

The Institutions of the Bahá'í Faith



Level One

TO UNDERSTAND THE STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

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

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

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 57, p. 40

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

On behalf of the Universal House of Justice, in *Stirring of the Spirit*, p. 29, no. 63

Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know from the Bahá'í writings the purpose and function of the Nineteen Day Feast

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Study quotations about the purpose and function of Feast.
- Make a poster divided in two. Invite one group to list the purpose or function of the Feast and the other group to list the characteristics and form of the Feast.
- Memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings about the special importance or spiritual quality of the Feast.

WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that the spiritual purpose of the Feast is achieved through devotional, administrative, and social portions
- To understand the relationship of the Feast to the Administrative Order

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Consult on how the characteristics and form of the Feast serve its purpose and function.
- Use some art form to demonstrate the relationship of the Feast to the whole Administrative Order.
- Play “Come to Feast” game (Brilliant Star JF 93, p. 16).
- Divide students into groups. Have each group examine one part of the Feast and how it addresses the spiritual purpose of the Feast.



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern the diversity of the ways Feasts are conducted around the Bahá'í world, and how it compares to local Feasts
- To perceive the bounty of attending the Feast, and why it is a privilege only for members of the Bahá'í community

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Keep a Feast journal in a special book with 19 pages for the year (i.e., how did Feast make you feel; did you make someone happy, suggestions for the next Feast).
- Consult on how to prepare oneself for going to Feast.
- Divide learners into two groups. Invite one group to consult and develop a list of benefits of going to Feast for oneself and the other group to list the benefits of each person's attendance for others in the community.
- Invite any community member who has visited other parts of the world to tell stories of Feast held in other areas. Use slides, videos, and pictures.
- In pairs, write and send letters with pictures about the local Feast to countries in another part of the world and request a similar letter and picture about that community's Feast.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings regarding the Feast
- To be able to explain the privilege of attendance at Feast
- To demonstrate one's understanding of Feast and its importance

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Prepare and host a feast as a class (menu, writings, etc.)
- Select a passage from the Feast compilation to memorize and recite.
- Read the poem and color "Feast at My House" (*Brilliant Star* JF 93, p. 8)
- Sharing learnings about Feast with the community, perhaps during the consultation or social portions of an upcoming Nineteen Day Feast.

TOPIC: THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: FOUR-PART MEMORIZATION

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know from the Bahá'í writings the purpose and function of the Nineteen Day Feast

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings regarding the Feast

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and marker
- One sentence of the quotation on a sheet of paper for each group (Resource Page 78)
- Paper, scissors, crayons/markers to create props or use real objects if desired
- Copy of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, if available

Advance Preparation: Create a simple but reverent display for the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Copy the following quotation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá onto chart paper to display in the classroom:

This Feast is a bringer of joy. It is the groundwork of agreement and unity. It is the key to affection and fellowship. It diffuseth the oneness of mankind.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. I, p. 425

1. Invite students to silently reflect on their acts of service since the last class. Encourage them to remember how they *feel* when they perform these acts of service. Then encourage them to respond to the question: How does service to others make us happy?
2. Draw the students' attention to the display of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the Most Holy Book.. Explain that this book, the Most Holy Book, explains how we can create an entirely new civilization in which all the people on earth will be united and all people will learn to express the spiritual qualities and attributes that God has placed in us. In paragraph 57 of this sacred book, Bahá'u'lláh ordains an important institution to bind hearts together. Briefly discuss: What do we think this institution is? Listen carefully to all student ideas and list them on chart paper. Affirm the importance of these ideas. Then reverently pick up the book and read:

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

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 57, p. 40

Read the quotation a second time and then discuss: What is the purpose of the Nineteen Day Feast? What is an example of an earthly means to bind hearts together? What is an example of a heavenly means to bind hearts together? Why do we think that Bahá'u'lláh says that it is okay to serve only water? How many of us have been to a Nineteen Day Feast? Can you think of a time when the Feast helped bind your heart to other members of the community? Please share a story about a time when you felt close to other people at the Nineteen Day Feast.

3. Call the students' attention to the posted quotation by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Read the quotation together as a group.
4. Discuss: What are some examples of some important words in this quotation—joy, groundwork, agreement, unity, affection, fellowship, diffuseth?
5. Organize the students into groups. Invite each group to memorize one or more sentences of the quotation and each member of the group to create a “prop” or visual aid to use for a presentation. Encourage students to use their imaginations for these visual aids. Here are some ideas to get them started: a gift, a brick or small dish of soil, a key, and an atomizer.
6. Bring all groups back together to recite the quotation in turn, holding their props to help them remember their parts.
7. As a group decide when and where to share this quotation with others. Could you recite it at a Feast, a devotional meeting, for other classes in your Bahá'í school, or in another setting?
8. Follow up with your plan so that students have the opportunity to share this quotation with others.

ACTIVITY 2: FOUNDATION OF A NEW WORLD ORDER

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand that the spiritual purpose of the Feast is achieved through devotional, administrative, and social portions; To understand the relationship of the Feast to the Administrative Order

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 40 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Three shoe boxes or other boxes of similar size, covered in plain paper
- Crayons/markers, pictures cut from magazines (if desired), glue, and other art supplies
- Building blocks with sticky labels for the words: Local Spiritual Assembly, National Spiritual Assembly, Regional Bahá'í Council, Universal House of Justice, International Teaching Center, Continental Counselors and their Auxiliary Boards and their Assistants, Hands of the Cause, the Guardianship, the House of Worship
- Flat surface such as a table or floor

Advance Preparation: Cover the boxes in plain paper. Cut out a variety of magazine pictures such as scenes from nature, diverse people, food items if desired. Label blocks or a variety of small boxes with names of other institutions in the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, such as Local Spiritual Assembly, National Spiritual Assembly, Regional Bahá'í Council, Universal House of Justice, International Teaching Center, etc. Copy the quotation from the National Spiritual Assembly onto chart paper and display in the classroom.

The Nineteen Day Feast has been described by the Guardian as the foundation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. It is to be conducted according to the following program: the first part, entirely spiritual in character, consists of the reading of prayers by the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Master; the second part consists of general consultation on the affairs of the Cause. The third part is the material Feast and social meeting of all the believers, and should maintain the spiritual nature of the Feast.

U. S. National Spiritual Assembly, quoted in *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 52

TOPIC: THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

1. Welcome students and invite them to share the results of their service since the last class. Encourage them to listen closely to each other and make affirmative statements such as, “I appreciate . . .” to each other.
2. Read aloud the posted quotation and invite the students to suggest concrete examples of the term “foundation.”
3. Divide chart paper into three parts and label them “Spiritual,” “Consultation,” and “Social.” Read the quotation aloud a second time. Discuss: What happens during the first part of Feast? What happens during the second part of the Feast? What happens during the third part of Feast? Why is each part important? How can it help make a foundation for the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh?
4. Organize students into three groups, give each group a paper-covered box, and ask them to label their box with one part of the Feast and then decorate it to illustrate their part of the Feast.
5. Reconvene the whole group and invite the students to place their boxes on a table to represent a foundation. Ask students to place the smaller boxes representing the Administrative Order on top of this foundation to build the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh.
6. Discuss: What would happen if part or all of the foundation were not holding up the other boxes? Demonstrate by removing the parts of the Feast and watch the World Order tumble, emphasizing the importance of the Feast in the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh. Allow students to take turns with this demonstration.
7. Then discuss: How can we share these ideas with others? How can we show through our actions that we understand that the Feast is the foundation of the World Order of Bahá’u’lláh?
8. Encourage students to:
 - Think of at least one person to tell about the three parts of the Feast and why the Feast is so important.
 - Select one specific action to show their understanding of the importance of the Nineteen Day Feast.

If students are not Bahá’ís or are not able to come to the Feast for another reason assist them to find ways to complete these actions according to their own circumstances.

ACTIVITY 3: FEAST AT MY HOUSE

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive the bounty of attending the Feast, and why it is a privilege only for members of the Bahá'í community

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í writings; Use of play; Use of arts and crafts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- *Brilliant Star* magazine, J/F '93, pp. 8–9, and pp.16–17, or Resource Pages 79–81
- Copies of Resource Page 83 so that each student has one of the quotations
- Nice paper, glue, and other art supplies, if desired

Advance Preparation: Photocopy Resource Pages 80–81 and tape together to prepare a game board. Alternatively, you may choose to lay out a large, life-size game board on the floor using tape and/or index cards or other paper to indicate the boxes of the game board. Identify the date, time, and place for an upcoming Nineteen Day Feast or devotional meeting.

1. Invite students to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Read aloud the poem “Feast at My House,” from *Brilliant Star* magazine, Jan./Feb. 1993, pp. 8–9, or Resource Page 79. Discuss the words and images in the poem, the sights, sounds, and smells. Ask the students, “Does this sound like something you would want to attend? What are your favorite parts?”
3. Play the game “Come To Feast.” You may use the game board on Resource Pages 80–81, or adapt to create a life-size game board that students actually move on themselves. If there are more than 8 students, create teams to play the game.
4. Applaud all as they reach the end of the game board. Celebrate your successful “feast” with a treat.
5. Provide each student with a copy of one of the quotations from Resource Page 83, plain paper, glue, and other art supplies as desired. Encourage students to glue the quotations to the paper and decorate as desired. Circulate among the students as they work and assist students to read aloud and understand the meaning of their quotation.

Encourage students to carefully write the date, time, and place of an upcoming Nineteen Day Feast or devotional meeting on their papers. They may also write a simple invitation to that gathering.

Consider encouraging students to roll the completed quotations as scrolls and to present them as gifts to their parents or other adults in their households. Encourage them to share one fact about the Feast when they offer their gifts.

Resource Pages

Four Part Memorization Quotation

This Feast is a bringer of joy. It is the groundwork of agreement and unity. It is the key to affection and fellowship. It diffuseth the oneness of mankind.

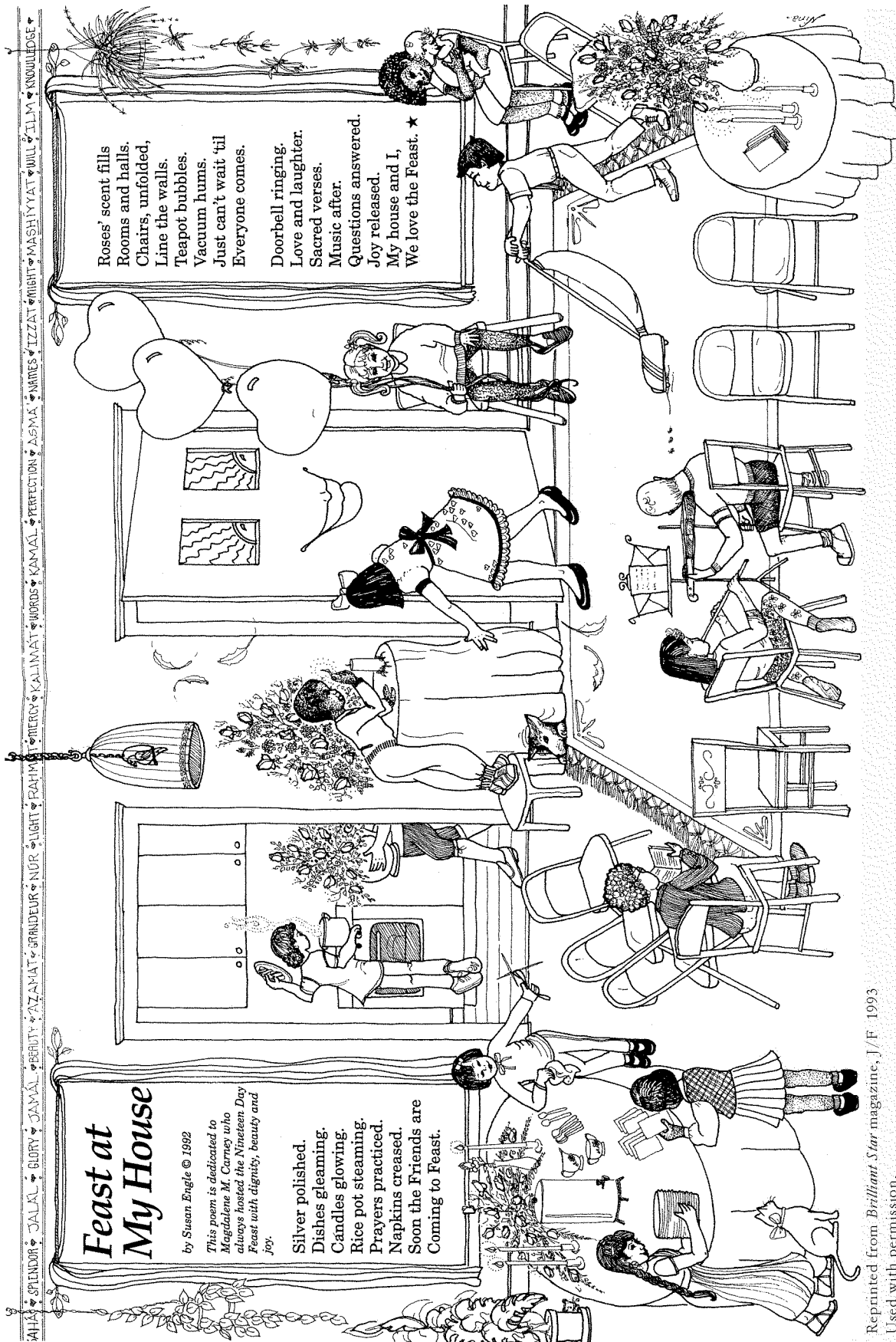
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. I, p. 425

This Feast is a bringer of joy.

It is the groundwork of agreement and unity.

It is the key to affection and fellowship.

It diffuseth the oneness of mankind.



Feast at My House

by Susan Engle © 1992

This poem is dedicated to Magdalene M. Correy who always hosted the Nineteen Day Feast with dignity, beauty and joy.

Silver polished.
Dishes gleaming.
Candles glowing.
Rice pot steaming.
Prayers practiced.
Napkins creased.
Soon the Friends are
Coming to Feast.

Roses' scent fills
Rooms and halls.
Chairs, unfolded,
Line the walls.
Teapot bubbles.
Vacuum hums.
Just can't wait 'til
Everyone comes.

Doorbell ringing.
Love and laughter.
Sacred verses.
Music after.
Questions answered.
Joy released.
My house and I,
We love the Feast. ★

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TOPIC: THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

Time to Arrive

1. Can a Bahá'í from another community attend your Feast?

2. What happens if someone who is not a Bahá'í comes to the Feast?

Roll Again ↘

3. When do we talk about the Funds at Feast?

You missed Feast to watch a TV show. Go back two.

4. What is the name of the first Feast of the year?

5. Is it a Bahá'í law to attend Feast?

You fell asleep during Feast. Miss one turn.

Devotional

6. During what part of Feast do we talk with friends?

Bounce Back

7. When do we read the Bahá'í Writings during Feast?

8. When can we play music during Feast?

Free Space

9. Can we play background music while prayers are being read at Feast?

10. When can we sing at the Feast?

11. Who established the Feast?

12. When do we eat at the Feast?

You baked cookies for Feast. Take another turn.

Administrative

13. Can we have Feast outside?

You said a prayer from memory at Feast. Move ahead one space.

14. In what way are all the Feast names special?

15. When does the Feast day begin and end?

Bounce Back

Name five Bahá'í months in Arabic or English. Move ahead one space for each correct name.

16. How do you prepare yourself to go to Feast?

Roll Again ↘

Come to the Feast

A Game for 4 to 8 players

How To Play

Use one die. Roll the die to see who goes first. The lowest goes first. The first player rolls the die and moves the number of spaces shown. Follow the directions for each space you land on. The first player to pass through all three portions of the Feast — Devotional, Administrative, and Social — is the winner. Play until everyone wins.

Question Space: Answer the question. The answers are listed by number on page 18. Study the questions and answers before you play. If your answer is wrong, you must go back five spaces. If you are right, stay there.

Needed for Play: one die, one marker for each player, s1

Administrative

Free Space
You volunteered to help with a service project. Move ahead four spaces.

Bounce Back
19. When may the writings of the Guardian be read at Feast?

Head for Home
You complained to the host about the punch. Go back two.

Free Space
You shared your idea with the Assembly at Feast. Take another turn.

20. Name two of the four Bahá'í Funds.

Advance to the next Free Space

26. Should you stay home from school on the Feast day?

18. Can poems written by Bahá'ís but based on the Writings be used at Feast?

Free Space

21. Can children participate in consultation at Feast?

25. May a Bahá'í express criticism of an Assembly action at Feast?

17. What is the main purpose of the Feast?
You giggled during prayers. Go back one space.

Roll Again
You have a teaching story to tell. Take another turn.

Free Space
You missed Feast to watch a TV show. Go back two.

Free Space
You helped little children be quiet during prayers. Roll again.

24. Can children offer ideas to the Assembly at Feast?

22. Can children host a Feast?

23. At Feast can children ask questions of the Assembly?

Bounce Back
You thought of a fun activity for a Holy Day. Move ahead two.

Free Space
You saved your money to give to the Fund. Move ahead three.

To Feast

by Dennis Smith ©1993

Bounce Back Space: Take a Bounce Back marker and keep it until you need to use it. If you answer a question wrong, you may use a Bounce Back marker to bounce right back to your space on the board. Return the marker after you use it.

Roll Again: Roll again and move in the direction of the arrow. This may be backwards. Do whatever the instructions say for the space you land on.

Action Space: Do what it says.

Free Space: Take a rest safely until the next turn.

Small objects for Bounce Back markers.

Social

Questions and Answers to the Come to the Feast Game

1. Can a Bahá'í from another community attend your Feast? *Yes.*
2. What happens if someone who is not a Bahá'í comes to Feast? *Welcome the guest for the devotional and social parts of the Feast only.*
3. When do we talk about the Funds at Feast? *Administrative portion, also known as consultation.*
4. What is the name of the first Feast of the year? *Feast of Bahá.*
5. Is it a Bahá'í law to attend Feast? *No, but the believers should make every effort to attend them.*
6. During what part of Feast do we talk with friends? *During the social portion.*
7. When do we read the Bahá'í Writings during Feast? *During the devotional portion, but the Writings may be read at any time.*
8. When can we play music during Feast? *During any part.*
9. Can we play background music while prayers are being read at Feast? *Yes.*
10. When can we sing at the Feast? *During any part.*
11. Who established the Feast? *The Báb.*
12. When do we eat at the Feast? *During the social portion.*
13. Can we have Feast outside? *Yes, if done with dignity.*
14. In what way are all the Feast names special? *They are all attributes of God.*
15. When does the Feast day begin and end? *Sunset.*
16. How can you prepare yourself to go to Feast? *Clear your mind and thoughts of everything except God.*
17. What is the main purpose of the Feast? *“Concord among the believers, spiritual uplifting, fellowship and love, to flood the heart with the love of God, to unify the believers.”*
18. Can poems written by Bahá'ís but based on the Bahá'í Writings be used at Feast? *Yes.*
19. When may the writings of the Guardian be read at Feast? *During consultation.*
20. Name two of the four Bahá'í Funds? *Local, National, International, Continental.*
21. Can children participate in consultation at Feast? *Yes.*
22. Can children host a Feast? *Yes.*
23. Can children ask questions of the Assembly at Feast? *Yes, during the administrative portion.*
24. Can children offer ideas to the Assembly at Feast? *Yes, during the administrative portion.*
25. May a believer express criticism of an Assembly action at a Feast? *Yes, “it is the right and the responsibility to offer honestly, and with respect and consideration, any suggestion or criticism.”*
26. Should you stay home from school on the Feast day? *No.*

References: *Bahá'í Meetings and the Nineteen Day Feast*, and *Stirring of the Spirit*, available from the Bahá'í Distribution Service.

Feast Quotations for Activity 3: Feast at My House

You have asked as to the feast in every Bahá'í month. This feast is held to foster comradeship and love, to call God to mind and supplicate Him with contrite hearts, and to encourage benevolent pursuits.

That is, the friends should there dwell upon God and glorify Him, read the prayers and holy verses, and treat one another with the utmost affection and love.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 91

As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 91

Do not call it a meeting. Call it a confluence of holy souls; a convocation of those who love the Lord; a retreat for the people of the All-Merciful; a palace-hall for all who sing His praise. For the members of that gathering are each one a lighted taper, and that council a mansion of the moon and stars. It hath been blessed by the Lord of all mankind, and hath made current the Feast as set forth in the Most Holy Book.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. I, p. 428

O God! Dispel all those elements which are the cause of discord, and prepare for us all those things which are the cause of unity and accord! O God! Descend upon us Heavenly Fragrance and change this gathering into a gathering of Heaven! Grant to us every benefit and every food. Prepare for us the Food of Love! Give to us the Food of Knowledge! Bestow upon us the Food of Heavenly Illumination!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. I, p. 429

The Nineteen-Day Feast was inaugurated by the Báb and ratified by Bahá'u'lláh, in His Holy Book, the Aqdas, so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the Divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness be established

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *Principles of Bahá'í Administration*, p. 52

In brief, this is my hope: that the Nineteen Day Feast become the cause of great spiritual solidarity between the friends, that it may bring believers into the bond of unity, and we will then be so united together that love and wisdom will spread from this center to all parts. This Feast is a divine Feast. It is a Lord's supper. It attracts confirmations of God like a magnet. It is the cause of the enlightenment of hearts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, vol. I, p. 430

TOPIC: THE NINETEEN DAY FEAST

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star:

- MJ 91 Kids and the Administration, p. 24
- JF 02 Nineteen Day Feast, p. 23

Lucy Lizard Goes to Feast, Carol O’Sullivan, Nightingale Press, New Zealand, 1991

My Name is Nabil, Wendy Heller, Kalimat Press, 1981

Restoring the Spirit: Celebrating the Nineteen Day Feast, National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the United States, Office of Assembly Development, 1998

A Feast of ABCs, Gail Radley, Malcolm Lee, George Ronald, Publisher, 1996

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Brilliant Star:

- JF 93 My Bahá’í Community, p. 4
- JF 93 Feast at My House, p. 8

Lucy Lizard Goes to Feast, Carol O’Sullivan, Nightingale Press, New Zealand, 1991

Activities:

Brilliant Star:

- JF 93 Come to Feast, p. 16
- JF 93 Feast, p. 20
- JF 93 Virtue Notes, p. 24
- MJ 00 Feast Around the World, p. 14
- MA 03 Nimni Finds Out About Feast, p. 22

Music:

Brilliant Star:

- ND 99 Song of the Months, p. 27
- JA 00 Bright Star, p. 3

“Song of the Months,” *We are Bahá’ís*, Lenz & Cameron, Don’t Blink Music, 1981

Poetry:

Brilliant Star:

- JF 93 Feast at My House, p. 8

Other favorite resources:

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Children’s Education and Resource Center, or submit your findings to the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org.