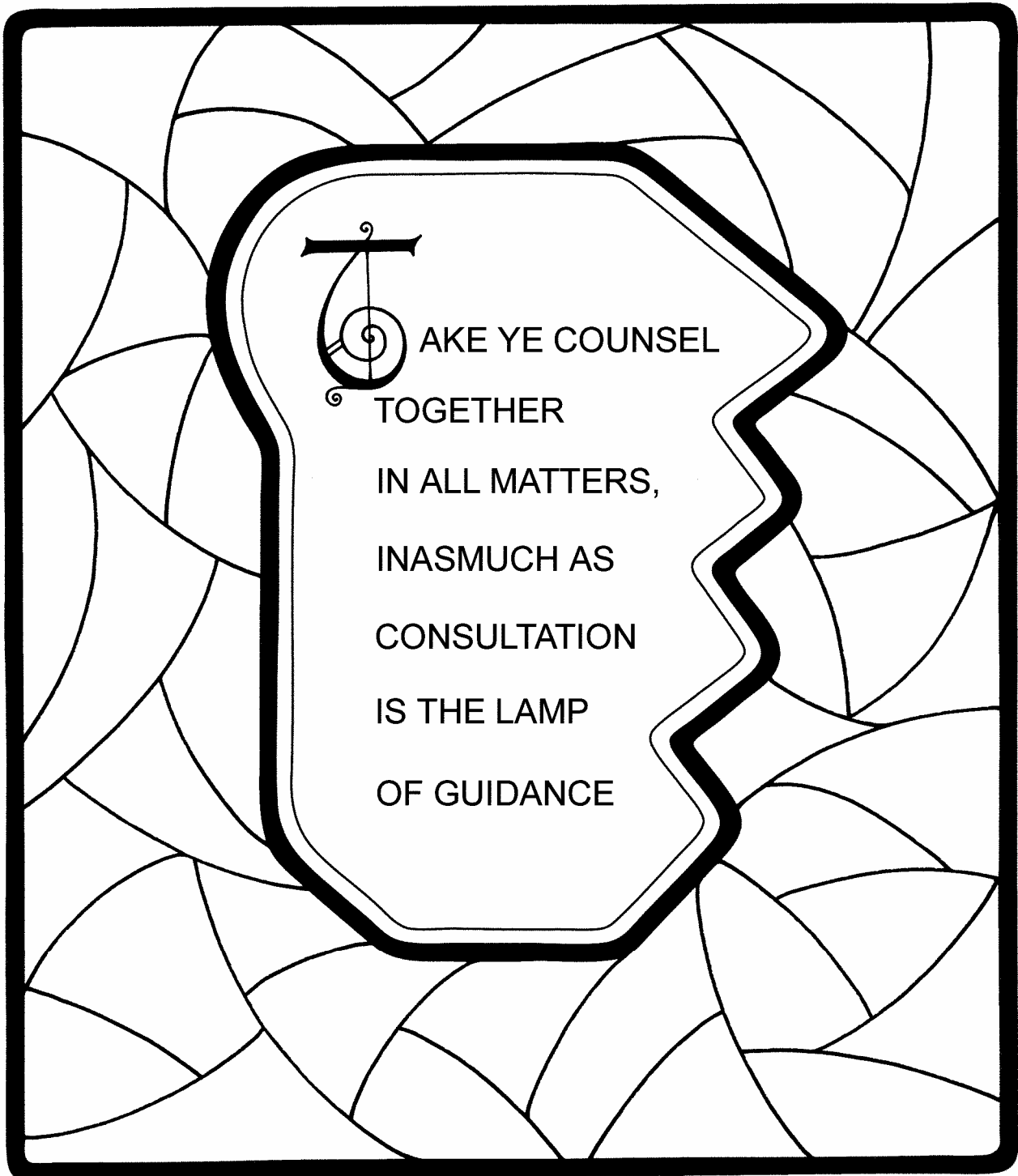
- Copies of Resource Page 85
- Chart paper and markers

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their reflections and observations of consultation over the past week: Have they noticed examples of successful consultation? Have they also noticed examples of unsuccessful consultation—if so, why do they think it wasn't successful? Have they noticed situations that they felt could be improved through consultation?
2. Organize students into teams of two. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 85. Ask each team to focus on one of the quotations. Encourage teams to read their quotation aloud twice and identify 1–2 key ideas in that quotation.
3. Encourage teams to share the key ideas from their quotations in the whole group. Then discuss the focus questions in the whole group.
4. Invite students to brainstorm a list of situations in which one person makes a decision for a group of peers and that decision causes difficulties for other members of the group. Briefly explore what some of those difficulties might be.
5. Recombine teams so that each team is made of students who were not paired in Step 2 above. Provide each team with one of the situations identified in Step 4. In this team, encourage students to use consultation to resolve the difficulties of their situation. Circulate among teams to provide encouragement as needed while they work.
6. Invite teams to share the results of their work. Applaud all!
7. Then consult in the whole group: How could we improve our consultation in this class so that we can work more effectively as a group? What are some situations at home, at school, or in other groups that we could also improve through consultation? How could we use our time together to prepare for consultations that must happen outside of class?
8. Encourage students to practice initiating at least one consultation in a situation at home, at school, or in another group before the next class. Remind students that they will have the opportunity to share their experiences at the beginning of the next class.
9. Include the quotation memorized in Activity 1, p. 78, in your closing devotions for this activity.



Resource Pages

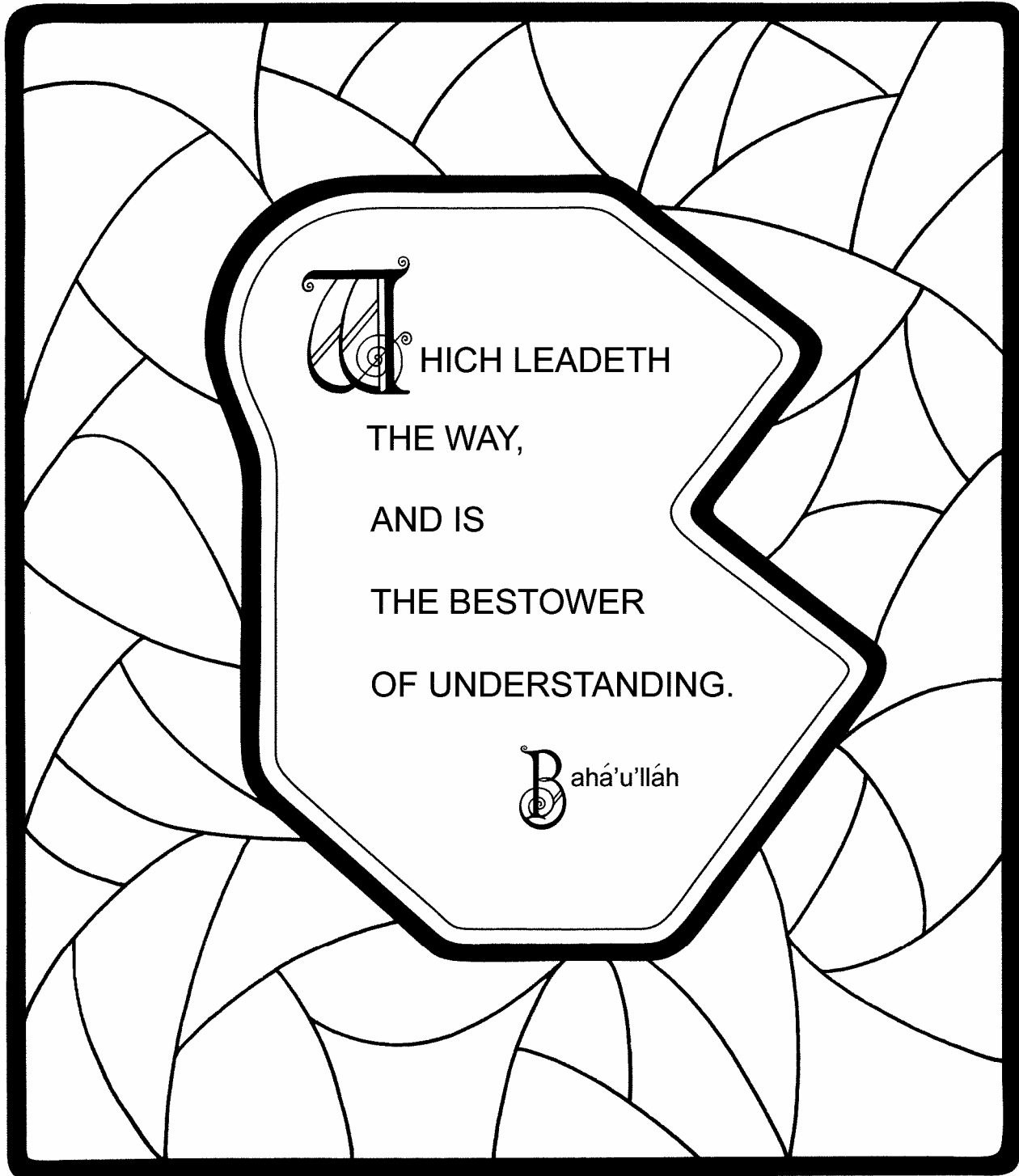
Activity 1: Consultation and the Search for Truth



GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION  
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## TOPIC: THE ROLE OF CONSULTATION

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### Activity 3: Consultation and the Search for Truth

Focus Questions:

What can individuals do to learn the truth?

How can consultation help us discover truth?

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. . . Consultation must have for its object the investigation of truth. He who expresses an opinion should not voice it as correct and right but set it forth as a contribution to the consensus of opinion, for the light of reality becomes apparent when two opinions coincide. A spark is produced when flint and steel come together. Man should weigh his opinions with the utmost serenity, calmness and composure. Before expressing his own views he should carefully consider the views already advanced by others. If he finds that a previously expressed opinion is more true and worthy, he should accept it immediately and not willfully hold to an opinion of his own. By this excellent method he endeavors to arrive at unity and truth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 72

The honored members must with all freedom express their own thoughts, and it is in no wise permissible for one to belittle the thought of another, nay, he must with moderation set forth the truth, and should differences of opinion arise a majority of voices must prevail, and all must obey and submit to the majority.

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

He does not ask us to follow Him blindly; as He says in one of His Tablets, God had endowed man with a mind to operate as a torchlight and guide him to truth. Read His words, consider His teachings, and measure their value in the light of contemporary problems and the truth will surely be revealed to you. . . .

Shoghi Effendi, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 1, p. 217

Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá’í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other.

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, pp. 63–64

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories and Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “An Invisible Tool,” Mar/Apr 1999
- “The McLaughlin Family,” Mar/Apr 1999
- “Consultation On the Bus,” Mar/Apr 1999
- “Star Kids: The Best Idea,” Mar/Apr 2002
- “Family Consultation,” Mar/Apr 2003

*Percival The Piano: A Story for Naw-Rúz*  
*My Name is Nabil*

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

Flowers of One Garden

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Consultation Helpers,” Sp Ed 1997
- “The Bright Side,” Mar/Apr 2002
- “Verbal Volleyball,” May/June 2002

**Music:**

“The Unifyer,” *Wings*

**Other Favorite Resources:**

*Consultation: A Compilation*

*Bahá'í Consultation Workbook*

*Consultation: A Universal Lamp of Guidance*

*Developing Genius: Getting the Most Out of Group Decision-Making*

*Developing Patterns of Community Life: A Guide to Consultation: The Process of Social and Economic Development for Bahá'í Communities*

*Spiritual Assemblies and Bahá'í Consultation: A Compilation*

If you find any additional resources, please contact 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 UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION AND BASIC LAW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
COURTESY, HUMILITY, DETACHMENT**

We, verily, have chosen courtesy, and made it the true mark of such as are nigh unto Him. Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 50

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 21

## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

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### Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



#### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To know from the Bahá'í writings the spiritual prerequisites for consultation

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read the writings explaining the spiritual prerequisites for consultation.
- Make a list of the prerequisites.
- Make a word puzzle with the prime requisites, as named by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, no. 43, p. 87.



#### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the purpose of the application of spiritual qualities to Bahá'í consultation
- To understand the connection between the spiritual prerequisites for consultation and basic interpersonal and communication skills

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Talk about how the Administrative Order must be founded on spiritual qualities to succeed.
- Give a behavioral example for each of the spiritual prerequisites: How can we tell if we have it?
- Read stories about people who have demonstrated any of these prerequisites and how they acquired it and/or used it.
- Find something from nature that represents each or one of the spiritual prerequisites for consultation.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the differences between an administrative system founded on spiritual qualities and the prevailing systems of government and administration in human society
- Reflect on one's own development in acquiring the spiritual prerequisites for consultation

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Show a news clip from television showing a lack of consultation in congressional proceedings. Discuss how much more efficient government would work if they practiced Bahá'í consultation.
- Recall incidents that one may have personally experienced demonstrating spiritual prerequisites.
- Plan a personal goal for developing spiritual prerequisites.
- Develop a play or a series of skits from a story that shows the necessity of these prerequisites for successful consultation and the failure when there is a lack of spiritual prerequisites.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate one's understanding of the prerequisites for consultation in one's own interactions with others

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Practice consultation with any problem or question that arises in class.
- Perform drama pieces.
- Devise a system to bring oneself to account on developing these prerequisites.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION  
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**TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES**

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**Sample Activities**

**ACTIVITY 1: PRIME REQUISITES**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know from the Bahá'í writings the spiritual prerequisites for consultation

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the connection between the spiritual prerequisites for consultation and basic interpersonal and communication skills

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Access to outdoors or a tray of objects from nature that students could keep
- Paper and markers or permanent markers for writing on objects from nature, if desired
- Strips of paper in a basket as described below

**Advance Preparation:**

Prepare strips of paper, each paper with one of the following phrases on it:

Detachment from all else save God

Radiance of spirit

Attraction to Divine Fragrances

Patience and long-suffering in difficulties

Humility amongst God's loved ones

Servitude to God's exalted Threshold

Purity of motive

Fold these papers and place them in a basket.

Display the following quotation in the classroom:

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 43, p. 87*

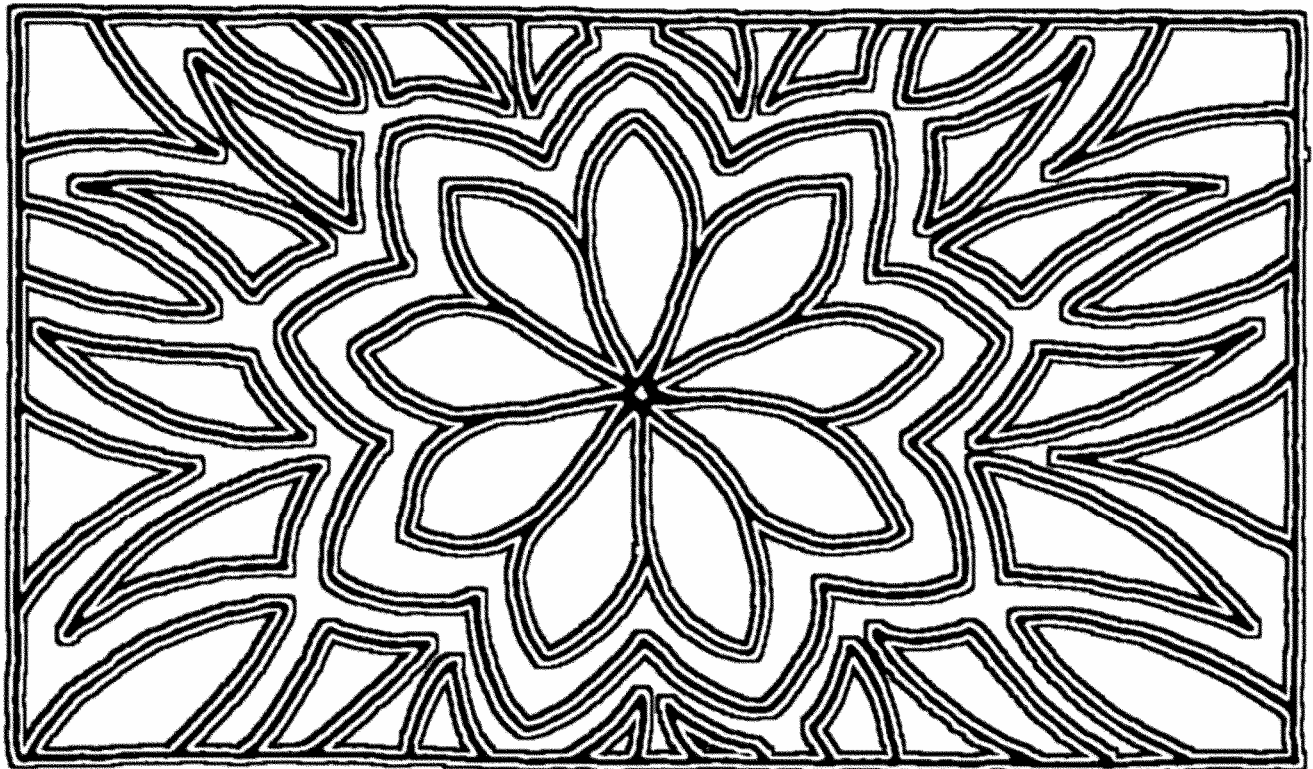
1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their adventures in service over the past week. Invite them also to share their observations and experiences with consultation. Acknowledge all. If you have new students in class for the first time, warmly acknowledge them, arrange introductions all around, and invite other students to explain a few words about the purpose of the class.
2. Organize students to work in teams of two. Consider suggesting that students who know each other well find a different partner for this activity. Explain that one of the goals of the class is for each to become friends with all.
3. Invite the teams to each draw one of the strips of paper from the basket. Explain that their job is to create a silent tableau, dramatic pose, or human sculpture to demonstrate that spiritual quality. All others will guess what that quality might be.
4. After allowing a brief time for students to prepare their poses, invite the teams in turn to strike their pose. Encourage others to guess the quality. Do not refer to the posted quotation, but if students have difficulty guessing the quality you may suggest that teams also mime the words of their phrase, one by one.



TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 until all phrases have been guessed. Applaud all!
6. Explain that the spiritual qualities just demonstrated are described by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as prime requisites for something. Ask students if they know what that is. If desired, explain that a requisite is something that is necessary or essential. Listen, then read aloud the posted quotation twice.
7. Invite students to go outdoors (or to the tray of objects from nature) and find an object that illustrates one of the attributes mentioned in this quotation.
8. After students have selected their objects, encourage them to share their objects in the whole group. Acknowledge all.
9. Encourage students to take their objects home (if possible) and place them where they will see them daily. If desired, you may invite students to write the name of that attribute on the object or on paper that could be displayed on or near the object. Encourage them to look for real-life examples of people displaying that spiritual attribute at home, at school, or in other groups.

Briefly discuss: How could these spiritual qualities help make consultation successful? What are some examples that we’ve seen in our own lives of people showing these qualities? What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá say will happen if we acquire these attributes?



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**TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES**

**ACTIVITY 2: SPIRITUAL REQUISITES, CONSULTATION, AND LISTENING**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the connection between the spiritual prerequisites for consultation and basic interpersonal and communication skills

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate one's understanding of the prerequisites for consultation in one's own interactions with others

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Cardboard tubes or paper that can be rolled into a tube shape
- Chart paper and markers
- A copy of one of the quotations on Resource Page 99 for each student
- Copies of Resource Page 100

**Advance Preparation:**

Prepare a simple display—a plant, an attractive arrangement of rocks and twigs, a basket of fruit, etc.—to place in the center of the group, either on the table around which they sit or on the floor in the center of the circle.

Also prepare a copy of one quotation for each student from Resource Page 99. You may consider mounting that quotation on card stock or other nice paper.

1. Welcome students. Read aloud the following quotation:

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 43, p. 87*

2. Invite students to share examples of these spiritual qualities that they have noticed in the people around them. Encourage them also to share their own efforts to develop a spiritual quality of their choice.

3. Explain that these spiritual qualities not only draw confirmations from the “unseen Kingdom of Bahá,” but they also provide very practical benefits to the consultation itself. Briefly discuss: How do we think that these qualities make consultation more effective?

4. Provide students with cardboard tubes. Encourage them to look through their tubes at the display in the center of the group. Encourage students in turn to describe what they see through their tube, using as precise a language as possible. Record students' observations on chart paper.

5. After all students have shared their perspectives, briefly acknowledge similarities and differences in these descriptions. Then read aloud the following quotation:

The purpose of consultation is to show that the views of several individuals are assuredly preferable to one man, even as the power of a number of men is of course greater than the power of one man.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 1, p. 97*

## **TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES**

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Briefly discuss: How was our view of the display more complete when we took into account each person's perspective? How does consultation also help us to have a more accurate view of reality?

6. Explain that the spiritual practice of listening to others with care is an important component of consultation. Encourage students to work in pairs to practice this important spiritual requisite for consultation. In their pairs, invite students to take turns using their cardboard tubes to focus attention on another object in the classroom. One student will use the tube to focus on a very specific view and describe it as precisely as possible without naming the object; the other person will listen carefully to guess the object. Encourage them to pace their work so that each person has the opportunity to practice listening several times.
7. Reconvene the group; then discuss: When we're listening to others, what are some ways that we can focus our attention on what that person actually means to say? When we're speaking, how can we tell that someone else is listening and cares about what we say? Record student ideas on chart paper.
8. Read aloud the story on Resource Page 98, in which a Unitarian minister, Mr. Howard Colby Ives describes the way that 'Abdu'l-Bahá listened to people. Briefly discuss: How did 'Abdu'l-Bahá listen? What ideas should we add to our chart about listening?
9. Provide each student with one of the quotations on Resource Page 99 or, if your class is larger than 5 students, organize the class into small teams and provide each team with one of these quotations. Allow individuals or teams time to read the quotation. Encourage all students to individually think of one important thing that they'd like to tell the group about that quotation. Circulate as necessary to assure that students understand their assigned quotation.
10. After all students are ready to share their ideas, suggest that the class practice listening to each other. Gather the class in a circle and use a talking stick or other object for students to hold while speaking. Explain that the person holding the stick is the only person that will speak and all others will listen with care. Go around the circle with each person speaking in turn and all others listening. After the circle is complete, allow a brief period of silence, then discuss: What new understanding did we gain about consultation from listening with care to each other? Listen carefully as students speak and warmly but silently acknowledge each contribution.
11. Distribute copies of Resource Page 100. Invite students to take about 5 minutes to reflect on their own progress developing spiritual requisites for consultation. Explain that this page will not be shared with anyone else. After students have had time to complete this self-reflection form, encourage them to select one specific action to practice over the coming week. They may write or draw a symbol of their personal goal at the bottom of this self-reflection form.
12. Encourage students to think carefully about their own goals for the coming week and to think of how, when, and where they can work toward their goals. Encourage them also to bring to the next class an example of a time that they pay conscious attention to listening to another person. Encourage them also to notice when they feel that someone else listens to them. Conclude the activity with prayers written by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION  
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**ACTIVITY 3: PRACTICING CONSULTATION**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate one's understanding of the prerequisites for consultation in one's own interactions with others

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

For each team of 3–4 students:

- Bucket, basket, or other container
- Tennis ball or other small ball

For each person:

- Large piece of paper (poster paper, several layers of newspaper, or other)
- 12" string

For the class:

- Nature pictures cut from magazines
- Poster paper or other paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers

**Advance Preparation:**

Identify an indoor or outdoor location for active movement. Decide where to place the starting line and finish bucket for each team of 3–4 students.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to think carefully about the past week and to come up with an example of a time that they consciously focused their attention on listening with care to another person. After a brief period of reflection, encourage them to share their examples in the whole group: What happened and what happened after that? What difference did listening make to the people with us?

Encourage them also to share examples of times that they noticed others also listening.

2. Read aloud the following statements from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Universal House of Justice. Explain to the class that they are going to explore the way in which consultation can be used to solve problems.

. . . The happiness and greatness, the rank and station, the pleasure and peace, of an individual have never consisted in his personal wealth, but rather in his excellent character, his high resolve, the breadth of his learning, and his ability to solve difficult problems.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, p. 23

It should be borne in mind that all consultation is aimed at arriving at a solution to a problem.

The Universal House of Justice, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 179

3. Organize the class into teams of 3–4 students.
4. Provide each person with stiff paper and string.
5. Place a bucket in an open area for each team. Explain that the bucket must stay at this place and cannot be moved or touched once in place.
6. For each team, designate a line 15 to 20 feet from the bucket.
7. Give each team the assignment of moving a tennis ball from the line and dropping it in the bucket.

Rules:

- Bucket cannot be moved or touched.
- Line cannot be moved.
- Ball cannot be touched or picked up by any team member.
- Ball cannot be carried by moving team members. Team members can move, but not while the ball is in their possession.

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- Teams must consult with each other and agree on a plan before touching any of their materials.
  - After their first trial, teams may experiment as they refine their approach.
8. When all teams have designed their approach to the problem, invite them to demonstrate their answer to the problem. Applaud all!
  9. Briefly discuss: What did this activity teach us about consultation? Which spiritual qualities did we notice in each other as we consulted about our problem?
  10. Read again the following quotation:

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. Should they be graciously aided to acquire these attributes, victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.
  11. Remind students that they will have the opportunity in a future class to prepare to serve the community by preparing a deepening about consultation. Encourage students to work together to create a poster entitled “The Prime Requisites for Consultation.” Invite individuals to select one picture to illustrate a spiritual quality necessary for consultation. Encourage them to share their picture and the reason they selected it with the group.
  12. Encourage the class to work together to use their pictures and other materials provided to collaboratively design and create their poster to be used at this future deepening. Save this poster for use in Activity 5, page 124 of this Lesson Planning Guide.
  13. Encourage students to practice consulting in their home by asking their parents or other adults the question: What is a time that consultation helped you and how did it help you solve an important problem? Remember to invite students to share what they learn at the beginning of the next class.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no. 43, p. 87*

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**ACTIVITY 4: CONSULTATION AND ME**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** Reflect on one’s own development in acquiring the spiritual prerequisites for consultation

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** Demonstrate one’s understanding of the prerequisites for consultation in one’s own interactions with others

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Establishing a loving environment; Use of the power of reasoning

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 101
- Take Out Menu, Resource Page 102
- Let’s Eat scenario, Resource Page 103

**Advance Preparation:**

If desired, create a café atmosphere by writing the Take Out Menu on the board, draping a table with a tablecloth or other props for Steps 4–5, and serving snacks upon the completion of this activity.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their reflections and observations on the spiritual requisites for consultation. Encourage students to share the results of their conversations with their parents or other adults about consultation. Briefly discuss: What are we learning about consultation from our own experiences and from the experiences of others?
2. Invite students to recall some of the spiritual requisites for consultation. Invite students to share their reflections on their own efforts to develop these spiritual requisites if they like. Acknowledge all.
3. Provide copies of Resource Page 101. Read the quotations aloud in the whole group. Briefly discuss: What are some important new words or new ideas in these quotations? What do we think it could mean to befriend one another until we “become as a single body, one and all?” What evidence do we see in our own lives that Bahá’í youth can demonstrate the power and unity that come from true consultation?
4. Provide students with copies of the Let’s Eat scenario and refer them to the Take Out Menu. Invite the class to use consultation to arrive at a decision that fulfills the requirements of the situation. If the class is larger than 5–6 students, divide into smaller groups and invite each group to develop its own consultative solution to the scenario.
5. Circulate among students to provide encouragement as they work. If students experience frustration as they approach the problem, remind them of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s promise that as they strive to develop the spiritual requisites for consultation, “victory from the unseen Kingdom of Bahá shall be vouchsafed to them.” After allowing time for students to work, invite them to present their solution. Applaud all!
6. Read again the quotations on Resource Page 101. Again answer the questions provided in Step 3 above, this time applying them particularly to the group’s consultation in the Let’s Eat scenario.

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7. Encourage students to reflect on their own participation in the Let's Eat scenario, their current plans to develop the spiritual requisites for consultation, and affirm or modify their own self-development goals in light of that experience. Consider playing quiet background music during this reflection period.
8. Encourage students to write or affirm their goal on their copies of Resource Page 101 and to underline or star portions of the quotation that will help them remember exactly what it is they want to do. Encourage them to record how, when, and where they could take action toward their goals.
9. Conclude the activity with prayers for divine assistance.



## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

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### Resource Pages

#### Activity 2: Spiritual Requisites, Consultation, and Listening

His encouragement always was that the other should speak and He listen. There was never that eager tenseness, that restlessness so often met showing most plainly that the listener has the pat answer ready the moment he should have a chance to utter it. I have heard certain people described as “good listeners,” but never had I imagined such a “listener” as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It was more than a sympathetic absorption of what the ear received. It was as though the two individualities became one; as if He so closely identified Himself with the one speaking that a merging of spirits occurred which made a verbal response almost unnecessary. . . .

And when, under His encouraging sympathy, the interviewer became emptied of his words, there followed a brief interval of silence. There was no instant and complete outpouring of explanation and advice. He sometimes closed His eyes a moment as if He sought guidance from above Himself; sometimes sat and searched the questioner’s soul with a loving, comprehending smile that melted the heart. And when He finally spoke, and that modulated, resonant voice of music came, the words were so unexpected . . . that the questioner was at first somewhat bewildered, but always, with me at least, this was followed by a calmness, an understanding which went much deeper than the mind.

Howard Colby Ives, *Portal to Freedom*, pp. 55–56



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Activity 2: Spiritual Requisites, Consultation, and Listening

We, verily, have chosen courtesy, and made it the true mark of such as are nigh unto Him. Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 50

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold. . . . The members thereof must take counsel together in such wise that no occasion for ill-feeling or discord may arise. This can be attained when every member expresseth with absolute freedom his own opinion and setteth forth his argument. Should any one oppose, he must on no account feel hurt for not until matters are fully discussed can the right way be revealed. The shining spark of truth cometh forth only after the clash of differing opinions.

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 21

In accordance with the divine teachings in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle anyone and call him ignorant, saying: “You know not, but I know.” Rather, we should look upon others with respect, and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying: “Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found.”

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, pp. 298–99

Not infrequently, nay oftentimes, the most lowly, untutored and inexperienced among the friends will, by the sheer inspiring force of selfless and ardent devotion, contribute a distinct and memorable share to a highly involved discussion in any given Assembly.

Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, p. 79

It is good that people should turn to God and beseech His aid in solving their problems and guiding their acts, indeed every day of their lives, if they feel the desire to do so. But they cannot possibly impose what they feel to be their guidance on anyone else . . . as Bahá'u'lláh has expressly laid down the law of consultation and never indicated that anything else superseded it.

Shoghi Effendi, *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 34

## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

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### Activity 2: Spiritual Requisites, Consultation, and Listening

#### Self-Reflection

The prime requisites for them that take counsel together are purity of motive, radiance of spirit, detachment from all else save God, attraction to His Divine Fragrances, humility and lowliness amongst His loved ones, patience and long-suffering in difficulties and servitude to His exalted Threshold.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no. 43, p. 87*

Think about the ways you participate in consultation. Check the box that you think best describes the way you usually participate.

I do my best to focus on what is best for everyone, not just me.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I listen carefully to the person who is speaking.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I try to learn from what others are saying, even if I disagree.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I try not to let things distract my attention from the consultation.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I try not to distract other people’s attention from the consultation.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I ask questions and contribute my ideas freely.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I do not argue a point just to please myself.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

I remember the purpose of the consultation and try to help the group stay on track.

Mostly    Sometimes    Rarely

**MY GOAL FOR THIS WEEK:**

Activity 4: Consultation and Me

Settle all things, both great and small, by consultation. Without prior consultation, take no important step in your own personal affairs. Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another's projects and plans. Grieve over one another. Let none in the whole country go in need. Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 178

Paralleling the growth of his inner life through prayer, meditation, service, and study of the teachings, Bahá'í youth have the opportunity to learn in practice the very functioning of the Order of Bahá'u'lláh. . . . They can develop the wonderful skill of Bahá'í consultation, thus tracing new paths of human corporate action. Consultation is no easy skill to learn, requiring as it does the subjugation of all egotism and unruly passions, the cultivation of frankness and freedom of thought as well as courtesy, openness of mind, and wholehearted acquiescence in a majority decision. In this field Bahá'í youth may demonstrate the efficiency, the vigor, the access of unity which arise from true consultation and, by contrast, demonstrate the futility of partisanship, lobbying, debate, secret diplomacy, and unilateral action which characterize modern affairs.

The Universal House of Justice, *Wellspring of Guidance*, p. 96

## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

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### Activity 4: Consultation and Me

## LET'S EAT!

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You are one of a group of friends who are ordering take-out lunch from a local deli. You must decide what to order. The following facts apply:

- You must order from the Take Out Menu
- You have \$15 to spend (ignore tax and tip).
- All members of the group have certain requirements that must be met:

Stubby      No dairy

Ma'Jonn      No meat

Frantiqué      Will eat seafood or eggs, but prefers veggies

Mable      No wheat bread

Loupie      Doesn't want a sandwich

RDZ      Wants a grilled sandwich

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## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL PREREQUISITES

### Activity 4: Consultation and Me

## TAKE OUT MENU

### Special Sandwiches

All Special Sandwiches are served on a crusty whole-wheat bun (tortilla wrap also available). Shredded Lettuce, Sliced Tomato, Alfalfa Sprouts, Sliced or Diced Onion are included.

All sandwiches are served with potato chips or corn chips.

Any sandwich (except wraps) can be grilled—add \$0.75.

		Full	Half
<b>Lefty's Favorite</b>	Pepper-Rubbed Sliced Beef, Dijon, Choice of Pickle	4.50	2.99
<b>High Noon</b>	Avocado, Gouda, Swiss	4.99	3.25
<b>Mediterranean</b>	Pesto, Provolone, Sun-Dried Tomatoes	4.75	3.15
<b>Italian</b>	Hard Salami, Gorgonzola, Vinaigrette	5.50	3.50
<b>Cheese Plus</b>	Monterrey Jack, Artichoke Hearts, Sharp Cheddar	4.99	3.25
<b>Classic</b>	Ham, Turkey, Swiss, Choice of Four Veggie Extras	5.99	4.25
<b>South of the Border</b>	Cheddar, Chorizo, Jalapeños, Hot Sauce	4.75	3.15
<b>Mexican Wrap</b>	Cheddar, Chipotle Shrimp, Avocado	5.75	4.15
<b>Today's Special</b>	Roast Beef, Sharp Cheddar, Fire-Roasted Peppers	5.75	4.15
<b>Today's Soups</b>	Miso Tofu, Cool Gazpacho, Creamy Potato	2.49	1.99

### Build Your Own Sandwiches

Bread Choices: Whole Wheat, Sourdough, Pumpernickel, Rye, Corn or Wheat Tortilla

Veggie Choices: Lettuce, Tomato, Onions, Sprouts, Pickles, Black Olives

	Full	Half
<b>Roast Beef</b>	4.65	3.05
<b>Roast Turkey</b>	4.65	3.05
<b>Ham</b>	4.50	2.99
<b>Salami</b>	4.50	2.99
<b>Bologna</b>	4.25	2.89
<b>Chicken, Tuna, or Egg Salad</b>	4.65	3.05
<b>Humus and Artichoke</b>	4.25	2.89
<b>Lentil Walnut Paté</b>	4.25	2.89
<b>Tabouli Salad</b>	4.50	2.99
<b>BLT</b>	4.25	2.89
<b>Peanut Butter &amp; Jelly</b>	2.75	1.99
<b>Add Cheese (Any Kind)</b>	1.00	0.50

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories and Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:  
“An Invisible Tool,” Mar/Apr 1999

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

The Virtues: Activity & Coloring Book, Ages 5–7  
The Virtues: Activity & Coloring Book, Ages 8–10  
Flowers of One Garden

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:  
“Consultation Helpers,” Sp Ed 1997  
“Peaceful Planning/Messy Meeting,” Sep/Oct 2006

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:  
“A Rock is Patient,” Nov/Dec 2001  
  
“Courtesy,” *We Want to Grow Up*  
“Love is the Key,” *Unity in Diversity*  
“Patience,” “Truthfulness,” “Obedience,” “Courtesy,” *Come and Sing*

**Other Favorite Resources:**

*Consultation: A Compilation*  
*Bahá’í Consultation Workbook*  
*Consultation: A Universal Lamp of Guidance*  
*Developing Genius: Getting the Most Out of Group Decision-Making*  
*Developing Patterns of Community Life: A Guide to Consultation: The Process of Social and Economic Development for Bahá’í Communities*  
*Consultation Part 1: Developing the Requisites of Consultation: Participant Packet*  
*Spiritual Assemblies and Bahá’í Consultation: A Compilation*

If you find any additional resources, please contact 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).