

# *A Life of Service*



*Level One*



# THE PURPOSE OF LIVING A LIFE OF SERVICE

## THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
SERVICE, SPIRITUAL DISTINCTION, SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION**

We cherish the hope that through the loving-kindness of the All-Wise, the All-Knowing, obscuring dust may be dispelled and the power of perception enhanced, that the people may discover the purpose for which they have been called into being. In this way whatsoever serveth to reduce blindness and to increase vision is worthy of consideration.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35

For you I desire spiritual distinction—that is, you must become eminent and distinguished in morals. In the love of God you must become distinguished from all else. You must become distinguished for loving humanity, for unity and accord, for love and justice. In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 190

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that the purpose of life is to know and to worship God
- To know from the Bahá'í writings that we are to carry on an ever-advancing civilization
- To know the Bahá'í writings on living a life of distinction

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Memorize the passage from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas on the purpose of life.
- Make banners using quotations from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
- In pairs, study the Bahá'í writings on living a life of distinction. Make a poster listing how to live a life of distinction.
- Find the meaning of the words: distinction, ever-advancing, worship, and civilization.
- Find quotations from the Bahá'í writings about the purpose of life, living a life of distinction, and carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To gain a deep understanding that in order to know and worship God, we need to follow the teachings of the Manifestations of God in our daily lives
- To understand that one must live a life of service to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization
- To understand why one's life should be a life of distinction

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use the analogy that one knows the sun through its reflection in other objects such as a mirror, and one knows God through the Manifestations of God.
- Discuss ways to “know” the Manifestations of God.
- Brainstorm ways that children contribute toward an ever-advancing civilization.

## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To discern that one's actions demonstrate one's knowledge and worship of God
- To perceive one's daily role in establishing an ever-advancing civilization
- To reflect on developing a daily pattern for a life of selfless service
- To reflect on ways that one's life can be a life of distinction

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students keep a journal of activities that demonstrate their efforts to know and worship God, their daily deeds of service, and their efforts toward distinction.
- In small groups, develop skits about how our daily lives can bring about an ever-advancing civilization.
- Create a board game about daily deeds of service and distinction.
- Have students create charts to identify when they have made steps towards advancing civilization.
- Have students reflect on ways in which their daily lives reflect distinction and efforts toward an ever-advancing civilization.

## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to track and document one's attendance at the Nineteen-Day Feast, devotional meetings, and Holy Day commemorations
- To be able to track and document daily personal acts that contribute toward an ever-advancing civilization
- To be able to track daily acts of service
- To strive toward distinction in one or more aspects of one's life

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students develop a system to track and document their attendance at Feast, devotional meetings, Holy Day commemorations, daily acts of service, and their efforts toward distinction.
- Have students recite quotations about the purpose of life at the Nineteen-Day Feast and devotional meetings.
- Have students prepare a fireside on the purpose of life based on what they have learned.
- Have students create a story or poem about the purpose of life.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: LIVING A LIFE OF DISTINCTION

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá'í writings on living a life of distinction

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To strive toward distinction in one or more aspects of one's life

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of memorization; Use of stories; Employ arts; Engage in science

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Small poster with the word, "Imtíyáz," written on it ("Distinction" in Persian)
- At least 4 different representatives of mineral kingdom (liquid, gas, solid, etc.); the same for vegetable kingdom, plants of different colors and sizes, (flowery, non-flowery, edible, etc.); the same for the animal kingdom; the same for human kingdom (pictures of diverse peoples)—any or all of these items may be pictures
- Poster boards 8 ½" x 11", one per student
- Several strips of paper, ½" x 3" long folded accordion style (at least six per student)
- Scrap paper—can be of different colors, cut in rectangles no bigger than 2" x 4"
- Markers
- Glue sticks

1. Share the following story: One day when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was traveling in United States, He became very tired and He went to bed and fell asleep. And while He was sleeping, He was talking out loud as if He was giving a speech. His own voice woke Him up and 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "one word was upon my lips—the word Imtíyáz." (See Resource Page 106.) The word is pronounced "EM-tee-AHZ."
2. Holding up the poster, show the word, *Imtíyáz*, and explain that this word means distinction in Persian, a language spoken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Point out various definitions of the word—things that are special or different, things that stand out.
3. Illustrate examples of distinction by using pictures or objects representing the kingdoms of God. Lay out at least one object from each of the kingdoms. Ask: How are all of these things alike? How are they different?
4. Lay out the objects of the mineral kingdom; ask how each object is different from the others. Emphasize the word, "distinction," when discussing differences.
5. Do the same with the vegetable and animal kingdoms.
6. Display pictures of diverse people. Invite the students to state physical differences among them. Ask if they think that these differences are important.
7. Observe that when 'Abdu'l-Bahá woke up that day with the word, Imtíyáz, He decided to tell people about distinction—what makes all of us so special. Let's look at the talk He gave. (See Resource Page 106.)
8. State: 'Abdu'l-Bahá says, "The Bahá'ís must be distinguished from others of humanity. . . . For you I desire spiritual distinction." Invite students to repeat the latter sentence.

9. Discuss: Does this verse mean that we should have more money or material things than others?
10. Invite the students to write on small pieces of scrap paper the things that the Master said are the points of spiritual distinction—that is, “love of God,” “loving humanity,” “virtues,” “service to the human world,” “unity,” “heavenly illumination.”
11. Encourage students to write on the top of their poster boards: *‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, “For you I desire spiritual distinction.”* Underneath the quotation, have them glue one end of an accordion-folded strip to the poster and glue one of the small papers labeled with points of spiritual distinction onto the other end, making the point of spiritual distinction stand out from the poster. Do the same for other points of spiritual distinction.
12. After the art activity is finished, review the ways ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that we are special and different. It is not what we look like, not what we wear, not what we have in our pockets. Rather it is loving God, loving everyone, and serving humanity that matters. Invite the students to repeat the verse from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk, “For you I desire spiritual distinction.” Have them repeat with vigor the word, “*Imtíyáz!*”
13. If desired, sing the song, “To be a Bahá’í” from the CD *Immerse Yourself* by Joe Crone, or use the song composed by Bob Simms, on Resource Page 107.
14. Briefly discuss: What is one way that each of us can show distinction or *Imtíyáz* this week?
15. Assist students to each select one specific action to carry out before the next class. Remember to invite students to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.

## ACTIVITY 2: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE AS REVEALED IN THE KITÁB-I-AQDAS

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas that the purpose of life is to know and to worship God

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- A copy of **The Kitáb-i-Aqdas** with a bookmark placed on page 100. The marker could read, “What is our purpose?”
- Photocopies of instructions for making an origami box (Place these instructions inside a folder to appear as if in a “book.” See Resource Page 108.)
- A pre-made sample of the origami box
- 8 ½" x 11" rectangular paper
- Small pieces of paper onto which students will write the quotation: “I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.”
- Pens or markers



1. Invite students to share the results of their service over the past week. Applaud all!
2. Hold up a sheet of the rectangular paper. Say to the students, “Imagine that there is a purpose

for this piece of paper. What might it be? For what reason was this paper created?”

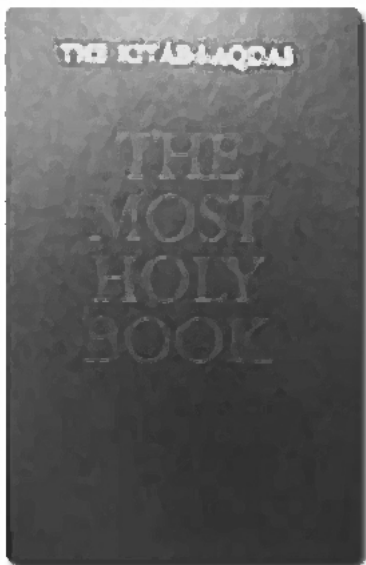
(The students will give a variety of answers and possibilities or they may indicate that they do not know.)

## GOAL: THE PURPOSE OF LIVING A LIFE OF SERVICE

# TOPIC: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

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3. Show them the folder and share with them that you have found the purpose for this paper in this “book” (i.e., the folder). Pull out the sheet and indicate to them that the purpose of the paper is shown on this sheet. The purpose of the paper is to be a box. Show them the sample of the box.
4. Ask: “What is the purpose of our lives? How do we find out what is our purpose for being here on this earth today?” Indicate that this is a very difficult question—even adults ponder this question.
5. Ask: “Where can we find out why we are here, why we are alive?” Indicate that just as they found out the “purpose” of the piece of paper, we are so lucky that we have the answer to that in a special Book that was given to us by Bahá’u’lláh Himself. Respectfully display the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Say, “This is the Most Holy Book—the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Can you repeat the name of the book? On page 100 of the 1992 hardcover edition (or page 101 of the softcover 1993 edition), you can find the answer.” Invite a student to find the page.
6. Show them that the answer is in the short obligatory prayer—a prayer that Bahá’ís are obliged to pray every day.
7. If possible, have one of the students read the first sentence of the prayer. Discuss the meaning of some important words such as “bear witness,” “created,” and “worship.”
8. Briefly discuss: Now what do we know is God’s purpose for us? Then explain that everything we do must serve our purpose of knowing and worshipping God.
9. Invite the students to copy the first sentence of the prayer on the smaller pieces of paper and if they wish, illuminate the prayer with colored pencils or markers. Capable writers may choose to write the entire prayer.
10. Reread the prayer with the students and have them begin to memorize it. Encourage them to memorize the rest of the prayer and to practice saying it every day at home or at school.
11. Then distribute the rectangular papers to the students. Following the directions on the instruction sheet, guide them in making the origami box. Have them label the lid of the box “The Purpose of Life” and insert the prayer. Encourage them to take this “purpose of life box” home and open it everyday between noon and sunset and read or recite the prayer.
12. Briefly discuss: How can we remember to do this every day? Remember to invite students to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.





## ACTIVITY 3: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on developing a daily pattern for a life of selfless service

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of parables and stories; Engage in science and in the investigation of the world of nature; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Seeds of many kinds: popcorn, flower seeds, sunflower seeds, acorns, pumpkin seeds, maple seeds, legumes of different sizes, colors, shapes, etc. Place each variety on small paper plates.
- Optional: List of the names of the above seeds
- Poster board cut into approximately 5" x 7" pieces
- Thick white glue, such as Tacky Glue®

1. Invite students to share their efforts to say the obligatory prayer everyday. Encourage all to continue to strive to develop this habit.
2. Then, invite the students to imagine a farmer working on her farm, bending down and dropping seeds into the soil row by row: Imagine that you come up to her and ask, "What are you doing?" And the farmer replies, "I am planting trees." "You're being silly! You're not planting trees," you say. "You are planting seeds." And the farmer then shakes her head, "Yes, but the seeds are created for a purpose. They will grow to become trees. Therefore, these seeds are really trees because that is why God created them."
3. Bring out the varieties of seeds. In the whole group or as small teams, encourage students to sort and guess the kinds of plants the seeds represent. (Pictures of the plants or a prepared list of the names of the plants might help.) Encourage them to say that the seeds are what they will grow into, i.e., instead of saying, "This is a corn kernel," say, "This is a corn plant"; instead of an acorn, this is an oak tree; etc.
4. Briefly discuss: What is the purpose of the sun? Is it just to sit in the sky?
5. Then ask the students if they know why God created them. Ask, "Are you alive just to eat and play?" Share the quotation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
 

"...May you become thriving trees bearing delicious and fragrant fruits which are the blessings in the path of service." ('Abdu'l-Bahá' in *London*, p. 78)

 Briefly discuss: Does this mean that you will become trees? What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá mean?
6. Art Activity: Invite the students to create a collage using the various seeds to depict trees—representing the "thriving trees" with fruits mentioned in the above quotation. Encourage the students also to write the quotation on their posters.
7. After the art activity, discuss: What are some "fruits" of service in our own lives? (Helping parents, assisting friends with work, making something for someone else, etc.) Encourage students to each select a "fruit" of service to offer their parents, friends, or others in the coming week. Remember to invite students to share the results of this "fruit" at the beginning of the next class.
8. OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITY: Read the book *The Jumping Mouse* as illustrated and retold by John Steptoe. It beautifully shows how selflessness and humility allow an individual to grow closer to the true self. This story is retold as "Great Wolf and Little Mouse Sister" in the Core Curriculum course book *Training for Teachers of Children and Junior Youth*, pp. 56–57. Discuss the story as desired.

## TOPIC: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

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### ACTIVITY 4: KNOWING AND WORSHIPPING GOD MEANS FOLLOWING THE TEACHINGS OF THE MANIFESTATIONS

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To gain a deep understanding that in order to know and worship God, we need to follow the teachings of the Manifestations of God in our daily lives

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to track daily acts of service

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- A sign that reads, "Knowing and Loving God—Our Purpose of Life"
- Cards that have teachings of Manifestations and cards that have exhortations that are not divine (See Resource Page 109)
- Colored ribbon to tie as a bracelet for each student, if desired

1. Invite students to share their acts of service over the past week. Applaud all!
2. Review the first sentence of the short obligatory prayer, "I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee." Have the students repeat this sentence using hand gestures to help them recall the words.
3. Pose the questions: If you wanted to know something about math or reading or manners, who could help you learn these things? Could or can you learn these things by yourself?
4. Continue discussing the questions: So, how does God help us in learning how to know and love Him? Should a group of us think up some things by ourselves and say, for example, "To show love, let's build a statue." Or should we say, "No, the best way to know and love God is to just say so and not worry about how we behave." Would it be right to say, "God only loves people with brown eyes. I say we not care about the ones with blue or green eyes?"
5. Explain that God teaches us how to know and love Him by giving us the best Teachers. Ask them if they can name some of these divine Teachers. (Adam, Noah, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh are some.)
6. Ask the students if, when they are in school and want to learn reading or math, do they learn by following directions of their teacher? Share the idea that we learn how to know and love God in the same way—by following the teachings of His Teachers.
7. Introduce a game to illustrate this idea: In a fairly large space, have the previously prepared sign posted at one end of the space or have someone hold it up. The students line up several feet away from the sign. The object is to reach the sign by following the teachings of the Manifestations of God. The teacher will read the cards and if the card reveals a teaching revealed by a Manifestation, the whole group takes one giant step towards the goal sign. If the card says something that will not help them know or love God, they are to say "No" in a loud voice. The purpose of this exercise is to reinforce the concept of following the divine teachings rather than to "win" by being first to reach the sign.

Applaud all when students reach the destination! If desired, tie a colored ribbon as a bracelet for each student to acknowledge the group's victory.

8. Then encourage students to individually select one of the teachings of the Manifestation of God as the focus of their service for the coming week. Encourage them to think carefully about when, where, and how to carry out these actions over the coming week and how they will be able to track their progress. Encourage them to consciously acknowledge their own efforts each day, in a step by step way just as they moved

step by step toward their goal in the game. Encourage students to wear or place their ribbon bracelets where they will see them each day. Suggest to the students that the ribbon will serve as a reminder to track their daily acts of service. Remember to invite students to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.

Resource Pages

15 June 1912

Talk at 309 West Seventy-eighth Street, New York—Notes by Howard MacNutt

I have made you wait awhile, but as I was tired, I slept. While I was sleeping, I was conversing with you as though speaking at the top of my voice. Then through the effect of my own voice I awoke. As I awoke, one word was upon my lips—the word *imtíyáz* (“distinction”). So I will speak to you upon that subject this morning.

When we look upon the world of existence, we realize that all material things have a common bond; and yet, on the other hand, there are certain points of distinction between them. For instance, all earthly objects have common bodily ties. The minerals, vegetables and animals have elemental bodies in common with each other. Likewise, they have place in the order of creation. This is the common tie or point of contact between them. All of them pass through the process of composition and decomposition; this is a natural law to which all are subject. This law is ruling throughout creation and constitutes a bond of connection among created things. But at the same time there are certain distinguishing features between these objects. For instance, between the mineral and vegetable, the vegetable and animal, the animal and human, points of distinction exist which are unmistakable and significant. Likewise, there are distinctions between kinds and species of each kingdom. When we consider the mineral kingdom in detail, we observe not only points of similarity between objects but points of distinction as well. Some are immovable bodies, some hard and solid; some have the power of expansion and contraction; some are liquid, some gaseous; some have weight; others, like fire and electricity, have not. So there are many points of distinction among these kinds of elements.

In the vegetable kingdom also we observe distinction between the various sorts and species of organisms. Each has its own form, color and fragrance. In the animal kingdom the same law rules as many distinctions in form, color and function are noticeable. It is the same in the human kingdom. From the standpoint of color there are white, black, yellow and red people. From the standpoint of physiognomy there is a wide difference and distinction among races. The Asian, African and American have different physiognomies; the men of the North and men of the South are very different in type and features. From an economic standpoint in the law of living there is a great deal of difference. Some are poor, others wealthy; some are wise, others ignorant; some are patient and serene, some impatient and excitable; some are prone to justice, others practice injustice and oppression; some are meek, others arrogant. In brief, there are many points of distinction among humankind.

I desire distinction for you. The Bahá'ís must be distinguished from others of humanity. But this distinction must not depend upon wealth—that they should become more affluent than other people. I do not desire for you financial distinction. It is not an ordinary distinction I desire; not scientific, commercial, industrial distinction. For you I desire spiritual distinction—that is, you must become eminent and distinguished in morals. In the love of God you must become distinguished from all else. You must become distinguished for loving humanity, for unity and accord, for love and justice. In brief, you must become distinguished in all the virtues of the human world—for faithfulness and sincerity, for justice and fidelity, for firmness and steadfastness, for philanthropic deeds and service to the human world, for love toward every human being, for unity and accord with all people, for removing prejudices and promoting international peace. Finally, you must become distinguished for heavenly illumination and for acquiring the bestowals of God. I desire this distinction for you. This must be the point of distinction among you.

# To Be a Bahá'í

WORDS: Bahá'í writings, 'Abdu'l-Bahá

MUSIC: Bob Simms

To be a Ba-ha'i \_\_\_\_\_ simply

means to love all the world to

love hu-man-i-ty and try to serve

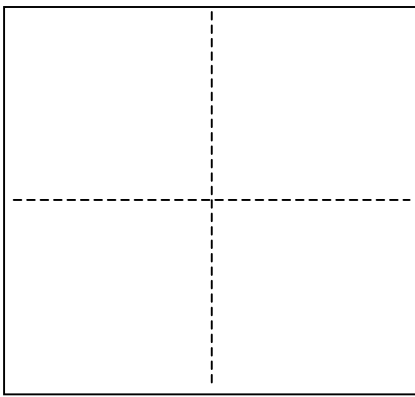
it. to work for peace and

un-i-ver-sal bro-ther-hood to be a Ba-ha'i

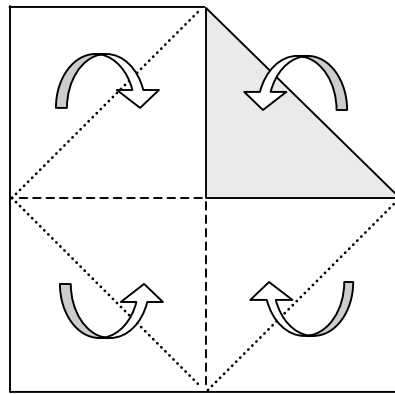
sim-ply means to love, love all the world

# TOPIC: THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

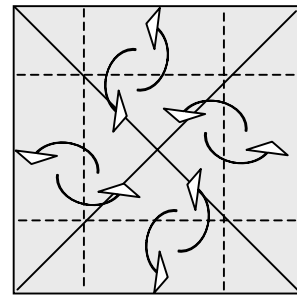
**SIMPLE ORIGAMI BOX**—begin with a sheet of paper, 8 inches square



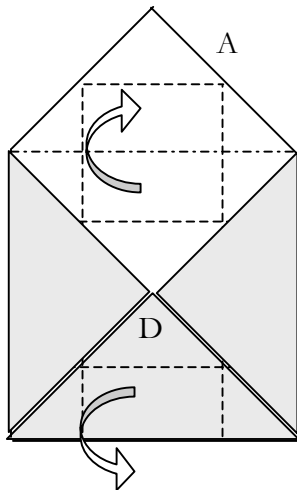
1. Lay the paper down, wrong side up. Fold and unfold vertically and horizontally.



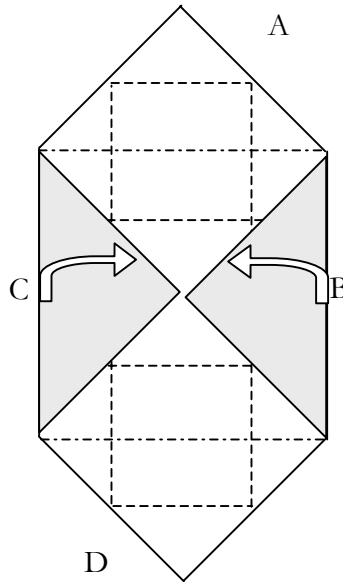
2. Fold corners to the center.



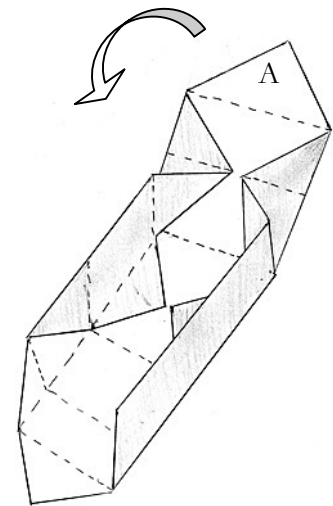
3. Fold, then unfold outside edges in to the center, one at a time.



4. Pull open the opposite corners A and D.

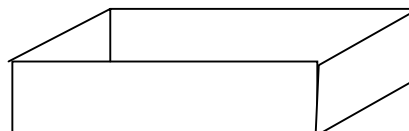
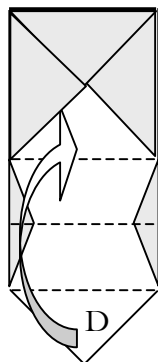


5. Fold in sides B and C to a standing position.



6. Lock the ends of the box by folding A over the top to the middle.

7. Likewise, fold D over the top to the center to make your box.



8. If desired, repeat the process with a square sheet of paper  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch larger to make a lid.

Knowing and Worshipping God: Game Cards for Activity 4

**Buddha** says that we should have right thoughts and right deeds.

**Bahá'u'lláh** says, “Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide.”

**Muhammad** says that prayer is a ladder to God.

**Jesus** says to love your neighbor as yourself.

**Moses** says that we should honor our fathers and our mothers.

**Moses** says to love the Lord thy Father with all your heart and with all your might.

James says that we should love only the people who are kind to us.

Alexandra says that it is okay to say something bad about someone when that person is not nearby.

**The Báb** says that “if ye believe in the one True God, follow me.”

Darnell says that we should do only what we feel like doing.

**Krishna** says that we must be patient.

**Zoroaster** says that we should have good thoughts, good words, and good deeds.

Frederickus says that all we have to do is build lots of statues and buildings in order to show love for God.

Manfreda says that all we have to do is say, “I love you, God” and not worry about doing things that please Him.

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- |       |                                    |       |  |
|-------|------------------------------------|-------|--|
| JF 93 | Golden Rule Service Club, p. 6     | MJ 96 | Mas'úd Serves Bahá'u'lláh, p. 6          |
| MJ 93 | You're Born Twice But . . . , p. 6 | MJ 96 | Work Some+Play Some=Service, p. 30       |
| JA 00 | Virtueman, p. 29                   | ND 00 | Do U Want to Serve the Faith?, p. 22     |
| JA 02 | The Journey Bend, p. 22            | JF 03 | The Case of the Puzzling Pioneers, p. 10 |
| MJ 95 | A Life of Service, p. 10           | JF 03 | Wayne & Wilma: Snowy Service, p. 20      |

*The Story of Daphne Duck*, Jennifer Lemon, Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1998

*God's Big Instruction Book: Timeless Wisdom on How to Follow the Spiritual Path*, Mabey Juliet, Oneworld Publications, 1998

*Changing Patterns: Friendship, Fellowship and Transformation*, Michael Winger-Bearskin, New Directions Press, 2005

*Walking the Straight Path*, Development Learning Press, 2002

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- MJ 91 Hidden Helpers, p. 30  
JF 00 Hidden Picture: World of Service, p. 10

*Tablet of the Heart: God and Me, 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Leslie Lundberg, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1982, Shining Lamp, p. 5, Pray to God, p. 9, Be exceedingly kind, p. 29, Love is Light, p. 33

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- |       |                             |       |   |
|-------|-----------------------------|-------|---|
| SO 91 | Super Server's Badge, p. 26 | JF 03 | Clean-Up Day Dilemma, p. 9                |
| JF 93 | I Want to Help!, p. 14      | JF 03 | Jose's Pioneering, p. 12                  |
| SO 94 | Paths of Service, p. 15     | JF 03 | Pathway of Service, p. 14                 |
| MJ 95 | Helping Hands, p. 14        | JF 03 | Star Kids: Career Day Creativity, p. 16   |
| SO 95 | Service Plan, p. 28         | JF 03 | Working and Serving, p. 17                |
| MJ 96 | Go Serve, p. 10             | JF 03 | Service Starfish or Selfish Shrimp, p. 21 |
| MJ 96 | Servant, p. 20              | JF 03 | Word Pictures, p. 22                      |
| JA 97 | Create ServANTS, p. 12      | JF 03 | Helping Hands Relay, p. 23                |
| SE 99 | Secret Servants, p. 10      | JF 03 | Service is Prayer, p. 23                  |
| MA 00 | Youth In Service, p. 18     | JF 03 | Service Riddles, p. 25                    |
| ND 02 | Serving Humanity, p. 1      | JF 03 | Chameleon Crossword, p. 28                |
| JF 03 | Service to Humanity, OBC    | JF 03 | Service Scramble, p. 29                   |
| JF 03 | Your Story of Service, p. 8 | JF 05 | Circle of Service, p. 29                  |

**Music:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- JA 02 Children's Prayer, p. 23  
MA 96 We Have Come to Sing Praises, p. 28

**Drama:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- MA 01 Life and Death, p. 4

**Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- JA 98 Poetry Peak, p. 19

**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](http://www.core-curriculum.org).



**TO CARE FOR ONE'S BODY**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL  
CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
CLEANLINESS, PURITY, PRAYERFULNESS**

Wings that are besmirched with mire can never soar.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 131 (1988 ed.)

Although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 147

## TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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### Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



#### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the Bahá’í writings about physical cleanliness
- To know that external cleanliness has an influence upon the spiritual self

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and memorize a quotation on physical cleanliness.
- Have students decorate a cleanliness quotation card.
- Have students discuss examples of cleanliness.
- Create a picture game for students to identify what is clean and what is dirty.



#### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the relationship between physical cleanliness and spirituality

#### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read stories about the connection between physical cleanliness and spirituality.
- Use the analogy of getting a special gift and choosing to place it in a clean or dirty box compared to getting the gift of the spirit from God and respecting it with a clean body.
- Discuss what it means to be “spiritually clean.”
- Create a visual representation of the relationship between physical cleanliness and spiritual cleanliness.

# TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on one's own daily habits of cleanliness
- To perceive the power of cleanliness in one's own preparations for prayer

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students reflect collectively and make a list of daily acts of cleanliness.
- Have each student create a chart to track daily acts of cleanliness.
- Develop skill in daily habits of cleanliness.
- Prepare for prayers by washing and focusing one's attention on the prayer.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to demonstrate daily habits of cleanliness
- To share with others insights about spiritual benefits and physical cleanliness

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Recite quotations about spiritual cleanliness and physical cleanliness.
- Practice regular patterns of cleanliness.

## TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that external cleanliness has influence upon the spiritual self

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the power of cleanliness in one's own preparation for prayer

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of questioning; Engage in science and the world of nature; Employ creativity and the arts; Use of stories; Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Something that has appealing fragrance: perfume, scented candle, rosewater, etc.
- Music that is pleasing to the ear: CD and player, musical instrument, or voice
- Soft silky cloth that is comforting to the skin
- Pictures of beautiful scenes, paintings pleasing to the eye, or photographs of happy people
- A food that is sweet to taste: piece of chocolate, perhaps?
- Pitcher of warm water, clean towel, and large bowl to catch the water as students wash their hands
- Copy of Resource Page 118 for each student
- Colored pencils and/or crayons

1. Invite the students to smell a pleasant fragrance. Discuss the questions: How does it make you feel? Does it remind you of a flower that you love to sniff? Did you know that the fragrance is nothing but tiny, tiny molecules in the air touching the inside of your noses? Note that the fragrance is something physical that makes us feel good.
2. Invite the students to listen to music. Discuss how the music makes them feel: Do you think it is fun? Nice to listen to? Do you enjoy it? Does it sometimes move your spirit? Share the fact that music is nothing but vibrations of air molecules hitting our ear drums. This is something physical that affects our hearts.
3. Repeat the same type of enquiries with pictures of beautiful scenes. Then share the fact that we see light rays bouncing off the picture into our eyes. The light rays can make us smile or enjoy the beauty of the picture.
4. Repeat the same type of enquiries by inviting them to taste something sweet. Share the fact that the substance touches nerves on our tongues and noses and makes our brains experience sweetness.
5. Repeat the same type of enquiries by asking students to feel a silky cloth as it brushes over their arms or cheeks. Explain that the substance touches nerve endings in our skin and our minds enjoy the silky smoothness.
6. Go to the students in turn and pour warm water over their hands from a pitcher, offer a towel to wipe their hands, and hold a bowl beneath their hands to catch the water. Ask them how it feels now that their hands are clean. Explain that 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that just like listening to music, smelling a wonderful fragrance, or seeing a beautiful thing, cleanliness has a wonderful influence on our spirits. Read aloud the following quotation twice:

## TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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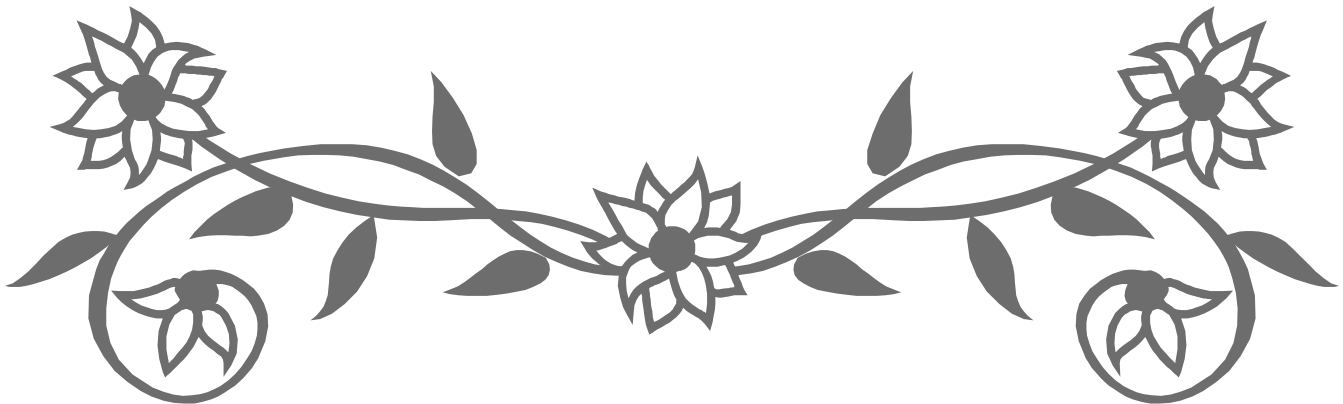
Although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 147*

7. Briefly discuss: Why might ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have said this? You may want to add, incidentally, that in one gram of soil, there are 100 million bacteria; cleanliness reduces the chance of spreading germs. Also, ask if they are aware that Bahá’u’lláh requires us to perform ablutions (wash hands and face) before reciting our obligatory prayers.

Discuss: How do we think ablutions before our obligatory prayers might have a special influence on our spirits?

8. Invite students to draw the outline of a human figure on a clean piece of paper. Briefly discuss: If this figure represents a human being, why would we not color it with unclean clothes, hands, or face? How could we color it as an example of cleanliness and delicacy? How might we show a heart on the figure as a symbol of our spirits?
9. Invite students to enjoy listening as you read the stories on Resource Page 118 while they work. After reading the stories, discuss: What are some ways that we can follow the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at home, at school, and here at Bahá’í class? Encourage students to select one action to increase their cleanliness at home, at school, or at Bahá’í class. Remember to invite them to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.
10. Conclude the activity by once again inviting students to wash their hands with clean warm water and gather for one or more prayers in a reverent atmosphere.



## TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

### ACTIVITY 2: THE GIFT OF CLEANLINESS

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the relationship between physical cleanliness and spirituality

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To share with others insights about spiritual benefits of physical cleanliness

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of memorization and reflection; Employ creativity and the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- An item of beauty or special value, such as a glass vase, sculpture, a small statue, a piece of jewelry, or a beautiful object from nature
- Two boxes large enough for the above item: one battered, ugly, defaced, or dirty; the other beautifully designed, bejeweled, shiny or clean
- Photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- 2 mats that frame the photograph: one bent, discolored, messy, dirty; the other, clean and attractive
- A sign on which is printed: "Be the very essence of cleanliness among mankind." (Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 47)
- Another sign on which is printed: "O Son of Spirit! Noble have I created thee. . ." (Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic No. 22) and the verse, "O Son of Spirit! I created thee rich..." (Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic No. 13) and the words: "O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee." (Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic No. 11)
- Unruled index cards, 4" x 6" or larger—one for each student, plus several cut in half with a hole punched on each to be used as gift tags
- Glitter and/or stickers to decorate index card
- Glue if needed for glitter
- Gallon-size plastic freezer bags without markings on the bags and with the "zipper" closure cut off
- Pipe cleaners or chenille sticks

1. Invite students to share their efforts towards cleanliness and purity over the past week. Applaud all!
2. Present to the students an object of beauty. Discuss the purity or loveliness of the object. Tell them that you are going to wrap this special item in a box. Show them the two boxes. Ask: Which box would you choose to put it in? Why?
3. Present or point out the photograph of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and tell the students that you would like to put a frame around this picture because He is so special. Display both frames and again ask them which they would choose.
4. Review the previous activity. Briefly discuss: How does physical cleanliness affect our spiritual selves? Remind the students that 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us that cleanliness has "a powerful influence on the life of the spirit."
5. Share with the students that another reason we should be clean is that we are like a gift from God. Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "O Son of Spirit! Noble have I created thee. . ." and "O Son of Spirit! I created thee rich. . ." and "O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee." Discuss: What are some ways that we can show respect and care for this gift?
6. Point out that another way to show respect for ourselves is to be clean. Just like the package for the beautiful object and the frame for the picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we can "wrap" ourselves with cleanliness and purity. Discuss: If each of us is a gift created by God, His lamp with His light in us, how should we "wrap" this beautiful self?

# TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

7. Bahá'u'lláh says, "Be the very essence of cleanliness among mankind." Brainstorm with the students different ways that we can "wrap" or present ourselves with "essence of cleanliness." (Examples include washing hands before eating or after playing outside, brushing teeth after meals, taking baths or showers, washing clothes, shining shoes, wearing clothes that are not offensive, avoiding alcohol and other drugs which are poison, covering mouths when sneezing, avoiding backbiting, saying prayers to purify selves from selfishness, etc.)
8. Give students an index card on which to write their names and select one of the Hidden Words quoted above to write underneath their names. Remind them that they were created "noble," "rich," and as "God's lamp." With that in mind, ask them to illuminate their name and the Hidden Word with glitter, stickers, or other decorative materials.
9. Then, encourage them to place their name card inside a gallon-size plastic food storage bag. As they do this, encourage them to reflect on their nobility and richness. Use a pipe cleaner to close the bag.
10. Give a few gift tags to each student and have students write different ways that they can become the "essence of cleanliness" and attach them to the pipe cleaner.
11. After this gift activity, have the students repeat the quotation, "Be the very essence of cleanliness among mankind." Pair up the students and have each partner share in one minute with the other partner some ways to be the "very essence of cleanliness among mankind." Encourage students to carry out these actions on a daily basis.
12. Arrange to have the students take these gifts to a Nineteen-Day Feast or devotional gathering, recite the quotations, and explain the wrapping and the contents.

## ACTIVITY: SING "O SON OF BEING"

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the relationship between physical cleanliness and spirituality

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

**SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY:** 15 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of Resource Page 119

1. Using Resource Page 119, learn and sing together the song "O Son of Being."

## TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY

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### Resource Pages

### Stories of Cleanliness

We children looked upon Bahá'u'lláh as another loving Father; to Him we carried all our little difficulties and troubles. He took an interest in everything which concerned us.

He used to send a servant to Beirut every year to buy stuff [fabric] for our clothes.

Bahá'u'lláh would then call us to choose which we liked best for our frocks. My mother, my aunt, and the children would make this cotton material into garments.

He was always punctual, and loved daintiness and order.

He was very, very particular and refined in His personal arrangements, and liked to see everybody well groomed, and as neatly dressed as possible. Above all things, cleanliness was desirable to Him.

“Why not put on your prettiest frocks?” He would say.

Túbá Khánum, quoted by Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 97–98

When there were no guests, there were no particular arrangements for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s meals. However, washing the hands before eating and brushing the teeth afterwards were customary and definite practices. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s meals were very simple. The expenses of His lunch and dinner, if guests were not present, were much less than one could possibly imagine. Cleanliness and purity prevailed at all times. The Master would take some water with His meals. . . .

The raiment that clothed that beloved body was abundantly soft and delicate, light and free-flowing, and while the air of ‘Akká was not laden with smoke and other pollutants as that of the cities of Europe, and a gentle breeze always cleared the air, yet the Master changed his shirt twice daily. . . . The brightness and delicacy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s shirts and headgear dazzled the eyes. Most of the Master’s clothes were made of cotton and quite inexpensive. . . . The color of His clothes was generally beige or a bit darker. I never saw ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in black or other dark colors.

In brief, the Master’s good health, maintained through eating little and adhering to absolute cleanliness and simplicity, complied perfectly with the requirements of nature.

. . . His body was straight as an arrow and He enjoyed perfect health. He was the very embodiment of joy and cheerfulness.

Youness Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in ‘Akká*, pp. 274–76

George Ronald, publisher. Used with permission.



TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS  
AND SPIRITUALITY

# O Son of Being

From a quote by Bahá'u'lláh  
Music ©2001 by Jerry Hett

A A<sup>7</sup>/G D/F#

O SON OF BE - ING! \_\_\_ Thy heart is My home; \_\_\_ sanc - ti - fy it

Dmaj<sup>7</sup> Esus<sup>4</sup> E A A<sup>7</sup>/G

for \_\_\_ My de - scent. \_\_\_ Thy spi - rit is My place \_\_\_ of re - ve - la - tion; \_\_\_

D/F# Dmaj<sup>7</sup> A  
2nd ending

cleanse it \_\_\_ for My man - i - fes - ta - tion. \_\_\_ O SON OF BE - ING! \_\_\_

A<sup>7</sup>/G A D A

O SON OF BE - ING! \_\_\_ O SON OF BE - ING! \_\_\_

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**GOAL: TO CARE FOR ONE’S BODY**

# **TOPIC: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PHYSICAL CLEANLINESS AND SPIRITUALITY**

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## **LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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### **Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- SO 00 Are You Happy?, p. 18
- ND 00 Virtueman: Lean, Mean and Clean, p. 23
- ND 04 Fitness Fun, p. 24

*Bahá’í Education for Children, Book 3*, A. A. Furutan, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, India, 2000, p. 34

*Bahá’í Education for Children, Book 4*, A. A. Furutan, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, India, 2000, p. 13

*Bahá’í Education for Children, Book 5*, A. A. Furutan, Bahá’í Publishing Trust, India, 2000, p. 21

### **Activities:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- SO 00 The Health of Max, p. 5
- SO 00 Healthy Water in the Most Great Prison, p. 10
- SO 00 Masha and Nimni: Scented Soap, p. 16
- SO 00 Chameleon Crossword, p. 28

### **Music:**

“Bath Song,” *Special Times*, Susan Engle

### **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](http://www.core-curriculum.org).

# DEVELOP ONE’S INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES

## EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
ENTHUSIASM, HIGH AIMS, RESPECT**

Arts, crafts, and sciences uplift the world of being, and are conducive to its exaltation. Knowledge is as wings to man’s life, and a ladder for his ascent. Its acquisition is incumbent upon everyone.

Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 26

Let the loved ones of God, whether young or old, whether male or female, each according to his capabilities, bestir themselves and spare no efforts to acquire the various current branches of knowledge, both spiritual and secular, and of the arts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in *Bahá’í Education*, p. 9, no. 30

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the Bahá'í writings on importance of education, especially the education of children
- To know the Bahá'í writings on excellence and its application in all things
- To become familiar with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's tablets to children on excellence and education
- To know some of the Bahá'í writings on the station of the teacher

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read selected Bahá'í writings on education, the station of the teacher, and excellence.
- Memorize a quotation about education, the station of the teacher, or excellence.
- Study the tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to children on excellence.
- Make a booklet on all the quotations that were read, studied, and memorized.
- Choose one quotation on the role of the teacher and make a gift card for a teacher.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand why everyone must be educated
- To understand the importance of excellence in education
- To understand the importance of the role of the teacher

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the importance of education and the role of the teacher.
- Read stories about outcomes in excellence in education.
- Have students compare the difference between having selected people educated and having the entire community educated.
- Have students develop a play about the importance of education for all.
- Have students list the qualities of a teacher based on their study of Bahá'í writings.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on one's own role in one's education
- To reflect on ways of achieving excellence in one's education
- To perceive the role of teacher in one's own life and learning

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students reflect on their favorite teachers and how these teachers demonstrate the role of a teacher as described in the Bahá'í writings.
- Think about (meditate on) times when they have achieved excellence in education and share.
- Choose an area in which they can achieve excellence.
- Discuss ways the students will achieve excellence in their chosen areas during individual student/teacher conferences.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate progress in one's pursuit of excellence in education
- To share with others the contents of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets to children about education
- To demonstrate one's respect for the role of the teacher

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Students choose a teacher to present a gift card about the role of the teacher.
- Share booklets that they have made with another adult or peer.
- Plan a devotional portion of a Nineteen-Day Feast or a devotional meeting on the topic of excellence and education, which includes recitation of memorized texts.
- Have students record their progress in educational pursuits on their spiritual education plans.
- Encourage parents to celebrate student progress in application of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's instruction on excellence in education.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá’í writings on importance of education, especially the education of children

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand why everyone must be educated

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Engage in science and investigation of the world of nature; Use of music; Employ creativity and the arts; Direct use of Bahá’í sacred writings

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

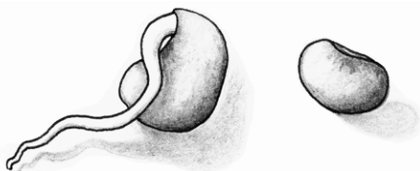
- Music/lyrics to “I am, O my God, but a tiny seed. . . .” See Resource Page 130.
- A sprouted bean inside a Ziploc bag
- Another bean but left untreated as above
- Optional—Two potted plants: both watered but one that has been exposed to sunlight and the other that has been in a dark spot for several days
- Poster board – at least 8 ½" x 11", one per student
- Markers
- Small paper clips
- Tape
- Small magnets strong enough to attract a paper clip through poster board
- Construction paper
- Green yarn, string, or embroidery floss 6–8 inches long

**Prepare several days in advance:** Sprout a bean inside a Ziploc bag within a paper towel folded and wetted, so that the bean shows some root and stem formation. If you choose to also use the plant metaphor, prepare those as well.

1. Teach the students to sing the prayer, “I am, O my God, but a tiny seed” and use body gestures to signify the words in the song, such as “seed,” “sown,” “love,” “spring forth,” etc. (You can learn how to teach this song using the CD *Teaching Songs to Children and Junior Youth*, available through the National Children’s Education and Resource Center.)
2. Show the students the sprouted bean in the Ziploc bag and the dry bean and explain the difference in the treatment of the beans. Briefly discuss: What happens to the seed when it is watered (nurtured)? What happens to the seed when it is left alone with no water?
3. If desired, explain the difference in the treatment of the two potted plants suggesting that one plant had a capable gardener and the other did not. Briefly discuss: What are the differences we see between these two plants?
4. Explain that plants need a gardener to water them and to make sure that they are planted where they can receive the sunlight.
5. Explain that we also need a gardener to help us grow closer to God. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

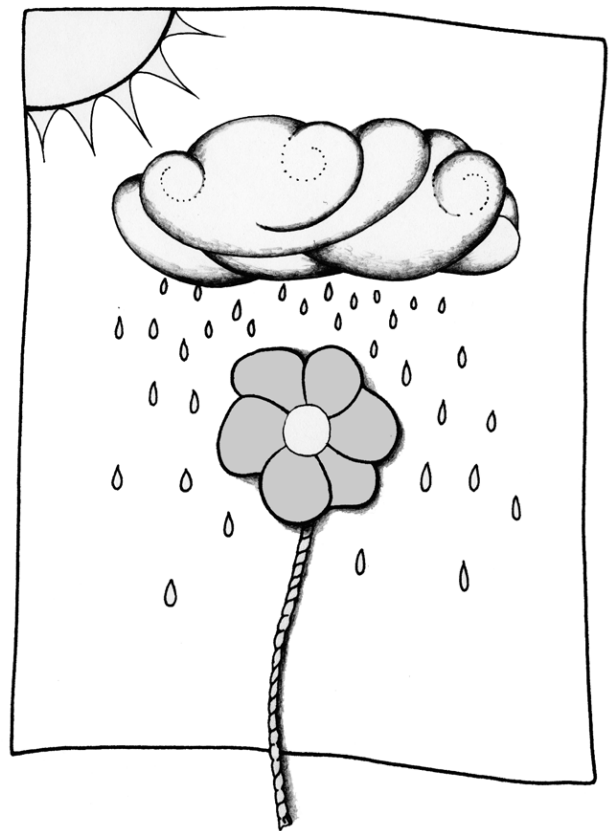
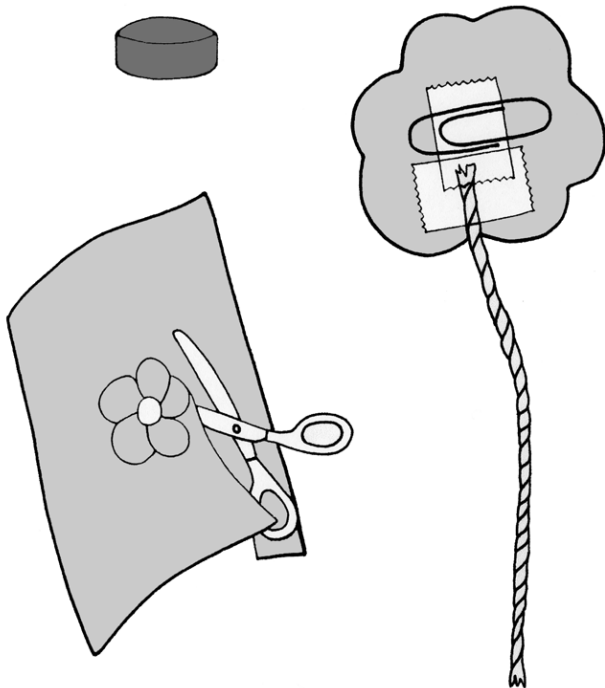
If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 129-30, no. 103



TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION

6. Briefly discuss: Who is the “Holy Gardener” that Abdu’l-Bahá talks about? Instead of water and sunlight that the gardener provides for her plants, what does the Holy Gardener give to us? Listen carefully to the students, then add as desired the ideas that He provides for all of us the teachings that help us to grow, that tell us that we must be educated, go to school, and be trained in the love of God and know about the world. Without education and training, we will be very unhappy people, like the seeds or plants that do not grow. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that without education, we can become like beasts! That is not why God created us, is it?
7. Then discuss: What do babies need after they’re born? What would happen to a baby who was never hugged, cuddled, fed, and clothed? What would happen to children if there was no one to read books to them, take them to school, answer their questions, or teach them about God and about loving others? How sad would they be? Why do we think that Abdu’l-Bahá says it is SO important to be educated?
8. Invite each student to draw and color on poster board a sun with rays and clouds with raindrops at the top. Then have them cut out a flower from construction paper, and tape the end of a piece of green yarn and a paper clip onto the back of the flower. Next, have the students hold the poster board upright and make their flowers “grow” by moving the magnet on the other side of the poster board upwardly, thereby pulling the flower up closer to the sun.
9. Using the artwork created, review with the students the concepts discussed: that with the sun of truth and the water of God’s teachings, we (God’s flowers) grow. With education, we can grow closer to God. Encourage the students to show their artwork and explain it to at least one other person before the next class.
10. Conclude the activity by singing “Tiny Seed.” Encourage students to sing this song when they explain their picture. They may also teach this song to other members of their families.



ACTIVITY 2: THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the role of the teacher in one's own life and learning

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate one's respect for the role of the teacher

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Card stock or nice paper
- Art supplies

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share the results of their efforts toward spiritual distinction over the past week. Applaud all!
2. Briefly discuss: How do we learn to do good deeds? What is the role of a teacher? What are some other things that we learn from teachers?
3. Invite students to think about their own experiences in school, at Bahá'í class, and in other places. Encourage them to silently reflect on their best teachers: What do those teachers do? After this short period of reflection, invite students to share their ideas. Record these ideas on chart paper.
4. Then read aloud the following quotation twice:

Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children. . . .

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 133, no. 106*

Briefly discuss: Why do we think that the education of children is among the greatest of all possible services? Listen carefully and record student ideas on chart paper.

5. Invite students to use the materials provided to create cards of appreciation for one or more of their favorite teachers in their academic schools. They also could consider music teachers or other teachers. Encourage students to copy the quotation onto their cards in their best handwriting. They could complete the note with words such as:  
Dear \_\_\_\_,  
Thank you for\_\_\_\_\_.  
Your friend, \_\_\_\_\_  
Provide envelopes for the students to address as desired.
6. Discuss as a class: When, where, and how will we deliver our cards? Will we deliver them by hand, mail them, or something else? Assist students to make a plan to deliver these cards. Remember to ask them about the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.
7. Optional extension activity: Consider planning an “Honoring Teachers Tea” at which the students could present their cards, sing several songs, recite quotations, and serve simple refreshments to their teachers.



## ACTIVITY 3: RESPECTING THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the writings on the station of the teacher

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the importance of the role of the teacher

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the role of teacher in one's own life and learning

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate one's respect for the role of the teacher

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
- Large sheet of paper or writing board
- Blank paper
- Writing tools – colored pencils, thin markers, or pens

1. Invite students to share their acts of service over the past week. Did some students deliver notes of appreciation to their teachers? Applaud all!
2. Invite the students to think of their favorite teachers. Have them share some of the qualities that they admired in them and what valuable lessons they have learned from them. These lessons do not need to be subjects in school, they may also be interpersonal and spiritual skills.
3. Explain that the Bahá'í writings honor and praise the teachers. Show the children one of the books such as *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* that contain writings regarding education and teachers—Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had much to say about how wonderful teachers are. Share these passages, pausing to explain the more advanced words such as “indispensable” and “obligatory”:

According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is indispensable and obligatory. It followeth that teachers are servants of the Lord God, since they have arisen to perform this task, which is the same as worship. . . .

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Education: A Compilation*, p. 25, no. 63

4. Display a copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and explain that this is the Most Holy Book—and in this Most Holy Book, Bahá'u'lláh indicates the importance of teachers. Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed,

Blessed is that teacher who remaineth faithful to the Covenant of God, and occupieth himself with the education of children. For him hath the Supreme Pen inscribed that reward which is revealed in the Most Holy Book. Blessed, blessed is he!

*Bahá'í Education: A Compilation*, p. 7, no. 28  
Also in *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, p. 63 and p. 175

Emphasize the word, “blessed” which means that teachers are very special and are honored.

(NOTE: This quotation is not from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, but refers to the inheritance provisions in the Most Holy Book.)

5. Briefly discuss: What are some of the ways that we can show honor to our teachers? Record responses on chart paper. Invite the students to reflect on what they can do personally to show respect and honor to their teachers. Encourage them to consider habits or patterns of respectful behavior in addition to one-time actions.

## GOAL: DEVELOP ONE’S INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES

# TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION

6. Encourage students to each select one new way to show respect to their teachers. Provide paper and suggest that students write out their action plans to honor the high station that Bahá’u’lláh has given teachers. Encourage them also to consider ways to share these ideas with others.
7. Invite students to share their plans with each other in teams of two.
8. Then in the whole group share the following story about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and a teacher:

A woman who is a good Bahá’í, working for the children in the school, came. She showed her hands to ‘Abdul-Bahá that he might see how long she had scrubbed the floor. He kept her hands in His and said,

“Hands which have labored in the cause of education are ever blessed. I am pleased with your hands. I love such hands very much because they have worked for the children. May you become a great educator and guide to humanity.”

*Star of the West*, vol. 9, no. 7, July 1912, p. 6

Suggest to the students that when they look at the hands of their favorite teacher, they remember how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would love those hands very much because they are working for them, the children. Remember to invite the students to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.

### ACTIVITY 4: “THEY ARE ALL MY CHILDREN”

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá’í writings on importance of education, especially education of children

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand why everyone has to be educated

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- CD and player, or musical score of prayer, “O God! Educate these children. . . ,” or create your own melody for this prayer
- Various photographs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with children, available on Resource Page 131
- Photographs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—one for each student, available on Resource Page 132
- Pictures of children from magazines and/or photographs of all the students in the class
- Glue sticks
- Drawing paper
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils
- Chart paper

1. Welcome students and invite them to share the results of their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Lead the students in singing the prayer, “O God! Educate these children. . . .” Two versions are available on CD: *Happy Ayyám-í-Há*, and Joe Crone’s *Immerse Yourself*. You may also make up your own melody for this prayer.
3. Briefly discuss: In Whose orchard are we the plants? In Whose meadow are we the flowers? In Whose garden are we the roses? Reinforce the fact that we all belong to God; we are part of God’s treasured family.

## TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION

4. Explain that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a trip to Europe and United States to tell people about the teachings of His Father, Bahá'u'lláh, at the end of His suffering as a prisoner in the Holy Land. One day when He was in Washington, D.C., where the United States president lives, He gave a wonderful talk about the importance of teaching and training children just like those in this class. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that "each may become like a lighted candle in the world of humanity."
5. At the very end of this talk, 'Abdu'l-Bahá' said something very touching. He said, "Know ye the value of these children, for they are all my children." Repeat this and emphasize that each one of the students in the class belongs to 'Abdu'l-Bahá; we are all part of His family.
6. Show various pictures of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with children, from Resource Page 131 or other sources. Convey the tender love He bestowed on the children wherever and whoever they may be. In the whole group brainstorm a list of examples that they remember of the ways that 'Abdu'l-Bahá showed His love for children. After listening to students and recording their ideas on chart paper, add the following examples:

From the earliest days of the small Bahá'í community centered around Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land, the education of children—both boys and girls—was emphasized, within the limits imposed by the confinement of the family and companions as prisoners of the Ottoman Turks, and by the meager facilities available to them. The emphasis on education was constant. Lady Blomfield, an early Bahá'í, describes how, when the family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was evacuated temporarily from Haifa to the village of Abu-Sinan during the period of World War I when Haifa was in danger of bombardment, 'Abdu'l-Bahá arranged for schools to be set up in that village to ensure that the children's education was not neglected.

Janet Khan and Peter Khan, *The Advancement of Women*, p. 183

Despite the enormous press of work, the Master found the time once in every week to hold a class for small Bahá'í children. Here they would recite the short Tablets they had learned by heart and bring samples of their handwriting to show Him. He loved them. He showed great concern, wishing them to learn the principles of Bahá'í conduct.

Marzieh Gail, *Summon Up Remembrance*, p. 138

7. Ask the students to reflect: How does it feel to know that you are so loved by 'Abdu'l-Bahá and that you can become "like a lighted candle in the world of humanity?"
8. Distribute the drawing paper, glue sticks, and photographs of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from Resource Page 132. Also provide photographs of diverse children cut from magazines and/or photographs of the children in the class. Explain that they will create a family portrait collage, showing children as belonging to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Have them first glue the picture of the Master and then the pictures of the children around Him. Suggest that they write below the portrait the words, "Know ye the value of these children, for they are all My children." Also suggest that they create a border for the portrait by drawing candles "lighting the world of humanity."
9. Encourage the students to share their portraits with the rest of the class and to read the quotation aloud. The teacher may respond to each student by saying and affirming, "Yes, you are 'Abdu'l-Bahá's child."

Encourage students to share their portraits with at least one other person before the next class. Encourage them also to share an example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love for children with that person.

Resource Pages

# A Tiny Seed

Words: Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 148

**♩ = 108**

Voice

The musical score is written for voice in 6/8 time. It consists of five staves of music. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. There are three rests marked with an 'x' on the staff. The lyrics are: "I am, (clap, clap, clap) O my God, (clap, clap, clap) but a ti -". The second staff starts at measure 6 with a treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. The melody continues with quarter notes C5, D5, E5, and F5. There are three rests marked with an 'x'. The lyrics are: "- ny seed (clap, clap, clap) which Thou (clap, clap, clap) hast sown \_\_\_\_\_ in the". The third staff starts at measure 13 with a treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. There are three rests marked with an 'x'. The lyrics are: "soil \_\_\_\_\_ of Thy love, \_\_\_\_\_ and caused (clap, clap, clap) to spring forth \_\_\_\_\_". The fourth staff starts at measure 20 with a treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. There are three rests marked with an 'x'. The lyrics are: "\_\_\_\_\_ by the hand of Thy boun-ty. (clap, clap, clap) I \_\_\_\_\_ am, (clap, clap, clap) O my". The fifth staff starts at measure 27 with a treble clef, key signature of one flat, and a tempo marking of quarter note = 108. The melody begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. There are three rests marked with an 'x'. The lyrics are: "God, (clap, clap, clap) but a ti - - - ny seed. \_\_\_\_\_".

I am, (clap, clap, clap) O my God, (clap, clap, clap) but a ti -

- ny seed (clap, clap, clap) which Thou (clap, clap, clap) hast sown \_\_\_\_\_ in the

soil \_\_\_\_\_ of Thy love, \_\_\_\_\_ and caused (clap, clap, clap) to spring forth \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ by the hand of Thy boun-ty. (clap, clap, clap) I \_\_\_\_\_ am, (clap, clap, clap) O my

God, (clap, clap, clap) but a ti - - - ny seed. \_\_\_\_\_

GOAL: DEVELOP ONE'S INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES  
TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION

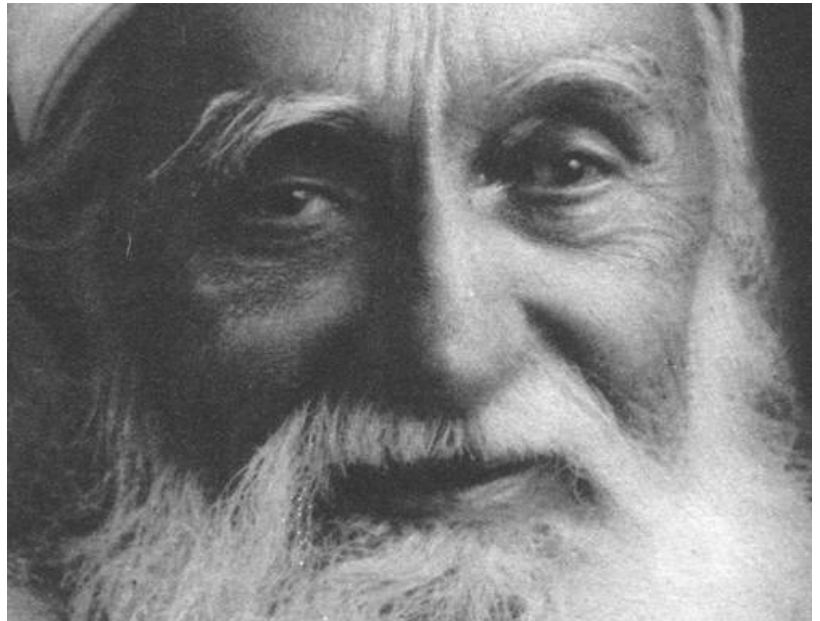
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**GOAL: DEVELOP ONE'S INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES**

**TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION**

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GOAL: DEVELOP ONE'S INTELLECTUAL FACULTIES  
**TOPIC: EXCELLENCE AND EDUCATION**

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**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- SO 99 What Would U Invent?, p. 2
- JA 00 Workshop at Bosch 2000, p. 16
- JA 00 My Time at Bosch, p. 19
- JA 01 Search for Strength, IFC

*Bahá'í Education: A Compilation*, Bahá'u'lláh, et. al, Bahá'í Publishing Trust U.K, 1998

*Excellence in All Things*, Research Department Of The Universal House Of Justice, Bahá'í Publishing Trust India, 1989

*Education: A Bahá'í Perspective* (booklet), Bahá'í International Community, Bahá'í Publishing Trust U.K., date unknown

*Principles Into Practice: Workshop and Compilation of Bahá'í Teachings on Education*, Dr. Randie Shevin Gottlieb, 2005

*Thoughts: Education for Peace and One World: A Study Book for Moral Education*, Irene Taafaki, George Ronald, Publisher, 1986

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star:*

- SO 00 Brain-Maze, IC
- MA 02 Your Powerful Mind, p. 2
- MA 02 A World of Challenges, p. 14
- SO 02 Back to School, IC
- MJ 05 Someday I Could Be..., p. 9

**Music:**

"Education," *C'mon Rise Up*, Doug Cameron, Don't Blink Music, Inc, 1986

"Bahá'í School," *Loving Hands*, Susan Engle, 1984

"Come and Sing," *Come and Sing*, Susan Engle, 1980

"Everyone," *Special Times*, Susan Engle, 1992

"Shake Your Brains," *Teaching Peace*, Red Grammer, 1986

**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](http://www.core-curriculum.org).





# DEVELOP SPIRITUAL CAPACITIES

## SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

### SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC: PRAYERFULNESS, TRUTHFULNESS

Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 29

The wisdom of prayer is this: That it causeth a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state man with all heart and soul turneth his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, vol. 3, p. 683

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know some of the Bahá'í writings about prayer
- To know the Bahá'í writings about when and how to recite prayers (i.e. recitation in melodious tones)
- To know the Bahá'í writings on truthfulness and the avoidance of backbiting

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read the Bahá'í writings on prayer, truthfulness, and the avoidance of backbiting.
- Memorize quotations on prayer, truthfulness, and the avoidance of backbiting.
- Make a list of when and how to recite prayers based on the writings.
- Make a list of reasons to be truthful and to avoid backbiting.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand the benefits of prayer
- To understand the need for regular habits of prayer
- To gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of truthfulness and the harm of backbiting and not being truthful.

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read stories that demonstrate the benefits of truthfulness and not backbiting.
- Discuss ways to establish regular habits of prayer as instructed in the writings.
- Have students create plays about truthfulness and the avoidance of backbiting.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on ways to establish regular habits of prayer
- To reflect on strategies to ensure truthfulness within one's own character and its importance for one's spiritual health and development

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students meditate on their own decisions about times and places for daily prayer.
- Have students reflect on a specific situation in which they found it challenging to be truthful or to avoid backbiting.
- List the elements that made these experiences challenging and in small groups brainstorm ways to address the identified challenges.
- Make a list of prayers to memorize in the coming weeks or months.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- Track and demonstrate daily habits of prayer
- Demonstrate progress in the memorization and recitation of prayers
- To be able to recite the Bahá'í writings on the importance of prayer
- To be able to share Bahá'í writings about truthfulness

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students make their own charts for tracking their memorization and prayer.
- Provide opportunities to recite newly memorized prayers.
- Encourage parents to find ways to acknowledge their children's accomplishment of memorizing prayers.
- Provide opportunities to present plays about truthfulness or the avoidance of backbiting to the younger children's classes.
- Have parents encourage courageous acts of truthfulness and avoidance of backbiting.

Sample Activities

ACTIVITY 1: PRAYER AS A CONNECTION BETWEEN THE SERVANT AND THE TRUE ONE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know some of the Bahá'í writings about prayer

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to recite Bahá'í writings on the importance of prayer

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Engage in science and in investigation of world of nature; Play and use of manipulatives

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Prayer book placed inside a nicely wrapped gift box
- Strong magnet
- thread
- paper clip
- scotch tape
- Pony beads (preferably heart-shaped) or other beads, one per student
- 8-inch ribbon or yarn
- photocopies on cardstock of Resource Page 145

1. Invite students to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Ask the students to sit on the floor in a circle. Invite them to connect with the people on both sides of them by linking their thumbs. Briefly discuss: How strong is our physical connection with one another?
3. Then invite the students to link elbows. Briefly discuss: How has our connection changed?
4. Encourage the students to think of other ways we can be connected with each other. Invite them to brainstorm different ways of connecting without touching. Record their ideas on chart paper or chalkboard.
5. Then discuss: How can one connect with God, Whom we cannot see or touch? Can we use any of the methods listed on the chart paper to connect with God?
6. Show the students the gift box and explain that something is inside the box that can connect us to God. Open the box and show the prayer book.

7. Share with the students that 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote:

The wisdom of prayer is this: That it causeth a connection between the servant and the True One, because in that state man with all heart and soul turneth his face towards His Highness the Almighty, seeking His association and desiring His love and compassion.

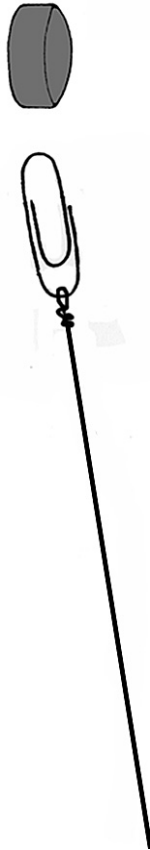
*Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, vol. 3, p. 683*

Briefly discuss: Who is the True One, His Highness the Almighty? How can we connect with God?

8. Express how wonderful it is that God sent us prayers revealed by His Messengers. Note that Bahá'u'lláh Himself revealed to us many, many prayers. Also explain that the Báb and 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed many prayers. Observe that we also have prayers from all the Manifestations of God, from every religion in the world. Ask: How many of us already know some of these prayers? Applaud all!

## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

9. Demonstrate the invisible connection of prayer by using the principles of magnetism. Tie one end of a 12" piece of thread to one end of a paper clip and tape the other end of the thread onto a table. Touch the paper clip with the magnet and then raise it with the magnet. Carefully pull the magnet away from the paper clip until the clip detaches from the magnet and “floats” in the air. (The magnet will still be close to the clip.) Explain that prayer is like the connection between the paperclip and the magnet—it is an invisible connection, but a powerful one.



10. Distribute photocopies of Resource Page 145, pieces of ribbon, and beads. Invite each student to string one bead onto the ribbon and tape both ends of the ribbon onto the page above the last line of the quotation. The students should be able to move the bead from the words, “the servant” to “the True One.” Create a decorated border for the quotation if desired.
11. After they complete their art work, lead the students through a memorization activity using their fingers to reinforce the words on the page. “The wisdom (point to head) of prayer (hands in a prayerful position) is this (point to palm of other hand): That it causeth a connection (point both pointer fingers to each other) between the servant (point to self) and the True One (point heavenward).” Applaud all!
12. Encourage students to practice reciting this quotation each day so that it will stay in their memories. Encourage them to share the quotation with at least one other person before the next class.

ACTIVITY 2: PRAYER AS INDISPENSABLE AND OBLIGATORY

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the benefits of prayer

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on ways to establish regular habits of prayer

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings;  
Engage in science and in the investigation of world of nature

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Dictionary or access to computer with thesaurus or dictionary
- Plants or cut flowers: one that has not been watered and has withered, the other that has been watered
- Posterboard cut into approximately 9" x 11" pieces
- Small circular magnets, one for each student
- String or ribbon (preferably green)
- Scraps of colored paper (to make flowers) including yellow (to make a sun)
- Paper clips, one for each student
- One or more prayer books, as desired

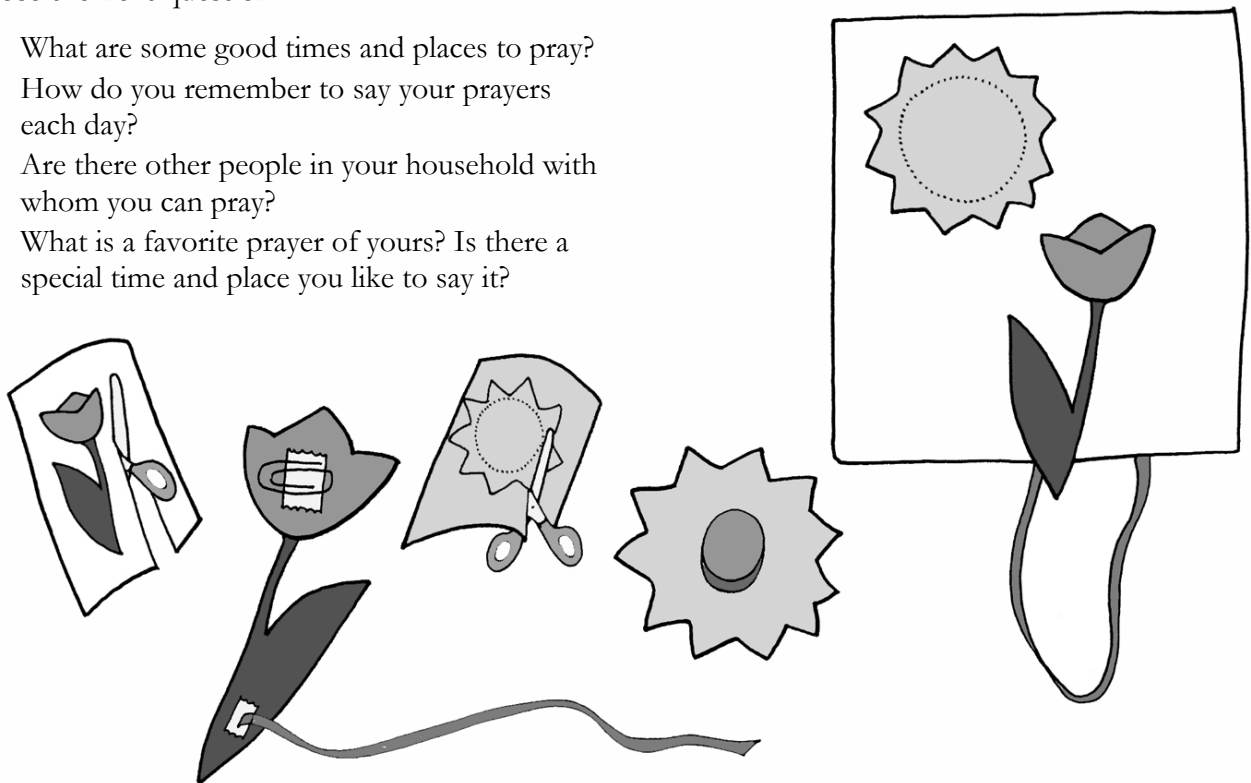
**Advance Preparation:** Prepare two posters, one poster that reads, “Know thou that prayer is indispensable and obligatory. . . .” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era*, p. 92) and another poster that reads, “The state of prayer is the best of conditions, for man is then associating with God. Prayer verily bestoweth life. . . .” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá’, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 201)

1. Invite students to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Read aloud twice the words on the posters that are displayed prominently in the room. Invite the students to repeat the words, “indispensable” and “obligatory.” Indicate that these are powerful words.
3. Invite the students to use a dictionary or thesaurus to look up the definitions and synonyms for these significant words. If available, a computer could be used to look up the two words using online dictionaries.
4. Pose the question: What are some examples of things that might be indispensable (or very, very important) and something that might be obligatory (or required)? If desired you may prompt them with questions such as, “Is food very, very important to us?” or “What would happen to our muscles if we did not move at all?” or “Is it required for us to obey the stop sign?”
5. Show the students the two plants—one withered, the other thriving. Briefly discuss: Which plant was watered and which was not? Is water indispensable to the plant? Do you know what happens if a plant is left in the dark? And if a plant is left near a window, which way do the leaves eventually turn?
6. Explain that just like the plant absolutely needs water and light, Bahá’u’lláh tells us that we absolutely need prayer—it is indispensable. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote, “Prayer verily bestoweth life. . . .” Explain the meaning of “bestoweth” (gives). The sun gives life to the plant, prayer gives us life.



## TOPIC: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

7. Explain that Bahá'u'lláh wrote that prayer is also obligatory. We are required to pray everyday. Briefly discuss: Why do you think that Bahá'u'lláh says that prayer is obligatory?
8. Lead the students in art activity, making a small poster of a flower “turning” to the sun (just like we turn to God in prayer.)
  - Cut out a flower shape and tape a steel paperclip on the back of it.
  - Attach to the flower a piece of ribbon or string and tape one end of the string to the bottom of the poster.
  - Then, make a sun shape and glue a magnet to the back of the sun.
  - Glue the other side of the magnet/sun to the top of the poster.
9. While the glue is drying, invite students to reflect individually on the following questions and after giving them some time to think of their answers, have them share their answers with each other in pairs. Pose each question in turn, allow time to reflect, invite the students to pair and share for one or two minutes, then pose the next question.
  - What are some good times and places to pray?
  - How do you remember to say your prayers each day?
  - Are there other people in your household with whom you can pray?
  - What is a favorite prayer of yours? Is there a special time and place you like to say it?
10. After the glue has dried, invite the students to position the flower so that it will become attracted to the magnet (the sun shape). If they pull the flower away, it drops “lifeless,” so to speak.
11. Invite the students to carefully copy the quotations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “Prayer is indispensable and obligatory” and “Prayer bestoweth life. . . .” on their posters before taking them home. Encourage the students to display their posters where they will see them as a reminder to say their daily prayers. Encourage students to share these quotations with at least one other person before the next class.
12. Discuss with the students: Do you know someone who is sick or sad or lonely? Do you also think about the people you love? Do you know that our prayers can help them, too? As a class say the names of some people that they love or some people that are sick or sad or lonely. Then using a prayer book or memorized prayers, say one or more prayers for the people whose names have been mentioned.



**ACTIVITY 3: PRAYER IS INDISPENSABLE AND OBLIGATORY GAME**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know some of the Bahá'í writings about prayer

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Sign that reads, "Kingdom of God" and attach yarn to it so that a student may wear it as a large necklace
- Blindfolds—one for each student

1. Take the students to a large open area indoors or outdoors.
2. Invite one volunteer to wear the sign that reads, "Kingdom of God."
3. Have the rest of the students put on their blindfolds.
4. Have the sign-holder go silently to a different spot in the area.
5. Explain to the students that they are to listen carefully to the sign-holder when she or he says, "Prayer is obligatory." After the sign-holder has said this, the others are to turn to the sign-holder and take one step towards him or her as if turning to the Kingdom of God in prayer. The sign-holder will then say, "Prayer is indispensable." The others take one more step to the sign-holder. The sign-holder then will say "prayer" often until one of the others reaches him or her. The first one to reach the sign-holder will be the sign-holder for the next round.
6. Repeat the process until all have taken a turn as the sign-holder.

**ACTIVITY 4: SINGING "REVERENCE" AND "GUIDE OUR STEPS"**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand the benefits of prayer

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

1. Enjoy learning and singing the songs on Resource Page 146 using the methods taught in Teacher Development Workshop number 8.
2. Briefly discuss the meaning of the words of these songs.



## ACTIVITY 5: THE POWER OF SPEECH

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá'í writings on truthfulness and the avoidance of backbiting.

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on strategies to ensure truthfulness within one's own character and its importance for one's spiritual health and development.

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chart paper and markers
- Building blocks plus sticky labels and pen
- Story on Resource Page 147
- Nice paper and pens or markers

**Advance Preparation:** Copy the following quotations on nice paper. Consider displaying the quotations one at a time on a small easel.

Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXXVI, p. 297*

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 26

. . .The tongue is for mentioning what is good. . . .

*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 219*

1. Welcome the students and invite them to share their reflections on their times of prayer since the last class. Also encourage them to share their acts of service to others.
2. Begin with a discussion on the importance of truthfulness. Discuss: You have all heard that it is important to be truthful. Where have you heard this? When have you heard this? Why do you think people put such an emphasis on this spiritual quality?
3. Place the first quotation on a small easel and read it aloud:
 

Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty.

*Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, CXXVI, p. 297*

Discuss: What is Bahá'u'lláh telling us? What does it mean to beautify our tongues? What is another word for “truthfulness” in this quotation?
4. Display the second quotation on the easel and read it aloud:
 

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 26

Discuss: What image comes to mind when we read this quotation? How do we think that truthfulness can be the “foundation” for other virtues?
5. Discuss: Think about your own experiences. Can you remember a time when it was hard to be truthful and you were truthful anyway? Listen carefully, then ask: What other spiritual qualities combined with truthfulness in these experiences?
6. Record student responses on chart paper and show the relationship between truthfulness and the other qualities, for example:

## GOAL: DEVELOP SPIRITUAL CAPACITIES

# TOPIC: SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

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- Courage: It can be hard to tell the truth.
  - Responsibility: People depend on you for what you say or do.
  - Courtesy: We tell the truth with kindness.
7. Work with the students to write “truthfulness” and the names of the other qualities on blank labels and place these labels on building blocks. Briefly discuss: If we were to use the blocks to build a tower what block should we use first? Then invite students to build a tower upon the block of truthfulness. Discuss: What will happen if we pull away the first block? What happens if I pull truth out of [another quality listed by students, such as courage]? Discuss the qualities listed by students one by one—are these spiritual qualities possible without truthfulness?
  8. Then place the following quotation on the easel:

. . . The tongue is for mentioning what is good. . . .

*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 219*

Discuss: Why is it so important to talk about the things that are good?
  9. Read the story on Resource Page 147 and discuss: What happened in the story? What did the lady learn? How could the quotations we’re studying today help the people in the story?
  10. Display all three quotations and invite the students each to select the quotation that they feel helped them most learn about the power of speech. Allow students time to think quietly and then invite them to share their choices. After a few minutes invite students to share their selections and their reasons for choosing them.
  11. Then encourage students to reflect on their own lives. Discuss: How can we use these quotations to help us remember to tell the truth? How can we use them to help us remember to mention what is good?
  12. Encourage students to copy their quotations in their best handwriting on nice paper and to recite it again and again until it is memorized. Applaud all!
  13. Encourage them to share the quotation with at least one other person before the next class and to read it every day to themselves.

## ACTIVITY 6: THE BACKBITING SONG

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of truthfulness and the harm of backbiting and not being truthful

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 15 MIN.

1. Enjoy learning and singing The Backbiting Song, Resource Page 148.
2. Briefly discuss: What does this song tell us about the importance of good speech?

Resource Pages

Tape ribbon here

“The wisdom of prayer is this:

That it causeth a **connection** between

the servant and the True One”

— ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Tape ribbon here

# Reverence

words and music by Mimi McClellan

When the Word of God is read, I  
close my eyes and bow my head. I  
open up my mind and heart and like a bowl, I  
let the words fill up my soul.

# Guide Our Steps

music by Beverly Ruhe

Guide our steps by Thy know-ledge, cheer our hearts by Thy love.  
Guide— our steps, cheer our hearts.

This lovely song can be sung with the first line and second line as melody and harmony, or it can be sung as a round. If you sing it as a round, the numbers in parentheses show where each group joins in.

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## Control Your Tongue

One day a rich lady went to a saintly man to ask his advice. She said that she wished to be a saintly woman, but there was one fault which she found difficult to overcome. The saint told her that there was no fault one could not overcome if one wanted to overcome it.

Then the lady told the saint how she was in the habit of gossiping about others and how she had failed to overcome that fault although she had tried very hard.

“Can you help me?” she asked the holy man. “I will do anything you ask me to do.”

“Very well,” answered the holy man, “go to the market and buy a fowl. On your way back home, pluck the fine feathers of the fowl and throw them on the street as you walk along. Come and see me after you have done this.”

The rich lady was surprised to hear this, but she respected the holy man. So she did as she was told and faithfully obeyed his orders.

The next day she went and told the holy man that she had obeyed his commands.

“Very good,” answered the saint. “You have done the first part of your task very well. Now comes the second part. Go to the market and walk along the street again and try to pick up the feathers which you threw on the road yesterday.”

“That’s impossible!” said the rich lady. “The wind has already blown them in all directions. How can I collect the feathers again?”

“That is so,” answered the holy man. “The same happens when you gossip about others. Your words are passed from mouth to mouth and it is impossible to stop the evil spreading, once it has started. The best thing to do is not to start it.”

The lady was so impressed by this object lesson that she went home determined never to speak evil of anybody again.

From the book *Thoughts: Education for Peace and One World*, compiled by Irene Taafaki, pp. 5–6. George Ronald, publisher, 1986. Used with permission.

# The Backbiting Song

Original song from the musical play "The Education of Henry Halifax" by Mimi McClellan © 1973

New verses by Susan Engle

**Jazzy**

**Not too fast**

Refrain C

(Piano...) When you feel a back-bite coming on,

F7 C C7

Bite it back! Hold it in! Get your-self un-der con-trol! 'Cause a

F F7 C Gm7 G7 C

back-bite can quench the light of the heart and ex-tin-guish the life of the soul.

F C

1. O if you see lit-tle Em-i-ly; She has  
 2. O if you play dur-ing gym to-day, And you're  
 3. O if you spy on your new friend Cy, Have

G C F

rag-ged clothes; her shoes have hol-ey soles. Do you call her ug-ly? Care-ful  
 mak-ing fun of the way I run, Just be-cause I'm clum-sy,  
 more to eat than a kid twice his size, Do you call him fat-so?

C D7 G

what you say, if you want to feel o-kay when you look back on your day!

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## LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Stories & Articles:***Brilliant Star:*

ND 94 Prayer Works, p. 14  
 MJ 95 Treasures Within, p. 22  
 ND 95 No Time For Anything Else, p. 2

SO 98 Bahá'í Prayers, p. 28  
 ND 98 The Sacred Writings, p. 4  
 MA 00 The Stonecutter, p. 20

*Does God Hear My Prayer?* August Gold, Skylight Paths Publishing, 2005  
*Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, IL, 1939, p. 284  
*Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Bahá'í World Centre, Haifa, 1978, p. 26–27  
*The Pattern of Bahá'í Life*, Bahá'u'lláh et al., Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1948  
*Prescription for Living*, Rúhiyyih Rabbani, George Ronald, Oxford, 1950  
*Counsels of Perfection*, Genevieve Coy, George Ronald, Oxford, 1978  
*Bahá'í Prayers and Daily Readings for Children and Youth*, Badí Publishing Corporation, 2004  
*Sacred Moments: Daily Meditations on the Virtues*, Linda Kavelin Popov, Penguin Group, 1997  
*Nurturing Spirituality in Children*, Peggy Davidson Jenkins, Ph.D., Beyond Words Publishing, 1995  
*Reflections on the Life of the Spirit: Ruhi Book 1*, Ruhi Institute, Palabra Publications, 1987  
*Spiritual Foundations: Prayer, Meditation, and the Devotional Attitude: Extracts from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi*, Research Department of the Universal House of Justice, Bahá'í Publishing Trust U.S., 1980  
*Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on Spiritual Reality*, A Bahá'í Compilation, Publisher: Palabra Publications, 1996  
*Light of a Good Character: A Teacher's Guide for Values Education of Children Ages 4-6*, The New Era Development Institute, Bahá'í Publishing Trust India, date unknown

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*The Virtues Activity & Coloring Book*, Badí Publishing

**Activities:***Brilliant Star:*

MJ 93 Like the Air That We Breathe, p. 21  
 MJ 93 Transformation into Freedom, p. 14  
 ND 93 Customs of the Kingdom, p. 18  
 SE 93 Robes of Courtesy, p. 18  
 SE 93 What Does God Want Us to Do? p. 16  
 MA 95 Changing Hate to Love, p. 6

ND 95 Prayer Search, p. 3  
 MA 96 Weighty Matters, p. 4  
 JA 98 My Diary of Giving and Growing, p. 26  
 JF 01 Behind the Veils, p. 7  
 JF 01 Seven Valleys, p. 14  
 JF 01 Communicating with Love, p. 17

**Music:***Brilliant Star:*

SO 99 Virtues Rap, p. 24  
 MA 01 Laugh, Smile and Rejoice, p. 21  
 MA 04 Be Pure, O People of God, p. 24  
 "Hollow Reed," *Wings of Prayer*, Mary Davis, Windflower Music, 1992  
 "Alláh'u'Abhá," *We Are Bahá'ís*, Lenz & Cameron, Don't Blink Music, 1981  
 "Words of Wisdom," *Words of Wisdom*, Bob Simms, This Day Production, 1994  
 "We Give God the Praise," *My Prayer, My Praise*, Eric Dozier, Live Unity, 2003  
 "We Have Come To Sing Praises," *We Have Come to Sing Praises*, Bahá'í Gospel Singers, Global Music, 1993

**Drama:***Brilliant Star:*

SE 95 World's Comeliest Garment, p. 2

**Poetry:***Brilliant Star:*

SO 93 Dara of Deeds, p. 20

**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](http://www.core-curriculum.org).





# DEVELOP ONE'S SOCIAL LIFE

## DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
FRIENDSHIP, SERVICE, KINDNESS TO ANIMALS**

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 214, CIX

. . . It is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, No. 138, p. 158

## Learning Objectives and Suggested Activities



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the Bahá'í writings on importance of developing friendships and how to maintain them
- To know the Bahá'í writings on importance of respect and service to parents
- To know the Bahá'í writings on kindness to animals
- To know from the Bahá'í writings that we are to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Study the Bahá'í writings on building friendship, respect of parents, and kindness to animals.
- Memorize a quotation from each of these areas.
- Create a gift card for a friend and/or parent.
- Make a list of how to maintain friendship based on the Bahá'í writings.
- Make a list of one's responsibilities towards parents.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To discern from the Bahá'í writings the qualities of those we should befriend
- To understand the value of friendships for our personal development
- To gain a deeper understanding of the central role of respect and service to one's parents in spiritual growth
- To discern the value of kindness to animals
- To understand that one must live a life of service to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have a discussion regarding whom we should befriend based on the Bahá'í writings.
- Brainstorm the benefits of having friends.
- In small groups determine how to achieve one's responsibilities to respect and serve one's parents.
- Read a story about kindness to animals.
- Have students share stories about kindness to animals.
- Develop a play on friendship building and its benefits.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To reflect on one's skills of building and maintaining friendships
- To reflect on ways to expand one's circle of friends
- To perceive one's daily actions of kindness, respect, and service to one's own parents
- To reflect on one's opportunities to show kindness to animals
- To perceive one's daily role in establishing an ever-advancing civilization

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Have students meditate and write in their journals about a new person that they want to befriend.
- In small groups brainstorm ways to expand their circle of friends.
- Have students interview their parents and discuss ways that they can serve parents daily. Share these interviews in class.
- Have students plan a class trip to a petting zoo.
- Have students write a poem about their parents.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To be able to share one's understanding of Bahá'í concepts of friendship with others
- To demonstrate competencies in building and maintaining friendships
- To be able to recite the Bahá'í writings on the importance of respect and service to parents
- To demonstrate one's respect and love for one's parents through one's actions
- To be able to share information or stories about acts of kindness to animals
- To demonstrate that virtues carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Plan a friendship appreciation party in which each student will bring a friend.
- Plan and carry out a parent appreciation party where parents are honored.
- Have students make a progress chart based on their specific interests and track their own progress toward their goals.
- Make a report back to the community about their progress toward their goals.

## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

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### Sample Activities

#### ACTIVITY 1: SKILLS OF BUILDING FRIENDSHIPS

**WISDOM OBJECTIVES:** To reflect on ways to expand one's circle of friends; To discern from the Bahá'í writings the qualities of those we should befriend

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on ways to expand one's circle of friends

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate competencies in building and maintaining friendships

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Photocopies of Resource Page 168 for each student, and crayons or markers
- Scissors, colored paper, and glue if desired
- Chart paper and markers
- Cards with names of virtues that help build friendships (see Resource page 169). Create more if needed—two cards for each virtue
- CD player and recorded music about friendship, if desired
- One or more small rusted objects, if available
- Kitchen scrubbing pads or sandpaper to remove rust, if available

**Advance Preparation:**

1. Copy and cut out virtue cards, Resource Page 169, so that there are two cards for each virtue. Create more cards if needed for a larger class.
2. Rusted objects may be found or created. It takes one week to create small rusted objects. You may purchase small **unplated steel** objects such as square keystock at a hardware store. Wash the keystock or other objects to remove manufacturing oils. Sprinkle liberally with salt and wrap the keystock in a damp paper towel. Keep the towel damp. Rust will form on unplated steel after about one week. Students may then use sandpaper to remove the rust.

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Read the following quotation aloud:

Treat all thy friends and relatives, even strangers, with a spirit of utmost love and kindness.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 1, p. 389

You may also wish to play or sing a song about friendship, such as “Say Hi” from Red Grammer’s *Teaching Peace* CD, or “Friendship” from Tim Urbonya’s *Love All the World* CD. Sing this song together.
3. Then invite the students to stand in a Friendship Circle. In this circle, encourage each one to move around the circle and greet each person in turn by saying, “Hi \_\_\_\_\_. I’m glad to see you today.” The other student responds, “Hi \_\_\_\_\_. I’m glad to see you too.” Repeat this step so that each student has a turn as the greeter.
4. Distribute markers and photocopies of Resource Page 168. Encourage the students to think about their best friends. What are some of the qualities they most love about their friends? Invite some to share their thoughts with the whole group. Record student ideas on chart paper. Then invite students to write those qualities in big and fancy letters on the figures, so the words fill up and “clothe” the figures.

## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

Students may choose to cut out and mount their work on colored paper as a background.

5. Next, play the Building Friendship game by placing the appropriate number of virtue cards (from Resource Page 169) face down, so that two students receive the same virtue cards. Invite each student to pick one. After all have picked a card, instruct them to find a partner that holds the matching card. Instruct each pair to share with each other how that attribute helps build friendships. Then invite them to share examples of friends demonstrating that attribute. Invite them to dramatize an example of two friends showing this attribute towards one another. Applaud all!
6. After each presentation, briefly discuss: How can this spiritual quality help strengthen friendships? How can it help us make new friends?
7. After all presentations have been completed, share the quotation:

If you desire with all your heart, friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will spread; it will become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the minds of all men.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 29–30*

Discuss: Why is it so important for us to be the first to reach out in friendship to people of every race? What have we already done to reach out to all people in friendship? What new ideas do we have?

8. Then read aloud the following quotation:

The company of the ungodly increaseth sorrow, whilst fellowship with the righteous cleanseth the rust from off the heart.

*Bahá’u’lláh, The Hidden Words, Persian No. 56*

Discuss: What do we think it means to cleanse the rust from off the heart? Listen carefully to all responses. Then if available, show the rusted object and demonstrate removing the rust. To

the extent possible, provide students with the opportunity to repeat this demonstration.

Discuss: How can friendship with the righteous help make our hearts cleaner? How might the company of the ungodly increase sorrow?

9. Explain that we want to be friends with all people and that we also have an obligation to protect ourselves from harm. Discuss: Was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá friends with all people? How do we think it might have been possible for Him to be friends even with people that others might have found “ungodly”? Are people always “righteous” or “ungodly” or do we all have the capacity to be both? How can we tell if someone is having a positive or negative influence on our hearts? What should we do if we think that fellowship with someone might be harmful? How do we keep our hearts pure and avoid prejudice while we are also following Bahá’u’lláh’s instruction to avoid fellowship with the ungodly? What are some ways that we seek fellowship with the righteous?
10. Remembering that we want to reach out to all people in friendship and make friends with more and more people, what are some steps that we can take to make friends with more people? Listen carefully and record student ideas on chart paper. What are some ways that we can also invite our friends to come with us to Bahá’í class? In teams of two, create short dramatic sketches to show reaching out with friendly words to new people or inviting them to come with us to Bahá’í class. Applaud all! Then briefly discuss: What are some ways to make our new friends feel welcome when they come with us to Bahá’í class?
11. Encourage students to think of one specific individual to befriend in the coming week. Encourage them also to consider inviting that person or another friend to Bahá’í class. Conclude the activity by inviting the students to imagine themselves reaching out in friendship to the people they have in mind. Then as a class say prayers for the success of these endeavors.

ACTIVITY 2: TRACKING OUR DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that one must live a life of service to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive one's daily role in establishing an ever-advancing civilization

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to track and document daily acts of service

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Photocopies of the “Ever-Advancing Civilization Chart,” Resource Page 170, preferably on cardstock. NOTE: You will need to determine the day of the Bahá'í month on the day of this activity (refer to a Bahá'í calendar or try the website <http://www.fourmilab.ch/documents/calendar/>)
- Markers or colored pencils
- Optional: star, heart, and dot stickers, several for each student



1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Ask the students to close their eyes and imagine that they are building a kingdom. Discuss: What activities would be involved? Are you building castles, draw bridges, roads, houses, walls, moats? What else are you building? How would you have these things built? Do you think that if you could wave a magic wand, your kingdom would appear all at once?
3. Explain that the Kingdom of God as Bahá'u'lláh sees it is not about building castles, houses, roads, and walls. The Kingdom of God is about building unity, peace, justice, and love. It is not built by waving a magic wand or just by saying “Alláh'u'Abhá!” God has created us—each one of us—to build this Kingdom. Review the verse: “Man has been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization.” Indicate that we build this Kingdom, this civilization, by living a life of service and distinction. Remember “Imtíyáz” (distinction)? Bahá'u'lláh says that “Thy day of service is now come!” (*Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 84) Encourage students to repeat this quotation three times with enthusiasm as if they are being given a challenge.
4. Explain that builders keep records of what they do when they build buildings and roads; they keep track of the progress they make. We who carry forward an ever-advancing civilization also need to keep track of what we do to help build this Kingdom of God—every day.
5. Distribute copies of the “Ever-Advancing Civilization Chart.” Show how the arrow represents our efforts to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. Explain that we can do this through three basic acts of service. Each column represents one day in a Bahá'í month.
  - ☆ On each day they should draw a star when they have shown distinction (or excellence) in some way. This could be, for example, having done their best work at school or having behaved in a way that would please Bahá'u'lláh.
  - ♥ They are to put a heart shape when they have performed an act of service or reached out to another person in friendship.
  - And they are to put a dot when they have attended the Nineteen Day Feast, a Holy Day celebration, or a devotional meeting, spent time in prayer and meditation, or attended Bahá'í class.

## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

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Note that it is possible to place more than three marks on each day. Briefly discuss: Why is it important for us to call our own selves to account each day? When and where can we do this? And how could we also take time to think about our acts of service for the coming day? Would we like to do this as part of our morning or evening prayers? Could we also read or recite a short passage from the Bahá'í writings at this time? What are some quotations that we have already memorized? Do we have favorites that we especially like to say? Do we have others that we'd like to begin memorizing today?

6. Invite the students to reflect on the things that they have done today and put the pertinent symbols on the appropriate column indicating the correct day of the Bahá'í month. For example, all students would put a dot for being in class today. Invite students to share with the rest of the group the acts of service they have done that day, if desired.
7. Take time to decorate the charts to make them attractive. Invite the students to take their charts home and to keep track of their efforts to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. Encourage them to bring the charts back with them to the next class so that we can all see how we are carrying forward an ever-advancing civilization daily together. The teacher should also complete this chart.
8. Then work together to memorize a quotation suggested by your students. This quotation may be selected from quotations previously studied or could be a statement such as "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning" from the Persian Hidden Words, no. 5. They may work individually, in small teams, or in the whole group as desired. Consider setting the words of the quotation to a simple tune such as "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" or create your own melody. Consider using simple movements as memory aids. Consider writing the words of the quotation on index cards, and gradually turning the words over. Consider using visual images or simple sketches to replace key words in the quotation. After this happy work period, applaud all!
9. Encourage students to recite their newly memorized quotation with at least one other person before the next class. Remember to rehearse this quotation at the beginning of the next class.

ACTIVITY 3: TO CARRY FORWARD AN EVER-ADVANCING CIVILIZATION

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know from the Bahá'í writings that we are to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that in order to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization, one must live a life of service

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate that virtues carry forward an ever-advancing civilization

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'u'lláh's Sacred Writings, Use of memorization, Employ creativity and the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Tagboard or stiff paper, preferably larger than 8 ½" x 11"
- Markers and/or crayons

**Helpful but not necessary:**

- Pictures of a baby, a toddler, a kindergartner, an adolescent, and an adult
- Pictures of variety of animals

**Advance Preparation:** Create a poster that shows the quotation:

All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. The Almighty beareth Me witness: To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 214, CIX

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Ask the students if anyone can recite the short obligatory prayer. If no one can, open a prayer book and ask a capable reader to read it to the entire class. Encourage reverence.
3. Briefly discuss: How does this prayer help us to know why we were created? What are some ways we can know God and show our love for Him?
4. Hold up the quotation poster and read it as you point to the words. Invite everyone to read it with you as you read it a second time.
5. Briefly discuss: What else do we know about the purpose for which we were created? Repeat the first sentence of the quotation, but this time use hand motions to suggest "carry forward" (hands appearing to hold an imaginary object and bringing it forward) and "ever-advancing" (one hand in front of the other repeatedly). Again, have them repeat this sentence using the same gestures.
6. Discuss any unfamiliar words, such as "ever-advancing" and "civilization."



## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

7. Share pictures of people in various stages of development. Discuss: Do we think that older people are able to do some things more easily than the younger ones? Why? What are some things that older people can do more easily than younger ones? Explain that people develop emotionally as well as intellectually, spiritually as well as physically. Older people are usually more capable of caring for others, unlike a baby. This is one example of “ever-advancing.”
8. Read the verse again, then discuss: What are some ways to help all people become happier and more loving?
9. Show pictures of animals, if available. Ask: What do animals do all day every day? (Sleep, eat, hunt for food, care for their babies, look for shelter, fight for survival, etc.) Is that all that God created us to do? Can you think of examples of how sometimes people act like animals?
10. Invite the students to look again at what Bahá'u'lláh says are given especially to us and not to animals—virtues such as forbearance (which means patience), mercy, compassion, and loving kindness toward all peoples. Animals do not know to do this, but we as people do.
11. Pass out poster boards or paper and divide the class into four groups (using more or fewer according to class size). Give one group the words of the quotation, “All mankind”; a second group, “have been created”; a third group, “to carry forward”; a fourth group, “an ever-advancing civilization”. Have the groups write those words in large letters visible from a distance. Encourage them to use colors and illuminate their posters.
12. Next, pass out more poster boards to the same groups. Give first group, the word, “forbearance”; the second group, “mercy”; the third group, “compassion”; and the last group, “loving-kindness”. Have them do the same as with the other posters.
13. After the posters are done, have the groups line up in the order of the words of the quotation. The first group will step forward and say in unison, “All mankind.” Then, the second group will step forward and say in unison, “have been created.” The third group will step forward and say in unison, “to carry forward”, and the last group will do the same with the words, “an ever-advancing civilization.” Repeat this as they continue to step forward—thus demonstrating the concept of “ever-advancing.”
14. Then, have them pick up the virtue posters. Recite the quotation, “To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are. . . .” At this point, the first group steps forward, holds up the sign, and says, “forbearance”; the second, third, and fourth groups follow in succession and do the same with their words.
15. Regroup the class. Review and ask if they understand that each and every one of them can help carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. What can we do to make this happen? Encourage each student to select one specific action to complete during the coming week. Remember to invite students to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.
16. Continue to practice this presentation and offer it to the community at an upcoming Nineteen-Day Feast, devotional meeting, or other public gathering.

## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

### ACTIVITY 4: REGARD FOR THE RIGHTS DUE TO ONE’S PARENTS

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá’í writings on importance of respect and service to parents

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 50 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Access to outdoor area or colored pictures of a variety of trees, including fruit trees
- Any fresh fruit (from fruit trees) cut into pieces
- A copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
- Felt board or poster board
- Felt pieces or colored paper, cut in the shapes of a tree trunk with branches, clusters of leaves, and fruit shapes. Label the fruits with a permanent marker: trustworthiness, godliness, truthfulness, sincerity. Make two larger fruit shapes and label them, “recognition of the unity of God” and “regard for the rights that are due one’s parents.”
- Double stick tape, if using poster board instead of felt board
- Newspaper, 3 double page sheets per child
- Stapler
- Circles cut from colored paper, about 3" diameter, to represent “fruits”
- Markers
- Star stickers, 2 per student

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. If possible, take the students outside to examine different trees. Alternatively, you may display pictures of trees. Briefly discuss: What grows on trees? (bark, branches, twigs, leaves, seedlings, flowers, fruits, etc.) What are some of the fruits of trees? Explain that trees grow up in order to bear fruits. The fruits of the tree are like gifts that they give to us. How we enjoy them! Give students a piece of the fruit and allow them to eat it and describe its juiciness and sweetness.
3. Show the students the copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and indicate that it is the Most Holy Book and it is written by Bahá’u’lláh Himself. And in this Most Holy Book on page 139, Bahá’u’lláh talks about a different kind of tree. He writes about the tree of human life—we are a little like trees in that we grow bigger and bigger. We also have fruits that we give to the world. However, they are not apples, bananas, coconut, pears, or oranges. They are special gifts, but they are not things or money. Read the quotation aloud:

The fruits that best befit the tree of human life are trustworthiness and godliness, truthfulness and sincerity; but greater than all, after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one’s parents.

Bahá’u’lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 139, Q136

4. Press the felt tree trunk, branches, and leaves onto the felt board. Then place the trustworthiness fruit. Say, “Bahá’u’lláh calls one fruit ‘trustworthiness’.” Discuss briefly what that means (being honest and reliable) and have them pronounce it back to you.
5. Put the “godliness” fruit on the tree. Say, “Another fruit that we can grow is ‘godliness’.” Put the godliness fruit onto the tree and discuss what that means—being good and near to God.
6. There are two more fruits that God wants us to “grow”—truthfulness and sincerity. Put those fruits onto the tree. Discuss their meanings as well.

**TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE**

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7. Say, “But, Bahá’u’lláh says there are two other fruits that we can grow that are even greater than all these. One of these is recognizing that God is one. Can you guess the other?” Listen to students’ ideas then explain that it is “regard for the rights that are due one’s parents” or to love and to serve our parents. Bahá’u’lláh says that loving and serving our parents are very special gifts that we can give to God. They are our fruits!
8. Then encourage students to create a “tree of human life” out of newspapers. See Resource Page 171.
9. After constructing the tree, encourage the students to write the words *trustworthiness*, *godliness*, *truthfulness*, and *sincerity* on four of the paper circles and staple them on the lower “branches” of the newspaper tree.
10. Then, have them write *recognition of the unity of God* and *regard for the rights that are due one’s parents* on two more of the circles and place star stickers on these.
11. Briefly discuss: What are some of the ways that we show our love to our parents? What are some ways that we serve our parents? How do these actions show our regard for the rights that are due one’s parents? Encourage students to select one special action to show their regard for the rights due one’s parents and write that action on the back of the appropriate circle. Then staple the two remaining circles onto the upper “branches” of the newspaper tree, signifying that these two are greater than the other four.
12. Review the concept that Bahá’u’lláh ranks loving and serving our parents as one of the most important gifts that we can give to the world and to God. Encourage students to show the trees to their parents or other caregiver and explain to them this beautiful instruction of Bahá’u’lláh. If students do not live with their parents, work with them to find a way to show their love and service to parents or other caregivers according to their circumstances. Remember to invite students to share the results of their actions at the beginning of the next class.

ACTIVITY 5: SERVICE TO ONE'S PARENTS

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION:** To perceive one's daily actions of kindness, respect, and service to one's own parents

**ELOQUENT SPEECH:** To demonstrate one's respect and love for one's parents through one's actions

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Prior to this class time, ask the parents (or other caregivers) to bring photographs of themselves—if possible, photographs of themselves with their children—that could be used for an art project. Alternatively, the teacher may take snapshots of the students.
- Chart paper and markers
- Mat boards cut a little larger than the photographs of the parents, one per child
- Copies of the quotation on Resource Page 172
- Decorative “gems” (usually found in craft stores) that could be glued onto mat boards
- Glue sticks or glue
- Copies of Resource Page 173, one for each student

1. Invite students to share the results of their service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Invite the students to describe some of the important things that their parents give them. What would happen if they had no parents or other caregivers? Record their responses on chart paper. (Would they have been fed, housed, and kept safe? Would they have been cared for and loved? Would they have been tucked into bed and given kisses and hugs? Would they have been given the things they need to live? Would they be very lonely? Would they have been taught manners? Would they have been taught about God? Would they have been educated?)
3. Affirm that parents and other caregivers play a very important part in our lives. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, “The children’s prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.”
4. Explain words such as prosperity and good pleasure. Explain that when parents are pleased with them, children prosper, and if parents are not happy about their children’s behavior, the children are also unhappy. If students do not live with their parents adapt this conversation to include those students while also showing respect to parents that may not be currently involved in their children’s lives.
4. Help the students memorize this quotation by repeating a section again and again—each time omitting a few words so that the students will repeat them from memory.
5. Encourage students to make a gift for their parents or other caregivers that will be given to them at a parent party using this quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
6. Have the students glue their photographs and the printed quotation onto their mat boards. Then have them glue the “gems” around the borders of the mat board, thus representing “prosperity.” While they are doing this craft project, repeat the quotation over and over so that the students commit it to memory.

## TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

7. Tell the students that you will hold their gifts so that they can give it to their parents or other caregivers at a special event in the future. See the next activity for possibilities.
8. Before they leave, provide copies of Resource Page 173. Encourage students to ask their parents or other caregivers to respond to the questions. Invite students to share their parents' or caregivers' responses at the next class.

### ACTIVITY 6: HONORING PARENTS

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá'í writings on the importance of respect and service to parents

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to recite the Bahá'í writings on importance of respect and service to parents

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. + EVENT TO HONOR PARENTS IF DESIRED

**Materials Needed:**

- Copy of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas
- Quotation printed from Kitáb-i-Aqdas (one for each student): “. . . greater than all, after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one's parents.” (Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 139, Q136) See Resource Page 174.
- Copy of the Qurán, if available
- Quotation printed from Qurán on small slips of paper (one for each child): “Thy Lord hath decreed that ye worship none save Him, and (that ye show) kindness to parents.” (Surah 17, Pickthall translation)
- Copy of the Bible, if available
- Quotation printed from Bible on small slips of paper (one for each child): “Honor thy father and thy mother.” (Deuteronomy 5:16)
- Pictures of parents from *National Geographic* or other magazines
- Large index cards, 3 for each student
- Glue sticks
- Glitter glue or plain glitter
- Ribbon or yarn
- Supplies for an event to honor parents, if desired

**Advance Preparation:** Prepare a dignified setting in which the Holy Books—the Bible, the Qurán, and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas—are beautifully displayed and the printed quotations are inserted in the relevant Books. Consider using candles, beautiful cloths, flowers, etc. to beautify this setting.

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Also invite them to share their parents' or other caregivers' responses to the questions on Resource Page 173 if available. Applaud all!
2. Invite the students into the setting you have prepared, and explain that you have found a very special message for children in these holy books of God. First, show them the Bible and read the Biblical quotation. Have them repeat the verse and distribute copies of this verse to all.

**TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE**

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3. Do the same for the quotations from the Qurán and the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.
4. Discuss: What do these verses tell us about the manner in which we should treat our parents? What are the rights due to our parents? How can we show kindness to our parents? What does the word “honor” mean? What does “honor” look like and sound like? What are some ways we show honor to our parents?
5. Discuss the questions: Why do we think that Bahá’u’lláh tell us that “regard for the rights that are due to one’s parents” is even more important than truthfulness and trustworthiness? Why might it be next in importance to recognizing the oneness of God? (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 128)
6. Invite students to create a collage of pictures of parents and children on three index cards. Have them affix the printed quotations on separate index cards and glue glitter or use other materials around the quotations to make them stand out.
7. Punch two holes along the top edge of the finished cards and insert two ribbons or yarn to create a book.
8. Encourage the students to share these “honoring parents” books with their parents or other caregivers and to consult with them about the different ways they can show honor to their parents. These books may also be presented at an event to honor parents and other caregivers. Encourage students also to select one specific action to show honor to their parents or other caregivers in the coming week.
9. As a group discuss: How would we like to present these books? Would we like to simply take them home or would we like to invite our parents to class, to a special devotional program or other gathering, or would we like to present them at a previously scheduled event such as a Nineteen-Day Feast? If the group decides to plan an event, discuss: How could we organize refreshments, if desired? How will we invite our parents or other caregivers? Would we like to sing songs, say prayers, or recite memorized quotations? What else would we like to do? When and where shall we host this event? How will we invite people? Do we want to invite people in addition to our parents or caregivers?
10. Follow up as needed to plan and host the event planned by the class. Debrief the event by acknowledging success and recording ideas for continued progress with future events hosted by the class.

## ACTIVITY 7: KINDNESS TO ANIMALS

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the Bahá'í writings on kindness to animals

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to share information or stories about acts of kindness to animals

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

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Poster on which the quotation from 'Abdu'l-Bahá is written: "It is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, No. 138, p. 158)
- Music and lyrics to verse, "If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it; if it be hungry, let them feed it; if thirsty, let them quench its thirst; if weary, let them see that it rests." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 159) Available on the CDs *Immerse Yourself* by Joe Crone, and *Love All the World* by Tim Urbonya. You may also create your own melody for this quotation. This verse should also be written on a poster for the students to read. See Resource Page 176.
- Play-Doh® or other modeling clay products
- Other materials to create settings for animal care (pretend grass, toothpicks, pipecleaners, construction paper)
- Styrofoam trays or pieces of cardboard or posterboard

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Display the quotation, and read what 'Abdu'l-Bahá says about animals, "It is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature." Invite the students to repeat the last part of this quotation twice—" . . . Show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature."
3. Review the words, "mercy," "compassion," and other words that may be unfamiliar to the students. Ask them to name some of the living creatures the Master might have been referring to.
4. Ask the students if any of them have pets at home. Invite them to share the kinds of things they do that show kindness to the animals.  
  
Then discuss: Even if we don't have pets, what are some ways that we can show kindness to animals?
5. Share the story from Resource Page 175 about 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a very small animal.
6. Play or sing a song about the second verse, "If an animal be sick. . . ." Sing the song over and over until the students memorize the quotation. Review this quotation by discussing: If an animal is sick, what should we do? If it is hungry, what should we do? If it is thirsty, what should we do?
7. Invite the students to work in pairs or small groups with Play-Doh® or other modeling materials. Give each group a part of the latter quotation (for example, "If an animal be sick, let the children try to heal it. . . .") Invite each group to consult and create a scene with these materials to show the stated act of kindness to animals. Encourage the students to use their imaginations and create not only the animals but also the setting for them. When finished, set the clay pieces onto a styrofoam tray or piece of poster board. Attach the quotation onto the display when finished.

## GOAL: DEVELOP ONE’S SOCIAL LIFE

# TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE

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8. Encourage students to share their scenes in the whole group. Then discuss: What are some specific actions that each of us can do in the coming week to show kindness to an animal? Encourage each students to select a specific act of kindness to complete over the coming week. Encourage creativity so that students who do not have pets may also find a way to complete this action assignment. For example, they could teach other people about the importance of kindness to animals.
9. Encourage the students to show their animal scenes to parents and others, sing the verse, and retell the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the mouse.

## ACTIVITY 8: ANIMALS HAVE NEEDS BUT NO VOICE

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To discern the value of kindness to animals

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To reflect on one’s opportunities to show kindness to animals

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To be able to share information or stories about acts of kindness to animals

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of recreation; Use of stories; Use of travel; Involve service to humanity; Use of travel and field trips

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MINUTES + FIELD TRIP IF POSSIBLE

### Materials Needed:

- Quotation: “Therefore is it essential that ye show forth the utmost consideration to the animal, and that ye be even kinder to him than to your fellow man.” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, No. 138, p. 159)
- Children’s library books or information gleaned from internet about the care of a variety of animals, primarily pets
- Access/transportation to a pet store or petting zoo or animal shelter

**Advance Preparation:** If possible, plan a field trip to a pet store, or petting zoo, or animal shelter. Call in advance to request someone to be there to give the children advice on how to care for animals, how to hold or handle them, how to feed them, how to make the animals comfortable, and what not to do with them. If this is not possible, check out some children’s books about the care of animals. Or find someone in the community who is knowledgeable about animal care to come to the class and share information; encourage that person to bring in animals if possible.

Alternative to the field trip: Gather information about the needs of the animal shelter and have the children consult on how they can help fulfill those needs and donate or contribute some time for the shelter. An example might be to visit the animals or to raise funds to provide needed food or materials.

Carefully plan the field trip or service project. Be sure to request parents’ permission for this field trip.

1. Invite students to share their acts of service since the last class. Applaud all!
2. Play the game “Poor Kitty.” Students sit in a circle with one person in the middle, who will be “kitty.” “Kitty” gets on hands and knees, acts and meows like a kitty, goes from one person to another, and without talking tries to get that person to smile or laugh. As “kitty” comes to another person, that person must pet the “kitty” and say, “Poor kitty, poor kitty” and try not to smile or laugh. If the person, however, smiles or laughs, then she or he becomes the “kitty.”



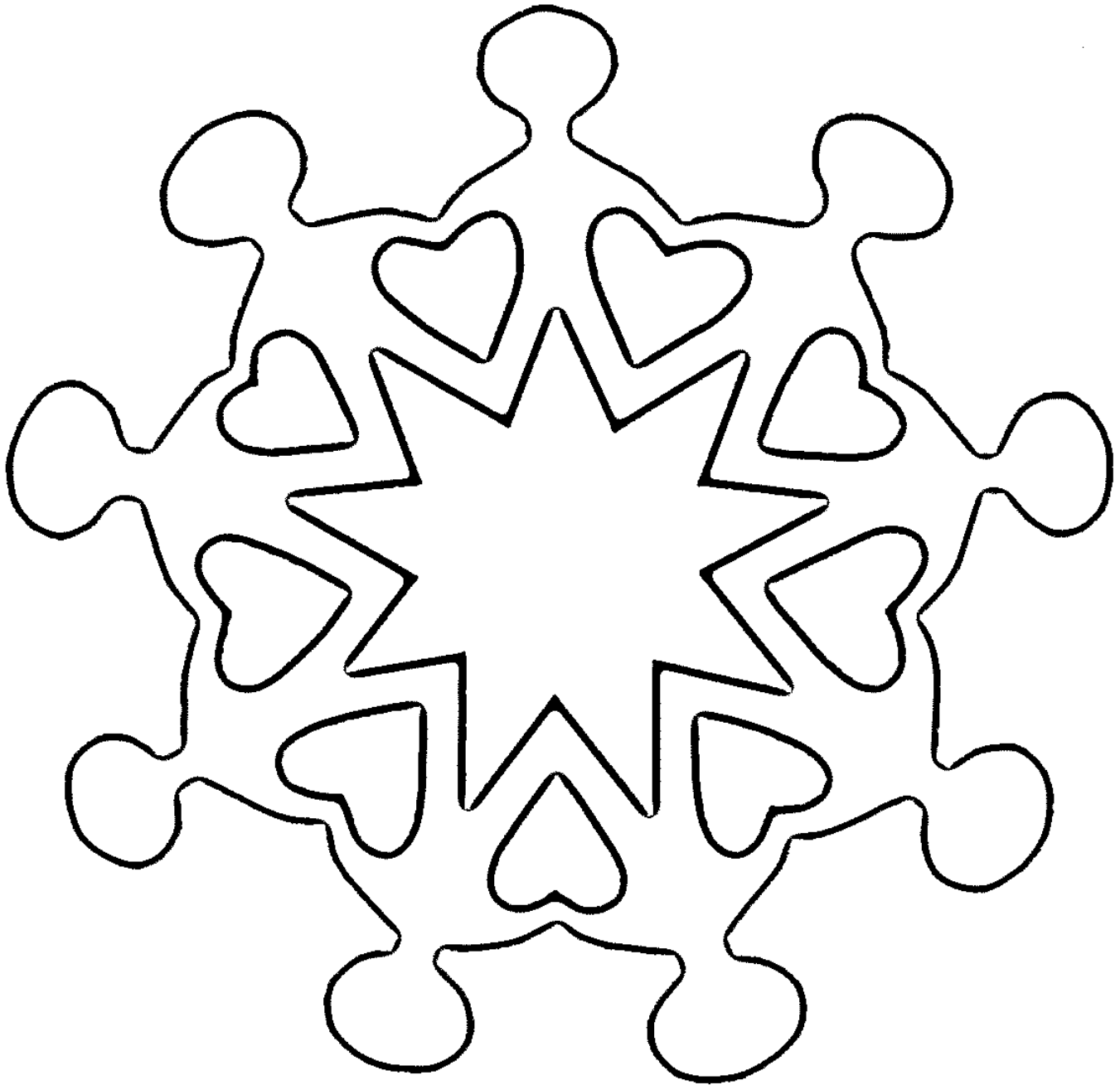
**TOPIC: DAILY DEEDS OF SERVICE**

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3. After the game, share the story found on Resource Page 177 about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and his gardener’s dog. Ask: If you had been that dog, what kinds of things might you feel?
4. Explain that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says two important things about animals. The first is that we must understand that animals and people have the same “physical sensibilities.” Invite the students to pinch themselves—ask them if it hurts. Explain that sometimes people think that animals don’t feel pain like we do—but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says this is not true, that animals hurt too if you pinch them. That is a very important reason to be kind to animals.
5. Then ask: What happens if someone hits us? Listen carefully to students and then suggest that we might cry or we might tell that person not to do this or we might go to our parents or another adult to get help. We can talk about it and solve the problem in some way. However, animals cannot talk, they cannot complain—they do not have a voice. They are helpless. That is why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says we must be kind to animals, even more than we are to people.
6. If possible, take the students to a pet store, or petting zoo, or animal shelter. If this is not possible, share information about caring for animals from a knowledgeable person, library books, or from the internet. Discuss: What are some of the practical ways that we can show kindness to animals? Encourage each student to choose a specific means to show kindness to animals, according to his or her own circumstances.
7. Convene the class after the field trip or presentation, invite the students to share what they have learned from this field experience. Record the information on a flip chart in simple sentences. Discuss: How can we share this information with others?

Resource Pages

Coloring page for Activity 1



Activity 1: Cooperative Game of Building Friendships

CARING

CARING

TRUSTWORTHINESS

TRUSTWORTHINESS

TRUTHFULNESS

TRUTHFULNESS

SERVICE

SERVICE

THANKFULNESS

THANKFULNESS

PATIENCE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

KINDNESS

# My "Carrying Forward an Ever-Advancing Civilization" Chart

"Thy day of service is now come!" — Bahá'u'lláh

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19

Days of the Bahá'í Month of \_\_\_\_\_

"All men have been created to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization."  
Bahá'u'lláh



Attended Feast,  
Holy Day, Devotions,  
Bahá'í Class



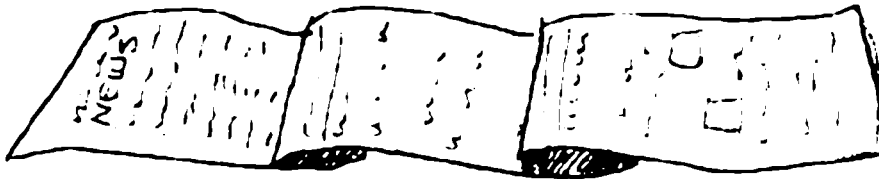
did act of loving service



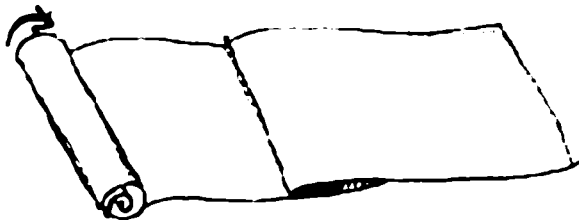
Showed distinction

Activity 4: Regard for the Rights Due to One's Parents

Directions for a growing newspaper tree:

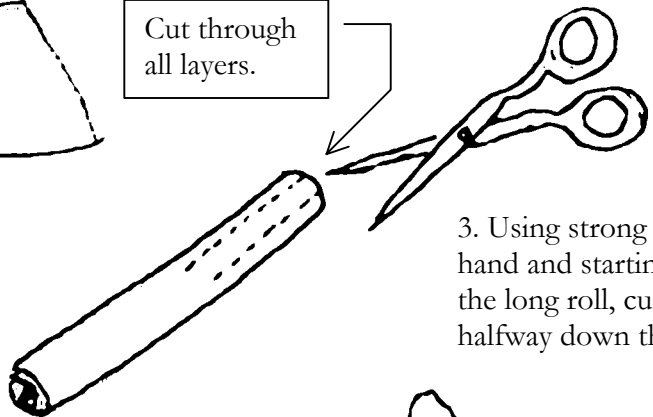


1. Lay three double page sheets of a newspaper on the table or floor, overlapping them as illustrated.



2. Starting with the edges, roll the newspapers up so that you have a roll about 3 inches wide.

Cut through all layers.



3. Using strong scissors or by hand and starting at one end of the long roll, cut 2 lines almost halfway down the roll.



4. Gently pull one strip in the center of the roll out of the roll, twisting slightly as you pull, and watch the tree "grow."

Don't hold too tightly!



5. Tape the newspaper edges at the base of the tree to prevent it from unraveling.

Resource Page for Activity 5

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

**Activity 5: Questions for Parents and Other Important People**

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The children's prosperity in this world and the Kingdom depends upon the good pleasure of parents, and without this they will be in manifest loss.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, cited in *A Compilation on Bahá'í Education* (1976), p. 39, no. 91

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1. What are some things that make you happy?

2. What are some of those things that I do that make you happy?

3. Can you think of a time that my actions pleased you? Please tell me the story. What was I doing? Who else was involved? What happened after that?

Thank you very much.

Resource Page for Activity 6

Honor thy father and  
thy mother.

The Bible, Deuteronomy 5:16

Honor thy father and  
thy mother.

The Bible, Deuteronomy 5:16

Thy Lord hath decreed  
that ye worship none  
save Him, and (that ye  
show) kindness to  
parents.

Qurán, Surah 17

Thy Lord hath decreed  
that ye worship none  
save Him, and (that ye  
show) kindness to  
parents.

Qurán, Surah 17

...greater than all, after  
recognition of the unity of  
God, praised and glorified  
be He, is regard for the  
rights that are due to  
one's parents.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 139

...greater than all, after  
recognition of the unity of  
God, praised and glorified  
be He, is regard for the  
rights that are due to  
one's parents.

Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 139



## Story for Activity 7: Kindness to Animals

One day a pilgrim brought a rock sugar cone (in those days it was popular to press sugar into a large cone-shaped piece which would then be broken into lumps for consumption) for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. . . .

[Khalíl] made a portion for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and offered it to the Master. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took a piece, gave it to Khalíl and asked him to break it into four pieces.

Khalíl looked bewildered. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “Khalíl, there is a mouse in this room. I want these pieces for the mouse. This one is its share. Haven’t you seen it? It is a pretty white mouse.”

*Sweet and Enchanting Stories*, compiled by Aziz Rohani, p. 23  
Used with permission.

Activity 7

# If An Animal

Words: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p 159

Music: Joe Crone

Voice

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff in common time (C). It consists of five lines of music. The first line is an 'Intro' with four measures of chords: C, G, C, and C. The second line starts at measure 5 and has four measures of chords: C, G, C, and F. The third line starts at measure 9 and has four measures of chords: G, C, C, and F. The fourth line starts at measure 13 and has four measures of chords: C, G, C, and F. The fifth line starts at measure 17 and has three measures of chords: C, G7, and C. The lyrics are: 'If an an-i-mal be sick, let the child-ren try to heal it, if it be hun-gry, let them feed it, if thirst-y, let them quench its thirst, if wear-y, let them see that it rests. If an an-i-mal be sick, let the child-ren try to heal it, if it be hun-gry, let them feed it, if thirst-y, let them quench its thirst, if wear - y, let them see that it \_\_\_\_\_'.

Intro C G C C F

5 C G C F

9 G C C F

13 C G C F

17 C G7 C

If an an-i-mal be sick, let the child-ren try to heal it,  
if it be hun-gry, let them feed it, if thirst-y, let them quench its thirst, if  
wear-y, let them see that it rests. If an an-i-mal be sick, let the child-ren try to heal it,  
if it be hun-gry, let them feed it, if thirst-y, let them quench its thirst, if  
wear - y, let them see that it \_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 8: Animals Have Needs But No Voice**

## The Gardener's Dog

One of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's gardeners had a dog. One day, the gardener decided to punish the dog by keeping it in a room for the whole night without any food, because of something the dog had done. The next day, at dawn, when the gardener was still asleep, 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to his house. The gardener woke up suddenly and bowed down respectfully in front of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked him why he had punished the dog and had not given it food. "Don't you know that it is a sin to hurt the animals and we should never harm them? Hurry up and feed the animal." The gardener immediately opened the door of the room where the dog was imprisoned and freed it. The dog came out and lay at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's feet. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked the gardener what he had in the house to give to the dog. The gardener said he had nothing except for sugar cubes. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked for some and gave them to the dog. The dog was so hungry that it swallowed the sugar cubes and rubbed itself on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's feet. 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the gardener to prepare some food for the poor dog and to never punish it in that way again.

*A.A. Furutan, Babá'í Education for Children: Book One, pp. 42–48*  
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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star:*

MJ 92	Bahá'í Kids in Action, p. 13	JA 01	A Year of Service for Bahá'u'lláh, p. 6
SO 93	Bahá'í Youth Service Corps, p. 26	JF 02	Deeds, Not Words, p. 25
JF 93	Golden Rule Service Club, p. 6	JF 02	Service, p. 25
MJ 95	Just Open the Door, p. 2	JF 03	Wayne & Wilma: Snowy Service, p. 20
MJ 95	A Life of Service, p. 10	MJ 05	Balancing Act, p. 8
ND 00	Do u Want to Serve the Faith?, p. 22		

*Stories of the Greatest Holy Leaf*, Jacqueline Mehrabi, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, London, 1997  
*He Loved and Served: The Story of Curtis Kelsey*, Nathan Rutstein, George Ronald, Oxford, 1982  
*To Serve the Covenant: Fundamental Verities*, Course 5, National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, 2003  
*A Love Which Does Not Wait*, Janet Ruhe-Schoen, Palabra Publications, 1998  
*Walking Together on a Path of Service: Book 7*, Ruhi Institute, Palabra Publications, 2001

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star:*

MJ 91	Hidden Helpers, p. 30
JF 00	Hidden Picture: World of Service, p. 10

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star:*

SO 91	Super Server's Badge, p. 2	JF 03	Helping Hands Relay p. 23
SO 94	Paths of Service, p. 15	JF 03	Service is Prayer, p. 23
MJ 95	Helping Hands, p. 14	JF 03	Service Riddles, p. 25
SO 95	Service Plan, p. 28	JF 03	Chameleon Crossword, p. 28
MJ 96	Go Serve, p. 10	JF 03	Service Scramble, p. 29
MJ 96	Servant, p. 20	JF 05	Circle of Service, p. 29
JA 97	Create ServANTS, p. 12	MJ 05	Stuart Sustainable, p. 4
SE 99	Secret Servants, p. 10	MJ 05	Lightening and Luna: Masks Off, p. 14
JA 02	Spirit of Service, p. 7	MJ 05	Which of the Two Are U?, p. 16
JF 03	Your Service, p. 8	MJ 05	Creative Cartography, p. 17
JF 03	Clean-Up Day Dilemma, p. 9	MJ 05	Let the Sun Shine In, p. 18
F 03	Pathway of Service, p. 14	MJ 05	Stuart's Solar Oven, p. 9
JF 03	Service Starfish or Selfish Shrimp, p. 21	MJ 05	A Tale of Two Giants, p. 22
		MJ 05	Chameleon Crossword, p. 28

**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](http://www.core-curriculum.org).