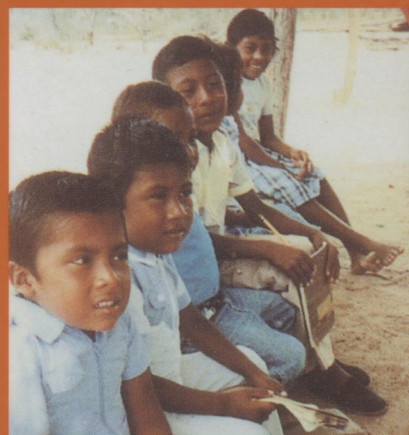
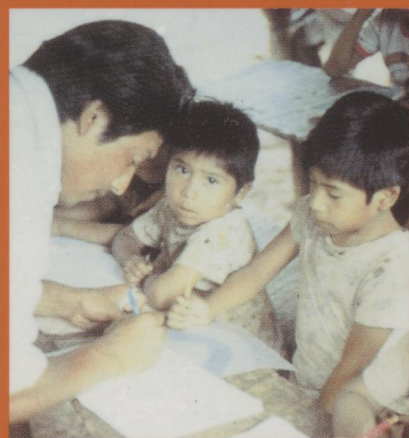
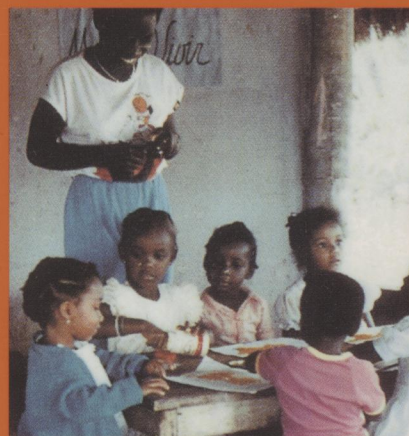




Teaching Children's Classes Grade 1

Ruhi Institute



Book 3

Teaching Children's Classes

Grade 1

Ruhi Institute

Books in the Series:

- Book 1 *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*
includes: "Understanding the Bahá'í Writings"
 "Prayer"
 "Life and Death"
- Book 2 *Arising to Serve*
includes: "The Joy of Teaching"
 "Deepening Themes"
 "Introducing Bahá'í Beliefs"
- Book 3 *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1*
includes: "Some Principles of Bahá'í Education"
 "Lessons for Children's Classes, Grade 1"
 "Conducting Classes for Children"
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Contents

To the Collaborators	1
Some Principles of Bahá'í Education	5
Lessons for Children's Classes, Grade 1	23
Conducting Classes for Children	107

TO THE COLLABORATORS

This book is the collection of three units aimed at helping individuals who wish to undertake the highly meritorious service of teaching regular classes for the spiritual education of children. It is assumed that those who study it have already participated in courses in which at least the content of Book 1 of the Ruhi Institute has been covered.

Bahá'ís who have taught the Faith in receptive areas will not be surprised to see that the Ruhi Institute places a strong emphasis on children's classes. The insistent desire of newly enrolled believers, especially in rural areas and the outskirts of large cities, for their children to be educated by Bahá'í teachers is well-known. Unfortunately, there have never been enough teachers to respond to this well-justified demand, and for some reason or another, many capable Bahá'ís who could teach children have not attached the necessary importance to this act of service on which the future of new generations depends.

It is important to mention that Bahá'í children's classes are not like the classes of indoctrination which are common in many other religions. Even though children are instructed in the principles, teachings and basic beliefs of the Faith, the emphasis is on learning to think, to reflect and to apply spiritual laws to the life of the individual and society. Especially during the early years of childhood, great attention is given to the development of spiritual qualities and to those beliefs, habits and behaviors that constitute the essential attributes of a spiritual being.

The desire to avoid indoctrination or catechism should not, however, lead to laxity in religious instruction. Doctrines that have disregarded religious education for children and have left them to acquire their own standards and beliefs, supposedly by free choice, from their interactions with society, have greatly contributed to the present state of moral disintegration. The proponents of these doctrines do not seem to appreciate the fact that there are political, economic and cultural interests in society which aggressively promote their own desired patterns of thought and behavior. But even if this were not so, there is no reason to suppose that a new generation of children will be able to create a better world without an education which is basically spiritual. Humanity, left to its own devices without divine guidance, has produced nothing more than chaos, injustice and suffering.

Although the dynamics of educating children vary greatly from community to community in the Bahá'í world, the importance of the enterprise is a matter on which all can agree. Moreover, it is evident that the key to success in any ambitious plan for the spiritual education of large numbers of children is the training of teachers. It is hoped that this book will help Bahá'í institutions and their agencies, especially regional and national institutes, in their efforts to substantially increase the number of dedicated and well-prepared Bahá'í children's class teachers.

The first unit of the book, "Some Principles of Bahá'í Education", is concerned with certain basic concepts. There is no educational system in the world today that can properly be called "Bahá'í". Such a system can only be created through the efforts of numerous educators working in diverse settings and cultures over an extended period of time. Nevertheless, certain principles and concepts can be identified that should influence endeavors to develop elements of Bahá'í education, and this unit briefly examines some of them.

One of the basic concepts discussed in the unit is the nobility of man. It is essential for the participants in the course—future teachers of children—to understand the impact this

- The methodology of the children's classes combines different activities, all focused on the principal goal of motivating the development of attitudes and spiritual qualities. All these activities revolve around the Creative Word, which alone has the power to awaken spiritual susceptibilities in the children, and a strong emphasis is placed memorizing the Creative Word. Memorization has an even greater effect if what is being memorized is well understood. For this reason, each lesson includes material to help children understand the meaning of the quotation, as well as activities to help further this understanding. Unfortunately, at this point, there is not an abundance of songs, games and stories which directly reinforce the ideas presented in the quotations to be memorized. It is hoped that, in the future, many more such activities will be created and compiled for the use of Bahá'í children's class teachers.
- The stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá presented in the lessons are of the greatest importance, because He is the Exemplar of Bahá'í life. They illustrate in a concrete way the spiritual qualities that are being explored, and it is well known that concrete situations help, especially children, understand abstract explanations. Some participants may have trouble learning how to tell stories in a way that brings them to life for the children. The ability to remember the details that give excitement to a story and to present the events of the story in an effective way can be acquired by means of constant practice.
- The lesson plans that are included in the unit require very little in the way of materials and outside resources. Besides the teacher's knowledge, acquired through the training offered in this course, only coloring sheets and crayons are needed. The coloring sheets can be simply reproduced by the teachers themselves by tracing them from the sample sheets corresponding to each lesson.
- It is recommended that participants begin putting their new skills into practice as they go through the course. This will allow them to prepare themselves for the time when they will take on their own classes. New teachers may feel nervous the first time they face a class of, say, 20 children, so it is advisable to let them start out alongside experienced teachers or with a small number of children—perhaps four or five. It is also possible to hold classes which only teach the quotations at the beginning, without worrying about stories, songs and other activities. As the teacher develops confidence, more children can be added to the class and other elements can be introduced.
- A cassette tape of the songs used in the lessons accompanies this material. Teachers may wish to use the cassette, not only to prepare themselves for the class, but also to help the children learn the songs.

When the results of the initial efforts of the Ruhi Institute to help train teachers were evaluated, it became evident that a course on how to manage a children's class was also necessary, especially for those who choose the education of children as a special area of their service to the Cause. The last unit in this book, "Conducting Classes for Children", was developed to answer that need. As in the other courses, the participants should study the unit in small groups with a more experienced person as their tutor. Each section should be read aloud once or twice and then consulted upon by the participants. An important objective of the unit is to help the participants achieve a balanced understanding of how to keep a class happy and full of love, yet also highly disciplined. Bahá'í teachers of children should develop a capacity to inculcate in each child the spiritual discipline that results from love and trust in God, and not impose discipline through fear of punishment.



Some Principles of Bahá'í Education

Purpose

To understand some of the basic principles
of Bahá'í education of children.

SECTION 2

In studying the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith, we find counsels and teachings which show us how to offer true education. One teaching has to do with the attitude of love and understanding that teachers should show to all their students. Your students will be very special to you; they will not be just some people you are required to teach. Each student is a unique creation of God, endowed with his or her own talents and capacities. Later, we will talk about some of these talents, but for now, what is most important to understand is that everyone has the capacity to know the Manifestations of God, to obey Their laws and to progress spiritually. No child is incorrigible. All can be good and all can develop spiritual qualities.

You should carry in your heart the assurance that human beings are created noble. In your classes, you can help your students demonstrate this nobility.

1. A few phrases are written below about what we have just read, but with blank spaces. Fill in these blank spaces with the appropriate words. For example, if we write: "No child is _____", you would write the word "incorrigible".

The attitude of love and _____ that teachers should show towards all their _____ is very important. The attitude of _____ and understanding that teachers show towards their students is very _____. Each student is a unique creation of God endowed with his own _____ and _____. However, _____ has the capacity to know the _____ of God, to obey Their _____ and to _____ spiritually. All have the capacity to _____ the _____ of God, to _____ Their laws and to _____ spiritually. Your students will be very _____ to you; they will not be just _____ you are required to teach. The attitude of _____ and _____ that teachers show towards their _____ is very important. Your students will be very _____ to you. Each student is a unique _____ of God, endowed with his own _____ and _____. All have the capacity to _____ the Manifestations of God, to _____ Their laws and to _____ spiritually. All children can be _____ and all can develop _____. You should carry in your _____ the _____ that human beings are created _____. In your classes, you can _____ your students to _____ this nobility.

2. Can you write the two phrases from this section that you consider most important? Why are they important? _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

SECTION 3

Now read carefully the quotation below of Bahá'u'lláh, and complete the phrases that follow with the appropriate words.

“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”⁴

Bahá'u'lláh teaches us that man is like a _____ rich in gems of inestimable _____. Man is as a mine _____ in _____ of _____ value. _____ can, alone, cause it to _____ its treasures and enable mankind to _____ therefrom.

SECTION 4

Now, memorize the above words of Bahá'u'lláh and think about the following questions: What are some of the gems that we possess? Can we consider the virtues latent within us, such as love and kindness, justice, truthfulness, trustworthiness, constancy, integrity and sincerity, as some of these gems? What do you think about the capacities of the human mind, its powers to discover the world of nature, to produce beautiful works of art, to express beautiful and noble thoughts? And what would happen without true education? Could we show forth all of those treasures which God has conferred upon us?

Consult about these ideas with the participants in your group.

SECTION 5

We can think of two types of teachers: those who believe in the words you have just memorized, and those who do not understand them. The second type of teacher believes that his students know nothing and that it is very difficult for them to learn. He may even accuse them of being stupid. It is as though he had some empty containers which, little by little, he

hopes to fill with information. You, on the other hand, believe that your students possess hidden gems which you will help them discover. This is why you are going to do all that is possible to help them participate in the class: you are going to converse with them, listen to their opinions, and see to it that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings develop in them the capacities God has bestowed upon them.

Suppose someone put thirty big containers in front of you and told you to fill them with water, spoonful by spoonful. Would you like to do this? Would you be happy if this were your task in life?

Now, suppose you were given a mine of precious gems and that every day you were to search out and discover new, hidden jewels in the tunnels of the mine. Does this seem more agreeable to you?

We see, then, that by applying the words of Bahá'u'lláh to your work, you not only help the children, you also make your own task of teaching much more agreeable.

SECTION 6

We have said that children have many capacities. Now let us think a little about this important word "capacity". First, let us consider some physical objects. We can say that a candle has the capacity (or potential) to shed light. Does this mean that the candle gives off light by itself, or must you do something to it first? Clearly, the candle has to be lit so that it can shine; yet, even when it is not lit, it has the potential to illuminate its surroundings. Of course, other objects do not have this capacity. For example, a pencil is not going to give off light, no matter what we do to it. On the other hand, a pencil has another capacity; we can use it to write. Yet, can a pencil write without being sharpened? Or must we sharpen the pencil so that we can use its capacity?

Now let us consider the capacities of children. Some of their capacities are the special talents they have. One person may be able to run very well; another may have a very pleasant voice. Someone may have a talent for artistic work, and another may show signs of being good in the sciences. What other talents might some of your students have?

You, as a Bahá'í teacher, have to search in each one of your students to find their talents and foster their development. You should always be aware of each of your students, think about them, and try to discover their capacities. With some children, this task will be difficult, but you should persevere. Remember that, of all talents and capacities, those having to do with spiritual qualities are the most important.

1. To remember these ideas better, fill in the spaces with the appropriate words.

We say that a candle has the capacity or _____ to shed _____ . The _____ has the _____ or potential to give off light. The candle does not _____ unless someone _____ ; yet, even when it is not lit

it has the _____ to illuminate. Other objects, which cannot give off light, have other _____. There are other objects which cannot shed _____ but have _____ capacities. For example, a pencil is used for _____. You can _____ with a pencil, but it has to be _____. Before being _____, the pencil has the _____ to _____ but it has not yet demonstrated that capacity.

2. So it is with the capacities of children; children must be educated to show forth the treasures they possess. Continue filling in the spaces and think about some of these capacities.

Children have different _____ for doing _____ things. For example, one may be able to _____ very well, another may have a very pleasant _____, another may have a talent for artistic work, and still another may show signs of being good in the _____. You, as a Bahá'í teacher, have to _____ in each one of your _____ to find their talents and foster their _____. You should search in _____ one of your students to find their talents and _____ their development. You should _____ be aware of _____ of your students, _____ about them, and try to _____ their _____. You should always be _____ of each one of your _____, think about them, and try to _____ their capacities. With some children, this will not be easy, but you should _____.

SECTION 7

Having come to some understanding of the nobility of man as a very important theme in the Bahá'í teachings, we can now direct our attention to certain objectives of Bahá'í education.

Why do you teach children? What results do you want to achieve? To begin your consideration of these questions, read and meditate on the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

“As to thy question regarding the education of children: it behooveth thee to nurture them at the breast of the love of God, and urge them onward to the things

of the spirit, that they may turn their faces unto God; that their ways may conform to the rules of good conduct and their character be second to none; that they make their own all the graces and praiseworthy qualities of humankind; acquire a sound knowledge of the various branches of learning, so that from the very beginning of life they may become spiritual beings, dwellers in the Kingdom, enamored of the sweet breaths of holiness, and may receive an education religious, spiritual, and of the Heavenly Realm. Verily will I call upon God to grant them a happy outcome in this.”⁵

1. Complete the following phrases with words from the above quotation:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that it _____ us to nurture children at the breast of the _____ of God, and _____ them onward to the things of the _____. The teacher must _____ them onward to the things of the _____ that they may turn their faces unto _____. The teacher should help children so that their ways may _____ to the _____ of good _____. They should make their _____ all the _____ and praiseworthy _____ of humankind. The teacher should help the children so that their ways conform to the _____ of good _____, and that they make their own all the _____ and _____ qualities of humankind. Children, from the very _____ of _____, should become _____ beings, dwellers in the _____, enamored of the sweet breaths of _____, and should receive an education _____, _____, and of the _____ Realm. Children, from the very _____ of life, should become _____ beings, _____ in the _____, _____ of the sweet _____ of holiness, and should receive an education _____, _____, and of the _____ Realm. Remember that we should nurture _____ at the _____ of the _____ of God, and urge them onward to the things of the _____, help them so that their ways _____ to the rules of good _____, that they make their own all the _____ and _____ qualities of humankind. They should acquire a sound _____ of the various branches of _____, so that from the very _____ of _____, they may become spiritual _____.

dwellers in the _____, enamored of the sweet _____
of _____, and receive an education _____,
spiritual, and of the _____ Realm.

2. After having studied 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words, what do you think the objectives of Bahá'í classes are? What do you want to achieve with the children? You already know that your principal goal is to help them develop in themselves the spiritual qualities of a true Bahá'í. From infancy, they should be educated spiritually and be attracted to pure, upright and holy deeds. Now, fill in the following lines with phrases, as in the examples.

Examples:

I must help children to be truthful.

I must help children to be fair.

I must _____

I must _____

I must _____

I must _____

I must _____

I must _____

SECTION 8

Now think a little about this question: Can you help children acquire spiritual qualities if you, yourself, do not constantly demonstrate them? Read and memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear him.”⁶

Do you think it is only important to demonstrate these qualities in the presence of children? Suppose that a teacher tells a lie when none of his students are present. Will this have an effect on his class? Will his words be effective later when he teaches truthfulness to his students?

SECTION 9

To succeed in teaching heavenly virtues to children, you must sow the seeds of love for God and fear of God in the pure soil of their hearts. They should learn that we were created out of the infinite love God has for His creatures, and that we are continually protected and nurtured by this love. You can teach them to be conscious of all the blessings of God: the bounty of having recognized Bahá'u'lláh, the joy of being able to grow through

His words, and even the smallest blessings of their daily lives. And, you should teach them that because they love Bahá'u'lláh they should obey His laws. Now, read and meditate on the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

“The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: ‘Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.’ Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of His Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe.”⁷

“Let the flame of the love of God burn brightly within your radiant hearts. Feed it with the oil of Divine guidance, and protect it within the shelter of your constancy. Guard it within the globe of trust and detachment from all else but God, so that the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its light.”⁸

“O Son of Being! My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.”⁹

1. Complete the following phrases with words from the preceding quotations:

We should observe the commandments of God for love of His _____.
We should _____ the commandments of God for the _____ of His beauty. We should _____ the commandments of God for the _____ of His _____.
The flame of the love of God should burn _____ within our _____ hearts. The _____ of the love of God should burn _____ within our _____ hearts. The _____ of the _____ of God should _____ brightly within our radiant _____. We should observe the _____ of God for love of His _____. We should feed the flame of the _____ of God with the _____ of Divine _____. We should _____ the flame of the _____ of God with the oil of _____ guidance. We should _____ the flame of the _____ of God with the oil of Divine _____. We should protect it within the _____ of our constancy. We should protect the flame of the love of _____ within the _____ of our constancy. We should _____ it within the shelter of our _____. We should _____ the flame of the _____ of God within the globe of _____ and _____ from all else but God. We should _____ the flame of the _____ of God within the globe of _____ and _____ from all else but God. We should guard it within the globe of _____

and _____ from all else but God. We should guard it within the _____ of _____ and _____ from all else but _____. The flame of the _____ of God should burn _____ within our radiant _____. We should feed this flame with the oil of _____ guidance. We should protect it within the shelter of our _____. We should guard it within the globe of _____ and _____ from all else but God. We should feed the flame of the love of God, protect it and guard it so that the evil whisperings of the ungodly may not extinguish its _____. Whoever enters the stronghold of the _____ of God is safe and _____. Whoever enters the _____ of the _____ of God is _____ and _____. Whoever enters the _____ of the _____ of God is _____ and _____.

SECTION 10

We have said that to succeed in cultivating spiritual qualities in children you must sow in their hearts the seeds of the love of God and the fear of God. The concept of the fear of God is very deep and important; we are only going to touch upon it here. When we love someone a great deal, and are longing for his love, it causes our heart the greatest pain if his love does not reach us. We know that the love of God is the very cause of our existence. If for one moment we did not receive the blessings of God, we would fall into the deepest degradation. Our wrongdoings and our disobedience to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh are like barriers that separate us from the spiritual world and prevent the blessings of that world from reaching us. That is why we feel the fear of God: a fear that if we disobey Him we will not receive His favors. The fear of God is what keeps us on the straight path and protects us from our ego, our corrupt desires, and deeds which are displeasing to God. Thus, the teacher may mention from time to time that certain acts are not pleasing to God; or, when a child does something praiseworthy, he may tell her, for example, that this would bring joy to the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

1. Complete the following phrases with words from the preceding paragraph:

In order to succeed in cultivating spiritual qualities in children you must sow in their hearts the seeds of the _____ of God and the _____ of God. To _____ in cultivating spiritual _____ in children, you must _____ in their hearts the seeds of the _____ of God and the _____ of God. When we _____ someone a great deal and are longing for his love, it

causes our heart the greatest _____ if his _____ does not reach us. When we _____ a great deal and are longing for his love, it causes our heart the greatest _____ if _____ love does not reach us. When we _____ someone a great deal and are longing for his _____, it causes our heart the greatest _____ if _____ love does not reach us. The love of _____ is the cause of our _____. Our wrongdoings and our _____ to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh are like _____ that _____ us from the _____ world and prevent the _____ of that world from reaching us. Our _____ and our _____ are like _____ that separate us from the _____ and prevent the _____ of that world from reaching us. When this happens we feel the _____ of God: a fear that by disobeying Him we will not receive His favors. When this happens, we _____ the _____ of _____: a fear that by _____ Him we will not receive His _____. This fear of _____ is what keeps us on the straight _____ and _____ us from our _____, our _____, and _____ which are not pleasing to _____.

2. Memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Let God be your fear, O people, and be ye of them that tread the path of righteousness.”¹⁰

SECTION 11

In this course we have learned that, according to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, it is incumbent on us to nurture children at the breast of the _____ of God and to urge them towards the things of the _____. We should help children so that their ways may _____ to the rules of good _____, that they make their own all the _____ and _____ qualities of humankind. Children, from the very beginning of their lives, should become _____, dwellers in the _____,

enamored of the sweet breaths of holiness, and receive an education _____,
 _____, and of the _____.
 To succeed in teaching heavenly virtues to children, the seeds of the _____
 for God and the _____ of God must be sown in the pure soil of their
 hearts. They should learn that we were created out of the infinite love which God has
 for His creatures and that we obey Bahá'u'lláh's laws because of the love we feel for Him.
 We should observe the commandments of God for love of His _____.
 The flame of the _____ of God should burn brightly within our
 radiant _____. We should feed this flame with the oil of Divine
 _____, and protect it within the shelter of our _____.
 We should guard it within the _____ of _____ and
 detachment, so that the evil _____ of the ungodly will
 not _____ its light.

We have also learned that, for children to acquire spiritual qualities, we ourselves
 must show in our daily actions that we possess these qualities. We must obey Bahá'u'lláh's
 teaching:

**“Whoso ariseth among you to teach the Cause of his Lord, let him, before all
 else, teach his own self, that his speech may attract the hearts of them that hear
 him.”⁶**

SECTION 12

The habits we learn in childhood become part of our daily actions for a lifetime. You
 need to recognize the importance of habits, as well as the importance of the spiritual
 qualities you are helping your students develop. What a person does when he gets up in the
 morning, whether he reads the newspaper every day, what he has for breakfast, where he
 goes for amusement, whether he likes to be near nature, whether he has to have a radio at his
 ear at all times, and a thousand other habits are usually acquired at an early age, and good or
 bad, are difficult to change later. You should strive to influence your children to form habits
 that are in harmony with the Bahá'í way of life. Among such habits are praying in the
 morning and at night, attending the Nineteen Day Feast, and keeping clean. During the next
 few months, think about your own habits; examine them well, and decide if you have to
 change some of them. As you think about your habits, make a list of the spiritual habits you
 are going to teach your students:

SECTION 13

The following situations could easily occur in your classes. Can you apply the principles you have learned thus far to resolve them?

A. George is a very mischievous boy. He is always bothering the other children and talking during class. When you ask him about the lesson, he almost always knows the answer. What would you do with him?

1. Throw him out of class because he bothers everyone and does not let the other children learn.
2. Give him more difficult work so he can use his intelligence, won't become bored, and will be too busy to bother others. Also, ask him to help the other children with their lessons.
3. Put him in a corner of the classroom, far from the rest of the children, where he cannot bother anyone; that way you can easily forget about him.

B. Gita never causes trouble. She comes to class and is very attentive, but she never answers any of the questions. You teach her an idea, but the next minute she forgets it. What should be done with her?

1. Dismiss her from class because apparently she is not learning anything.
2. Patiently try to find other ways of encouraging her to see if she responds.
3. Tell her she is stupid, and that it would be best to hold a special class for her after the other students have gone home.

4. Other: _____

C. Obuya is much younger than the other children. He never laughs or speaks unless someone asks him a question. He tries very hard, but the rest of the children laugh at him because he is not capable of answering correctly. What would you do with Obuya?

1. Tell him to leave because he is too young.
2. Teach the children not to laugh when he answers incorrectly, because all people, including small children, should be respected.
3. Call his parents and tell them they should wait until he grows up a little before sending him back to school.

4. Other: _____

D. Kumar is much older than the others, studies hard, and understands a great deal; but he seldom attends class because he feels too old for the group. What should be done with Kumar?

1. Dismiss him because he is too old.
2. Do special projects with him. For example, teach him to teach the younger children: have him help some of the children every week, and if you teach another class in the same town, take him there so that he can gain more experience.
3. Tell him that he is already too old to study and that if he would like, you will teach him a profession, such as carpentry or masonry.
4. Other: _____

E. Luis always holds up his hand even though he never has the correct answer. He is always critical of the children who bother others or talk during class. What would you do with Luis?

F. In a certain class there are several children who understand much faster than the rest, and they ask very advanced questions. What do you think the teacher should do with these children?

1. Scold them, because it seems they are trying to do better than the rest, and this is not fair.
2. Push the rest of the class so they will learn faster.
3. Answer their questions in such a way that all the students understand. Also, give more difficult work to the more advanced students, but do not make the difference known, so that no one feels inferior or superior to the others.
4. Separate the more advanced students and say that they are examples for the others.

G. A teacher sends one of the children to buy some classroom supplies. The child returns with only part of the change. A little later, the teacher sees the child eating candy and thinks that the child spent the change on sweets. What should the teacher do?

1. Scold the child, telling him that he is a thief and should never have bought the candy.
2. After class, go to the store and ask how much the supplies did cost. If the child did not tell the truth, later call him aside and remind him firmly but lovingly that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings forbid us to steal and tell lies.
3. Go to the store immediately to ask how much the supplies cost and, if the child

did not tell the truth, come to class and say, "It is very sad that there is a child in our class who cannot be trusted"; then tell the class what happened.

4. Say to the class, "Who wants to go to the store and see if it is true that the supplies cost this amount of money?"
5. Remain silent and do not do anything.

H. Some children are playing in the classroom instead of listening to the teacher, although she has kindly asked for their attention. What should the teacher do now?

1. Analyze why they are misbehaving. If it is because they are tired, change the activity. Possibly it is only one child who is causing problems; in this case, he should be separated from the others.
2. Tell those who are playing that since they have been misbehaving for such a long time she is going to punish them.
3. Have them leave the classroom because she will not stand it any more.
4. Call their parents, tell them about the misbehavior and scold them for having such disruptive children.

I. The children hand in an assignment. You discover that some were done very carefully and others were not. The children want you to grade the homework, but you do not want to hurt the feelings of some of them. What is the best thing to do?

1. Say that some of the assignments are very poor and should be done over, more carefully.
2. Take one of the carefully prepared assignments and show it to the children, saying "This is how the homework should be done: clearly, and in good handwriting."
3. Punish the children who did not bring a carefully prepared assignment, and threaten that if they do not bring in good work the next day they will not be allowed to attend class.
4. Privately congratulate each child who brought in a carefully prepared assignment; privately, tell the others, "Your homework is fine, but it could be better if you had done it more clearly and neatly. I am sure you will do better on tomorrow's assignment."

J. A teacher brings a poster to class to show the children. Later he finds marks on it, and two children accuse each other of having scribbled on it. How is the teacher to know who did it?

1. Since he does not know, he should punish both children.
2. Since he does not know, he does not punish anyone.

3. He asks each child individually, and then the entire class. This way, it is easier for him to make a fair decision and know which child to punish.
4. The teacher asks his favorite student to find out what happened and tell him afterwards so that he can punish the guilty child.
5. Other: _____

K. One little girl has problems learning in a group. She sits alone in a corner, playing, and does not pay attention in class. The teacher notices that the child does not understand things as well as the others. What can the teacher do?

1. Call her back to the group and tell her that by paying more attention she will understand things better.
2. Punish her for being naughty.
3. Have her leave the class because, with 20 other students in the class who want to progress, the teacher does not have time to spend with a child who is always behind.
4. Since she is not interrupting the class, let her do what she wants; while others are working on individual projects, dedicate special time to her.

L. One child has memorized more prayers than the others. Whenever the occasion arises, she says them aloud, in a sweet voice and with a great deal of devotion. Should this child always be allowed to say the prayers because she recites them better than other children do?

M. In your class, one child always arrives dirty and no one wants to sit beside him. Naturally, the child feels sad and rejected. What should you do? Send him home to clean up? Speak to him alone to find out about his home situation? Does he live with his parents? Does his mother leave early for work? Has anyone in his home taught him how to stay clean?

N. Andrew is a child nobody understands. When his classmates start an activity, such as painting, he wants to play; and when they are playing, he wants to paint. In other words, Andrew always does things at the wrong time. What are you going to tell him? Is this a habit of Andrew's or a sign of a contrary attitude?

O. Sachiko is very attentive and studious. At home she is encouraged to be first in everything and often is told that she knows more than other children. That is why every time you ask the class a question she is the first to respond, even though she may not know the correct answer. Every time you give the class an assignment, she finishes first and asks, "Isn't mine better than everyone else's?" What are you going to do to change this habit of Sachiko's? How can you help her feel loved and appreciated? What spiritual qualities apply to her situation?

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Lessons for Children's Classes Grade 1

Purpose

To learn to teach simple children's classes
consisting of memorization of prayers and quotations,
songs, stories, games and coloring.

SECTION 1

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that “. . . the beloved of God and the maidservants must train their children with life and heart and teach them in the school of virtue and perfection. They must not be lax in this matter; they must not be inefficient.”¹

One way to ensure that this desire of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is fulfilled is to establish classes for children in every community. In order to do this, it is imperative that more and more people dedicate themselves to the teaching of children. When a person begins to teach it is not very important that he or she knows a great deal about theories of education. What matters is desire and dedication. Teaching is a science and an art which can gradually be learned through study and experience.

Questions:

1. What does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá say in the above quotation about the education of children?

2. How can you help carry out ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instruction? _____

3. How much do you need to know about education to begin a simple class for children?

4. What is more important than your knowledge about education? _____

5. How do you think you can learn the art and science of education? _____

SECTION 2

The first series of classes that you will establish with children will consist of only a few activities. Before each class you will have to review these activities and prepare your lesson well. One activity should always be the memorization of a quotation from the Holy Writings or part of a prayer. Therefore, we should think about the nature of memorization. Why do you think it is so important to memorize the Holy Writings?

The Word of God revealed by His Manifestation has far-reaching effects on the heart of a child. Remember that, in the mystical sense, the universe was created through God's utterance of the word "Be". Imagine, then, the effects in the lives of children when the Words of God, with all their power, are engraved in their hearts.

In order to help the children learn a prayer or quotation by heart, you must first explain its meaning to them. Therefore, one of the first capabilities which you are going to develop as a teacher is that of explaining clearly the meanings of prayers and quotations. First, study carefully the following approach which a very experienced teacher has used to explain to children the meaning of this prayer:

"O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful."²

Guide:

1. John is lost and cannot find his way home. Soon, he meets a friend who shows him the way. The friend guides John to his home.
2. Sunita is very sad because she does not know whether to study or to look for work. She asks her parents for their opinion. They give her good advice. They guide Sunita.

God is our Best Friend; that is why we say in this prayer, "Oh God, guide me." Towards what does God guide us?

Protect:

1. We are outside and it starts to rain, so we run and stand under a roof. The roof protects us.
2. A very fierce dog attacks Ming Ling and she runs to her mother, who protects her from the dog.
3. Our parents protect us from people with bad intentions.

God is our True Protector; that is why we pray, "Oh God . . . protect me."

Where there is no light, there is darkness. Where there is darkness, we cannot see and we become lost. A lamp can give off light, but someone has to turn it on. The heart is like a lamp which can give off spiritual light; that is why we pray to God, ". . . make of me a shining lamp."

Bahá'u'lláh wants the whole world to know that Bahá'ís are noble, kind and wise, and that they joyfully help others. Bahá'u'lláh wants us to be like brilliant stars guiding the world of humanity. So we ask of God, ". . . make of me . . . a brilliant star."

Finally, we testify that God is the Mighty and the Powerful.

SECTION 3

After you have explained to the children the meaning of a quotation, the next step is to help them memorize it. Surely, in your life you have memorized many quotations and poems. How can this be done? Once the meaning of a quotation is understood, memorizing it is very simple. The quotation is divided into parts and you begin by memorizing the first part. Later, the second part is learned, and then both parts are repeated together. You continue in this way until the entire quotation is learned by heart. For example, in order to learn the prayer in Section 2, you begin with “Oh God, guide me . . . ,” and ask the children, sometimes individually and other times as a group, to repeat the words. Then you combine “Oh God, guide me” with “protect me . . . ,” repeat the two phrases together, then add “. . . make of me a shining lamp . . . ,” and so on with each phrase until the end of the prayer. Once the whole group of children has repeated the entire prayer, each child is patiently helped to recite the prayer by heart.

Undoubtedly, as a conscientious Bahá’í teacher, you will wish to begin your new tasks by teaching yourself. Therefore, when you look at the 15 lessons for children presented further on in this unit, dedicate some time to studying the meaning of the quotations, thinking about the examples given to clarify the meaning for the children, and memorizing the quotations.

SECTION 4

Another activity that can be done with the children is to sing spiritual songs which fill their hearts with happiness. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

“The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit. Through the power and charm of music the spirit of man is uplifted. It has wonderful sway and effect in the hearts of children, for their hearts are pure and melodies have great influence in them. The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music.”³

This quotation from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá indicates the importance that music can have in our lives. We can imagine, then, how wonderful it is for children to learn to sing beautiful songs from the time they are very young.

In general, children love to sing, and teaching songs is one of the easiest things to do in a Bahá’í children’s class. Again, the key to success is practice. You yourself should sing the songs with someone who knows them, paying special attention to the rhythm and the melody. If you can listen to the songs on a tape recorder, you will learn them much faster. With the children, you also have to sing the songs over and over until they have learned them well. The words of the songs are memorized in much the same way as those of the quotations, only this time the words are repeated along with the melody.

In order for you to be able to skillfully guide the children through this activity, we suggest that you learn the songs of the 15 lessons of this unit well, either from your tutor or by listening to a tape recorder.

SECTION 5

Another very important activity that can be carried out in a children's class is storytelling. What importance can stories have in children's education? Many stories and narratives illustrate principles and spiritual qualities and show us how to apply them. Other stories show clearly the rewards for good deeds and the consequences of bad behavior. Children can benefit greatly from the ideas which stories contain and, in the world of the imagination, can gain experience which will be valuable to them in the formation of their characters and personalities.

We know that Bahá'u'lláh designated His son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as the Perfect Exemplar of the Bahá'í teachings. Stories about His life help us to understand how to apply the Bahá'í teachings in our own lives. Children should learn many stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá so that they will always have His example in mind.

Questions:

1. Why are stories important in a child's education? _____

2. Who is 'Abdu'l-Bahá? _____

3. Why is it important to learn stories about the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá? _____

SECTION 6

Storytelling is an art. In order to attain a degree of excellence, one must become familiar with the basic principles of this art and later dedicate many hours to its practice. First of all, to tell a story effectively, it is necessary to be well acquainted with it. In this section, we are going to study in detail a story about the childhood of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in order to see how a teacher should go about narrating it for the children.

One day Bahá'u'lláh sent 'Abdu'l-Bahá to inspect the work of the shepherds who were taking care of His sheep. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a small child at the time, and the persecutions against Bahá'u'lláh and His family had not yet started. Bahá'u'lláh then had a good deal of land in the mountains and owned large herds of sheep. When the inspection was finished and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ready to leave, the man who had accompanied Him said, "It is your father's custom to leave a gift for each shepherd." 'Abdu'l-Bahá became silent for a while, because He did not have anything to give them. The man, however, insisted that the shepherds were expecting something. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá had an idea that made Him very happy! He would give the shepherds the sheep they were taking care of! Bahá'u'lláh was very much pleased when He heard about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's generous thoughts towards the shepherds. He humorously remarked that everyone had better take good care of 'Abdu'l-

Bahá because someday He would give Himself away. Of course, this is exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá did for the rest of His life. He gave everything He had, each and every moment of His life, to humanity, to unite us and bring us true happiness.

The first thing to examine in a story is the main theme. In this case, we can say that the story's main theme is the generosity of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Then we should identify those parts of the story which are directly related to the main theme. Which are these parts? 'Abdu'l-Bahá's thought to give the sheep to the shepherds, and the pleasure shown by Bahá'u'lláh when He heard of this spirit of generosity. Thus, it is very important that those parts be well stated when you narrate the story to the children. What would it be like if you forgot to mention the last part, or if you did not put sufficient emphasis in your voice when you said, "He would give the shepherds the sheep they were taking care of"? To clearly demonstrate this point, read the story aloud and pay close attention to how you say the two parts of the story that relate to the main theme. Repeat this exercise with the other participants in your class.

Now, even though we have identified the essential parts of the story, the rest of the story cannot be forgotten. It must be narrated in such a way that the children become enthusiastic, interested, and will learn the central message. Would this be a story if you simply said that 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in His childhood, gave away an entire herd of sheep to the shepherds who worked for His Father, and that Bahá'u'lláh saw in this act the ample generosity of His Son? There are always details in a story which give it more feeling and make it more interesting.

What are those elements in our story?

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a small child when this happened.
- When the inspection was finished, the man who had accompanied 'Abdu'l-Bahá told Him that Bahá'u'lláh always used to give something to the shepherds as a gift.
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá became silent for a while because He did not have anything to give them.
- Finally, this idea came to Him and He felt very happy.

Now that you are aware of these points, narrate the story to a group of classmates. To prepare yourself well as a children's class teacher, it would be good for you to dedicate some hours to studying and learning the stories in the fifteen lessons of this course. Remember that, before telling a story, there are three major questions to answer: 1) What is the main theme of the story? 2) What are the parts that directly relate to this theme? 3) What are some important details that make the story more interesting?

SECTION 7

After you have learned the stories well, it is important for you to develop your own storytelling techniques. You will have to tell the stories many times, listen to your own voice and observe your own gestures. Yet, throughout all this, you must remember that the purpose of telling a story is to teach something important to the children, and that you are not acting in a play. Thus, you should tell the stories with joy and feeling, but your feelings must be sincere. You must know that children easily detect a lack of sincerity.

You should feel a great love for the children while telling the story and thus create a special atmosphere of closeness between you and them. Yet, this atmosphere should at the same time be one of anticipation and drama. The tone and volume of your voice should change according to the story's development, and your gestures, though simple, should correspond to each part of the story. Children are not going to be interested in a story told monotonously by someone who is like a statue. You must practice until you learn to communicate emotions such as joy, sadness, anger, fear and courage through changes in tone of voice and gestures.

You should also think about the rhythm and pace of the story. If you talk too slowly, the children will become bored, and if you talk too quickly, they cannot follow the story.

In summary, there is an entire series of factors that affect the art of storytelling. To perfect this art, more than anything else, you need to practice. Therefore, dedicate some time to narrating the stories that you have already analyzed with some of your classmates. Think about the various factors, such as voice, gestures, emotions. Describe factors besides these which are a part of the art of storytelling.

SECTION 8

Someone once said that the work of children is to play. In fact, games help children learn and practice many skills and concepts. For example, through games children learn to cooperate, to pay attention, to obey rules, and to coordinate their movements. Thus, the teacher can use games the same as a blackboard or a reading book. That is why another element of our classes for small children is games. Most of the games that have been chosen for these classes are cooperative games.

Cooperation and collaboration are key elements for achieving the unity of the family or of the community. Often we complain a great deal that there is no cooperation in the community. The reason for this could be very simple; maybe people have never been taught how to collaborate.

In order to achieve cooperation, first you need a common goal. All the people involved should seek the same end, for example, the establishment of a school. Nevertheless, having a common goal does not automatically bring success. It is essential that everyone lend personal support to the project, leading to the completion of the goal.

Furthermore, each person must understand that his support is essential for the achievement of the goal. The word "essential" not only means that something is important, but also that it is necessary. So, each person's support is not only important, it is also necessary, because if each one does not contribute a share, it may even become impossible to achieve the goal.

Cooperation has a third element that is worth consideration. It is not enough that all participants have the same goals and that all collaborate. One's contribution and the contributions of others have to be coordinated. For example, two people are going to cooperate in order to make a barbed wire fence. Both want to build the fence and both want to collaborate. Nevertheless, one comes on Saturday and the other on Sunday. They did not accomplish their goal because, in order to put up the barbed wire, both of them had to be there at the same time.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand why coordination is important in order to achieve collaboration. Surely, you have had the experience of starting to come together with others in a group to collaborate on some project, yet not everyone showed up. The result was that those who showed up became discouraged and left the project unfinished, or perhaps did not even start it. Or maybe some of the people come at a certain time, and others arrive three hours later. Those who arrive first get tired of waiting and leave, or become discouraged and the spirit of the group drops considerably.

Cooperative games help develop in children the attitudes which are necessary for cooperation:

1. The object of the game provides a common goal.
2. To achieve this goal, the children learn to cooperate and coordinate their efforts.

This learning is not achieved the first time the game is played. The games must be used repeatedly until the children begin to discover ways to cooperate.

Questions:

1. What do you think about cooperative games? _____

2. How do most ordinary games compare with cooperative games? _____

3. What do you think about competition? _____

4. What effects would you like the games to have on the children? _____

SECTION 9

In order to teach the games to the children well, you obviously have to know how they are played. This is done by playing and practicing. Therefore, it would be very helpful if you and some friends would practice all of the games presented in the 15 lessons included with this unit.

SECTION 10

In order to teach a game to children one has to do three things very well:

1. Clearly explain the purpose of the game.
2. Make sure all the children understand how to play the game.
3. Make sure they all feel a sense of success when the game is over.

The way in which the teacher explains the purpose of a game very much affects the children's enthusiasm. The teacher should communicate happiness and a sense of challenge to the children in order to interest them in the game. As well as motivating the children, the right kind of explanation serves to focus their enthusiasm. For example, in the game called "Help the Sick" from Lesson 5, two children clasp hands to form a chair in which a "sick person" is carried to the "health center". Without the proper introduction, the children might think it is more fun to let their companion fall than to take care of him. The teacher can prevent this by saying, "All right children, today we are going to play 'Help the Sick.' This game is a lot of fun because we all have to cooperate in order to take the sick person to the health center. If we let the sick person fall, he will get hurt, and we would all feel very sad. If we arrive at the health center without any problems, we can feel very happy and content because we will have helped him."

Exercises:

1. Name two things the teacher should do well when she introduces a new game.
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
2. Practice introducing three games to your fellow classmates.
3. Why is it necessary to motivate the children and to explain the purpose of a game, even though they may already be familiar with it? _____

SECTION 11

Once the children understand the purpose of the game and are motivated, it is important to clearly explain how the game is played. In general, it will be necessary to practice a little with the children. For example, in the game called "The Bridge", presented in Lesson 4, you can gently guide the children into their starting places, and help them go through the steps of the game. In some cases, you can start with a few of the smaller children and afterwards allow the rest to participate. Instead of putting all the children on the "bridge" at once, you can practice with some of the children two by two. After several demonstrations, the number of children on the "bridge" can be increased, until everyone is participating. When you are explaining how to play the game, it is essential to show them how to do it and practice it with them.

SECTION 12

Throughout the game, it is important that the children experience a sense of success. The role of the teacher is very important in achieving this. She encourages them as they play,

applauds them when they do well, and demonstrates the happiness she feels in their accomplishments.

When he feels successful, a child grows psychologically. The child starts to feel confident in his own capacities; he develops the courage to try things that are new and difficult, and develops a sense of fellowship. His desire to be obedient to the rules of the game is strengthened. This obedience can be channeled towards his parents and the laws of God. Feeling successful also strengthens his desire to achieve things, using his capacities to the utmost.

For consultation:

1. How does a teacher contribute to the children's sense of success?
2. Which actions of a teacher contribute to the children's sense of failure?
3. Do the children have to play the game perfectly in order to feel successful?
4. What are some of the expressions a teacher can use to contribute to the children's sense of success?

SECTION 13

The last activity of your class will be coloring pictures. Actually, this will be one of the children's favorite activities, and they will always be looking forward to it. Maybe what attracts their attention is the opportunity to test their artistic capacities and develop their concepts of beauty. Artistic development is very important in children's education. In the more advanced classes you will have to do more complex activities in order to develop their artistic expression. For now, it is sufficient to let the children freely color the different drawings.

For each class you should choose the corresponding drawing at the end of the unit and make enough copies for all the children. Sometimes children bring crayons from home, on other occasions each family can make a small contribution to buy some boxes of crayons for the entire class. In this case, your Local Spiritual Assembly could certainly assist you in asking for help from the families.

As an exercise before carrying out this activity with the children, decide whether the following phrases are true or false:

1. It is important for children to learn to share the crayons. T ☐ F ☐
2. It does not matter if, at the beginning, the child colors outside the lines, as long as he is trying to color well. T ☐ F ☐
3. When a child cannot color well, the drawing should be taken away from him and given to another child. T ☐ F ☐

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 4. While the children color, the teacher can sit down and rest. | T <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. While children are coloring, the teacher should walk among them, giving them help and encouragement. | T <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. While they are coloring, the children should remain silent. | T <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Before handing out the drawings, the teacher should say something about what the drawing might mean. | T <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. It would be interesting for the teacher to think of an imaginary story related to the drawing that would be useful in teaching the children something important. | T <input type="checkbox"/> | F <input type="checkbox"/> |

15 Lessons for Children

LESSON 1

In order to attract divine blessings and create a spiritual atmosphere, begin your class by reciting a prayer. The prayer suggested for this lesson is the following:

“O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate.”⁴

After the prayer, the children may be asked if any of them know a prayer by heart. Then, you may help them memorize the following prayer in the way that was explained in Sections 2 and 3:

“O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.”²

It is expected that the children will learn at least a part of the prayer in this class. Once this has been achieved, you may go on to the second activity, learning to sing a song:

Ye Are Drops

C

Ye are drops (ye are drops) *echo voice*

Of one ocean (of one ocean).

F

Ye are leaves (ye are leaves)

G

Of one tree (of one tree).

C

Come and join us (come and join us)

F

In our quest for unity.

C

G

C

It's a way of life for you and me.

All the earth is (all the earth is)

But one country (but one country).

Man is one (man is one)

Can't you see (can't you see).

Come and join us (come and join us)

In our quest for unity.

It's a way of life for you and me.

The next activity is to memorize a quotation from the Bahá'í Holy Writings. You could explain the quotation to the children in the following way:

The principal goal of the Bahá'í Faith is the unity of mankind. We try to live in unity and see everyone as our brother or sister. It is especially important for us to do this in

the community where we live. Bahá'ís avoid arguments and fights. If any differences arise, we resolve them with friendliness and love. To help ourselves live in unity, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illumine the whole earth.”⁵

The children can learn the quotation more easily if they understand it well. They will be assisted in this if you encourage them to talk about the meaning of the quotation. Here are some sentences to help them understand words that may be new to them:

Powerful

1. Kumar read a poem so sweet that it brought tears to his eyes. The poem was very powerful.
2. The sun's rays warm the earth and give life to all beings. The sun's rays are powerful.

Illumine

1. The room was dark until we turned on the light. The light illumined the room.
2. In the morning, the sun rises and shines its light on the land and sea. The sun illumines the land and sea.

When the children have learned the quotation by heart and have thought about the importance of unity, you may tell them a story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá that shows His concern for unity. As discussed in Sections 5, 6, and 7 it will help the children understand the story if you emphasize certain important points, such as the central theme, the parts of the story that relate to it, and the conclusion. It is suggested that you mentally review these questions before you tell the story: What is the central theme of this story? What parts of the story relate directly to this theme? What are some important details that make the story interesting?

In the days of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, many of the people of 'Akká had been misled about the Bahá'ís and felt it was all right to be against them. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with His great wisdom and love, changed the hearts of many of these people. He showed kindness to the people of all religions and helped them become united.

There was a Christian merchant in 'Akká who, like his fellow citizens, did not respect the Bahá'ís. One day, outside the gates of the city the merchant saw a camel-load of charcoal that belonged to the Bahá'ís. He stopped the driver and said, "This is better charcoal than I can get!" Without paying any money, he took the charcoal for himself.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá heard of this incident He went to the merchant's shop to ask for the return of the charcoal. The merchant did not pay Him any attention, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá sat there and waited. Finally, after three hours, the merchant turned to Him and asked coldly, "Are you one of the prisoners? What have you done that you were imprisoned?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied that His crime was the same one for which Christ was persecuted. The merchant was surprised. "What do you know about Christ?" he asked. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá calmly and kindly began to talk to him about Christ and His teachings. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke, the merchant's heart began to

melt and his pride and arrogance disappeared. Finally he said to 'Abdu'l-Bahá that unfortunately the charcoal was gone, but he would gladly pay for it. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá rose to go. The merchant also rose and walked with Him into the street, treating Him with great respect and honor.

The next activity for this class is a game called "Giants":

Two children stand side by side and the left leg of one child is tied to the right leg of the other child. Then they walk from one designated spot to another.

Variations:

- a. Three, four or more children are tied to one another and attempt to walk together.
- b. Obstacles can be placed along the pathway, such as branches and stones, making sure that it is done in a safe way.
- c. Instead of walking, the children jump like frogs, walk like crabs, etc.

To end the day, each child is given Drawing 1 to color.

LESSON 2

Today it is suggested that you begin the class by reciting the following prayer:

"O God! Rear this little babe in the bosom of Thy love and give it milk from the breast of Thy Providence. Cultivate this fresh plant in the rose garden of Thy love and aid it to grow through the showers of Thy bounty. Make it a child of the kingdom, and lead it to Thy heavenly realm. Thou art powerful and kind, and Thou art the Bestower, the Generous, the Lord of surpassing bounty."⁶

After the prayer the children should be asked to say a prayer they already know. Then you may help them review the prayer they began to memorize during the previous class.

The activity that follows consists of two songs, the one you introduced last time and a new one:

His First Counsel

A

Listen to the voice

That makes our hearts rejoice,

G D A

His first counsel is this:

E

Possess a pure heart,

A

A kindly heart,

B7 E

A radiant heart.

D A
 The heart is a treasure,
 D A
 A gift beyond measure,
 B7 E
 A bounty from your Lord.
 D A
 Protect it from the fire
 D A
 Of worldly desire,
 D E A
 And freely let it soar.

After the songs, the children may memorize a quotation of Bahá'u'lláh. You could explain it in the following way:

Our hearts are like mirrors. We should always keep them clean. Hatred, envy, and negative thoughts are like dust that stop the mirror from shining. When our hearts are pure they reflect the light of God, and we become a cause of happiness for others. To help keep our hearts pure, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart . . .”⁷

Counsel

1. One day Gerard and Mary were coloring some drawings. Gerard needed the yellow crayon, but Mary did not want to give it to him. The teacher told Mary she should share. The teacher gave Mary wise counsel.
2. Patricia has to decide whether to spend her money on cookies or on a story book. Her parents counsel her to buy the story book. Her parents give Patricia wise counsel.

Possess

1. Tinaye likes to read prayers before going to sleep. She has a small prayer book to read from. Tinaye possesses a small prayer book.
2. There was a flood and many people lost everything they possessed, but friends came to their aid and soon they had the things they needed again.

Pure heart

1. Cathy became angry and screamed at Susan. Susan was sad but quickly forgave Cathy. Susan possesses a pure heart.
2. Jorge likes to share his cookies with all the children, even with Gustavo, who throws stones at him. Jorge possesses a pure heart.

Kindly heart

1. When people in need come to her house, Ming Ling always takes care of them. Ming Ling possesses a kindly heart.
2. Mr. Robertson is very old. Jimmy helps him carry his fruit harvest to the market. Jimmy possesses a kindly heart.

Radiant heart

1. When I feel sad, my mother always cheers me up and makes me happy. My mother possesses a radiant heart.
2. Obuya became ill and has to spend all his time in bed. He says many prayers, does not become sad, and continues to show forth happiness. Obuya possesses a radiant heart.

After the children learn the quotation, you may tell them a story. As always, if you keep the different parts of the story clearly in mind and you tell the story with joy and sincerity, the children will understand it better.

'Abdu'l-Bahá could always tell what was in a person's heart, and He greatly loved people whose hearts were pure and radiant. There was a lady who had the great honor of being the guest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at dinner. As she sat listening to His words of wisdom, she looked at a glass of water in front of her and thought, "Oh! If only 'Abdu'l-Bahá would take my heart and empty it of every earthly desire and then refill it with divine love and understanding, just as you would do with this glass of water."

This thought passed through her mind quickly, and she did not say anything about it, but soon something happened that made her realize 'Abdu'l-Bahá had known what she was thinking. While He was in the middle of His talk, He paused to call a servant and said a few words to him in Persian. The servant quietly came to the lady's place at the table, took her glass, emptied it, and put it back in front of her.

A little later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while continuing to talk, picked up a pitcher of water from the table, and in a most natural way, slowly refilled the lady's empty glass. No one noticed what had happened, but the lady knew that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was answering her heart's desire. She was filled with joy. Now she knew that hearts and minds were like open books to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who read them with great love and kindness.

The activity which follows the story is a game called "The Burning Thirst":

Sticks are tied to the children's arms so they cannot bend their elbows. Then the children pretend that they are walking in a desert and are very, very thirsty. They come upon water in cups and have to find a way to drink it. (They will discover that the only way is to help each other, being careful not to get each other wet.)

To end the class each child is given Drawing 2 to color.

LESSON 3

By now you appreciate the value of beginning each class with a prayer and asking the children to recite prayers they know by heart, so that gradually they will learn to begin every effort by beseeching the assistance of God. The prayer we suggest for today's class is the following:

“O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.”⁸

After this prayer, and prayers recited by some of the students, you may direct your attention to helping the children memorize the prayer they have been working on for the last two lessons. Make sure this time that all the children have learned it.

The next activity starts by having the children sing the two songs they learned in the previous lessons. When you feel they have learned these songs well you may introduce today's song:

Justice is the Way

Chorus:

C

Justice is the way

Dm

To make a brighter day,

F G C

When people are in need.

C

Justice is the light,

Dm

A light that's shining bright,

F G C

Shining through good deeds.

C

Dm

How often have we heard that 'Abdu'l-Bahá

F G C

Shared everything He had.

Dm

He was content with less and led a simple life,

F G C

So others would be glad.

Chorus

Justice is a little more than just being fair.
To be just we have to give,
Share what we have, share what we love,
Share the joy to live.

To introduce the next quotation for memorization, you could ask some of the children to recite the two quotations they already know. Then explain the following:

God loves justice. He is pleased with us when He sees us treating other people with fairness and justice. We must respect the rights of every human being and make sure we do not take away from anyone what they deserve. In order to help us be just, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.”⁹

Tread

1. Many leaves have fallen from the trees in the forest, covering the path. Fumiko walks through the forest. She treads the leaf-covered path.
2. Pedro likes to help all his friends play happily together. Pedro and his friends are very unified. Pedro treads the path of unity.

Path

1. Luis has a donkey. He took it to graze in a meadow and left it alone. The donkey found the path home by itself.
2. There are two ways to go to school. Millie always likes to take the path that goes by her grandmother's house.

Justice

1. Carlos was given crayons to hand out during class. There were ten crayons and five children. Carlos gave two crayons to each child. Carlos handed out the crayons with justice.
2. Anna has lots of water in her water well, but sometimes her neighbor's well runs dry. Anna never allows this neighbor to suffer and always makes her feel welcome to take water. Anna loves justice.

After the children learn the quotation and you talk with them about its meaning, you can tell them the following story about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that helps illustrate justice. In telling it you can emphasize the actions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that show His quality of justice, and help the children see how they could follow His example.

One day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wanted to go from ‘Akká to Haifa. He went to take an inexpensive seat in a regular coach. The driver was surprised and must have asked himself

why 'Abdu'l-Bahá was so frugal as to ride in this cheap coach. "Surely, Your Excellency would prefer to travel in a private carriage," he exclaimed. "No," replied the Master, and He traveled in the crowded coach all the way to Haifa. As He stepped down from the coach in Haifa a distressed fisherwoman came to Him and asked for His help. All day she had caught nothing and now had to return to her hungry family. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave her a good sum of money, turned to the driver and said, "Why should I ride in luxury while so many are starving?"

The activity which follows the story is a game called "Sharing":

A car tire (or other low object) is placed on the ground. Then the children try to see how many of them can stand on it at the same time.

To end the class, each child is given Drawing 3 to color.

LESSON 4

You may begin today's class with the following prayer:

"O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life. O God! Thou are more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord."¹⁰

Once some of the children have also said prayers, you may review with them the prayer they have been memorizing in the last three classes. Since they will begin to learn a new prayer in today's lesson, you should make sure they can say the first one well.

As you introduce the new prayer, remember that it should be explained word by word. Where words are difficult, concrete examples should be given to illustrate their meaning. The children can spend seven classes learning this prayer; therefore you can divide the prayer into five parts, leaving the last two classes to review the whole prayer.

"O Thou Kind Lord! I am a little child, exalt me by admitting me to the kingdom. I am earthly, make me heavenly; I am of the world below, let me belong to the realm above; gloomy, suffer me to become radiant; material, make me spiritual, and grant that I may manifest Thine infinite bounties. Thou art the Powerful, the All-Loving."¹¹

Moving on to the next activity, the children can learn to sing the following song and review the songs they have learned in previous lessons:

Love, Love, Love

C F
Love, love, love, love,
G C
Love your fellow man.
 F
Love, love, love is
G G7
How the world began.
C F
God loved creation
C G
For He created thee,
C F G C
To love, love, love Him and humanity.

You may now explain a new quotation for the children to memorize, in the following manner:

The love of God shines upon humanity like the rays of the sun. The sun's rays fall on deserts and gardens alike. Our love should be like the rays of the sun: we should love everyone, even those who mistreat us. In order to help us love all of humanity, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“O Friend! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love . . .”¹²

In this quotation the only word that may need explaining is “naught”, which means nothing.

1. Agot loves to sing songs about the sun and the flowers, and he does not sing songs about anything else. Agot sings of naught but sunshine and flowers.
2. Ta Jen wanted to go down to the river, but he had not done his household tasks. His father said he could not leave until he finished his work, and unfortunately Ta Jen became angry. His grandmother said, “Dear, all your plans will come to naught if you don't obey your father.”

The next activity is telling a story. Remember that in order for the children to enjoy the story you must first read it carefully to yourself, thinking about the main theme and the details that will attract the children's attention.

While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a prisoner in ‘Akká, there was a man in that city who behaved very badly towards Him. The ignorant man believed that he was following the teachings of Muḥammad. He thought that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was not a good man and that God did not care how badly the Bahá'ís were treated. In fact, he believed that he was showing love for God by showing hatred to the Bahá'ís. He hated ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with all his heart. That hate grew and festered inside him, sometimes spilling out of him the way water spills out of a broken pot.

In the mosque, when people came to pray, this man would cry out against 'Abdu'l-Bahá and say terrible things about Him. When he passed 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the street, he would cover his face with his robe so that he would not see Him. Now, this man was very poor and had neither enough to eat nor warm clothes to wear. What do you think 'Abdu'l-Bahá did about him? He showed him kindness, sent him food and clothes, and made sure he was being taken care of. For example, once when this man became very ill, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent him a doctor, paid for his medicine and food, and also gave him some money. He accepted the gifts from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but did not thank Him. In fact, this ignorant man held out one hand to the doctor to take his pulse, and with the other hand, covered his face so that he would not have to look upon the countenance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And so it went for many long years. And then, one day, the man's heart finally changed. He came to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house, fell at His feet and with a very heavy heart and tears flowing down his face like twin rivers, cried, "Forgive me, Sir! For twenty-four years I have done evil to You. For twenty-four years You have shown only goodness to me. Now I know that I have been wrong. Please forgive me!" Thus, the great love of 'Abdu'l-Bahá triumphed over hatred and saved this man from his condition of ignorance.

The activity which follows the story is a game called "The Bridge":

A line is established on the floor using benches (or boards or tiles) and it is called "the bridge". Two groups of children have to cross the bridge at the same time, going in opposite directions, without letting anyone fall off the bridge. The children have to help each other change places, passing each other one by one.

To end the class, each child is given Drawing 4 to color.

LESSON 5

By this time, you will have memorized the four prayers that you have used to introduce the lessons. You can continue to use one of these prayers to open each class. The children, themselves, will know at least one prayer by heart, and a few of them should recite it after your opening prayer. Every child should have an opportunity to recite a prayer at least once every three or four classes. Also, in each class you will continue with memorization of the prayer that you introduced in Lesson 4. This activity will be followed until Lesson 9, when it is expected that all the children will know the second prayer by heart.

The other activities of today's class are the following:

A. Songs (include some of the songs learned in previous lessons):

Look at Me

C
Look at me,
F C
Follow me, be as I am,
F G C
'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Teach, teach, teach,
Follow me, be as I am,
'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Serve your Lord,
Follow me, be as I am,
'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Love mankind,
Follow me, be as I am,
'Abdu'l-Bahá, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

B. Memorizing quotations:

God loves us and always wants us to be near to Him. The best way to attain nearness to God is to become His servant. We are God's servants when we serve humanity. There are many ways to serve, for example, visiting the sick, helping those in need, and teaching what one knows to others. We should serve everyone, without thinking whether they are rich or poor, friends or strangers. To help us become servants of humanity, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

"That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race."¹³

Dedicate

1. Dervi always pays close attention during art class and spends many hours preparing herself for each class. Dervi dedicates herself to art.
2. Hung Wei's father has a vegetable garden. Every day Hung Wei helps his father weed and water the vegetable garden. Hung Wei dedicates himself to helping his father.

Service

1. Mumbi, Apiyo and Tocho cleaned their grandparents' house. They were happy to have done this service.
2. Sachiko walks four kilometers to give a children's class. She walks that far each week because she loves to serve the community.

Human race

1. At school we saw pictures of white, red, black, brown and yellow-skinned people from many different countries. All of these people belong to the human race.
2. The lady asked Kenji if he liked people from other places as much as he liked people from his own village. He answered that he loved everyone because all are a part of the human race.

C. Story:

Lua Getsinger, one of the early Bahá'ís of America, tells of an experience she had in 'Akká. She had made the pilgrimage to the prison-city to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One day He said to her that He was too busy today to call upon a friend of His who was very poor and sick. He wished Lua to go in His place. He told her to take food to the sick man and care for him as He had been doing.

Lua learned the address and immediately went to do as 'Abdu'l-Bahá had asked. She felt proud that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had trusted her with some of His own work. But soon she returned to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a state of excitement. "Master," she exclaimed, "You sent me to a very terrible place! I almost fainted from the awful smell, the dirty rooms, the degrading condition of that man and his house. I left quickly before I could catch some terrible disease."

Sadly and sternly 'Abdu'l-Bahá gazed at her. If she wanted to serve God, He told her, she would have to serve her fellow man, because in every person she should see the image and likeness of God. Then He told her to go back to the man's house. If the house was dirty, she should clean it. If the man was dirty, she should bathe him. If he was hungry, she should feed him. He asked her not to come back until all of this was done. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had done these things many times for this man, and He told Lua Getsinger that she should be able to do them once. This is how 'Abdu'l-Bahá taught Lua to serve her fellow man.

D. Game: "Help the Sick"

One child pretends to be sick. Two other children clasp each other's hands (right with right and left with left) in order to form a chair. The sick child is helped to sit down in the chair and the others take him to the Health Center. (The teacher chooses a tree or another place that can be the Health Center.)

Variation:

The sick person lies down on a stretcher which is formed by a few children holding each other's arms. The children form two lines facing each other. They stretch out their arms bent at the elbow and interlock them with those of the children across from them.

E. Coloring: Drawing 5

LESSON 6

As in the preceding lessons, it is suggested that you start the class with one of the prayers that you know from memory and then ask some of the children to say a prayer. After these prayers, the children continue memorizing the prayer you introduced in Lesson 4. The other activities of today's class are the following:

A. Songs (include some of the songs learned in previous lessons):

Tell the Truth

Chorus:

C
When you tell the truth,
G
You win people's trust.

Always tell the truth,
C
You must, you must.

F C
When you tell the truth, you'll never feel ashamed.
G C
God will be pleased with you.
F C
If you tell a lie, you surely will be blamed,
D7 G
And maybe lose a friend or two.

Chorus

B. Memorizing quotations:

Truthfulness is one of the most essential spiritual qualities. Bahá'ís should never tell even the smallest lie. Why do people tell lies? Sometimes it is because they are afraid to tell the truth. Yet we all know that God is aware of all our actions and we cannot hide anything from Him. If we are not truthful, it will be very difficult for us to develop other virtues, and we will not attain nearness to God. Let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

"Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues."¹⁴

Truthfulness

1. Sanjay dropped a glass and broke it. When his mother asked him what had happened, instead of telling a lie he told her the truth. Sanjay showed the virtue of truthfulness.
2. A friend wanted to play with Gita and went to her house to find her. Gita had homework and could not come out to play. Her brother told Gita he would tell the friend that she was not home, but Gita did not want her brother to tell a lie. Gita went outside and told her friend that she could not come out and play. Gita showed the virtue of truthfulness.

Foundation

1. Alok's father was building a house. Before putting up the walls, he placed rocks and

cement under the place where the walls would go. The rocks and cement form the foundation of the house.

2. Before you learn to read and write you have to know the sounds of the letters. Learning the sounds of the letters is a foundation for learning to read and write.

Virtues

1. Aurora is friendly, kind and joyful. Aurora possesses many virtues.
2. Mrs. Patel teaches the children about justice, generosity, humility and honesty. She teaches them many human virtues.

C. Story:

In a country far away, some time ago, there lived a young shepherd, who, while his father worked in the fields and his mother kept up the home, had the task of taking care of the family's sheep. One day, the boy felt very bored and decided to play a trick on his neighbors. Suddenly he started crying out "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is eating the sheep!" All of his friends came running to help chase away the wolf, but when they got there they found the young shepherd laughing at them because they had received such a fright and really there was no wolf anywhere to be found. His friends went back to their work saying that the boy had behaved very badly.

The following day, the boy repeated his foolery. "Wolf! Wolf! Help me! Help me!" Some of the neighbors came running again to help, only to find the young shepherd laughing at them, because this time too it was a lie that a wolf was near. The third day, when they heard the boy call "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is eating the sheep! Please come help!" no one paid any attention because they thought that it was just another lie. That day the wolf did come and eat the sheep! The young shepherd was very sad, but he had learned a good lesson. If we tell lies, the day will come when neither our parents, our brothers and sisters, nor our friends will believe what we say, even when it is the truth!

D. Game: "Touch Telephone"

Several children stand in a line all looking in the same direction, with the last child looking at a piece of paper hanging on a wall or tree or, if available, at a blackboard. More than one line can be organized, if necessary. With a finger, the teacher draws something on the first child's back. He, in turn, draws it on the back of the second child. The second child draws it on the back of the third child, and so on, until the last child is reached who draws it on the piece of paper or blackboard. Then the teacher draws next to it what she had drawn on the first child's back. The drawings should be simple so that all the children can do them.

E. Coloring: Drawing 6

LESSON 7

After you and the children recite prayers and the children learn more of the prayer they have been memorizing, continue with the other activities for today's class.

A. Songs (include songs from previous lessons):

We Are the People of Bahá

D
We are the people of Bahá,

We are the people of Bahá,

G
We are the people of,

D
We are the people of,
A7 D
We are the people of Bahá.

Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá,
Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá,
We are the people of,
We are the people of,
We are the people of Bahá.

Firmly we walk the path of God,
Firmly we walk the path of God,
Until the very last,
We will be steadfast,
Firmly we walk the path of God.

B. Memorizing quotations:

One of the most important qualities of a person who truly loves God is steadfastness, or firmness. As Bahá'ís, we have accepted Bahá'u'lláh and we are certain that He is the Manifestation of God for this day. Therefore, nothing that others can say or do to us can affect our faith in Him. We must always love Him and obey His laws and teachings. In order to remember this, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

"Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord."¹⁵

Supremely

1. The gardens that surround the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh are supremely beautiful, more beautiful than our most wonderful dreams.
2. Maria's mother made a very special cake for the family. They ate it with great enjoyment and all said it was supremely delicious.

Lofty

1. Each night before she sleeps Martha prays and feels close to God. When she goes to sleep her spirit is in a lofty condition.
2. At the meeting, Kumar is giving a talk about world peace and the goodness of humanity. Kumar is speaking of lofty things.

Remain steadfast

1. Someone told Rosemary that stars are white spots painted on the sky, but Rosemary has learned that each star is really a far-away sun. Rosemary does not change her mind. She remains steadfast in what she knows.
2. Someone told Mona that it isn't important to pray every day, but she kept praying because she knew it was a law of God to pray. Mona remained steadfast in following the law of prayer.

C. Story:

Everyone has heard of the first heroes of the Bahá'í Faith who, in the time of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, offered up their lives in the path of God. This is the story of a very special hero who lived in the times of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His name is Rúhu'lláh Varqá and he was a child only 13 years old when he sacrificed his life in the pathway of his Best-Beloved, Bahá'u'lláh.

When Rúhu'lláh was 12 years old, he traveled with his father to 'Akká to be in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He had heard a great deal about the great love and kindness of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and during their travels he could hardly sleep because he was so anxious to be in 'Akká. Finally, when he attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, his heart was filled with great joy and happiness.

'Abdu'l-Bahá loved Rúhu'lláh very much and especially liked to hear Rúhu'lláh chant in a very lovely voice the prayers he knew by heart. Rúhu'lláh lived for a time in the paradise of the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. With the passing of each day, his love for the Faith grew and grew. Yet finally these days of nearness came to an end, and Rúhu'lláh and his father left 'Akká and returned to Persia. There they devoted themselves to teaching sincere souls and taking the beautiful message of Bahá'u'lláh from place to place. Rúhu'lláh's words had a great effect on all who heard him. His father loved him tenderly and everyone praised his manner and spirituality. He was very truthful, honest, courteous and kind towards others. He recited the prayers beautifully and knew many of them by heart. Each morning he arose at dawn to pray.

One day the enemies of the Faith captured Rúhu'lláh and his father and took them to a prison in Teheran. The conditions of that prison were very bad and it was very difficult to sleep under the weight of heavy chains. Yet, in spite of all this, Rúhu'lláh felt very happy. He prayed, chanted, and composed very beautiful poems expressing his love for Bahá'u'lláh.

Every day, life in prison became harder and harder for these two heroes until the event they were hoping for finally took place. In the early hours of one morning a

high government official arrived at the prison. He was drunk and violent. He falsely accused Rúhu' lláh and his father of terrible things, but they calmly responded that they were innocent and had harmed no one. The official, becoming more and more furious, screamed at Rúhu' lláh's father and asked him, "Who should I kill first, you or your son?" "It makes no difference to me," Varqá calmly replied. Upon hearing this, the official approached Rúhu' lláh's father and killed him with terrible cruelty. "Father, Father, take me with you!" Rúhu' lláh cried, over and over again. He wished with all his heart to follow his father's example and sacrifice his own life.

The official tried to speak kindly to Rúhu' lláh, and told him, "Dear son, you are still a child and I have great love for you. I can help you occupy high, important positions. I can give you riches and anything else you want. Just say that you are not a Bahá'í." "I do not want a high position or money," Rúhu' lláh answered. "I just want to go with my father."

When the official realized that this child was steadfast and could not be moved, he gave orders for Rúhu' lláh to be hung. The two bodies were thrown into a well in a nearby place known today as Varqáyyih.

So it was that Rúhu' lláh, although a child, became one of the heroes of the Bahá'í Faith, satisfying the desire of his heart which, as his poetry had expressed, was none other than to offer up his life in the pathway of Bahá'u' lláh.

D. Game: "The Wolves and the Goats"

Once there was a herd of goats that had to pass over a very old bridge to get to the pasture where the sweet grass grew. Underneath the bridge lived a family of wolves that loved to eat little goats. But the wolves were very lazy and always slept a lot, waking up only at the sound of a goat passing over the bridge. The goats were very smart and learned how to walk very lightly over the bridge without making any noise because, of course, they did not want to wake up the wolves. They listened closely to the snoring of the wolves, and, if at any moment it stopped, they would stay very still, because they knew that the wolves were listening. If the goats stayed very still, the wolves would go back to sleep.

The teacher makes a bridge out of sticks and benches, some high, some low. The children must "cross" the bridge, going under the high sticks and over the low ones. The teacher, by clapping or hitting a pan, represents the wolves snoring. Every now and then the wolves wake up. The child has to stay absolutely still, even though he may have one foot up in the air, until the wolves go back to sleep. If the child knocks down a stick or even makes a small noise, the wolves wake up and gobble up the little goat.

E. Coloring: Drawing 7

LESSON 8

After you and a few of the students have said some prayers, you can review with them the prayer they are learning by heart. The other activities of the day are the following:

A. Songs (including some of the preceding songs):

Be Like the Earth

C G
See the earth,
F G C
It's so humble.

 G
Has all God's wealth to give,
F G C
Everything we need to live.
 C G
Let's us walk on it every day,
 F G C
But have you ever heard it say,
 G F G C
I am richer, greater than you.

See the tree,
It's so humble.
The more its fruits abound,
It bows closer to the ground
And shares the fruit that way,
But have you ever heard it say,
I am richer, greater than you.

C G
Be like the earth,
F G C
Be like the tree,

 G
Rise to the heaven of glory
 F G C
On the wings of humility.

B. Memorizing quotations:

A very important virtue is humility. A person who is humble before God realizes the greatness of God and his own smallness. He gives himself up entirely to God's Will. When we give our will over to His, God fills our hearts with joy. To help us be humble before God, let us memorize the following quotation:

"O Son of Man! Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee."¹⁶

Humble

1. When Zinab prays to God she often bows her head and thinks about God's greatness. Zinab is humble before God.
2. Before Yong Fu goes on a teaching trip, he thinks about the greatness of God and begs His help. Yong Fu is humble before God.

C. Story:

Humility was one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's most impressive qualities. The friends wanted to give Him great titles, but He only wanted to be called "'Abdu'l-Bahá", which means "Servant of the Glory". He also liked simplicity. One time, some wealthy friends from the West made an elaborate plan for Him to wash His hands before a meal. They arranged for a specially-dressed boy to carry a fancy bowl with "crystal water" and they also had a perfumed towel waiting for Him. When the Master saw all this, as the group of friends with the little boy, the bowl and the towel approached Him from across the lawn, He knew their purpose. He hurriedly found some water nearby, washed His hands, and dried them with a piece of cloth the gardener had. Radiantly, He then turned to meet His guests, and asked them to use the water and towel to wash their own hands.

D. Game: "Sometimes I am Tall"

One child is blindfolded and the rest form a circle around him. In unison they say:

"I am very tall." (They stand on their toes and stretch as tall as they can.)

"I am very short." (They squat down and make themselves as short as they can.)

"Sometimes I am tall." (They stretch up again.)

"Sometimes I am short." (They squat down again.)

The teacher gestures to the children whether they are to be short or tall, and then they say together:

"Guess what we are now!"

The blindfolded child tries to guess by the height of their voices if they are short or tall. Each child takes a turn being blindfolded.

E. Coloring: Drawing 8

LESSON 9

Begin the class by reciting a prayer from memory, then ask some of the children to recite prayers. By this lesson, the children will have finished learning the prayer they started to memorize in Lesson 4. Today you should review the prayer with them to make sure they can say it well. The other class activities are the following:

A. Songs (including some of the previous songs):

Prefer Your Brother

Chorus:

F G C Am
It is a blessing to prefer your brother.
F G C Am
This is a way to show you care.
F G C Am
It is a blessing to prefer your sister.
F G C G C
You are richer, the more you share.

C G Am7 C
I am thirsty, I am thirsty,
Dm G6 C Am7
But my brother, he comes first.
F Em Dm C
So I offer him the water
Dm G C
That will quench his thirst.

Chorus

I am hungry, I am hungry,
And my sister, she is too.
So I give her some of my food,
That's what's best to do.

B. Memorizing quotations:

God wants all of us to live happily. He wants us always to be looking for ways to serve others and bring them joy. In order to live in this way, we should not only wish for other people the good things we want for ourselves, we should wish even better things for them. Let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”¹⁷

Blessed

1. There is a well and a bucket but no way to use the bucket to get water. Amelia, using her intelligence, finds a rope to tie to the bucket, lowers the bucket, and gets water. Amelia's intelligence is a gift of God. God has blessed Amelia with intelligence.
2. Victor's family says prayers every morning in the living room of their home. The home of Victor's family is blessed.

Prefers

1. John likes to eat chocolate and vanilla ice cream, but when he has to choose, he chooses vanilla. He prefers vanilla.
2. Anindo can go out and play, or go help her father in the garden. She decides to help her father in the garden. Anindo prefers to help her father.

C. Story:

'Abdu'l-Bahá preferred inexpensive clothes for Himself. When He had extra clothes He always gave them away to others. One day He was going to entertain the Governor of 'Akká. His wife felt that His coat was not good enough for the occasion. Well ahead of time she went to the tailor and ordered a fine coat for 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She thought He surely would not notice that His old coat had been replaced; He desired, after all, only to be scrupulously clean. When the day of the Governor's visit arrived, the new coat was laid out for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but He went searching for His old one. He asked for His old coat, saying that the one laid out could not be His. His wife attempted to explain that because of the occasion she had bought Him a new coat, but He would not accept it. He told her that for the price of this one coat they could buy five simple ones like He normally wore. He told her that there was no reason to spend so much money on a coat just for Him. If He needed a new one, they could send the expensive coat back to the tailor and order five ordinary coats for the same amount of money. "Then, you see, I shall not only have a new one, but I shall also have four to give to others!"

D. Game: "The Snail"

All the children line up holding hands. The children at one end of the line stand in place, while the others begin to walk around them. Little by little they wind themselves into a spiral to form a snail.

Variations:

- a. Those at one end begin to turn in a circle, winding the others up around them. (Be careful they do not step on each other's feet.)
- b. Once the snail is formed, those in the middle can squat down and go under the legs of the others—with none of the children letting go of each other's hands.

E. Coloring: Drawing 9

LESSON 10

After beginning the class with prayers, review with the children the two prayers they have learned in previous lessons. Then continue with the other activities.

A. Songs (including some of the previous songs):

Truthfulness

C G D G
Truthfulness is brighter than the light of the sun.

C G D G
Truthfulness is brighter than the light of the sun.

C G D G
With truthfulness, O people, beautify your tongues.

C G D G
With truthfulness, O people, beautify your tongues.

C G D G
Honesty adorns the soul of everyone.

C G D G
Honesty adorns the soul of everyone.

C G D G
Honesty is brighter than the light of the sun.

C G D G
Honesty is brighter than the light of the sun.

B. Memorizing quotations:

All of us know of beautiful things that God has created to adorn our lives and bring joy to our hearts. Yet, more than material things, it is spiritual qualities that make human beings beautiful. One of the most beautiful qualities which can adorn our lives is honesty. When we beautify ourselves with honesty, we do not take things that belong to others, and we never cheat anyone. To help us remember this quality of honesty, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty.”¹⁸

Beautify

1. Malit planted beautiful roses in the garden. The roses beautify the garden.
2. Sunil used to tell lies, but now he tells the truth. Sunil beautified his tongue with truthfulness.

Adorn

1. There is a lovely painting of sailboats on the wall. The painting adorns the wall.
2. In springtime the trees are adorned with beautiful blossoms.
3. Cindy's mother adorns herself with a special pair of earrings before she goes to the Feast.
4. When Akbar was a small boy he decided to adorn his character with spiritual virtues. He developed a very beautiful character.

C. Story:

Mullá Bahram was one of the great Bahá'ís of Iran. One day he received a letter that made him very sad. His cousin's small child had died. Since the child was a Bahá'í, they had given him a Bahá'í burial. This had angered the Muslim priests, who complained to the police. The child's father was taken to jail.

After reading the letter, Mullá Bahram thought deeply about this problem and decided to go to see a high government official to ask for help. When Mullá Bahram arrived at this official's home he found him at a feast with many guests. One of them, who saw the poorly dressed man enter the doorway, wanted to have him thrown out. But the owner of the house saw Mullá Bahram and with a great deal of love and respect, invited him to come in. All of the guests were surprised to see the courtesy and warmth with which the official treated Mullá Bahram, a poor and humble man. The host explained, "The respect I feel towards Mullá Bahram is well deserved because he is a righteous and honest man, even in moments of tests." Mullá Bahram explained his problem and with a great deal of pleasure the official wrote out the order for his cousin's immediate release. The guests were surprised and asked the official how he knew that Mullá Bahram was so honest that he merited such respect from a high government official. The official answered:

"Some time ago I had a debt which I had to pay right away, but I didn't have enough money. So I arrived at an agreement with the money-lender that he would receive a piece of property in exchange for the debt. However, we could not come to an agreement on the property's value. We could not accept the judgment of a friend of his nor a friend of mine, because each of us could have paid our friend to alter the property's price in our favor. So we asked a merchant to send one of his employees to the property to put a value on it. He sent Mullá Bahram. To ensure that the property was worth enough to pay the entire debt, I went to him the day he was to value the property and offered him a big bag of money so that he would speak in my favor. He would not have earned that much money in six years of hard work, but he did not accept it. He said it was better to wait and see the property. It turned out that Mullá Bahram estimated the property at much more than I had thought it was worth. So, I went to him and offered him a bag of much more money so he would be pleased. He did not take it this time either. He said that the only reason he had put that value on the property was because it was the true value. His appraisal was a part of his work, for which he received a salary, and it would not be right to receive anything extra for it."

"Now," said the official to his guests, "you can appreciate why I say that Mullá Bahram possesses an honesty and integrity which is very rare these days. Oh! if everyone could be as honest as Mullá Bahram!"

D. Game: "Square, Circle, Triangle"

The teacher names a sequence of shapes (for instance: circle, circle, square) and asks one of the children to repeat it. Then the child is asked to try to draw the sequence. Each child is given several opportunities, each time using different sequences. If the child cannot remember a sequence of three, use a sequence of two. If a sequence of three is too easy, use four.

Variations:

- a. Instead of giving the sequence verbally, prepare some cards with different sequences drawn on them. Show one of the cards to each child and have him, after he looks at it, repeat the sequence, first aloud and then drawing it on paper.
- b. This can be done with sequences of actions. For example: jump, turn, touch your toes, touch your nose, clap, take a step forward.

E. Coloring: Drawing 10

LESSON 11

Beginning with this lesson and continuing through the next four lessons the children will be memorizing a new prayer. Therefore, after starting the class with prayers, you will need to explain to them the meaning of the words and sentences in the following prayer and help them memorize the first couple of sentences.

"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."¹⁹

The other activities for this lesson are the following:

- A. Songs (including a review of songs already learned):

Fountain of Generosity

C

Be a fountain,

Be a spring,

G

Be an ever-flowing thing.

F

C

It is true that if you do,

G

C

Happiness will come to you.

F

C

Search your heart every day.

G

Is there something you can give away?

Happiness should be your goal,

Give your heart

And give your soul.

It is true that if you do,

God will always be with you.

B. Memorizing quotations:

God is very generous with His creation. He looks after all of us. He gives daily nourishment to everyone. He has given us many gifts, such as hearing, sight and intelligence. In the same way that God is generous with us, He wants us to be generous with each other. We should give of what we have to those who need our help. In order to remember to be generous, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.”²⁰

Generous

1. Ram and Rajish had saved a little money. They decided to buy some books for their younger brothers and sisters. Ram and Rajish are generous.
2. Mrs. Murphy spent the whole morning baking cakes. Before taking them to town to sell, she gave two large cakes to the neighbors. Mrs. Murphy is generous.

Attribute

1. Joel took a beautiful rose to the teacher. Beauty is an attribute of the rose.
2. The stone is very hard. Hardness is an attribute of stones.
3. “One of your attributes is that you are willing to work hard,” the teacher said to Charlene.

Adorn

1. Tonight is the Nineteen Day Feast. The children picked flowers to place in the meeting room. The children adorned the meeting room with flowers.
2. Ta Jen has a beautiful smile. Most of the time a smile adorns his face.

C. Story:

One day, Bahá'u'lláh sent 'Abdu'l-Bahá to inspect the work of the shepherds who were taking care of His sheep. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a small child at the time, and the persecutions against Bahá'u'lláh and His family had not yet started. Bahá'u'lláh then had a good deal of land in the mountains and owned large herds of sheep. When the inspection was finished and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ready to leave, the man who had accompanied Him said, "It is your father's custom to leave a gift for each shepherd." 'Abdu'l-Bahá became silent for a while, because He did not have anything to give them. The man, however, insisted that the shepherds were expecting something. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá had an idea that made Him very happy! He would give the shepherds the sheep they were taking care of! Bahá'u'lláh was very much pleased when He heard about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's generous thoughts towards the shepherds. He humorously remarked that everyone had better take good care of 'Abdu'l-Bahá because someday He would give Himself away. Of course, this is exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá did for the rest of His life. He gave everything He had, each and every moment of His life, to humanity, to unite us and bring us true happiness.

D. Game: "The Twins"

Two, three or four children stand back to back and squat down. Then they hook elbows and try to stand up.

E. Coloring: Drawing 11

LESSON 12

This lesson also begins with prayers and proceeds with memorization of the prayer that was introduced in the previous lesson. The other activities of this lesson are:

A. Songs (including some previous songs):

God's Creatures

C

The creatures of this big world,

Dm

Whether they walk or fly, or fly,

G7

Are part of God's creation

C

Like you and I.

Chorus:

C

That's why we treat them with kindness.

Dm

Remember when you do, you do,

G7

To care for God's creation

C

Brings blessings to you.

The dog on our front door step,

He is our faithful friend, our friend.

We also thank our milk cow

And bees in the wind.

Chorus

The donkey carries his burden,

The kitty purrs on our lap, our lap,

And the bird sings sweetly

When we take our nap.

Chorus

B. Memorizing quotations:

God wants the Bahá'ís to work for the good of humanity. He wants everything that divides people to disappear so that everyone can live together as one family. To help this happen, we must cleanse our hearts from bad feelings towards others. We must mingle with peoples of every religion, race, nation and class in a spirit of kindness and love. To remember this, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

"Blessed is he who minglenth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love."²¹

Mingle

1. Egrets and cowbirds are two kinds of birds that live in the meadows. They are often seen together. These two kinds of birds mingle.
2. At the Nineteen Day Feast people of different races were so intermingled that you could tell they all loved one another.

C. Story:

Hakím Áqá Ján, a Jewish doctor, hurried behind Muḥammad-Báqir who, lamp in hand, ran towards his home through the narrow streets of Hamadán. His wife was having convulsions and was at the edge of death. A few hours earlier Hakím Áqá Ján had seen her and had given her some pills to lower her fever, yet her condition

had worsened. Upon arriving again at her side he paled as he became aware of the grave error he had committed. In place of the quinine pills, he had given her strychnine, which is a powerful poison. The woman was seriously ill and there was a very great possibility that she would die because of the doctor's mistake. Upon remembering the mistreatment that the Jews always received at the hands of the Muslims in that city, Ḥakīm Áqá Ján feared that if the woman died, he and his entire family and the other Jews of the city would be killed. These thoughts caused him to tremble and he almost could not hear Muḥammad-Báqir who was asking him why he was shaking and so upset. The doctor decided to confess the truth and explain his error. To his great surprise, Muḥammad-Báqir responded: "Everyone can make a mistake. You have not done so on purpose. Even if my wife dies, no one will blame you."

The doctor could not believe his ears. It seemed impossible to him that a Muslim could speak like that to a Jew. But as he had to act quickly, he ran to the nearest pharmacy and bought the medicine with which he hoped to save the woman's life. He spent the whole night with her doing everything possible to save her. Muḥammad-Báqir helped the doctor as much as he could and showed the utmost courtesy, friendliness and kindness. Finally, as morning came, the woman showed signs that the danger had passed and she would recover.

Ḥakīm Áqá Ján was very perplexed by the courtesy and kindness that Muḥammad-Báqir had shown towards him. He could not hide his surprise and finally asked Muḥammad-Báqir why he had treated him with so much kindness. "The reason", explained Muḥammad-Báqir, "is that my wife and I are Bahá'ís and we love people of all religions." This is how Ḥakīm Áqá Ján was attracted to the Bahá'í Faith. Later he became a believer.

D. Game: "The Hidden Quality"

All of the children form a circle with their hands out in front of them. The teacher holds a coin or a stone in her hand. The coin represents a quality, for example "kindness". Then as she walks along, the teacher passes her hands over the hands of each child and says: "John is kind, Martha is kind, Dervi is kind, etc." Each child closes his hands acting as though she has given him the coin. The teacher actually leaves the coin in the hands of one of the children. When she has gone around the entire circle, one child tries to guess who has the coin by saying, for example, "Kenji is very kind." Then Kenji should open his hands and show whether or not he has the coin. The child has three guesses to try to find out who has the coin, after which the game is repeated using another quality.

E. Coloring: Drawing 12

LESSON 13

The lesson begins with prayers recited by you and some of the children. The children then should continue memorizing the prayer presented in Lesson 11. The other class activities are the following:

A. Songs (including some previous songs):

I Want to Be Happy

Am
There is something you must know.
E7
In this Faith we have to show,
Dm
We are men of deeds, not of words.
Am E7 Am
Our very life should show our Faith to friend and foe.

Chorus:

Am
I want to be happy,
I want to be strong,
To be His servant
My whole life long.
Dm Am
So, I must obey the laws of God.
E7 Am
Yes, I must obey the laws of God.

There is something you must know.
In this world of pomp and show,
People are tired of empty speech.
They want to see you practice what you teach.

Chorus

B. Memorizing quotations:

God is All-Powerful. Out of His infinite love, He created man. Therefore, we must love Him and obey His commandments. We must obey God's commandments not only when they are easy to obey, but also when tests and difficulties arise in our lives. We must be obedient to God, and patient in times of trials. To remember this, let us memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

“The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.”²²

Sign

1. Nancy's little brother Niko was very sick last night and everyone was very worried. Today he is happy and his eyes are bright. This is a sign that Niko is getting well.
2. Koli gave her sister a bouquet of flowers. Koli loves her sister very much. The bouquet of flowers is a sign of her love.

Fortitude

1. Though the baby had been crying all day, Carol continued to rock her and care for her tenderly. Carol did not weaken in continuing to care for the baby. Carol showed fortitude.
2. The boys were always trying to get Ashok to fight, but Ashok knew this was wrong, so he avoided fights. Ashok showed fortitude.

Decree

1. Jerry says his prayers every day at morning and at night. Daily prayer is a commandment of God. By praying Jerry is following God's decree.
2. Teresa never tells lies. Teresa obeys the commandment of God to be truthful. Teresa is obeying God's decree.

C. Story:

There once was a man named Hájí Muḥammad who was a very good hunter. His bullets always hit the mark. He could even hit a small bird in full flight while galloping on horseback. One day with his rifle on his shoulder, he came upon a group of Bahá'ís who were on an outing with Bahá'u'lláh and decided to join them.

When Bahá'u'lláh saw that Hájí Muḥammad was going to use his rifle, He told him not to kill innocent birds. Hájí Muḥammad did not pay any attention to what Bahá'u'lláh said because his mind was on hunting, which he loved very much. So, he continued shooting at every bird he saw. But he was quite surprised to find that none of his bullets were hitting any birds. He shot once, he shot twice, he shot many times—but did not kill even one bird. He shot at big birds and at little birds, without any success.

The group was returning from the outing when a large, beautiful, white bird caught Hájí Muḥammad's eye. It was so big that it could not fly quickly and Hájí Muḥammad thought that surely it would be easy to kill this one. His first shot missed. Then he fired four more times, but he missed every time. In a panic the frightened bird flew near them. Hájí Muḥammad thought that now he could not possibly miss. He fired two more shots, but the bird escaped.

Hájí Muḥammad was astonished, and he began to think about the whole incident. All of a sudden, he understood something very important. He realized that Bahá'u'lláh had given him a clear command, but in his preoccupation with what he wanted to do, he had ignored Bahá'u'lláh. That day, Hájí Muḥammad made a firm decision to obey the commandments of God at all times.

D. Game: "The Blind Man"

One child is blindfolded. Another child acts as his guide and leads him around, being careful that nothing happens to him.

Variations:

- a. Rows of blindfolded children form a train and someone guides them.
- b. The blind person is guided around obstacles (tree trunks, ditches, rocks, tires, etc.).
- c. To increase the children's capacity for giving and receiving instructions, the blind person can be guided just by someone's voice. The guide (and perhaps the teacher) follows close by to catch him in case he stumbles.

E. Coloring: Drawing 13

LESSON 14

After prayers, the children continue to memorize the prayer presented in Lesson 11. During this lesson, the children should learn the whole prayer so that in the next lesson they may review it. The other activities of today's class are as follows:

A. Songs (including some of the previous songs):

My Love Is My Stronghold

Am
O Son of Being,
G
My love is My stronghold.
Am G C Dm7
He that entereth therein
E7 Am
Is safe and secure,
Am G C Dm7
And he that turneth away
E7 Am
Shall surely stray and perish.

Am G Dm
O Son of Being,
E7 Am
My love is My stronghold.
G Dm
O Son of Being,
E7 Am
My love is My stronghold.

B. Memorizing quotations:

God's love is like a fortress. A fortress is a mighty building with strong, thick walls and doors and windows that no one can break into. If someone wants to hurt us and we go into this fortress, we are safe. Loving God is like being inside a fortress, a stronghold where no one can do us harm, where we are completely protected. Let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

“O Son of Being! My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.”²³

Stronghold

1. To protect themselves from their enemies, the people built a large wall around the town. The town was made into a stronghold.
2. A boy in the neighborhood used to throw rocks at Danny. At first, this scared Danny and made him angry, but he knew he shouldn't fight back. He learned to remember God's love and rely on His protection. God's love became a stronghold for Danny. After a while the boy became Danny's friend.

Safe and Secure

1. The sheep got lost in the brush and Bahiyyih had to find them so that the wild dogs would not get them. Now the sheep are back in the corral, safe and secure.
2. Mark's friends were criticizing him. At first he felt sad, but then he turned his heart to God and felt His love. Turning his heart to God, Mark was safe and secure.

Perish

1. When wood burns in the fire it finally disappears completely and no longer exists as it did before. It perishes.
2. After leaves fall off a tree, they gradually crumble and disappear into the soil. They perish.

C. Story:

Once there were three little fish. They lived in a big lake and were very happy playing and swimming all day in the water. The lake was free of dangers. There were no big fish or hungry crocodiles. The water was very calm and there were no strong currents that could sweep them away from their mother. Other fish lived in the lake and the three little fish had lots of friends to play with. They held races, swimming one in front of the other. They jumped in the air and dived deep to the lake's bottom. They also played a game called "hide". They would hide behind the rocks and plants, and when their mother or father or grandparents passed by they would swim out quickly, shouting so as to scare them. The adults would pretend to be afraid, but knew that there was nothing in the lake that could harm them.

One day, the three little fish came to a part of the lake where they had never been before. They began to play, swimming quickly and jumping in the air. On one jump, one of the little fish saw a very large wall. He had never seen such a thing! He quickly entered back into the water and told his two brothers just what he had seen. His brothers did not believe him. They asked him: "What would a wall be doing here in our lake?" "I do not know," he answered them. "But if you do not believe me, jump up in the air and you will see it."

The two brothers, laughing at the other, swam quickly to take a big jump. Suddenly, they slammed into the wall. "Ow!" they screamed. With sore noses, they stuck their heads up out of the water to see. There really was a wall. And it was big! They swam along the wall to the edge of the lake and saw that the wall went all the way to the shore. They swam across to the other side and saw that the wall went from shore to shore. They dove down deep and saw that the wall reached down to the bottom of the lake. The three little fish could not explain to themselves why there was a wall there; they decided to ask their grandfather. When they found him he was sleeping, but because they were so anxious to know about the wall they woke him up.

"Grandfather!" they all shouted at once.

"There is a wall!" said the first fish.

"It goes from shore to shore!" said the second.

"It goes to the bottom of the lake!" said the third.

"What?" said the grandfather. "A wall?"

"Yes!" the three of them cried at once.

"A wall?" said the grandfather again, twitching his whiskers.

"What is the wall doing there, Grandfather?" the three little fish asked.

"It is a dam! It keeps us safe," the grandfather said. "It keeps out the crocodiles, the big hungry fish and the other animals that would eat us. It also keeps out the strong currents that rush up against the rocks. The dam makes the water stay in the lake. It is because of the dam that we do not have to worry about anything. The dam protects us. It is our stronghold."

"What is on the other side of the dam, Grandfather?" they asked him.

"There are many dangers," said the grandfather. "It could be that if you went outside, you could never get back."

For some time, the three little fish contented themselves with this explanation, yet each day they wanted to know more and more what was on the other side of the dam. Finally one day they decided to go and see. They went very far back from the dam to get a good start, and then swam full speed ahead and jumped as high as they could to get up and over the dam.

The first thing they saw on the other side was that the water level was lower than in the lake, so they fell. They were very scared and wanted to return immediately to the lake, but did not know how to! They fell and fell and fell, until at last they reached the water, hitting so hard that their entire bodies ached. The water ran very fast and swept them far away from the dam, threw them against the rocks and scraped their noses into the sand. At last they reached a spot where the water did not run so rapidly. They leaned against some smooth stones to rest.

*"My whole body hurts," said the first little fish.
"From nose to tail," said the second.
"We should have never left the lake," said the third.*

Suddenly a crocodile swam by. They had never seen a crocodile before, and when they saw his mouth with all its teeth they immediately cried: "Hide!" Fortunately for them, another fish passed by who had not seen the crocodile. The crocodile turned to catch it and swallowed it up in one bite! When he looked their way again, the three little fish were well hidden behind the rocks. The crocodile swam on in search of more food.

*"Did you see how he swallowed it up?" the first little fish asked his brothers.
"Yes," said the second.
"Soon he will swallow us up, too," said the third.
Their hearts skipped a beat and their tails trembled.
"Let us get away from here," they said.*

They started to swim upriver, fighting against the current. Bellies against the sand, struggling from rock to rock, and swimming with all their might, they swam towards the dam. They struggled and struggled. When at last they reached the foot of the dam, they stuck their heads up out of the water and, grabbing onto the rocks so as not to once again be swept away by the water, cast their gaze upwards. The dam was so high that they lost all hope of ever being able to jump over it. "We will never get back again to our fortress, our stronghold," they said crying.

Just at that moment a big hungry fish swam close by. When the little fish saw it their eyes nearly popped out of their heads with fright! It came closer to them with its mouth wide open. There was no time to run and hide. Without stopping to think, they jumped as high as they could, all three at once! The fright gave them so much strength that they jumped high enough to make it up and over the dam, falling once again into the lake on the other side.

"We will never again leave our stronghold!" they cried, and swam towards their mother.

D. Game: "Who is Knocking at My Door?"

One child is blindfolded and sits down on a bench with his back to everyone else. The teacher points to another child, who goes up to the child who is seated and knocks on the bench. The child who is seated says: "Who is knocking at my door?" The other, trying to disguise his voice, says: "It's me!" The child who is seated tries to guess who is knocking. The blindfolded child has three guesses, and then it is another child's turn to be blindfolded.

E. Coloring: Drawing 14

LESSON 15

This is the last lesson for this grade. As you know, during the year you will repeat each lesson at least three times so that the children learn its content well. Remember that in this lesson, after the prayers, the children should review the prayer they have been learning in the last four lessons. The other activities of this lesson are as follows:

A. Songs (including songs from previous lessons):

That Is How Bahá'ís Should Be

C
I love the Master,
G7
The Master loves me.
C
He shows me how Bahá'ís should be.
Cmaj7 F D#o
Trusting in God faithfully, (D#dim)
G7 C
That is how Bahá'ís should be.

I love the Master,
The Master loves me.
He shows me how Bahá'ís should be.
Praying for guidance constantly,
That is how Bahá'ís should be.

I love the Master,
The Master loves me.
He shows me how Bahá'ís should be.
God's will, not my will, my prayer will be,
That is how Bahá'ís should be.

B. Memorizing quotations:

Sometimes situations in life become difficult and we do not know what to do. God, our Creator, knows everything. He knows when someone is sad or in trouble. He loves us and is watching over us every moment of our lives. We should put our whole trust in God and, when we need help, turn to Him for assistance. To help us to remember to turn to God at all times, let us memorize the following quotation:

“Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping.”²⁴

Trust

1. Edward had a problem and went to Hung Wei for help. Edward knows that Hung Wei will do all he can to help him. Edward trusts Hung Wei.

2. Atieno wants to repair the roof of her house, but cannot do it alone. Atieno's friends tell her they will help. Trusting her friends, Atieno buys the materials.

Affairs

1. This morning Mr. Paulson went to see the judge, then to the market, and later to his cousin's house. In each place he had many things to do. He had to attend to many affairs.
2. Rose takes care of her younger brothers and sisters, does the homework assigned to her at school, and visits a neighbor who is sick. Rose keeps very busy tending to her affairs.

C. Story:

Síná was already very old. For many years he had traveled far and near teaching the Bahá'í Faith. Today he was going to start out on another teaching trip. His son, Habíb, for the first time, was going to accompany him. It was snowing and very cold, but Síná was impatient to leave so they prepared the mules and started their journey. The first day they traveled past nightfall until they found a town where they could rest and have something to eat. Although it was not a dangerous town, the people were not very friendly, so Síná and Habíb had to sleep in a stable. The stable was very old and it seemed that more rain fell inside than out. They passed the night waiting for dawn when they could continue their trip.

At last the sun rose and once again they mounted their mules. They traveled all day without rest, but at night the only place they could find to sleep was an old, dirty hotel. The beds were full of bugs, so they passed the whole night without sleeping. Thus they traveled for many days.

One day Habíb said to his father, "Now I know why my older brother did not want to come on this journey." Síná laughed and said, "Yes, sometimes it is a little uncomfortable to travel through these regions." In spite of the discomforts, they felt great joy when they arrived at a town where there were Bahá'ís. The Bahá'ís always received them with happiness, and Síná encouraged them and helped them to better understand the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

One day Síná said to Habíb, "We are very close to a town where a great Bahá'í friend of mine lives. We only have to pass through one village to get there. I do not know anyone in that village, and if we pass by it without stopping, we can be at my friend's house by nightfall."

So, off they went. Very soon it began to rain. By the time they passed the village they were soaked, but they continued straight on without stopping. Because of the rain, the river swelled and flooded the forest. It was difficult to find the path, and when night fell they were lost. To make matters worse, Síná became sick. Soon he was paralyzed and could not even speak. Habíb decided to take his father back to the village they had passed. Maybe there they could find at least a stable to sleep in.

At last, having almost died of cold, and covered with mud, they entered the village. The people received them with warmth and friendliness. They were immediately

taken to a house, where their host lit a fire, put Síná to bed, covered him with blankets and did everything possible to help him. An elderly woman stayed with him at his bedside all night and could not stop weeping. In the early morning hours Síná's condition improved, and once again he could speak.

Síná began to talk with the elderly woman, who explained that she had dreamt of Síná and his son three nights ago. In her dream she saw him lying unconscious, just as he had done the previous night. Thus, she knew that his visit must have a special meaning.

The elderly woman asked Síná, "Where were you going?" Síná answered, "We were going to visit a friend in the next town." Speaking with care, Síná discovered that his friend was the elderly woman's grandson and that she, too, was a Bahá'í. Indeed, to their surprise, all of the inhabitants of that village were Bahá'ís.

Great is the power and guidance of God. He caused it to rain and the forest to be flooded. He caused them to get lost and Síná to get sick, in order to guide them to this village and deepen their brothers and sisters. One should never doubt the power and guidance of God.

D. Game: "The Rhythm"

All the children sit down in a circle. Very slowly, they perform the following sequence:

1. Slap their legs once.
2. Clap their hand once.
3. Snap their fingers.
4. Repeat the sequence several times.

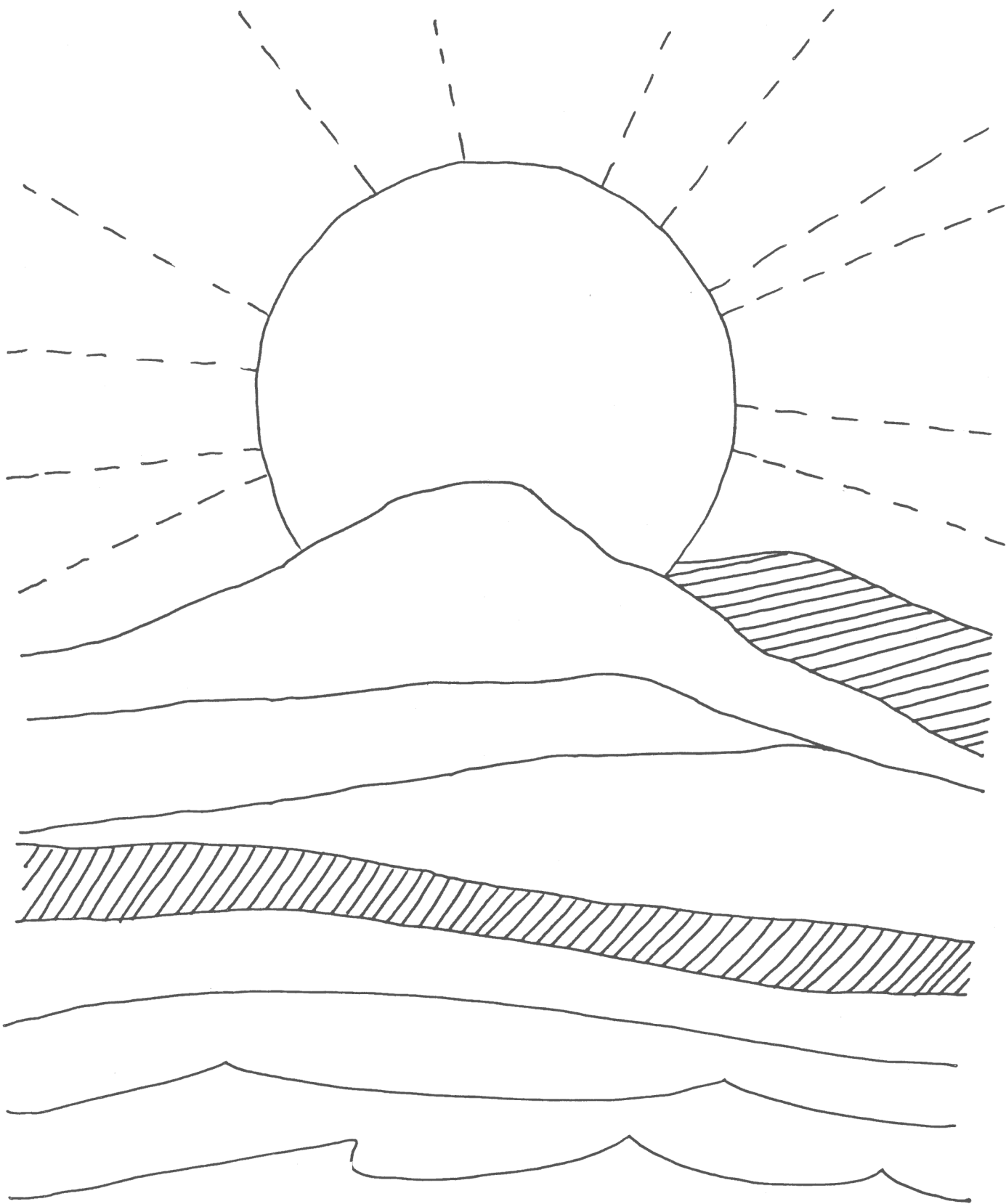
When everyone has learned to carry the rhythm, let the group then call out the name of each child in turn, pronouncing the name at the moment they snap their fingers.

Afterwards, let one child say everybody's name while the rhythm continues aloud.

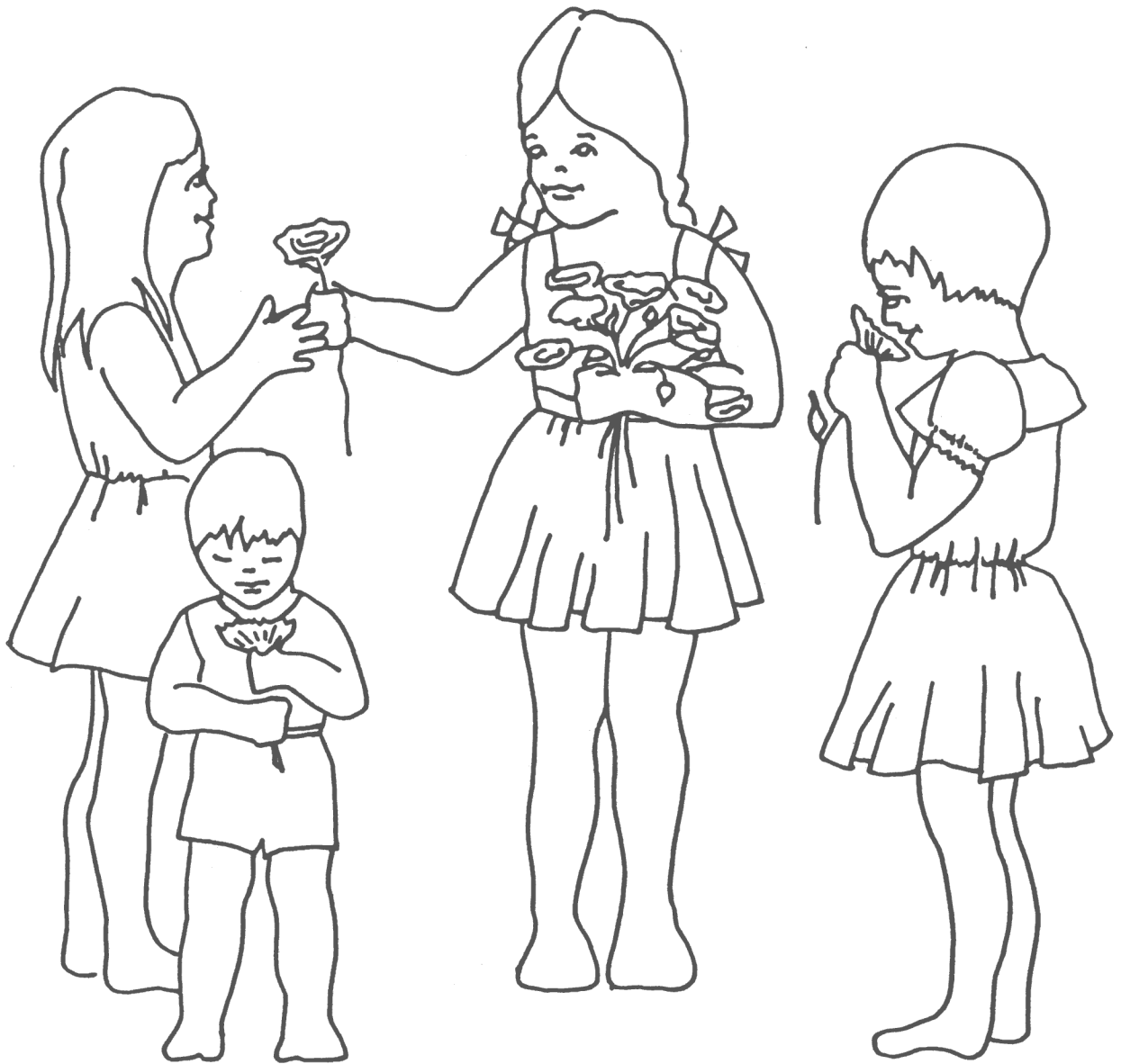
Variation:

Instead of names, each person could say a shape, color or quality, or could count numbers.

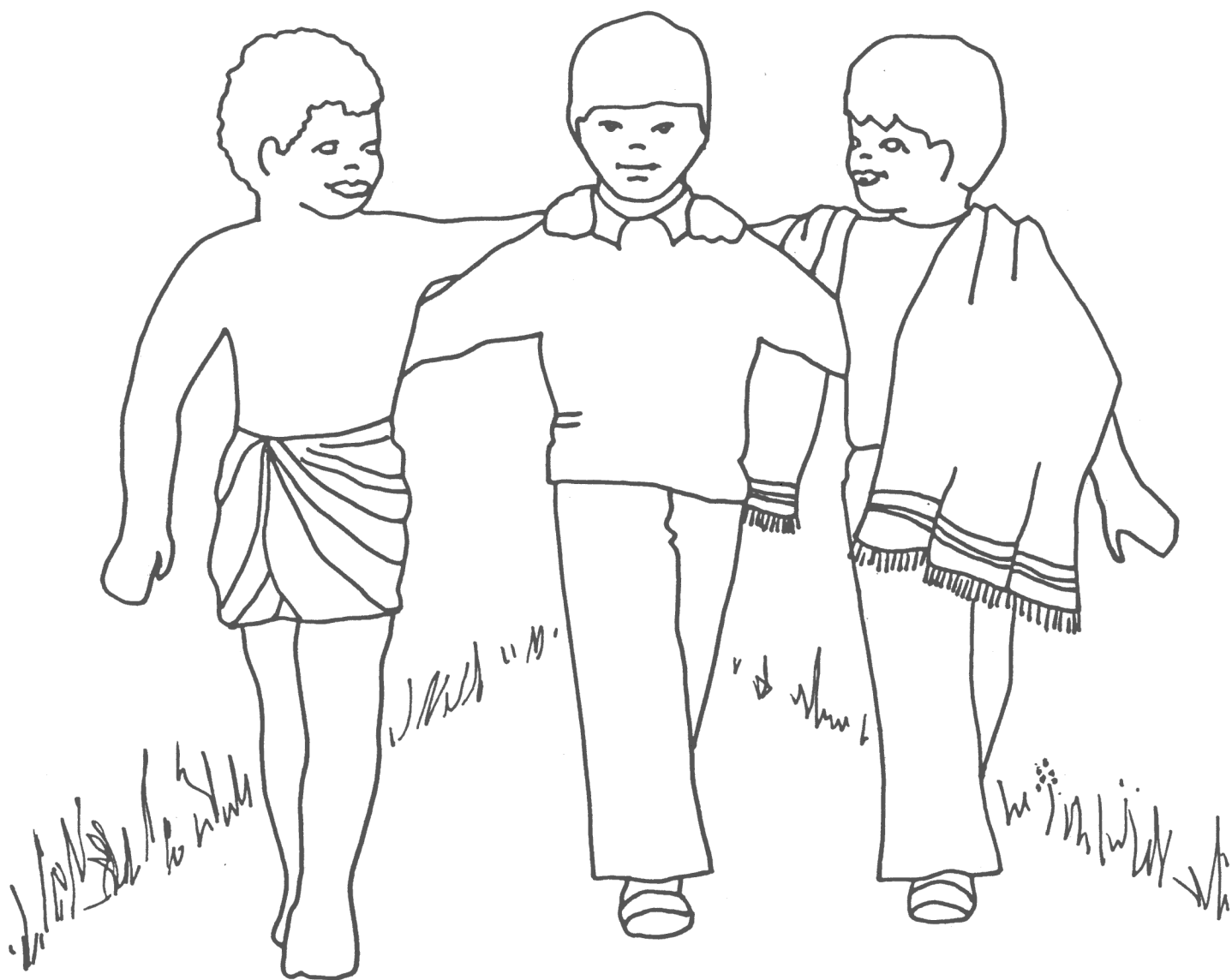
E. Coloring: Drawing 15



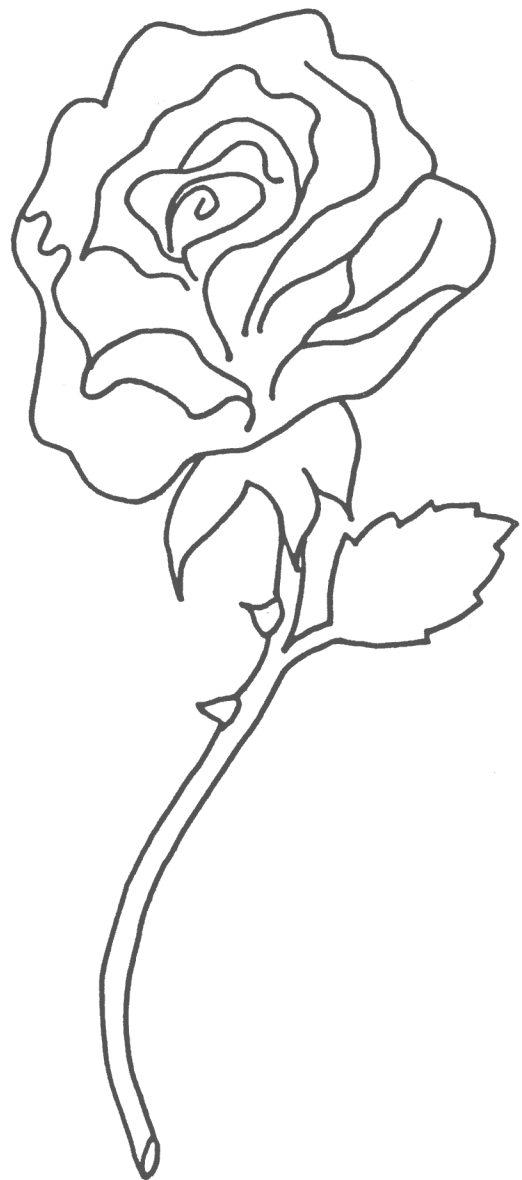
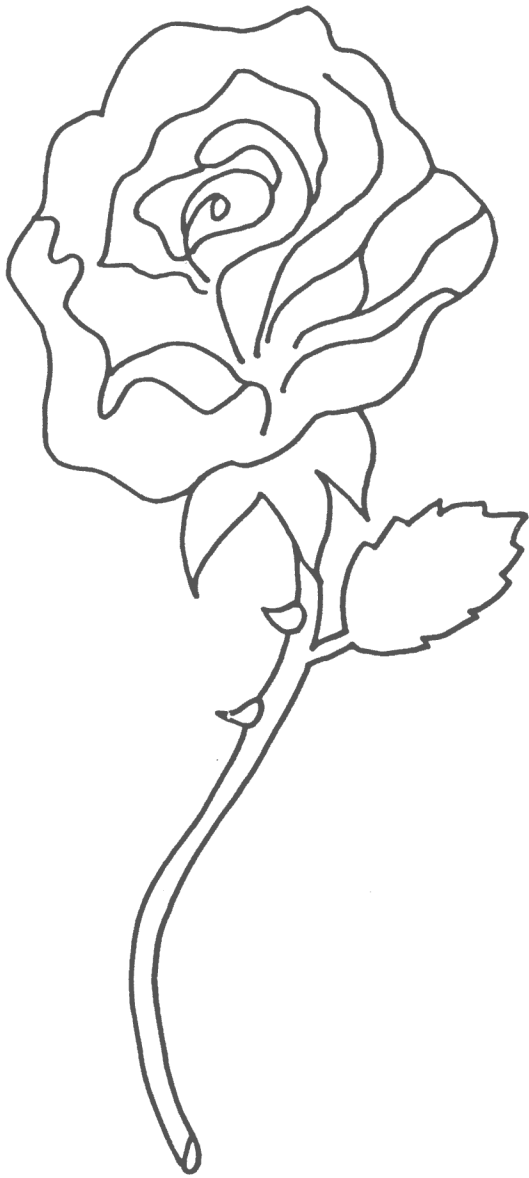
“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illumine the whole earth.”



“O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart.”



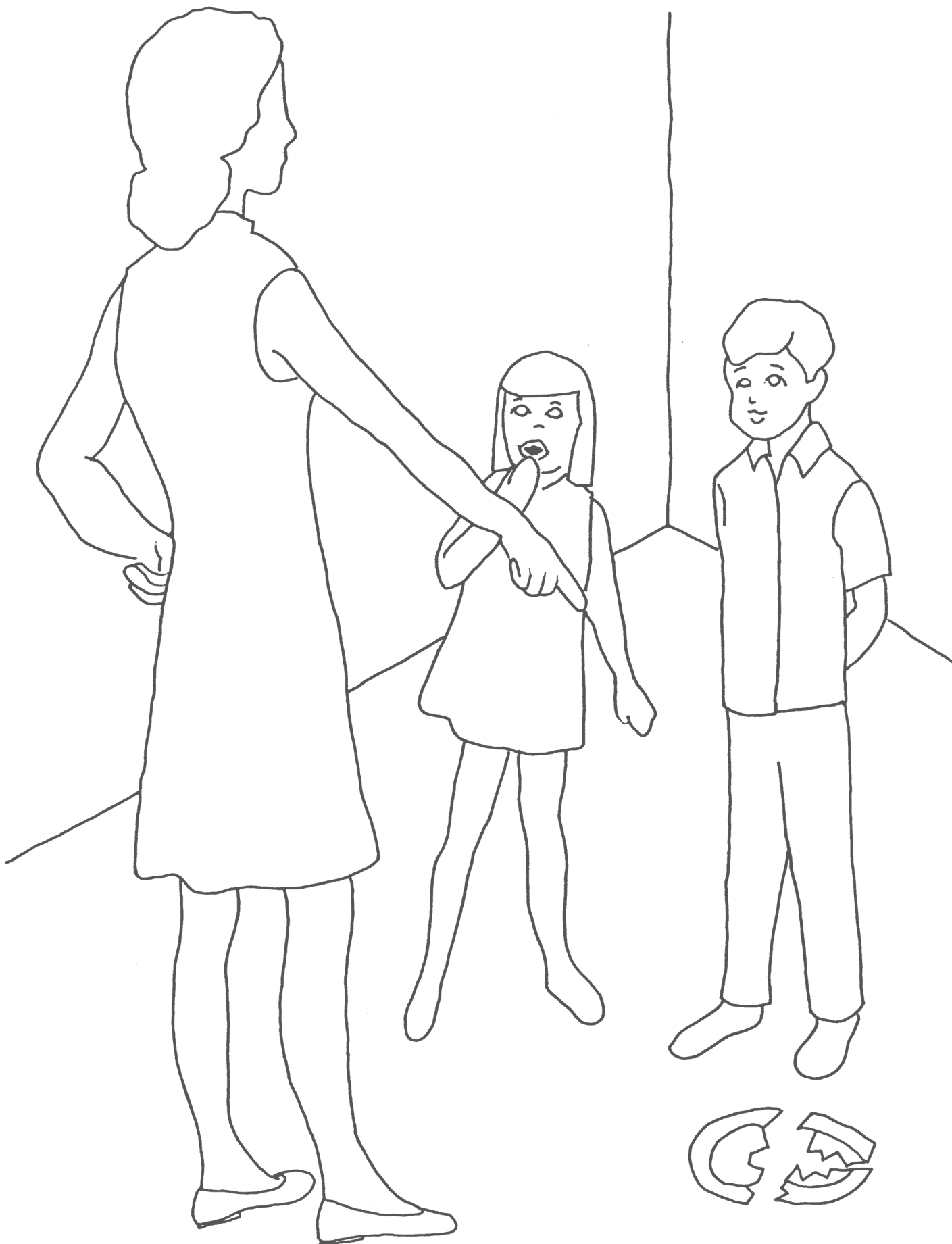
“Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily is the straight path.”



“In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love.”



“That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.”



“Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.”



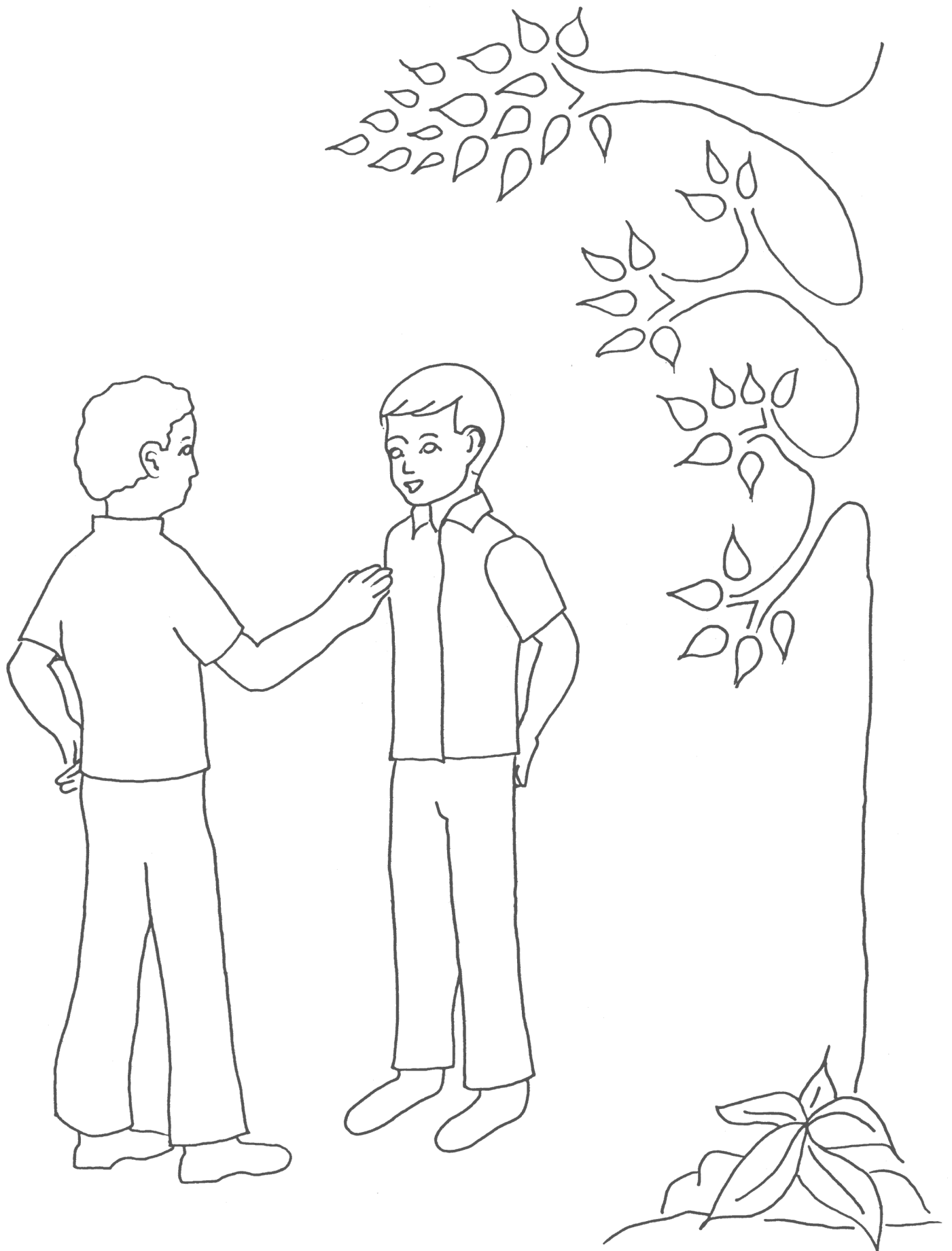
**“Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause
of thy Lord.”**



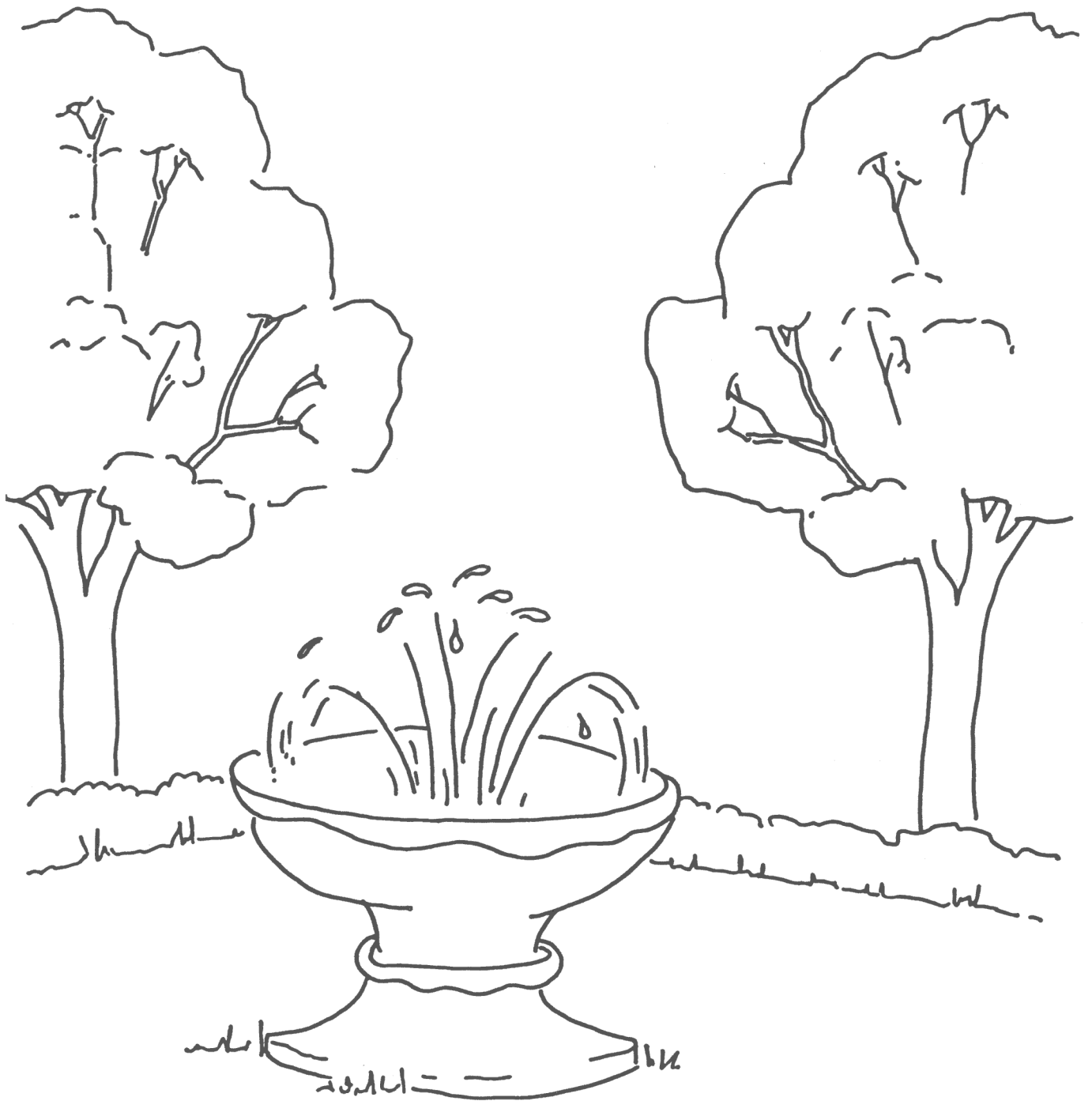
“O Son of Man! Humble thyself before Me that I may graciously visit thee.”



“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”



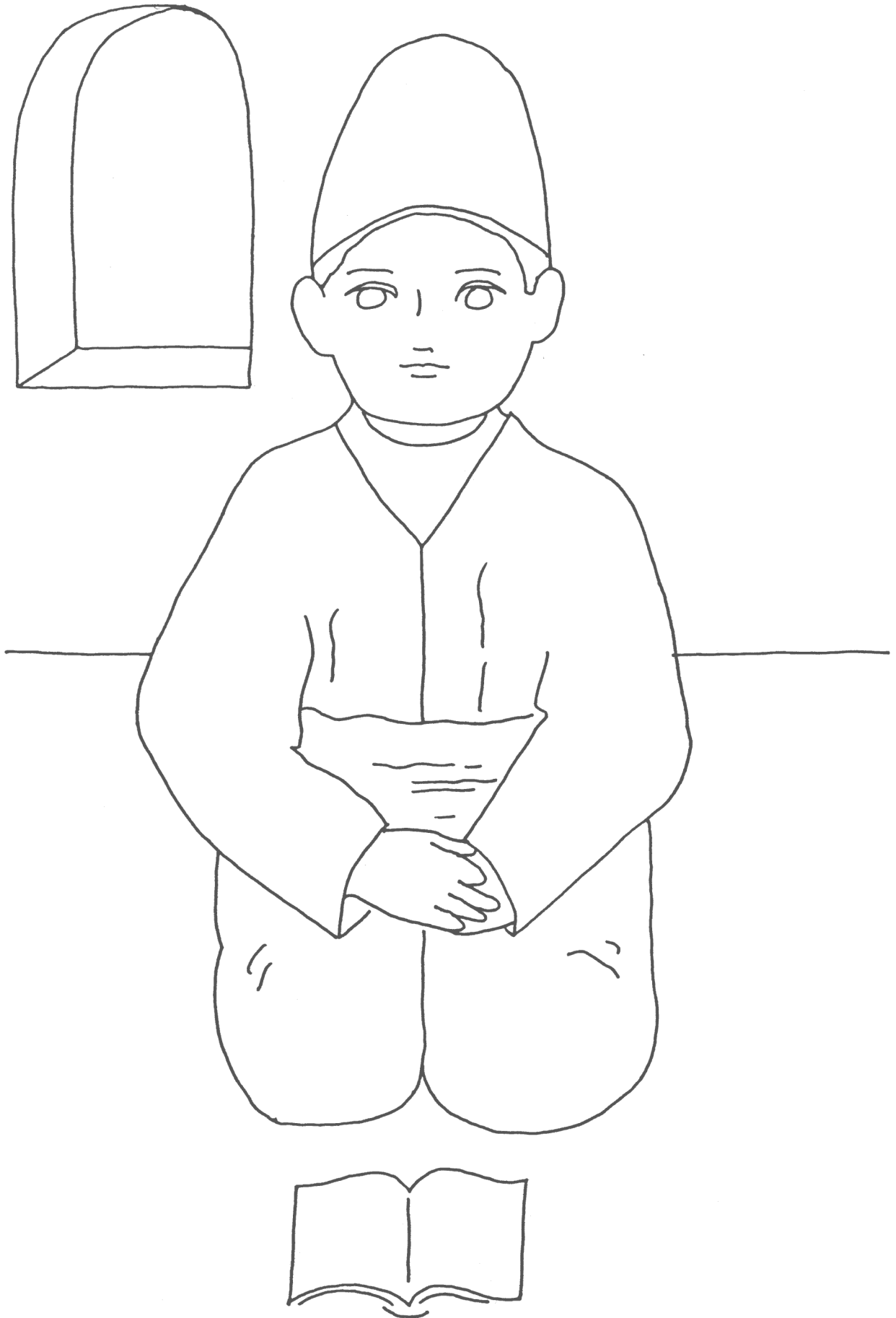
“Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty.”



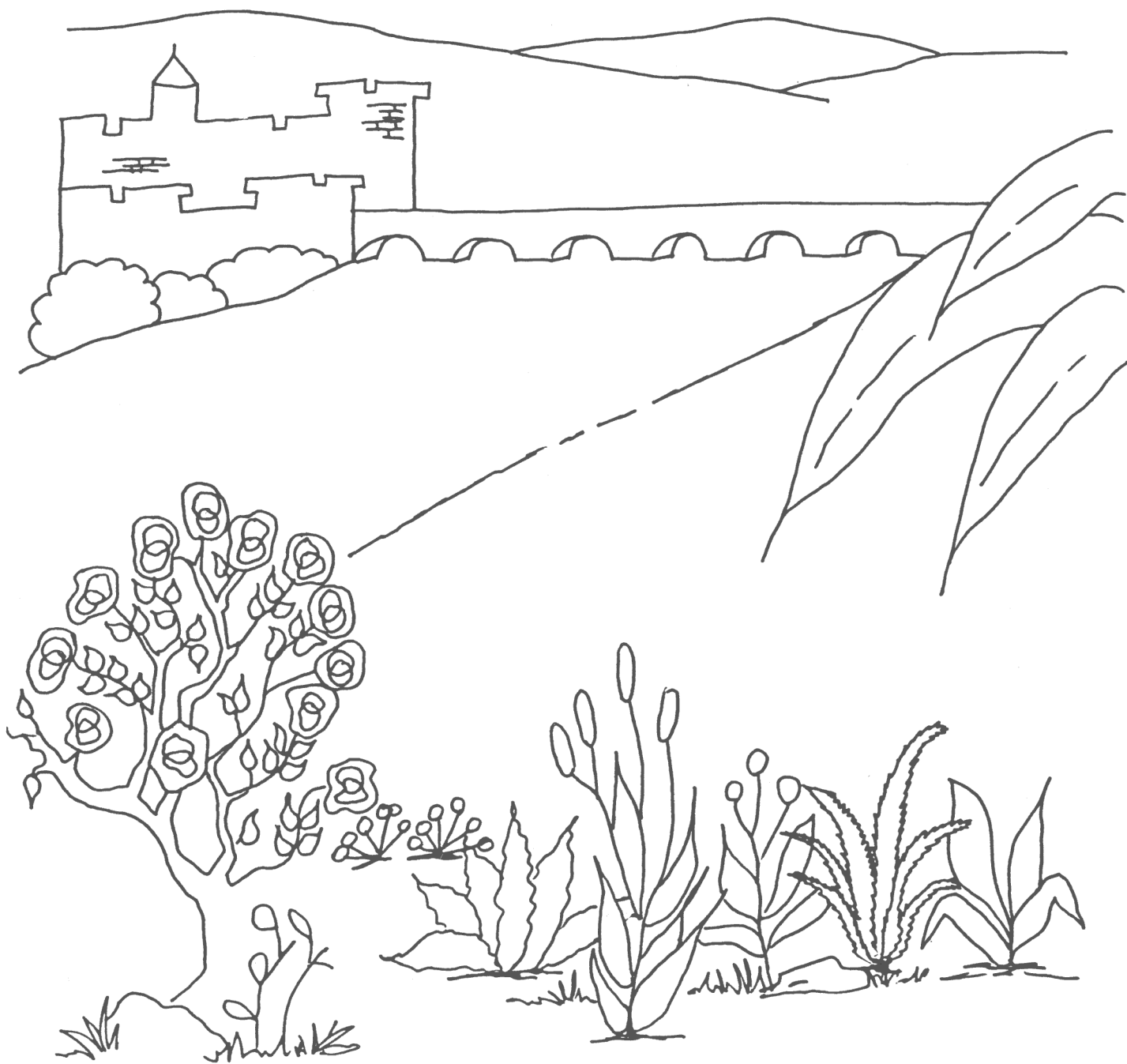
“To give and be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.”



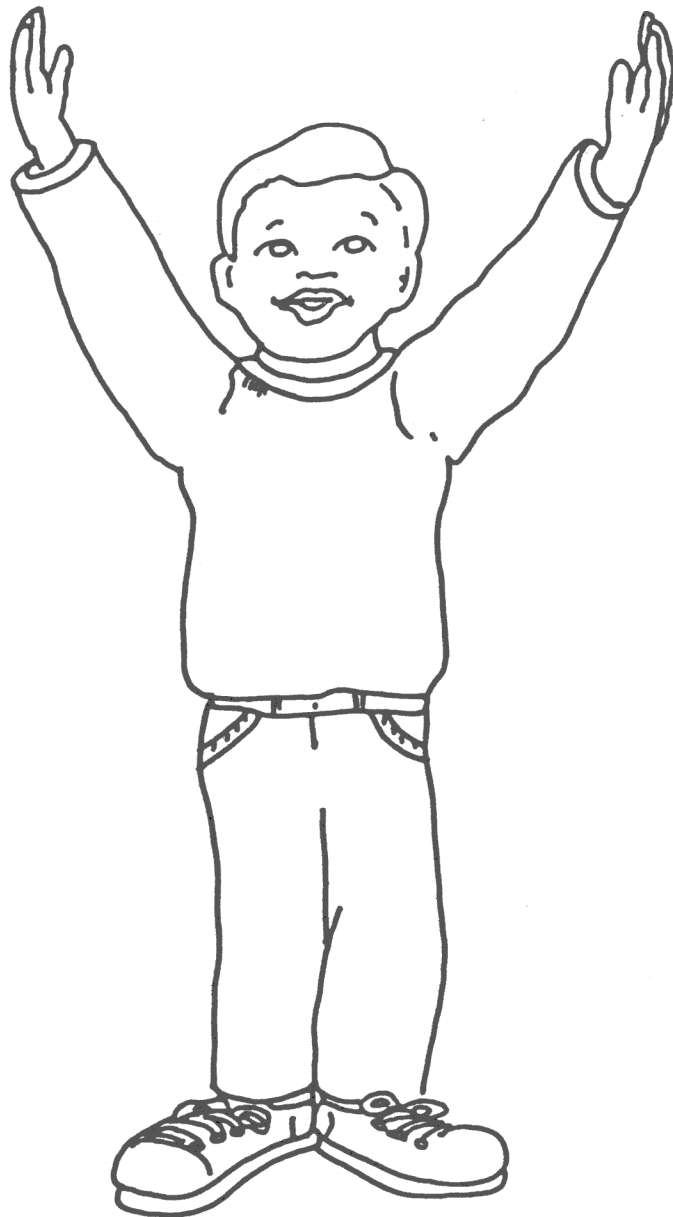
“Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love.”



“The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.”



“O Son of Being! My love is My stronghold; he that entereth therein is safe and secure, and he that turneth away shall surely stray and perish.”



“Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping.”

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Conducting Classes for Children

Purpose

To develop the skills and abilities needed to conduct classes for children,
managing the class with a great deal of love and understanding
and, at the same time, with the discipline necessary
to create a proper learning environment.

SECTION 1 - Conducting Classes for Children

The purpose of this unit is to learn some methods and understand some basic ideas on how to conduct a Bahá'í class. In the previous unit you studied the content of a simple class that includes memorizing quotations and prayers, learning short stories, playing, singing and coloring. Your knowledge of the content of each class and the enthusiasm with which you prepare for it are important factors for the success of your efforts; yet, knowledge and enthusiasm are not enough to guarantee good results. Success also depends on the way you manage the class and on the quality of your relationships with the children and their parents. You already know that such relationships have to be based on unconditional love and deep respect. However, it is worthwhile to think about certain methods that will help you to be more effective in this meritorious service.

SECTION 2 - Organization of the Class

As you already know, children do not come to class to remain quiet and still. Neither should it be your intention to keep them that way. You should try to take advantage of their youthful energy and channel it into learning. To do this, it is necessary to plan for quiet moments and also periods of activity and spontaneity. In all cases, organization is a basic element. When a class is well organized it is easier for the children to concentrate and to learn. To begin thinking about organization of your class it is worthwhile to consider three points:

1. Each class should begin in a clear and consistent way, and end in an orderly way as well.
2. A daily routine needs to be established. Thus, little by little, the children come to know which activity follows which, and what to expect from the teacher.
3. The time dedicated to each activity should be flexible and should depend on the enthusiasm and energy of the children. The five activities that you carry out with the children are:
 - a. Memorizing prayers and quotations from the Bahá'í Writings
 - b. Singing
 - c. Telling stories
 - d. Playing
 - e. Coloring drawings related to spiritual concepts

The time dedicated to these activities will naturally tend to differ in intensity and degree of movement; some will be very active periods and others, very tranquil.

1. Which of these five activities imply the most movement? _____

2. Which are the more quiet activities? _____

The degree of intensity of the activities will help you organize your classes into a certain order. Read the following description of a class and decide whether there is logic in the sequence of activities:

The children organize themselves outside the class and then enter the room in an orderly manner. You take advantage of the calm atmosphere to begin the class with prayers, to review the quotations that the children have memorized and teach them a new one. The next activity you introduce is singing songs and then, after creating an atmosphere of anticipation, you tell the children a story. Afterwards they go out to play. When they return, you distribute the coloring sheets and allow them to color for some time. To end the class, all the children sit silently to think about what they have learned, and then say a closing prayer.

Now make a list of activities in the order that you would like to use them in a class. How much time do you think is necessary for each activity?

Activity	Time
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

SECTION 3 - Getting Started

If circumstances permit, the teacher should organize the children before entering class. The teacher can take roll call at this time. Upon hearing their name called children say "Good morning" and take their place in line. At each class a different child can be given the opportunity to occupy the first place. This can be a reward for good behavior or for efforts shown in the previous class. Once the children are in line the teacher can speak with them about some aspect of good behavior. For example he or she can say: "Now, children, we are going to begin in silence and sit down to say some prayers. Today we will try especially to be courteous to each other."

After entering the classroom the children can put away their things and seat themselves for prayers. If the children learn from the first day that this is always the way things are done, it will be easy to begin the class and to maintain discipline and order.

Consult with your group about the following questions:

1. What would you do if the children began pushing, making a lot of noise and creating disorder in the line?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. What would you do if one child did not want to be next to another in line?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
3. What would you do if, in the classroom, children started fighting over a seat?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
4. What would you do if the children lined up in a very orderly way, entered the classroom calmly, and sat down in silence to pray?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
5. What would the children do if, after being seated and ready to begin, the teacher was still not prepared and was looking for materials for the first activity?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

SECTION 4 - The Period of Prayers

The period of prayers at the beginning of each class is very important. In the first place, prayers bring the blessings and assistance of God to the children. Their intelligence is awakened and their capacity for understanding is increased. Prayers also help create an atmosphere of devotion towards God which favors the process of learning.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

“Every day at first light, ye gather the Bahá’í children together and teach them the communes and prayers. This is a most praiseworthy act, and bringeth joy to the children’s hearts: that they should, at every morn, turn their faces toward the Kingdom and make mention of the Lord and praise His Name, and in the sweetest of voices, chant and recite.”¹

While the children are praying, you should try to maintain a spiritual atmosphere in the class. This implies that all the children are sitting silently and respectfully while another one is saying a prayer.

When the first prayer is finished, everyone should remain silent for a few moments before the next prayer begins. It is often difficult for small children to stay seated and quiet

for long periods of time. It is better for only three or four children to say prayers in a spiritual atmosphere than for all the children to pray while there is noise and movement. It is advisable to select in advance the three or four children who will say prayers, and for the teacher to be the first person to say a prayer.

Consult with your group about the following questions:

1. Why is it necessary to begin the class with prayers?
2. What blessings do the children receive through prayer?
3. How should the children say their prayers?
4. What does it mean to be seated respectfully? Can you demonstrate?
5. How could you reward the children who behave very well during prayers?
6. During prayers, a child becomes distracted and begins talking to his friend. What would be the results of the following actions that you could take?
 - a. Interrupt the prayers and remind the children that they should be silent.
 - b. Ask the child to leave the class.
 - c. Do not allow the child to say prayers aloud for several days.
 - d. Ignore the child.
 - e. Scold the child harshly.
7. Some children start to scold their classmates for having made a great deal of noise during the prayers. What are the advantages of the following actions that you could take?
 - a. Remind them that it is the teacher's duty to correct the children.
 - b. Let the children correct each other.
 - c. Stop the prayers and demand that the children remain quiet.
 - d. Remind them from the beginning of class how they should behave.
 - e. Ask the child who started talking to leave the class.

SECTION 5 - Discipline

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

“... the children’s school must be a place of utmost discipline and order, that instruction must be thorough, and provision must be made for the rectification and refinement of character; so that, in his earliest years, within the very essence of the child, the divine foundation will be laid and the structure of holiness raised up.”²

In all the diverse activities of your class there is a very important factor which influences success: the children’s behavior. Much of the art of teaching consists in knowing

how to guide each child so that his or her behavior contributes to a joyful yet disciplined learning atmosphere. There are many details about promoting this type of behavior that you will learn through your own experience. However, the following basic ideas will help you get organized at the beginning.

Children have a natural interest to learn. Generally, they will work fine without misbehaving if they are given something interesting to do that is neither too difficult nor too easy.

For example, how can a teacher prevent difficulties in the following situations?

1. A child or group of children have finished an activity and have nothing else to do.
2. A child or group of children do not understand what they should do, or the work is too difficult for them.
3. The activity is too easy for one or several children.
4. The children are left waiting for a long time for the teacher to begin an activity.

Consider each situation mentioned above and write down some ideas to prevent disorder in the class.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

After writing down your ideas, consult with your group about your solutions.

Disorder may also occur during transition time between activities. Some experienced teachers suggest to use songs in these situations. Having the children sing keeps them from talking and becoming distracted. Singing is also a good way to enjoy activities that are generally not very interesting for children. For example, when it is time to arrange and clean up the class, they may sing: "Now it's time to clean the class, clean the class, clean the class!"

SECTION 6 - Rules

'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"The root cause of wrongdoing is ignorance, and we must therefore hold fast to the tools of perception and knowledge. Good character must be taught. Light must be spread afar, so that, in the school of humanity, all may acquire the heavenly characteristics of the spirit, and see for themselves beyond any doubt

that there is no fiercer hell, no more fiery abyss, than to possess a character that is evil and unsound; no more darksome pit nor loathsome torment than to show forth qualities which deserve to be condemned.”³

Spiritual education eliminates the need for the drastic discipline that uses constant scolding and harsh punishments. From the very first day, the teacher needs to infuse the children with the love of God, a love that instills good behavior in every fervent follower of Bahá'u'lláh. The children's desire to live according to spiritual laws will then increase day by day. Stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Perfect Exemplar of Bahá'í life, can serve as a guide.

Nevertheless, sometimes the teacher finds that in spite of a great deal of loving attention the children do not behave as expected. The following ideas may help the teacher maintain discipline and order in the class:

1. The first days of class are the most important days of the year. If an atmosphere of discipline and respect is established during these days, it will continue the entire year. Such an atmosphere can be attained if the teacher explains clearly the most important rules of behavior. A great deal depends on how the teacher explains the rules and enforces them. The teacher should be firm and consistent, yet at the same time friendly and full of tenderness.
2. In the beginning the teacher should choose several important rules of behavior (not more than three or four at a time). These rules are explained in a simple language to the children. Very general rules like “the children should behave themselves” do not help them very much, but others like “the children should not fight” or “the children should take turns speaking” are easy to understand. Consult with the group and add four rules to the following list:

The children:

- a. Should not fight.
- b. Should listen attentively.
- c. Should await their turn courteously.
- d. Should finish their work.
- e. _____
- f. _____
- g. _____
- h. _____

3. When the children have assimilated these rules the teacher can introduce others, remembering that not many should be given at once. When a child repeatedly misbehaves, the teacher should think of ways to correct the child. Usually when a teacher loses patience, it is because she does not have a workable solution in mind. Let us remember the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

“Whensoever a mother seeth that her child hath done well, let her praise and applaud him and cheer his heart; and if the slightest undesirable trait should manifest itself, let her counsel the child and punish him, and use means based

on reason, even a slight verbal chastisement should this be necessary. It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child's character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.”⁴

SECTION 7 - Friendliness

The words one uses to speak with children reflect the teacher's sentiments. Consider, for example, these two phrases:

Elaine! Sit still and repeat with the others!
Elaine, dear, repeat now with the others.

The second phrase clearly uses words that are softer. Yet, it also is possible to say “my dear” insincerely without feeling love. Being friendly depends first on the teacher's sincerity; then it may be expressed in words, by the tone of voice or through gestures. The words we use to speak with and about children indicate our attitude towards them. For example, how would you feel towards a child who is often called stupid and ill-mannered? Do you feel love? Do you feel affection? Tenderness? What feelings are awakened in your heart when you think of a child who is attentive and cooperative?

Now read the following words and indicate which are the appropriate words for a Bahá'í teacher to use when referring to the children. Which of these words do you hear frequently?

stupid	cooperative	too much
naughty	selfish	attentive
noble	worthless	happy
dumb	precious	nice
obedient	ill-mannered	obnoxious
intelligent	lady-like	gentlemanly
trouble-maker		

In the world today there are two extreme opinions that a Bahá'í teacher should avoid. Traditional ideas of submitting a child to harsh punishment and rigid discipline are still applied in many places. As a reaction to this rigid point of view, there is a growing number of people who permit children to behave as they wish, allowing them absolute freedom. The task of the Bahá'í teacher is to follow a moderate path, helping to form the child's spiritual character, with love, patience and wisdom.

In addition to the lessons the students learn from the content of each class, they can benefit from certain practices of the teacher to improve their behavior.

1. An important element is counselling. The teacher should take time to speak with a child who needs help and counsel him. Of course, during these moments the teacher must be very loving and, at the same time, firm. He should not show anger or impatience. Consult with your group about the words you would use to counsel a child or a group of children.

2. If the teacher follows the advice of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and frequently praises the children’s positive actions, they will notice that a lack of praise at any given moment is a sign that the teacher does not approve of certain behaviors. This is a very subtle yet effective means of punishment.
3. If a child repeats an inappropriate behavior after having been counselled otherwise, the teacher can openly express disapproval. This is done in a tone of voice that is firm and respectful. For a child who is accustomed to receiving loving attention from his teacher, this constitutes severe punishment.

SECTION 8 - Reward

In order to follow the counsels of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, we should think of ways of praising, nourishing and bringing joy to the heart of the child.

1. Children cannot be expected to behave well at all times. When they do, the teacher should applaud and praise them and give them a reward.
2. Rewards can sometimes be material, like a piece of fruit. Yet, mostly the rewards should consist of permission to spend more time at something the child likes to do.

How would you answer the following questions?

1. What would we observe in a class where the teacher does not say anything when the children misbehave?
2. What would we observe in a class where the teacher says with a certain regularity that she is happy with the children when they behave well?
3. What effect would it have if the teacher told the children that at last they were behaving well, even though she thought they were incapable of doing so?

Now think of some activities that the children like to do and that could be used as rewards. When the reason for the reward is explained, it will have a greater effect: for example, to say, “Jenny is going to hand out the papers today because she was very courteous towards her classmates”, is more effective than simply letting her hand out the papers.

1. Be seated next to the teacher.
2. Choose the game.
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SECTION 9 - Sanctions

In some cases it may be necessary for the teacher to adopt an even firmer attitude and to apply explicit sanctions. Examples of such sanctions are: not allowing the child to color, or not allowing him to participate in a game for several minutes. There are three essential ideas about this type of sanction. The first is that the child should know exactly why he is being punished. The teacher should clearly explain why by saying, for example, "Because you did such and such a thing, you must wait five minutes before entering the game." The second idea is that the sanctions must be applied immediately after the misbehavior occurred because the child quickly forgets what he has done. The third idea is that the sanctions should be small and reasonable. For example, it does not make sense to deprive a child of playing for an entire week.

Now consult with your group on this last point. Make a list of appropriate sanctions and another list of punishments that would be inappropriate for a Bahá'í class.

Appropriate Sanctions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Inappropriate Sanctions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

SECTION 10 - Cooperation

The period dedicated to coloring also offers opportunities for the children to learn the kind of dignified behavior that should distinguish Bahá'ís. This period can especially be used to develop patience, order, discipline, cooperation, and the desire to share with others. The children always show a great desire to color; yet, if the teacher cannot manage the class it can become very disordered.

Generally, the teacher helps each child during the first class to find a good place to carry out this activity. She begins by finding a place for the children who show qualities of patience, cooperation and courtesy. The child who pushes, demands attention and screams must wait his turn. However, if this same child, the next day, shows patience, the teacher would seize this opportunity to reward him or her for this new conduct.

In handing out the crayons the teacher should follow these same principles. In the beginning, the children could be allowed to choose a crayon from the box that the teacher has in her hand. When they want to change colors, they should hand in the crayon they have and exchange it for another. Thus the children will become accustomed to having only the crayon they are using. After several classes, when the children are more disciplined, the crayons can be left in a central place. If the children continue the habit of using only one crayon at time, they have acquired more discipline and a sense of cooperation. If they start to take several crayons and keep them for their own use, the teacher should return to handing out the crayons.

Questions:

1. Name four qualities that the children can develop while they are coloring. _____

2. During the first classes, who should be in charge of handing out the crayons? Why?

3. How does the teacher know when the children have progressed in discipline and cooperation? _____

SECTION 11 - Exercises

This section presents a series of questions and exercises related to the topic of discipline and behavior. You should think about these exercises a great deal and consult on each one with your tutor and your group.

1. Kumar and Sanjay always learn very quickly and then start to play together and make a lot of noise. This may indicate that:
 - a. These children are very naughty.
 - b. They are tired.
 - c. The lessons are too difficult.
 - d. The lessons are too easy or short and they have become bored.
 - e. The teacher is tired.
2. Gita never responds to the questions and she seems far away. This may mean that:
 - a. She is a very good girl.
 - b. She may be tired.
 - c. The lessons are very difficult for her.
 - d. The lessons are too easy.
 - e. She does not like to memorize.
 - f. She may be sick.

3. After five minutes of class, all the children become restless and do not pay attention to the teacher. This may indicate that:
- a. The children are ill-mannered.
 - b. They are tired.
 - c. They do not like to memorize.
 - d. The lesson is too easy.
 - e. The teacher does not show interest in what she is teaching.
4. Hung Wei works for 15 minutes but afterwards starts to bother Ming Ling. This may indicate that:
- a. Hung Wei always bothers the other children.
 - b. He is very fidgety.
 - c. He is tired.
 - d. He does not like the teacher.
 - e. He is not interested in the lesson.
 - f. Hung Wei needs to lengthen the time he concentrates on a given task.
5. What would you do to remedy each of the four situations that have been used as examples?

Case 1: _____

Case 2: _____

Case 3: _____

Case 4: _____

6. How can you know if the reason a child is bothering another is because he is naughty or because he is tired?

7. How can you tell whether a child is tired or the work is too difficult for him? _____

8. If the teacher loses her patience and becomes angry with the children, this indicates that:
- a. The children are unbearable.
 - b. The teacher is unbearable.
 - c. The teacher does not understand the children.
 - d. The teacher is tired.
 - e. The teacher did not prepare for her class.
 - f. The children are just misbehaving.
 - g. The teacher should not teach the children any more.
 - h. The teacher should speak with the parents so that they discipline the children.
9. What should the teacher do in order not to become angry with the children?
- a. Not teach any more.
 - b. Only accept good children.
 - c. Pray before every class.
 - d. Try to understand the children's behavior.
10. At the beginning of the games, Sachiko begins to scream and push, and wants to be first. This indicates a tendency towards:
- a. Patience.
 - b. Leadership.
 - c. Selfishness.
 - d. Cooperation.

Explain your answer. _____

11. In Sachiko's case, the teacher should:
- a. Let her be first so she will be quiet.
 - b. Not allow her to participate in this game and tell her that if she wants to participate in the next she should not scream and push like that.
 - c. Choose a patient child and say: "Tocho is going to be first because he is more patient." Then, if Sachiko calms down and is patient, let her participate in the third or fourth place.
 - d. Let her be first, but tell her she should not scream like that.

Explain your answer. _____

12. Which of the following actions seems best to you?
- The teacher sits in one place and the children come to her to show her their coloring sheet or exchange crayons.
 - The teacher walks among the children handing out the crayons and helping them.
 - The teacher lets the children color and goes outside to talk with her friends.
13. What should the teacher do if, when she puts the crayons on the table, some of the children cooperate and share, but others still want to take more than one for their own exclusive use?
- Choose one of the children who is sharing, give her all the crayons, and have her distribute them.
 - Collect all the extra crayons, then give one crayon to each child and take away the coloring sheets from the selfish children so they cannot color for a few minutes.
 - Collect the crayons and coloring sheets and do not allow anyone to color any more.
 - Bring more crayons for the children who do not have any because others took too many.
 - Ask all the children to place the crayons they are not using in the center of the table.

Explain your answer. _____

SECTION 12 - The Register

The success of our classes depends a great deal on the teacher's qualities and the way she carries out diverse activities. But the teacher also must have some instruments that help her organize the class and follow the students' progress. One such instrument is the progress register, which we will examine in this section.

Angela, a Bahá'í from the community of High Pastures, has the desire to teach children. She wants the children to begin developing spiritual qualities so the community will turn into a paradise of love and harmony. She feels that the children should learn each of the different lessons that she has prepared but knows that some of the children learn faster than others. Therefore, she has decided to have a register to be able to follow each child's progress. Here is what we observe after a few months.

To begin with, Angela let the entire community know that she wanted to give children's classes every Sunday afternoon. On the first of September the following students were registered in her class:

Judy, 5 years old	Ines, 5 years old
Franklin, 5 years old	Michael, 5 years old
Maurice, 6 years old	Arlene, 5 years old
Martha, 6 years old	Alexander, 6 years old
Lucy, 6 years old	Joey, 5 years old
Marcela, 6 years old	Elaine, 5 years old
Paula, 6 years old	Andrea, 6 years old

To register them, Angela wrote each name and age on a form as shown at the end of this section.

Angela started the first class on the 6th of September and felt very happy when Judy, Franklin, Martha, Lucy, Marcela, Michael, Arlene, Elaine and Andrea learned the first quotation. Angela wrote down the date in the first column beside the name of each child who knew how to say the quotation without help. Can you find these dates in the register form?

The second class, the 13th of September, was more difficult; only Franklin, Marcela, Elaine and Andrea learned the second quotation. Also, Maurice, Paula and Alexander finished memorizing the first quotation.

For the third class, the 20th of September, Angela decided to review quotations 1 and 2 instead of teaching something new. Joey learned the first quotation, and Judy, Maurice, Lucy, Martha, Paula, Michael and Alexander learned the second quotation well.

In the fourth class, the 27th of September, Angela started to teach the third quotation. By the end of the class, Franklin, Maurice, Lucy, Marcela, Paula and Elaine had learned it. Also Ines had learned quotation 1. Angela was very happy to see that Ines had learned the first quotation with her mother's help and, with a great deal of satisfaction, wrote down the date in the register.

It was very exciting for Angela to see the squares in the progress register get filled in. One day some of the neighbors commented that they had noted a change in the children. They were very pleased with the class. Upon hearing this, Angela became even more enthused. She continued her class, and with a great deal of love and dedication obtained the following results:

Results of October 4:

Learned quotation 3: Judy, Martha, Arlene, Alexander and Joey.

Learned quotation 4: Franklin, Lucy, Paula, Andrea, Elaine, Marcela, Maurice and Michael.

Results of October 18:

Learned quotation 5: Judy, Martha, Lucy and Alexander.

Note: Most of the children did not attend class because they were sick with colds.

Results of October 24:

Learned quotation 5: Franklin, Andrea, Ines and Arlene.

Note: Many of the children were still sick.

Results of November 1:

Angela dedicated this day to helping the children who were behind, obtaining the following results: Ines learned quotation 3, Alexander learned quotation 4, and Andrea learned quotation 3.

Results of November 8:

Learned quotation 6: Maurice, Lucy, Andrea, Ines, Michael, Arlene and Joey.

Now look at your register and answer the following questions:

1. How many children now know 6 quotations? _____
2. How many children do not yet know quotation 4? _____
3. How many quotations does Joey know? _____
4. With which children should Angela work the upcoming Sunday to help them progress a little more? _____
5. Which quotations does Martha still have to learn? _____
6. Which ones does Andrea still have to learn? _____
7. Write 3 ideas on how you could help Joey:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
8. What should Angela teach in the next class? _____

9. By examining the register, do you think that Angela should have acted differently after she saw the results of the October 4th class? _____

When you begin your children's class, to keep track of the quotations learned by your students, you may wish to use the register found on page 125.

Progress Report

Name	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Judy	5	S 6	S 20	O 4		O 18				
Franklin	5	S 6	S 13	S 27	O 4	O 24				
Maurice	6	S 13	S 20	S 27	O 4		N 8			
Martha	6	S 6	S 20	O 4		O 18				
Lucy	6	S 6	S 20	S 27	O 4	O 18	N 8			
Marcela	6	S 6	S 13	S 27	O 4					
Paula	6	S 13	S 20	S 27	O 4					
Ines	5	S 27		N 1		O 24	N 8			
Michael	5	S 6	S 20		O 4		N 8			
Arlene	5	S 6		O 4		O 24	N 8			
Alexander	5	S 13	S 20	O 4	N 1	O 18				
Joey	5	S 20		O 4			N 8			
Elaine	5	S 6	S 13	S 27	O 4					
Andrea	6	S 6	S 13	N 1	O 4	O 24	N 8			

Progress Report

Name	Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

SECTION 13 - Each Child's Family

In addition to knowing how to conduct a children's class well, you need to establish a very friendly relationship with the family of each child. We all know that children learn during every moment of their lives. Even before going to school, children have already learned many, many things. They have learned to talk and walk, they can find their house, the store, and the houses of friends and relatives. They know of many animals and plants and know that there are things one buys with money. These are examples of the great store of knowledge children have accumulated by the time they start school. Where have they learned all of this? They have learned it, of course, during daily activities with their families and neighbors. They learn most things from their parents and brothers and sisters, by imitating what they say and do. However, the education that children receive from their family is not very intense. The father spends most of his time working and very few hours are available for him to be with his family. The mother is almost always occupied with different tasks and does not have much time for teaching the children directly. The children observe their parents, imitate them, and learn by their example. This is the principal way in which children learn. Because other family members do not have enough hours available either, they cannot arrange special classes for the children. Therefore, when a person decides to dedicate some of his or her time to the teaching of children, he or she is performing a very important service to the community. Whenever a children's class is organized, it becomes possible to take advantage of the special years during which children can learn easily and quickly. The relationship between the families and the class then is very special. The families trust teachers to teach their children correctly, and the teachers trust families to provide moral and material support. In the class, the children are taught in accordance with the spiritual desires and aspirations of the parents. The parents support the educational program by means of their examples and by stimulating the children to participate. Therefore, it is very important to cultivate and maintain a very close and loving relationship between the families and the teacher.

1. Write some examples of what a child learns at home. _____

2. How do children learn during the family's daily life? _____

3. What is the main method used by families to teach children? _____

4. Why should a very close relationship be cultivated between the families and the Bahá'í children's class teacher? _____

SECTION 14 - Relationship with Families

Unfortunately, the relationship between the teacher and the children's families is very often modelled after those seen in regular schools outside the Faith. In the atmosphere of hostility in which most educational systems operate, this relationship is one of mistrust and mutual accusation. Thus, teachers blame the parents for the children's misbehavior, and parents complain that the teachers do not know how to teach their children. It is clear that a teacher of Bahá'í classes should do everything possible to overcome these widespread conditions. The task of a Bahá'í is always to help others, trying to pardon their faults instead of magnifying them. The teacher, then, should strive to get close to the children's parents and consult with them constantly about the children's behavior in class and at home. A habit of having frequent and friendly conversations should be established, during which the children's outstanding qualities and achievements, however small they may be, should be discussed. Later, in consultation with the parents, you can decide how you are going to use these achievements to further motivate the child to develop the qualities he or she already possesses.

Only under these conditions, and with a great deal of discretion, can some fault of the child be mentioned. The aim must be to find a positive means of collaboration between the family and the teacher, thus helping the child to correct his or her shortcomings.

This topic of the formal relationship between the teacher and the families is very broad and will not be covered in its entirety in this unit. Little by little, you are going to learn to use the class as a means of helping the community's progress, of bringing education to all, and of contributing to cooperation and solidarity among the families. Since you are just starting out, too many tasks cannot be asked of you. The first, most important task before you now is to establish such an exemplary class that everyone in your community will admire the quality of your teaching and the progress of the children who attend it. However, you cannot achieve this alone and, as stated above, you will take advantage of opportunities to consult with members of each child's family and enlist their support.

To begin these consultations we suggest that you make a list of the spiritual qualities that you wish the children to develop, and for each quality find a quotation from the Writings. Many quotations may be found in the materials you are teaching to the children. You can find additional quotations in other units you are studying and in your readings of the Sacred Writings. In your discussions with the children's families you should mention these qualities and comment on them, explain the corresponding quotations and consult on the way everyone can help develop these qualities in the children of the community. Once again, remember that your comments should be positive and that no trace of criticism should enter the conversation, whether in your words or your tone of voice.

REFERENCES

1. *Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá* (1978 Bahá'í World Centre Edition), no. 115, p. 139.
2. *Ibid.*, no. 111, p. 137.
3. *Ibid.*, no. 111, p. 136.
4. *Ibid.*, no. 95, p. 125.

