

**TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE  
THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH  
AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
EMPATHY, FRIENDLINESS, INITIATIVE**

Hearken ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein. . . . Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens. . . . Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 88

The American continent . . . giveth signs and evidences of very great advancement. Its future is even more promising, for its influence and illumination are far reaching. It will lead all nations spiritually.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 254

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### Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



#### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings regarding America's spiritual destiny, and the conditions regarding the fulfillment of that destiny

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memorize the prayer for America, passages from the Tablets of the Divine Plan, or other Bahá'í writings.
- List the themes from the prayer for America and the Tablets of the Divine Plan.
- Read and color "America's Spiritual Destiny" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1994, p. 1).
- Read and color "Tablets of the Divine Plan" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1994, pp. 16–17).
- Sing the Red Grammar song "Ensigns of the Most Great Peace" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1995, pp. 24–25).
- Complete the puzzle "America's Amazing Destiny" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1995, pp. 8–9).



#### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To gain insight into how the successive plans have contributed to the development of the Bahá'í community towards the fulfillment of its spiritual destiny
- To become familiar with the lives of those early believers who made significant contributions to the spiritual destiny of America
- To understand the conditions upon which America will fulfill its spiritual destiny

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and discuss "Time-line of Bahá'í Events" (*Brilliant Star*, May/June 1994, pp. 4–17).
- Read "Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh in Action" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1994, p. 22).
- Read about Martha Root in "The Decision" (*Brilliant Star*, Sp Ed 1994, pp. 25–26).
- In pairs, identify the actions necessary to fulfill the themes the prayer for America and Tablets of the Divine Plan or other Bahá'í writings.
- In pairs, read the Plan letters to United States for the last 3 or 4 Plans and list the main points. As a whole group, share lists and examine the progress and changes in the Plans through time.
- Research the early American believers using *Bahá'í World* volumes; *The American Bahá'í*; *Star of the West*; *The Bahá'í Faith in America: Early Expansion, 1900–1912*, vol. 2, by Robert Stockman; and individual biographies.

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### SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the difference between potential and actual achievement
- To discern the characteristics of, and the differences between, the Greater and Lesser Peace
- To perceive the spiritual qualities and actions necessary on the part of the American Bahá'í community in order to fulfill its destiny
- To reflect on one's own part in the realization of America's spiritual destiny

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Develop a plan of action for achieving one's part in America's destiny. Envision one's overall contribution at adulthood and the necessary steps to get there. Make a picture book of this commitment.
- Compare and contrast the Greater and Lesser Peace and make it into a poster illustrating these results.
- In small groups, develop lists of spiritual qualities necessary to fulfill the destiny of America and find pictures that demonstrate them. Alternatively, write stories about these qualities and how they assist in the realization of America's spiritual destiny, or find Hidden Words that describe these qualities.

### ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To prepare presentations concerning the role of the American Bahá'í community in the establishment of the Greater and Lesser Peace, and the necessary qualification of the Bahá'ís in order to fulfill America's spiritual destiny

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Exhibit and perform artwork on this topic.
- Recite Hidden Words describing these themes or spiritual qualities at the Nineteen Day Feast or other gatherings.

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### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: WALKING WITH THE SAME FEET

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings regarding America's spiritual destiny, and the conditions regarding the fulfillment of that destiny

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on one's own part in the realization of America's spiritual destiny

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Assorted shoes and boots of different sizes, shapes, styles, condition, including ceramic "shoes" used for planters, shoe-shaped toys, bronzed baby shoes, ornaments, etc., as described below
- Copies of Resource Page 143
- Chart paper and markers
- Simple art supplies, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Think creatively about shoes and objects in the shape of shoes such as books, toys, games, planters, ceramic dishes, and ornaments. To the extent possible, collect a wide variety of shoes of different sizes, shapes, and styles, including old shoes and objects made to look like shoes. Consider bringing a work boot, snow boot, tennis shoe, moccasin, ballet slipper, shoelaces, or other shoes and shoe-like items. Enlist the help of others, visit second-hand stores, or borrow examples of shoes worn by people of varying levels of wealth, different professions, different ages, and different ethnic or cultural groups in your community. If some people in your community rarely wear shoes, find a way to symbolize bare feet.

One's own shoes can be a sensitive topic for students as a variety of social and economic factors may influence the type of shoes that students wear. Remind students to share positive, courteous comments, and re-frame student comments that could be hurtful by relating them to your own shoes. For example, if a student says, "Ugh, no one would wear those old shoes!" you could say, "I feel that way about my shoes some days too," and then continue the activity. Do not allow student teasing or joking about other people's shoes.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their service since the last class. Acknowledge all.
2. Explain that one of the goals of this class is for us to work together to become more and more able to use our God-given talents in service to humanity. We strive to take one step after another in this service. Briefly discuss: What are some of the steps that we've taken in service to the people around us? What are we learning about the power of divine assistance as we take these steps?
3. Suggest that in this class we will focus our attention on our next steps of service by looking at our shoes.<sup>1</sup> Display the shoes you brought one at a time. Call attention to interesting characteristics of each shoe. Pass each shoe around the whole group and then gather the shoes in a display. Briefly discuss: What different sorts of shoes do we wear? When and where do we wear these shoes? What sorts of shoes do we like to wear? Why do we wear different shoes at different times? Do we always get to wear the shoes we like best? What factors influence the sorts of shoes we wear? Listen carefully and acknowledge all comments.

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<sup>1</sup> This activity is adapted from an activity in Sanders and Sanders, *Teaching Creativity Through Metaphor*, pp. 212–27.

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4. Invite students to remove one of their shoes and add it to the display. Encourage them to consider all the shoes in the display—including their own—to select one, and then complete the statement, “This shoe (or my shoe) is like me because . . .” Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: What new insights have we gained about ourselves from considering our shoes?
5. Return shoes to students and then invite the class to silently take their shoes for a walk. The goal will be to experience the walk from the point of view of the shoes. With all wearing their own shoes, lead students on a silent walk around the school, indoors and out, upstairs and down, on smooth and rough surfaces, walking, skipping, jogging, tiptoeing, etc., for about 10 minutes.
6. When back in the classroom briefly discuss: What were your shoes “thinking” as we began our walk? What parts of the walk did your shoes like best? What might different sorts of shoes be thinking or feeling at different places in the walk? What could our shoes tell us about the way we work together as a class? What could they tell us about the best way to welcome new people when they join the class?
7. Read aloud the following Hidden Word:
8. Briefly discuss: What do we think Bahá'u'lláh might mean when He says that we should “walk with the same feet”? What could our shoes tell us about “walking with the same feet”?
9. Read aloud the following anecdote in which Nabil, the chronicler of *The Dawn-Breakers*, records the experience of himself and his friends when they had the supreme bounty of living near Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad.

Many a night . . . no less than ten persons subsisted on no more than a pennyworth of dates. No one knew to whom actually belonged the shoes, the cloaks, or the robes that were to be found in their houses. Whoever went to the bazaar could claim that the shoes upon his feet were his own, and each one who entered the presence of Bahá'u'lláh could affirm that the cloak and robe he then wore belonged to him. Their own names they had forgotten, their hearts were emptied of aught else except adoration for their Beloved. . . . O, for the joy of those days, and the gladness and wonder of those hours!

Nabil-i-A'zam, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 137

Discuss: What brought these early believers joy? In what way could they be “walking with the same feet?”

**O Children of Men!**

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Hidden Words*, Arabic no. 68

10. Explain that as we take steps to implement this pivotal principle of the oneness of humanity, we're also taking steps needed to fulfill America's spiritual destiny. Explain that America can mean the United States, North America, or the entire western hemisphere and that the destiny of America is part of the destiny of the entire world.
11. Distribute copies of Resource Page 143, The Prayer for America. Eloquently read this prayer aloud in the whole group.
12. Encourage students to identify and define new words and to discuss: What is America called to do? Record student ideas on chart paper and save this list for the next activity.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ➤**

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13. Encourage students to think of all the people they know at school or in their neighborhood and to silently identify one or more individuals that they feel might have very different experiences from their own. This individual could be a newcomer to the area, an elder, a young child, or someone who speaks a different language. Encourage students to find a way to “walk with the same feet” as that individual for a brief period of time each day.
14. In the whole group brainstorm a list of ways that students could “walk with the same feet” as their selected individuals. If desired, you may add such ideas as pray for that person, imagine oneself in that person’s shoes, greet that person, initiate a friendly conversation with that person, ask that person a friendly question such as, “How are you today?”, walk side by side with that person on the way to class or to the corner store, etc. The possibilities are limitless! Record student ideas on chart paper.
15. Encourage students to write that person’s name in one of the shoe drawings on Resource Page 143 and to write one or more actions that they plan to take to “walk with the same feet” as that person before the next class. As time permits, students may also decorate these pages. Remember to invite students to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.

**ACTIVITY 2: EXPLORING AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings regarding America's spiritual destiny, and the conditions regarding the fulfillment of that destiny

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the conditions upon which America will fulfill its spiritual destiny.

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 144
- Chart paper and markers
- Plain paper and pencils

**Advance Preparation:**

Consider displaying all or some of the same shoes gathered for the previous activity in your classroom.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to “walk with the same feet” as another person since the last class. Acknowledge all. Briefly discuss: What new insights have we had about the principle of oneness since the last class?
2. Remind students that this same principle of oneness links the destiny of America to our own destinies, and to the destiny of the whole earth. Explain that the sacred writings of Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá provide an astonishing and exciting destiny for America and that we can help bring that destiny into reality.

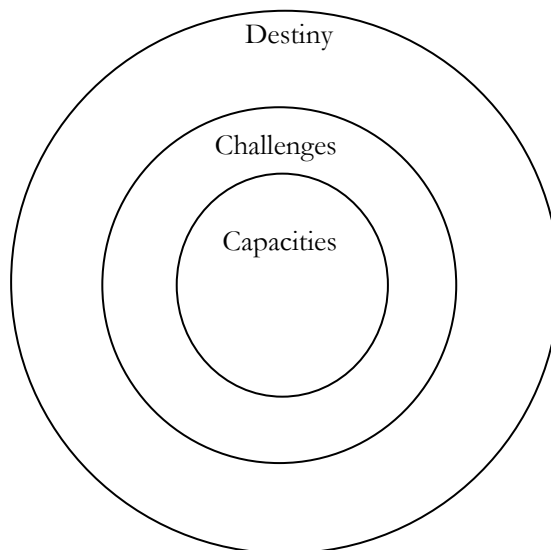
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3. Read aloud the following quotation twice.

Hearken ye, O Rulers of America and the Presidents of the Republics therein. . . . Adorn ye the temple of dominion with the ornament of justice and of the fear of God, and its head with the crown of the remembrance of your Lord, the Creator of the heavens. . . . Bind ye the broken with the hands of justice, and crush the oppressor who flourisheth with the rod of the commandments of your Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 88

4. Briefly discuss: What is Bahá'u'lláh telling the rulers and presidents in America to do? What evidence do we see that in some mysterious way, the rulers and presidents in America have been influenced by this Call of God since Bahá'u'lláh revealed these words in about 1973—whether they're aware of this Message or not?<sup>1</sup> Why is it important for us to know about Bahá'u'lláh's Message to the rulers and presidents in America?
5. Distribute copies of Resource Page 144. Read aloud the quotations. Briefly discuss: What are the responsibilities of ordinary people in America?
6. On chart paper, draw three consecutive circles, as illustrated:



7. Briefly discuss: Based on these quotations, are some of the capacities and powers of the American people? Record student responses in the center circle.
8. Discuss: What are some of the challenges that America faces? Record student responses in the middle circle.
9. Discuss: What is the ultimate destiny of America? Record student response in the outer circle.
10. Read aloud the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that explain one of the conditions for America to fulfill its destiny:

O ye friends! Fellowship, fellowship! Love, love! Unity, unity!—so that the power of the Bahá'í Cause may appear and become manifest in the world of existence. My thoughts are turned towards you, and my heart leaps within me at your mention. Could ye know how my soul glows with your love, so great a happiness would flood your hearts as to cause you to become enamored with each other.

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

11. Briefly discuss: Thinking about friendship, what actions show others that we truly want to be their friend? Record student ideas on chart paper.

<sup>1</sup> If desired you may add the following information to student suggestions: America's role in the first and second World Wars; America's role in the founding of the League of Nations and the United Nations; America's continuing engagement in world affairs. You may consider sharing Shoghi Effendi's statement that God uses "both the mighty and lowly as pawns in His world-shaping game," (*Citadel of Faith*, p. 139) as well as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's statement that President Wilson's work to found the League of Nations after World War I signaled "the dawn of the Most Great Peace" (quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 87).

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12. Continue the discussion: What are some ways that we can approach a new person in a friendly way? What can we say? What can we do? Record student ideas on chart paper.
13. Organize the class into small teams. Encourage each team to present a brief role-play that shows a person reaching out to make a new friend.
14. Allow a few minutes for teams to develop their role-plays; then invite the teams to share their role-plays in the whole group. Applaud all!
15. Conclude the activity with a Friendship Shuffle. Invite the class to stand with you in a circle. Teachers may begin the shuffle by moving inside the circle, and moving around the circle to their left to shake hands and personally say one or two words of greeting to each person in the circle. The person standing immediately to the left of the teacher receives the teacher's greeting and then follows the teacher around the circle, shaking hands and personally greeting each person in turn. The third person follows the second, and so on, so that each person moves around the circle and greets each person in turn. Teachers and students rejoin the circle one by one after greeting the last person, so that each person greets each person and then is greeted by each person. Keep the activity moving at a relatively rapid pace so that the Friendship Shuffle is completed within a few minutes' time.
16. With this practice in mind and heart, encourage students to reach out to a new person at school or after school to initiate a friendly conversation. Remember to invite them to share the results of their initiatives at the beginning of the next class.

**ACTIVITY 3: WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the spiritual qualities and actions necessary on the part of the American Bahá'í community in order to fulfill its destiny

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- 2 copies of Resource Pages 145–50, so that each team of 2 will have a different page
- Chart paper and markers
- Simple props such as pieces of fabric, scarves, hats, or canes, if desired
- Plain paper and pencils
- Simple art supplies, optional

**Advance Preparation:**

Consider displaying all or some of the same shoes gathered for the previous activity in your classroom.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to initiate friendly conversations with a new person since the last class. Briefly discuss: What surprised you about the response to your initiative?
2. As you continue to explore the topic of the destiny of America, introduce the question: What is an American? Acknowledge all responses.



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3. Invite students to work together to explore that question further by meeting some real Americans. Organize the class into teams of two. Provide each team with copies of one of the Resource Pages 145–50. Encourage teams to read the information on their Resource Page, discuss the focus questions, and prepare to introduce that American to the class. If desired, you may provide simple props to students to use in their introductions.
4. Allow time for students to prepare and then dramatically introduce these Americans to the class. Applaud all!
5. Note that all of these individuals are real people from American history. Explain that they are ancestors of a sister and a brother living in America today. Briefly discuss: How will this brother and sister see themselves if they know only one of these stories? How will their understanding of themselves change if they know that all these people are in their family?
6. Note that American nations have “welcomed to their shores immigrants, students and refugees from all parts of the planet, drawn from all the major racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds of humanity.”<sup>1</sup> As a result both of immigration and babies being born, the population of the United States doubled from 1945 to 2000. The U.S. population continues to become more and more diverse; by 2050 the U.S. Census projects that about 52% of the U.S. will be “white”; 13% “black”; 25% Latino; 10% Asian; and 1% American Indian. To the extent desired, share additional information from Resource Page 151.
7. Then pose the question again: What is an American? Record your answers on chart paper.
8. Eloquently re-read the final quotation on Resource Page 144. Then brainstorm as many examples as possible of people in America working to build a truly unified multiracial community, beginning with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to America in 1912. List these examples on chart paper.
9. Encourage students to reflect for a few minutes about their own experiences of unity and diversity. Encourage them to identify an experience in which they were working with a diverse group in a way that demonstrated real unity and then to share their examples with a person sitting beside them. After allowing a few minutes for students to share their examples in pairs, invite them to share highlights of those conversations in the whole group. Add these highlights to the list created in Step 8 above.
10. Invite students to work in these same pairs to write or draw their own vision of a truly unified racially diverse community. These may be fairly brief descriptions or simple sketches that will be used in the next activity. After allowing time for student teams to write or sketch their vision, share them as “works in progress” with the whole group. Applaud all! Save these descriptions or sketches for the next activity.
11. Encourage students to think of a younger person—a brother or sister, neighbor, or friend—with whom to share their vision of a truly unified diverse community before the next class.
12. Invite students also to ask their parents or other family members about their own ancestors before the next class: From where do their ancestors come? What do they know about their family background?
13. If available, you may refer to your shoe display, point out that these shoes represent the travels of all our ancestors, and encourage students to keep “walking with the same feet” as the people around them.
14. Conclude the activity by reading or reciting the prayer for America on Resource Page 143.

**NOTE:** If you will be completing the next activity, consider requesting that students bring with them to the next class an old shoe that they no longer wear and that is too worn to be used by others.

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<sup>1</sup> The Universal House of Justice, Ridván 1996, Message to North America, p. 1

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**ACTIVITY 4: STEPS TOWARD DESTINY SHOE SCULPTURES**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To prepare presentations concerning the role of the American Bahá'í community in the establishment of the Greater and Lesser Peace, and the necessary qualification of the Bahá'ís in order to fulfill America's spiritual destiny

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Student descriptions of racially diverse unified communities from Step 10 in the previous activity, if available
- Copies of Resource Page 152
- One old shoe for each student, perhaps one of the student's own worn-out shoes
- Hot glue gun or other strong glue
- Assorted readily-available small objects or "junk," such as cord, rocks, small bits of hardware, small used toys, bits of paper, small used pencils, miscellaneous art supplies
- Gold, silver, or other spray paint, optional

**Advance Preparation:**

Copy the name of each of the following spiritual qualities on a separate small piece of paper: marvelous promptitude, fidelity, vigor, zest, consecration, unquenchable enthusiasm, dauntless courage, faith, fearlessness, tenacity, efficiency. Fold each small piece of paper individually and place them all in a basket or bowl.

Consider preparing a sample shoe sculpture as a model. Gather a supply of varied small objects that students could use to symbolize their own steps toward fulfilling America's spiritual destiny. Have available extra old shoes for students that may not bring their own. Arrange small objects and "junk" on a tray or in a basket. Consider continuing to display some or all of the shoes gathered for Activity 1, p. 134.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to encourage the young people they know. Invite them to share what they've learned about their own ancestors. Acknowledge all.
2. If available, distribute the sketches or descriptions of racially diverse, unified communities to the student teams that created them in the previous activity. Invite the teams to take a few minutes to add any additional details to these descriptions and then to share them again with the whole group. Acknowledge all.
3. Explain that Shoghi Effendi wrote to American Bahá'ís in 1938 and praised their marvelous promptitude, fidelity, vigor, zest, consecration, unquenchable enthusiasm, dauntless courage, faith, fearlessness, tenacity, and efficiency.<sup>1</sup> Invite each team of two students to select the name of one of these qualities from a tray or basket. As a quick exploration of the meaning of these words, encourage them to demonstrate their quality using their own bodies to form a human sculpture or dramatic pose. Provide a few brief minutes of preparation while you circulate among teams to assist as necessary for students to understand the meaning of these words. Invite teams to announce their qualities and demonstrate their poses one after another in a fast-moving set. Applaud all!

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<sup>1</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pp. 11–15

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4. Then explain that Shoghi Effendi said that these “glowing tributes . . . to the capacity, the spirit, the conduct, and the high rank, of the American believers” provide a sharp contrast with “the people from which God has raised them up.”<sup>2</sup>
5. Shoghi Effendi further explained that it is a proof of the power of Bahá'u'lláh to raise up such heroes and heroines from people who are “immersed in a sea of materialism, a prey to . . . racial prejudice, and notorious for political corruption, lawlessness and laxity in moral standards.” Shoghi Effendi said that American Bahá'ís must demonstrate the highest standards of personal morality and fellowship with all people to build God's promised World Civilization.<sup>3</sup> Briefly discuss: What are some action steps that we have already taken to free ourselves from materialism, prejudice, and immorality? What are we doing now to develop our own personal morality and friendship with all people? Record student ideas on chart paper.
6. Distribute copies of Resource Page 152. Read these quotations aloud in the whole group. Briefly discuss: What is the role of sacrifice in building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh? What are some examples of sacrifices that people make to promote unity? Encourage students to identify for themselves one specific action to take to help their own community fulfill its destiny.
7. Invite students to select several items from the “junk” tray that could be used to represent specific action steps toward our ideal communities. Encourage them to share these items and what they represent in the whole group. Acknowledge all.
8. Invite students to mount these symbolic objects on their old shoes as an expression of their commitment to take one or more specific steps toward realizing the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. If you are using a hot glue gun, you as teacher should apply glue while students position the objects. Consider spray painting student “sculptures” as a finishing step.
9. While shoe sculptures dry, discuss ways to both honor and encourage our co-workers in the Cause of God. Encourage students to each think of one adult that they know personally who has been a source of inspiration in the student's life—could they show the shoe sculpture, explain its meaning, and thank the adult for serving as inspiration in their lives? Encourage students also to each think of a young person that they'd like to encourage in this path of service—could they explain the shoe sculpture and present it as a gift to this younger person with the invitation to carry forward this legacy of service? Would students like to present these gifts individually before the next class or save them to present more publicly at an upcoming community gathering to be planned and carried out as students study the next two topics in this Lesson Planning Guide?
10. After agreeing on your plan, conclude the activity with prayers for humanity. Remember to invite students to share the results of these conversations at the beginning of the next class.



<sup>2</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 16

<sup>3</sup> Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 19

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**ACTIVITY 5: TREAD YE THE PATH OF JUSTICE**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the conditions upon which America will fulfill its spiritual destiny

**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 153, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Learn the song on Resource Page 153 to be able to teach the class. You may choose to use the CD *Love All the World* by Tim Urbonya, or *Teaching Songs to Children and Junior Youth, Volume One*, available through the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore (800) 894-9716, Louhelen@usbnc.org), or listen to the song online at <http://www.songsfromthewritings.com>, or <http://www.core-curriculum.org/songs.html>.

1. In the whole group read aloud the following guidance of Bahá'u'lláh to the rulers of the earth:

Shouldst thou cause rivers of justice to spread their waters amongst thy subjects, God would surely aid thee with the hosts of the unseen and of the seen, and would strengthen thee in thine affairs.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 211

Lay not aside the fear of God, O kings of the earth. . . . Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.

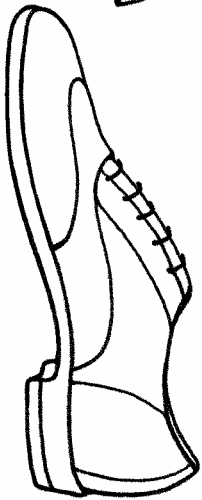
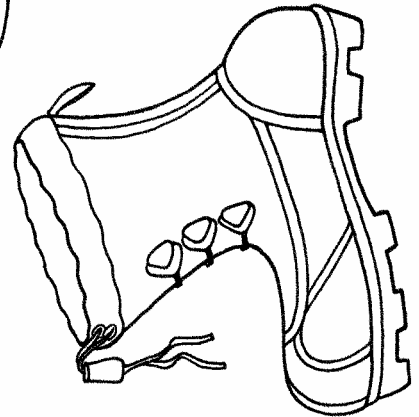
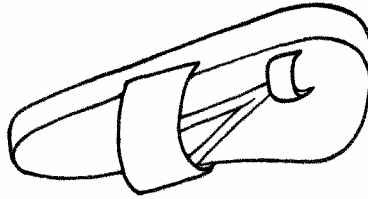
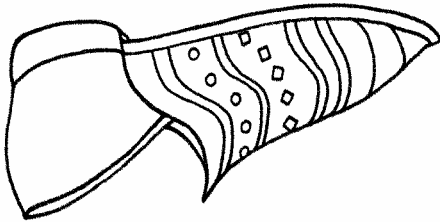
Bahá'u'lláh, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 177

2. Briefly discuss: How is acting with justice tied to the spiritual destiny of America?
3. Teach the song “Tread Ye the Path” using the methods taught in the Core Curriculum Teacher Development Workshop Eight or other methods.
4. Notice the power of music for helping us feel encouraged to walk the “straight path.”
5. Consider singing other songs you may know about feet or marching, such as “My Feet Will Hold Me Up.”

TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY

Resource Pages

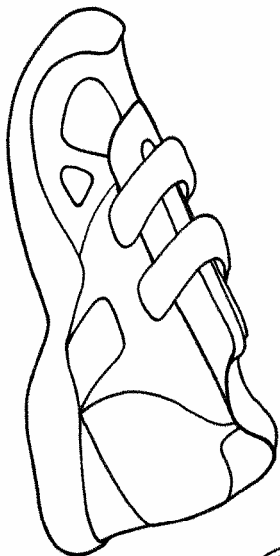
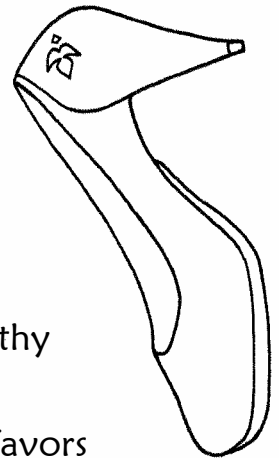
Activity 1: Walking with the Same Feet



O Thou kind Lord!

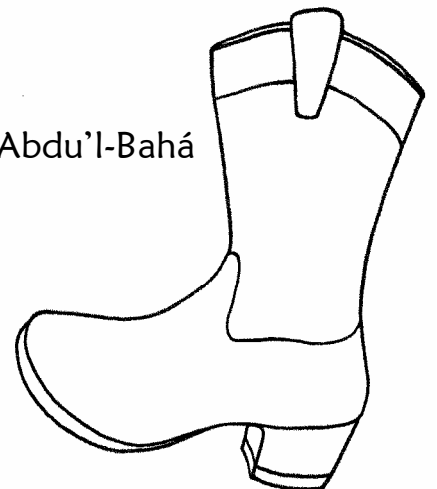
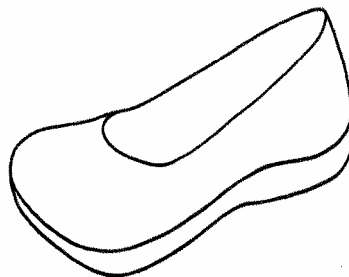
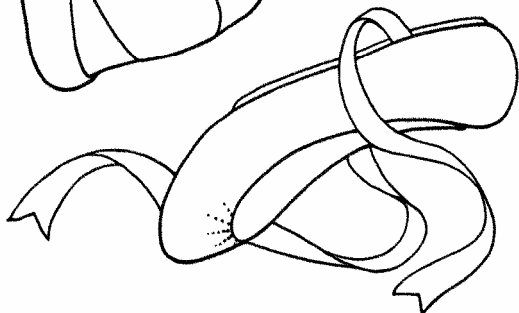
This gathering is turning to Thee.  
These hearts are radiant with Thy love.  
These minds and spirits are exhilarated  
by the message of Thy glad-tidings.

O God! Let this American democracy  
become glorious in spiritual degrees  
even as it has aspired to material degrees,  
and render this just government victorious.  
Confirm this revered nation to upraise  
the standard of the oneness of humanity,  
to promulgate the Most Great Peace,  
to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy  
among all the nations of the world.



O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors  
and is deserving of Thy mercy.  
Make it precious and near to Thee  
through Thy bounty and bestowal.

'Abdu'l-Bahá



## TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY

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### Activity 2: Exploring America's Spiritual Destiny

I have visited America and find everywhere the evidences of just and equitable government. Therefore, I pray God that these western peoples may become the means of establishing international peace and spreading the oneness of the world of humanity. May you become the cause of unity and agreement among the nations. May a lamp be lighted here which will illumine the whole universe with the oneness of the world of humanity, with love between the hearts of the children of men, and the unity of all mankind. I hope that you may become assisted in this supreme accomplishment, that you may raise the flag of international peace and reconciliation upon this continent, that this government and people may be the means of spreading these lofty ideals in order that the world of man may find rest, in order that the good pleasure of the Most High God shall be attained and His favors encircle the Orient and Occident.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 301

When the racial elements of the American nation unite in actual fellowship and accord, the lights of the oneness of humanity will shine, the day of eternal glory and bliss will dawn, the spirit of God encompass, and the divine favors descend. Under the leadership and training of God, the real Shepherd, all will be protected and preserved. He will lead them in green pastures of happiness and sustenance, and they will attain to the real goal of existence. This is the blessing and benefit of unity; this is the outcome of love. This is the sign of the Most Great Peace; this is the star of the oneness of the human world. Consider how blessed this condition will be.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 57

## **TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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### **Activity 3: What Is an American?**

#### *Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand Elizabeth's experience and feelings about America.

#### *Focus Questions:*

What caused Elizabeth to come to America?

What do you think were her feelings about living in America?

What do you think were her hopes and fears about being in America?

## **ELIZABETH**

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- Born in what is now Virginia in about 1645.
- Elizabeth, despite her English name, was an American Indian.
- For her people, no one remembered coming to “America.” There was no concept of “America” when her ancestors first came there.
- In 1663, an Englishman began living near Elizabeth's people. Elizabeth became his wife and was given the name by which history knows her: “Elizabeth.”
- Elizabeth died as a result of diseases brought by the English.

**GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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**Activity 3: What Is an American?**

*Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand Alexander's experience and feelings about America.

*Focus Questions:*

What caused Alexander to come to America?

What do you think were his feelings about living in America?

What do you think were his hopes and fears about being in America?

**ALEXANDER**

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- Most of the people in Scotland, such as Alexander, were Presbyterians and did not accept the “official” Church of England.
- Presbyterians were barely tolerated and sometimes treated as outlaws. Presbyterian marriages were declared invalid and their churches were closed. They could not have schools nor hold public office. At times, men, women, and children were killed by the thousands—including several of Alexander's family.
- At the same time, large landlords were allowed to expand their holdings at the expense of the small landholders.
- Misery and desperation was the order of the day.
- The Scottish tried to resist and protect their way of life.
- Scottish armies fought the English three times between 1648 and 1651. Each time the Scots were defeated and on each occasion several hundred prisoners were sold to anyone who would buy them.
- Alexander was among the Scottish prisoners deported to America and sold in 1652.



## **TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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### **Activity 3: What Is an American?**

#### *Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand Will's experience and feelings about America.

#### *Focus Questions:*

What caused Will to come to America?

What do you think were his feelings about living in America?

What do you think were his hopes and fears about being in America?

## **WILL**

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- Will was born in West Africa.
- At age eleven, he was captured by African slave traders.
- More than half of his fellow captives died on a forced march to the seacoast port where English slave traders bought him.
- Will and many of the captives were taken on board a slave ship bound for South Carolina.
- Will lived through the terrible voyage to America, but many of his fellow captives died. Their bodies were simply thrown overboard as if they were excess baggage.
- Will arrived in Charleston in 1746. The name "Will" was given as a means to identify him on his bill of sale.

**GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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**Activity 3: What Is an American?**

*Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand Rhoda's experience and feelings about America.

*Focus Questions:*

What caused Rhoda to come to America?

What do you think were her feelings about living in America?

What do you think were her hopes and fears about being in America?

**RHODA**

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- In wars to subdue the Irish and Scottish lands and bring them firmly under English political, religious, and commercial control, somewhere between 200,000 and 300,000 Irish and Scots were deported to America and sold in the 17th and early 18th centuries.
- Small Irish merchants, like Rhoda's father, lost business to larger merchants favored by the English. Times were hard and her family was sinking into miserable poverty.
- Rhoda's father might have stayed in Ireland looking for work, but her parents were afraid for their children. Slave dealers often kidnapped children off the streets and forcibly carried them aboard ships bound for the West Indies and other places in America. Being kidnapped in this way was so common that a slang term for it developed. Someone taken in this way had been "Barbadosed"—because over 30,000 Irish slaves were shipped to Barbados alone. In *Black Folk Then and Now*, W.E.B. DuBois, the great African-American scholar, wrote: "Young Irish peasants were hunted down as men hunt down game, and were forcibly put aboard ship, and sold to plantations in Barbados."
- Rhoda's father sold the family possessions, and used the money to buy passage for the family to Virginia in 1654.

## **TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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### **Activity 3: What Is an American?**

#### *Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand James' experience and feelings about America.

#### *Focus Questions:*

What caused James to come to America?

What do you think were his feelings about living in America?

What do you think were his hopes and fears about being in America?

## **JAMES**

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- James was born about 1650 to a family of well-established seamen. Generations of the family had been involved in sea-faring trade.
- He became a famous English pirate.
- In 17th-century England, piracy against England's enemies—"privateering" as it was called—was legal and even honored work.
- James was knighted by the Queen for his success in plundering the ships of England's enemies.
- His ship made good money selling its plunder in the American colonies.
- His ship also made some voyages to carry slaves from Africa to the West Indies.
- James made enough money to buy land in Virginia and never returned to England.

**GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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**Activity 3: What Is an American?**

*Instructions:*

1. Read the information below about this real-life American.
2. Discuss the focus questions.
3. Use your answers to the focus questions to introduce this American to the class. Your introduction should include your answers to the focus questions. You may choose to make this introduction in the form of a short drama. The goal is to help others understand Maria's experience and feelings about America.

*Focus Questions:*

What caused Maria to come to America?

What do you think were her feelings about living in America?

What do you think were her hopes and fears about being in America?

**MARIA**

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- Maria was born into a noble family from a French-speaking part of southern Germany in 1697.
- During the religious wars in Europe, even noble birth was no protection against fanatical religious hatred. She was one of only a handful of her family to escape slaughter.
- Maria was a Huguenot— a Protestant branch of Christianity heavily persecuted in predominantly Catholic countries, especially France. Thousands were killed, their churches destroyed, and their citizen and property rights taken away.
- As the persecution grew, many Huguenots fled. They had to resort to astonishing methods of disguise and other means of escape.
- By official proclamation England, Holland, Switzerland, and Denmark offered asylum to the refugees. Maria first escaped to Switzerland where she met and married her husband. Later, they went to England, before sailing for America where the English king had offered grants of land to the fleeing Huguenots.

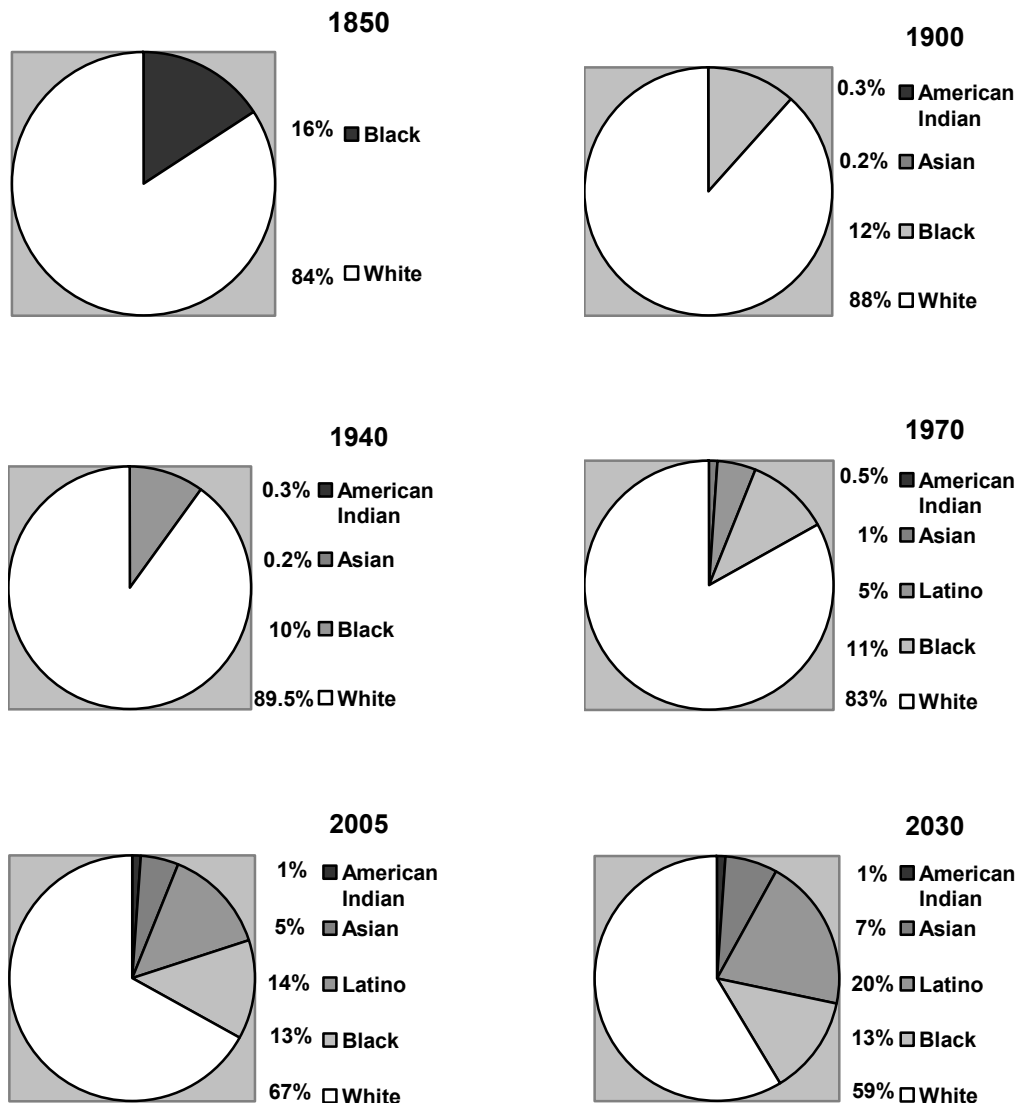
**TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

**Activity 3: What Is an American?**

The classification of the population by race reflects common or social usage. It does not denote any clear-cut scientific definition of biological stock. Through 1950, the classification of the population by race was usually obtained by the census enumerator's observation. Individuals of mixed White and other parentage were usually classified with the other race. In 1960, census data on race were collected by a combination of self-classification, direct interview, and observation. In the 1970 census, data on race and Hispanic origin were obtained primarily through self-classification. In the 1980 and 1990 censuses, the data were obtained entirely through self-classification.

In the 1850 census, the only racial classifications in census reports were for White and Black. It is not clear how the unknown, but clearly very small, number of enumerated individuals who were not White or Black were classified by race. Chinese and American Indian classifications were added in the 1860 census; however, prior to 1890, the enumeration of American Indians excluded Indian reservations and American Indians living elsewhere in tribal society (not taxed). Japanese was added in 1870, and other Asian "races" were added starting in 1910. In the 1930 census only, Mexican was defined as a race. Tabulations for 1930 were revised to include Mexicans with White and were included in 1940 census reports.

Campbell J. Gibson and Emily Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-born Population of the United States: 1850-1990,"  
Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., February 1999



## TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY

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### Activity 4: Steps Toward Destiny Shoe Sculptures

The continent of America is . . . in the eyes of the one true God, the land wherein the splendors of His light shall be revealed, where the mysteries of His Faith shall be unveiled, where the righteous will abide, and the free assemble.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 6

Until a being setteth his foot in the plane of sacrifice, he is bereft of every favor and grace; and this plane of sacrifice is the realm of dying to the self, that the radiance of the living God may then shine forth.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 76

The community of the organized promoters of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh in the American continent—the spiritual descendants of the dawn-breakers of an heroic Age, who by their death proclaimed the birth of that Faith—must, in turn, usher in, not by their death but through living sacrifice, that promised World Order, the shell ordained to enshrine that priceless jewel, the world civilization, of which the Faith itself is the sole begetter.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 7

GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY

Activity 5: Tread Ye the Path of Justice

Words of Bahá'u'lláh; Music by Tim Urbonya. Used with permission.

D G A D

Tread ye the path of jus - tice , for this, ve - ri - ly is the straight path.

D G A D *Fine*

Tread ye the path of jus - tice , for this ve - ri - ly is the **STRAIGHT PATH.**

D G

Tread ye the path, tread ye the path, Tread ye the path, tread ye the path,

D G

TREAD YE THE PATH OF JUS - TICE , FOR THIS

A D

VE - RI - LY IS THE **STRAIGHT PATH.**

one two three four five six seven eight

*D.C. al Fine*

ONE TWO THREE FOUR FIVE SIX SEVEN **STRAIGHT!**

**GOAL: TO APPRECIATE THE PRIVILEGES AND DISCHARGE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF CITIZENSHIP  
IN THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**TOPIC: AMERICA'S SPIRITUAL DESTINY**

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories and Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “A Letter to Ourselves from 2044,” Sep/Oct 1994
- “My Dream for America,” Sep/Oct 1994
- “Becoming an Apostle . . .” Sp Ed 1994
- “Candles of Unity,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Firmness in the Covenant,” Sp Ed 1994
- “It’s Your Future,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Standard Bearers,” Sp Ed 1995
- “The Future Is Now,” Nov/Dec 1996

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “A Time Machine to Your Future,” Sep/Oct 1994
- “Dry in the Sea,” Nov/Dec 1994
- “Secret Essence Picture,” Nov/Dec 1994
- “Apostles of Bahá'u'lláh . . .” Sp Ed 1994
- “A Time Machine to Your Future,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Building Bridges,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Celebrate the Apostles . . .” Sp Ed 1994
- “Celebrate Our Future!” Sp Ed 1994
- “Choose Your Future,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Decision,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Fellowship and Love,” Sp Ed 1994
- “How to Play the Apostle Game,” Sp Ed 1994

- “Tablets of the Divine Plan,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Take Action/One Destiny,” Sp Ed 1995
- “America’s Amazing Destiny,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Keys to Victory,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Same Game,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Together We Can Make It . . .” Sp Ed 1995
- “Unity Bingo,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Walk with the Same Feet,” Sp Ed 1995
- “We Are All Connected,” Sp Ed 1995
- “World’s Comeliest Puppets,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Amazing Days,” Nov/Dec 1996
- “Leaps of Faith,” May/June 2002
- “Look at Your Leaps,” Jan/Feb 2003

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Lighters of the Unlit Candles,” Sp Ed 1994
- “Ensign of the Most Great Peace,” Sp Ed 1995
- “Prayer for America,” *For the Martyrs*
- “Prayer for America,” *Voices of Bahá' Live in Carnegie Hall*

**Drama:**

- “World’s Comeliest Garment,” Sp Ed 1995

**Video:**

*The Power of Race Unity*, Broadcast Version

**Other Favorite Resources:**

*The Advent of Divine Justice*  
*World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*  
*The Vision of Race Unity*

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 THE MISSION  
AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH  
AND THE ROLE OF BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS TO THE  
ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN AFFAIRS**

**THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FRIENDLINESS, INITIATIVE, GENEROSITY**

O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 215*

The thoughts of universal peace must be instilled into the minds of all the scholars, in order that they may become the armies of peace, the real servants of the body politic—the world. God is the Father of all. Mankind are His children. The globe is one home. Nations are the members of one family. The mothers in their homes, the teachers in the schools, the professors in the college, the presidents in the universities, must teach these ideals to the young from the cradle up to the age of manhood.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, in "Bahá'í Methods of Education," in *Star of the West*, vol. 9, no. 9 (Aug. 20, 1918), p. 98*

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To become familiar with the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh as described in the Bahá'í writings, including the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and writings of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- List the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh after researching the writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, or the Universal House of Justice.
- Memorize selected short passages from the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá or other writings.
- Make a table of contents for the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, becoming familiar with its various segments and themes.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh and the importance of His Revelation for the unity, peace, and pattern of future society

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- In groups, perform skits showing what the future would be like without Bahá'u'lláh's plan.
- In small groups, use art forms such as poetry or sculpture to demonstrate how various aspects of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation contribute to achieving peace.
- Study Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the Kings and Heads of States in pairs or small groups and develop a presentation for the community sharing the contents of each letter.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
**TOPIC: THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

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 **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES**

- To discern from the Bahá'í writings the prerequisites necessary for the establishment of the Lesser Peace and for the achievement of the Most Great Peace
- To reflect on one's own contribution to building a peaceful world

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Outline the prerequisites necessary for establishing the Lesser Peace and Most Great Peace.
- Consult on the differences between the Lesser Peace and Most Great Peace and why they are separate events and how they relate to each other. Prepare artwork that demonstrates the path toward establishing the Lesser Peace to the Most Great Peace.
- Examine one's own role in these two processes through prayer and meditation. Start a notebook and record, with text and pictures, the steps one is taking toward the establishment of the Lesser Peace and Most Great Peace.
- Imagine the lives of one's grandchildren as they approach the Most Great Peace and develop a drama sharing how they will reap the benefits of today's actions.

 **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE**

- To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings that describe the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

**SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Plan a Peace Party, inviting Bahá'ís and others to each bring their wish for peace and to place it in a "wishing well" with their name on it. Then encourage students to present their memorized quotations, artwork, and drama to demonstrate the connection between Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation and both the Lesser Peace and Most Great Peace.

## TOPIC: THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: WHO LIVES HERE?

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh as described in the Bahá'í writings, including the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the writings of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings that describe the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

**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 165
- Chart paper and markers

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their adventures in service and teaching since the last class. Acknowledge all!
2. Invite students to reflect on their own families. Briefly discuss: Where were our parents born? Grandparents? Great-grandparents? Other relatives? Record all these places of origin for members of the class on chart paper.
3. Continue the discussion: Thinking about all the people we know personally, where were they born? What about all the people in our neighborhood or town? Add these places to the list. Save this list for the next activity.
4. Briefly discuss: What evidence do we see that the following words of Bahá'u'lláh are becoming more and more true every day?  
  
The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.  
  
*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 167*  
  
Discuss: Who do we know that is working for unity in our families, our schools, and our neighborhood? Which actions promote unity? Acknowledge all.
5. Explain that the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, Shoghi Effendi, translated many of Bahá'u'lláh's writings. He not only published them as books of the sacred Word of God, but also included short quotations in his own letters that describe the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. Distribute copies of Resource Page 165 that includes quotations of Bahá'u'lláh that the Guardian included in a letter to the Bahá'ís in the West in 1936. Read through these quotations, then discuss: What is the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh? Record student comments on chart paper.
6. Invite teams of students to select one of these quotations to memorize. Circulate among student teams to provide encouragement and assistance as needed.
7. When memorization is complete, invite students to recite their memorized quotation in the whole group. Applaud all!
8. Then discuss: In an upcoming devotional meeting, peace party, or open mic event, we will have the opportunity to recite these quotations for others. How shall we use our voices to convey the meaning and importance of these Words of God? How shall we stand? What shall we do with our hands and arms as we recite? Record student ideas on chart paper. Then encourage students to return to their same teams to practice reciting the quotations in a way that will attract the hearts of those who hear.

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
**TOPIC: THE PURPOSE AND MISSION OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH**

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9. Allow time for students to practice their quotations a second time. Circulate among students as they work to provide encouragement and assistance as needed. After practicing, invite them to recite their quotations again in the whole group. Applaud all!
10. Encourage students to recite these quotations daily, as they will need to be able to recite them eloquently at an upcoming community gathering. Encourage students also to learn more about their family backgrounds as well as the national, religious, or ethnic backgrounds of other people in the community.

## ACTIVITY 2: THE OUTCOME OF ACHIEVING PEACE

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the purpose and mission of Bahá'u'lláh and the importance of His Revelation for the unity, peace, and pattern of future society

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 166
- Lists created in Activity 1, p. 158, if available
- Map of your city, town, or cluster, if available
- Large chalkboard, butcher paper, or chart paper
- Chalk or markers

**Advance Preparation:**

Identify from a local civic group or download from the internet a map of your city, town, or cluster with sufficient detail to identify neighborhoods where students live. If maps are not available, become familiar with the general area in which the class meets and plan to draw on students' knowledge of their own neighborhoods.

Mount the butcher paper or align several sheets of chart paper to enable students to create a large map of their community.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share memorized quotations from the previous activity or prayers memorized on other occasions. Applaud all!
2. If available, refer to the list of birthplaces of the people we know created in the previous activity. Invite students to share additional information that they have learned about the national, religious, or ethnic origin of the people they know personally and the people in their neighborhood or town. Add to your list as appropriate.
3. Briefly discuss: What do we know about the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation?
4. Distribute copies of Resource Page 166. Read these quotations aloud in the whole group. Explain that a watchword is like a motto or slogan that guides the actions of a group. Briefly discuss: Why do we think that Unity in Diversity is the watchword for the Law of Bahá'u'lláh? Why do we think that it is so important to teach everybody about the principle of the oneness of humanity? What are some ways that we can use our watchword as our guide? And how can we teach this principle to others?

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >

5. Invite students work together to learn more about the Unity in Diversity of their own town by creating a map that includes all the neighborhoods where students live, as well as other areas in their town, city, or cluster. Working together in small groups or as an entire class, invite students to sketch the general outlines of their city, town, or cluster on the butcher paper or chart paper mounted on the wall. Encourage students to use different colored markers to individually place on their map their own preferred locations for:

- Landmarks that make the town special, or give the student pride about their town (blue).
- Favorite places they like to go (green).
- Places to which they often go, even if they don't like to go there (yellow).

6. When the students have completed their maps invite them to share them with the class. Acknowledge all.

7. If desired, students may choose to indicate if neighborhoods are diverse in population or if people of a particular religious, ethnic, or national group live in a particular area.

8. Students may also mark places where they may feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or where they are not allowed to go on their own.

9. Invite the students to once again share their maps with the class. Discuss:

- What are the similarities and differences in our favorite places, landmarks, and places where we may feel uncomfortable? Do some of the similarities and differences seem to relate to gender, age, racial, economic, or other social, cultural, or ethnic differences?
- Are the “boundaries” of these areas well known or easy to discover? Why or why not?
- Does crossing any of the boundaries involve a feeling of fear or danger? If so, why?

10. Read aloud the following words spoken by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá when He was in North America:

The earth has one surface. God has not divided this surface by boundaries and barriers to separate races and peoples. Man has set up and established these imaginary lines, giving to each restricted area a name and the limitation of a native land or nationhood. By this division and separation into groups and branches of mankind, prejudice is engendered which becomes a fruitful source of war and strife.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 316*

11. Briefly discuss: How do the boundaries of different areas in our town separate people? What are some actions that we can take individually or as a class to make friends across these boundaries and barriers?

12. Then read aloud the following words of the Universal House of Justice:

The world that Bahá'í youth are inheriting is one in which the distribution of educational, economic and other basic opportunities is grossly unjust. Bahá'í youth must not be daunted by such barriers. Their challenge is to understand the real condition of humanity and to forge among themselves enduring spiritual bonds that free them not only from racial and national divisions but also from those created by social and material conditions, and that will fit them to carry forward the great trust reposed in them.

*The Universal House of Justice, letter, 24 May 2001, p. 2*

**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
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13. Discuss: Why is it important for us to understand the real condition of humanity? Why should we also understand the real condition of our neighborhoods? What are some ways that we can create enduring spiritual bonds with each other? And how can we reach out to the people from whom we might be separated by the “boundaries” in our community? How can we reach across these boundaries to make new friends at school or after school? How can we invite new friends to join our Bahá'í class and work with us to establish Unity in Diversity in our community?
14. Record student ideas on chart paper. Encourage students to each invite one or more friends to join Bahá'í class over the coming week. Encourage them also to find a way to greet a new person at school or in their neighborhood and engage that person in a friendly conversation. Teachers should also complete these actions.
15. Conclude the activity by encouraging students to recite memorized quotations from the previous activity and with prayers for humanity.

### ACTIVITY 3: THE TRANSFORMING POWER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To discern the prerequisites necessary for the establishment of the Lesser Peace and for the achievement of the Most Great Peace.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of storytelling

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- A Core Curriculum storybook for each 2 students or several copies of each story on Resource Pages 167–70
1. Warmly welcome returning students, new students, and guests. Encourage students to introduce themselves and to share one hope that they have for the class that day. Acknowledge all.
  2. Invite students to explain the purpose of the class to newcomers, perhaps incorporating one or more of the quotations that they learned in Activity 1, p. 158, for this topic.
  3. Explain that this class will use stories to explore the impact that the Message of Bahá'u'lláh when we decide to follow His teachings. Encourage students to share with the class a positive change that they have made in their own lives as a result of choosing to uphold the principle of Unity in Diversity. Teachers should also give an example of positive change in their lives. Acknowledge all.
  4. Organize students into teams of two. Provide each team with a Core Curriculum storybook. Suggest that each team select a story from the following list:
    - “The Truth of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume one)
    - “A Journey Across a Desert”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume one)
    - “Father of the Poor”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume one)
    - “Thank You, Isfandíyár”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume one)
    - “Inheriting the Lesser Peace”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume two)
    - “Not in My Class”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume two)
    - “Bamba and the Rainstorm”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume two)
    - “Changing the Heart”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume two)
    - “Lifting the Veil”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume three)

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- “Mirza Abu'l-Fadl and the River of Mercy”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume three)
  - “Mirza Haydar-Ali’s Greatest Wish”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume three)
  - “From a Drop to an Ocean”  
(*Bahá'u'lláh*, volume three)
5. Alternatively you may provide each student team with copies of one of the stories on Resource Pages 167–70.
  6. Encourage students to work in their teams to:
    - a. Read aloud their story.
    - b. Discuss: What positive change happened in this story? Why did this change occur? How does the action in this story uphold the principle of Unity in Diversity?
    - c. Outline the beginning, middle (2–3 actions), and end of the story.
    - d. Identify two or more important details.
    - e. Practice reading or retelling the story in a way that would touch the heart of a hearer and involve both members of the team.
  7. Invite the teams to read or retell their stories for the whole group. Applaud all! Explain that the class also will have the opportunity to polish and retell these stories during the next activity.
  8. In the whole group, briefly discuss: What are some of the spiritual qualities demonstrated by the people in these stories? List these qualities on chart paper.
  9. Continue discussing: How can these qualities help us progress toward the Most Great Peace? Why is it important for each one of us to play our part in the step-by-step movement of humanity toward peace?
  10. Encourage students to each select one of the spiritual qualities on their list to practice over the coming week. Encourage them to continue practicing their stories by telling them to themselves and to at least one other person before the next class. Encourage them also to continue making new friends by reaching out in a friendly way to more and more people in their schools or neighborhoods, reaching out through the transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh.

Circulate among teams and provide encouragement or assistance as needed.





**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
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**ACTIVITY 4: ONE WORLD OPEN MIC**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES:** To discern from the Bahá'í writings the prerequisites for the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the achievement of the Most Great Peace; To reflect on one's own contributions to building a peaceful world

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings that describe the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Engage mind and heart; Use of stories; Use of peer teaching; Use of creativity and the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN. + UPCOMING EVENT IF DESIRED

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Pages 171
- Copies of Resource Pages 172–75 so that each team will have 2 copies of one of the Unity in Diversity Examples from History
- Assorted paper and other art supplies
- Musical instruments, if available

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to focus on a particular spiritual quality, to reach out in friendship to others, or to share a story about the transforming power of Bahá'u'lláh over the past week. Briefly discuss: Did anything surprising happen as a result of our efforts? Did any of us notice divine assistance for our efforts? Do we always recognize divine assistance or heavenly confirmations?
2. Explain that this activity will focus on some of the spiritual qualities that assist us to promote unity and affirm the beauty of diversity in our community. Distribute copies of Resource Page 171. Encourage students to work in pairs to read these quotations aloud and to mark the actions that promote Unity in Diversity.
3. Invite teams to share their actions in the whole group. Record student ideas on chart paper. Briefly discuss: How can these actions help build a truly unified community?
4. Explain that the Message of Bahá'u'lláh is a message for all the people on earth and that as we work to translate this message into our own actions, little by little, day by day, we can learn from other people and other places. The previous activity built on stories of individuals working to transform their own actions. This activity explores times and places on earth in which people worked together to build a unified diversity of thought and action.
5. Organize the class into small teams. Provide each team with one of the Unity in Diversity Examples from History, from Resource Pages 172–75.
6. Allow time for students to read their examples and then to briefly describe them to the class. Encourage them to answer the questions: What is one aspect of Unity in Diversity that is described in this example? Where and when did it happen? Applaud all.
7. Then discuss: How do these examples illustrate the quotations on Resource Page 171?

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8. Invite students to prepare an Open Mic presentation to celebrate the principle of Unity in Diversity.

Each team will eloquently recite the quotation memorized for Activity 1, p. 158.

Encourage them to use the materials provided and create either a performing art or visual art presentation, either individually or in self-selected teams, according to the following description.

They may also choose to polish and retell one of the stories selected for the previous activity.

**Guidelines for Open Mic presentation:**

Essay, Spoken Word/Poetry, Stories, Song or other Music, or Dance:

- Length: 3 minutes maximum when performed.
- Include title or caption.

Visual Art:

- Maximum 17x17x17 inches.
- Include title or caption.
- Brief artist's explanation.

9. As students work, set an encouraging and inclusive tone. Circulate and provide assistance as needed.

10. Decide how much time to allow for students to work: 20 minutes may be sufficient for a simple presentation. Allow more time if the class would like to create more complex or polished presentations.

11. When student work reaches a stage of completion, organize a whole class presentation. Consider selecting a student emcee. The emcee would also make his or her presentation. The teacher should help the emcee arrange the order of the presentations. Intermixing presentation of the different categories will help keep the pace moving and interesting. There should be no shows of favoritism; keep the pace moving and enforce the 3-minute rule.

12. Celebrate student presentations, then briefly discuss: What are some other times that we should use this same encouraging positive tone? What are some specific ways that we can encourage others at school, home, or in other activities?

13. Explain that the class will have the opportunity to share these presentations at an event planned during their study of the next topic.

14. Encourage students to focus attention on encouraging another person at least once a day for the coming week. Encourage them also to continue reaching across boundaries to make new friends.

15. Conclude the activity with prayers for divine assistance.

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Resource Pages

Activity 1: Who Lives Here?

A new life is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause, or perceived its motive.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah*, XCVI, p. 196

O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah*, CX, p. 215

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah*, CXXXI, p. 286

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah*, CXXXII, p. 288

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah*, CVII, p. 214

Activity 2: The Outcome of Achieving Peace

Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world. It calls for a wider loyalty, for a larger aspiration than any that has animated the human race. It insists upon the subordination of national impulses and interests to the imperative claims of a unified world. It repudiates excessive centralization on one hand, and disclaims all attempts at uniformity on the other. Its watchword is unity in diversity such as 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself has explained. . . .

Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 41

Acceptance of the oneness of mankind is the first fundamental prerequisite for reorganization and administration of the world as one country, the home of humankind. Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies.

The Universal House of Justice, *The Promise of World Peace*, p. 3

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**Activity 3: The Transforming Power of Bahá'u'lláh**

***“PEACE—RESULT, NOT A CAUSE,” BY GRACE OBER***

A Bahá'í family lives in a section in which there are no other people of African descent. They own their home, and the Father, Mother, and little daughter (at the time, eight years of age) have become the joy of the neighborhood through their selfless lives of service to all.

One summer day the little daughter, playing on the front veranda with her little neighbor of European descent, was rudely addressed by some passing schoolboys. In a tone of derision and scorn one boy called out, “Oh! you little ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’” Instantly with a beautiful expression upon her upturned face she replied, “No, I am not a ‘\_\_\_\_\_.’ I am a Bahá'í. You don't know what that means now, but you will, and when you do you won't call anybody names.”

The two mothers were inside the front room, the black mother teaching the white mother the glorious Bahá'í Message. As this incident closed the white mother turned to her teacher and said, “I need no further proof, this Message is from God for nothing but the power of the Love of God could have enabled that child to give such an answer.”

*Adapted from Star of the West, vol. 16, June 1925, pp. 392–93*

Activity 3: The Transforming Power of Bahá'u'lláh

*FISH IN THE RIVER, SCHOOLS IN THE VILLAGE*

Ali Mahamat is a maker and seller of fishing nets, and he was troubled to know that fish were slowly disappearing from the Chari River near his home in the African nation of Chad. Once, not long ago, the fishing was good, but today there was practically nothing to catch. What made it worse for Mr. Mahamat was the knowledge that he had inadvertently contributed to the die-out. To help fishermen here, he sold nets with increasingly smaller mesh, designed to catch the few immature fish that remained.

Then, one day, he tried to sell his nets to the fishermen of a nearby village. But the fishermen there had other ideas. They had organized into a community-based group to revive the fishing and they had become serious about enforcing game laws.

“You can’t sell small nets here,” they told Mr. Mahamat. “You can only sell nets with large mesh. We need to protect the fish.”

Today, because of actions like that, the fish are returning to the Chari River, and there are other signs of prosperity.

Much of the credit goes to APRODEPIT, a Bahá'í-inspired organization that has worked for more than a decade to provide communities with training in improved fishing practices, fish farming, and the preservation of fish through smoking and curing. It also promotes wildlife protection and forest preservation. In this way it has helped to organize more than 140 community groups in the region.

By teaching and fostering participatory methods of community organization and consultation, this organization has prompted a number of the groups to branch out into other endeavors, such as the operation of community-based schools, women’s literacy classes, and village granaries.

“Before, there were no fish; now there are fish. Before there was no school; now there is a school. So I am very happy.”

Source: adapted from <http://news.bahai.org/story.cfm?storyid=313>

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**Activity 3: The Transforming Power of Bahá'u'lláh**

***BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITY OF SOUTH AFRICA***

March 19, 1994

Services are being held today in East London, South Africa, for three members of the Bahá'í Faith who were murdered during a meeting for worship last Sunday in the homeland of Ciskei. Hooshman Anvari was 43, a computer salesman with three children who recently established a school for young black children; Doctor Shaman Bakhshandegi was a 29-year-old dentist; Rias Razavi was a 44-year-old accountant at the all-black university of Forhare in Ciskei.

Last Sunday morning they were part of group of thirteen men and women who were meeting for worship, when four armed men rushed into the room and demanded that the group divide themselves between blacks and whites. The Baha'is hesitated. Important among the tenets of their Faith, founded in Persia in 1844, is the unity of all peoples and the equality of all races. Since Bahá'is arrived in South Africa about 40 years ago, they have refused to accommodate themselves to apartheid. The same cannot be said of many Christian or Jewish congregations, some of whom would denounce South Africa's cruel race laws yet still hold segregated services.

When the worshipers hesitated the gunmen turned their weapons on those three men, who were all of Iranian ancestry and classified under the old race laws as "white." They shot them dead. The Azanian Liberation Army has claimed responsibility saying "the men were shot to show there is no role in a new South Africa for anyone of the race that invented apartheid or suppressed the black masses." The Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'is in South Africa has reacted to the killings with a sadness and a sagemess that says much about their Faith. They've called the deaths of their brethren a tragedy but go on to say that the last remorseless legacy of apartheid is that people who were brutally kept down because of their color might rise up now with indiscriminate revenge pressed into their hearts rather than love.

The Bahá'is have their own experience of repression, especially in today's Iran, where they've been hunted down and suppressed by a fundamentalist government that cannot abide the Bahá'í dedication to the equality of all races, genders, faiths, and nations.

Last night I asked a Bahá'í spokesman one of those unavoidable reporter's questions: Were the three men being buried today the only white worshipers among the thirteen or were there others who were not shot? He paused a bit and said, "I don't know. I never asked. And to tell you the truth, I would be embarrassed to call back now. After all, to us it just doesn't matter."

Source: "NPR 3/19/94" on Matthew Levine's CD *A Sacrifice to Thee*

Activity 3: The Transforming Power of Bahá'u'lláh

*HAJI ALI-'ASKAR-I-TABRIZI*

. . . He took a little merchandise with him from Adrianople [to the bazaar] to earn his livelihood. What he had with him was trifling, but still, it was carried off by thieves. When the Persian Consul learned of this he presented a document to the Government, naming an enormous sum as the value of the stolen goods. By chance the thieves were caught and proved to be in possession of considerable funds. It was decided to investigate the case. The Consul called in Haji Ali-'Askar and told him: "These thieves are very rich. In my report to the Government, I wrote that the amount of the theft was great. Therefore you must attend the trial and testify conformably to what I wrote."

The Haji replied: "Your Honor, Khan, the stolen goods amounted to very little. How can I report something that is not true? When they question me, I will give the facts exactly as they are. I consider this my duty, and only this."

"Haji," said the Consul, "We have a golden opportunity here; you and I can both profit by it. Don't let such a once-in-a-lifetime chance slip through your hands."

The Haji answered: "Khan, how would I square it with God? Let me be. I shall tell the truth and nothing but the truth."

The Consul was beside himself. He began to threaten and belabor Ali-'Askar. "Do you want to make me out a liar?" he cried. "Do you want to make me a laughingstock? I will jail you; I will have you banished; there is no torment I will spare you. This very instant I will hand you over to the police, and I will tell them that you are an enemy of the state, and that you are to be manacled and taken to the Persian frontier."

The Haji only smiled. "Jinab-i-Khan," he said. "I have given up my life for the truth. I have nothing else. You are telling me to lie and bear false witness. Do with me as you please; I will not turn my back on what is right."

When the Consul saw that there was no way to make Ali-'Askar testify to a falsehood, he said: "It is better, then, for you to leave this place, so that I can inform the Government that the owner of the merchandise is no longer available and has gone away. Otherwise I shall be disgraced."

The Haji returned to Adrianople, and spoke not a word as to his stolen goods, but the matter became public knowledge and caused considerable surprise.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 163



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**Activity 4: One World Open Mic**

They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations. Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred.

This Wronged One exhorteth the peoples of the world to observe tolerance and righteousness, which are two lights amidst the darkness of the world and two educators for the edification of mankind.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 36*

Love and fellowship are absolutely needful to win the good pleasure of God, which is the goal of all human attainment. We must be united. We must love each other. We must ever praise each other. We must bestow commendation upon all people, thus removing the discord and hatred which have caused alienation amongst men. Otherwise, the conditions of the past will continue, praising ourselves and condemning others; religious wars will have no end, and religious prejudice, the prime cause of this havoc and tribulation, will increase. This must be abandoned, and the way to do it is to investigate the reality which underlies all the religions. This underlying reality is the love of humanity. For God is one and humanity is one, and the only creed of the Prophets is love and unity.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 410*

Observe carefully how education and the arts of civilization bring honor, prosperity, independence and freedom to a government and its people.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 111*

If men could only learn the lesson of mutual tolerance, understanding, and brotherly love, the unity of the world would soon be an established fact.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 49*

**Activity 4: One World Open Mic**

***Alexandria: 323 B.C.E.–215 C.E.***

- The greatest library of the ancient world was established in the year 288 B.C.E.
- It was the first research center in the world—a sort of meeting place for prominent scientists and intellectuals. Some of these individuals include:
  - Aristarchus, the first to proclaim that the earth revolves around the sun.
  - Hipparchus, the first to measure the solar year within six and a half minutes' accuracy.
  - Eratosthenes, the first to measure the circumference of the earth.
  - Euclid, who wrote the elements of geometry.
  - Archimedes, the greatest mathematician of the ancient world.
- The library expanded to include all the knowledge in the ancient world. At its zenith it may have had over 700,000 manuscripts.
- The ancient Library of Alexandria was open to all civilizations. The best works were collected from all over the world; any ships that docked in Alexandria were searched, and any books on board were copied. Scholars from all over the world were invited to come. The Old Testament was translated there for the first time from Hebrew to Greek.
- Alexandria in its first centuries was a mixture of all civilizations and languages, and with its great Library was the intellectual capital of the Euro-Mediterranean world.

***The School of Jondishapour: 500–800 C.E.***

- Jondishapour (meaning “the beautiful garden”) was a Persian city populated by Romans and Greeks in addition to Persians, Indians, and Iraqis.
- During the reign of Shapur II the city was enlarged and a university was established.
- The cosmopolitan nature of the city assured a place of almost equal honor for Christians, Zoroastrians, and others.
- The university made progress in the sciences, and developed new methods in the treatment of the disease.
- These physicians learned from other peoples, adopted their methods, and modified their approaches by their own discoveries.
- The university became the greatest intellectual center of the time. The thoughts and experiences of Greeks, Jews, Nestorian Christians, Persians, and Hindus were freely exchanged within its walls.
- For several centuries the school and hospital of Jondishapour held first place in the world of medicine and science.

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*Changan: 618–907 C.E.*

- During the reign of emperor Tai-tsung, China was transformed into the most advanced and civilized country in the world.
- Its capital, Changan (modern-day Xian), was by far the largest and most cosmopolitan city in the world, with a million people within its walls by the eighth century. London and Paris did not reach this size for another 1,100 years.
- Changan was full of Indian, Turkish, and Japanese visitors. Buddhism caused a religious and philosophical revival; new schools of literature and poetry burgeoned to produce works of great beauty. Paper had already been in use in China for five centuries but now texts started to be printed with wood-blocks: the oldest surviving printed book in the world is a Buddhist text in Chinese, the Diamond Sutra.
- Tai-tsung's reign saw foreign trade expand, vitality and openness to new ideas, and religious tolerance. In addition to Buddhist temples there were Muslim, Jewish, Nestorian Christian, Zoroastrian, and Taoist houses of worship.
- Christian and Muslim missionaries who arrived at the court of Tai-tsung were courteously received.

*Moorish Spain—Cordova and Toledo: 750–1492 C.E.*

- Spain became the home of three spiritual traditions: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.
- The impact of Islam was dramatic—Moorish Spain became a beacon of civilization and sophisticated culture throughout Europe.
- Trade with the Middle East was established and brought a large influx of Muslim and Jewish settlers.
- A pursuit of excellence in every field from agriculture to cultural arts was officially fostered.
- Cordova, the capital, became a huge city served by public baths, streetlights, a university and great library, and also had magnificent houses, gardens, and palaces.
- Markets sold goods from all over the known world.
- Even the poor were well off relative to the crude life of most common people in the rest of Europe.
- To bring the “two truths” of Reason and Revelation together, so as to prove their mutual veracity, became a major occupation of Muslim and Jewish thinkers.
- Many European Christians came to study in Spain when they heard of the intellectual activity there.
- Toledo became an important center of meeting and interchange among the three faiths, where scholars and mystics could freely discuss with one another.
- The Universities of Andalusia were the best in Western Europe that was still in its Dark Age.
- Tolerance and friendly interchange between the three religions of the West was a hallmark of the time.

*Baghdad: 762–1258 C.E.*

- In about 762 C.E., the Abbasid dynasty took over rule of the vast Muslim world and moved the capital to the newly founded city of Baghdad.
- Over the next five centuries, the city became the world's center of education and culture.
- Scholars of the Muslim world made important contributions in both the sciences and humanities: medicine, mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, literature, and more.
- Baghdad became a city of museums, hospitals, libraries, and mosques.
- Scholars from diverse cultures and religions came from all over the world to research and study in the congenial atmosphere of tolerance. Teachers and students worked together to translate Greek manuscripts, preserving them for all time.
- Baghdad was the heart of a vibrant and diverse civilization, perhaps the world's richest and most intellectual city of the time.

*Swahili States: 900–1400 C.E.*

- East African coast had contact with Arabia, Persia, India, and even China, long before the 8th century, while Europe was in the Dark Ages.
- Long before Europe moved into sea trade, Africa was an active and dominant participant in lucrative and enriching world trade.
- Dynamic trading interchange took place along the African coast of the Indian Ocean.
- Trading connections led to a vibrant cultural mix in East African city states.
- Historians use the term *Swahili* to describe the blend of cultures that defined these East African societies.
- Swahili culture and language was a mix of African Bantu and Islamic and Asian influences.
- Some of the wealthy and influential city-states included Mogadishu in the north, Kilwa, and Zanzibar in the South.
- Mombasa (in the modern state of Kenya) has been compared to Venice in terms of its central economic importance and cultural richness.

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***Timbuktu: 1100–1591 C.E.***

- In the 12th century, Timbuktu was a city of knowledge, trade, and commerce.
- Timbuktu had a multicultural composition, with people of many different cultures—Arabs, Tuaregs, Amazigh, Berbers, Fulani, Songhai, Mandinkas, all converged to Timbuktu to create a civilization of tolerance.
- Timbuktu at that time was a very prosperous city.
- Rulers of Timbuktu created a condition where scholars were honored and appreciated for their contributions.
- Camel caravans loaded with goods from the North, riverboats loaded with goods from the South, Mediterranean traders—all met in Timbuktu.
- Diverse scholars, commonly referred to as “Ambassadors of Peace,” established an academic and peaceful multicultural society.
- For centuries the city enjoyed prosperity and served as a model of peaceful governance.
- In 1593 the celebrated scholar Ahmed Baba (d.1627) was among those deported to Morocco following the Moroccan conquest of Timbuktu. He complained to the Sultan of Morocco that his library of 1,600 books had been plundered and that his was one of the smaller in the city.

***Renaissance Cities—Venice and Amsterdam: 1400–1600 C.E.***

- The great Renaissance cities—such as Venice and later Amsterdam—created a dynamic stage for interaction between diverse cultures.
- First the Italians, then other Europeans, seized the opportunities presented by the expansion of cross-cultural, intercontinental trade.
- Although far smaller than its Asian counterparts such as China and Japan, the Republic of Venice had developed a vast commercial network by the 15th century, extending from the shores of Britain to the Middle East, with links reaching to India and China. Venice became the richest city in Europe, the center of the newly developing world economy. By the early 16th century, the tiny Republic’s revenues were greater than those of all of France and equal to those of both Britain and Spain.
- Venice, first among Europe’s cities, benefited from the fostering contacts with the highly evolved societies of the early Islamic Middle East.
- At a time when most cities were roiled by intolerance and lawlessness, Venice offered foreigners a “haven of comparative security.” Merchants from Germany, Jews, Greek Christians, and other outsiders crowded Venice’s streets, bringing goods, ideas, and techniques to the city. As one French contemporary remarked: “If you are curious to see men from every part of the earth, each dressed in his own different way, go to Saint Mark’s Square or the Rialto, and you will find all manner of persons.”<sup>1</sup>
- Cities and states with comparatively open and tolerant attitudes, such as Venice and eventually Amsterdam, tended to control the commercial cross-currents.
- By the time of its emergence in the sixteenth century, Amsterdam boasted fully functioning Catholic, Huguenot, Jewish, Lutheran, and Mennonite religious institutions, as well as the dominant Dutch Reformed church. Workers from Germany, dissenter craftspeople from Britain, exiled Iberian Jewish merchants—all contributed to making the Dutch metropolis the center not only of the emerging global trading economy, but also a major contributor to the development of the arts and sciences.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://publicpolicy.pepperdine.edu/davenportinstitute/reports/renaissance/renaissance3.html>

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories and Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “God’s Great Plan,” Jan/Feb 1995
- “God’s Guidance for . . .” Jan/Feb 1995
- “Fire and Dirt!,” Jan/Feb 1995
- “Let’s Roll Up the Old . . .” Jan/Feb 1995
- “The Fruits of One Tree,” Jul/Aug 1999
- “What Is the Bahá’í Faith?” Jan/Feb 2002
- “What Do Bahá’ís Believe?” Jan/Feb 2002
- “Who and Where Are the Bahá’ís?” Jan/Feb 2002
- “What Does it Mean to Be a Bahá’í?” Jan/Feb 2002
- “What’s Next on Our Adventure?” Jan/Feb 2002
- “The Bahá’í Calendar,” Jan/Feb 2002
- “How Do I Find Out More,” Jan/Feb 2002
- “Josie’s Quest: Hidden Treasure,” Jan/Feb 2004
- “What Do You Say?” Sep/Oct 2004

*Bahá'u'lláh: The Glory of God: A Complete Curriculum and Teacher's Guide*  
*The Bahá'í Faith*, Patrick Vickers

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “We’re Bahá’ís,” Jan/Feb 1995
- “Fun Stuff to Do,” Jan/Feb 2002
- “Chameleon Crossword,” Jan/Feb 2002

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Ye Are the Stars,” Jan/Feb 1995
- “In This Day,” Jul/Aug 1997
- “Hoy es el Día,” Sep/Oct 1997
- “Peace and Unity,” Nov/Dec 1991
- “Mankind Is One,” May/Jun 2004
- “Anthem of the World Citizen,” *Laughter of Angels*
- “The Royal Falcon,” *Jewel in the Lotus*
- “One Family,” *Artists for the Arc*
- “One Single Country,” *The Magic Bird*
- “The Unifyer,” *Wings*
- “Unity House,” *If You Only Knew*
- “Bahá’u’lláh, The Glory of God,” *Release*
- “This Is the Day,” *Fire and Steel*

**Other Favorite Resources:**

*Bahá'u'lláh: His Station and Mission*  
*The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Mission*

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 THE MISSION  
AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH  
AND THE ROLE OF BAHÁ'Í INSTITUTIONS TO THE  
ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN AFFAIRS**

**THE UNFOLDING DESTINY  
OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FRIENDLINESS, HOSPITALITY, INITIATIVE**

His brotherly advice to you, and all loyal and ardent young believers like you, is that you should deepen your knowledge of the history and tenets of the Faith, not merely by means of careful and thorough study, but also through active, whole-hearted and continued participation in all the activities, whether administrative or otherwise, of your community. The Bahá'í community life provides you with an indispensable laboratory, where you can translate into living and constructive action, the principles which you imbibe from the teachings. By becoming a real part of that living organism you can catch the real spirit which runs throughout the Bahá'í Teachings.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, in *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, p. 36, no. 117

The Bahá'í youth must be taught how to teach the Cause of God.

Shoghi Effendi, in *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, p. 21, no. 73

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings that describe the steps to be taken towards the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- In groups, recite memorized passages which describe the steps that must be taken to establish the new World Order. Write the steps along this path on a poster, leaving room for students to add new steps over time.
- Read and discuss “God’s Great Plan” (*Brilliant Star*, Jan/Feb 1995, pp. 2–3).



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand, from the history of the Faith, the growth and development of the Bahá'í community, and the role of the Central Figures and institutions in continually guiding this growth
- To identify and understand the unique features of the Bahá'í Administrative Order: the Covenant, the twin institutions, Bahá'í elections, consultation, and the role of the individual in the unfolding destiny of the Bahá'í Faith

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Liken the growth of the Bahá'í community to that of a tree, which needs water, sunshine, and good soil to grow. Draw a large tree and use it to identify various elements of the Administrative Order that foster the Bahá'í community's growth, acting as spiritual rain, sunshine, and soil for this growing “tree.”
- In small groups, choose one of the unique features of the Bahá'í Administrative Order and research some of its contributions throughout the history of the Faith. Use an art form to present the results.



**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
**TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

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## **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES**

- To perceive the relationship between the guidance of Bahá'í Administration, the individual, and the community in the gradual unfoldment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh
- To discern the unique features of the Bahá'í Administrative Order in the functioning of one's own Bahá'í community

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Using an instructor-provided checklist of features of the Bahá'í Administrative Order, go on a treasure hunt throughout the Bahá'í community observing these features. Prepare a report or presentation for the Nineteen Day Feast or for Naw-Rúz on the unfoldment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh in one's community from its first articulation by Bahá'u'lláh to the present.
- Give a list of the identified steps the community can take in the remainder of the current teaching Plan from the Universal House of Justice to the community, Local Assembly and Auxiliary Board Members along with a statement of the students' and teachers' own commitment.



## **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

- To demonstrate how the individual can contribute to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Display artwork for the community describing the steps toward, and the unfoldment of, the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.
- Prepare a celebration of the community and its contribution to the unfoldment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. As part of the celebration, present a gift to the Local Spiritual Assembly: one's commitment to accomplishing the goals of the community's teaching plan.

## **TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

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### **Sample Activities**

#### **ACTIVITY 1: PLANNING A PEACE PARTY, DEVOTIONAL GATHERING, OR OPEN MIC EVENT**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writing that describe the future World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- 2 or more copies of Resource Page 188 on card stock or heavy paper for each student
- Copies of Resource Page 189
- String
- Glue
- Scissors
- Art supplies such as markers, glitter, etc.
- Envelopes for invitation cards, if desired

**Advance Preparation:**

Consider reading through all of the sample activities for this topic as they build upon one another to create an outreach activity that the junior youth plan for their friends, neighbors, and families. Reading through the entire set will provide the teacher with the opportunity to select some or all of these activities and to adapt them as appropriate for local circumstances. Consider linking the theme of the invitations in Activity 1 with preparation of the environment for the gathering in Activity 4. Identify several possible times and places for a student-hosted devotional gathering, peace party, or open mic event to which they could invite their friends, neighbors, and family.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their experiences encouraging other people and reaching out to make new friends. Acknowledge all.
2. Encourage students to recite quotations memorized for Activity 1 of the previous topic, p. 158, or other favorite quotations and prayers.
3. Explain that students will have the opportunity to share these words of Bahá'u'lláh with others by planning a community event—a devotional meeting, fireside, open mic event, or peace party—to which the class can invite new and old friends, neighbors, and family members.
4. Encourage students to huddle for a moment in pairs and to discuss: What are times and places when we have felt spiritually uplifted and happy? Where were we? What were we doing? And what happened after that?
5. After this pair-share, encourage students to share highlights of these conversations in the whole group. Record student comments on chart paper. Then discuss: What are some shared elements of these experiences? In the whole group, identify some of the factors that helped create spiritually uplifting, joyful experiences. Record these factors on chart paper.
6. Explain that one of the ways that the class can help humanity take one step after another toward its glorious future is to share the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the message from God to every member of the human race. Suggest that the quotations memorized for the previous topic, Activity 1, p. 158, are powerful ways to touch the heart. Suggest that the stories learned in the previous activity on the Transforming Power of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 161, show the power of individuals to take powerful actions for peace. Invite the class to use the principles of

## TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

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consultation as they discuss: What are some other things that we could do to attract the hearts of our friends, family, and neighbors? Who exactly can we invite to our gathering? Record student ideas on chart paper. Create a list of friends, neighbors, and family members to invite.

7. Consider the role of music, fun and fellowship, refreshments, location for the gathering, etc. Consider whether to plan an indoor or outdoor event.<sup>1</sup> Note that the class will have opportunities to continue working in a step-by-step way to carry out these plans as it continues its study of this topic of the Lesson Planning Guide, *The Unfolding Destiny of the Bahá'í Faith*.
8. Continue consulting as a class to decide the type of event, potential time and place, and general flow of the activity.
9. In the whole group, review the quotations that were memorized for Activity 1 of the previous topic, p. 158; the stories prepared in Activity 3 of that topic, p. 161; and the open mic presentations created for Activity 4 of that same topic, pp. 163. Decide which of these quotations, stories, and other presentations to share at this event. Then read aloud the quotations from prominent thinkers on Resource Page 189 and decide if your audience would also appreciate hearing some of them in your program.
10. After students have consulted and agreed on a general plan for this event, consider organizing small teams to work on different aspects of the celebration. Also decide how the class will monitor its progress and adjust plans as necessary.
11. Then encourage students to use copies of Resource Page 188 to create invitations for their friends, neighbors, and family members.

- Note that the design for this card includes cutting apart the sections of two copies of Resource Page 188, decorating both copies of the inner circle of the card, and using glue and string to connect all parts of both copies of Resource Page 188 to make a single card.
- First cut out the circles of both copies of Resource Page 188.
- Create a simple design for both copies of the center circle, using the art materials provided.
- Write a short quotation around both copies of the middle circle of the card, such as: “The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.” —Bahá'u'lláh
- Consider using glitter to decorate the border of the front of the card.
- Use string to connect one center circle, one middle circle, and one border of the card. Glue the corresponding parts of the two Resource Pages together.
- Write the details of the invitation on the inside of the card. Include the following information:

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
You are warmly invited to \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_

With friendship,  
(Your Name) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Plan to send or deliver the invitations about 2 weeks before your scheduled event.
13. Remember to review the group's progress in carrying out its plans each week between this class and the actual event.
14. Encourage students to begin talking with their family members and friends about this upcoming event. Encourage them to continue reaching out to make new friends.
15. Encourage students to continue practicing their memorized quotations and selected stories and artistic performances, as part of their preparation for this upcoming event.

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<sup>1</sup> One of the next sample activities provides an opportunity for students to create the environment for this gathering. While an outdoor event is ideal for that activity, it can also be completed for an indoor event.

## **TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

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### **ACTIVITY 2: NEW WORLD ORDER MIX-UP**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To discern the unique features of the Bahá'í administrative order in the functioning of one's own Bahá'í community

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engage the mind and heart; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of play; Involve service and teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Materials for making additional invitations described in the previous activity (optional)

**Advance Preparation:**

This activity includes tracking progress towards a community gathering that students may have begun to plan in Activity 1 for this topic. If time permits, students may make additional invitations as described in the previous activity.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their efforts to practice spiritual qualities since the last class. What has happened as they've reached out to make new friends? Have they had the opportunity to invite people to the upcoming gathering planned by the class? Did they have other adventures in their path of service to all people? Acknowledge all.
2. Explain that the topics studied in this Lesson Planning Guide all seek to explore the close relationship between the spirit of the Cause of God, administrative institutions of the Bahá'í Faith, and processes such as consultation that promote unity at all levels of individual and community life. In the whole group, discuss: What is the purpose of the Bahá'í Faith? What are some of the administrative institutions, processes, and principles that help achieve this purpose?<sup>1</sup> List student ideas on chart paper. As each item is listed, encourage students to suggest an example of that administrative institution, process, or principle—an example from the local community, if possible.
3. When the list is longer than the number of students in your class, encourage students to think of one item on the list, to keep it firmly in mind, and to tell no one what they're thinking as they play the following game.
4. Arrange chairs in a circle, with enough chairs for all but one player. Invite a volunteer to be the first caller and stand the center. The caller will call out the name of two items from the list created in Step 2 above. When students hear the name of their item, they must find a new seat before the caller takes that seat. It is okay if no one has thought of that item or if more than one player has the same item in mind. If the caller says "New World Order Mix-Up!" all players must find a new seat. The player without a seat becomes the next caller.
5. Continue the game until everyone has had the chance to serve as caller. Then discuss: How do all these elements of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh work together to build a peaceful world?

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<sup>1</sup> If desired you may add the following to the class list of Bahá'í administrative institutions, processes, and principles: family, Local Spiritual Assemblies, National Spiritual Assemblies, the Universal House of Justice, Auxiliary Board Members and Assistants, Continental and International Counselors, Regional Bahá'í Councils, the Nineteen Day Feast, the Fund, Huqúqu'lláh, the House of Worship, consultation, Bahá'í elections, unity in diversity, search for truth, etc.

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6. Briefly review the class's plans for the upcoming event planned. Keeping in mind the people we want to invite, recall the words of Bahá'u'lláh:  
  
The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.  
  
*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Baba'u'llah, p. 97*  
  
Briefly discuss: What is the Word of God? How is it like a sapling? How can we help this sapling grow in the hearts of our friends? Which quotations have we decided to include in the program? Are we presenting them by reciting with eloquence? Are we presenting them through music or in some other way?
7. Discuss: Have we identified individuals that we'd like to thank for their contributions to building unity in the community? If so, how will we show our appreciation?
8. Continue consulting: How are we coming with progress on our plans for the program, refreshments, information for the Local Spiritual Assembly and other relevant institutions, and invitations to our friends, families, and neighbors?
9. Briefly discuss: Have some of our friends already said they want to come? Who else would we like to invite? As time permits, consider making additional invitations as described in the previous activity.
10. Encourage students to continue working over the coming week on their plans for the coming event, reaching out to make new friends, and inviting friends to their event. Conclude the activity with prayers for teaching.

ACTIVITY 3: THE ROOTS OF THE TREE OF HUMANITY

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings that describe the steps to be taken towards the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand, from the history of the Faith, the process of growth and development of the Bahá'í community, and the role of the Central Figures and institutions in continually guiding this growth

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Access to an outdoor environment, if possible
- Beautiful nature photographs that include one or more trees, if it is not possible to go outdoors
- A wide variety of nature pictures cut from magazines

**Advance Preparation:**

This activity includes tracking progress towards a community gathering that students began to plan in Activity 1 for this topic. If possible, identify an outdoor area near the classroom to take the class. Ideally this area will have some elements of beauty, including one or more trees. The more trees, and the larger they are, the better!

If it is not possible to take the class outdoors, consider how to create an area of natural beauty in the classroom. Is it possible to have plants in the room, perhaps even a small potted tree? Is it possible to have students sit on a rug or cloth, rather than in their chairs? Could you play a recording of sounds from nature? What else could enhance the environment?

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share their adventures in service over the past week. Briefly discuss: How are we coming with our preparations for our upcoming gathering? Do we need to adjust any of our plans?
2. If possible, invite students to move with you to an outdoor area, ideally an area of beauty where one or trees may be seen. Encourage students to find a comfortable place to sit and view the trees and other foliage. If feasible, encourage some students to sit directly under a tree. If it is not possible to take the class outdoors, invite them to move the area you have beautified for this activity.
3. When students are comfortable, invite them to notice the beauty of the natural world, a gift of our All-Loving Creator. Encourage them to feel the freshness of the air, the warmth of the sunshine, the fragrance of the trees or flowers. Encourage them to let themselves fully appreciate all the beauty around them and then to reflect on the question:

How many of us have had the experience of reading the Bahá'í writings, and while we read, our hearts respond, “yes, this is true”? After allowing students time to reflect, invite those who wish to share their experiences. Teachers may also share these memories.

4. Read aloud the following quotation twice.

**Say:** This Youth hath come to quicken the world and unite all its peoples. The day is approaching when that which God hath purposed will have prevailed and thou shalt behold the earth transformed into the all-glorious paradise.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 145*

5. Discuss: What is God's purpose in sending His Revelation to humanity at this time in human history? What do we imagine the earth will be like when it is transformed into the all-glorious paradise?

Encourage students to listen with heart and mind to each other's reflections.

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6. Refer to a tree in the environment, show a beautiful photograph of a large tree, or encourage students to imagine a large tree. Briefly discuss: How does this tree demonstrate the fundamental principle of Unity in Diversity?
7. Listen carefully to student responses, then read aloud the words of Bahá'u'lláh:

O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 163*

Briefly discuss: If we're like the leaves and fruits of this tree, what is the root?

Listen carefully to student responses then read aloud the following quotations:

Say: My creatures are even as the leaves of a tree. They proceed from the tree, and depend upon it for their existence, yet remain oblivious of their root and origin.

*Bahá'u'lláh, The Summons of the Lord of Hosts, p. 40*

The Prophets of God have founded the laws of divine civilization. They have been the root and fundamental source of all knowledge.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 142*

Briefly discuss: In what ways are the Prophets of God like the root of the tree of humanity?

8. Listen carefully to student responses, then share the following information:
- Tree root systems can spread 2–3 times wider than the height of the tree. 90–95% of a tree's absorbing roots are in the top 3 feet of soil, and 50% occur in the top 12 inches.
  - The roots from a single large redwood tree have been found to cover 3–4 acres.
  - Tiny root hairs—sometimes so small you cannot see them without magnification—absorb more than 95% of a tree's water and minerals. Smaller roots are not necessarily more absorptive than larger roots, but they make up a large fraction of the total surface area available for absorption. Tiny root hairs can make up as much as 60% of the surface area of a plant's roots.
9. Suggest to the class that, just as the roots of a tree are hidden, our inner spiritual lives are hidden also. Yet, at the same time, our inner spiritual lives feed the growth of human society and civilization.
10. Read aloud the following quotation in which Shoghi Effendi explains the relationship between the growth of the Cause of God and our own spiritual life:

Every outward thrust into new fields, every multiplication of Bahá'í institutions, must be paralleled by a deeper thrust of the roots which sustain the spiritual life of the community and ensure its sound development.

*Shoghi Effendi, The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 1, p. 209*

Briefly discuss: What examples have we seen in our own community or our own lives of the truth of this statement?

11. Explain that the Universal House of Justice has guided the development of core activities—such as devotional meetings, children's classes, junior youth activities, and study circles—in Bahá'í communities all over the world. These activities stimulate the growth of spiritual roots for the tree of humanity. Discuss: How could our upcoming gathering also serve to encourage our friends, neighbors, and family members to consider participating in one or more of these core activities? Shall we include in our program an invitation for them to participate in ongoing community events? What else could make a difference?

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12. After allowing some time for discussion, invite the students to select two pictures from the set provided: one picture that illustrates how they feel about the Bahá'í community today and one picture that illustrates how the community could look after about 3 months, when more people will have had the opportunity to draw closer and closer to the roots that sustain the spiritual life of the community.
13. After all students have selected their pictures, invite them to share the pictures in the whole group. Acknowledge all.
14. Encourage students to keep their second pictures as a reminder of their vision of growth. Conclude the activity with prayers for teaching.

### **ACTIVITY 4: ONE WORLD GARDEN**

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate how the individual can contribute to the establishment of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. + 20 MIN. STUDENT-HOSTED DEVOTIONAL GATHERING

**Materials Needed:**

- A glass of refrigerated water for each student
- Assorted materials for preparing the environment for the student-hosted gathering
- If selecting option 6.c below: Materials to enhance the environment, such as rose water or other fragrance; beautiful cloths, rocks, twigs, or flowers; fresh water; recorded nature sounds
- If selecting option 6.d. below: flower seeds, bulbs, or seedlings; soil; small plastic pots or tin cans with holes in the bottom; colored cellophane or foil for wrapping pots; ribbon

**Advance Preparation:**

Consider carefully the environment for the upcoming student-hosted event. Gather materials or invite students to bring materials to prepare the environment for guests. Consider preparing the environment during class to refine your plans, and then saving the materials to quickly re-set it on the day of your event.

If the class plans to grow flowing plants for guests, these plants may be started one or more weeks before the event. They may need to be watered daily until the event.

Pour a glass of water for each student and refrigerate it until class so that condensation will form on the sides of the glass when you serve it.

1. Welcome students. Invite them to share the results of their service over the past week. Acknowledge all.
2. Consider playing background music while you read aloud the following quotation, also studied in a previous activity:

The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 97



## TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH

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3. Invite students to continue reflecting on the words of this quotation while you place a glass of refrigerated water in front of them. Encourage them to refrain from drinking for a few minutes while they continue their silent reflections on their hopes for their upcoming gathering, the people they've invited, and the power of the Word of God to touch the hearts of their friends.
4. After a period of silent reflection, read aloud the following quotation:

Remembrance of God is like the rain and dew which bestow freshness and grace on flowers and hyacinths, revive them and cause them to acquire fragrance, redolence and renewed charm.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Compilation of Compilations, vol. 2, p. 232*
5. Then pose the question: What do we notice about the glass? Listen to student responses and then affirm that the moisture that is in the air condenses on the glass because of the refreshing coolness of the glass. In the same way, when our love for God and remembrance of God refreshes our own hearts, we can help the Word of God take root in the hearts of others. Briefly discuss: What can we do to refresh our own hearts with the remembrance of God as we prepare to welcome our friends?

Continue the discussion: What are some ways that we can prepare the environment so that the Word of God will grow in the hearts of our friends during our upcoming gathering? What effect does the environment have? How can we arrange the environment to best serve this purpose? Is it possible to beautify an outdoor area for our gathering?
6. Whether the upcoming gathering will be held indoors or out, consider some of the following options to enhance the environment:
  - a. Find or create a path through nature; have different parts of the presentation at different points along the path; consider posting quotations for reflection or to inspire a brief activity at various places along the path; plan to have fellowship and refreshments at the end of the path; consider titling your path 'The Path to Peace.
  - b. Clean the ground in an outdoor area, arrange chairs or cloth so people can sit; arrange stones in a pleasant pattern to illustrate Stepping Stones to Peace; plan an interactive portion of the gathering so that guests write one action they will take to promote peace on a ribbon that they tie on a nearby tree.
  - c. Use potted plants, beautiful cloths, and artfully arranged stones, twigs, etc., to create a Peace Garden. Use light natural fragrance, recordings of nature sounds, and perhaps a basin of clear water to evoke the world of nature. Invite your guests to bring a favorite song, prayer, or inspirational writing to share.
  - d. Plant flower seeds, bulbs, or seedlings to give to your guests. If the class plants today and waters the seeds or plants between now and the gathering, small plants will be ready to go home with your guests. Consider the theme Flowers of One Garden.
  - e. Plan your gathering at a public playground. Host a One World Clean-Up Party before or after your spiritual gathering.
7. After consultation, work together to carry out the class's plans during class time or schedule time to do this necessary preparation prior to your gathering. Also plan to:
  - Arrive early for your gathering.
  - Stay to clean the area before departing.
  - Invite guests to participate in ongoing Bahá'í classes, junior youth activities, devotional meetings, or study circles.
  - Debrief your experience by discussing elements of success, new friendships to cultivate, etc.
8. Conclude this activity with prayers for teaching.

Resource Pages

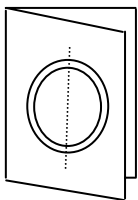
Activity 1: Planning a Peace Party, Devotional Gathering, or Open Mic Event

Cut out and keep two copies of the white areas.

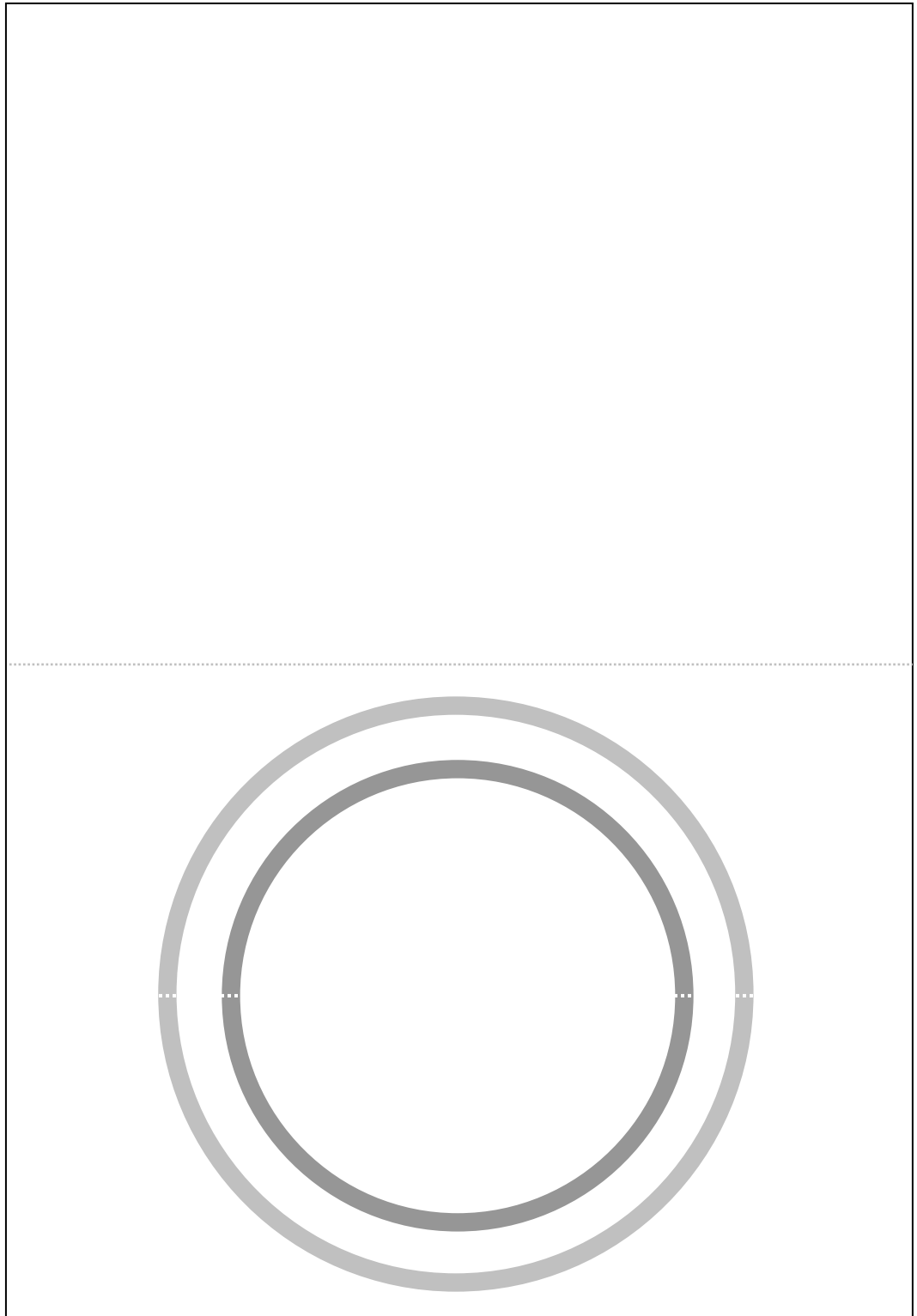
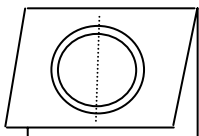
Discard the shaded areas.

After decorating, glue halves together, with string through the center of circles.

This example shows string placement for a card that folds vertically.



You may also choose to place the string so the card folds horizontally.



**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE MISSION AND FUTURE STATE OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**  
**TOPIC: THE UNFOLDING DESTINY OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH**

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**Activity 1: Planning a Peace Party, Devotional Gathering, or Open Mic Event**

**SOME THOUGHTS ON INDIVIDUALITY AND UNITY**

Even the weak become strong when they are united.

—Johann Friedrich von Schiller

The oneness of human beings is the basic ethical thread that holds us together.

—Muhammad Yunus

When we drop fear, we can draw nearer to people, we can draw nearer to the earth, we can draw nearer to all the heavenly creatures that surround us.

—bell hooks

It is a poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish.

—Mother Teresa

The cure for all ills and wrongs, the cares, the sorrows and the crimes of humanity, all lie in the one word 'love.' It is the divine vitality that everywhere produces and restores life.

—Lydia Child

A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

—Albert Einstein

Know that although in the eternal scheme of things you are small, you are also unique and irreplaceable, as are all your fellow humans everywhere in the world.

—Margaret Laurence

An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories and Articles:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Welcome to the Three Year Plan,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Parts of the Plan,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Most Great Gardener,” Mar/Apr 1995
- “Glorious Future,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “4 Year Plan! Let’s Get Started!” Sep/Oct 1996
- “Go Global!” Sep/Oct 1997
- “Making Time Capsules,” Nov/Dec 1999
- “What Day is it?” Nov/Dec 1999
- “That Was Then, This Is Now,” Nov/Dec 1999
- “Why Does the World Go Faster?” Nov/Dec 1999
- “Mailbox,” Jan/Feb 2000
- “Star Kids: Making a Difference,” Jan/Feb 2000

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Heart to Heart,” Sep/Oct 1997
- “The Life of . . . Max,” Nov/Dec 1999

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “People in the Plan,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Personal Spiritual Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Teaching Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Race Unity Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Women’s Equality Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Family Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make a Community Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Make Your International Goal,” Nov/Dec 1993
- “Noteworthy,” Jul/Aug 1995
- “Bahá’u’lláh’s Gift to the World,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “Be a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “Planning a Garden,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “Secret Code,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “You Can Tell the Story,” Sep/Oct 1996
- “New World Construction Teams,” Sp Ed 1997
- “Let’s Go! Four Year Plan!” Sp Ed 1997
- “Hands of Loving-Kindness,” Jan/Feb 1998
- “Stand Ready,” Jan/Feb 1998
- “Star Kids: Time Machine!” Nov/Dec 1999
- “Share-Your-Stuff Party,” Jan/Feb 2000
- “Virtues Day Maze Activity,” Jan/Feb 2000
- “My Trip to the Future,” Jul/Aug 2001
- “Scale the Heights,” Nov/Dec 2005

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Reverence,” Nov/Dec 1995
- “Marching to the Kingdom,” Sep/Oct 2000
- “The World Pledge,” Sp Ed 1995
- “When Will It Be?” *C’mon Rise Up*
- “We Are Building the Kingdom of God,” *To The Glory of God*
- “Let Us Be About Our Father’s Business,” Jul/Aug 1991
- “Press on,” *Laughter of Angels*

**Drama:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Plans in the Cause of God,” Sp Ed 1997
- “Spirit Upon Spirit,” Sp Ed 1998

**Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star* magazine:

- “Poetry Peak,” Jan/Feb 2000

**Other Favorite Resources:**

- The Spiritual Conquest of the Planet: Our Response to Plans*
- Building Momentum: A Coherent Approach to Growth*
- The Advent of Divine Justice*
- Bahá’í: The New Vision*
- Unfolding Destiny: The Messages from the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith to the Bahá’í Community of the British Isles*

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).