

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

**CONSULTATION AND COOPERATION IN
DECISION-MAKING**

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

Therefore, true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love. Members must love each other in the spirit of fellowship in order that good results may be forthcoming. Love and fellowship are the foundation.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 72–73

When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail—that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs—development and growth are inevitable.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 197

TOPIC: CONSULTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know from the Bahá'í writings and other sources in Bahá'í literature how the process of Bahá'í consultation enables decision-making

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Bring one quotation about the process of consultation to class.
- Tell stories of the effects of consultation in decision-making.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the importance of the expression of all opinions and views in the process of consultation
- To understand the value of group decision-making for both group and individual concerns
- To understand individual and group responsibility in carrying out any decision taken through consultation

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss various ways individuals and groups arrive at decisions. Enumerate positive and negative aspects of each and how we maximize the positive with consultation.
- Use examples from the arts to experience what happens if a note is missing from a chord, or a color from a painting, to illustrate the importance of all views and expressions.
- Explore ways of encouraging everyone's opinion.
- Through games, show how validity of a decision can only come forth through everyone's application of it into action. For example, use a puzzle game. Give each person a piece or pieces of a puzzle and demonstrate how the final picture, i.e., decision, can only be complete when all students verify that their piece fits and then take action to connect it to other pieces.

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SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive the meaning of the principle of Unity in Diversity in the process of decision-making

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Illustrate how diversity and different opinions enhance consultation using varied collections of rocks, flowers, or paper dolls.
- Use various examples from literature showing how different characters contribute their own perspectives toward a more complete understanding of the truth (e.g., seven mice who put their perspectives together to identify an elephant).
- Make a dramatic presentation of a story from literature showing how each character in a scene can shed light on truth.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To share the understanding of the importance of consultation in decision-making with others

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Keep a weekly journal of situations in which one could have—or did—use consultation. Then create stories or skits from these encounters.
- Perform and exhibit artistic representations of this topic for Feast or firesides.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION
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TOPIC: CONSULTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: CONSULTATION OR COMEDY?

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To know from the Bahá'í writings and other sources how the process of Bahá'í consultation enables decision-making.

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive the meaning of the principle of Unity in Diversity in the process of decision-making

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To share one's understanding of the importance of consultation in decision-making with others

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of consultation; Establishing a loving environment; Use of the power of reasoning; Use of independent investigation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Plain paper and pencils
- Copies of Resource Pages 112–13

Advance Preparation:

Display the following questions in the classroom:

- What is the situation? What happens? What happens after that? What is the result?
- Who are the characters? What spiritual qualities do they have or lack?
- What can this story tell us about true consultation?

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their efforts to develop their own spiritual qualities in service to others over the past week. Acknowledge all.

2. Invite them also to share their reflections and observations regarding the role of consultation in decision-making. Briefly discuss: Is group discussion the same thing as consultation? Why or why not? Does group discussion always lead to a good decision? Why or why not?

3. Read aloud the following observation that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made during his trip to America in 1912:

In this Cause consultation is of vital importance, but spiritual conference and not the mere voicing of personal views is intended. In France I was present at a session of the senate, but the experience was not impressive. Parliamentary procedure should have for its object the attainment of the light of truth upon questions presented and not furnish a battleground for opposition and self-opinion. Antagonism and

contradiction are unfortunate and always destructive to truth. In the parliamentary meeting mentioned, altercation and useless quibbling were frequent; the result, mostly confusion and turmoil; even in one instance a physical encounter took place between two members. It was not consultation but comedy.

. . . Therefore, true consultation is spiritual conference in the attitude and atmosphere of love. Members must love each other in the spirit of fellowship in order that good results may be forthcoming. Love and fellowship are the foundation.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 72–73

Briefly discuss: What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá see at the French Parliament? What could have changed this experience into true consultation?

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4. Organize the class into 2 groups so that each group studies a different story. Provide groups with copies of either Resource Page 112 or Resource Page 113. In their groups, encourage students to read their story aloud and discuss the questions provided.
5. Invite them to present their stories in the form of a role-play for the rest of the class. Applaud all!
6. In the whole group discuss the questions:
 - Write a favorite quotation about consultation on the cover of this booklet.
 - Write the title “Consultation” at the top of the other 3 pages.
 - Write the following words at intervals on each page:
 - People
 - Place
 - Topic
 - Results

- What missing elements in these stories could have turned them from comedy into consultation?
- What happens when we insist on our own views without listening to others?
- What happens if we always let others tell us what to think or what to do?
- How can true consultation help us make good decisions?

7. Provide each student with a sheet of plain paper. Encourage students to fold their papers in half to make a small booklet for recording their efforts to initiate true consultation with others over the coming week. Suggest that students:

Explain that students may use these words as headings for recording various aspects of the consultations they initiate with others.

8. Encourage students to brainstorm a list of opportunities that they have to consult with friends at school or in other activities. Record student ideas on chart paper.
9. Encourage students to use their booklets to record 3 consultations that they initiate with another person before the next class. Encourage students to bring these booklets to the next class to be able to share at the beginning of the next class.

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ACTIVITY 2: CONVERSATION, CONSULTATION, AND DECISION-MAKING

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know from the Bahá'í writings and other sources how the process of Bahá'í consultation enables decision-making

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the value of group decision-making for both group and individual concerns

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive the meaning of the principle of Unity in Diversity in the process of decision-making

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 114

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share to share any spiritual experiences or important observations they've had over the past week. Acknowledge all.
2. If students completed the previous activity, explain that they will have the opportunity to share their notes about consultation after the group conducts an experiment.
3. Invite students to stand with you in a circle. Encourage all to stand on their tiptoes and raise their hands in the air while they repeat after you: Ha, ha, ha, hee, hee, hee, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, huh, huh, huh. Teachers should participate with students in this activity.
4. Encourage students to begin to move on their tiptoes around the circle and wave their hands in the air as they continue to repeat: Ha, ha, ha, hee, hee, hee, hi, hi, hi, ho, ho, ho, huh, huh, huh. Continue repeating, waving, and tiptoeing around the circle for about 3 minutes or until the entire group is laughing. Applaud all!
5. Invite students to take a seat and then briefly discuss: In what way did this experience help create a positive environment for consultation? How many of us feel ready to share our ideas freely and listen with care to each other?
6. Invite students to share their notes about consultation. If students do not have notes about consultation, encourage them to think deeply about conversations that they've had with their friends over the past week. Briefly discuss: To what extent do we feel that the conversations that we have with others reflect the principles of consultation?
7. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 114. Read these quotations aloud one by one, stopping after each quotation to assure understanding. Then discuss:
 - What is freedom of conscience? What are the benefits of freedom of conscience?
 - How can we learn to express our views frankly and courteously? How can we encourage others to express their views?
 - In group consultation, why is it important to hear all views before making a decision? Why is it important for everyone to support the decision?
8. Invite the class to work with you to demonstrate the beauty of self-expression and group harmony: Encourage each person to individually think of a simple clapping pattern. Invite students to demonstrate their individual clapping pattern as you go around the circle. Briefly discuss: How are we demonstrating freedom of expression?

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9. Then encourage the group to evolve their individual clapping patterns into a more beautiful pattern by harmonizing their powers of self-expression into a coherent whole. Encourage students to begin clapping their same individual pattern, and then gradually change that pattern to harmonize with another person, and then with more and more people until the whole group is clapping in some complex rhythmic pattern. When you conclude the clapping, acknowledge all. Then briefly discuss: How did our demonstration illustrate Unity in Diversity in decision-making?
10. Encourage students to look for opportunities to share their views frankly and also to work for group harmony during the coming week. Remember to invite them to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.

TOPIC: CONSULTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Resource Pages

Activity 1: Consultation or Comedy?

THE OTTERS AND THE FOX

Two otters were fishing one day and had the good fortune to catch a huge trout, three feet long and almost as heavy as they were. The trout put up a great fight and both otters were completely exhausted by the time they landed their fish.

When the trout was safely grounded, the two friends began to quarrel about how to divide their catch. They could not agree on who should get the head and who should get the tail, and to whom belonged the greater share.

Along came a fox and stopped to listen to their dispute. The two otters turned to him.

“We caught this great trout together,” they explained. “But we cannot agree on how to divide him between us. Will you help us make a fair decision?”

The fox said gravely: “I have judged many cases like this, and I am known far and wide for my skill and fairness in such matters.” The fox cut the trout in three parts, and asked: “Who saw the trout first?”

“I did,” said one otter. “Then to you belongs the head,” said the fox, and gave him the head.

He asked again: “Who helped secure the fish on the ground?”

“I did,” said the second otter. “Then to you justly belongs the tail,” said the fox, and gave him the fish tail.

“But what of the body of the fish?” asked the otters.

“That is my share for acting as judge,” said the fox as he ran off with most of the great trout in his mouth.

When the fox arrived home, his wife exclaimed admiringly: “My dear husband, how very clever you are! Tell me how did you, a land animal, catch so great a fish?”

“I caught him without having to go near the water,” replied her husband. “I met two otters who knew how to catch fish together, but they did not know how to agree together when it came to dividing him. And their quarrel made me a better fisher than either of them.”

Source: *Fables of India*, Joseph Gaer (1955)

TOPIC: CONSULTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Activity 1: Consultation or Comedy?

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR DONKEY

(Aesop's Fable)

A miller and his son were driving their donkey to market. They had not gone far when some girls saw them and broke out laughing.

"Look!" they cried. "Look at those fools! How silly they are to be trudging along on foot when the donkey might be carrying one of them on his back."

This seemed to make sense, so the father lifted his son onto the donkey and walked along contentedly by his side. They trod on for a while until they met an old man who spoke to the son scornfully.

"You should be ashamed of yourself, you lazy rascal. What do you mean by riding when your poor old father has to walk? It shows that no one respects age anymore. The least you can do is get down and let your father rest his old bones."

Red faced with shame, the son got down and made his father get onto the donkey's back.

They had gone only a little further when they met a group of young fellows who mocked them.

"What a cruel old man!" jeered one of the fellows. "There he sits, selfish and comfortable, while the poor boy has to stumble along the dusty road to keep up with him."

So the father lifted his son up, and the two of them rode along. However, before they reached the market, a townsman stopped them.

"Have you no feeling for dumb creatures?" he shouted. "The way you load that little animal is a crime. You two men are better able to carry the poor little beast than he you!"

Wanting to do the right thing, the miller and his son got off the donkey, tied his legs together, slung him on a pole, and carried him on their shoulders. When people saw this spectacle, they laughed so loudly that the donkey was frightened. The animal kicked through the cords that bound him, fell off the pole into the river and drowned.

Source: <http://www.esl-classroom.com/reading/please.html>

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TOPIC: CONSULTATION IN DECISION-MAKING

Activity 2: Conversation, Consultation, and Decision-Making

When freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and right of speech prevail—that is to say, when every man according to his own idealization may give expression to his beliefs—development and growth are inevitable.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 197

Every one of the friends should highly praise the other and each should regard himself as evanescent and as naught in the presence of others. All matters should be consulted upon in the meeting and whatever is the majority vote should be carried out. I swear by the one true God, it is better that all should agree on a wrong decision, than for one right vote to be singled out, inasmuch as single votes can be sources of dissension, which lead to ruin. Whereas, if in one case they take a wrong decision, in a hundred other cases they will adopt right decisions, and concord and unity are preserved. This will offset any deficiency, and will eventually lead to the righting of the wrong.

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

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories and Articles:

Brilliant Star magazine:

“An Invisible Tool,” Mar/Apr 1999

“Consultation on the Bus,” Mar/Apr 1999

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Flowers of One Garden

Activities:

Brilliant Star magazine:

“Consultation Helpers,” Sp Ed 1997

“Complaining or Consulting?” Mar/Apr 2006

Music:

“The Unifier,” *Wings*

“Use a Word,” *Teaching Peace*

“Places in the Choir,” *Down the Do-Re-Mi*

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

Channels of Divine Guidance: Consultation Part 2: Consulting in Unity and Harmony: Participant Packet

Overcoming Barriers to Unity: An Essay on Group Harmony

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.

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

THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
LOVE, OBEDIENCE, SERVICE**

The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. . . . The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 22

In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 22

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To identify from the Bahá'í writings the basic steps in Bahá'í consultation

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read the steps in the process of consultation.
- Chart the steps of consultation, as listed in *Consultation: A Compilation*, no. 10.
- Use pictures from various parts of nature to represent each step of consultation.



WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand how each step of consultation builds upon the previous step and contributes to the arrival at truth and a wise decision

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Illustrate the steps of consultation leading to a unified decision by using a staircase, a ladder, or footprints on the floor to arrive at a beautiful place.
- Sketch the concepts from the chart on Bahá'í consultation, as suggested above.
- Play the game “Customs of the Kingdom” (*Brilliant Star*, Nov/Dec 1993, p. 18).



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern one's own responsibility in using the steps of consultation to enable the group to reach a decision in love and harmony

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss how the steps of consultation enable the group to reach a decision in love and harmony.
- Role-play a consultation demonstrating how each individual can contribute to a harmonious process.
- Examine and discuss the differences between a true consultation in which differing perceptions are shared, and a non-harmonious process.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To describe the steps taken in Bahá'í consultation
- To apply the steps of consultation in one's own personal decision-making

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Share ways in which learners have used consultation at home or in school.
- Perform or exhibit a skit or human sculpture showing the steps of consultation.
- Develop individual plans to apply the steps of consultation on a daily basis and report on progress.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION
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TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: STEPS IN CONSULTATION

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To identify from the Bahá'í writings the basic steps in Bahá'í consultation

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand how each step builds upon the previous step and contributes to the arrival at truth and a wise decision

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 126
- Chart paper and markers

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their observations and experiences about consultation. Have they had opportunities to share their views frankly and courteously with others? Have they had the opportunity to listen with detachment to others? Have they had the opportunity to use consultation to promote harmony?
2. Listen carefully and acknowledge all. To the extent desired, review the principles of consultation studied in previous activities in this Lesson Planning Guide.
3. Explain that 'Abdu'l-Bahá outlines a step-by-step process for consultation and that the class will study this process carefully. The class will also have the opportunity to memorize all or part of this quotation.
4. Provide students with copies of Resource Page 126. In the whole group read through the quotation together. Encourage students to identify new, important, or interesting words. Define or briefly discuss these words, using dictionaries if desired.
5. Still in the whole group, read the quotation aloud a second time, stopping after each sentence. Work together to create a list of steps for consultation. Record this list on chart paper.
6. Next organize the class into teams of two or more. Invite each team to take responsibility for one or more sentences in this important quotation. In their teams, invite students to:
 - Copy their sentences on chart paper using their best handwriting.
 - Add simple dignified decoration to the quotation. A simple shape could be used over and over as decoration.
 - Think of a real-life example of that step to consultation.
 - Work together to memorize their portion of the quotation, using repetition, rhythm, melody, dignified movement, or any other favorite means for memorization.
 - Prepare to share their memorized sentences, chart paper, and example in the whole group.
7. Invite teams to share their sentences in the whole group. Encourage teams to present their steps in order, to use strong eloquent voices, and to step forward as they recite. Applaud all!
8. Post the chart paper in the classroom. Save these posters to share with others in a future activity.

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

9. Reconvene the whole group. Encourage students to turn to the person beside them. In pairs encourage students to take turns telling each other the steps of consultation.
10. Briefly discuss with the whole group: Why is it important for us to know the steps in consultation? How do these steps build on each other to help us learn the truth and make wise decisions?
11. Encourage students to share these steps with at least one other person before the next class. Challenge students to consider memorizing the entire quotation before the next class.

ACTIVITY 2: PRACTICING CONSULTATION

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To discern one's own responsibility in using the steps of consultation to enable the group to reach a decision in love and harmony

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To apply the steps of consultation in one's own personal decision-making

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Posters created in previous activity, if available
 - Reference to Resource Pages 112, 113, 126
 - Chart paper and markers
1. Welcome students. Invite students to share the results of their conversations with others about consultation. Encourage them to recite all or part of the quotation on Resource page 126. Invite them also to share other highlights or challenges on their path of service to others.
 2. Convene a sharing circle in which students respond to a question in turn. Use an object that may be passed from student to student. Only the person holding the object will speak. All others will listen attentively to the speaker. After each person answers the question, the person to the speaker's right will restate the speaker's answer in his or her own words. Consider using questions that may encourage a wide range of responses, such as the following:
 - Round 1—What is a truly delicious meal?
 - Round 2—Who is a great singer and why?
 - Round 3—What would be a totally excellent day?
 3. After completing the third round, briefly discuss: Was our sharing circle a good example of consultation? Why or why not?
 4. Read aloud or recite again the quotation on Resource Page 126. Review the step-by-step approach to consultation suggested in the quotation. If the class completed the previous activity, consider inviting the teams to briefly share their posters again. Continue to save these posters for future opportunities for sharing.

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TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

5. Refer to the story of the otters and the fox on Resource Page 112. Briefly discuss: What steps in consultation were missing from this story? How might the story have ended if the otters and the fox had followed this step-by-step approach to consultation? How can true consultation help us achieve our goals?
6. Refer to the story of the miller, his son, and their donkey on Resource Page 113. Briefly discuss: How might this story have ended if all those people had consulted together? What might have happened if even the father and son had consulted fully with each other before they began their journey? How can true consultation protect us from making harmful decisions?
7. Organize the class into groups of at least 3 students. Encourage students to carefully follow the steps of consultation to choose a machine to pantomime for the rest of the class. The rest of the class—or even just the teachers if your class is very small—will guess the machine.
8. After allowing time for the students to consult, decide, and practice pantomiming their machines, invite the teams to perform for the class. Applaud all!
9. Then briefly discuss: How did the spirit of harmony assist the consultation? How did calling on divine assistance influence the consultation? How did suggestions from different individuals help make the consultation successful? What was the role of courtesy, detachment, and listening? Were the groups unanimous in their decision or did they use the majority vote? How did it feel to be part of a successful consultation? What are some everyday occasions in which we can use these steps for consultation?
10. Encourage students to think carefully and plan to initiate at least one consultation with friends, family members, or another group before the next class. Remember to invite students to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.

ACTIVITY 3: CONSULTATION IN THE LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand how each step builds upon the previous step and contributes to the arrival at truth and a wise decision

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To apply the steps of consultation in one's own personal decision-making

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. + 5–10 MINUTES IN A COMMUNITY GATHERING

Materials Needed:

- Copies of Resource Page 127
 - Paper for writing a letter
1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to use the steps of consultation. Acknowledge all.
 2. Distribute copies of Resource Page 127. Read aloud the quotations in the whole group. Discuss: What do these quotations say should be important topics of consultation for a Local Spiritual Assembly? Why do we think these topics are so important to the well-being of humanity?

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

3. Invite students to imagine their community some time in the future: Many people have declared their belief in Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í community is now about 50% of the entire community. The members of the class have been elected to serve on the Local Spiritual Assembly and this is the first meeting of the Assembly. One of the important tasks of this meeting is to organize the agenda for a full-day retreat of this newly elected Local Spiritual Assembly.
4. Encourage the students to assume the role of Assembly members and use the steps of consultation to plan their full-day retreat. If your class is large, consider forming more than one “Assembly.”
5. After allowing time for student consultation, encourage them to share their plans and then debrief their consultation:
 - How did they feel about the consultation? Were all voices heard? Did diverse perspectives lead to a unified plan? If not, do they understand why?
 - To what degree do they feel they followed the steps of consultation? Why or why not?
 - Why do they think that the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is based on elected consultative bodies rather than individuals?
 - How is consultation in a Spiritual Assembly the same and how is it different from community consultation at the Nineteen Day Feast? How is it the same and how is it different from consultation in a family or among a group of friends?
6. Invite students to consider their own community at the present time. Encourage them to consider such possibilities for real consultation as the Nineteen Day Feast, an upcoming cluster reflection meeting, or other meeting. Invite students to consider offering to serve that gathering by preparing a short presentation about consultation that may include reciting memorized quotations, preparing readings, showing artwork prepared in other activities, or creating a short report of the important principles learned. Using the steps of consultation, encourage them to plan a short deepening (5–10 minutes) for the local community to share at an upcoming gathering.
7. Encourage them also to write a short letter to the appropriate institution offering their service to that gathering.
8. Provide students with plain paper or journals and encourage them to write or draw in their journals their response to the following question: How can I use the steps of consultation to be of service to my family and my community?
9. Conclude the activity with prayers for the institution of your Local Spiritual Assembly.

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TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

ACTIVITY 4: CONSULTATION MEANS FINDING OUT

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe the steps taken in Bahá'í consultation

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 128

Advance Preparation:

Learn the song on Resource Page 128 to be able to teach the class. They will be able to use this very simple song to teach younger children about consultation. You may listen to the melody of this song on the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to initiate consultation over the past week. Acknowledge all.
younger children. Invite the students to consider using simple gestures with the song to assist them in learning it and teaching it.
2. Suggest that one way to teach younger children about consultation is to use the song on Resource Page 128. Teach the song and invite students to consider how they might teach it to
3. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to teach children about consultation at a future time.

ACTIVITY 5: TEACHING YOUNGER CHILDREN TO CONSULT

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To describe the steps taken in Bahá'í consultation

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN. + 15–20 MIN. WITH YOUNGER CHILDREN

Materials Needed:

- Posters made for previous activities of this Lesson Planning Guide:
 - p. 78 (The Role of Consultation, Activity 1)
 - p. 94 (Spiritual Prerequisites, Activity 3)
 - p. 120 (Steps Used in Consultation, Activity 1)
- Chart paper and markers

Advance Preparation:

Identify possibilities for the class to teach younger children about consultation, such as visiting a younger class at your Bahá'í school, visiting a local neighborhood Bahá'í class, gathering younger children at the Nineteen Day Feast or other community gathering, or perhaps during an after school activity in the local community. Consider whether you'd like your class to plan a very short lesson for young children and teach it the same day, or, if you prefer for the class to plan their lesson one day and teach it at another time.

If you haven't already completed Activity 4 above, learn the song on Resource Page 128 to be able to teach the class. They will be able to use this very simple song to teach younger children about consultation. You may listen to the melody of this song on the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to initiate consultation over the past week. Acknowledge all.
2. Refer to the “What Is Consultation?” chart created in Activity 1, p. 78 of this Lesson Planning Guide. Briefly discuss: What would we like to change or add to our chart? Using a different colored marker, adjust the chart as desired.
3. Briefly discuss: What is the most important thing that we’ve learned about consultation over the last several classes? What is so important that you’d like to teach it to children? How do you think we could teach children these things? Record student responses on chart paper.
4. Suggest that one way to teach children about consultation is to use the consultation song learned in the previous activity, using Resource Page 128. Sing the song as a reminder.
5. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to teach children about consultation on the day, time, and location that you’ve identified.
6. Using the steps to consultation on Resource Page 126, consult in the whole group to plan a short lesson for children. In your consultation, decide if you’d like to use some or all of the posters created in the activities on pages 78, 94, and 120 in your lesson for children. Decide if you’d like to use either of the stories on Resource Pages 112 or 113. Consider selecting one or more short quotations to share as part of your lesson.
7. Consider the questions:
 - How would we like to greet the children?
 - How would we like to begin the lesson or introduce the topic?
 - What will we do next? And what will we do after that?
 - How will we conclude the lesson and say good-bye?
 - How will we be able to tell that the children understand the most important ideas?
 - Who will be responsible for what?
8. Allow time for individuals or small teams to prepare to teach their part of this short lesson; then practice teaching the lesson.
9. Accompany your class as they teach their short lesson.
10. Warmly acknowledge their service and then debrief the experience: What did we learn from teaching this lesson to children? How can we build on this experience to also teach our friends?
11. Conclude the activity with prayers for the children they taught.

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

Resource Pages

Activity 1: Steps of Consultation

The first condition is absolute love and harmony amongst the members of the assembly. . . . The second condition:—They must when coming together turn their faces to the Kingdom on High and ask aid from the Realm of Glory. They must then proceed with the utmost devotion, courtesy, dignity, care and moderation to express their views. They must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and persistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden. 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. It is again not permitted that any one of the honored members object to or censure, whether in or out of the meeting, any decision arrived at previously, though that decision be not right, for such criticism would prevent any decision from being enforced.

In short, whatsoever thing is arranged in harmony and with love and purity of motive, its result is light. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá’í Administration*, p. 22

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

Activity 3: Consultation in the Local Spiritual Assembly

When in session it behooveth them to converse, on behalf of the servants of God, on matters dealing with the affairs and interests of the public. For instance, teaching the Cause of God must be accorded precedence, inasmuch as it is a matter of paramount importance, so that thereby all men may enter the pavilion of unity and all the peoples of the earth be regarded even as a single body. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. 2, p. 44

Discussions must all be confined to spiritual matters that pertain to the training of souls, the instruction of children, the relief of the poor, the help of the feeble throughout all classes in the world, kindness to all peoples, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Holy Word. Should they endeavor to fulfill these conditions the Grace of the Holy Spirit shall be vouchsafed unto them, and that assembly shall become the centre of the Divine blessings, the hosts of Divine confirmation shall come to their aid, and they shall day by day receive a new effusion of Spirit.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *Bahá'í Administration*, pp. 22–23

Where large-scale enrollment is beginning to result, provision is being made to ensure that a certain percentage of the new believers immediately enter the institute program, for, as we have emphasized in several messages, these friends will be called upon to serve the needs of an ever-growing Bahá'í population. They help deepen the generality of the Bahá'ís by visiting them regularly; they teach children, arrange devotional meetings and form study circles, making it possible to sustain expansion.

All of this opens thrilling opportunities for Local Spiritual Assemblies. Theirs is the challenge, in collaboration with the Auxiliary Board members who counsel and assist them, to utilize the energies and talents of the swelling human resources available in their respective areas of jurisdiction both to create a vibrant community life and to begin influencing the society around them.

The Universal House of Justice, letter, 17 January 2003

Once communities are able to sustain the basic activities of Bahá'í life, a natural way to further their consolidation is to introduce small projects of social and economic development—for example, a literacy project, a project for the advancement of women or environmental preservation, or even a village school.

The Universal House of Justice, letter, 9 January 2001

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

Activity 4

Consultation Means Finding Out

Words: Roberta Christian

Music: Eugene Babcock

Con - sul - ta - tion means find - ing out, What ev - ery bo - dy is think - ing a - bout. You

lis - ten to them and they lis - ten to you, Then you all do what most of you want to do.

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures of music with lyrics: "Con - sul - ta - tion means find - ing out, What ev - ery bo - dy is think - ing a - bout. You". The second system has four measures of music with lyrics: "lis - ten to them and they lis - ten to you, Then you all do what most of you want to do." The piano accompaniment is in 6/8 time and features a steady bass line with chords.

From *Sing a New Song*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, p. 11
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**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE CONSULTATION AS A FOUNDATION
AND BASIC LAW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

TOPIC: THE STEPS USED IN CONSULTATION

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories and Articles:

Brilliant Star magazine:

“An Invisible Tool,” Mar/Apr 1999

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Flowers of One Garden

Activities:

Brilliant Star magazine:

“Consultation Helpers,” Sp Ed 1997

“A Trip to Consultation Station,” Jul/Aug 2005

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.