



Lessons for Young Children

Preschool

Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education®

Oneness of Religion

Oneness of Humanity

Bahá'u'lláh

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Shoghi Effendi

The Greatest Holy Leaf

The Nineteen Day Feast and Bahá'í Holy Days

Prepared by the National Bahá'í Education Task Force
under the direction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States

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Dear Parents and Teachers,

As we introduce these lessons for young children, ages 3–5, we're confident that your genuine loving-kindness in offering these lessons, teaching children prayers, and introducing spiritual concepts, will bring joy both to them and to you. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us:

These children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.

Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 139

These lessons on the Oneness of Religion, Oneness of Humanity, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Greatest Holy Leaf, and Shoghi Effendi draw the hearts and minds of young children to their Creator and help them begin to realize their own capabilities for service. When they learn to appreciate the truths that all people are created by the same All-Loving Creator and that they can help make the world better through their own loving actions, the goals of this program are achieved.

Parents and teachers in a wide variety of locations have enjoyed using these lessons with small groups of children in their own homes. While the content of these lessons has been designed for children of about 4 years of age, we trust that you will adjust the lessons according to the capacities, capabilities, and interests of the children you teach.

The lessons include prayers, songs, stories, simple crafts and games, and opportunities to practice spiritual qualities both in class and at home. Each lesson includes something new. Each lesson also repeats some important concepts so that young children may learn them well. These lessons provide a foundation for the deeper understanding that children will develop as they mature.

You will see that the lessons include lists of materials and a suggested time for each activity. The suggested times and materials for each activity are simply that— suggestions about the amount of time and the sorts of materials that a small group of children may use to complete that activity.

The Power of Example

'Abdu'l-Bahá's encourages, "Be thou a teacher of love, in a school of unity." Your genuine love is the key to attracting the hearts of your young students and bringing them closer to the love of God and each other.

Lessons from Nature

As many lessons in this book draw on materials from nature, we hope that you will find a way to create these experiences in your locality. Whether you're in a city, town, or countryside, and whether it is hot, cold, wet, or dry, children benefit from the opportunity to learn spiritual lessons from the world of nature.

Icons

This book introduces a series of simple images to provide a quick reference to the type of activity. The lessons include prayers, songs, stories, activities, pieces for memorization, exploration of spiritual qualities, and practice of those spiritual qualities. The following icons are used to indicate these activities:



Prayer



Song



Story



Activity



Spiritual
Quality



Memorization



Practice

These lessons form part of the **Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education**, a comprehensive spiritual education curriculum with lessons for children, youth, and adults, as well as training for teachers, parents, and others. You can learn more about the Core Curriculum on the website www.core-curriculum.org. New materials, including additional full color illustrated storybooks, will be announced periodically on this website.

We pray for your success in your work for the spiritual education of these dear young children, the most precious treasure in every community.

With loving greetings,

The National Bahá'í Education
Task Force

Acknowledgments

Since 1988 parents, teachers, and many others have contributed lessons, activities, stories, songs, and visual art to create, refine, and gradually develop this curriculum and related materials. This Lesson Planning Guide draws upon these materials and integrates them into the Core Curriculum learning framework. In addition, we are deeply grateful for the contributions of Gloria Abrar, Ernestine Atkins, Barbara Gholar, Janice Gholar, Katherine Johnson, Naimeh Lawrence, Daun Margin, Munirih Moore, Cindy Pacileo, Corinne Taborn, Mary Wilson, Carolyn Yuille, James Yuille, Ruihyiyh Yuille, and many others.

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The Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education

Bahá'u'lláh writes:

Strain every nerve to acquire both inner and outer perfections, for the fruit of the human tree hath ever been and will ever be perfections both within and without. It is not desirable that a man be left without knowledge or skills, for he is then but a barren tree. Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must deck the tree of being with fruits such as **knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception, and eloquent speech.**

Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Education*, no. 9, p. 3

This brief quotation inspires the flow of activities in these Core Curriculum lessons for young children, designed to engage our their hearts and minds, and begin to develop their capabilities for the following:

Knowledge

To become informed of the sacred writings on a spiritual principle;

Wisdom

To begin to understand a spiritual principle;

Spiritual Perception

To reflect on a spiritual principle and what it might mean in their own lives;

Eloquent Speech

To show the spiritual principle through words and actions.

The Bahá'í writings compiled in the book, *Foundations for a Spiritual Education*, outline the purpose, process, content, outcomes, and organizational principles for a spiritual education curriculum open to all.

The Content of the Curriculum

That which is of paramount importance for the children, that which must precede all else, is to teach them the oneness of God and the Laws of God.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Bahá'í Education*, no. 14, p. 3

Following this exhortation of Bahá'u'lláh, the content of the Core Curriculum is organized into three major categories of study: The **Central Figures** of the Faith, The **Principle of Oneness**, The **World Order of Bahá'u'lláh**. These lessons for young children include topics for each of these main content areas.

The same content is developed at a more advanced level in the Lesson Planning Guides and storybooks for older children and junior youth. There are also courses for youth and adults. These materials are available on the Core Curriculum website, www.core-curriculum.org, and from the U. S. Bahá'í Distribution Service, www.bahai bookstore.com, 1-800-999-9019.



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