

A. A. Furútan

Bahá'í Education for Children

Book 2

"...for when the bough is green and tender
it will grow in whatever way ye train it."

A Teacher's Guide
For Children 7 Years Old



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**For children
7 years old**

A Teacher's Guide

by A. A. Furútan

**Bahá'í Publishing Trust
South Africa**

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Teaching and learning, according to the
decisive texts of the Blessed Beauty, is a duty.
Whosoever is indifferent therein depriveth
himself of the great bounty.¹

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Foreword

Bahá'í education for children is one of the most important lines of action for the consolidation of the Bahá'í communities. Through children's education, the whole community can gradually be transformed. Observing the great need for a systematic approach to this task, some fifty years ago Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan developed a set of 13 books for the Bahá'í education of children. The books were written in the Persian language for use in the Bahá'í communities in Írán (Persia) and were known as the *Kitáb-i-Dars-i-Akhlagh* (*Books for Moral Education*). The set included 12 books for children aged 5 to 16–18 and a *Teacher's Manual* on the principles of Bahá'í education.

An administrative system was put in place by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán to assist generations of Bahá'í children to attend these classes, first as students, and later on in their youth and adulthood, as teachers. Availability of these materials and the efforts of various institutions of the Faith and parents to systematically follow up the progress and assist Bahá'í communities to hold children's classes made children's education a vital activity in almost every Bahá'í community in Írán.

Inspired by the spirit of the Four-Year Plan and the need for the systematisation of human resource development, a group of Bahá'í friends in Zambia decided to translate these books into English for possible use by interested national communities. It was obvious from the outset that the books needed not only to be translated but adapted in many instances. With the full permission of Mr. Furútan, the adaptation and changes made in the books include information on the update of the progress of the Faith, modifications based on cultural considerations and the addition of new topics. We are very grateful to Mr. Furútan for his kind permission to make these changes.

We are also thankful to the friends who translated the books for their interest and hard work. May their meritorious service be crowned with the bounty of the acceptance of the Blessed Beauty.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Zambia

Lusaka, June 1998

Note on South African Edition

In preparing this edition, an attempt has been made to carry on the work of improving these books, by making corrections to the text, and reviewing some of the stories in the light of versions already published in the West.

Some of the laws mentioned in the lessons are not yet applicable to all Bahá'ís. There is no harm in teaching these to children, who can be told they will apply at a time in the future when the Universal House of Justice notifies the Friends. Such laws are indicated as 'not yet universally binding' in the lessons.

Editor

Introduction

1 Book 2 is for teachers and is based on the concept of dialogue and discussion with the children. The content of each lesson is given as a guide, and teachers should feel free to add and subtract on the basis of their own experience. In other words, teachers can complement the contents of this book with similar topics as long as the essence of the teachings of the Faith is not lost in the process.

2 Spiritual and moral subjects are best conveyed to the children through dialogue and consultation. This is an effective system of strengthening the spiritual awareness of children, as through it their pure and sensitive hearts can be touched. Children (as well as adults) enjoy listening to stories. Teachers should explain various subjects in a simple but concise manner, complemented with tender and heart-warming examples and stories. In this way, children will grow to appreciate, and see the need for, good manners and acceptable ways of expression and will grow to dislike bad manners.

The Messengers of God in the past often presented spiritual concepts in the form of stories and examples. It is said of Jesus in the Bible, “He used parables to tell them many things.” (Matthew 13: 3) In the Qur’án too, many subjects have been revealed in the form of stories and examples. In this age, even though humanity has become more mature, the Blessed Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) has given messages through examples such as the following, found in one of His prayers:

I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love, and caused to spring forth by the hand of Thy bounty. This seed craveth, therefore, in its inmost being, for the waters of Thy mercy and the living fountain of Thy grace. Send down upon it, from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness, that which will enable it to flourish beneath Thy shadow and within the borders of Thy court. Thou art He Who watereth

the hearts of all that have recognized Thee from Thy
plenteous stream and the fountain of Thy living waters.
Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds.²

Bahá'u'lláh

Stories and examples therefore play a major role in helping children to have a better understanding of spiritual concepts. Teachers should take full advantage of this approach and assist the children to understand various concepts through the use of stories. Education is effective only when it penetrates the soul of the child, and using soul-stirring stories is one of the best approaches to accomplish this. This is why many authors write stories for children, often conveying moral issues while entertaining at the same time. Teachers, considering the needs of the students, should research and identify appropriate stories from the history of the Faith and from Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í writers. However, teachers should bear in mind that not all children enjoy the same type of story. Some enjoy funny stories while others enjoy sad ones. Girls may have a different taste for stories than boys. Whatever the case may be, teachers are in the best position to identify these needs and choose stories accordingly. The underlying factor in the selection process, however, must be to convey the spirit of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh to the children.

3 Songs (Bahá'í and other moral songs) are also effective tools for strengthening the tender feelings of children. Teachers should always be conscious of the level of interest the students show in the songs and make every effort to maintain their interest by teaching songs that the children appreciate.

4 As stated in the introduction to Book 1, great emphasis must be placed on the spiritual atmosphere and the sense of reverence and respect shown when saying prayers. This will instil in the children from an early age the concept of prayers being “conversation with God”³, and therefore the greatest respect must be shown.

5 Plays and drama are other tools to keep children's attention. The play included in this book is written in a simple way to enable the children to act in the play with little difficulty.

6 In order for teachers to become familiar with their students, it is advisable for them to visit each student's home and get to know the parents and the setting in which they are living. This may also enable the teacher to assist the parents in their child's upbringing, should there be a need and the situation allow.

7 Teachers must show the utmost respect towards their students. Children are sensitive at this age, and the treatment they receive from their teachers may become their own measure for treating others in life.

8 The dialogue and discussion period should be such as to attract and maintain the attention of the students. Teachers should ensure that the students find the discussion interesting and willingly take part in it. The discussion period should normally not last more than half an hour at any one time.

9 Teachers should ensure that they review all lessons prior to going to the class and that they have also studied the *Teacher's Manual*.

A. A. Furútan

Format of a Typical Lesson

Each children's lesson will follow basically the same format. It is helpful for children to be in a structured and familiar environment. They will soon learn the format of the class and will look forward to each part of it. The class will begin with prayers. Then the teacher and children will review what was learned in the previous class. There is a brief break after the review, which includes songs, games, and an opportunity for the teacher to register the students. Following the break, the new lesson will be presented, usually with a brief explanation, a story, and sometimes a quotation or prayer to learn. If the teacher has materials for the children to use, they may then draw and colour pictures related to the lesson. The class will close with a prayer, and then a final suggestion from the teacher, asking the children to do something specific at home. Below is a more detailed description of each part of the class.

1 Opening prayer – Each lesson should begin with an opening prayer. One of the students or the teacher may say a prayer to start the lesson. If more than one student would like to say a prayer, this would also be acceptable, as it is good to encourage the children to do this. If they all know the same prayer, however, this is not the time for each of them to recite it. That can be done later as a class activity.

2 Review of previous lesson – Except for the first two lessons, each lesson will begin by reviewing what was learned in the previous class. The teacher can ask questions to give the children a chance to recall what they have learned.

3 Break: songs, games, stories, student registration and children's cleanliness – After the review, the children will enjoy singing and learning new songs and playing games.

Songs – Children should be encouraged to learn Bahá'í songs. If the teacher knows how to play a guitar or a local musical instrument, this will add to the joyful atmosphere

of the class. Members of the community who play musical instruments may also be invited to play for the children.

Games – If the location and the environment are suitable for simple games, the teacher may play with the children; this will help them not to become bored. Games are already included with each lesson in these materials. Of course, if there is another game that the children enjoy, you should feel free to use it. Choose games that are suitable to the children's age and the environment. Games should be played under the teacher's supervision. If the environment is not suitable for this purpose, the children can be asked to have a break and rest, with the teacher lovingly, patiently and firmly ensuring that they maintain acceptable behaviour.

Stories – The children should also be told stories. The teacher should try to tell the children, whenever appropriate, interesting stories with positive and spiritual morals. Other members of the community can also be invited to the class for the same purpose. Tapes of interesting stories can be played at times.

Student registration – The teacher should take advantage of the break time to register the students in a notebook specially prepared and maintained for this purpose. The teacher can ask the children to listen for their names. When the teacher calls a child's name, the child can stand up to show that he or she is present. When the teacher notices one of the students has not attended for more than one or two sessions, he or she may enquire from the others and from the student's parents, and may help, if possible, to encourage the student to attend regularly.

Children's cleanliness – Another objective of the break time is for the teacher to see if all the students have paid sufficient attention to being clean. Undoubtedly, this must be done with utmost love, kindness and patience, and without any student feeling, in the slightest way, that he or she is being inspected for cleanliness. The teacher, lovingly and kindly,

tries to look closely at the children to see if any one of them has neglected this important matter. Should it be necessary, the teacher may, without addressing any one given child, initiate a discussion in which the importance of cleanliness and the disadvantages of uncleanness are explained to them.

4 New lesson, story or memorization – This is the new material presented during the lesson. It may be a story that the teacher tells to the children, or a prayer for the children to memorize. There is even a lesson where the children will learn a play during this part of class. Remember that stories should be told in ways that make them interesting to the children. The teacher should learn the story before telling it.

5 Drawing and colouring pictures (if material is available) – Children enjoy drawing and colouring and this should be encouraged whenever possible. A picture can be included with each lesson of the course. If the teacher has paper and colouring materials, he or she may trace the pictures for the children to colour. The parents and the Bahá'í community may be able to contribute such items or help raise funds to buy them.

6 Closing prayer – Each class will end with a closing prayer. It is good to encourage the children to say a prayer. However, if none of them knows one, the teacher may say one. Also, the teacher should lovingly remind the children how to behave when prayers are being said. They should be still and listen quietly and attentively.

7 Teacher's suggestion for the week – Before the children leave, the teacher will remind them of what they have learned and will ask them to do something at home. The teacher may ask them simply to think about what they have learned, or to tell the story they have heard in class to their family, or to practise the prayer they are memorizing, or practise being clean, and so on.

1 Getting to Know the Children: Review of Lessons 1, 2, 5 and 6 from Book 1

1.1 Opening Prayer

As many students as possible should recite the prayers they learned from Book 1:

O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp
and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.⁴
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God! O Divine providence, shed a ray from the Sun
of Truth upon this gathering that it may become illumined.⁵
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

1.2 Getting to Know the Students

If the teacher does not know all the students through previous association from Year 1, he should make the effort to get to know them, following the procedures set out in Book 1. If the teacher already knows the students, after expressing the joy of having the chance to be with them, for the second year, he may begin the discussions. If there are just a few students who have not been in his or her class in Year 1, the teacher should make every effort to get to know them as the situation allows.

1.3 Reviewing Lessons 1, 2, 5 and 6 from Book 1

We learned the following lessons in Book 1:

- Use of the Bahá’í greeting: Alláh-u-Abhá
- Cleanliness
- Kindness to animals

Here is one way to begin the discussion with the children:

“Dear children, how many years have you been attending children’s classes? That is correct, one year.”

“Which class did you attend last year? That is correct, Year 1.”

“I will give you a few minutes to think about what you learned last year so that we can talk about it together.”

Note: It is important to allow the children to think deeply about the subjects they have learned. This should be done in a quiet atmosphere in order to encourage the children to think and meditate.

After the children have been given time to think about the lessons they learned in the previous year, the teacher should encourage them to express their thoughts. Following this the teacher should ask questions and encourage a discussion about the three topics learned in Book 1 (see above).

1.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson” on pages 4 to 6.

1.5 Review of the First Song from Book 1

The children can sing the song “People of Bahá” which they learned in Book 1.

1.6 Closing Prayer

Ask one of the students to recite the first prayer from Book 1:

O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp
and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

1.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Please send my regards to your parents. Try to be clean at all times and to be kind to animals.”

2 Review of Lessons 2, 8 and 9 from Book 1

2.1 Opening Prayer

One of the students is asked to recite the prayer from Book 1, Lesson 11:

He is God! O Divine providence, shed a ray from the Sun of Truth upon this gathering that it may become illumined.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

2.2 Review of Lessons 2, 8 and 9 from Book 1

Cleanliness

2.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson” on pages 4 to 6.

2.4 Closing Prayer

Ask one of the students to recite the second prayer from Book 1:

He is God! O Divine providence, shed a ray from the Sun of Truth upon this gathering that it may become illumined.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

2.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, remember what we have learned about cleanliness and always try to be neat and clean.”

3 Review of Lessons 13 and 17 from Book 1

3.1 Opening Prayer

Ask one of the students to recite the first prayer from the previous year:

O God, guide me, protect me . . .

3.2 Review of Lessons 13 and 17 from Book 1

Cleanliness

3.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson" on pages 4 to 6.

3.4 Games

Students may play the game "Cat and Mouse" (from Lesson 2 in Book 1)

3.5 Closing Prayer

One of the students may recite from memory the second prayer from Book 1:

He is God! O Divine providence, shed a ray from the . . .

3.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, we have been learning so much about the importance of cleanliness. Do your best to be clean at all times."

4 Review of Lessons 6 and 7 from Book 1

4.1 Opening Prayer

Students should start a rotation where they, in turn, say one prayer each lesson.

4.2 Review of Lessons 6 and 7 from Book 1:

Kindness to Animals

Obedience to Parents

4.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

4.4 Review of the Second Song from Book 1

The children can sing the song "Love, love, love" which they learned in Book 1.

4.5 Closing Prayer

One of the students may recite a prayer from memory.

4.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, remember God loves to see children obey their parents. God also loves to see us being kind to everyone and even to animals. Remember and practise this."

5 What is a Bahá'í?

5.1 Opening Prayer

5.2 Discussion

We are called Bahá'ís because we have received and accepted the wonderful Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.⁶

Here is one way of starting the discussion:

“Dear children, I would like to ask you a few questions. Please pay special attention. You know that we are Bahá'ís, and that we are called Bahá'ís. Do you know why we are called Bahá'ís? Think about this and share your thoughts with me.”

After a few minutes

“Those with an answer please raise your hands and share your answer with everyone.”

The teacher may ask one of the students to share his or her views. If none of the students can give a satisfactory answer, the teacher may extend the discussion as follows:

“You know that there are people in our community who are called Christians. Why do you think they are called Christians? Those who believe in Christ are called Christians; that is, they are the followers of Christ. Each religion is known by the name of its Messenger. A Buddhist is a follower of Buddha. A Zoroastrian is a follower of Zoroaster. So what are the followers of Muḥammad known as? That’s right, they are known as Muslims. Is this understood, dear children?”

“Now, we are called Bahá'ís because we believe in Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh has brought us the Message of God for today, to guide us to the right path. We are called Bahá'ís because we are followers of Bahá'u'lláh. So if someone asks you why you are

called a Bahá'í, what would you answer? You would say we are called Bahá'ís because we believe in Bahá'u'lláh.

“Dear children, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (I am sure you have heard His name) explains what it means to be a Bahá'í:

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.

If someone asks you what it means to be a Bahá'í, you may tell them:

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.”

The teacher should ask some of the students to repeat this wonderful quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The teacher should then turn to the entire class and ask them to repeat the quotation.

“So, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.

Dear children, please memorize this quotation well.”

5.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

5.4 Closing Prayer

5.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

The teacher may remind the students that they should remember the wonderful quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and may ask them to memorize it. The teacher may also mention that, as Bahá'í children, they are expected to excel in their behaviour.

6 Review of Lesson 5

6.1 Opening Prayer

6.2 Discussion

Review of Lesson 5.

6.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

6.4 Closing Prayer

6.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, if you have not yet memorized the quotation,

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.

please do so this week."

7 Unity

7.1 Opening Prayer

7.2 Discussion

Bahá'u'lláh says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.
Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.⁷

Here is one way of starting the discussion:

“Dear children, I am sure you have noticed that various churches exist in your community. Some people belong to the Catholic Church, others to the Anglican Church, or to the Methodist Church. [The teacher should give examples of churches familiar to the children.] Some people are Muslim but others are Hindu or Buddhist. Members of these churches all belong to the same community, but every Saturday or Sunday (Muslims on Fridays) they attend different churches. If you talk to followers of each church and ask them which church one should attend, they say that theirs is the best! In fact some churches consider those in other churches as lost souls, but they all say that they believe in God through their prophet. You may find that sometimes there is no love and unity between people of different churches and religions. Sometimes people even fight in the name of religion.

“Bahá'u'lláh came to change all this. He came to unite followers of all religions. He says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.
Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

“As Bahá'ís we should always remember this quotation. Let us memorize it. The purpose of religion is to bring unity, not division, amongst humanity, to teach humanity to love one another, to work together and to serve each other.

“Let me tell you how some animals are kind to each other and

assist one another. Here is the story of how bees live together in harmony, and how they serve each other.

“live together in groups and all obey the queen bee. There can be as many as 30 000 bees living together as one group. They make their homes (called hives) in places such as trees or holes in walls. To make their homes, the bees use wax to make compartments. The queen bee then lays an egg in each compartment. After a few days, the eggs hatch and larvae (young bees) are born, ready to start feeding immediately. The ‘worker’ bees, whose job is to prepare food for the larvae, bring honey to them. The larvae eat the honey and grow. After eight days, using its own saliva, each larva makes a sac around itself and hides. The ‘worker’ bees make the sacs waterproof and the larvae spend another ten days in this protected environment until they grow up fully and develop wings, a head, hair, and so on. Once fully grown, the young bees come out of their sacs, make a hole in the compartment and start to fly. At this time the queen bee tells the others that these young bees are inexperienced and cannot make hives for themselves. ‘We should leave this one for them and move to a new place where we can build ourselves a new hive.’ The bees obey and fly away to begin building their new hive, leaving the existing one for the young bees.

“In the same way ants live a very co-operative life. There is a story about a person who saw a group of ants trying to carry the wing of a butterfly to their nest. One ant was pulling the wing while the others were pushing it from behind. The entrance to the nest was very small, and it was difficult to get the large wing in. After a while, one of the ants went in to invite other ants to come out and help. Soon many ants came out and began to widen the entrance to the nest and, sure enough, in no time the butterfly wing was taken into the hole.

“See how much animals care for each other. If animals can be so kind, human beings are able to be much more caring about each other.”

Bahá'u'lláh says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.
Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

Note:

Relating similar stories from the lives of animals (based on science) will help the young children to appreciate the need for co-operation, harmony and unity. Teachers should prepare more stories of this nature for the students.

7.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

7.4 Closing Prayer

7.5 Summary

The teacher may summarize what was discussed during the class.

7.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, when you go home, look and see if you can find some ants living together and helping each other. Tell your parents about the bees and the ants and the importance of working together."

8 Review of Lesson 7

8.1 Opening Prayer

8.2 Discussion

To bring about unity we need to learn about kindness. Here is a story about kindness to others:

Story: Kindness to One Another:

Two travellers spent the night in a village. In the middle of the night they heard people shouting, “Help! There is a house on fire! Help!” One of the travellers got up to see if he could help. His friend said, “Where are you going? We are only visitors here. There are many other people in the village who can help.” The first traveller ignored his friend’s advice and said, “If your house was on fire, would you not want others to come and help you?” And he left the room to help put out the fire.

He saw a house in flames. A woman stood crying, saying, “My children are burning inside the house.” The traveller ran into the house, and the people standing outside thought that he would surely burn. A short time later the crowd saw the man running out of the house, with his clothes on fire, holding the two children. The crowd came to his assistance and put out the fire. The mother was very happy and held her children, kissed them and thanked God for His mercy. She also thanked the traveller for risking his life to save her children.

Now the teacher should encourage the children to discuss the actions of the two men. Which one of them showed that he was a lover of humanity?

8.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

8.4 Closing Prayer

8.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, this week think about the story we heard today and try to find ways in which you can help others.”

9 *Oneness of Religions Play*

9.1 Opening Prayer

9.2 Learning the *Oneness of Religions Play*

A play in three acts

Note: This play is written in a simple way so that all the children can take part in it. Some parts may be difficult for the children; since there is nearly a year for them to practise, there is plenty of time for all the children to learn their parts.

Act One

The scene: There is an open area on the stage where children are in three separate rows, each representing a different religion. One child, who is the preacher of that religion, stands in front of each row. If possible the children can carry flags which show their religion. On the flags may be written "Followers of Christ", "Followers of Moses", "Followers of Muḥammad". In front of the stage, there hangs a banner with the words "THE WORLD BEFORE BAHÁ'U'LLÁH".

As the play starts, the preacher in front of each row begins to speak to his followers.

JEWISH PREACHER: Praise God that we are followers of Moses. The Lord of the Jews has given us many blessings. We are the Chosen Ones, and the land of milk and honey is ours. God loves us. We should give thanks to the Lord of the Jews that we are the followers of Moses and follow the laws of our Holy Book, the Torah. Praise the Lord!

JEWS: Praise God that we Jews have been blessed with our Holy Book, the Torah. Praise God that we Jews are righteous people, living in the land of our forefather King Solomon. We are God's Chosen People and we are saved from God's punishment.

CHRISTIAN PREACHER: Praise God that we are followers of Jesus. The heavenly Father has saved us and freed us from

sin. Jesus is the only Saviour. Jesus died on the cross for us. There is no salvation for people who are not Christians. Unbelievers will burn in hell. Praise our Lord Jesus Christ for saving us. He is with us always. Amen.

CHRISTIANS: Praise God that we Christians have been blessed with our Holy Book, the New Testament. Praise God that we Christians are righteous people who will go to heaven. Christ, the Saviour, has saved us from God's punishment.

MUSLIM PREACHER: Praise the One True God, Alláh, that we are the followers of Muḥammad and friends of Alláh. Muḥammad is the Seal of the Prophets. Muḥammad will save and protect us. Unbelievers are lost and will burn in hell. We are happy to be among the faithful.

MUSLIMS: Praise God that we Muslims have been blessed with the Holy Book, the Qur'án. Praise God that we Muslims are righteous people who will go to paradise. We are followers of Alláh, the one True God. Therefore we are saved from God's punishment.

End of Act One

Act Two

The scene: The stage is similar to that of Act One but the banner is now changed to read, "THE CALL OF GOD". The different groups are in the same places as in Act One.

From behind the stage the following can be heard, recited in a beautiful voice:

Rejoice; rejoice for a new day has dawned,
The whole wide world is all one fold.
Rejoice, rejoice for a new day has dawned,
The plan of God has now been told.
The Promised One by the name of Bahá,
Came to bring a new day.
Let us be happy, let us say, Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá,
Say: Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá. [*twice*]

A child now enters the stage carrying a sign “Bahá’í” and says:

BAHÁ’Í: O people of the world! We are all human beings. We are all servants of One God, the God of Justice. We are all brothers and sisters. We are all one family. O people, have you heard that the Promised One, Bahá’u’lláh, has come, inviting us all to live in unity and harmony? Why should there be this separation and division? God created us all. We are all from the same race. Let us listen to the words of Bahá’u’lláh. He says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

Investigate and accept the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh and let us be united. Remember what Bahá’u’lláh has revealed:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

ALL [*nodding in agreement*]: Yes, yes. This is true. I believe this.

End of Act Two

Act Three

The scene: The followers of the different religions have now formed a semicircle. The banner now reads: “THE WORLD AFTER BAHÁ’U’LLÁH”.

The Bahá’í child begins to speak:

BAHÁ’Í: Each religion says that they are right, and that the others are wrong. Either all of them are right or all of them are wrong. If they are all wrong, then there is no truth, and if they are all right then the Bahá’ís speak the truth.

O followers of the different religions! If you look for the truth with pure hearts, you will enter the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh, and you will live together, hand in hand, with utmost friend-

ship and love. Are you looking for salvation? Will you accept the Truth?

ALL GROUPS TOGETHER: Let us listen to the Voice of God.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MUSLIMS: We have all been ignorant of the truth.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHRISTIANS: We have all been ignorant of the One True God. We were fighting with each other in the name of God.

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE JEWS: We always thought that we were God's Chosen People. The truth is now clear to us.

BAHÁ'Í: Praised be Bahá'u'lláh for showing us the right path. Praised be Bahá'u'lláh for setting us free from the darkness of ignorance.

ALL: Praise God that we can all be saved.

Praise God for eternal life.

We are all the followers of one great God,

We are all the soldiers of the army of love and unity.

BAHÁ'Í: Bahá'u'lláh says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

ALL:

Rejoice, rejoice for a new day has dawned,

The whole wide world is all one fold.

Rejoice, rejoice for a new day has dawned,

The plan of God has now been told.

The Promised One by the name of Bahá,

Came to bring a new day.

Let us be happy, let us say, Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá,

Say: Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá [*twice*]

The End

9.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

9.4 Closing Prayer

9.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, remember to love the followers of all religions and respect their beliefs.”

10 *Oneness of Religions Play* **(continued)**

10.1 Opening Prayer

10.2 Rehearsal of Last Week's Play

**10.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and
Children's Cleanliness**

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

10.4 Closing Prayer

10.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, please think about what we have learned in this play."

11 Some Laws of Bahá'u'lláh: Cleanliness

11.1 Opening Prayer

11.2 Discussion

This is one of the ways the discussion may begin:

“Dear children, we are Bahá'ís and followers of Bahá'u'lláh. We now need to know what Bahá'u'lláh wants us to do, so that He will be happy with us. It is not enough to believe in Bahá'u'lláh. We have to know His laws. A good Bahá'í accepts Bahá'u'lláh and follows His laws. So we need to know and understand Bahá'u'lláh's laws in order to know how to live.

“Bahá'u'lláh lived for seventy-four years on this earth and, for almost fifty of these years, He guided and educated the people. During these fifty years, He gave us many laws, which you will gradually learn. Every week we will learn one of His laws that is easy for us to follow. Once we learn a law, we have to do our best to follow it.

“One of Bahá'u'lláh's laws is to cut one's nails regularly. We should not allow our nails to grow long nor allow dirt to collect underneath them. We learned this law last year. This is a law from the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, the Most Holy Book. Every week before coming to the Bahá'í class we should check that our nails are short and clean.

“Another law of Bahá'u'lláh is to keep our bodies clean. We also discussed this last year. He says that our bodies should be clean at all times, and this means that we should take baths regularly.

“We have learned two of the laws (ordinances) of Bahá'u'lláh today. One is to keep our fingernails short and the other is to keep ourselves clean at all times. Please remember these two laws and follow them.”

11.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

11.4 Rehearsal of the Play

11.5 Closing Prayer

11.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, we talked about two of Bahá'u'lláh's laws today. One is to keep our fingernails short, and the other is to keep ourselves clean at all times. Please remember these two laws and follow them."

12 Some Laws of Bahá'u'lláh (continued)

12.1 Opening Prayer

12.2 Review of Laws from Lesson 11

12.3 Discussion

“Another one of Bahá'u'lláh's laws (ordinances) is to keep one's feet clean, that is to say, if regular bathing of the whole body is not possible for some reason, we should wash our feet at least every day. This matter is of great importance to one's health. Dirty feet also cause an odour (smell) which is unpleasant to everyone. Our body breathes through small pores in our skin. If the body becomes dirty, these pores can become blocked. When the body cannot breathe properly through these pores, our health is affected, and we have less energy. Feet become dirty more quickly than other parts of the body, and this is why Bahá'u'lláh has specifically told us to wash our feet regularly.

“Keeping our clothes clean at all times is another law of Bahá'u'lláh.”

The teacher should explain the importance of this matter to the children, using the Bahá'í Writings:

In the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Bahá'u'lláh says:

Wash ye every soiled thing with water . . . Be ye the very essence of cleanliness amongst mankind.⁸

In Note 167 on the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, it says,

The believers are exhorted in the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* to bathe regularly, to wear clean clothes and generally to be the essence of cleanliness and refinement.

12.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

12.5 Closing Prayer

12.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please remember how important it is to always keep clean.”

13 Some Laws of Bahá'u'lláh (continued)

13.1 Opening Prayers

13.2 Review of Lesson 12

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us:

And although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit.⁹

13.3 Discussion

“Another law of the Most Holy Book is not to plunge hands into bowls or platters when eating.* We should not take food from a communal bowl with our hands. It is also better to find a spoon, fork, or chopsticks to eat with, and we should wash our hands before eating. Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly tells us that a Bahá'í should be an example of cleanliness. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us:

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

By this statement ‘Abdu’l-Bahá means that if our body is clean, it helps the soul to be happy and joyous. When the body is dirty, the soul is not happy. This is why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us:

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

Students should memorize this quotation in the usual way.

13.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

13.5 Rehearsal of the *Oneness of Religions* Play

13.6 Closing Prayer

* Not yet universally binding

13.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, today we memorized a quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Please say it every day this week so that you can remember it easily.”

14 Always Telling the Truth

14.1 Opening Prayer

14.2 Review of Lesson 13

14.3 Discussion

“Bahá’u’lláh has also given us the law of truthfulness. Every Bahá’í must know and follow this law. Bahá’ís must always tell the truth, even when it is difficult. Bahá’u’lláh says:

Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning.¹⁰

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá also talked about the importance of speaking the truth. He said:

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.¹¹

(Ask the children to repeat this quotation until they have memorized it.)

“We must always tell the truth. This is the only way that the people of the world can begin to trust each other. Telling the truth is the foundation of the building of God’s Kingdom on earth. People who do not speak the truth are harming other people, harming the world and harming themselves.”

Story:

(Teachers may want to change names and situations according to their country.)

All night the rain had poured down, splattering the sides of the hut, making patterns of tiny rivers in the sandy ground of the village compound. Tendai woke up to the sweet smell of rain and the warm sun quickly drying the ground.

Tendai was a young, strong little boy, just like many of you. He loved to play and sing and be with his friends, but he did not find much time to do this. His father had chosen him to look after the family’s cattle.

Tendai woke up every morning, got dressed and ate some sweet potatoes [teacher to include common food of their area] before he went out

once again to herd the cattle from one kraal to the next and to make sure that all the cows were fine and safe and healthy.

Tendai was very proud of his job. He was very special to be chosen by his father to do this. Unfortunately Tendai found it difficult, hearing his friends fishing in the dam and singing as they helped their parents in the fields. Sometimes, the other children would laugh at him because he could not go to school.

One day, Tendai decided that he had had enough. His job was not much fun and he was lonely. He had moved the cows to graze near the fields where all the villagers were planting a crop of maize.

Tendai jumped up and smiling to himself, shouted with all his might: **“Help! Help! A big man is stealing my cows. Help!”**

The villagers far off in the distance heard his cries and threw down their hoes and seeds. They began running, as fast as they could towards Tendai. The men prepared to catch a very big thief.

When they arrived they saw Tendai standing with a big smile on his face, and all the cows were happily eating the fresh green grass. He laughed and laughed, telling everyone it was just a joke. The men and women shook their heads sadly. They did not smile and they returned to their gardens to finish their work.

The next day Tendai lay in the grass thinking how funny and clever he had been the day before. He decided it would be a very good idea to play the trick again. He was very bored, you know, and he needed some fun.

He jumped up and screamed: **“Help! There is a mad dog biting my cows! Help!”**

Once again the villagers rushed to rescue Tendai and the cows but this time they carried all their hoes as they ran, just in case they had to chase the mad dog away.

This time Tendai rolled in the grass laughing. **“Look, I have fooled you again!”** he said, laughing proudly.

No one said a word! They returned to their work and Tendai's mother and father looked very sad.

Tendai thought about what he had done and decided that it wasn't a very good idea. He decided never to do it again. He lay in the grass feeling sorry for the villagers but still proud of himself for his clever jokes.

Then do you know what happened?

A sound in the grass made Tendai sit up. He heard some growling, and all of a sudden the cows began to run. "Help!" Tendai screamed. "Help, the cows are running away!"

The villagers kept on hoeing their fields; Tendai's mother and father shook their heads. One of the women said, "That boy. I am tired of his making up stories." And then she bent over again and continued her work.

There was nothing Tendai could do; he was all alone and there was a strange dog chasing and biting the cows. His little legs were too short to catch up with the cows and he felt very scared of the dog. Soon all the cows were out of sight and he collapsed in the grass. He felt angry with the villagers for not coming to help him and he felt afraid to return home without the cows because that was all his family had.

Tendai cried and cried! He felt very angry with himself for his silly stories. "It is my own fault," he said to himself. "I should not have made up stories. I must always tell the truth otherwise I will always find myself in trouble like this."

Tendai walked home slowly with his head bowed down in shame. He walked straight to his grandfather's hut and knocked.

"Come in Tendai," said his grandfather, because he was expecting his grandson.

"Grandfather, I'm sorry!" Tendai sobbed, "I have learned my lesson. I will always tell the truth. I'm so sorry for what I have done."

"Tendai," his grandfather said, "I can see that you are feeling very bad. You have suffered a great punishment for your stories, and I am sure

more will come because the people of the village are very disappointed with you.”

The teacher should tell more stories to the students about the need to be truthful and the harm that lying can do. With more descriptions, and by giving examples, the children should be assisted to realize that they should always tell the truth, under all circumstances.

14.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

14.5 Closing Prayer

14.6 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children please remember that Bahá’ís must ALWAYS tell the truth. Lying is very bad and is totally unacceptable to God. God will not be happy with us if we do not tell the truth.”

15 Waking up Early in the Morning and Reciting Prayers

15.1 Opening Prayers

15.2 Review of Lesson 14

The teacher should review the lesson on telling the truth with the children and help them to memorize the quotation from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.

15.3 Discussion

“Dear children, we all know that God made day and God made night. Night-time is for sleeping, and daytime is for being happy, working, playing, serving, helping others and remembering our Creator. When the sun rises the world is very beautiful, it is fresh and quiet, only the birds can be heard singing; it is a perfect time to say our prayers. To rise with the sun, to wash our hands and face and say our prayers is something very special. It is much easier to pray first thing in the morning, before we become busy with other things.

“Sleeping in late is being lazy, and when we wake up, much time has been wasted. Don’t you think it is a beautiful idea to show our respect and love for God by thinking of Him first, before we do anything else? By doing this we prepare ourselves for a long, happy and productive day.

“We all know about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and how much everybody loved Him and wanted to be with Him. At one time a very lucky lady was able to make the long, long journey to meet Him. She journeyed all the way from America to Israel, across the whole world, to meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! When she arrived she wanted to do everything perfectly; she made sure she was clean and dressed nicely so that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be very happy, because we all know how much ‘Abdu’l-Bahá liked people to be clean and with good manners. One morning this lady woke up late by mistake. She

was very worried because she did not want to be late for breakfast with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Quickly she dressed, made her bed and ran out of her room to meet everyone for breakfast. Unfortunately, just outside her door she ran right into someone. She quickly said, ‘Sorry,’ and when she looked up, she was looking into the eyes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Can you guess what He said to her? The first thing He said was, ‘Always remember to take spiritual food before physical food!’ This means we must feed our spirits with prayer before we feed our stomachs with food! You see this woman had not had enough time to say her prayers; she had to run to eat breakfast because she had woken up late.

“It is very important to wake up early and say prayers before eating breakfast!

“Bahá’u’lláh says:

Blessed is he who, at the hour of dawn, centring his thoughts on God, occupied with His remembrance*, and supplicating† His forgiveness . . .¹²”

After the benefit of rising early in the morning and reciting prayers is repeated and understood by the children, the teacher should ask the students if they would like to be reminded of this. Every week the teacher can ask the students if they are getting up early to say prayers. The teacher should ensure that this habit is clear in the minds of the students. If this habit is developed early in the children, it will remain with them for the rest of their lives.

The following narrative may be shared with the students to help them think more about this:

“I am a second year student of Bahá’í Children’s Class. I wake up every morning at dawn, wash my face and hands, comb my hair, brush my teeth and, with total respect, begin my prayers. I know three prayers by heart, and every day I recite one. To wake up early is a good habit. When I say my prayers my soul feels happy. O how wonderful it is to wake early!”

* “occupied with His remembrance” means “saying prayers”

† “supplicating” means “asking”

15.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

15.5 Memorizing a Prayer

O my Lord! O my Lord!

I am a child of tender years. Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy, train me in the bosom of Thy love, educate me in the school of Thy guidance and develop me under the shadow of Thy bounty. Deliver me from darkness, make me a brilliant light; free me from unhappiness, make me a flower of the rose garden; suffer me to become a servant of Thy threshold and confer upon me the disposition and nature of the righteous; make me a cause of bounty to the human world, and crown my head with the diadem of eternal life.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Seer, the Hearer.¹³

'Abdu'l-Bahá

15.6 Closing Prayer

15.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, try to wake up very early in the morning so that you can say your prayers. If you find it difficult you might ask your parents to help you wake early."

16 Kindness to Animals

16.1 Opening Prayers

16.2 Discussion

“As you may recall, we discussed in Lesson 11, that Bahá’u’lláh lived in this world for seventy-four years. He guided the people of the world to God for almost fifty years and brought to us many teachings and laws. We have studied some of these laws in previous lessons and have tried to put them into action. Before He passed away, Bahá’u’lláh appointed His first-born son, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as the spiritual leader of the Bahá’ís. You have heard the name ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and may have seen His picture. Perhaps you have a picture of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in your house. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was called the Master. After the passing of Bahá’u’lláh, all the Bahá’ís followed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

“In the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Bahá’u’lláh advises us not to harm animals, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá specifically addressed this issue in many of His Tablets. He said that Bahá’ís should not hurt animals and that we should be kind to them. He says that harming animals is worse than harming human beings, because humans can express their grief and complain, but animals cannot.

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

Unless ye must,
Bruise not the serpent in the dust,
How much less wound a man.
And if ye can,
No ant should ye alarm,
Much less a brother harm.¹⁴

“By this, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá means that Bahá’ís should not harm even an ant, and, if at all possible, we should not even kill snakes. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá himself was very kind to animals and would not let anyone hurt animals.”

Unless ye must,
Bruise not the serpent in the dust,
How much less wound a man.
And if ye can,
No ant should ye alarm,
Much less a brother harm.

The children should try to memorize this quote.

“We should all try to be kind to animals.”

16.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

16.4 Review of Prayer Learned from Lesson 15

The teacher should help the children to remember the prayer they memorized last week:

O My Lord! O my Lord!

I am a child of tender years. Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy, train me in the bosom of Thy love, educate me in the school of Thy guidance and develop me under the shadow of Thy bounty. Deliver me from darkness, make me a brilliant light; free me from unhappiness, make me a flower of the rose garden; suffer me to become a servant of Thy threshold and confer upon me the disposition and nature of the righteous; make me a cause of bounty to the human world, and crown my head with the diadem of eternal life.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Seer, the Hearer.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá

16.5 Closing Prayer

16.6 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please always remember to be kind to animals.”

17 Review of Lesson 16

17.1 Opening Prayer

17.2 Review of Lesson 16

17.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson" on pages 4 to 6.

17.4 Recital of the Prayer from Lesson 15

(Each student to recite the prayer)

17.5 Closing Prayer

17.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, please practise the prayer we have been learning. Next week I will ask each of you to recite the prayer."

18 Being Kind to the Poor

18.1 Opening Prayer

As many children as possible should recite the prayer from Lesson 15.

18.2 Being Kind to the Poor

“Another teaching of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is to show generosity to the poor. Like Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá advised the Bahá’ís to be kind to the poor and make their hearts joyous by assisting them. During His lifetime ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent a lot of His time assisting the needy. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lived for seventy-seven years and spent all His life in service to the Faith and to the people. He was always a supporter of the poor and helpless. He was so dedicated to the service of the needy that He was given the title “Father of the Poor”. Many people who were not Bahá’ís but had witnessed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s kindness have recorded their observations in their books. An American visitor to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told this story:

There were over a hundred people, men and women, young and old, all gathered in a narrow street in ‘Akká. They were mostly weak, in ragged clothes and malnourished. The old men could not even stand on their feet. Women, holding their small children, were in one corner and five-to-six-year-old children had queued up in another corner. These were the poor of ‘Akká who were expecting the arrival of a noble Man. At this time, a door opened and an older person, with flowing white hair, wearing a light-coloured robe, stepped outside. [Of course we can all guess this person was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.] With absolute majesty, this person walked towards the crowd and called them to Him. The crowd in one wave approached Him. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, with much kindness directed them to move back and approach Him one by one. As they each approached ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He placed a coin in the palm of their hands. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew everyone in the crowd and after distributing the coins, He would move within the crowd, talk to them and ask them of their well-being. He would joke with some, and others He would embrace. During the cold season, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would distribute clothes

*and with His own hands would assist those who were too weak to put them on, saying ‘God bless you’.*¹⁵

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s love for children was very great. He would always embrace them, give them sweets and give them encouraging pats. Teachers should show the children some of the photographs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, especially those where He is smiling and those where He is with children.

18.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson” on pages 4 to 6.

18.4 Closing Prayer

18.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, we should always remember the kindness of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Try to be helpful to people in need. This is a virtue that God wants all of us to have.”

19 Learning a New Prayer

19.1 Opening Prayer

One of the children to recite the prayer from Lesson 15

19.2 Review of Lesson 18

19.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson" on pages 4 to 6.

19.4 Learning a New Prayer:

O Peerless Lord! Be Thou a shelter for this poor child and a kind and forgiving Master unto this erring and unhappy soul. O Lord! Though we are but worthless plants, yet we belong to Thy garden of roses. Though saplings without leaves and blossoms, yet we are a part of Thine orchard. Nurture this plant then through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy tender mercy and quicken and refresh this sapling through the reviving breath of Thy spiritual spring-time. Suffer him to become heedful, discerning and noble, and grant that he may attain eternal life and abide in Thy Kingdom for evermore.¹⁶

'Abdu'l-Bahá

19.5 Closing Prayer

19.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, try to memorize this new prayer."

20 Review of Prayer from Lesson 19

20.1 Opening Prayer

20.2 Review of Prayer from Lesson 19

20.3 Recital of Prayer Learned in Lesson 19

(Each student to recite the prayer)

20.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

20.5 Closing Prayer

(Students to recite the prayer learned in Lesson 19)

20.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, say this new prayer in the early morning when you get up to say your prayers."

21 Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith

21.1 Opening Prayer

Students should recite the prayer from Lesson 19.

21.2 Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith

“Dear Children, I want you all to listen very, very carefully today because I am going to tell you about someone very special. You all know how great Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá were, and so now you must learn about another holy and divine person called Shoghi Effendi.

“His birthday was on 1 March 1897 and he was born to ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's eldest daughter. This means that he was the grandson of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and the great-grandson of Bahá'u'lláh.

“Shoghi Effendi was a very happy child. He often joked, but he was very serious too. He knew how much ‘Abdu'l-Bahá liked it when the children prayed, and so he used to say his prayers very loudly so that his beloved Grandfather (‘Abdu'l-Bahá) could hear him praying wherever He was in the house!”

(Show a few photographs of Shoghi Effendi to the children.)

“Shoghi Effendi was very lucky to have been raised in the house where ‘Abdu'l-Bahá lived, even though he had to be careful not to disturb ‘Abdu'l-Bahá's work. Every day he would wait for ‘Abdu'l-Bahá to come out of His room. He was so eager to see his Grandfather that he would sit at his window and watch, and as soon as the door opened he would run to greet ‘Abdu'l-Bahá.

“When Shoghi Effendi was old enough, he had to go to school. He was sent to the best school in the country but it was difficult for him to be happy, because he missed his Grandfather. He knew how great ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was, and all he wanted to do was to serve Him. Everyone who met Shoghi Effendi felt how special he was. He loved children, and he loved everyone. He spent all his life serving the Bahá'í Faith and the people of the world.

“One day something terrible happened: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away. It was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Who took care of the Bahá’ís and Who had been kind to everyone after the passing of Bahá’u’lláh. Now He too had passed away. All around the world people cried because they were sad. Can you imagine? But God loves us so much, He sends all His Messengers to look after us. When Bahá’u’lláh passed away, He knew we still needed help so He gave us the gift of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away, He also knew we still needed someone to care for us, and so He gave us his precious grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to be the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith.

“When he was about twenty-five years old, Shoghi Effendi became the Guardian of the Faith and began to guide and look after all the Bahá’ís and many other people. He built a beautiful place where the Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are buried, and people come from all over the world to pray in this special place.”

(Show a photograph of the Shrine of the Báb and explain to them who built it.)

“Although he was sad because he had lost his grandfather, Shoghi Effendi worked and worked and worked for the Bahá’ís – do you see how selfless he was?

“We must always remember to try to be like ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi.”

21.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

21.4 Summary of Lessons Learned

21.5 Closing Prayer

(Prayer from Lesson 19)

21.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, remember that Shoghi Effendi loves you all. To show your love for him, you should try to do your best to be a good Bahá'í.”

22 Learning a Song

22.1 Opening Prayer

Students should recite the prayer from Lesson 19.

22.2 Review of Lesson 21

22.3 Learning a New Song

The teacher can select a song that teaches the children about some of the teachings of the Faith.

22.4 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

22.5 Closing Prayer

22.6 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

"Dear children, it is good to sing. Practise the song that we have learned today."

23 The Universal House of Justice

23.1 Opening Prayer

23.2 The Universal House of Justice

Teachers can begin by asking a few questions:

“Who can tell me what was special about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in terms of His position in the Faith?”

That is right; He looked after the Bahá’ís after Bahá’u’lláh passed away.”

“And who can tell me what was special about Shoghi Effendi? How did Shoghi Effendi help the Bahá’ís?”

That is correct; he took over ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s task of looking after the Bahá’ís of the world.”

“It was after the passing of Shoghi Effendi that the time had come for a new way of organizing the Bahá’í Faith. God wanted a group of people, working together in complete unity, to look after the Bahá’í world. This group is called the Universal House of Justice.

“You may be wondering how God told us about the Universal House of Justice. It was through Bahá’u’lláh, Who is God’s Messenger. Bahá’u’lláh made plans for the Universal House of Justice to look after the world. When Shoghi Effendi passed on to the Abhá Kingdom, the Bahá’ís were ready to be directed by the Universal House of Justice.

“The Universal House of Justice is very, very special. There are nine members. Bahá’u’lláh has promised to protect and guide the Universal House of Justice. He also promised us that the Universal House of Justice could never make a mistake. This is why Bahá’ís always listen to what the Universal House of Justice tells us. Listening to and obeying the Universal House of Justice is like obeying God and Bahá’u’lláh.

“The members of the Universal House of Justice work in a very beautiful building in Haifa, Israel. This building is called The Seat

of the Universal House of Justice. Here is a picture of that building [*show picture*]. It is in this building that they have meetings, consult, make decisions and receive visitors.

“Perhaps one day, if you are very lucky, you may visit this building and meet the members of the Universal House of Justice.”

23.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

See “Format of a Typical Lesson”, on pages 4 to 6.

23.4 Closing Prayer

23.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think how lucky we are to be living in these days under the guidance of the Universal House of Justice. To make Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi pleased with us, we should live a Bahá’í life and obey the Universal House of Justice.”

24 Review of Lessons 5 and 7

24.1 Opening Prayer

(One of the students to recite the first prayer learned in Book 1)

24.2 Review in Detail, Lessons 5 and 7, through Dialogue and Discussion

24.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

24.4 Closing Prayer

(A student to recite the second prayer learned in Book 1)

24.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

25 Review of Lessons 11 and 12

25.1 Opening Prayer

(One of the students to recite the prayer learned in Lesson 15)

25.2 Review in Detail, Lessons 11 and 12, through Dialogue and Discussion

25.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

25.4 Closing Prayer

(One of the students to recite the prayer learned in Lesson 19)

25.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

26 Review of Lessons 13 and 14

26.1 Opening Prayer

(One of the children says the first prayer learned in Book 1)

26.2 Review in Detail, Lessons 13 and 14, through Dialogue and Discussion

26.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

26.4 Closing Prayer

(Students to recite the second prayer learned in Book 1)

26.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

27 Review of Lessons 15 and 16

27.1 Opening Prayer

(One of the children to recite the prayer learned in Lesson 15)

27.2 Review in Detail, Lessons 15 and 16, through Dialogue and Discussion

27.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

27.4 Closing Prayer

(One of the children to recite the prayer learned in Lesson 19)

27.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

28 Review of Lessons 18 and 21

28.1 Opening Prayer

28.2 Review in Detail, Lessons 18 and 21, through Dialogue and Discussion

28.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

28.4 Closing Prayer

28.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

29 Preparing for the Year-End Celebration

29.1 Opening Prayer

29.2 Explanations Provided by the Teacher Regarding the Year-End Celebration

29.3 Preparation of the Programme for the Celebration in Consultation with the Students and Division of Responsibilities

29.4 Programme for the Year-End Celebration (an Example)

1 Opening Prayer

2 Speech by one of the students on what they learned during this year

3 Songs

4 Recital of Holy Writings by some of the students

5 Break

6 Play

7 Closing Prayer

29.5 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

See "Format of a Typical Lesson", on pages 4 to 6.

29.6 Closing Prayer

29.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

(Teacher should make any suggestion he or she feels fit for the children)

30 Year-End Celebration

The celebration is organized with the full participation of all the students and held in the presence of their parents and close family friends. Members or representatives of the Local Spiritual Assembly and the Child Education Committee, as well as Auxiliary Board members and their assistants, should be invited. If there are other children's classes in the nearby communities, they may also be invited.

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- 5 'Abdu'l-Bahá, authorized translation
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- 10 Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 305
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- 12 Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, K 115, p. 61
- 13 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 37
- 14 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 256
- 15 See Phelps, Myron H., *The Master in 'Akká* (Kalimát Press, Los Angeles, 1985), pp. 2–4 (paraphrased here)
- 16 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Prayers*, p. 38