



# Teaching Children's Classes Grade 1

Ruhi Institute



Book 3



# Teaching Children's Classes Grade 1

Ruhi Institute

Books in the Series:

Below are the current titles in the series designed by the Ruhi Institute. The books are intended to be used as the main sequence of courses in a systematic effort to enhance the capacity of youth and adults to serve their communities. The Ruhi Institute is also developing a set of courses that branch out from the third book in the series for training teachers of Bahá'í children's classes, as well as another set from Book 5 for raising up animators of junior youth groups. These, too, are indicated in the list below. It should be noted that the list may undergo change as experience in the field advances, and additional titles will be added as a number of curricular elements under development reach the stage where they can be made widely available.

- Book 1     *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*
- Book 2     *Arising to Serve*
- Book 3     *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1*  
              *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 2 (branch course)*  
              *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 3 (branch course)*  
              *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 4 (branch course)*
- Book 4     *The Twin Manifestations*
- Book 5     *Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth*  
              *Initial Impulse: The first branch course of Book 5*  
              *Widening Circle: The second branch course of Book 5*
- Book 6     *Teaching the Cause*
- Book 7     *Walking Together on a Path of Service*
- Book 8     *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*
- Book 9     *Gaining an Historical Perspective*
- Book 10    *Building Vibrant Communities*
- Book 11    *Material Means*
- Book 12    *Family and the Community*
- Book 13    *Engaging in Social Action*
- Book 14    *Participating in Public Discourse*

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## A Few Thoughts for the Tutor

This book brings together two units that seek to build capacity in a growing number of individuals to undertake the highly meritorious act of teaching regular classes for the spiritual education of children in neighborhoods and villages. It is the third in the Ruhi Institute's main sequence of courses, and the first to open up a specialized path of service for those wishing to pursue it. Participants who decide to do so will go on to study a series of branch courses for teaching children, while continuing to progress, each at a pace suitable to his or her own situation, along the path traced out by the main sequence.

In guiding a group through the book, the tutor should keep the above vision in mind, remembering that only a percentage of the participants may choose to dedicate themselves to this area of endeavor. Beyond its immediate aim, then, the book will serve more broadly to familiarize every individual now firmly set on the path of service with some of the concepts and ideas that give shape to the educational program for youngsters unfolding in his or her village or neighborhood. In this, the book hopes to contribute to a heightened awareness within a community, both of its obligation to nurture children spiritually and of the qualities, attitudes and conduct its adult members must display in their interactions with them.

From their study of the second unit of Book 2, participants are already acquainted with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statement that education is of three kinds: material, human, and spiritual. Here they will be given an opportunity to further their understanding of the latter type of education, by the aid of which the spiritual nature, the higher nature, of the individual is developed. What should be clear from the outset is that spiritual education for children as conceived in the Bahá'í Faith differs fundamentally from the imposition of dogmatic beliefs sometimes associated with religious instruction. It aims to foster, instead, a love for knowledge, an open attitude towards learning, and a constant desire to investigate reality.

It is equally important to acknowledge that, in the education of the young, religious precepts cannot be swept aside, for to do so would be to deny them access to divine truths and spiritual principles, principles that must come to govern their thoughts and actions. Those supporting the claim that youngsters are best left to acquire their own standards and worldviews from their interactions with society, supposedly by free choice, do not seem to appreciate how aggressively political, economic and cultural powers promote patterns of belief and behavior that serve their own interests. But even if this were not so, there is no reason to assume that succeeding generations would be able to create a better world without an education that nurtures the spiritual nature of the individual. Humanity bereft of guidance from the Divine Educator can produce little more than chaos, injustice, and suffering.

Bahá'í teachings, then, are central to the six-year program of child education envisioned in this book and in those that branch off from it. That said, the design of the program, particularly the sequencing of the content across grades, opens the way for youngsters of all backgrounds to take part. Lessons for Grade 1 are concerned with the development of

spiritual qualities in children aged 5 or 6—this, in an effort to contribute to the refinement of character. Grade 2 builds on these lessons by fostering the habits and pattern of conduct that give expression to the inner qualities explored the previous year—for example, the habit of praying, through which an inner state distinguished by the desire to draw close to God is expressed. The next grades turn to the question of knowledge. Specifically, to work consciously for their own spiritual development, individuals must be connected to the Source from which the knowledge of God flows. Themes central to the lives of the Twin Manifestations of God for this Day, as well as Manifestations that appeared before Them, are discussed, then, in the lessons for these grades. The final grade provides children with an opportunity to grow in their knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, guided by, and benefiting from, the explanations and example of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is hoped that this will help strengthen the habit in children of turning to His Writings and utterances as they move forward in life and strive to align their thoughts and actions with Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. By the time they reach the age of 11 or 12, youngsters are ready to make the passage to the junior youth spiritual empowerment program, in which their rising consciousness will be expanded further through a series of texts, studied alongside an animator, including texts that continue the education they received in Bahá'í children's classes. Aspiring children's class teachers should have every confidence that parents who are not themselves Bahá'ís welcome the opportunity to send their sons and daughters to such classes and invariably rejoice in seeing the effects of spiritual education on their tender hearts and minds.

As noted above, classes in Grade 1 focus on the refinement of character. It is within this context, then, that the first unit, “Some Principles of Bahá'í Education”, examines certain fundamental concepts gleaned from the Writings of the Faith that have profound implications for education. The initial half of the unit is given over to this discussion, while the remainder looks at what approaches can be taken in conducting the lessons and at the teacher's relationship with parents.

One of the first concepts discussed in the unit is human potential, which is explored through the imagery found in Bahá'u'lláh's statement that likens the human being to “a mine rich in gems of inestimable value”. Participants are asked to reflect on two immediate implications that can be drawn from the statement—namely, that educational approaches which view students as empty vessels waiting to be filled with information ought best to be set aside and that, without proper nurturing, children will not be able to manifest the many gems latent within their inmost beings.

Among the gems with which every individual is endowed, the unit proposes, are those called “spiritual qualities”, seen as permanent structures upon which a noble and upright character can be built. That they constitute a distinct category of “virtues”—a general term used for every kind of praiseworthy attribute, including habits and attitudes as well as skills and abilities—is an essential idea that all participants should adequately grasp. Sections 6 and 7 consider some of the implications of this statement. The tutor will want to make sure that members of the group are able to relate what they are discussing to their study of the third unit of Book 1, where they thought about how spiritual qualities, as faculties of the human soul, must be developed in this life to aid and assist us on our eternal journey towards God. Love of God and knowledge of God are indispensable in nurturing spiritual qualities. It is important for participants to see how the ideas in these two sections set the Grade 1 lessons apart from, say, a course on virtues that treats punctuality and truthfulness as one and the same type of attribute. And, when teachers appreciate this distinction, they will avoid the tendency to view the development of a goodly character primarily in terms of behavior modification.

Spiritual qualities, of course, have a dynamics of their own, which the core elements of the lessons—prayer, memorization of quotations, and stories—in particular strive to foster. Participants already have some insight into the nature of these elements from their study of Books 1 and 2, and Section 8 is intended to help them extend what they have learned to the task of teaching children. In doing so, they should recognize that, to cultivate spiritual qualities in youngsters, the lessons put them in immediate contact with the Word of God and inspire them with stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the embodiment of the highest human ideals.

Another concept explored in the unit is the fear of God, which is addressed in Section 12. It is, according to the Bahá’í Writings, the “prime factor” in the education of a human being. What is important for participants to understand is that this fear is inseparable from the love of God, for it is a fear born of the desire to please the One we love and to avoid any act that would prevent the bounties of His love from reaching us. In the absence of love, the fear that motivates us to turn away from unseemly conduct is of another kind—fear of chastisement by a wrathful God. This is not an image that should enter the minds of children. While aspiring teachers need to grasp well the relationship between love of God and fear of God in the educational process, they should recognize that it is not a subject they will raise explicitly in class. Rather they must learn to fan the flame of the love of God in the hearts of their students and help them gain the absolute assurance that, having created humanity out of His infinite love, God will never cease to nurture and protect us. It is the love of His Beauty that, in the final analysis, will discourage them from acting in ways contrary to His good pleasure.

Discussion on the above concepts and ideas should lead participants to the realization that, ultimately, through a process of spiritual education, children should come to regard the acquisition of spiritual qualities as a reward in itself and the possession of an unworthy character as the greatest punishment. All of this, then, should enable participants to view the modification of behavior in youngsters from a proper perspective—not as a central aim but as an aid to the refinement of character. They will, accordingly, find appropriate ways in their interactions with children to encourage desirable conduct and to discourage unbecoming patterns of behavior, and some of these are mentioned in Section 13. Other concepts briefly addressed in the section are those related to freedom and discipline. While harsh punishment obviously has no place in the education of children, allowing them absolute freedom to do as they wish is equally damaging to their spiritual development.

The unit turns next to the question of how to maintain order and discipline in a class while creating a joyful learning environment. The tutor should remember that most participants will have had no previous experience teaching children, and so only a few initial ideas are offered here for their consideration. They may wish to return to the relevant sections after they have taken up this act of service and reflect on the ideas in light of experience.

Participants then go on to examine some of the approaches they can follow in engaging children in the activities that make up the lessons. In addition to the core elements of prayer, memorization of quotations, and stories, highlighted above, these activities include songs, games, and coloring. In analyzing the approaches available to them, participants review the first lesson on the spiritual quality of purity.

Finally, in Section 26, they consider the nature of the ongoing conversation that unfolds between a teacher and the parents of youngsters in his or her class. This section builds on what participants have already studied in this regard in Book 2, as well as on any experience they may have gained since then as part of a growing nucleus of friends visiting households

with children who attend classes in their neighborhood or village. The tutor should make sure to give participants sufficient time to carry out the exercise that calls for them to reexamine concepts in this first unit in preparation for their conversations with parents. The exercise will serve as a means for the members of the group to reinforce in their minds many of the concepts and ideas discussed.

The second unit, “Lessons for Children’s Classes, Grade 1”, consists of two parts: the twenty-four lessons suggested for this grade and preliminary sections designed to enable teachers to become well acquainted with the content of the lessons, each of which is structured around the development of a spiritual quality. Taking four lessons at a time, the preliminary sections guide participants through a review of the core elements of each one, which they analyze in much the same way they did the first on purity in the preceding unit.

A quotation from the Bahá’í Writings constitutes the pivotal element of every lesson. It is accompanied by a short statement that teachers are encouraged to use in introducing the quotation to the children. Though brief, the statement employs a constellation of words and images drawn from the Writings that will help the children start to form a picture in their minds of the dynamics that characterize the spiritual quality addressed. A teacher’s ability to present the introductory remarks in a natural way and assist students in gaining insights into these dynamics will grow through experience and through continued contemplation on the spiritual qualities discussed in the lessons. In this light, participants are asked in the preliminary sections to undertake an initial reflection on the significance of each quality, both in the life of the individual and for their teaching efforts, and a small selection of quotations related to each one is included for this purpose.

Having engaged in such reflection, participants next examine the stories that illustrate the qualities they have been considering. Gleaned largely from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, these are intended to offer children a glimpse of the limitless manifestations of spiritual qualities as attributes of the human soul. To this end, some questions are provided for each story to help teachers look beyond the sequence of events to the spiritual reality it explores. Particularly in the case of stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, these questions are formulated so as to ensure that, in their narration, teachers place emphasis on how He manifested spiritual qualities to the utmost perfection and avoid drawing the kind of immediate and superficial correlation that can distract children from seeing the true significance of His actions.

After participants have analyzed each grouping of four lessons in this way, they are asked to spend time practicing the various elements among themselves, employing the approaches discussed in the first unit. The importance of the practice component cannot be overestimated. Much will now fall on the tutor to assist the members of the group in their efforts to enhance their ability as potential teachers. The organization of the study of the lessons into sets of four allows for a degree of flexibility in this respect, and some thought should be given by the tutor on how best to proceed, in consultation, as needed, with the institute coordinator for children’s classes. There may be times when it is possible for participants to complete the study of the entire unit, including its practice component, before they take up this act of service. In that case, it is essential that those wishing to hold classes are able to gain experience swiftly following their completion of Book 3, whether by starting one of their own or by working alongside another teacher, helping out with some of the activities. Under other circumstances, however, it may be fruitful for participants to begin acquiring similar experience in teaching after they have completed the study and practice of, say, one or two sets of four lessons. At appropriate intervals, then, the tutor would bring participants back together to study and practice four more lessons in light of their growing experience.

It should be mentioned here that the organization of the preliminary sections into groups of four lessons does not imply that the spiritual qualities addressed in them are in any special way connected.

Irrespective of such arrangements, it is vital for teachers to become thoroughly familiar with the lessons and prepare well for each class period. Children's classes will be much more successful if the teacher does not read directly from the book but has learned to recite the prayers and quotations by heart, has prepared to introduce the quotation for the lesson, and has practiced telling the story. Aside from preparation of this kind, very little is needed for the classes by way of materials and outside resources, beyond some supplies for games and the coloring sheets and crayons. The coloring sheets, found at the end of the second unit, can be photocopied or reproduced by tracing them out on separate pieces of paper. They can, in addition, be downloaded from the website of the Ruhi Institute in order for prints to be made. Also provided on the website are recordings of the songs for Grade 1, which teachers may wish to use not only to prepare themselves for class but to assist the children in learning to sing them. Those who begin a class for youngsters in their community are encouraged to maintain a notebook dedicated to their efforts, which will enable them to have needed information readily on hand and will strengthen a pattern of preparation and reflection.

It is worthwhile to make explicit here that the twenty-four lessons for Grade 1 have been designed with the intent of ensuring that each one can be completed in a single class period, under normal circumstances. Dividing the elements of a lesson between two periods contributes to a tendency to prolong activities unnecessarily. More crucially, however, it can undermine the effectiveness of a process of learning in which establishing a rhythm among activities, each of different levels of intensity, but all revolving around one spiritual quality, is essential.

Lastly, a few words should be said about the relationship between the teacher and the students in the educational process, a theme treated in Sections 9 and 10 of the first unit but implicit throughout the entire book. That every teacher should exert the utmost effort to bring to his or her endeavors among children all the spiritual qualities they are studying in Grade 1 is evident. Of these, none will be more important than love, a love that is a reflection of the love of God. This love will be felt in the environment created by the teacher—in the degree of preparation made before class, in the prayers offered at the start of each one, in the language employed in interactions with the students, and in the way students receive encouragement and praise for the progress they are making.





# Some Principles of Bahá'í Education

## Purpose

To explore some of the principles and concepts  
found in the Bahá'í Writings related to education  
and to reflect on how to engage children  
in classes that nurture them spiritually



## SECTION 1

This third book of the Ruhi Institute introduces to you a most meritorious act of service, teaching Bahá'í classes for the spiritual education of children. If, after studying the book and carrying out its practice component, you decide to dedicate some of your time and energy to this act of service, you will be in the position to begin a weekly class in your community for a group of youngsters entering the first grade of a six-year educational program. While you offer the class, you will, of course, continue to advance through the books of the main sequence.

Teaching children is only one of several acts of service on the path you are treading. Even if you choose not to engage in it, you will find the study of this course valuable. In contributing to the community-building process in your village, town or neighborhood, you will interact with small children on many occasions and will be able to draw often on the insights you gain from your study here. Take a moment to reflect on the sentiments that the statement below from the Universal House of Justice engenders towards children:

**“Children are the most precious treasure a community can possess, for in them are the promise and guarantee of the future. They bear the seeds of the character of future society which is largely shaped by what the adults constituting the community do or fail to do with respect to children. They are a trust no community can neglect with impunity. An all-embracing love of children, the manner of treating them, the quality of the attention shown them, the spirit of adult behavior toward them—these are all among the vital aspects of the requisite attitude.”<sup>1</sup>**

The lessons for the first grade, presented in the second unit of the book, are simple. Each one consists of a set of activities focused on the development of a spiritual quality. The children are encouraged to memorize prayers and quotations from the Writings, listen to stories and explanations of the teachings, draw and color, sing and play. To offer these lessons, a great deal of knowledge of the field of education is not required. Irrespective of whether you have any formal training as a teacher, this course will prepare you to conduct a children's class effectively week after week. As you study the courses that branch off from Book 3 and gain experience, you will have an opportunity to give thought to many issues fundamental to education. At the beginning, you will probably follow the lesson plans closely but will increasingly be able to enrich them with additional content you yourself elaborate.

## SECTION 2

Let us reflect on the following words of Bahá'u'lláh and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, which help us appreciate the work performed by a teacher. You may wish to commit them to memory, so that you can bring them to mind when teaching.

**“Blessed is that teacher who shall arise to instruct the children, and to guide the people into the pathways of God, the Bestower, the Well-Beloved.”<sup>2</sup>**

**“Among the greatest of all services that can possibly be rendered by man to Almighty God is the education and training of children . . .”<sup>3</sup>**

**“According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is indispensable and obligatory. It followeth that teachers are servants of the Lord God, since they have arisen to perform this task, which is the same as worship. You must therefore offer praise with every breath, for you are educating your spiritual children.”<sup>4</sup>**

1. As you reflect on the significance of these words, fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

a. \_\_\_\_\_ is that \_\_\_\_\_ who shall arise to \_\_\_\_\_ the children, and to \_\_\_\_\_ the people into the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, the \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Among the \_\_\_\_\_ of all \_\_\_\_\_ that can possibly be rendered by any individual to Almighty God is the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of children.

c. According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. It follows that \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_ of the Lord God, since they have \_\_\_\_\_ to perform this task, which is the \_\_\_\_\_ as \_\_\_\_\_. You must therefore offer \_\_\_\_\_ with every breath, for you are educating your \_\_\_\_\_.

2. On the basis of what we have studied so far, decide which of these statements are true:

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents, teachers, and the community all share in the responsibility for the spiritual education of children.

\_\_\_\_\_ Every community has an obligation to establish classes for the spiritual education of children.

\_\_\_\_\_ Teaching children can be considered an act of worship.

\_\_\_\_\_ Since children go to school, the community does not need to establish classes for their spiritual education.

\_\_\_\_\_ A teacher of children is raising spiritual sons and daughters.

### SECTION 3

There are many passages in the Writings of the Faith bearing on the field of education. We will study some of them in this course and in those branching off from it. To begin, read the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“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.”<sup>5</sup>**

Completing the sentences below will help you meditate on the profound meaning of this statement and commit it to memory, if you have not already done so.

- a. The human being is like a \_\_\_\_\_ rich in gems of inestimable \_\_\_\_\_ .
- b. \_\_\_\_\_ can, alone, cause it to \_\_\_\_\_ its treasures, and enable mankind to \_\_\_\_\_ therefrom.

The implications of Bahá'u'lláh's words for the field of education are vast, and a number of them will be addressed in the sections that follow. For now, let us consider one idea. Suppose you were given some twenty empty jars and asked to fill them with water, spoonful by spoonful. If education were to be conceived in this way—feeding students with bits of information—it would be a tedious task, would it not? Next, imagine a mine filled with hidden gems ready to be discovered and brought to light. Do you not agree that teaching viewed as mining gems is indeed a most joyful occupation?

## SECTION 4

Let us think further about the above quotation. Can we include qualities such as love, truthfulness, justice, generosity, steadfastness and sincerity among the gems to which Bahá'u'lláh refers? What about the powers of the human mind, its powers to discover the mysteries of nature, to produce beautiful works of art, to express noble and uplifting thoughts? The children you will teach potentially possess all these attributes. Can you mention some others? Will any of them be developed without proper education? In reflecting on these questions, remember the analogy employed in Book 1, that a lamp has the potential to give light but that, to do so, it must be lit.

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## SECTION 5

To develop our potential, we all go through various stages of an educational process that, we could say, unfolds until the end of our lives. We are educated at home, at school, at work, and within the community. A question we must ask ourselves here is, What should be the focus of Bahá'í classes for children, particularly in the first grade, as one facet of this lifelong educational process? Certain counsels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá will assist us in finding answers:

**“Ye should consider the question of goodly character as of the first importance. It is incumbent upon every father and mother to counsel their children over a long period and guide them unto those things which lead to everlasting honor.”<sup>6</sup>**

**“Training in morals and good conduct is far more important than book learning. A child that is cleanly, agreeable, of good character, well-behaved—even though**

**he be ignorant—is preferable to a child that is rude, unwashed, ill-natured, and yet becoming deeply versed in all the sciences and arts. The reason for this is that the child who conducts himself well, even though he be ignorant, is of benefit to others, while an ill-natured, ill-behaved child is corrupted and harmful to others, even though he be learned. If, however, the child be trained to be both learned and good, the result is light upon light.”<sup>7</sup>**

**“In a time to come, morals will degenerate to an extreme degree. It is essential that children be reared in the Bahá’í way, that they may find happiness both in this world and the next. If not, they shall be beset by sorrows and troubles, for human happiness is founded upon spiritual behavior.”<sup>8</sup>**

Passages such as these have led the Ruhi Institute to focus on the refinement of character in the first grade of its program for the spiritual education of children. Before we go on to explore this aim, you may wish to discuss in your group what you understand by a “goodly character” and write some of your conclusions in the space below.

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## SECTION 6

A concept that immediately comes to mind when one thinks of a goodly character is “virtue”. There are many worthwhile programs in the world that seek to develop in the student one set of virtues or another. These programs use the term “virtue” to describe a wide range of praiseworthy human attributes. Some are habits like punctuality. Others are attitudes such as sympathy for those in difficulty. Yet others refer to certain skills and abilities, say, the ability to speak clearly. But there is one category of virtues which stands apart from all the rest—truthfulness, generosity, humility, love, to mention a few examples—that we call “spiritual qualities”. You are being asked to focus your efforts in the first grade on the development of these fundamental attributes of the human soul. This does not mean that, in your interactions with the children, you will neglect other virtues. It is just that the lessons you teach will be primarily concerned with qualities that are essential to the soul’s eternal journey towards God. To appreciate the kind of distinction being made here, consider punctuality as a virtue. Someone who is punctual may also be mean and cruel. Cruelty and meanness, however, cannot be traits of one who has acquired the heavenly qualities of truthfulness and sincerity, love and justice, generosity and forgiveness. For such a person to be punctual too is, of course, highly desirable.

You have given some thought to the qualities the soul must acquire in this life in the third unit of Book 1. It may be opportune for you to go back to that unit and review the relevant sections. Then think about what you studied there in the context of the importance of developing spiritual qualities from the tender years of childhood. Below is some space for you to write down your reflections.

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## SECTION 7

In helping children to manifest a praiseworthy character, you will naturally be concerned with their conduct, for virtues must necessarily be put into practice. As a teacher, you will reinforce good behavior in many ways. Praise, encouragement, exhortation, explanation, reward—each of these you will use time and again in following the progress of a small group of youngsters. On occasion, a mild expression of displeasure from you will also serve as a means for discouraging unseemly conduct exhibited by one or another child—this, once you have established deep bonds of love and affection with the students in your class. We will explore some of the issues related to how you will interact with your students in later sections. For the purpose of our present discussion, let us consider an example. In your interactions with the children, you will undoubtedly try to foster in them a sharing attitude and the corresponding habit. What are some of the things you could say and do? Discuss this question with the other members of your group.

Now reflect on the following question: Will sharing as an aspect of behavior endure, say, in times of scarcity, if it is not the manifestation of generosity, a spiritual quality that is a reflection of an attribute of God, the Generous, the All-Bountiful? The answer, of course, is that while modification of behavior has its place, the real aim is the development of spiritual qualities which, as faculties of the human soul, must be nurtured by the knowledge of God and the love of God. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá advises us:

**“Thou didst write as to the children: from the very beginning, the children must receive divine education and must continually be reminded to remember their God. Let the love of God pervade their inmost being, commingled with their mother’s milk.”<sup>9</sup>**

**“From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God’s love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.”<sup>10</sup>**

**“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 . . .”<sup>11</sup>**

You may wish to memorize at least one of these quotations.

## SECTION 8

The lessons you will be teaching children in the first grade, generally aged five or six, have been elaborated with the ideas we have explored thus far in mind. It may be helpful at this point for you to turn to the second unit and read through two or three lessons, paying particular attention to the initial one. Later you will have an opportunity to analyze all twenty-four lessons in detail. For now, you are encouraged to give thought to their various elements, as noted below, in light of the discussion in the preceding sections.

Every class begins with prayers recited by you and some of the children. Immediately after, the youngsters dedicate time to memorizing a prayer with your assistance. Prayer is indispensable to the development of a child who is to be “nursed at the breast of God’s love”. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that “children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.” Take a moment to ponder how this element of the class contributes to the overall aim of nurturing a goodly character in children. Try to articulate your ideas in a few sentences. Certain passages quoted in Book 1, such as the following, will assist you:

**“The greatest attainment or the sweetest state is none other than conversation with God. It creates spirituality, creates mindfulness and celestial feelings, begets new attractions of the Kingdom and engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence.”<sup>12</sup>**

**“Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men.”<sup>13</sup>**

**“Spirit has influence; prayer has spiritual effect.”<sup>14</sup>**

**“It behooveth the servant to pray to and seek assistance from God, and to supplicate and implore His aid. Such becometh the rank of servitude, and the Lord will decree whatsoever He desireth, in accordance with His consummate wisdom.”<sup>15</sup>**

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The theme of each lesson revolves around a quotation from the Sacred Text that the children are expected to memorize. You are asked to do your best to help them gain a basic understanding of its meaning, an understanding which invariably proves essential to the development of spiritual qualities. A question to consider in this respect is whether you could nurture the desired qualities in any meaningful way without the aid of the Word of God. Again, in formulating your thoughts, call to mind some of your reflections in earlier books in the sequence—for example, on the power of the Word of God in the first unit of Book 2.

How does the passage below in particular, which you probably know by heart, assist you in addressing this question?

**“The Word of God may be likened unto a sapling, whose roots have been implanted in the hearts of men. It is incumbent upon you to foster its growth through the living waters of wisdom, of sanctified and holy words, so that its root may become firmly fixed and its branches may spread out as high as the heavens and beyond.”<sup>16</sup>**

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Another element of the lessons consists of stories narrated to the children. Most are drawn from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who, as the perfect Exemplar of His Father’s teachings, embodied the qualities you wish to foster. From your study of the third unit of Book 2, you are already aware of the unique bounty bestowed upon humanity in the Person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The stories the children learn of His life play a special role in developing their character, and they should be reminded time and again of His great love for children. As their bond with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá strengthens, you can assure them that, when they strive to follow His example, they bring joy to His heart. How do you think stories from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, told with joy and reverence, contribute to the development of the desired qualities in youngsters?

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Singing songs is yet another element of the class, one which fills the hearts and souls of children 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.”<sup>17</sup>**

Discuss with your group why it is important for children to learn to sing beautiful songs from the time they are very young.

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Games and coloring are two other elements of a class. The games are cooperative in nature and are meant to contribute to the development of certain desirable attitudes and habits. The coloring sheets provided for the lessons relate to the spiritual quality on which each one is focused. Coloring, too, strengthens a number of vital skills and abilities necessary for children at this stage of growth. These two activities help create the atmosphere of joy that must be the hallmark of a class for the spiritual education of children. You may wish to say a few words about how indispensable a joyful environment is for the development of spiritual qualities.

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## SECTION 9

Over the past several sections you have gained some insight into the aim of the lessons in the first grade and have seen how each element contributes to the refinement of character. Let us now briefly examine the nature of your relationship with the youngsters you will be teaching.

First and foremost is the love you will feel towards your students, a love which, as a reflection of the love of God, will embrace all children of every background. How to express this love in a way that reaches each child is something a teacher strives to learn.

Your love for your students, pure and free from favoritism, will make it easy for you to discover the gems of inestimable value that have been deposited within the reality of each child by the Hand of the Almighty. You will see every student as a noble being created in the image of God, a truth to which these words of Bahá'u'lláh testify:

**“Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.”<sup>18</sup>**

**“With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light.”<sup>19</sup>**

**“Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee.”<sup>20</sup>**

You must realize, of course, that love will inevitably be tested. As you teach, you are bound to come across undesirable character traits in your students. On such occasions it is essential you reject the erroneous notion that some children are incorrigible. A teacher of Bahá'í children's classes must have no doubt that every child has the capacity to know God through His Manifestations and to obey Their teachings. Every child has the capacity to advance spiritually. Every one of the youngsters in your class has been created noble and can, with your assistance, show forth this nobility.

Calling to mind phrases used by the beloved Master in referring to children will help you see more clearly their spiritual essence as God's creation. Below is a selection of such phrases; read them and reflect on how they should shape your perception of the precious beings you will be teaching.

- these lovely children
- these bright, radiant children
- these beautiful children of the Kingdom
- these saplings which have sprouted by the stream of Thy guidance
- young plants of the Abhá Paradise
- plants of Thine orchard
- tender seedlings in the garden of the love of God
- fresh saplings in the meadows of the knowledge of God
- saplings bursting into bloom in Thy divine springtime
- the roses of Thy garden
- the roses of the garden of Thy guidance
- the flowers of Thy meadow
- the twigs of the tree of life
- young branches growing in the gardens of Thy knowledge
- boughs budding in Thy groves of grace
- birds of the meads of salvation
- candles which have been lighted by the fingers of the Blessed Perfection
- the handiwork of the fingers of Thy might
- the wondrous signs of Thy greatness
- loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

## SECTION 10

Alongside love, the relationship you nurture with your students will be characterized by all the other spiritual qualities addressed in the lessons for the first grade. There is no doubt that you will strive to increasingly manifest these qualities not only in your interactions with the children during class but in every aspect of your life. Bahá'u'lláh advises us:

**“Take heed, O people, lest ye be of them that give good counsel to others but forget to follow it themselves.”<sup>21</sup>**

It is particularly important for children’s class teachers to gain a growing appreciation of the meaning and implications of each quality discussed in the lessons, an appreciation that will assist them in their efforts to train and nurture the tender saplings under their care. As you will have noted, for example, the first lesson focuses on purity. It seems appropriate that classes concerned with the question of character should begin by exploring the quality of purity of heart. Bahá'u'lláh reminds us, “All that is in heaven and earth” God has ordained for us “except the human heart,” which He has made the habitation of His beauty and glory. Cleansing the mirror of one’s heart enables it to reflect all the other attributes with which the soul of a human being should be adorned.

To help teachers think about the spiritual qualities addressed in this grade, the second unit includes several quotations related to each one. For now, you are encouraged to read the quotations below concerning purity. Then, with the other members of your group, discuss the significance of this quality in the life of a human being, in general, and to the efforts of those who arise to teach children, specifically. After writing down some of your thoughts in the space provided, you may wish to memorize at least one of the quotations.

**“O My brother! A pure heart is as a mirror; cleanse it with the burnish of love and severance from all save God, that the true sun may shine therein and the eternal morning dawn.”<sup>22</sup>**

**“O Son of Being! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.”<sup>23</sup>**

**“The more pure and sanctified the heart of man becomes, the nearer it draws to God, and the light of the Sun of Reality is revealed within it.”<sup>24</sup>**

**“First in a human being’s way of life must be purity, then freshness, cleanliness, and independence of spirit. First must the stream bed be cleansed, then may the sweet river waters be led into it.”<sup>25</sup>**

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## SECTION 11

Now, you need to ask yourself, as a teacher of young children, how you can help strengthen their motivation to act according to the teachings God has revealed through His Manifestation Bahá'u'lláh and develop the qualities He tells us should adorn our souls. As you seek answers to this question, reflect 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.”<sup>26</sup>**

**“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.”<sup>27</sup>**

**“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.”<sup>28</sup>**

1. Complete the following sentences with words from the preceding quotations:
  - a. We should observe the commandments of God for the love of His \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - b. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the love of God should burn \_\_\_\_\_ within our \_\_\_\_\_ hearts.
  - c. We should feed the flame of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Divine \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - d. We should protect it within the \_\_\_\_\_ of our \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - e. We should \_\_\_\_\_ the flame of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God within the globe of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ .
  - f. We should observe the commandments of God for the love of His \_\_\_\_\_ . The \_\_\_\_\_ of the love of God should burn \_\_\_\_\_ within our \_\_\_\_\_ hearts. 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 \_\_\_\_\_ .

## SECTION 12

During the time you spend with the youngsters, you will be striving to fan the “flame of the love of God” in their radiant hearts and make them conscious of His blessings and of the joy of being able to grow through His words. Of course, our love for God and our longing to receive His bounties bring with them the fear that, for some reason, His love may not reach us. What if our wrongdoings act as barriers that prevent us from receiving His blessings? God’s love is the very cause of our existence, and if we were deprived of it for even a moment, our lives would be shattered. This fear, that if we disobey God we may not be able to receive His love, keeps us on the straight path and protects us from the promptings of our ego and from envy, greed, vain imaginings and corrupt desires.

In your endeavor to sow the seeds of the love of God in the hearts of the children you must also think of the fear of God, since the two are inseparable from one another. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá exhorts us:

**“Train these children with divine exhortations. From their childhood instill in their hearts the love of God so they may manifest in their lives the fear of God and have confidence in the bestowals of God. Teach them to free themselves from human imperfections and to acquire the divine perfections latent in the heart of man.”<sup>29</sup>**

It is important to note that fear of God is not a concept to be discussed directly with the children. The only image they must carry with them is that of a loving God, in Whose bounties and bestowals they should have complete confidence and trust. As you strive to nurture in them the love of God, a notion you can introduce is that certain words and deeds are pleasing to God and others are not. You can remind the children from time to time that because they love God, they wish to please Him. They could be told, for example, that having a kindly tongue and being loving towards one another are acts that please God, while using unkind words or hurting others displease Him.

The following quotations are provided for your reflection:

**“It is incumbent upon thee to summon the people, under all conditions, to whatever will cause them to show forth spiritual characteristics and goodly deeds, so that all may become aware of that which is the cause of human upliftment, and may, with the utmost endeavor, direct themselves towards the most sublime Station and the Pinnacle of Glory. The fear of God hath ever been the prime factor in the education of His creatures. Well is it with them that have attained thereunto!”<sup>30</sup>**

**“In this Revelation the hosts that can render it victorious are the hosts of praiseworthy deeds and upright character. The leader and commander of these hosts hath ever been the fear of God, a fear that encompasseth all things and reigneth over all things.”<sup>31</sup>**

**“Other attributes of perfection are to fear God, to love God by loving His servants, to exercise mildness and forbearance and calm, to be sincere, amenable, clement and compassionate; to have resolution and courage, trustworthiness and energy, to strive and struggle, to be generous, loyal, without malice, to have zeal and a sense of honor, to be high-minded and magnanimous, and to have regard for the rights of others.”<sup>32</sup>**



discipline, the courage to accustom children to hardship, not to indulge their whims or leave them entirely to their own devices.” Children, it goes on to say, “must lovingly but insistently be guided to live up to the Bahá’í standards”. And ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explains:

**“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.”<sup>34</sup>**

In order to follow the guidance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the teacher should think of ways to praise the children and bring joy to their hearts when they do well. This requires that the teacher be observant and make note of each child’s progress, taking care not to praise the same few children all the time while ignoring the rest. For a child who is accustomed to receiving loving attention from the teacher, then, a simple gesture of disapproval of unruly behavior can be a subtle yet effective means of punishment. Sometimes it may be necessary to go further and express verbal disapproval of misconduct, especially if a child is disrupting an activity. This should be done in a tone of voice that is firm and respectful, without showing the least trace of anger or impatience. In addition, teachers often need to find time outside of class to counsel one or another child.

It may happen that, even when the teacher follows the above advice, some children do not behave as expected. In such cases, small and appropriate sanctions may be required. Examples of such sanctions include not allowing a child to color or holding him or her out of a game for several minutes. There are two essential ideas to bear in mind in this regard. The first is that the teacher should explain clearly to the child why he or she is being sanctioned, 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 sanction must be applied immediately after the misbehavior occurred; otherwise the child may not be able to connect the punishment to the conduct.

Now discuss the above ideas with the other members of your group. Can you devise sentences together that you think would be appropriate to use in encouraging good conduct in children and in praising the progress you see them making, both individually and as a group? What sentences would be appropriate in discouraging misconduct, when necessary?

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## SECTION 14

To assist children in developing praiseworthy qualities, it is important for you to create a suitable environment in the class, an environment distinguished by discipline and order.

‘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.”<sup>35</sup>**

And referring to weekly classes for children, He gives the following counsels:

**“Thou must certainly continue this organized activity without cessation, and attach importance to it, so that day by day it may grow and be quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. If this activity is well organized, rest thou assured that it will yield great results.”<sup>36</sup>**

Much of the art of teaching consists in knowing how to guide each child so that his or her conduct contributes to a joyful yet disciplined learning atmosphere. Though there are many insights you will need to gain from experience in this regard, we will discuss a few basic ideas to help you prepare yourself from the start. To begin, read the following description of a class period:

You give the children a few minutes to organize themselves and sit quietly when they arrive. Once all the youngsters are settled, you take advantage of the calm atmosphere to open the class with prayers. The next activity you introduce is singing songs, after which you present the theme of the lesson and help the children memorize a quotation. Then, having created an atmosphere of anticipation, you tell the children a story. Afterwards they play a game. When they are finished, you distribute the coloring sheets and crayons or pencils and ask them to color in the picture with care. To end the class, you encourage the children to sit quietly and prepare themselves for closing prayers, which are then recited by you and a few of the youngsters.

Is there a logic in the sequence of activities? Why do you think the activities are ordered in this way?

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## SECTION 15

As you may have discussed above, children do not come to class to stay quiet. Neither should it be your intention to keep them that way. You should try to take advantage of their natural energy and channel it into learning. To do this, you will need to plan for quiet moments and for 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. It is worthwhile to consider at least the following three points in this connection:

1. Each class period should begin in a clear and consistent way and end in an orderly way as well.
2. A routine needs to be established. Thus, little by little, the children come to know which activity follows which and what is expected of them.
3. The time dedicated to each activity should be flexible and should depend on the enthusiasm and energy of the children.

As noted in the description in the preceding section, the activities the children will carry out in every class period are as follows:

- a. Reciting and memorizing prayers
- b. Singing songs
- c. Learning and memorizing quotations from the Bahá'í Writings
- d. Listening to stories
- e. Playing games
- f. Coloring in drawings
- g. Reciting closing prayers

These activities naturally tend to differ in the level of energy and degree of movement they require; some will be very active and others more tranquil.

Which of these seven activities involve the most movement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which are quieter activities? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

There are certain demands that maintaining an orderly atmosphere places on the teacher. Which of the following contribute to the desired atmosphere and which hamper it? Mark them with a “C” or an “H” accordingly.

- \_\_\_ Keeping the space where the class is held clean and organized
- \_\_\_ Remaining calm and patient, no matter the circumstances
- \_\_\_ Losing one’s patience when the children do not listen to directions
- \_\_\_ Preparing the materials for each activity in advance
- \_\_\_ Looking everywhere for the supplies for a given activity while the children wait
- \_\_\_ Explaining clearly what the children are meant to do for each activity
- \_\_\_ Having other activities ready for children who finish their tasks early in order to keep them engaged
- \_\_\_ Helping children transition from one activity to another in an orderly manner
- \_\_\_ Reading the story to the children from the book
- \_\_\_ Learning the story so well that it can be told to the children with enthusiasm and ease

## SECTION 16

In striving to create an atmosphere of discipline and order in the class, you will need to establish certain standards of conduct. The first few weeks will be particularly important in this respect. Whatever expectations are set during this initial period are likely to be maintained throughout the year. In the beginning, the teacher should choose several standards of behavior and explain them, not more than three or four at a time, in a simple language to the children. Very general standards like “We should behave ourselves” do not help them much, but others like “We take turns when speaking” are easy to understand. Discuss with the members of your group the standards set in the statements below and add a few more to the list.

- a. We help each other when we play a game.
- b. We remain united and do not fight.
- c. We welcome new friends to our class.
- d. We listen to each other and to our teacher when they speak.
- e. We speak to one another with a kindly tongue.
- f. We wait our turn to speak.
- g. We share our crayons with each other.
- h. We try to finish our tasks.

- i. \_\_\_\_\_
- j. \_\_\_\_\_
- k. \_\_\_\_\_
- l. \_\_\_\_\_

Expectations for behavior, when composed as simple sentences such as these, can be discussed with the children, and the statements recited with them regularly. In this way, the statements can be internalized as standards to which the children aspire and will not be perceived as rules rigidly imposed. When they have become familiar with a given set of expectations, the teacher can gradually introduce others, remembering to avoid adding many all at once. Should a particular difficulty arise during a class, the children can be assisted in creating some simple sentences that address it. In such instances, the teacher should be firm and consistent, yet at the same time friendly and full of tenderness.

## SECTION 17

In Section 8 we briefly examined the significance of the various elements of the Grade 1 lessons and discussed how they each strive to contribute to a praiseworthy character. In this and the next seven sections we will consider some of the approaches you can take in engaging children in the activities suggested, beginning with memorization.

The memorization of prayers and quotations from the Writings is central to the lessons you will be teaching, and in every class period you will be helping your students in their efforts to recite prayers from memory and to learn one new quotation by heart. Before we discuss how you can go about engaging them in this activity, a few words should be said about a common misconception that ought best to be set aside in trying to assist youngsters in memorizing the Sacred Word.

You may have heard, or may hear as you begin teaching, comments such as “children should not repeat things”, “they should learn to express their own ideas”, “they should not parrot facts and information”. In fact, so pervasive is the criticism of so-called rote-learning that these ideas are becoming more and more widespread in all parts of the world. It is true that one could memorize an equation in mathematics, the definition of a law in physics, or a piece of prose in literature with little or no understanding of it. But the question you should ask yourself is this: Why should memorization of a profound statement and comprehension of its meaning be placed in opposition to one another? Memory is as much a power of the human mind as are the powers of comprehension, thought, and imagination. They all complement and reinforce each other. We can only imagine how much the memorization of the Word of God, with its endless potentialities to recreate the human heart and mind, will enhance intelligence and understanding in children. Later, as they go through different stages of growth, they will gain fresh insights from the passages they have committed to memory, and all throughout their lives they will be able to draw on the creative, regenerative and transformative powers of the Word of God.

Discuss with the other members of your group why it is important for teachers to be convinced that memorization of the Word of God helps to firmly plant in the minds and hearts of children seeds of spiritual knowledge, seeds that will grow over time to bear luscious fruits.

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## SECTION 18

With the above reflection in mind, let us give thought to how you will go about helping your students to memorize passages from the Writings, taking the quotation in Lesson 1 as an example. To begin, you will want to assist them in gaining some initial insights into the significance of the spiritual quality on which the lesson focuses. For this purpose, a short introductory statement is provided for you to draw upon. You are then encouraged to help them acquire a first basic understanding of the meaning of the quotation by selecting the difficult words it contains and using them in situations with which the children can easily identify. Consider this approach as described in Lesson 1, which addresses the quality of purity.

Our hearts are like mirrors. We should always keep them clean. Holding a grudge towards someone, feeling jealous of someone, and being unkind to anyone for whatever reason—these are like dust that cover the mirror of our hearts. When our hearts are pure, they reflect the light of God and His attributes—attributes such as kindness, love, and generosity—and we become a cause of happiness to 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 . . .”**

### *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 that she should share. The teacher gave Mary good counsel.
2. Patricia has to decide whether to spend her money on candy or on a storybook. Her parents advise her to buy the storybook. Her parents give Patricia good 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. We grow many delicious vegetables in our garden. We possess a good plot of land that gives us many fresh vegetables.

*Pure heart*

1. Cathy became angry and said unkind words to Agot. Agot was sad but quickly forgave Cathy. Agot possesses a pure heart.
2. Gustavo likes to share his cookies with all the children, even with Jorge, who does not share anything with others. Gustavo possesses a pure heart.

*Kindly heart*

1. When her parents invite friends to their home, Ming Ling happily serves them food. 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 had to spend all his time in bed. He said many prayers, did not become sad, and continued to show forth happiness. Obuya possesses a radiant heart.

Of course, you will not simply read the introductory statement and explanatory sentences from the book, and so you will need to prepare well in advance in order to present them in a natural way.

As for the prayers the children memorize, it is suggested that you take a similar approach, but it will be left for you to decide which words or phrases may require explanation. You will want to exercise some care in this respect. There are times when it may be sufficient to allow the youngsters to glean the meaning of words gradually from the prayers themselves. Look, for example, at the prayer below that the children begin to learn in Lesson 1. They will readily recognize that both a “pure heart” and a “pearl” are something precious. But, in order to understand that, ultimately, a pure heart is given to us by God, they will probably need to learn what the word “bestow” means. What sentences would you devise for this purpose?

**“He is God! O God, my God! Bestow upon me a pure heart, like unto a pearl.”<sup>37</sup>**

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## SECTION 19

Now let us consider one approach you can take in helping your students to memorize prayers and quotations. What you can do is divide the passage into smaller parts, which can then be learned one at a time. After the first part has been committed to memory, the second can be added to it and so on, until the entire quotation or prayer has been memorized. You can ask the children to repeat the parts after you, sometimes individually and other times as a group.

For example, to teach your students the quotation in Lesson 1, you would begin with the phrase “O Son of Spirit!” and have them repeat it. Then you would combine “O Son of Spirit!” with “My first counsel is this” and ask them to repeat the two phrases together. Finally you would add the words “Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart”. Once the group has learned the quotation in this way, a few of the children could be helped to recite it from memory. Of course, you would need to make sure this exercise is done in a sprightly manner, so the children remain attentive and a joyful atmosphere is maintained. Further, as their capacity gradually increases, they may be able to memorize longer segments in prayers and entire quotations all at once.

As you carry out this portion of the class, certain situations may present themselves that are difficult to anticipate, and you will have to learn how to address these through firsthand experience. Still, there are some situations that you would do well to consider as part of your preparations. Discuss the following questions with the other members of your group:

- If there are many children in your class, how will you go about helping them to memorize the quotation?
- What will you do if some of the children memorize faster than the rest?
- What will you do if one or more children have difficulty memorizing?
- How will you ensure that, even when a child is unable to memorize a quotation in its entirety during class, he or she still feels a sense of accomplishment?

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## SECTION 20

Children love to sing, and this activity, which precedes the memorization of quotations, is one of the most joyful. 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 recordings of the songs, you will learn them even faster. With the children, you will also have to sing the songs over and over until they have learned them well. The words of the songs can be memorized in much the same way as those of the quotations, only this time the words are repeated along with the melody. You may find, depending on the capacity of your students, that some of the songs are too difficult for them to sing. In such cases, it may be possible for you to sing the verses and for your students to join you in singing the chorus.

## SECTION 21

The next activity we will consider is storytelling. As mentioned earlier, most of the stories in the first grade are drawn from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These stories serve a very special purpose. They help children see how the spiritual qualities they are trying to acquire were completely manifested in the perfect Exemplar throughout His days on this earthly plane. The reverence shown by a teacher when narrating these accounts stirs heavenly emotions in their tender hearts and awakens their spiritual susceptibilities.

Though the stories you will tell the children about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are short, the spiritual insights they offer are profound. You will therefore want to take your students beyond the events described to help them catch glimpses into spiritual reality. Let us examine the story from Lesson 1 in this light.

*‘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 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 over an attendant and said a few words to him softly. The attendant 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.*

Clearly purity is the spiritual quality on which the story—and, indeed, the entire lesson—is focused. The following questions will help you think about how your narration will deepen the students’ understanding of this quality and what it means to strive for it.

1. It will be important for the children to recognize that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s guest was longing to acquire purity of heart. What is the connection in the story between this longing and the glass of water in front of the guest?
2. To attain unto purity, we must, just as a glass is emptied and refilled, rid ourselves of unworthy thoughts and feelings, that God may illumine our hearts with qualities such as love, generosity, and kindness. We know, of course, that nothing can be hidden from the sight of God. How does this understanding help us in our efforts to strive for purity?

After discussing these questions with the other members of your group, write down some of your thoughts here.

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There are a few stories in this grade that, although not related to the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, illustrate the significance of spiritual qualities. In them, children are able to see the reward for showing forth these qualities and the consequences of neglecting them. For example, the story in Lesson 4 of the shepherd who cries wolf, well known in many cultures, demonstrates the consequences of lying and, in this way, provides insights into the quality of truthfulness. Children can benefit greatly from the messages conveyed in these stories, which will prove valuable to them in the formation of their characters.

## SECTION 22

Storytelling is an art. To tell a story effectively, one must be well acquainted with it. In this section, we will study in greater detail the story from Lesson 1 to see how a teacher should go about narrating it to children.

We have established that the central theme of the story is the spiritual quality of purity of heart, which is explored through the example of the glass. The first question you need to ask yourself then is, What parts of the story are directly related to this main theme? That ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words of wisdom cause the lady to think of how much she wants to purify her heart of earthly desire, like the glass in front of her, is one essential part. The instructions given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the attendant to discard the water in the glass, which

‘Abdu’l-Bahá later refills, is another. What would it be like if you did not mention, for example, that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked the attendant to empty the lady’s glass?

Now, even though we have identified the essential parts of the story, its other details cannot be forgotten. Would it be a story if you simply said that a guest of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while sitting at dinner, wished that her heart could be purified in the same way one would empty a glass? There are always details in a story which give it more feeling and make it engaging. What are these?

- The thought of the empty glass occurs to the guest over a meal, while listening to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá share His wisdom, but she never voices her thought out loud.
- Though speaking to those gathered at the dinner, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá pauses to address the woman’s unvoiced thought.
- No one else notices what has happened.
- The guest feels immense joy in knowing that ‘Abdul-Bahá recognizes her heart’s desire.

It should be noted here that every teacher must take care not to embellish the stories in Grade 1 with additional details and other elements, which can divert the children’s attention from the spiritual truths that the stories are meant to convey.

Throughout your narration, then, you will want to keep in mind that the purpose of telling a story is to teach something important to the children. When you recount it with joy and feeling, they will understand it better. Children are not going to be interested in a story told monotonously. You must learn to communicate emotions such as happiness, sorrow, disappointment, fear, and courage through your voice, facial expressions, and gestures. The tone and volume of your voice should change according to the story’s development, and your gestures, though simple, should correspond with each part. You need to think, too, about the rhythm and pace of your narration. If you talk too slowly, the children will become bored, and if you talk too quickly, they will not be able to follow the story. Above all, you should remember that you are not playacting and that your feelings must be sincere. Youngsters can easily detect a lack of sincerity. What is desired is to connect with the hearts of the children and to carry on the longstanding tradition of storytelling through which, for millennia now, the store of wisdom acquired by humanity has been passed from one generation to the next.

## **SECTION 23**

Now let us consider the two activities that follow storytelling—playing games and coloring. In this section we will discuss how to approach the period dedicated to games, and coloring will be addressed in the next.

As mentioned earlier, the games in Grade 1 are cooperative in nature. Many people believe that, for games to be challenging, children need to compete with one another. What we should realize is that, when children are put in situations in which they have to compete, certain undesirable attitudes and habits are cultivated that last well beyond the duration of the game. Further, there is a notion that excellence can only be achieved through competition.

You need to examine closely the veracity of this idea. Is it really true that we cannot achieve excellence through cooperation? In competition, some win while others lose; in cooperation everyone feels a sense of accomplishment.

Games in the first grade seek to enhance in children the skills of listening to and following instructions. They will also come to see that each game establishes a common goal for the whole class and that, in coordinating their efforts, every one of them has a role to play in achieving it. Above all, it is expected that they will increase the degree of care they show towards one another, learn perseverance, and strengthen the bonds of friendship that connect them. You should remember, then, that they need not play a game perfectly to feel a sense of success. Look, for instance, at the game suggested in Lesson 1. How does it contribute to the desired aims?

For the next activity, place a car tire on the ground and then ask the children to see how many of them can stand in it at the same time. If a tire is not available, you could place a mat or towel, or some similar object, on the ground instead. Whatever object you choose, it should be small enough to make the game a challenge for the number of children in the class.

The way a teacher introduces a game affects how children play it. Its objective should be clearly explained. Further, when giving instructions to the children, a teacher will often have to demonstrate how to play it and practice it with them.

## SECTION 24

Artistic activities are important to the development of children's creativity and mental skills, and from an early age they should be given the opportunity to exercise their imagination through freestyle drawing and other forms of artistic expression. However, in many parts of the world, children will have had little chance to draw prior to the age of five or six, much less have had access to crayons. For them, coloring in the pictures provided with the lessons in the first grade is one of the most exciting periods of the class, and it creates in them the necessary confidence to move on to more complex artistic activities in the subsequent grades. It is also a means to develop their dexterity and a sense of discipline. How are the following abilities, skills and attitudes enhanced in children through coloring?

- Appreciating order and beauty
- Paying attention to detail
- Focusing on the task at hand
- Sharing resources with others
- Respecting others

In addition to fostering certain skills and attitudes, the period of the class dedicated to coloring offers the teacher yet another opportunity to discuss with his or her students the

qualities treated in the lessons in Grade 1. By asking the class questions about the depictions in the drawings, teachers can give children a chance to articulate ideas and make connections in their minds as they talk about what is happening in the picture. Look at the coloring sheet for the first lesson and explore with your group how you would introduce it to the children. Write down your thoughts below.

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A teacher must prepare adequately for this activity. Children invariably show a great desire to color; yet, this portion of the class can become chaotic if not properly organized. A place for the children to color should be identified, and copies of the drawing for each lesson prepared beforehand. Particularly in the first few lessons, the teacher may need to set a standard for how children should conduct themselves with the crayons and establish with them a sense of discipline and cooperation. Initially, every child could be asked to choose one crayon from the box held by the teacher. When they want to change colors, they can hand in the crayon and exchange it for another. After several classes, when they have become accustomed to having only one color at a time, the box of crayons can be left in a central place.

Now, look at the situations below. Which situation in each pair will contribute to the effectiveness of this activity?

- The teacher allows a child to color outside the lines, so long as he or she is trying to color well.
- All the children are told to color strictly within the lines.
  
- While the children are coloring, the teacher walks among them, giving them help and encouragement.
- While the children are coloring, the teacher sits and does some of his or her own work.
  
- During the time allotted for coloring, the children concentrate on the task at hand.
- During the time allotted for coloring, the children distract each other.
  
- While they are coloring, the children remain absolutely silent.
- While they are coloring, the children joyfully interact and encourage one another.

## SECTION 25

Many teachers find it useful to keep a notebook where some basic information on the group of youngsters they teach can be maintained. Two tables are helpful in this regard, one

with the names and ages of the students to record their attendance in the classes and another to keep track of their progress in memorizing the quotations. This latter table can have, for example, the names of the children in the left column and the numbers of the lessons in the row across the top. The teacher can then mark in the appropriate cells which children have memorized which quotations.

The notebook can also have a section dedicated to the lessons themselves, where teachers can record their analysis of each lesson, their thoughts on how to teach it, and, later, their reflections on how the sessions with the children unfolded.

In another section, the teacher can make note of each child's progress, as well as any particular anecdotes that could be shared with his or her parents. Some teachers also find it helpful to include in this section the names of the child's parents and siblings and short summaries of topics addressed during visits to their home.

## SECTION 26

As a teacher of a children's class, you will need to establish a close and loving relationship with the parents of each child, meeting with them regularly to discuss the growth and development of their son or daughter and seeking their support. You may have already visited families of some of the children who attend classes in your community after having completed your study of Book 2. To refresh your memory, you may wish to refer to Section 15 in the third unit of that book. In that section we see how Maribel, a teacher of children's classes, gathers her thoughts together about what she will say to Emma's mother on her second visit to their home. She decides to start by telling her of the joy that Emma's presence in the class brings to her heart and by mentioning the wonderful qualities she has discovered in her daughter. How significant is it for parents to see the joy and enthusiasm with which a teacher serves the children of the community? What are some other attributes that will attract the hearts of parents and create bonds of trust with them?

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Why is it important for a teacher to bring to the attention of parents the spiritual qualities that he or she notices their child is developing?

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Maribel also decides to share with Emma’s mother the quotation you studied in Section 3 of this unit and to explore with her its implications for the education of children. In the many conversations in which you engage with parents, you will have the opportunity to explain the educational ideas that have given shape to the children’s class program. Below are some of the concepts that you have have examined in this unit. What will you say to parents about each one in the context of the spiritual education of their children? Are there any passages from the Writings related to one or another concept that you will share in your conversations with parents?

The development of a praiseworthy character: \_\_\_\_\_

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The acquisition of spiritual qualities: \_\_\_\_\_

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The effect of prayer on the hearts of children: \_\_\_\_\_

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The importance of memorization of the Word of God: \_\_\_\_\_

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The edifying influence on children of stories from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: \_\_\_\_\_

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The love of God and the fear of God: \_\_\_\_\_

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Discipline and freedom: \_\_\_\_\_

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Maribel decides to pause during her presentation of ideas and invite Emma’s mother to express her thoughts. It is expected that a profound conversation will develop over time between teachers and parents of children. Why is it important that, from their very first visit to parents, teachers elicit from them comments, thoughts, and ideas on the themes being considered?

In addition to discussing with parents the general concept of spiritual qualities, you should take advantage of opportunities that present themselves throughout the year to converse with them about the particular qualities the lessons strive to cultivate in their daughters and sons. Bearing in mind the insights you have gained into the quality of purity of heart, addressed in Lesson 1, explore with the members of your study group how you might approach such a conversation.

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Maribel is aware that there needs to be mutual understanding and support between herself and the mother of Emma, if her daughter is to receive the full benefit of the classes she is attending. The prayers and quotations learned in class, for example, can be recited at home with the help of parents. In this way, children are better able to internalize the Word of God, which will penetrate their hearts and souls and give shape to their characters. Discuss with the members of your group in what ways parents can reinforce and support the efforts of teachers.

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The desired attributes of heart and mind can only be nurtured in children through proper education over a long period of time. It is clear by now that what should be emphasized in your regular meetings with parents is the progress made by their children, no matter how

small. As your conversation advances, you can explore with parents how to build on these achievements. When such a positive mode of communication has been established, the teacher will then be able to share with parents, with a great deal of care, any difficulties he or she has observed in their children. The aim should be to find a means of collaboration that will help a child overcome his or her difficulties. Discuss with your group the importance of creating such a constructive mode of communication with parents.

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## SECTION 27

As mentioned at the beginning of the unit, not everyone who participates in this course will undertake to establish a children's class. Of those who do, some may choose to hold a class only for a time before moving on to another sphere of service. Still others will dedicate themselves to this area of endeavor, sustaining over a long period classes that nurture children in the love of God. Yet, irrespective of the path participants take, all will have occasion to interact with the younger members of their community, whether in calling upon neighbors, in attending meetings and gatherings, or as siblings and parents. Whatever the circumstances, the concepts and ideas explored in this unit will offer participants insight into the responsibility of their community to care for, as the Universal House of Justice tells us, its "most precious treasure". May all of us, as we look with expectant eyes towards humanity's bright future, derive inspiration and sustenance from the following passages:

**"We prescribe unto all men that which will lead to the exaltation of the Word of God amongst His servants, and likewise, to the advancement of the world of being and the uplift of souls. To this end, the greatest means is education of the child."<sup>38</sup>**

**"The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory. If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life. . . .**

**"If, in this momentous task, a mighty effort be exerted, the world of humanity will shine out with other adornings, and shed the fairest light. Then will this darksome place grow luminous, and this abode of earth turn into Heaven."<sup>39</sup>**

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# Lessons for Children's Classes Grade 1

## Purpose

To develop the capacity to teach classes for children aged five or six that, focused on the refinement of character, consist of the memorization of prayers and quotations and songs, stories, games, and coloring



## SECTION 1

In the last unit you thought about the nature of your teaching effort in the first grade and examined the various elements that make up a lesson. This second unit contains the twenty-four lessons themselves, which, as you know, are structured around the development of spiritual qualities. In these preliminary sections, you will be given an opportunity to familiarize yourself with the content of the lessons and practice conducting them. What we will do is take four lessons at a time and reflect on the spiritual qualities addressed in each one. You will then be encouraged to go through the lessons in detail with your fellow participants, taking turns carrying out the different activities, before you move on to the next four lessons.

## SECTION 2

Every class period in Grade 1 should begin with an opening prayer recited by the teacher. As an assistance, one new prayer will be suggested for you to say every four lessons, for a total of six prayers altogether. If you are able to commit these prayers to memory, it will greatly encourage the children in their own memorization efforts. For Lessons 1 to 4, the following prayer is suggested:

**“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.”<sup>1</sup>**

After offering the above prayer, you will encourage a few children to say one they know by heart. Not all the youngsters may be able to contribute to this portion of the class at the start. Gradually, however, more and more will be able to do so, as they commit to memory the prayers they learn in this grade. From your study of the previous unit, you are already familiar with the one below, on which they will focus their efforts in these first few lessons.

**“He is God! O God, my God! Bestow upon me a pure heart, like unto a pearl.”<sup>2</sup>**

The period dedicated to opening prayers is most crucial; it will create an atmosphere of devotion to God, an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that gathering children together and teaching them prayers “bringeth joy” to their hearts. Conversation with God “engenders the susceptibilities of the higher intelligence”.

Children should be assisted in developing a profound sense of reverence towards God and in conducting themselves accordingly when praying. They may need to be helped to center their hearts and minds on the Sacred Word, whether they are praying themselves or listening to a prayer being recited by another child. The teacher can ask the children how they can show forth reverence—for example, how they should sit, what they should do with their hands so they do not become a distraction, and what they should do with their eyes if they find them wandering. The teacher can also have them demonstrate how they prepare themselves for prayer. You will want to remember that it is better for only three or four children to say prayers in a spiritual atmosphere than for every single child to recite one while there is noise and movement. It would be advisable, then, for you to select in advance the children

who will offer prayers at the beginning of each class period. You will want to make sure that every child is given the opportunity to recite a prayer at least once every three or four classes.

Throughout the year, it will be important for you to speak with your students from time to time about the nature of prayer and why we pray. Describe in the space below what you might say to them during the first few weeks.

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### SECTION 3

Now read through the first four lessons carefully, one by one, with the other members of your group. You should pay particular attention to the introductory comments and the quotations the students will commit to memory. Of course, you know that the first lesson focuses on the theme of purity. Write down the spiritual quality around which each of the next three lessons revolves.

Lesson 1: Purity \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 3: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 4: \_\_\_\_\_

In preparing to teach these lessons, you should spend some time reflecting on the quality addressed in each one, as you have already done on purity of heart in the first unit. Below are a few quotations from the Writings related to the other three qualities. It is suggested that you read each set several times with your group and reflect together on the passages, keeping in mind the quotation your students will memorize. Afterwards, write down some of your thoughts on the significance of the quality in the life of the individual, in general, and to your efforts as a teacher, in particular. Remember that these quotations are not intended for the youngsters in your class but for your own reflection.

Regarding justice, we read:

**“The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.”<sup>3</sup>**

**“No radiance can compare with that of justice. The organization of the world and the tranquility of mankind depend upon it.”<sup>4</sup>**

**“That which traineth the world is Justice, for it is upheld by two pillars, reward and punishment. These two pillars are the sources of life to the world.”<sup>5</sup>**

**“O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor. Ponder this in thy heart; how it behooveth thee to be. Verily justice is My gift to thee and the sign of My loving-kindness. Set it then before thine eyes.”<sup>6</sup>**

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About the quality of love, the Writings tell us:

**“The essence of love is for man to turn his heart to the Beloved One, and sever himself from all else but Him, and desire naught save that which is the desire of his Lord.”<sup>7</sup>**

**“In this day, to serve the Cause of God is to engender love and fellowship amongst His friends.”<sup>8</sup>**

**“The purpose of the appearance of the holy Manifestations hath ever been the establishment of fellowship and love in the world of humanity.”<sup>9</sup>**

**“Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God’s holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven’s kindly light, the Holy Spirit’s eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul.”<sup>10</sup>**

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And, in relation to truthfulness, we are advised:

**“Say: Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning.”<sup>11</sup>**

**“Without truthfulness progress and success, in all the worlds of God, are impossible for any soul.”<sup>12</sup>**

**“Truthfulness is the goodliest of qualities as it comprehendeth all other virtues. A truthful person will be protected from all moral afflictions, will shrink from every evil deed, and be preserved from every wicked act, inasmuch as all vices and misdeeds are the very antithesis of truthfulness, and a truthful man will hold them all in utter abhorrence.”<sup>13</sup>**

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Now, in addition to memorizing the quotations the children will learn by heart in these lessons, you may wish to commit to memory at least one passage from each set.

## **SECTION 4**

With the above reflections in mind, reread the stories you will recount to your students in the first four lessons. As you will note, three of the four are drawn from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the embodiment of the highest human ideals. Some children you teach in Grade 1 may not yet be familiar with the personage of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so you will need to briefly introduce Him to them. What you learned in the third unit of Book 2 has heightened your own awareness of His unique station, and as you advance in the study of the courses in this sequence you will grow in your gratitude to God for the precious gift He has bestowed upon humanity in the figure of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. What will you tell the children about Him as they start the first lesson in Grade 1?

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From your study of the first unit, you know that, in relating the stories to the children, you will want to take them beyond the events and help them gain a glimpse of spiritual reality. You were already given an opportunity to think about how the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s guest in Lesson 1 will assist your students in understanding the significance of the quality of purity and what it means to strive for it. Let us examine the stories in the next three lessons in a similar way.

As you will have seen, in Lesson 2 you will narrate a story that illustrates ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s concern for justice, which is the theme of the lesson. It describes an incident that occurs when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá travels one day from ‘Akká to Haifa. There are a few details the children will have to grasp if they are to follow the story—for example, the difference between a seat in a regular coach and one in a private carriage. This will help them see that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was willing to give up His personal comfort in order to be able to give spiritual and material sustenance to those who were in need. How will you make sure it comes across to your students that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s way of life—of not spending on Himself unnecessarily and providing for those in need—manifested the spiritual quality of justice? What are some details that should be clear in your mind before you tell the story?

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Love is the theme of Lesson 3, and here you will tell the children a story about a man in ‘Akká who, though always disrespectful to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, was the recipient of His loving-kindness over many years. It is easy, of course, to have love in our hearts for those who are kind to us. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s love knew no bounds and was not conditional. In the way you narrate the story, how will you make sure this characteristic of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s love becomes apparent to the children? How can you assist them in appreciating the power of love to transform the heart of someone who is behaving wrongly out of ignorance? What are some of the details that, if left out, would make it difficult for the children to follow the story and gain this insight?

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Lesson 4, which is focused on the quality of truthfulness, includes the widely known story of the shepherd who cries wolf. The story demonstrates the consequences of the young shepherd’s lies, which the children will readily grasp. But you will want them to go further and recognize the reward of being truthful. What is this reward, and how will you make sure the children glean this from the story?

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## SECTION 5

In these sections you have thought about the spiritual qualities addressed in the first four lessons of Grade 1, deepening your own understanding of their significance. You have seen, too, how the stories offer a glimpse into the nature of the qualities that you hope your students will develop further in this grade.

Before you move on to the next four lessons, you should spend some time with your fellow participants preparing to teach these first four. Drawing on the approaches discussed in the preceding unit, you can take turns with them introducing the prayer for memorization and presenting the spiritual quality discussed in each lesson, along with the quotation to be committed to memory. You should narrate the stories to one another and play the games and sing the songs together until you can teach them with a degree of confidence. Think about how you will introduce the coloring sheets. It may be helpful, before you begin this exercise, to review Sections 17 through 24 in the first unit. After practicing the various elements as suggested, each of the members of your group could be asked to teach one or more lessons while the others act as students. It may even be possible, depending on your circumstances, to gather three or four children together and go through the lessons with them.

In carrying out the above practice, you will probably want to take down notes about each lesson and record your thoughts on how to teach it. Further, for some of the games, you may need to prepare items in advance of the lesson. Many teachers dedicate a section of the notebook described in the first unit to such preparations.

Remember that, while you will surely carry this book and your notebook to class with you, you do not want to simply read from them. To the extent that you are able to present the content with ease and enthusiasm will your students be able to engage with the activities. Practice and preparation, then, will be essential.

## SECTION 6

For Lessons 5 to 8, it is suggested that you recite the following prayer from memory to open each class period:

**“O Thou kind Lord! These lovely children are the handiwork of the fingers of Thy might and the wondrous signs of Thy greatness. O God! Protect these children, graciously assist them to be educated and enable them to render service to the world of humanity. O God! These children are pearls, cause them to be nurtured within the shell of Thy loving-kindness.**

**“Thou art the Bountiful, the All-Loving.”<sup>14</sup>**

You may wish to take a moment to reflect on these words in light of your teaching efforts. How will they influence the way you approach each class period? How will they strengthen the love of God in the tender hearts of the children?

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In these lessons you will help your students commit the prayer below to memory, which, as you know, they will find easier to do if they have some understanding of its significance. You can write down in the space provided a few of your thoughts in this respect. What words do you think they might find new or unfamiliar, and how can you explain them through situations with which the children can easily identify? Besides such words, you may need to help them understand that both a lamp and a star give off light and that, without light, there is darkness, and we cannot see and can get lost. In the prayer, then, we ask God that we may shine forth with spiritual light, and we testify to His might and power to do as He wishes.

**“O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.”<sup>15</sup>**

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## SECTION 7

Now read through Lessons 5 to 8, one by one, paying particular attention to the introductory ideas you will share with the students and the quotations they will commit to memory. Indicate here the spiritual quality discussed in each lesson:

Lesson 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 6: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 7: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 8: \_\_\_\_\_

Below are a few quotations from the Writings that offer insight into these four qualities. Reflect on each set as you did previously and write down some of your thoughts in the space provided.

On the quality of generosity, we read:

**“Be generous in your days of plenty, and be patient in the hour of loss.”<sup>16</sup>**

**“The beginning of magnanimity is when man expendeth his wealth on himself, on his family and on the poor among his brethren in his Faith.”<sup>17</sup>**

**“The more antagonism they meet, the more let them show their own good faith; the more torments and calamities they have to face, the more generously let them pass round the bounteous cup. Such is the spirit which will become the life of the world, such is the spreading light at its heart . . .”<sup>18</sup>**

**“Be ye daysprings of generosity, dawning-points of the mysteries of existence, sites where inspiration alighteth, rising-places of splendors, souls that are sustained by the Holy Spirit, enamored of the Lord, detached from all save Him, holy above the characteristics of humankind, clothed in the attributes of the angels of heaven, that ye may win for yourselves the highest bestowal of all, in this new time, this wondrous age.”<sup>19</sup>**

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Regarding selflessness, we are exhorted:

**“. . . you must have infinite love for each other, each preferring the other before himself.”<sup>20</sup>**

**“Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.”<sup>21</sup>**

**“Man is he who forgets his own interests for the sake of others. His own comfort he forfeits for the well-being of all. Nay, rather, his own life must he be willing to forfeit for the life of mankind. Such a man is the honor of the world of humanity. Such a man is the glory of the world of mankind. Such a man is the one who wins eternal bliss. Such a man is near to the threshold of God. Such a man is the very manifestation of eternal happiness.”<sup>22</sup>**

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In the following quotations, we catch a glimpse of the dynamics of joyfulness:

**“Soar upon the wings of joy in the atmosphere of the love of God.”<sup>23</sup>**

**“All joy to such as have attained His presence, gazed upon His beauty, hearkened unto His melodies, and been quickened by the Word that hath issued forth from His sacred and exalted, His glorious and resplendent lips!”<sup>24</sup>**

**“Joy gives us wings! In times of joy our strength is more vital, our intellect keener, and our understanding less clouded.”<sup>25</sup>**

**“So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart.”<sup>26</sup>**

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The passages below speak to us of sincerity:

**“Say: The sincere soul longeth for nearness to God even as the suckling babe yearneth for its mother’s breast, nay more ardent is his longing, could ye but know it! Again, his longing is even as the panting of one sore athirst after the living waters of grace, or the yearning of the sinner for forgiveness and mercy.”<sup>27</sup>**

**“In these days truthfulness and sincerity are sorely afflicted in the clutches of falsehood, and justice is tormented by the scourge of injustice.”<sup>28</sup>**

**“It behooveth everyone to traverse this brief span of life with sincerity and fairness.”<sup>29</sup>**

**“Your hearts must be pure and your intentions sincere in order that you may become recipients of the divine bestowals.”<sup>30</sup>**

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Try to memorize at least one passage from each of the sets above.

## SECTION 8

Now let us turn to the stories in Lessons 5 to 8 and think about how they will help the children gain insight into the spiritual qualities they are exploring. After rereading each story, consider the questions below.

Generosity is the main theme of the story in Lesson 5, which describes an incident that occurred in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s childhood involving His Father’s flock of sheep. What parts of the story relate to the main theme? What are some of the details which, if left out, would make it difficult for the children to follow the story? Most important, of course, is the pleasure shown by Bahá’u’lláh upon learning of His Son’s spirit of generosity towards the shepherds. His remarks foretold how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would grow up to give everything He had for the good of humanity, not only material possessions but His whole Being. How will you make sure the children recognize the extent of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s generosity, which was without limits?

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The story in Lesson 6 offers children a glimpse of the ways of selflessness. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in declining to accept the expensive coat, showed how He preferred others to Himself. How will you ensure the children reach this conclusion from your narration? What are some of the details that should be clear in your mind before you tell the story?

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The theme of Lesson 7 is joyfulness, and you will relate a story about Leroy Ioas, who, as a young child, met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and who went on to dedicate his life to the promotion of the Cause of God. In the story, Leroy decides not to give ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the bouquet of flowers he has bought for Him; he wants to offer Him his heart instead. For the children to understand why Leroy did this, it will be important for you to get across to them that the human heart is far more precious than anything material. Will it be enough for you to put emphasis in your voice when you tell that part of the story? What details will need to be emphasized in your narration, if the children are to follow the sequence of ideas and realize why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s gesture of presenting Leroy with the red rose from His coat gave the boy such joy?

Throughout His life, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá brought joy to everyone who came into His presence. In this account, we see that Leroy wanted nothing more than to gladden ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s heart. Why is it imperative for children to understand that one of the greatest sources of joy is to bring joy to others?

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Sincerity is the focus of Lesson 8, and in introducing the story to the children, you may wish to explain that, sometimes, we can better understand what it means to possess a quality by listening to an account that shows when it is lacking. The story of the man who convinces his neighbor to cut down his tree is an example. How will you help the children grasp what it means that appearances can sometimes be deceiving? In narrating the story, you will have to ensure the children do not go away thinking that the neighbor who was insincere actually was rewarded. What will you tell the children to help them understand the negative effects of insincerity?

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## SECTION 9

Now that you have gained some insight into the spiritual qualities discussed in Lessons 5 to 8, you should pause here to practice carrying out the lessons and their various elements with your fellow participants, as you did with the first four. Remember that, in your notebook, you can write down any points you want to keep about each lesson and record your thoughts on how to teach it.

## SECTION 10

It is suggested that, for Lessons 9 to 12, you open each class period by saying the following prayer, which you are encouraged to commit to memory:

**“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.”<sup>31</sup>**

In these four lessons you will help your students memorize the prayer below. What words or phrases will you need to explain to the children for them to grasp the significance of the prayer?

**“Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.”<sup>32</sup>**

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## SECTION 11

As you have done previously, read through Lessons 9 to 12, giving special attention to the introductory remarks and the quotations for memorization. Indicate below the spiritual quality on which each lesson is focused.

Lesson 9: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 10: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 11: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 12: \_\_\_\_\_

To deepen your own understanding of the significance of the above four qualities, reflect on the selection of quotations related to each one. As you do so, keep in mind the passage your students will be learning by heart. Afterwards write down your thoughts about the importance of the quality in the life of the individual and for a teacher of young children.

Regarding the quality of humility, the Writings tell us:

**“Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.”<sup>33</sup>**

**“Every soul that walketh humbly with its God, in this Day, and cleaveth unto Him, shall find itself invested with the honor and glory of all goodly names and stations.”<sup>34</sup>**

**“They who are the beloved of God, in whatever place they gather and whomsoever they may meet, must evince, in their attitude towards God, and in the manner of**

**their celebration of His praise and glory, such humility and submissiveness that every atom of the dust beneath their feet may attest the depth of their devotion.”<sup>35</sup>**

**“It is certain that man’s highest distinction is to be lowly before and obedient to his God . . .”<sup>36</sup>**

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On the importance of thankfulness, we read:

**“Know thou, that I have wafted unto thee all the fragrances of holiness, have fully revealed to thee My word, have perfected through thee My bounty and have desired for thee that which I have desired for My Self. Be then content with My pleasure and thankful unto Me.”<sup>37</sup>**

**“Let God be all-sufficient for thee. Commune intimately with His Spirit, and be thou of the thankful.”<sup>38</sup>**

**“Wherefore, be thankful to God, for having strengthened thee to aid His Cause, for having made the flowers of knowledge and understanding to spring forth in the garden of thine heart. Thus hath His grace encompassed thee, and encompassed the whole of creation.”<sup>39</sup>**

**“The truth is that God has endowed man with virtues, powers and ideal faculties of which nature is entirely bereft and by which man is elevated, distinguished and superior. We must thank God for these bestowals, for these powers He has given us, for this crown He has placed upon our heads.”<sup>40</sup>**

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The quotations below speak to us of forgiveness:

**“He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be.”<sup>41</sup>**

**“The inmost essence of all things voiceth in all things the testimony: ‘All forgiveness floweth, in this Day, from God, Him to Whom none can compare, with Whom no partners can be joined, the Sovereign Protector of all men, and the Concealer of their sins!’”<sup>42</sup>**

**“Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls.”<sup>43</sup>**

**“Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If someone commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him.”<sup>44</sup>**

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And these extracts describe the standard of honesty to which we aspire:

**“Say: Honesty, virtue, wisdom and a saintly character redound to the exaltation of man, while dishonesty, imposture, ignorance and hypocrisy lead to his abasement.”<sup>45</sup>**

**“O ye friends of God in His cities and His loved ones in His lands! This Wronged One enjoineeth on you honesty and piety. Blessed the city that shineth by their light. Through them man is exalted, and the door of security is unlocked before the face of all creation. Happy the man that cleaveth fast unto them, and recognizeth their virtue, and woe betide him that denieth their station.”<sup>46</sup>**

**“Trustworthiness, wisdom and honesty are, of a truth, God’s beauteous adornments for His creatures. These fair garments are a befitting vesture for every temple. Happy are those that comprehend, and well is it with them that acquire such virtues.”<sup>47</sup>**

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Try to memorize at least one passage from each of the sets above.

## **SECTION 12**

Now let us see how the stories in these four lessons will offer your students insight into the above spiritual qualities.

The story in Lesson 9 describes an incident that occurred when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá met with some wealthy visitors; it will illustrate for the children His utter humility. That ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

did not want to be treated with pomp and pageantry is a central idea. In what way does this demonstrate His humility? Of course, the particular form of pageantry—the bowl, the water, and the perfumed towel—is only an interesting detail and should not distract from the central theme in your telling of the story. Instead it is the conclusion that should be emphasized. How will it extend further the children’s understanding of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s humility and His desire to serve others?

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The theme of Lesson 10 is thankfulness, and the children will listen to a story about a lady who visits ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and sets about sharing with Him all her troubles and woes. Later ‘Abdu’l-Bahá introduces her to Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí, who, despite having experienced great difficulties in life, never ceases to be grateful for all the blessings he has received from God. In narrating the story, you will want it to become clear to your students that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not introduce Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí to the lady by chance. What do you think the lady learned from her meeting with him? How does the story try to convey this lesson?

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Forgiveness is the theme of Lesson 11, and you will tell your students a story about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that shows the effect of forgiveness on those we forgive. There are many details to the story that you will need to narrate clearly if the children are to follow the sequence of ideas. It involves a governor in ‘Akká who sets out to do great harm to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His companions in that city. In the story, not only does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá forgive the governor for his actions; He treats the governor, who loses everything, with kindness and helps him in his hour of distress. What you should hope the children understand from the story is that forgiveness, as shown by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, goes beyond not harboring bad feelings towards those who wrong us. How will you know whether they have grasped this idea?

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In the story for Lesson 12, the children will see how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responds to a driver who demands an unfair price for a carriage ride. Although the essence of kindness and courtesy, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá never allowed people to act dishonestly or deceitfully towards Him or towards others. What do you think the driver learned from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s response? How will you help the children understand that what we really lose by being dishonest is far greater than anything material, like the handsome tip the driver lost?

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### SECTION 13

After you have practiced carrying out the activities in Lessons 9 to 12 with your fellow participants, you can move on to the next four. It is suggested that, for Lessons 13 to 16, you open each class period by reciting the following prayer from memory:

**“O my merciful Lord! This is a hyacinth which hath grown in the garden of Thy good pleasure and a twig which hath appeared in the orchard of true knowledge. Cause it, O Lord of bounty, to be refreshed continually and at all times through Thy vitalizing breezes, and make it verdant, fresh and flourishing through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy favors, O Thou kind Lord!**

**“Verily Thou art the All-Glorious.”<sup>48</sup>**

Below is the prayer your students will be learning to say by heart in Lessons 13 to 16. To help them gain an understanding of its significance, you should identify any words or phrases that will be new or unfamiliar to your students and devise appropriate sentences to explain them. Of course, they will easily grasp the imagery in the prayer, which will resonate with the one you will be reciting from memory in these lessons.

**“O Lord! Plant this tender seedling in the garden of Thy manifold bounties, water it from the fountains of Thy loving-kindness and grant that it may grow into a goodly plant through the outpourings of Thy favor and grace.**

**“Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.”<sup>49</sup>**

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## SECTION 14

Write down the qualities addressed in Lessons 13 to 16, after you have read through each one in the usual way with your fellow participants.

Lesson 13: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 14: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 15: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 16: \_\_\_\_\_

The following quotations will provide you with the opportunity to reflect further on the spiritual qualities discussed in these lessons, as you have done previously.

On the importance of showing forth compassion, we read:

**“Radiate the lights of compassion so that the hearts may be cleansed and purified and that they may take a share and portion from Thy confirmations.”<sup>50</sup>**

**“Be compassionate, so that your actions will shine like unto the light streaming forth from the lamp.”<sup>51</sup>**

**“Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch; be ye compassionate and kind to all the human race.”<sup>52</sup>**

**“Now must the lovers of God arise to carry out these instructions of His: let them be kindly fathers to the children of the human race, and compassionate brothers to the youth, and self-denying offspring to those bent with years.”<sup>53</sup>**

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About the quality of detachment, we are advised:

**“Detach yourselves from all else but Me, and turn your faces towards My face, for better is this for you than the things ye possess.”<sup>54</sup>**

**“Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.”<sup>55</sup>**

**“The essence of detachment is for man to turn his face towards the courts of the Lord, to enter His Presence, behold His Countenance, and stand as witness before Him.”<sup>56</sup>**

**“Detachment is as the sun; in whatsoever heart it doth shine it quencheth the fire of covetousness and self. He whose sight is illumined with the light of understanding will assuredly detach himself from the world and the vanities thereof. . . . Let not the world and its vileness grieve you. Happy is he whom riches fill not with vain-glory, nor poverty with sorrow.”<sup>57</sup>**

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The following passages speak to us about the quality of contentment:

**“O Son of Man! Wert thou to speed through the immensity of space and traverse the expanse of heaven, yet thou wouldst find no rest save in submission to Our command and humbleness before Our Face.”<sup>58</sup>**

**“O quintessence of passion! Put away all covetousness and seek contentment; for the covetous hath ever been deprived, and the contented hath ever been loved and praised.”<sup>59</sup>**

**“Tread, therefore, the path of acquiescence and resignation. Let no hardship sadden thy heart, nor set thy hope upon any worldly gifts. Be happy and content with whatsoever God hath willed, that thy heart and soul may find tranquility and thine inner being and conscience may experience true joy.”<sup>60</sup>**

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The extracts below illumine our understanding of kindness:

**“We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship.”<sup>61</sup>**

**“Be ye sincerely kind, not in appearance only. Let each one of God’s loved ones center his attention on this: to be the Lord’s mercy to man; to be the Lord’s**

**grace. Let him do some good to every person whose path he crosseth, and be of some benefit to him.”<sup>62</sup>**

**“... why should men be unjust and unkind to each other, showing forth that which is contrary to God? As He loves us, why should we entertain animosity and hate? If God did not love all, He would not have created, trained and provided for all. Loving-kindness is the divine policy.”<sup>63</sup>**

**“Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone, let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.”<sup>64</sup>**

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Try to memorize at least one passage from each of the sets above.

## **SECTION 15**

Having deepened your understanding of the spiritual qualities addressed in Lessons 13 to 16, reread the four stories and discuss the questions below with your group.

The theme of Lesson 13 is compassion, and the story you will narrate involves a woman who was turned away from the home where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was staying when she knocked on the door, hoping to meet Him. What part of the story illustrates His compassion towards the woman? What details will help the children follow the story and understand that a compassionate heart, while concerned for all equally, is especially sensitive to those who are in hardship, distress, or grief?

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Lesson 14 is focused on the spiritual quality of detachment. The story involves two friends who decide to go on a journey to the Holy Land, one who is wealthy and the other who is less so. Of course, to gain insight into the quality of detachment, the children will need to recognize that the journey to the Holy Land is symbolic of drawing closer to God. What you will want the children to understand is that detachment is not dependent on how much or how little we possess, but on whether we allow our possessions to keep us from drawing near to God. How will the story help foster this understanding?

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The story in Lesson 15 will provide the children with insight into the quality of contentment, which is the main theme. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells His companions that He was happy while imprisoned in the fortress-city of ‘Akká because He passed those days in the path of service. How will this statement affect the children’s understanding of contentment? How will they see that, though physically imprisoned, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s spirit could never be confined?

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In relating the story in Lesson 16, which involves a man in ‘Akká who was consumed by anger and hatred, you will need to emphasize certain details; otherwise the children could miss how it relates to the main theme of kindness. What are these details? What lesson does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá teach the man who clung to his anger and hatred for so long?

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## SECTION 16

It is hoped that your analysis of Lessons 13 to 16 was fruitful and that you and your fellow participants enjoyed practicing the various elements together. As for Lessons 17 to 20, you could recite the following prayer from memory at the start of every class period:

**“O my God! O my God! This, Thy servant, hath advanced towards Thee, is passionately wandering in the desert of Thy love, walking in the path of Thy service, anticipating Thy favors, hoping for Thy bounty, relying upon Thy kingdom, and intoxicated by the wine of Thy gift. O my God! Increase the fervor of his affection for Thee, the constancy of his praise of Thee, and the ardor of his love for Thee.**

**“Verily, Thou art the Most Generous, the Lord of grace abounding. There is no other God but Thee, the Forgiving, the Merciful.”<sup>65</sup>**

In these lessons, the children will focus on learning to recite the prayer below by heart, and you should note down, as you have with the others, how you will make sure they gain some understanding of the words they are committing to memory. This prayer is somewhat lengthier than previous ones, and if the children find it, or any others, challenging to memorize in the allotted four lessons, you should make whatever adjustments you think necessary.

**“Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”<sup>66</sup>**

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## SECTION 17

To begin your review of Lessons 17 to 20, read through them one at a time in the usual way, and write down the spiritual qualities that you will be exploring in them with the children.

Lesson 17: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 18: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 19: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 20: \_\_\_\_\_

Below are a few quotations that will help you and your fellow participants gain insights into the significance of the above qualities. Remember to discuss them not only from the perspective of the life of the individual; you should also think about what they mean for a teacher of young children such as yourself.

On the quality of courage, we are exhorted:

**“Strive as much as ye can to turn wholly toward the Kingdom, that ye may acquire innate courage and ideal power.”<sup>67</sup>**

**“May you be sources of comfort to the broken in heart. May you be a refuge for the wanderer. May you be a source of courage to the affrighted one. Thus, through the favor and assistance of God may the standard of the happiness of humanity be held aloft in the center of the world and the ensign of universal agreement be unfurled.”<sup>68</sup>**

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Concerning the importance of hopefulness, we read:

**“Set all thy hope in God, and cleave tenaciously to His unfailing mercy. Who else but Him can enrich the destitute, and deliver the fallen from his abasement?”<sup>69</sup>**

**“O Moving Form of Dust! I desire communion with thee, but thou wouldst put no trust in Me. The sword of thy rebellion hath felled the tree of thy hope. At all times I am near unto thee, but thou art ever far from Me. Imperishable glory I have chosen for thee, yet boundless shame thou hast chosen for thyself. While there is yet time, return, and lose not thy chance.”<sup>70</sup>**

**“Man is under all conditions immersed in a sea of God’s blessings. Therefore, be thou not hopeless under any circumstances, but rather be firm in thy hope.”<sup>71</sup>**

**“If the heart turns away from the blessings God offers how can it hope for happiness? If it does not put its hope and trust in God’s Mercy, where can it find rest? Oh, trust in God! for His Bounty is everlasting, and in His Blessings, for they are superb.”<sup>72</sup>**

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And regarding trustworthiness, the Writings tell us:

**“O people! The goodliest vesture in the sight of God in this day is trustworthiness. All bounty and honor shall be the portion of the soul that arrayeth itself with this greatest of adornments.”<sup>73</sup>**

**“Trustworthiness is as a stronghold to the city of humanity, and as eyes to the human temple. Whosoever remaineth deprived thereof shall, before His Throne, be reckoned as one bereft of vision.”<sup>74</sup>**

**“Be ye God’s manifestations of trustworthiness in every land. So perfectly should ye mirror forth this quality that even were ye to travel through cities heaped with gold, your gaze would not for a single moment be seduced by its allure.”<sup>75</sup>**

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And these words speak to us of enkindlement:

**“O Friends! You must all be so ablaze in this day with the fire of the love of God that the heat thereof may be manifest in all your veins, your limbs and members of your body, and the peoples of the world may be ignited by this heat and turn to the horizon of the Beloved.”<sup>76</sup>**

**“Let thy soul glow with the flame of this undying Fire that burneth in the midmost heart of the world, in such wise that the waters of the universe shall be powerless to cool down its ardor.”<sup>77</sup>**

**“Burn thou brightly with the flame of this undying Fire which the All-Merciful hath ignited in the midmost heart of creation, that through thee the heat of His love may be kindled within the hearts of His favored ones. Follow in My way and enrapture the hearts of men through remembrance of Me, the Almighty, the Most Exalted.”<sup>78</sup>**

**“Kindle the fire of love and burn away all things; then set thy foot into the land of the lovers.”<sup>79</sup>**

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Try to memorize at least one passage from each of the sets above.

## **SECTION 18**

Now let us turn to the stories in Lessons 17 to 20. After rereading each one, consider the questions below with the other members of your group.

In Lesson 17 you will tell the story of ‘Alí-‘Askar, who, even when threatened by a corrupt official, could not be persuaded to lie and cheat. The children already know well that

lying is not pleasing in the sight of God. The story will enable them to see how obedience to the teachings of God is a source of courage, which is the theme of the lesson. What parts of the story will help them make this connection? What details will be important for you to emphasize in narrating the events if the children are to follow the story and understand this important point?

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Lesson 18 revolves around the quality of hopefulness, and you will tell the children a story of a downhearted man whose hope is restored by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He showers the man with kindness and reminds him that he is rich in the Kingdom of God. To be rich in the Kingdom of God does not mean that we have great material wealth. What does it mean? How does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s reminder increase the man’s trust in God’s bounties? How will you assist the children in recognizing that, without trust in God, it is difficult to remain hopeful?

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Trustworthiness is the theme of Lesson 19, and to illustrate the importance of this quality you will tell your students the story of Muḥammad-Taquí, who was trusted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the task of receiving and dispatching mail in the Holy Land. There are many details you will need to keep in mind when narrating the story so that the children do not miss its main idea. What are they? In describing Muḥammad-Taquí, you will use the words “reliable” and “dependable”. Do you think it is possible to be careless and trustworthy at the same time?

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The figure of Thomas Breakwell is at the center of the story in Lesson 20, which is concerned with enkindlement. The metaphor of a lighted candle, a glowing flame, a blazing fire is often used in the Writings to help us understand the quality of enkindlement—the intensity of the love we have in our hearts for God. You should have confidence that, through this metaphor, your students will get some sense of what enkindlement means. The ability for abstract thinking exists in children from a young age, and it develops as their facility

with language grows. With these thoughts in mind, identify which parts of the story show how Thomas Breakwell was enkindled with the fire of the love of God. What are some of the details that make the story engaging?

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## SECTION 19

It is assumed that you and your fellow participants drew inspiration from practicing the elements of Lessons 17 to 20 and that you are now ready to move on to the final four in Grade 1, Lessons 21 to 24. You may wish to recite this prayer from memory at the start of every class period:

**“Create in me a pure heart, O my God, and renew a tranquil conscience within me, O my Hope! Through the spirit of power confirm Thou me in Thy Cause, O my Best-Beloved, and by the light of Thy glory reveal unto me Thy path, O Thou the Goal of my desire! Through the power of Thy transcendent might lift me up unto the heaven of Thy holiness, O Source of my being, and by the breezes of Thine eternity gladden me, O Thou Who art my God! Let Thine everlasting melodies breathe tranquility on me, O my Companion, and let the riches of Thine ancient countenance deliver me from all except Thee, O my Master, and let the tidings of the revelation of Thine incorruptible Essence bring me joy, O Thou Who art the most manifest of the manifest and the most hidden of the hidden!”<sup>80</sup>**

Below is the final prayer the children will memorize in this grade. Though they will readily understand much of its significance, you should decide how you will explain any words or phrases they may find new or unfamiliar.

**“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.”<sup>81</sup>**

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## SECTION 20

Read the final four lessons you will be teaching in Grade 1, paying particular attention, as always, to the ideas you will share with your students to introduce the quotations they will learn by heart. Write down the quality on which each lesson focuses.

Lesson 21: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 22: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 23: \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 24: \_\_\_\_\_

The following quotations will provide you and the other members of your group with the opportunity to reflect together on the spiritual qualities addressed in these lessons, as you have done for the previous ones.

On the significance of radiance, the Writings tell us:

**“O flame of the love of God! The ray must shed light and the sun must rise; the full moon must shine and the star must gleam. Since thou art a ray, beseech thou the Lord to enable thee to give illumination and enlightenment, to brighten the horizons and to consume the world with the fire of the love of God.”<sup>82</sup>**

**“Live ye one with another, O people, in radiance and joy.”<sup>83</sup>**

**“The All-Loving God created man to radiate the Divine light and to illumine the world by his words, action and life.”<sup>84</sup>**

**“Service to humanity is service to God. Let the love and light of the Kingdom radiate through you until all who look upon you shall be illumined by its reflection. Be as stars, brilliant and sparkling in the loftiness of their heavenly station.”<sup>85</sup>**

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From these passages, we gain insight into the quality of faithfulness:

**“The glory of God rest upon thee, upon every steadfast and unwavering heart and upon every constant and faithful soul.”<sup>86</sup>**

**“Convey thou unto the handmaids of the Merciful the message that when a test turneth violent they must stand unmoved, and faithful to their love for Bahá. In**

winter come the storms, and the great winds blow, but then will follow spring in all its beauty, adorning hill and plain with perfumed plants and red anemones, fair to see.”<sup>87</sup>

“In this day, the one favored at the Threshold of the Lord is he who handeth round the cup of faithfulness; who bestoweth, even upon his enemies, the jewel of bounty, and lendeth, even to his fallen oppressor, a helping hand; it is he who will, even to the fiercest of his foes, be a loving friend.”<sup>88</sup>

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The passages below tell us about patience:

“O Son of Man! For everything there is a sign. The sign of love is fortitude under My decree and patience under My trials.”<sup>89</sup>

“Blessed are the steadfastly enduring, they that are patient under ills and hardships, who lament not over anything that befalleth them, and who tread the path of resignation.”<sup>90</sup>

“Be content with that which hath been ordained by an irrevocable decree, and be of them that endure with patience.”<sup>91</sup>

“It behooveth whosoever hath set his face towards the Most Sublime Horizon to cleave tenaciously unto the cord of patience, and to put his reliance in God, the Help in Peril, the Unconstrained.”<sup>92</sup>

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And we read the following in relation to steadfastness:

“The first and foremost duty prescribed unto men, next to the recognition of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, is the duty of steadfastness in His Cause.”<sup>93</sup>

“Such must be thy steadfastness in the Cause of God, that no earthly thing whatsoever will have the power to deter thee from thy duty.”<sup>94</sup>

“Walk thou steadfastly in the love of God, and keep straight on in His Faith, and aid Him through the power of thine utterance.”<sup>95</sup>

**“Thus with steadfast steps we may tread the Path of certitude, that perchance the breeze that bloweth from the meads of the good-pleasure of God may waft upon us the sweet savors of divine acceptance, and cause us, vanishing mortals that we are, to attain unto the Kingdom of everlasting glory.”<sup>96</sup>**

**“Be ye confident and steadfast; your services are confirmed by the powers of heaven, for your intentions are lofty, your purposes pure and worthy.”<sup>97</sup>**

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Try to memorize at least one passage from each of the sets above.

## **SECTION 21**

Now let us look at the last four stories you will narrate to your students, with whom you will have spent so many wonderful hours together, striving to nurture in them the spiritual qualities they have been learning about. After rereading each story, discuss the questions below with your group.

In Lesson 21, the children will listen to a story about Dorothy Baker as a young girl, when she met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for the first time. They will see how, in the course of the story, she becomes enamored of His radiance, which is the main theme. What effect does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s radiance have on Dorothy? How do you hope the story will increase the children’s attachment to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

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The theme of Lesson 22 is faithfulness, a quality illustrated by the story of Isfandíyár. What parts of the story are most directly related to this theme? What other spiritual qualities does Isfandíyár demonstrate that help him to remain faithful? What details will you be sure to include in your narration?

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Lesson 23 focuses on the quality of patience. In the story, Li Xin shows patience while he tends to his peach tree as it passes through various stages of growth—from a small seed into a tree that finally bears fruit. The story emphasizes the joy rewarded by patience exercised over a long period of exertion and demonstrates how often, before seeing the fruits of our labors, we must exert a great deal of effort. Why is it important for children to view the spiritual quality of patience in this way? What details will you want to have clear in your mind when narrating the story to your students?

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In Lesson 24 you will tell the children a story about the life of Bahíyyih Khánum, the sister of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It will demonstrate to them how Bahíyyih Khánum manifested steadfastness in the face of adversity. But you will also want them to take away the understanding that steadfastness in the love of God involves more than overcoming any one specific crisis or difficulty. How will the story of her life give the children a glimpse of the strength and constancy that firmness in the Cause of God demands?

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## SECTION 22

In this unit, you have thought about the spiritual qualities you will be exploring with children in the first grade and have practiced carrying out the various elements of the twenty-four lessons you will be teaching to them in the hope of contributing to the development of their character. Take a moment now to call to your mind all the spiritual qualities you will have the bounty of helping your students develop in Grade 1. It seems fitting that, from among these, steadfastness in the love of God is the theme with which they will conclude their lessons, just as it will be important for them to begin, as discussed earlier, by focusing on purity of heart. As you embark on your first teaching effort, you should reflect often on how steadfastness in His love will help the students in your care persevere in their efforts to manifest all the gemlike qualities latent within them.



## **24 Lessons for Children**



# LESSON 1

## A. Reciting and memorizing prayers

To attract Divine blessings and create a spiritual atmosphere, begin the class by reciting a prayer you know from memory, such as the one suggested in Section 2. You can then ask the children whether any of them know a prayer by heart that they could recite for the class. Afterwards, they will memorize the prayer below. To help them grasp its significance, identify any words you think may need to be explained with concrete examples. It is expected that many of the children will learn this one easily, but you should review it with them at the start of the next three class periods so that, by Lesson 5 when they begin to learn a new prayer, this one has become engraved on their hearts and minds.

**“He is God! O God, my God! Bestow upon me a pure heart, like unto a pearl.”<sup>98</sup>**

Since the prayer the children will be memorizing in these first few lessons is short, you will have several opportunities to discuss with them some of the ideas mentioned in Section 2 about reverence and the nature of prayer.

## B. Songs

After the period dedicated to prayers, the children can learn to sing the following song, which puts to music the quotation they will memorize later related to the theme of the lesson, purity of heart. Since some of the words may be difficult for the youngsters, you could help them learn to sing the first four lines, while you carry on with the rest.

### My First Counsel

C C/B Am C/B  
O Son of Spirit!

C C/B Am C/B  
O Son of Spirit!

F G  
My first counsel is this

F G  
My first counsel is this

F G C Am  
Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart

F G C Am  
That thine may be a sovereignty

F G C C/B Am C/B  
Ancient, imperishable and everlasting

F G C  
Ancient, imperishable

### C. Memorizing quotations

As the next activity, the children will memorize a quotation from the Bahá'í Writings. You can introduce the theme of the lesson and the quotation for memorization in the following way:

Our hearts are like mirrors. We should always keep them clean. Holding a grudge towards someone, feeling jealous of someone, and being unkind to anyone for whatever reason—these are like dust that cover the mirror of our hearts. When our hearts are pure, they reflect the light of God and His attributes—attributes such as kindness, love, and generosity—and we become a cause of happiness to 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 . . .”**

The children will find the quotation easier to memorize if they understand it well. It is recommended, therefore, that you spend some time discussing the meaning of the words and phrases with them. Here are a few sentences that will assist you:

#### *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 that she should share. The teacher gave Mary good counsel.
2. Patricia has to decide whether to spend her money on candy or on a storybook. Her parents advise her to buy the storybook. Her parents give Patricia good 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. We grow many delicious vegetables in our garden. We possess a good plot of land that gives us many fresh vegetables.

#### *Pure heart*

1. Cathy became angry and said unkind words to Agot. Agot was sad but quickly forgave Cathy. Agot possesses a pure heart.
2. Gustavo likes to share his cookies with all the children, even with Jorge, who does not share anything with others. Gustavo possesses a pure heart.

#### *Kindly heart*

1. When her parents invite friends to their home, Ming Ling happily serves them food. 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 had to spend all his time in bed. He said many prayers, did not become sad, and continued to show forth happiness. Obuya possesses a radiant heart.

#### **D. Story**

Once the children have memorized the quotation, you can tell them the story below about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that will demonstrate to them further the importance of purity of heart. Remember that, if some of the youngsters in your class are unfamiliar with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, you should be prepared to say a few words about Him before you begin.

*‘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 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 over an attendant and said a few words to him softly. The attendant 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.*

#### **E. Game: “Sharing”**

For the next activity, place a car tire on the ground and then ask the children to see how many of them can stand in it at the same time. If a tire is not available, you could place a mat or towel, or some similar object, on the ground instead. Whatever object you choose, it should be small enough to make the game a challenge for the number of children in the class.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 1**

After the game, you can gather the children together and give them each a copy of Drawing 1 to color, explaining that the quotation they have memorized is at the bottom of the page and saying a few words you have prepared in advance about how the image relates to the theme of the lesson.

## G. Closing prayers

To close the class, two or three children can be asked to recite a prayer they know or the quotation they have learned to say from memory. You can then offer a final prayer.

## LESSON 2

### A. Reciting and memorizing prayers

It is suggested you open this and the next two classes with the prayer you recited at the start of Lesson 1. You can then ask a few of the children, selected in advance, to each say one they know. Afterwards, help your students continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the previous lesson.

### B. Songs

For the next activity, the children can sing two songs—the one from the preceding lesson and this new one below regarding justice, which is the theme of the lesson.

#### A Noble Way

D  
Justice is a noble way  
A D  
Justice brings a brighter day  
G D  
A light to those in need  
A D  
Shining through good deeds  
D A D  
Oh, justice is the way

D  
We know 'Abdu'l-Bahá would share  
A D  
Showing love and showing care  
G D  
He was content with less  
A D  
In order to bring happiness  
D A D  
He was content with less

*(continued on next page)*

D  
To be just we have to give

A                      D  
Share our love and joy to live

G                      D  
Sharing blessings we receive

A                      D  
A better world we will achieve

D    A    D  
Oh, justice is the way

*(repeat first stanza, singing last line twice)*

### C. Memorizing quotations

Following the two songs, you will encourage the children to memorize a quotation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Here are some ideas for you to present the theme of the lesson and the quotation suggested:

God loves justice. When there is justice, everyone enjoys the good things of life. Every child can go to school, every family has a comfortable home, and those who have more gladly give of the bounties they have received from God for the good of others. God is pleased with us when we treat one another with fairness and justice. If we see someone being mistreated, we should stand up for them and help them. We should not take from our friends or neighbors what is theirs. When something is to be shared, we have to make sure that no one is left out and that everybody receives a fair portion. 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.”<sup>100</sup>**

It will be important to ensure that the children have a basic understanding of the above quotation before they begin to memorize it. A few sentences are provided below to help you explain the meaning of words that might be new to them.

#### *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 acted with justice in handing out the crayons.
2. Anna has lots of water in the well in her yard, but sometimes her neighbor's well runs dry. Anna never allows her neighbor to suffer and always makes her feel welcome to take water. Anna loves justice.

### **D. Story**

After the children learn to recite the quotation from memory, you can tell them the story below about 'Abdu'l-Bahá that illustrates how just He was.

*One day 'Abdu'l-Bahá wanted to go from 'Akká to Haifa. He went to take an inexpensive seat in a regular horse-drawn coach that was usually packed with people. 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 regular 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?"*

### **E. Game: "The Burning Thirst"**

Following the period dedicated to storytelling, the children will be eager to play a game. Tie sticks to their arms so that they are unable to bend their elbows, and then tell them to pretend they are walking together in a desert and are all very, very thirsty. When they come upon water in cups that you have set out for them, they must find a way to drink it. They will discover that the only way to do so is to help one another, while being careful not to get each other wet.

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 2**

As the next activity, give each child a copy of Drawing 2 to color. You should remind the children that the quotation they have memorized is on the bottom of the page and should be prepared to say a few words about how the image relates to the theme of the lesson.

### **G. Closing prayers**

When the children have finished coloring, you can invite a few of them to say a prayer or the quotation they memorized in this or the previous lesson. You can then offer a closing prayer.

## LESSON 3

### A. Reciting and memorizing prayers

To open the class, recite a prayer from memory and ask a few children selected in advance to each say one as well. You can then spend some time with your students reviewing the prayer they began to learn in Lesson 1.

### B. Songs

Start this next activity by having the children sing the two songs they learned in the previous lessons. Then teach them the song below, which is related to the theme of the lesson, love.

Love, Love, Love

C F  
Love, love, love, love

G C  
Love your fellow man

C F  
Love, love, love is

D7 G  
How the world began

C F  
God loved creation

C G  
So He created thee to

C F  
Love, love, love Him

G C  
And humanity

Love, love, love the  
Everlasting good  
Love, love, love the  
Seed of brotherhood  
Love all creation  
For He created thee to  
Love, love, love Him  
And humanity

*(continued on next page)*

Love God's creatures  
Be they near or far  
See each human  
As a shining star  
Love all creation  
For He created thee to  
Love, love, love Him  
And humanity

### C. Memorizing quotations

To present the quotation for memorization, you can share with your students the following ideas related to the theme of the lesson:

The love of God shines upon all of humanity like the rays of the sun. The sun's rays fall on dry deserts and green gardens alike. Through its warmth, seeds planted in fertile ground grow and bring forth precious fruit. So should we plant in the pure soil of our hearts the seeds of the love of God, which will grow and blossom under the warmth of His loving care. Then will our love spread forth, and we will show love to everyone, even to those who are sometimes unkind to us. 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 . . .”**<sup>101</sup>

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

1. Dineo loves to sing songs about the sun and the flowers, and he does not sing songs about anything else. Dineo 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 upset. His grandmother said, “My dear, all your plans will come to naught if you don't obey your father.”

### D. Story

After the period dedicated to memorization, you can tell your students the following story:

*During the days that 'Abdu'l-Bahá lived in the prison-city of 'Akká, there was a man who behaved very badly towards Him. 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? 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. Indeed, he 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 did the great love of 'Abdu'l-Bahá triumph over hatred.*

### **E. Game: "The Bridge"**

For the next activity, you can use benches, boards, bricks, or tiles to make a line on the ground. This is the "bridge". Divide the children into two groups and tell them that both groups must cross the bridge at the same time, going in opposite directions, without letting anyone fall off the bridge. The children will discover that, to succeed, they have to help one another change places, passing each other one by one.

To assist them, you can gently guide the children to their starting places and help them go through the steps. Instead of putting all the youngsters on the bridge at once, you could practice with a few of them, two at a time. After several demonstrations, the number of children on the bridge can be increased, until everyone is participating.

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 3**

Following the game, you can give each child a copy of Drawing 3 to color as a final activity. Remember to say a few words about how the image relates to the theme of the lesson.

### **G. Closing prayers**

To end the class, encourage your students to sit quietly, while two or three of them recite a prayer or a quotation they have memorized. Then you or one of the children can offer a closing prayer.

## **LESSON 4**

### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After opening devotions, review with your students the prayer they have been learning by heart over the past few lessons.

## B. Songs

For the next activity, have the children sing songs they learned in previous lessons, before teaching them this new one on the theme of truthfulness:

### Truthful Words

G D  
A mirror that's covered up in dust  
A D  
Cannot reflect the sun's bright light  
G D  
A bird with wings all full of mud  
A D D7  
Is unable to take flight

CHORUS:

G D  
When all of our words are truthful  
A D D7  
Our souls are able to progress  
G D  
The foundation of all human virtues  
A D  
We know is truthfulness

CHORUS

A ship cannot catch the wind  
If it is using a torn sail  
Eyes can't see the path ahead  
If they are covered up in veils

CHORUS (*with last line repeated*)

## C. Memorizing quotations

It is suggested you present the theme of the lesson and the quotation for memorization in this way:

Truthfulness is one of the most important spiritual qualities for every human being to have. We should never tell even the smallest lie, even if no one will find out. Sometimes people tell lies because they are afraid to tell the truth. Yet we know that

God is aware of all our actions and that we cannot hide anything from Him. We should love truth. If we are not truthful, it will be difficult for us to develop other qualities, like justice, love, and kindness, and for us to draw close to God. Let us memorize the following quotation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

**“Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.”<sup>102</sup>**

Below are some sentences to assist you in explaining the meaning of words in the above quotation that the children may find difficult.

#### *Truthfulness*

1. Sanjay dropped a glass and broke it. When his mother asked him what had happened, he told her the truth and did not lie. Sanjay acted with truthfulness.
2. Gita spent so much time playing one evening that she did not finish her homework. The next day, when the time came to hand it in, she decided she had to tell her teacher the truth, even though she realized he would be displeased. Gita acted with 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. It helps hold the house together.
2. Before you learn to read and write, you have to know the letters and their sounds. Learning the sounds of the letters is a foundation for learning to read and write.

#### *Virtues*

1. Aurora is friendly, courteous, and kind. Friendliness, politeness, and kindness are some of her many virtues.
2. Mrs. Patel teaches the children about justice, generosity, humility, and honesty. These are some of the important virtues everyone should possess.

#### **D. Story**

As the next activity, you can tell the following story to your students, which will help them think about the quality of truthfulness:

*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; 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!*

#### **E. Game: “Touch Telephone”**

After telling the above story, you can have the children play a game. Ask them to stand in a line. They should all face 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. He or she will need some kind of instrument for writing. More than one line can be organized, if there are many children.

Now, using your finger, draw something on the back of the first child, who will, in turn, draw it on the back of the second child. The second child should then draw it on the third child’s back, and so on, until the drawing reaches the last child, who should draw it on the piece of paper or blackboard. Now you should draw next to it what you had traced with your finger on the first child’s back. Your drawings should be simple so that all the children can replicate them.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 4**

You can hand out in the usual way copies of Drawing 4 for the children to color as the next activity.

#### **G. Closing prayers**

As always, close the class by asking the children to sit quietly while quotations and prayers are recited.

## **LESSON 5**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

For this and the next three lessons, you should begin the class by reciting another prayer you know from memory, and one is suggested in Section 6 for this purpose. After a few of the children have joined you in reciting opening prayers, you can introduce the one below for them to memorize. It is expected that they will all be able to learn at least part of the prayer in this class and will be able to recite it from memory in its entirety by Lesson 8.

**“O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.”<sup>103</sup>**

## B. Songs

For this lesson, in addition to teaching the children the song below, you can sing with them a few others they already know.

### Fountain of Generosity

C  
Be a fountain, be a spring  
C G  
Be an ever-flowing thing  
F C  
It is true that if you do  
Dm7 G7 C  
Happiness will come to you  
F C  
Search your heart every day  
D7 G7  
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  
Search your heart every day  
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

## C. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas will help you introduce the theme of the lesson and the quotation the children will memorize:

God is very generous with His creation. He showers the plants with rain and provides food and nourishment for the animals and for human beings. He looks after all of us. He has given us many gifts: eyes with which to see the mountains, the rivers, the stars, and all the beauty around us; ears with which to listen to melodious songs, the chirping of birds, the advice of our parents, and the Word of God. He has given us intelligence with which we can learn about the mysteries of the universe and, above all, He has given us spiritual powers with which we can know and love Him. Just as God is generous with us, we should be generous with others. We should give of what

we have—of our food, of our possessions, of our time, of our knowledge—to meet the needs of others. We should share our love, our joy, and the good things we learn at home and in school. To assist us in our efforts to be generous, let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh that reminds us of God's generosity:

**“To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.”<sup>104</sup>**

### *Generous*

1. Ram and Rajish have saved a little money. They decide 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. The stone is very hard. Hardness is an attribute of stones.
2. “One of your attributes is that you are hard working,” the teacher said to Charlene.

### *Adorn*

1. Tonight there is a devotional gathering at the community center. The children picked flowers to place in the meeting room. The room is adorned with flowers.
2. Li Feng has a bright smile. A smile adorns his face most of the time.

## **D. Story**

In this lesson, you will tell the children the following story, which will assist them in reflecting on the concept of generosity:

*One day, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was invited by the man in charge of the sheep owned by His Father, Bahá'u'lláh, to spend the day in the countryside with the shepherds. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a small child at the time, and it was long before Bahá'u'lláh and His family were forced to leave their beloved homeland. Bahá'u'lláh had a good deal of land in the mountains and large flocks of sheep. With His mother's consent, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá joined the shepherds and had a wonderful day in their company as they sang, danced and prepared a beautiful feast. When the day came to an end and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was ready to leave, the shepherds all gathered around Him and gave farewell speeches. The man who had accompanied ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained that it was customary for those who owned land and flocks of sheep to offer parting gifts. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá became silent for a while. He did not have anything to give them, but the man had insisted that the shepherds were expecting something. Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had an idea: He would give the shepherds a few sheep from the very flock they were tending. Bahá'u'lláh was greatly 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.*

### **E. Game: “The Twins”**

After the period of storytelling, the children will, as always, play a game. Divide them into pairs, trying as much as possible to have children of the same height work together. Ask each pair to stand back to back and squat down. Then tell them to hook elbows and try to stand up. Once they have succeeded, have groups of three or four children try to do the same.

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 5**

As a final activity, you can hand out copies of Drawing 5 for the children to color.

### **G. Closing prayers**

The class can close in the usual way, with prayers and quotations recited by you and a few children.

## **LESSON 6**

### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After you and a few students have said opening devotions, you can help the children continue learning the prayer introduced in Lesson 5.

### **B. Songs**

As the next activity, teach the children to sing the following song, which is related to the theme of the lesson. They can also sing a few others they especially enjoy.

#### **Prefer Your Brother**

C    G/B   Am7    C  
I am thirsty, I am thirsty

Dm        G        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

*(continued on next page)*

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  
You are richer, the more you share

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

CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

In this lesson, the children will learn to recite a quotation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh that calls us to selflessness. You could present this theme in the following way:

God loves each and every one of us, and He has created the human heart to know Him and to love Him. When our hearts are pure, we are able to see the signs of God reflected in His creation. We see His generosity, His kindness, His mercy. In our love for God, we want to bring joy and happiness to all those we see around us—to our parents, to our brothers and sisters, to our friends and neighbors. Our love is so great that what gladdens us most is to bring joy to others and to put their comfort before our own. So it is that we think of our fellow human beings before we think of ourselves. Let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”<sup>105</sup>**

#### *Blessed*

1. Amelia's mother asked her to go to the store and buy five items. She did not make a list but remembered to buy them all, not forgetting a single one. Amelia is blessed with a good memory.
2. Victor's family says prayers together every morning in their home. The home of Victor's family is blessed by the remembrance of God.

#### *Prefers*

1. Anoushka's grandmother likes both mint tea and lemon tea, but when she has a choice, she chooses mint tea. She prefers mint tea.

2. Veasna can go out and play or go help her father in the garden. She decides to help her father in the garden. Veasna prefers to help her father.

#### **D. Story**

The story below illustrates how, through both His words and His deeds, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá shows us the ways of selflessness.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá preferred inexpensive clothes for Himself. More important to Him was to be scrupulously clean. 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 special occasion. Well ahead of time she went to the tailor and ordered a fine coat for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. When the day of the governor’s visit arrived, the new coat was laid out for Him. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went searching for His old one. How could such an expensive coat, like the one laid out, possibly be His? For the same amount, five ordinary coats could be made. “Then, you see,” He told His wife, “I shall not only have a new one, but I shall also have four to give to others!”*

#### **E. Game: “The Snail”**

For the next activity, tell the children they are going to be a snail. To succeed, they must stand in a line, hold hands, and not let go. The person on one end will be the center, and he or she must stand very still. The child at the other end must guide everyone else in the line to wind around the child in the center. Little by little they should wind themselves into a spiral to form a snail.

As an alternative to the above game, tell the children to stand in a line again and hold hands. Then ask the child at one end to begin to turn in a circle, slowly winding the others up around him or her. Make sure they are careful not to step on one another’s feet when doing so.

If time allows, once the children have formed a snail, tell those in the middle to bend down and the one at the center to go under the arms of a child next to him or her, continuing through the arms of others until he or she has emerged out of the snail. The other children, while continuing to hold hands, should follow him or her through one another’s arms until they all have emerged and formed a line once again. Clearly, for this game to work, you must have a sufficient number of children in the class.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 6**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 7**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

You can review with the children the prayer they began to memorize in Lesson 5, after you and a few of the youngsters have said opening devotions.

## B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)

### Joy Gives Us Wings

D A D G D  
Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings

D A D A D  
Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings

A D  
In times of joy, our strength grows in might

A D  
In times of joy, our intellect takes flight

A D  
In times of joy, our understanding is bright

D A D A D  
Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings

Dm A7 Dm A7 Dm  
But when sadness visits us, when sadness visits us

A Dm A Dm  
We become weak, our strength goes away

A Dm A Dm  
Our insights are dim, our thoughts become gray

A7  
How-ev-er

Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings  
Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings

In times of joy, our strength grows in might  
In times of joy, our intellect takes flight  
In times of joy, our understanding is bright  
Joy gives us wings to fly, joy gives us wings

## C. Memorizing quotations

The following will assist you in presenting the quotation that the children will memorize in this lesson, which is focused on the theme of joyfulness:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that joy gives us wings, that when joyful we are stronger, and that when happy we are quicker to understand. Joyfulness is a quality of the human heart. With hearts full of joy, we see the blessings of God everywhere around us—the blessing of loving parents, the blessing of friendship, and, above all, the blessing

to know Him and to love Him. We must be happy and joyful under all conditions and do our best to bring joy to others. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wants all children to shine like brilliant lamps shedding the light of joy everywhere. To help us remember that we should always be joyful, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“O Son of Man! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty.”<sup>106</sup>**

### *Rejoice*

1. Ronald lives far from his grandparents. When he heard that he would be visiting them during the school holidays, he became very happy. His heart rejoiced.
2. Mouzhgan helped her mother and her father to plant cucumber seeds in their garden. Her heart rejoiced when the first small cucumbers began to appear.

### *Worthy*

1. Sjona studied very hard and received excellent grades. The teacher praised her diligence and hard work. Sjona’s hard work was worthy of the teacher’s praise.
2. David always took good care of his brothers and sisters. His parents knew they could trust him with the children. David was worthy of his parents’ trust.

### *Mirror forth*

1. Amari polished the stone he found until it became so shiny it began to mirror forth light.
2. Hearts that are pure mirror forth the attributes of God.

### *Beauty*

1. Ilana’s mother enjoys seeing birds flying in the sky, flowers in bloom, and the ocean’s waves rolling onto the shore. She sees beauty in nature.
2. Sometimes the beauty of a song touches our hearts so much that it brings tears to our eyes.
3. Whenever Munir says prayers, he remembers God’s beauty, His love, His generosity, and His wisdom.

## **D. Story**

The story below will illustrate for the children how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá brought joy to the hearts of those around Him.

*Leroy Ioas was an outstanding Bahá’í that you will probably learn more about as you grow. He was a young boy in 1912 when the Master visited the city of Chicago. Can you imagine the excitement of this spiritual child at having the opportunity to be in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá? One day, as he and his father were on their way to the*

*hotel where the Master was staying, Leroy had an idea: he decided that he wanted to take 'Abdu'l-Bahá some flowers. With the little money he had, he managed to buy a beautiful bouquet of white carnations. But by the time they reached the hotel, he had changed his mind. He decided that he did not want to give anything material to the Master, not even beautiful flowers. He would offer Him his heart. That was the most important thing he had to offer. So, Leroy's father presented the flowers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá without mentioning who had brought them.*

*'Abdu'l-Bahá then gave a talk to all the friends who had gathered at the hotel to meet Him. During His talk, Leroy sat quietly at His feet and listened to His wise and loving words. Afterwards, the Master stood up and shook hands with the guests, giving each one a white carnation as a token of His love. Leroy was now standing behind the Master. "Oh! I wish He would turn around and give me one of those flowers," thought the young boy. Maybe, secretly in his heart, he wanted the Master to know who had really brought Him the beautiful flowers. But, one by one, the white carnations were being given to other people, and it seemed unlikely that Leroy was going to get one. Then, suddenly, the Master turned around and fixed His gaze on Leroy. His face radiated love and His eyes were full of kindness. And did He hand him a white carnation? No. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave Leroy something even more precious. He was wearing a beautiful red rose on His coat. He pulled it off and presented it to the young boy. Leroy's heart leaped with joy. The Master did know who had brought Him the white carnations after all.*

#### **E. Game: "Catching the Dragon's Tail"**

To begin the next activity, ask the children to stand in a line, placing their hands on the shoulders or the waist of the one in front of them. The first child in the line will be the dragon's head. The last in line will be the dragon's tail, eager to lash to the right and left in order to escape the head. Until the signal "Go" is given, the dragon must be a straight line. One youngster should count, "One, two, three, go!" On the signal "Go", the head should run around toward the tail and try to catch it. The whole body must move with the head and remain unbroken. If the head succeeds in touching the tail, or if the body breaks before he or she does so, the head becomes the tail, and the next in line becomes the head. The game can continue in this way until every child has had a chance to be the head and the tail at least once.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 7**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 8**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

Open the class in the usual way by saying a prayer from memory and asking a few students selected in advance to do so as well. You can then review with the children the prayer they began learning in Lesson 5.

## B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)

### At All Times

CHORUS:

          E                  A  
We should at all times manifest

B          E          A          B  
Our truthfulness and sincerity

          E                  A  
We should at all times manifest

B          E          A          B  
Our truthfulness and sincerity (*repeat*)

          E                                  A                  B  
When I speak, I share from the bottom of my heart

          E                                  A          B  
I let kind and true words be my art

E                                  A          B  
Oh what a treasure is sincerity

A                  E                  B          E  
A beautiful mix of honesty and purity

A                  E                  B          E  A  E  
Oh what a treasure is sincerity

When I serve, I give from the bottom of my heart

I purify my thoughts and pray before I start

This way my actions can build true unity

Oh what a treasure is sincerity

Oh what a treasure is sincerity

When I pray, I pray from the bottom of my heart

I close my eyes and think of God

I don't think of my desire, I don't think of what I need

I think of how sincerity can shine through my deeds

Oh what a treasure is sincerity

CHORUS (*repeat twice*)

### C. Memorizing quotations

To present the quotation for memorization, you can draw on the following ideas related to the theme of the lesson:

When our words and deeds reflect what is in our hearts, we show forth the quality of sincerity. Sincerity inspires us to be truthful and faithful in our dealings with others. For example, when we say that we are sorry for something we have done and we also know in our hearts that we will make every effort not to repeat our wrongdoings, we are being sincere. It is through our sincerity that others can see the purity of our hearts and place their trust in us. To help us remember the importance of this quality, we will memorize the following quotation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

**“We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity . . .”<sup>107</sup>**

#### *Manifest*

1. Csaba cleaned the mud off the seashell that he found at the beach and polished it until it was smooth and shiny. When he was finished, the shell’s true beauty became manifest.
2. As the sun rose and the morning fog lifted, the splendor of the mountains became manifest.

#### *Sincerity*

1. Leo’s classmates often play games instead of studying. Leo is worried that they will not do well in school, so he suggests that they all study together and tries to think of ways that they can help each other learn. Leo’s concern for his classmates is sincere.
2. Rosa promised her mother that she would do her homework every day. When her parents are away, Rosa diligently works on her homework assignments. Rosa was sincere in her promise.

### D. Story

The story you narrate to the children in this lesson will help them think about what it means to possess the quality of sincerity and to see when it is lacking.

*For many years a large tree stood behind a house that belonged to a husband and wife with several children. As the tree grew, its branches reached up and out, shading the back of the family’s home. One winter morning, the father was passing under the tree when he met a neighbor. They spoke briefly of the comings and goings in the village. After a while, the neighbor, taking notice of the large tree, said to the man, “You know, it really is time for you to cut that enormous tree down. It is sprawling and unruly. What if one of the branches were to break off and fall onto your roof—or worse yet, hit one of your children while they were playing in the shade?” When the two had parted, the man considered his neighbor’s advice. The tree had stood in this place since before he could remember, and no harm had come of it. It gave good shade in the summer and shielded the house from the bitter winds of winter. It seemed sturdy and strong. “Still, perhaps my neighbor has a point,” the man said to*

himself. “Appearances can sometimes be deceiving. What if the tree is not as sturdy as it seems?” And so he decided to cut it down.

*It was a difficult job, for the tree was very big, indeed, and had many limbs and branches, some of them quite high. Just as the man finished, his neighbor returned, this time accompanied by his two sons and a cart. “I see you decided to take down the tree,” the neighbor said, looking at the many stacks of wood. “I suppose you’ll need someone to take those piles away. Perhaps we can help you. I have brought my cart and my two sons, and we will be happy to remove all this from your yard.” Without waiting for an answer, the sons began loading the wood into the waiting cart. As they walked away with the loaded cart, the man sat down on the stump of the tree that had sheltered his home for so long. It was then that he realized that his neighbor had not been concerned for his family’s safety after all, but for the supply of firewood that would keep him warm through the winter months. “Appearances can, indeed, sometimes be deceiving,” he said with a sigh. How sad that the family lost its beautiful tree that day. But sadder still—the neighbor lost the trust of his friend and an opportunity to win the good pleasure of God.*

#### **E. Game: “Hot or Cold”**

Begin by blindfolding one of the children and asking him or her to turn away from the group. Have the others hide a small object, for example, a pencil or crayon, and then remove the blindfold from the first child, who will now look for the hidden object. The others should help by clapping louder and louder the closer the child gets to the hiding place. If the child moves away from the place where the object is hidden, the clapping will become softer and softer. Instead of clapping, the children can call out “warm”, “warmer”, and “hot” as the child who is looking gets nearer to the object and “cold”, “colder”, and “freezing” if the child moves away from it. The children should be careful not to mislead the friend who is searching for the hidden object; otherwise he or she will lose trust in the others, and the game will become futile.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 8**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 9**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

To begin this and the next three classes, choose a prayer to recite by heart, such as the one suggested in Section 10. A few students can join you in saying opening prayers, after which you can introduce the one below for memorization. This prayer is longer than the previous two memorized by the children, but it will not be difficult for them to grasp, and they should all be able to commit it to memory by Lesson 12.

**“Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.”<sup>108</sup>**

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Be Like the Earth

C G  
See the earth

F G C  
It's so humble

C G  
Has all God's wealth to give

F G C  
Everything we need to live

C G  
Lets us walk on it every day

F G C  
But have you ever heard it say

C G  
"I am richer

F G C  
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

C G  
Rise to the heaven of glory

F G C  
On the wings of humility

C G  
Rise to the heaven of glory

F G C  
On the wings of humility

### C. Memorizing quotations

The ideas below will help you to introduce the theme of this lesson and the quotation for memorization.

A very important spiritual quality is humility. Those who are humble before God recognize the greatness of God and His creation. They know that, without His assistance and grace, none of us can achieve anything. He is the Almighty, the All-Powerful. And, just as we would never show pride before God, we remain humble before all of His creation. We remember that the earth and everyone on it were created by Him and reflect His signs and attributes. We respect nature and know in our hearts that there is always something we can learn from those around us. Let us memorize the following quotation:

**“O Son of Man! Humble thyself before Me, that I may graciously visit thee.”<sup>109</sup>**

#### *Humble*

1. Zainab works diligently on her math assignments and always does well. She is humble and never boasts about her achievements.
2. The children in Yong Fu’s neighborhood are eager to learn, and he was asked to form a small class for them. Even though he has little experience and considers himself unworthy, he puts his trust in God and does his best. He approaches the task with humility.

#### *Graciously*

1. Candace’s family has invited a few neighbors to their home for a meal. When the guests arrive, Candace greets them warmly and graciously offers them a cool drink.
2. Giovanni saw his elderly neighbor struggling to walk home with her grocery bags, so he graciously offered to carry them for her.

### D. Story

*Humility was one of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s most notable qualities. Many people wanted to give Him great titles, but He only wanted to be called “‘Abdu’l-Bahá”, which means “Servant of the Glory”. His most ardent desire was to serve. One time, some wealthy visitors 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 the group of friends approaching from across the lawn—with the little boy, the bowl, and the towel—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 turned to greet the group. And then, bestowing on His guests the very honor that was meant for Him, He lovingly offered them the water and perfumed towel!*

### **E. Game: “Sometimes We Are Tall”**

Blindfold one child and have the rest form a circle around him or her. In unison, have them say:

“We are very tall.” (They should stand on their toes and stretch as tall as they can.)

“We are very short.” (They should squat down and make themselves as short as they can.)

“Sometimes we are tall.” (They stretch up again.)

“Sometimes we are short.” (They squat down again.)

Now gesture to the children, indicating whether they should stand tall or squat down, and have them say together:

“Guess what we are now!”

The blindfolded child should try to guess by the level of their voices whether they are “short” or “tall”. Each child should take a turn at being blindfolded.

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 9**

### **G. Closing prayers**

## **LESSON 10**

### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After opening devotions, the children can continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the last lesson.

### **B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

#### **I Thank and Praise Thee Lord**

C            Am            Em  
I thank and praise Thee Lord

F            G  
For the crown of mercy

C            Am  
Set upon my head

*(continued on next page)*

F C  
It will forever glow  
G7 Am  
The more gratitude I show  
Dm G7 C  
I thank and praise Thee Lord

I thank and praise Thee Lord  
For the love and knowledge  
Implanted in my heart  
They will grow and grow  
The more gratitude I show  
I thank and praise Thee Lord

I thank and praise Thee Lord  
For the light of truth  
That illumines my eyes  
I will see Thy bounties flow  
The more gratitude I show  
I thank and praise Thee Lord  
I thank and praise Thee Lord

### C. Memorizing quotations

The quotation for memorization can be introduced to your students in the following way:

When we receive even the smallest of gifts, we thank the person who gave it to us. How much more, then, should we be thankful to God for His innumerable gifts and bounties—caring eyes to watch over us, hearts to love us, and all that He has created so we can grow and develop. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that we should be thankful to God for the many bounties He has given us and for filling our hearts with His love. We must be thankful to God at all times, even in times of difficulty. Giving thanks to God enables us to receive more and more of His infinite bounties. Let us memorize the following quotation:

**“Be thou happy. Be thou grateful. Arise to render thanks unto God, that thy thankfulness may conduce to an increase of bounty.”<sup>110</sup>**

*Arise*

1. Salma was glad to see her grandmother arise from bed and go for a walk after a long illness.
2. The children arise early every morning to say prayers.

### Conduce

1. Nadia is always clean. She knows that cleanliness is important for spiritual growth. Cleanliness conduces to spirituality.
2. The members of Seff's family cooperate and help one another in all important matters. Because they cooperate, they live in harmony. Cooperation conduces to harmony.

### Increase

1. Last year, Maria's school had only five teachers. This year it has eight teachers. The number of teachers at the school has increased by three.
2. Shayan is a joyful boy, and his joy grows even more whenever he is able to help others. His joy increases when he serves others.

### D. Story

*One day, a wealthy lady came from very far away to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land. At great length, she began to tell Him of her small troubles, one after the other. 'Abdu'l-Bahá listened with patience and kindness for quite some time until, eventually, another appointment called Him away. Before leaving His guest, however, He pointed to a gentleman walking outside the window. "There goes a man whom I will bring in to see you," He said. "His name is Mirzá Haydar-'Alí. He walks on earth but he lives in heaven," 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained. "He has had many troubles and he will tell you about them."*

*Mirzá Haydar-'Alí had had many troubles indeed. He was from Persia, where Bahá'is were treated with injustice and great cruelty. Some were arrested and wrongly imprisoned; others were beaten by people full of hatred and anger. It would sadden your hearts too much to hear about all the sufferings that Mirzá Haydar-'Alí endured in his life.*

*Now, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went out to fetch Mirzá Haydar-'Alí and bring him in to meet His guest. After introducing him to the lady, 'Abdu'l-Bahá departed. Immediately Mirzá Haydar-'Alí began to speak to her with great joy and humility of the wonderful time in which we live and of all the blessings of God to come. The guest listened for a little while, then, impatient, interrupted saying, "But 'Abdu'l-Bahá said you would tell me about your troubles." Mirzá Haydar-'Alí looked up in amazement. "Troubles?" he replied. "Why madam, I never had any troubles. I don't know what troubles are." Of course, 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew that, even though Mirzá Haydar-'Alí had experienced great hardships, they never touched his happiness, and he saw only all the blessings God had given him in life, for which he was thankful.*

### E. Game: "Quick Impulse"

Ask the students to form a circle holding hands. First, have them practice squeezing their left hands and then their right hands. Afterwards, explain to them that they are going to send a "pulse" signal through the group. One child will begin by quickly squeezing the hand of the child to his or her right, who will pass the signal on to the next child, and so on, until it returns to the first child. The children should be timed and challenged to go faster

and faster. Once they have learned this basic game, you can ask them to send the pulse in the opposite direction or to increase the number of squeezes per pulse.

**F. Coloring: Drawing 10**

**G. Closing prayers**

**LESSON 11**

**A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

Open the class in the usual way by reciting a prayer from memory and inviting a few of the students to say one. You can then help the children continue memorizing the prayer they began to learn in Lesson 9.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Looking for Good

C  
I've got excellence as my goal  
F7  
But I've got a long, long way to go  
C  
And I know it helps me on my way  
G7 C  
When I see the good in every day  
F7  
So if I see something you do wrong  
C  
I won't sing about it in this song  
G7  
I won't talk about it with my friends  
F7 C  
I won't even think about it again

CHORUS:

F7  
I'll look at the good in you  
C  
I'll look at the good in you

*(continued on next page)*



### *Cheer*

1. Ursula was not feeling well. Her friend Elsie brought her flowers and sat with her for a long time, telling stories and talking. Elsie's visit made Ursula feel much better. Her visit cheered Ursula's heart.
2. Mrs. Sanchez received a long letter from her husband who had gone away to a nearby town for work. The letter brought the good news that he would soon be coming home. The news greatly cheered her.

### *Favored*

1. The teacher loved all of her students and paid special attention to each one. She favored them all.
2. James liked all of the subjects at school, but he did best in science. Science was the subject he favored most.

### **D. Story**

*During the days the Master lived in 'Akká, there was a governor who, time and time again, tried to harm the Bahá'ís. On one occasion he came up with a plan to destroy their means of livelihood: he ordered his guards to close down the shops of all the Bahá'ís and to bring him the keys. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá learned of the governor's plan and advised the friends not to open their shops the next day. He told them to wait and see what God would ordain.*

*Imagine the governor's surprise when he heard that his guards could not bring him the keys because the shops had not been opened. But before he could think of what to do next, something unexpected happened. A telegram arrived from his superiors dismissing him from his post as governor of the city. And so the shops of the Bahá'ís were saved.*

*The ex-governor was ordered to leave 'Akká and go to another city called Damascus. He did not know what to do. He had to leave quickly and alone. What would happen to his family? Who would help someone who had lost the favor of the government? The Master heard the news and went to see him. He showered the unhappy man with great kindness, as if he had never been an enemy of the Faith. Not once did He mention his past wrongdoings. Instead, He offered to help him in whatever way possible. The ex-governor was worried about leaving his wife and children behind. 'Abdu'l-Bahá assured him that He would take care of the matter. Later He arranged for a comfortable trip, provided someone reliable to accompany the wife and children, paid for all the expenses, and sent the family on its way to Damascus.*

*When the ex-governor was reunited with his family, he rejoiced. With a heart filled with gratitude, he turned to the man who had traveled with his family and asked him about the cost of the journey. The man explained that it had been paid by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Then the ex-governor offered him a present for his kindness and diligence during the journey. But he would not accept the present; he said that he was merely obeying 'Abdu'l-Bahá and did not wish to receive anything for his services. The ex-governor then asked the man to stay the night as a guest in his home. He said, however, that*

*he was eager to follow the instructions of the Master, Who had told him to return to 'Akká without delay. The ex-governor asked the man to wait at least long enough for him to write a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This he accepted and upon his return to 'Akká delivered the letter to the Master. The letter read: "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I pray you pardon me. I did not understand. I did not know you. I have wrought you great evil. You have rewarded me with great good."*

### **E. Game: "People to People"**

Tell the children to walk around randomly while clapping and saying, "people to people". When you call out "back to back", they should stop, and each back up to a partner. On your signal, they should start to move around again, clapping and saying, "people to people". When you call out "face to face", they should stop and each face a partner, bowing heads. The game can continue in this way, with these two commands being repeated several times. Other commands can then be included, for example, "knee to knee" and "elbow to elbow".

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 11**

### **G. Closing prayers**

## **LESSON 12**

### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

As always, the class should begin with opening prayers. You can then review with the children the prayer they have been learning over the last three lessons. You should make sure they can all say it well, since you will be introducing a new prayer for them to memorize in Lesson 13.

### **B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

#### **Brighter Than the Sun**

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

Honesty adorns the soul of everyone  
Honesty adorns the soul of everyone  
Honesty is brighter than the light of the sun  
Honesty is brighter than the light of the sun

### C. Memorizing quotations

Below are a few ideas that you can share with your students to present the theme of the lesson, which is honesty, and the quotation they will memorize.

Gardens are adorned with flowers of different shapes and colors. In the spring, fruit trees are adorned with fragrant blossoms. We adorn ourselves with clean and spotless garments. All of these adornments create beauty. Yet, more than material things, it is the radiance of spiritual qualities that make human beings beautiful, that bring joy to our hearts. One of the most beautiful qualities that can adorn our lives is honesty. When we beautify ourselves with honesty, we do not take things that belong to others without their permission, we never cheat or trick anyone into doing something. To help us remember the 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.”<sup>112</sup>**

*Beautify*

1. Malit planted beautiful roses in the garden. The roses beautify the garden.
2. Sunil only tells the truth. His words are always beautified with truthfulness.

### D. Story

*During the later part of His life, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was able to travel to many places around the world. Wherever He went, He would meet with people from all walks of life—laborers and leaders, educators and scientists—and He did whatever He could to make everyone feel at ease. One day, in Egypt, He had invited a high-ranking government official to be His guest for lunch. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá decided to hire a carriage to drive them to their destination, as the official was accustomed to this sort of comfort.*

*The ride was not long, and they soon arrived at their luncheon. But when the carriage driver approached ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for payment, he asked much more than a fair price for the trip. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew that the driver was not being honest. He paid the man only what he was owed, then turned to leave.*

*When the driver tried to argue, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood firm. He told the man that, if he had been honest about the fare, he would have been rewarded with a handsome tip. Then the Master walked away, leaving the driver to think about his actions.*

### E. Game: “Square, Circle, Triangle”

It is assumed that the children know the names of at least a few shapes, such as “square”, “circle”, and “triangle”. Begin by reviewing the names of these shapes with the children, making sure that they can identify each one. Next, hold up a card on which you have drawn a sequence of three shapes—for instance, circle, circle, square—and tell them to look at it closely. Then put the card away and ask one of the children to say the sequence out loud. Repeat this several times, using cards on which you have drawn a variety of sequences beforehand. You should have some cards with only two shapes, in case a sequence of three

is too difficult for the children to remember, and a few cards with a sequence of four or five, in case they find a sequence of three too easy.

Now try calling out a sequence of shapes—either two, three, or four shapes, depending on your students’ ability—and ask one child in the group to repeat it. After you have done this several times with each child, you can make the game more challenging by having the children draw the sequence that you call out.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 12**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 13**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

In this and the next three classes, the children will focus their efforts on learning to recite the prayer below by heart. You can introduce it to them after you have offered an opening prayer from memory, such as the one suggested in Section 13, and after a few of your students have also done so.

**“O Lord! Plant this tender seedling in the garden of Thy manifold bounties, water it from the fountains of Thy loving-kindness and grant that it may grow into a goodly plant through the outpourings of Thy favor and grace.**

**“Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful.”<sup>113</sup>**

#### **B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

##### **Be Fair**

CHORUS:

A  
Be fair, be fair

E7 A  
And strive to provide for the comfort of all

A  
Be fair, be fair

E7 A  
And strive to provide for the comfort of all

*(continued on next page)*



### *Equity*

1. All of the people in the kingdom worked hard for its prosperity. When all of the crops were gathered, the king divided them among his subjects, according to the size of their families. The king treated his subjects with equity.
2. The town council had to build a road to the next village. It decided to wind the road around the farmland. In this way many were able to benefit from the new road but the farmers did not suffer. The council showed a sense of equity in its decision.

### *Compassion*

1. Li Yong noticed that his friend Zahra was unhappy, so he went to find out whether he could help her in any way. Zahra explained to him that her mother was ill in the hospital. Li Yong listened and comforted Zahra, offering to go with her to the hospital the next day. Li Yong showed compassion to Zahra.
2. One day Shiori was walking in the countryside and saw a little lamb whose leg was caught in a fence. Shiori gently removed the leg and put a bandage on it. Shiori showed compassion to the lamb.

### **D. Story**

*When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled to the West, in every city He visited, many people came to see Him and listen to His encouraging words. Day and night He met with people of all kinds—the young and the old, the wealthy and the poor, officials and ordinary citizens. Some came out of their great love for the Master, and others came because they were curious about what He had to say.*

*One day a woman arrived at the home where the Master was staying and knocked on the door. She was an ordinary person who longed in her heart to spend a few moments with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. “Do you have an appointment to see the Master?” asked the man who opened the door. She said that she did not. In that case, she was told, it would not be possible for her to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as He was meeting with some very important people. She turned away sadly and started walking down the steps in front of the house. What disappointment filled her heart! But suddenly a messenger from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá appeared, asking her to return. The Master wished to see her. His voice was heard saying with power and authority, “A heart has been hurt. Hasten, hasten, bring her to me!”*

### **E. Game: “Together”**

Divide the children into pairs, standing side by side, with the left leg of one child tied to the right leg of the other. Explain to the children that, if they are to succeed in this game, they will have to learn to work together. Then have each pair walk from one designated spot to another. You can make the game more challenging by placing small obstacles in their path, such as branches and stones. Be sure to do this in a safe way. Alternatively, instead of simply walking, the pairs could be asked to jump like frogs, gallop like horses, and so on. It may be necessary to explain to the children that the pairs are not racing one another.

**F. Coloring: Drawing 13**

**G. Closing prayers**

**LESSON 14**

**A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

As always, you and a few of the students should recite some prayers to open the class. The children can then continue memorizing the prayer presented in the previous lesson.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

On the Wings of Detachment

CHORUS:

                  C  F  G  
One day a bird was flying in the sky above

C                          F  G  
Full of joy and confidence

C                          F  G          C          FG  
Soaring in this Paradise, his home

C                          F          G          C          FG  
As he flew, his hunger began to grow

C                                  F          G          C          FG  
So he turned to the water and clay below

C                          F  
Down below

G          C          F  
He was trapped

G          C  
By his desire

                  F                  G                  C          FG  
And his wings got covered in mud

C  
Too heavy to fly,

                  F  G                  C          FG  
He could not return to his home

*(continued on next page)*

## CHORUS

Like that bird I belong to the heavens  
So I will not cling to the earth below  
I will not cling to riches  
I will not cling to my wishes  
I will not cling to anything but God

C G F G  
So I will walk on the feet of detachment

C G F G  
I will soar on the wings of detachment

C G F  
I will free myself of all attachment

G C  
To anything but God (*repeat*)

### C. Memorizing quotations

The children will memorize a quotation about the quality of detachment, which is the theme of the lesson. You can introduce the theme to them in the following way:

God has created every good thing in this world for us to enjoy—good health, delicious foods, love and friendship, the beauty of nature, and the powers of the mind, which enable us to make discoveries and create inventions to improve the way we live. We should make use of all the bounties of God and be thankful to Him for the joy of living. But we should be careful not to become attached to this world. Our souls must be free at all times; like free and strong birds, they should soar in the heaven of holiness. How sad if a bird remains on the ground, unable to take flight because it is attached to the things around it. Let us memorize the following quotation:

**“Know that thy true adornment consisteth in the love of God and in thy detachment from all save Him . . .”<sup>115</sup>**

#### *Consists*

1. Vladislav has a sausage, some potatoes, and green beans for lunch. His lunch consists of sausage, potatoes, and green beans.
2. This sentence has five words. It consists of five words.

#### *Detachment*

1. Helgi really wanted to go swimming with his friends. However, he happily stayed home with his younger sister so that his mother could go to the store. Helgi showed detachment from his own plans because he wanted to help his family.

2. At the end of the school year, Anjali thought it would be nice to bring flowers to her teacher. Her sister suggested they bake a cake instead. Anjali thinks this is a nice idea. She is detached from her own idea.

*All save*

1. The children all did well on the examination, except one who did not study. All save one student did well on the test.
2. The mother wanted to make a special meal for the family. Then she realized that she could not do so because she did not have one important ingredient. She had all save one ingredient.

#### **D. Story**

*One day two men, longtime friends, were discussing spiritual matters over tea. Now, one of these men had accumulated a great many riches during his life and wanted for nothing. The other had much less. "I would like to make a journey to the Holy Land," said the second to his wealthy friend. The first man replied without hesitation, "This is a wonderful idea! I will join you." The pair set down their teacups and arose at once, headed in the direction of the Holy Land.*

*They had been walking for only a short while when night began to fall. The poorer man slowed down and then stopped, saying, "My friend, let us return to our houses to pass the night. It will be more comfortable, and we can start afresh in the morning." "But why would we turn back?" the other replied. "We are on our way to the Holy Land!" Still, his friend was not satisfied. "The Holy Land is a long distance to travel by foot," he tried again. "At least let me go back and fetch my donkey, which I am reluctant to leave behind."*

*"Then," the wealthy friend said to the other, "perhaps you are not the one to accompany me on this journey after all. With joy, I have abandoned a great fortune—horses, lands, and fine clothes—but feel no sense of loss. For what greater bounty is there than to spend even a moment in the Holy Land. Are you not able to leave even your donkey behind?" Sadly, he could not let go of his one prized possession. And so he left his friend, who continued on his way to the Holy Land and never looked back once.*

#### **E. Game: "Wheel"**

Ask the children to stand sideways in a circle and extend their left arms inward, joining hands at the center. They should now resemble a wheel, with their arms as its spokes. Next, have the children turn around the center of the circle like a wheel. After they have done so, ask them to move around the space where the class is being held, while turning in a circle and remaining in formation. To add to the challenge, they can try skipping and hopping.

You could make the game even more challenging by having the children sit on the floor in a circle and extend their legs straight out so that their feet touch in the middle. They should then place the palms of their hands on the floor beside their hips. They are now ready to get the wheel moving. To do so, they will all push themselves up with their hands and move one step to the right. They should continue step by step with their hands in this way, keeping their feet in the center of the wheel, until it makes a full rotation.

**F. Coloring: Drawing 14**

**G. Closing prayers**

**LESSON 15**

**A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After opening prayers have been recited, you can help the children continue memorizing the prayer introduced in Lesson 13.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Bestow Upon Me My Portion

CHORUS:

A  
Bestow upon me my portion

D A  
O Lord, O Lord

A D A  
Bestow upon me my portion

E A  
As it pleaseth Thee

A  
It's easy to be content

D A  
When things are going well

A  
It's easy to be content

E A  
When you're feeling swell

D A  
But what is really more challenging

E A  
Is to be content when things go wrong

D A  
To be patient in times of difficulty

E A  
Perhaps even sing a song

*(continued on next page)*

## CHORUS

From the time He was a boy  
The Master suffered indignities  
From early in His life  
He hardly had any comfort or ease  
But He remained content and calm  
Never full of anxiety  
He trusted in God and accepted His Will  
Continued on ever patiently

## CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

Below are some ideas that will help you present the theme of the lesson and the quotation the children will learn by heart.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was content with the Will of God under all conditions. He used to tell those around Him that it is easy to be content when everything is going well, when one is healthy and living in comfort. What is more difficult is to feel happy and content in times of trouble, in times of illness and hardship. In spite of all the suffering that filled His life, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá never became disheartened. Through the most grave and difficult times, He remained content and thankful to God. He was always cheerful and optimistic. Let us memorize the following quotation so that we will often be reminded of the value of contentment with the Will of God:

**“The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed, and contentment with that which God hath ordained.”<sup>116</sup>**

#### *Glory*

1. After studying science at school, Poh Leng joined a group of scientists. They made many important discoveries. Her work brought glory to her family’s name.
2. Swee loved to look at nature—at the mountains, the trees, and the sea. Whenever she saw the beauty of the world, she thought about the majesty and greatness of God, the Creator of all things. Looking at nature made Swee think of the glory of God.

#### *Bestowed*

1. Paulo thanks God every day for his loving family, his good health, and for all the good things God has given him. Paulo is grateful for the many gifts that God has bestowed on him.
2. Without the sun, the earth would be dark and cold, and nothing could live on it. The sun bestows light and warmth upon us.

## *Ordained*

1. The king gave an order that all the people of his country should not work on the first day of spring. The first day of spring was ordained a holiday.
2. For many months there was no rain in the region, and the people were ordered by the village council to limit their use of water. The restrictions were ordained by the council in order to save water.

## **D. Story**

*One evening, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was walking with a few Bahá’ís in the bright city of London. They strolled along a street lined on both sides with glowing lamps that stretched as far as the eye could see. Those in the company of the beloved Master felt as though their hearts had been carried away to another world.*

*“I am very much pleased with this scene,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá commented. “Light is good, most good. There was much darkness in the prison at ‘Akká.”*

*The small group of friends, who loved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, were saddened at the memory of His confinement in the fortress-city of ‘Akká, where He had spent so many years as a prisoner alongside His Father, Bahá’u’lláh. It was a very unwelcoming place, and the family suffered great hardship. “We are glad, oh so full of gladness that you are free,” they said.*

*To this ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded: “I was happy in that prison, for those days were passed in the path of service.” The greatest prison, He told them, is the prison of self. You see, if we think only of ourselves and not of those around us—that is when we are really imprisoned, when we truly suffer! ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was content at all times, for He walked in the path of service to God and humanity. And so, even during the darkest days as a prisoner in ‘Akká, the light of His indomitable spirit shone forth, giving warmth and comfort to others.*

## **E. Game: “Sculptor”**

Pretend you are a sculptor and the children will help you make your piece of artwork. Ask a child to come to the front of the class and hold a pose that you will demonstrate—for example, bending over with arms outstretched. Then, one by one or a few at a time, call the other children to the front of the group and demonstrate poses for them to imitate. Once they all know their poses, have them come together and form the art piece. Then add yourself to the group as the final part.

You can continue the game by dividing your students into pairs. Have each pair take turns, with one pretending to be the sculptor and the other holding the poses requested.

You may be able to think of other variations of this game as well. For example, you could call out questions like “Can you be a fence?” or “Can you be a garden?” The children would then respond by arranging themselves into the desired formation.

**F. Coloring: Drawing 15**

**G. Closing prayers**

**LESSON 16**

**A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

By this class, the children should all be able to recite from memory the prayer introduced in Lesson 13, which you can review with them after opening devotions.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

We Are Drops

C  
We are drops  
We are drops (*echo voice*)

C  
Of one ocean  
Of one ocean

F  
We are waves  
We are waves

G  
Of one sea  
Of one sea

CHORUS:

C  
Come and join us  
Come and join us (*echo voice*)

F  
In our quest for unity

C G C F C  
It's a way of life for you and me

We are flowers (*echo voice*)  
Of one garden  
We are leaves  
Of one tree

*(continued on next page)*

## CHORUS

All the earth is *(echo voice)*  
But one country  
Man is one  
Can't you see

CHORUS *(with last line repeated)*

### C. Memorizing quotations

The ideas below will help you introduce the theme of the lesson, kindness, and the quotation that the children will memorize.

God created all of humanity to live together as one family. If we are to do this, we cannot let differences come between us. Instead, we should mingle with people of every religion, nation, and background with love and kindness in our hearts. To help us 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.”<sup>117</sup>**

#### *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. In the devotional meeting, after the prayers were read, people stayed and mingled.

### D. Story

*You know from some of our earlier stories that, when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá first arrived in ‘Akká, many of the people treated Him badly. They were cruel to the Bahá’is and did not want to speak to them. Soon, however, they came to see that the Bahá’is were loving and kind, and slowly most of the townspeople began to show them kindness in return. But there were a few who clung to their anger and hatred.*

*Now, one day, a man who still carried much hatred in his heart towards ‘Abdu’l-Bahá heard others praising His greatness and goodness. The man became outraged. He would show them, he said with anger, that this Person they all revered was not so wonderful after all. And off he went, his heart burning with anger. He knew that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could be found praying in the mosque at that hour, and he rushed there, ready to lay violent hands upon the beloved Master. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá looked at the man with serenity and dignity. Lovingly, He reminded him of the teachings of God that we are to be generous to all guests, even those that are different from us. At this, the man realized that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Bahá’is were, indeed, like guests in ‘Akká, his home. And, like a generous host, he should welcome them with love and treat them with kindness.*

### E. Game: “The Hidden Quality”

Tell the children to form a circle, with their two hands cupped together in front of them. Stand in the middle of the circle, holding a small object like a pebble. The object will represent a quality, for instance, “kindness”. As you walk along the circle, pass your hand over the hands of each child and say, for example, “John is kind,” “Isabella is kind,” “Dervi is kind,” and so on. Each child should close his or her hands, acting as though you have given him or her the object. You should actually leave the item in the hands of one of the children. When you have gone around the entire circle, one child should try to guess who has the object by saying, for example, “Kenji is very kind.” Then Kenji should open his hands and show whether or not he has it. The child should be given three tries to guess who has the object, after which the game can be repeated using another quality. You should make sure that each child is given the object in at least one round.

### F. Coloring: Drawing 16

### G. Closing prayers

## LESSON 17

### A. Reciting and memorizing prayers

Over the next four lessons, the children will be learning to recite the prayer below by heart, and they will find it a source of encouragement if you open each class period with a new one that you have committed to memory, such as the one suggested in Section 16. After a few students have joined you in saying opening prayers, you can introduce this one in the usual way.

**“Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succor in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.”<sup>118</sup>**

### B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)

#### Source of Courage

CHORUS:

Am  
The source of courage and power  
Dm E Am  
Is the promotion of the Word of God  
Am  
The source of courage and power  
Dm E Am  
Is steadfastness in His love

*(continued on next page)*

G  
Forget about yourself

C  
Stand up for what is right

E7  
Defend those in need

Am  
Rely upon His might

Teach the Word of God  
Be courageous in your deeds  
Follow His path  
To happiness it leads

CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

The following statement will assist you in presenting the theme of the lesson and the quotation for memorization:

To have courage means to stand for what is right even if we are the only ones who do so, to defend those who need our help even if it causes us discomfort, and to tell the truth even when we know it may lead to difficulties for us. It takes courage to face hardships in life with calm and grace. We draw courage from our love of God and our desire to please Him above all others. To help us remember that we should face every situation in life with courage, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love.”<sup>119</sup>**

#### *Source*

1. Kyongmi lives in a village in a valley. The melting snow from the top of nearby mountains provides water to the village. The source of the village’s water is snow from the mountaintops.
2. Mrs. Putters has three loving and well-behaved children. Her children are a source of joy and happiness to her.

#### *Promotion*

1. Two of Shoa’s friends started an argument and became angry with each other. Shoa helped each to see the other’s point of view and make peace. Shoa always promotes peace and understanding among his friends.

2. A nurse visits the classroom to teach the children about foods that are good for their health. The nurse promotes healthy eating.

### *Steadfastness*

1. Promilla knew that she wanted to be a doctor. She always studied hard in school, and after many years of difficult work, she achieved her goal. She was steadfast in her efforts to become a doctor.
2. Zvondai went to a very remote village to help open a new school. Although he missed his family and faced many difficulties, he showed steadfastness and stayed in the village for many years, training teachers and working with children.

### **D. Story**

*'Ali-'Askar was a merchant in Persia. When he became a Bahá'í, he experienced much hardship at the hands of those who opposed the Faith. Within a short span of time, he had lost all he had. Even so, 'Ali-'Askar was not dispirited. Seeing that he would not be able to make a living in his homeland, he decided to move to Adrianople, a city in a neighboring country.*

*In Adrianople, though he still had little, he managed to acquire a small amount of merchandise. Before he was able to sell a single item, however, he was attacked by thieves who took everything he had in his possession, leaving him with nothing once again.*

*Not long after, the thieves were arrested, and the great fortune they had acquired from robbing many people was seized. One of the local authorities, dazzled by the riches, came up with an idea to keep the fortune for himself. He called 'Ali-'Askar to his office and explained.*

*"'Ali-'Askar," he said, "these thieves are very rich. In my report to the government, I wrote that the amount robbed from you was great. Therefore you must attend the trial and testify that what I have written is true." This way, the official thought, all of the money would be returned to 'Ali-'Askar, and the two would split it between themselves.*

*'Ali-'Askar knew that he could never go along with such a plan. "Your Honor, Khán," he replied, "the goods stolen from me amounted to very little. How can I report something that is not true? When they question me, I will give the facts exactly as they are. I consider this my duty, and only this."*

*The official tried again to convince 'Ali-'Askar. "We have a golden opportunity here," the official said. "You and I can both profit by it. Don't let such a once-in-a-lifetime chance slip through your fingers!"*

*But 'Ali-'Askar again refused, saying, "Khán, how would I answer to God? Let me be. I shall tell the truth and nothing but the truth."*

*Now the official became angry. If 'Ali-'Askar did not go along with his scheme, all his planning would come to naught, and he would lose the great fortune now within his grasp. And so he began to threaten 'Ali-'Askar, hoping he could frighten him*

into cooperating. "I will jail you," he said. "I will have you banished; there is not a torment I will spare you." Then he told 'Alí-'Askar that, if he did not agree, he would send him back to Persia.

'Alí-'Askar only smiled. "Jináb-i-Khán," he said, "do with me as you please; I will not turn my back on what is right."

### **E. Game: "Yes or No"**

Begin the game by asking the children to form a wide circle, with you in the center. Now explain to the children that you are going to make several statements. Some of them will be correct; others will be incorrect. Tell them that, if the statement is correct, they should shout out "yes" and hop towards the center of the circle. If it is incorrect, they should shout out "no" and hop backwards.

All the statements you make should be based on things the children can readily observe. Examples of "yes" statements are as follows: "The sun gives off light." "Trees grow from seeds." "Mountains are tall." You could also make statements that describe what the children are wearing, like "Sera is wearing a blue shirt," or what they see in the space around them, like "There are two benches over there."

A few examples of "no" statements are: "Rain falls upward." "Fish fly." "Stones walk on feet." Again, you could draw on your surroundings to make incorrect statements. Remember that you should have more correct statements than incorrect ones so that, by the end of the game, the children reach you at the center of the circle.

### **F. Coloring: Drawing 17**

### **G. Closing prayers**

## **LESSON 18**

### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After opening devotions, the children should spend time learning to recite from memory the prayer introduced in the last lesson.

### **B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

#### Be Hopeful

C F  
The future we can never know

G C  
What will happen the next day

*(continued on next page)*

C F  
Yet bounties never cease to flow  
G C  
Trust in God and make your way

CHORUS:

F G  
Be hopeful, be hopeful  
C F  
And find God's bounties everywhere  
F  
The sun will rise  
G  
And fill the skies  
C F  
Look up with expectant eyes  
F G C  
Look to Him with hopeful eyes

Be ever hopeful, strive to grow  
And winter will give way to spring  
His bounties never cease to flow  
They're bringing life to everything

CHORUS

Be a source of joy and peace  
Serve and let the spirit glow  
Remember bounties never cease  
Be hopeful for tomorrow

CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

Below are some ideas you can use to introduce the quotation that the children will memorize in this class.

God's love is always with us. He will never leave us alone and promises to help us throughout our lives. Though we do not know what will happen from one day to the next, we trust in God and remember that His gifts and bounties are all around us. And so we are hopeful when we look to the future, confident that we will receive a share of His infinite blessings. With hearts full of hope, we constantly anticipate

the outpouring of God’s bounties upon us. To help us remember the importance of hopefulness, let us memorize these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

**“Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man.”<sup>120</sup>**

### *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. Nirmala wants to repair the roof of her house but cannot do it alone. Nirmala’s friends offer to come the next day to help her. She trusts they will come as promised and gets everything ready.

### *Hopeful*

1. Iosefina plants a seed in a sunny spot and waters it every day. She looks forward to seeing it grow. Iosefina is hopeful the seed will one day become a strong plant.
2. Antonio’s good friend Mattias moved to another town. Antonio missed his friend, but he was hopeful that they would see each other again soon.

### *Bounties*

1. Every night when Lilian prays, she thinks about the many things she is fortunate to have. She thinks about her parents, her friends, her teachers, and even the bed in which she sleeps. Lilian is always thankful for the bounties she has been given.
2. Reza has many friends and relatives who love him and help him grow. Reza is grateful for the bounty of their love and support.

### *Cease*

1. When Tahir turns off the tap, the water stops coming out; the water ceases to flow.
2. Even on cloudy days, the rays of the sun warm the earth. The sun’s rays never cease to reach the earth.

## **D. Story**

*There was once a man with no home, who lived alone on the banks of the River Thames in London. He was very sad and had lost all hope for happiness in life. One day, he walked past a shop and a photograph in a newspaper caught his eye. It was the face of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The man stood frozen, staring at the face. He had never seen ‘Abdu’l-Bahá before and did not know who He was, but he was certain that he must meet Him. The address of a house was given in the newspaper, so the man started walking, hoping to find Him there. It was a very long distance—nearly fifty kilometers—but he kept walking until he reached the house.*

*The man was tired and hungry when at last he arrived, and the lady of the house kindly invited him in, gave him some food, and let him rest for a while. As he rested, he told his story to the woman and then asked her whether ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was there. The woman assured him that He was.*

*“Will He see me?” he asked. “Even me?”*

*Just as the woman replied that she was certain ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would see him, the Master Himself appeared at the door. The man stood up, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stretched out His arms to greet him. It was as though the man was an old friend whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had long been expecting. He welcomed him with love and compassion and asked him to sit down next to Him.*

*Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who always knew how to bring lost joy back to people’s hearts, began to speak to the man. He encouraged him to let go of his sadness, reminding him that he was rich in the Kingdom of God! As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá showered the man with compassion, His comforting words began to heal his heart and give him strength. Little by little his sadness drifted away. Before he departed, the man told ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that he would not let his poverty bring him sadness anymore; instead he would find work in the fields and save his money so that he could buy a bit of land, on which he would grow violets to sell in the market. The man learned from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to put his trust in God and to have confidence that God would confirm and bless his efforts. His despair turned into hope.*

#### **E. Game: “Rainmaker”**

First have the children stand in a circle around you, and then introduce the game by asking them to imagine they are in the desert longing for rain. Start rubbing the palms of your hands together and tell the children that, when you look at each one, they should begin to do the same. Once you have gone around the full circle and all the children are rubbing their palms, tell them to keep going until you look at each one with a new motion, which they should imitate. Snap your fingers as the next motion and then clap your hands as the next, followed by slapping your thighs and then stomping your feet. The sound made by all the children together should resemble the first few sprinkles of rain in the beginning and a great thunderstorm at the end.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 18**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 19**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

As always, open the class with prayers. You can then help the children continue memorizing the one introduced in Lesson 17.

## B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)

### Busy Hands

CHORUS:

C F  
Busy hands make happy children

C G  
Happy children can be found

C F  
Making other people happy

C F G C  
Spreading peace and love around

C F  
Working hands to build a new world

C G  
Everybody has a role

C F  
All of us can be so thankful

C F G C  
For we soon shall reach our goal

CHORUS

God will help us build a new world  
Where we all help someone else  
All of us will love our neighbour  
More than we love our own selves

CHORUS (*with last line repeated*)

## C. Memorizing quotations

In this lesson, the children will memorize a quotation about trustworthiness, and you could introduce this theme in the following way:

One of the greatest qualities in the sight of God is trustworthiness. A trustworthy person is truthful and honest and can be counted on to keep his or her word. We should not say one thing but do another. Our actions should always reflect our words. When we are trustworthy, others can be sure that we will do our best to fulfill our responsibilities and carry out our duties. In this way, people are able to work together

in harmony, knowing that everyone will do his or her part. To help us remember the importance of trustworthiness, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people.”<sup>121</sup>**

### *Trustworthiness*

1. Athos promised his mother that he would help her to prepare dinner. When his friends came to his house to invite him to play outside, Athos remembered the promise he had made to his mother and told his friends he would play with them another time. Athos showed the quality of trustworthiness.
2. Sunita went to the store to pick up some things for her family, but she found she had not brought enough money to pay for everything they needed. She asked the store’s owner if she could bring the rest of the money the next day. The owner said this was fine because she knew Sunita was trustworthy and would pay for the items as promised.

### *Tranquility*

1. Whenever Emilio has to make an important decision, he tries to find a quiet place to think and meditate. He goes to a quiet garden nearby. In its tranquility, he is able to clear his mind and heart.
2. Once the great storm had passed, everything became unusually quiet and still. Peace and tranquility followed the storm.

### *Security*

1. When a baby animal is frightened, it will often run back to its mother for safety. The mother provides security to her young ones.
2. The hiker went off the trail and got lost in the woods. When he did not return, the guides from the village went out to look for him. He felt a sense of security when they found him, knowing that they would lead him back to safety.

## **D. Story**

*Years ago, in the early days of the Faith, there were only a small number of Bahá’ís, spread out over several countries. They faced many challenges and often wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land with news and questions. Their letters traveled over long distances before reaching Him, and He would answer each one with great love and care. His words of encouragement strengthened them and cheered their hearts. And so it was crucial that this stream of communication not be disrupted.*

*Now, there lived in the area at the time a Bahá’í by the name of Muḥammad-Taqí. He had come from Persia many years earlier as a young man and had established a small business. Gradually he became known for his unwavering reliability. So dependable was he that all the mail for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land and the responses sent*

*abroad passed through the home of Muḥammad-Taqí. Everyone knew that he could be trusted to make sure each piece of mail was delivered promptly and securely.*

*But, then, the enemies of the Faith rose up against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. They became jealous of the love and respect people showed to Him. They hoped they could bring about His exile, or worse still, His execution. Spies were planted all around His house, and He was kept under constant watch. How pleased His enemies would have been if they could have stopped the flow of correspondence and broken the link between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the devoted Bahá’ís in other countries; how much more if they could have stolen some document that could be used to mislead the authorities!*

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, however, was not deterred. He could often be seen late into the night, writing by the light of His lamp; for He had ensured a secure means for the receipt and dispatch of mail. What do you think He did?*

*You see, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew His enemies recognized the important work Muḥammad-Taqí carried out. They would no doubt try to intercept the mail routed through him. So ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent Muḥammad-Taqí to a nearby place in a neighboring country, where he was out of danger. Then others, whom His enemies did not suspect, carried in and out of the Holy Land all the mail to Muḥammad-Taqí. And, from this safe spot, he continued to faithfully receive and dispatch mail, never faltering in the trust ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had placed in him. So it was that, even in the most difficult times, communication with the Holy Land was never cut off and guidance continued to reach friends in the most remote places.*

#### **E. Game: “A Guide”**

Divide your students into pairs and ask them to hold hands with their partner. Blindfold one child in each pair and have the other child lead him or her around, making sure he or she does not stumble along the way. For an added challenge, the blindfolded child can be guided around obstacles such as tree trunks, ditches, rocks, and tires. Once a bond of trust has been established between partners in this way, the blindfolded child can be guided using verbal instructions alone. In that case, the guide should follow close behind in order to catch the child should he or she stumble.

As an alternative to the above game, all the children can be blindfolded and form a train, led by you or one of the students.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 19**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 20**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

After you and a few students have said opening devotions, review with the children the prayer they have been learning over the last three lessons.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Kindling the Fire of God's Love

D  
In my heart

A  
There is a flame

G  
That God has placed

D  
A special flame

A  
This is the fire

G  
The fire

D  
Of His love

CHORUS:

D A  
I will pray  
I will pray (*echo voice*)

G  
To God

A D A  
To kindle in my heart  
To kindle in my heart (*echo voice*)

G  
That flame

A D A  
The fire of His love

G  
And I will strive

A D  
That its light illumines all hearts

Day by day  
I will feed this flame  
As I pray

*(continued on next page)*

And do good unto others  
This flame will grow  
As I pray  
And serve mankind

And as this flame burns  
As it grows  
It will be felt  
By all who come  
Its way  
It will bring warmth  
To all  
Who come its way

CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

The theme of this lesson is enkindlement, and the following statement will help you introduce this theme and the quotation for memorization:

Every human being was created to know God and to love Him, and we all have the spark of His love in our hearts. It is important for us to feed the flame of the love of God by praying to Him daily and by serving others, that it may grow stronger and stronger. As this flame burns ever brighter in our hearts, its warmth will be felt by all who cross our path. And their hearts, too, will be set aglow. When we are so enkindled, we become like burning candles that cannot help but to give light and warmth to those around us. Let us memorize the following quotation:

**“Be ye enkindled, O people, with the heat of the love of God, that ye may enkindle the hearts of others.”<sup>122</sup>**

*Enkindle*

1. The house was cold, so Axel’s father decided to start a fire. He put large logs in the stove and lit some small twigs below. The wood soon became enkindled, and the fire warmed the room.
2. A scientist came to the school and explained to the students many interesting things about the workings of the universe. They began to ask her various questions after the talk. She had enkindled in the students a desire to know more about the world.

### D. Story

*Thomas Breakwell was a young man who held an important position in a cotton mill in the southern United States and spent his vacations in Europe. On his way to Europe in the summer of 1901, he met a woman on a steamship and began talking with her about spiritual subjects. When they arrived in Paris, the woman took him*

*along to meet a friend of hers who lived in an apartment in the city and who, she knew, had similar interests. The young woman welcomed them, and the three talked for some time. Before leaving, Breakwell asked his hostess whether he might return to speak further. He was invited to come back the next morning.*

*When he arrived the next day, the young woman noticed that his eyes were shining brightly and his voice was full of emotion. She asked him to be seated. Breakwell looked at her intently for a moment and then described for her a strange experience. After he had left her home the day before, he had walked along an avenue, alone, in the warm and heavy evening air. Not a leaf stirred around him. Then, all of a sudden, a great wind came that seemed to bring with it the glad tidings of a new message from God!*

*The young woman urged him to be calm. You see, she knew of the message to which Breakwell referred. During the next three days, over the course of many hours, she told him everything she could about the Bahá'í Faith—its history and its teachings—and about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the perfect Exemplar of those teachings, Who was living in the prison-city of 'Akká in the Holy Land.*

*By the end of three days, Breakwell's heart was so filled with joy and hope that he wanted nothing other than to travel to 'Akká and visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It happened that there was another young man who had already made plans to go to the Holy Land for this very purpose and who was most pleased to have Breakwell accompany him. So, a message was sent to 'Abdu'l-Bahá requesting permission for him to come, and in a short time, they were on their way.*

*When the two men arrived at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home, they were taken into a room where several other men were gathered. Looking around, Breakwell became deeply troubled. There was no one in the room to whom his heart was drawn, and thinking that 'Abdu'l-Bahá must be among those present, he feared that he had failed to recognize that Heavenly Being about Whom he had learned in Paris. He sat down in despair. At that moment, a door opened, and Breakwell looked up. He saw there a brilliant light, from which the figure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá emerged. He immediately knew that his dearest wish had been fulfilled.*

*Breakwell spent two glorious days in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, during which the fire that had been enkindled in his heart grew stronger and stronger. When Breakwell told 'Abdu'l-Bahá about his job at the cotton mill, where children were used as workers, 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised him to resign from his post, which he did without hesitation. At the end of his visit, he returned to Paris, his spirit ablaze. For the rest of his short life, he burned like a bright candle, sharing the light enkindled in his heart with everyone he met. Upon his passing, 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed a Tablet in his honor, which includes the following verse: "O Breakwell, O my dear one! Thou hast lit a flame within the lamp of the Company on high, thou hast set foot in the Abhá Paradise, thou hast found a shelter in the shadow of the Blessed Tree, thou hast attained His meeting in the haven of Heaven."*

#### **E. Game: "Help the Sick"**

Choose one child to pretend to be the "sick patient". Now have two other children stand face to face, their hands clasped around one another's forearms, in order to make a



E A  
As we are joyful, illumined and bright  
B E  
All those around will feel the warmth of His light

CHORUS:

E A  
O Son! O Son of Being!  
B E  
Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee!

E A  
O Son! O Son of Being!  
B E  
Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee!

The love of God never ceases to flow  
As we arise to serve its brightness will grow  
Don't hesitate! Just radiate! With all of your might  
Till each and every heart is filled with His light

CHORUS (*with last line repeated*)

### C. Memorizing quotations

In this lesson the children will memorize a quotation related to the quality of radiance, which you can introduce in the following way:

The light of the love of God never ceases to illumine our hearts. As this light grows brighter and brighter, our hearts become radiant with His love. The light of the knowledge of God—the knowledge of His greatness, of His glory—brightens our eyes. And, through our generous deeds and kind words, the light of love and knowledge shines forth. Those around us are touched by the radiance of our joy. To help us remember the importance of the quality of radiance, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me.”<sup>124</sup>**

#### *Radiance*

1. When Tyrell woke up, the room was filled with sunshine. He was happy to be greeted by the radiance of the sun.
2. Mrs. Santos loves everyone like her own family. She is always generous, kind and helpful towards others. The love in her heart is felt by all the people she meets, bringing them joy. Everyone is touched by her radiance.

## Seek

1. When a baby bird hatches, the mother will look for food to feed it. The mother bird will seek food for the new chick.
2. The school invited all the students on a special outing. In order to attend, they needed their parents' permission. All the students were asked to seek approval from their parents to go on the outing.

## D. Story

*Dorothy Baker, about whom you will probably learn more one day, had the honor of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a young girl. It was Dorothy's grandmother who took her to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His travels in the West. Arriving at a house that she had never visited before, Dorothy entered a crowded room. Many people were talking quietly and reverently while waiting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to speak. The Master smiled as Dorothy and her grandmother came in and motioned to the young girl to sit near Him. Eager, but with some trepidation, she made her way across the room. Without looking up from the floor, she carefully walked past all the other guests to reach the footstool near His feet.*

*As 'Abdu'l-Bahá began to speak, Dorothy sat with her eyes cast down, staring at her black shoes. She did not have the courage to look at Him. But soon her fear was gone. She felt attracted to the warmth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's loving presence. His radiance was magnetic. Without even realizing that she had moved, Dorothy found herself turned in His direction, with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, gazing up at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's luminous face.*

*Dorothy could never remember what 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke about that day. All she could remember was His kind face, His melodious voice, and the warmth of His presence. His loving eyes seemed to tell her of the spiritual worlds of God. In time, the love of God that had been ignited in her heart grew so strong that she decided to write to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She begged Him that she might be allowed to serve Him and the Cause of His Father, Bahá'u'lláh. In His answer to Dorothy, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praised her goal, assured her of God's bounties, and expressed the hope that she would succeed in her desire. And, indeed, Dorothy dedicated her entire life to serving God and humanity.*

## E. Game: "Two-Way Copy"

Divide the children into pairs, each child facing his or her partner. Now ask one child in each pair to begin making simple physical movements, which the other child should try to mirror. After a few minutes, the partners can switch roles. You can also have them mirror facial expressions rather than movements. Next, have one child in each pair stand behind the other. As the one in the front moves, the one behind should shadow his or her movements.

## F. Coloring: Drawing 21

## G. Closing prayers

## LESSON 22

### A. Reciting and memorizing prayers

After opening devotions, the children can continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the last lesson.

### B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)

#### I Want to Be Happy

Am  
There is something you must know  
Am 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  
Am  
I want to be strong  
Am  
To be His servant  
Am  
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

### C. Memorizing quotations

The children will learn to recite the quotation below by heart in this lesson, which is focused on the theme of faithfulness. Here are some ideas to assist you in introducing it:

A faithful soul never forgets all the bounties that God has bestowed on it; it never ceases to love God. It is out of our faithfulness to Him that we always try our very best to follow His teachings and obey His laws, even when it becomes difficult. So it is that we work hard to serve others and to do worthy deeds, with no other thought than to attain His good pleasure. For the faithful soul there is no greater joy than striving to please God. Let us memorize this quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“Happy is the faithful one who is attired with the vesture of high endeavor and hath arisen to serve this Cause.”<sup>125</sup>**

#### *Attired*

1. Mae has a beautiful dress that she only wears on special occasions. She put on her dress for the community gathering. Mae was attired in her special dress.
2. Natalia is kind to everyone. God has attired her soul with kindness.

#### *Vesture*

1. In some places, judges must wear a white wig and a long black robe in a court of law. They must wear the full vesture of judges.
2. Before leaving the palace, the prince puts on his sash and crown. He puts on his royal vesture.
3. Jakob says prayers every morning before leaving the house. The prayers are like a vesture clothing his soul. They strengthen and protect him throughout the day.

#### *Endeavor*

1. The students decided to plant trees around the school. The community supported their endeavor by providing seedlings and soil.
2. Pierre and Arlene decided that they would climb to the top of the mountain. They knew that this would be a difficult endeavor, but they were determined to try.

### D. Story

*When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a young boy, His family, which was part of the nobility of Persia, had a servant by the name of Isfandiyár. He was very loyal to the family, and they trusted him a great deal. When the authorities, out of jealousy and ignorance, had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s beloved Father, Bahá’u’lláh, arrested, all of the family’s possessions were taken away. They were left with nothing, and anyone close to Bahá’u’lláh was in danger. Still, Isfandiyár continued to look after the family. Knowing that many officers would be looking for Isfandiyár, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mother urged him to leave the city. But Isfandiyár would not leave.*

*“I cannot go,” he said, explaining that he owed money to many shopkeepers for items he had purchased. “How can I go?” he asked. “They will say that the servant of Bahá’u’lláh has bought and consumed the goods and supplies of the storekeepers without paying for them. Unless I pay all these obligations, I cannot go. But if they take me, never mind. If they punish me, there is no harm in that. If they kill me, do not be grieved. But to go away is impossible. I must remain until I pay all I owe.”*

*For one month Isfandiyár went about in the streets and bazaars, selling small things he owned. When he had paid every last debt, he went to the family and said goodbye, for he knew he could stay with them no longer. A government minister agreed to take him in and to protect and shelter him during this dangerous time.*

*Many months later, Bahá’u’lláh was released from prison, and He and His family were exiled from Persia by the authorities. They went to Baghdád, a city in the neighboring country. Isfandiyár, ever faithful to Bahá’u’lláh, journeyed to Baghdád to ask whether he could once again serve in His household. Bahá’u’lláh said to him, “When you left us, there was a Persian minister who gave you a place to stay when no one else could give you protection. Because he gave you shelter and protected you, you must be faithful to him. If he is satisfied to have you go, then come to us; but if he does not want you to go, do not leave him.”*

*Of course, Isfandiyár was so upright, so trustworthy and loyal, that the minister did not want him to go. “O Isfandiyár!” he exclaimed. “I am not willing that you should go, yet, if you wish to go, let it be according to your own will.” But Isfandiyár remembered Bahá’u’lláh’s words. He remained in the minister’s service until, sometime later, the minister passed away and Isfandiyár once again returned to the family he so loved, serving ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the end of his days.*

#### **E. Game: “Who Is Knocking at My Door?”**

Blindfold one of the children, who should be seated on a bench with his or her back to the rest of the class. Now point to another child. He or she should go up to the blindfolded child and knock on the bench. The child who is seated should say, “Who is knocking at my door?” The other, trying to disguise his or her voice, will respond, “It’s me!” The seated child will then try to guess who is knocking. He or she will have three guesses, after which another child should be given a turn. You may wish to mention to the children that, if the blindfolded child is to listen carefully, the rest of the class will need to remain very quiet.

#### **F. Coloring: Drawing 22**

#### **G. Closing prayers**

### **LESSON 23**

#### **A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

You can open the class with prayers and then help the children advance in their efforts to memorize the prayer introduced in Lesson 21.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Patience

          D                  A  
Your legs are getting tired

          A                  D  
And the road is very long, long, long

          D                  A  
You want to give up trying

          A                  D  
And the sun is beating strong

          G                  D  
No sense gettin' impatient

          G                  D  
It's useless if you cry

          G                  D  
If you take it step by step

          A                  D  
The time goes rushing by

CHORUS:

          G                  D  
Patience is the answer

          G                  D  
When you're sad and blue

          G                  D  
Patience is rewarded

          A                  D  
It brings happiness to you

Your brother doesn't understand  
But you've explained it more than twice  
You really ought to try again  
And do your best to be nice  
No sense gettin' impatient  
It's useless to be stern  
If you show him kindness  
It's the way to help him learn

*(continued on next page)*

CHORUS

You want to do much better  
But still you don't succeed  
You wonder why make an effort  
And where it all will lead  
No sense gettin' impatient  
It's silly to do less  
If you keep on striving  
You'll eventually progress

CHORUS

### C. Memorizing quotations

In this lesson, the children will memorize a quotation related to patience, which you can present in the following way:

Patience is one of the most important qualities we can possess. Without patience we can achieve little in this life. In our studies, in our work, in our family, in our friendships with others, in our efforts to grow spiritually, patience is necessary. Not all things in life can be done quickly. Many things can only be done little by little, day after day. When we exercise patience, we do not try to hurry those things that require time. We need to be patient with others and ourselves, because we are all learning and growing. To help us in our efforts to acquire patience, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.”<sup>126</sup>**

#### *Reward*

1. Mrs. Anderson was very pleased with the excellent science projects that the students in her class prepared. As a reward, she took them to visit a nearby aquarium.
2. Alena spent time every day learning how to play the guitar. When she played a sweet song for her younger brother, the joy on his face was all the reward she needed for her efforts.

#### *Endure*

1. Aliya and her family moved to a faraway place. For the first few months, they had many difficulties. But, with the help of their kind neighbors, they were able to endure these difficulties and are now very happy in their new home.
2. Hugh became ill. He was in a great deal of pain, but did not complain. He endured his suffering with patience.

#### D. Story

*Li Xin was very fond of peaches. Every day, he would bring a peach with him to school and eat it during his lunch break. He enjoyed every bite, but he always threw away the pit, with the seed inside.*

*One day, Li Xin's class was learning about seeds. This gave Li Xin an idea. He would plant a seed from his peach and help it grow into a tree! At lunchtime, he saved the pit from his peach and wrapped it in a piece of paper. When school ended, he raced home and asked his father to help him find a place to start growing his tree. His father reminded him that he would have to wait for the pit to dry before he could get the seed out. Still, Li Xin wanted to plant the pit right away. "Li Xin," said his father, "if you don't have the patience to dry the pit, how will you have the patience to wait for the seed to sprout?" So Li Xin set the pit out to dry.*

*A few days later, Li Xin was finally able to crack the pit and pull out the seed. His mother showed him a corner of the yard where the tree could grow big and tall. Li Xin dug a small hole and dropped in the seed, then covered it with a mound of moist earth. He grinned with excitement. His tree was finally on its way!*

*Every day, Li Xin would visit the mound, hoping to see some sign that the seed had sprouted. But no sprout appeared for weeks, and Li Xin grew disheartened. Seeing Li Xin's concern, his mother asked him what was wrong. "My seed is not growing," Li Xin said. "I wonder if I will ever have a tree." "Well," said his mother, "this seed has a lot of growing to do. In that way it is very much like you. When you were born, you were just a tiny little thing and all you did was eat and sleep. And now look at you! You are a young boy, walking, talking, and thinking for yourself! This tree may take many years to grow, but, if you care for it well, then someday you will be able to sit in its shade and enjoy its fruit." Thinking of this, Li Xin grew hopeful again. He knew from his class that a seed had to go through many changes before it could even become a sprout.*

*Then, one spring day, Li Xin went out to visit the mound, as he always did, and to his great excitement he saw a tiny green sprout poking up through the earth! His tree was growing! He ran to his neighbor, who was a farmer, and told her the exciting news. She gave him advice on how to care for the tree while it was so young and vulnerable, and he listened to her every word, eager to nurture it as best he could. "Soon I will have many peaches to give you as thanks for your good advice," said Li Xin. But the neighbor just smiled. "Li Xin, do you remember how you had to be patient while you waited for the pit to dry?" Li Xin nodded. "And do you remember how you needed even more patience while you waited for your seed to sprout?" Li Xin remembered this, too. "Well," said the neighbor, "it will take even longer before your sapling becomes a tree and sometime after that before it gives fruit. It could be years before the tree is ready to produce any peaches for you to enjoy."*

*And so Li Xin cared for the tree and tended to its needs as it grew from a sprout to a sapling and from a sapling to a tree. Little by little, it grew taller and broader, just as he did. And then one day, as Li Xin returned from school, he saw the tree's first peaches beginning to emerge where only blossoms had been before. Once again, he felt the joy that filled his heart when the seed had first sprouted. And once again he*

*knew that he would have to exercise patience. For it would be some time still before the peaches would be ripe and ready to eat.*

**E. Game: “Find the Starter”**

Blindfold one child and have him or her turn away from the rest of the group. Then point silently to another child who will be the “starter”. Before asking the first child to rejoin the group, help the others practice following the actions given by the “starter”. For example, if he or she claps, everyone else should do the same. If he or she starts waving goodbye, so should all the others. The first child can now remove the blindfold and join the group again. He or she must look carefully and try to discover who is acting as the “starter”. At the same time, the others should try hard not to look at the child leading the actions too closely or too often, which could easily give him or her away. The children can take turns being the “starter” or the one who guesses.

**F. Coloring: Drawing 23**

**G. Closing prayers**

**LESSON 24**

**A. Reciting and memorizing prayers**

As always, open the class with prayers and then review with the children the one they have been learning to say by heart over the past few lessons.

**B. Songs (including a review of previous songs)**

Firm in the Love of God

G C  
We walk, we walk

D G  
We walk the path of God

G C  
We’re firm, we’re firm

D G  
Firm in our love of God

G C  
We walk the path of God

D G  
When troubles come our way

*(continued on next page)*

G C  
We're firm in our love of God

D G  
And on His path we stay

We serve, we serve  
We serve the Cause of God  
We're firm, we're firm  
Firm in our love of God  
We serve the Cause of God  
Always doing our part  
We're firm in our love of God  
And serve with a joyful heart

We stand, we stand  
We stand, hearts turned towards God  
We're firm, we're firm  
Firm in our love of God  
We stand, hearts turned towards God  
Never doubting His aid  
We're firm in our love of God  
And all our sorrows fade

### C. Memorizing quotations

The ideas below will help you introduce the quotation that the children will commit to memory in this final lesson, which is focused on the theme of steadfastness.

One of the most important qualities of a person who truly loves God is steadfastness. No matter what happens in life, we always remember God and our love for Him. Therefore, nothing that others can say or do to us can affect our faith in Him. We love Him and obey His laws and teachings. To remind us that we should remain steadfast at all times, 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.”<sup>127</sup>**

#### *Supremely*

1. The gardens were more beautiful than any Xavier had ever seen. He could not imagine a garden more supremely beautiful.
2. Keletso'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 state.

2. At the meeting, Kumar gave a talk about world peace and the goodness of humanity. Kumar spoke about lofty ideas.

#### *Remain steadfast*

1. Rosemary's friend keeps telling her that stars are little lamps floating in the sky. But Rosemary learned in class that each star is really a faraway sun. Rosemary does not change her mind. She remains steadfast in what she knows to be true.
2. Someone told Mona that it is not 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.

#### **D. Story**

*Perhaps you know that Bahíyyih Khánum was the younger sister of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She was around six years old when their Father, Bahá'u'lláh, was arrested and sent to prison by an unjust government. You remember from another story that her family was part of the nobility. But, upon her Father's arrest, all of the family's possessions were taken away. Their lands, their houses, their furniture, their belongings—these were all gone. The family was left with almost nothing, not even food to eat. When she and her beloved older Brother, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, were hungry and there was no bread to give them, their mother poured some flour into the palms of their hands for them to eat instead.*

*After a time, their Father was released and forced by the government to leave their homeland. Bahíyyih Khánum and her family then set out in the bitter cold of winter for the city of Baghdád in a neighboring country. To reach the city, they had to cross huge, snow-covered mountains. The journey was perilous, and the supplies they had for the trip were not adequate. Their clothing did little to protect them from the snow and cold. With the help of only some mules, they slowly made their way along the high peaks of the mountains. Often, they had to make camp for the night in the total wilderness. But God protected them, and through His unfailing assistance, they arrived safely in Baghdád after three months. Never again would Bahíyyih Khánum return to the land of her birth.*

*For the rest of her life, Bahíyyih Khánum shared in her Father's sufferings and exiles. Eventually, the government banished Bahá'u'lláh to the prison-city of 'Akká, where she and her family lived among the most unwanted criminals. When the Father she loved so dearly departed this world, Bahíyyih Khánum faithfully supported her beloved Brother, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who had been appointed the Head of His Father's Faith. And, many years later, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá, too, passed into the next world, Bahíyyih Khánum became the greatest supporter and staunchest defender of His grandson, young Shoghi Effendi, who had been named the Guardian of the Faith by 'Abdu'l-Bahá.*

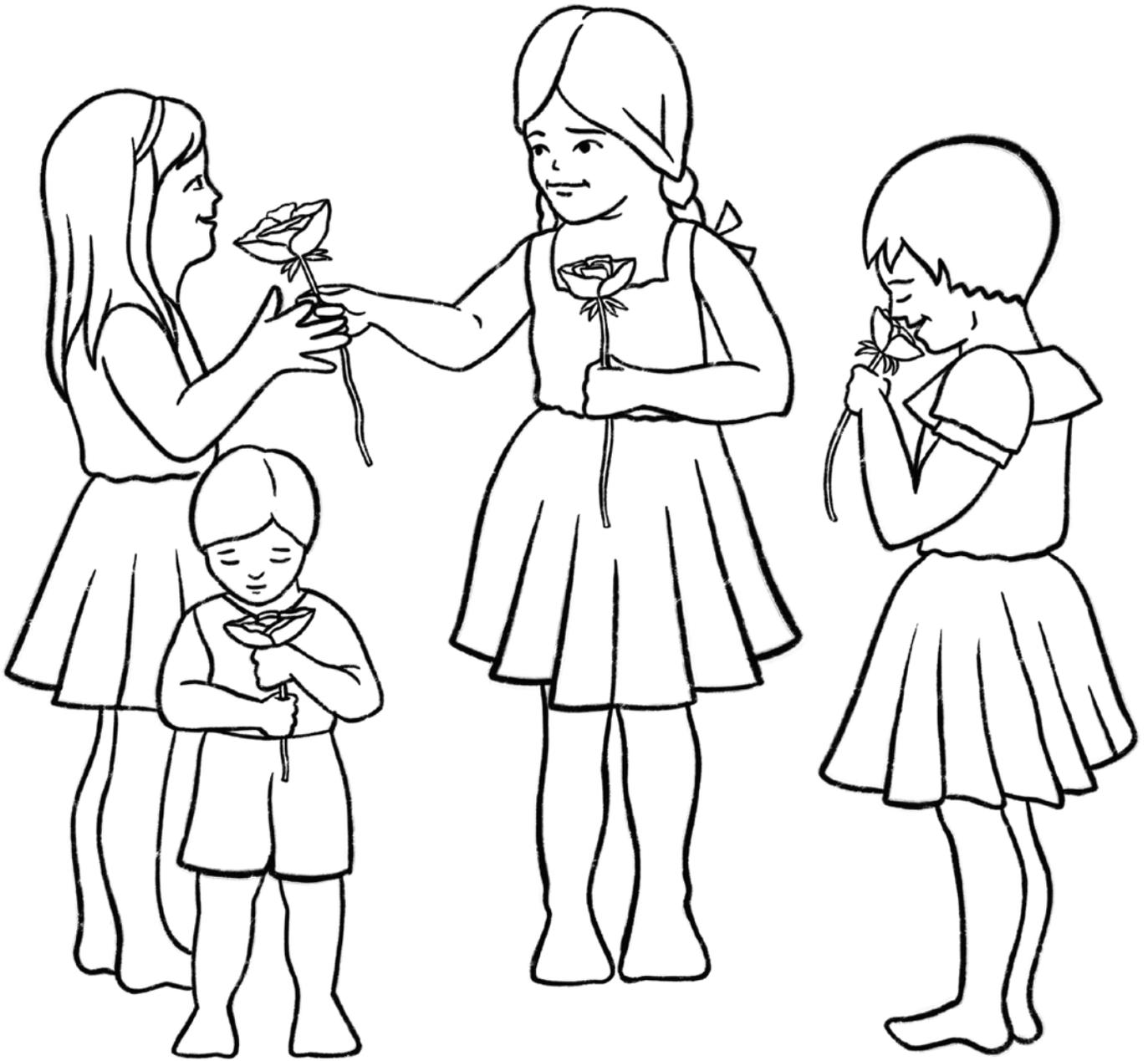
*Bahíyyih Khánum was now an old woman. Her life had been filled with turmoil and upheaval. It moved from hardship to hardship, from calamity to calamity. But her spirit remained constant, and her heart was always filled with the love of God. She was steadfast and firm through the final days of her life.*

### **E. Game: “A Helping Hand”**

Ask the children to form pairs and hold hands with their partner. First have them walk around the area in pairs, with their eyes open. They should begin with tiny steps, and their steps should gradually become longer and longer. Each pair should take care not to bump into anyone. Then, one partner in each pair should shut his or her eyes, and they should repeat the walking exercise. Now if they are to avoid bumping into anyone, the other child will need to guide his or her friend. Tell them they must use signals given by touch alone. You should help them devise the signals before they start—for example, one squeeze of the hand could mean “stop”, two “go back”, three “turn right”, and four “turn left”.

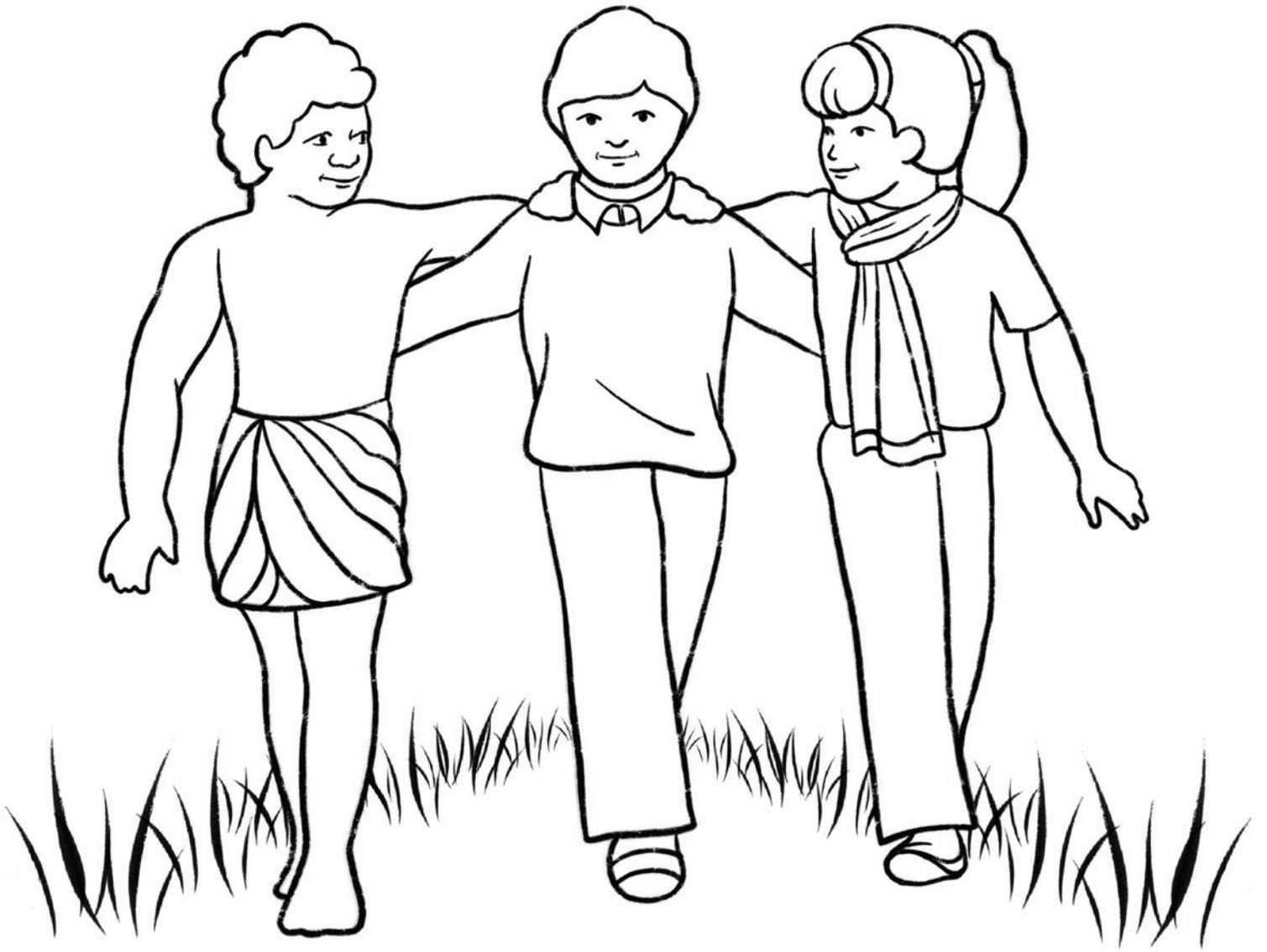
### **F. Coloring: Drawing 24**

### **G. Closing prayers**



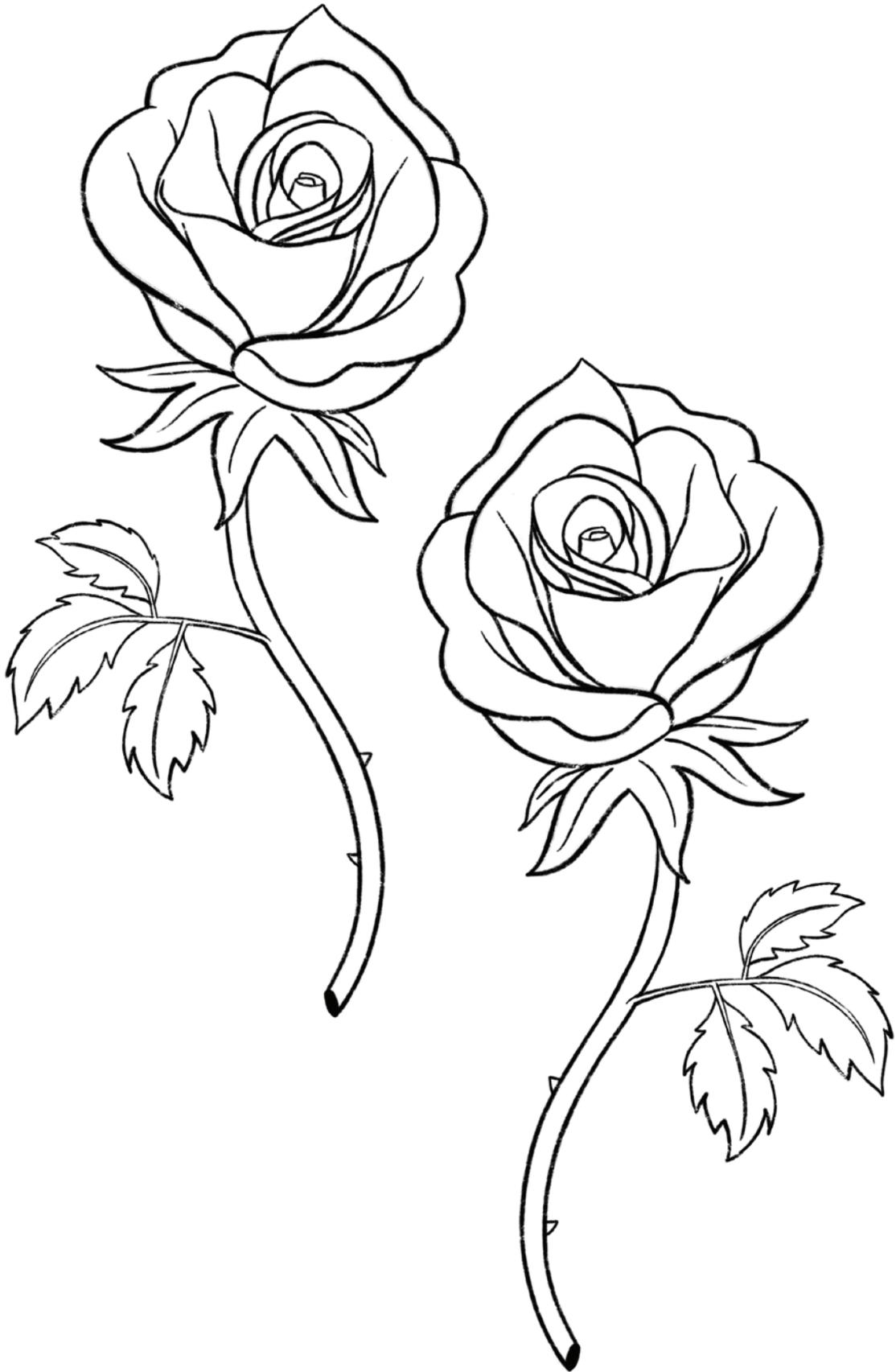
**“O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart . . .”**





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





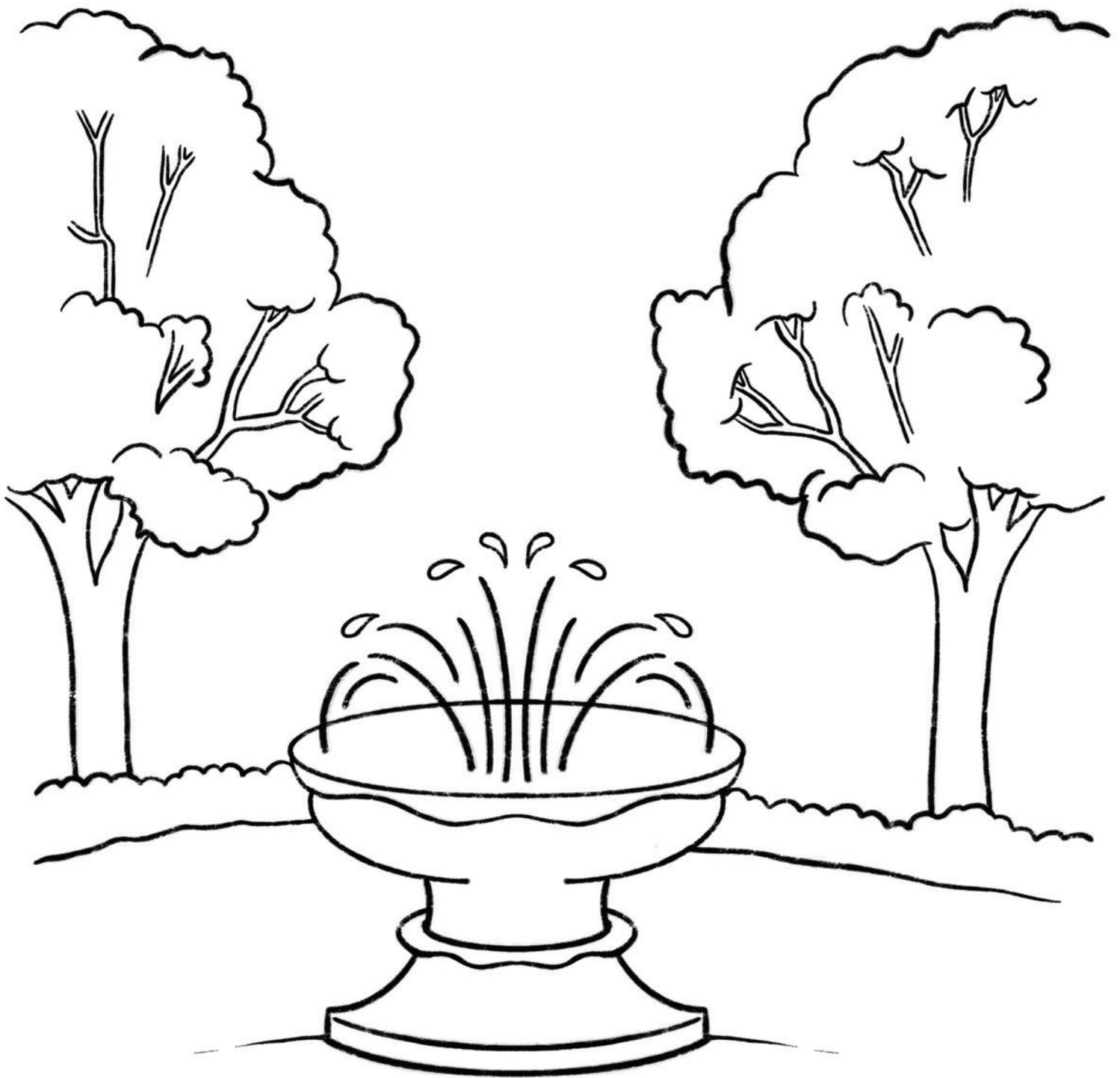
**“O Friend! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love . . .”**





**“Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.”**





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





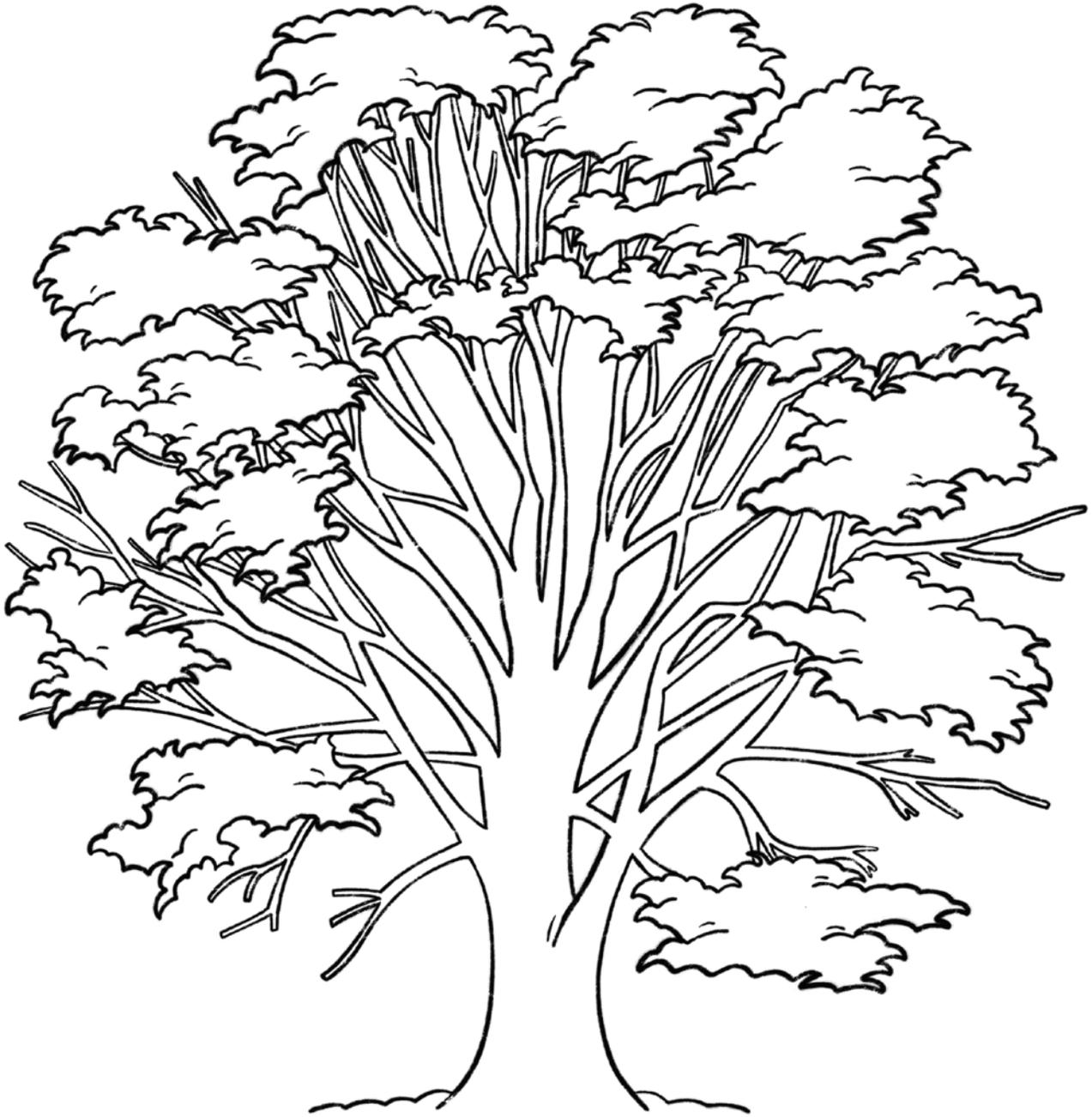
**“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”**





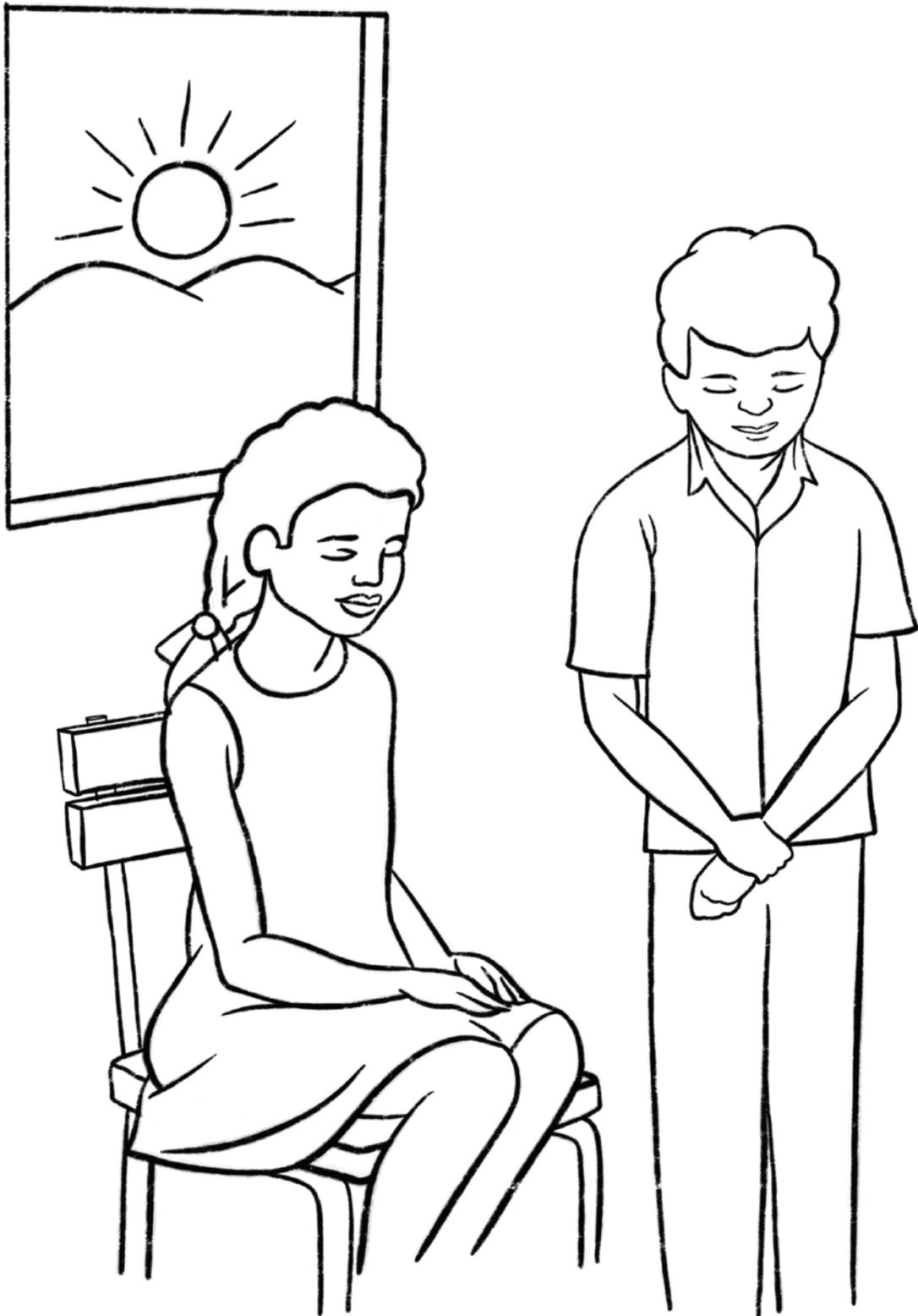
**“O Son of Man! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty.”**





**“We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity . . .”**





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





**“Be thou happy. Be thou grateful. Arise to render thanks unto God,  
that thy thankfulness may conduce to an increase of bounty.”**





**“... let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favored of God.”**





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





**“The Kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul.”**





**“Know that thy true adornment consisteth in the love of God  
and in thy detachment from all save Him . . .”**





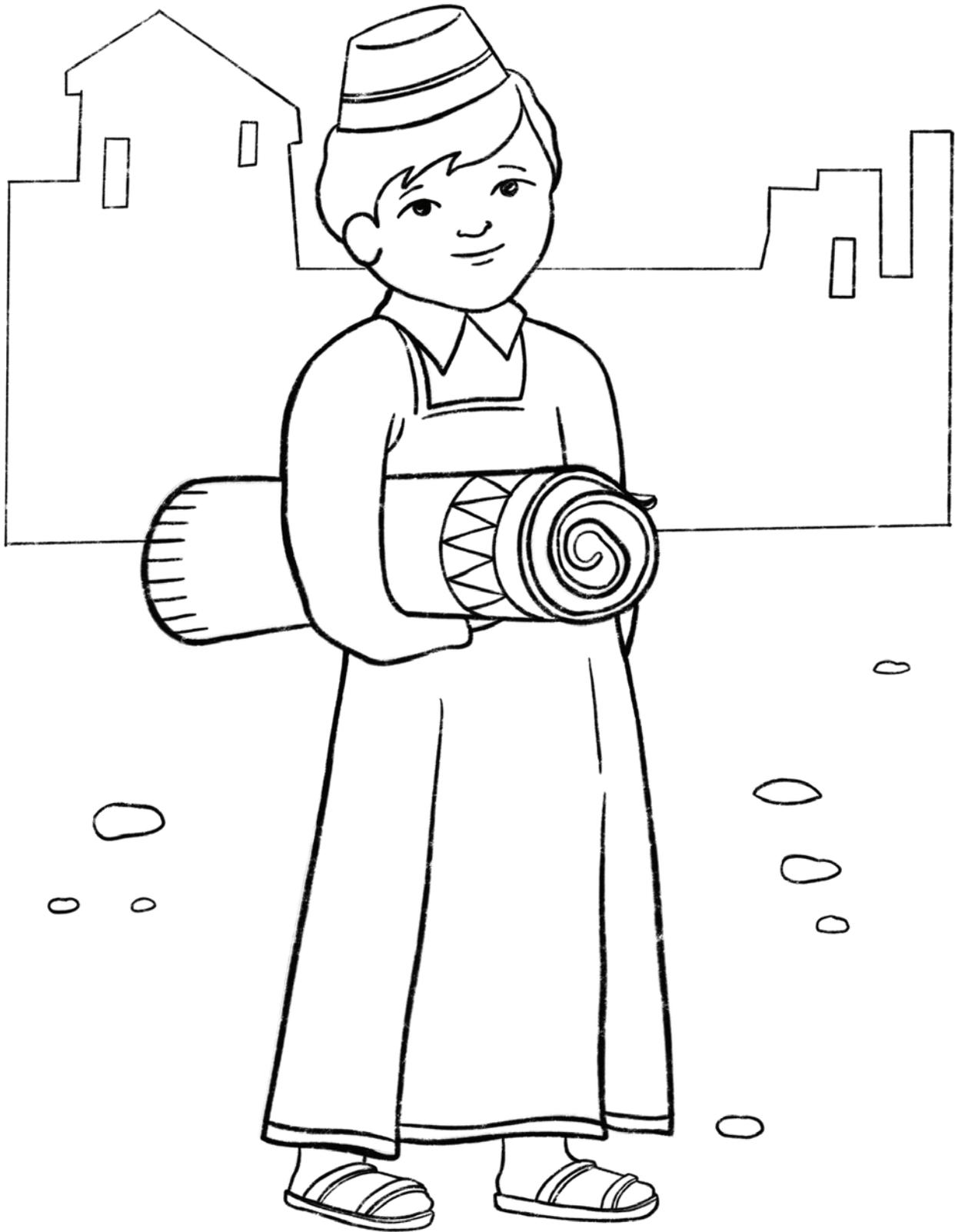
**“The source of all glory is acceptance of whatsoever the Lord hath bestowed,  
and contentment with that which God hath ordained.”**





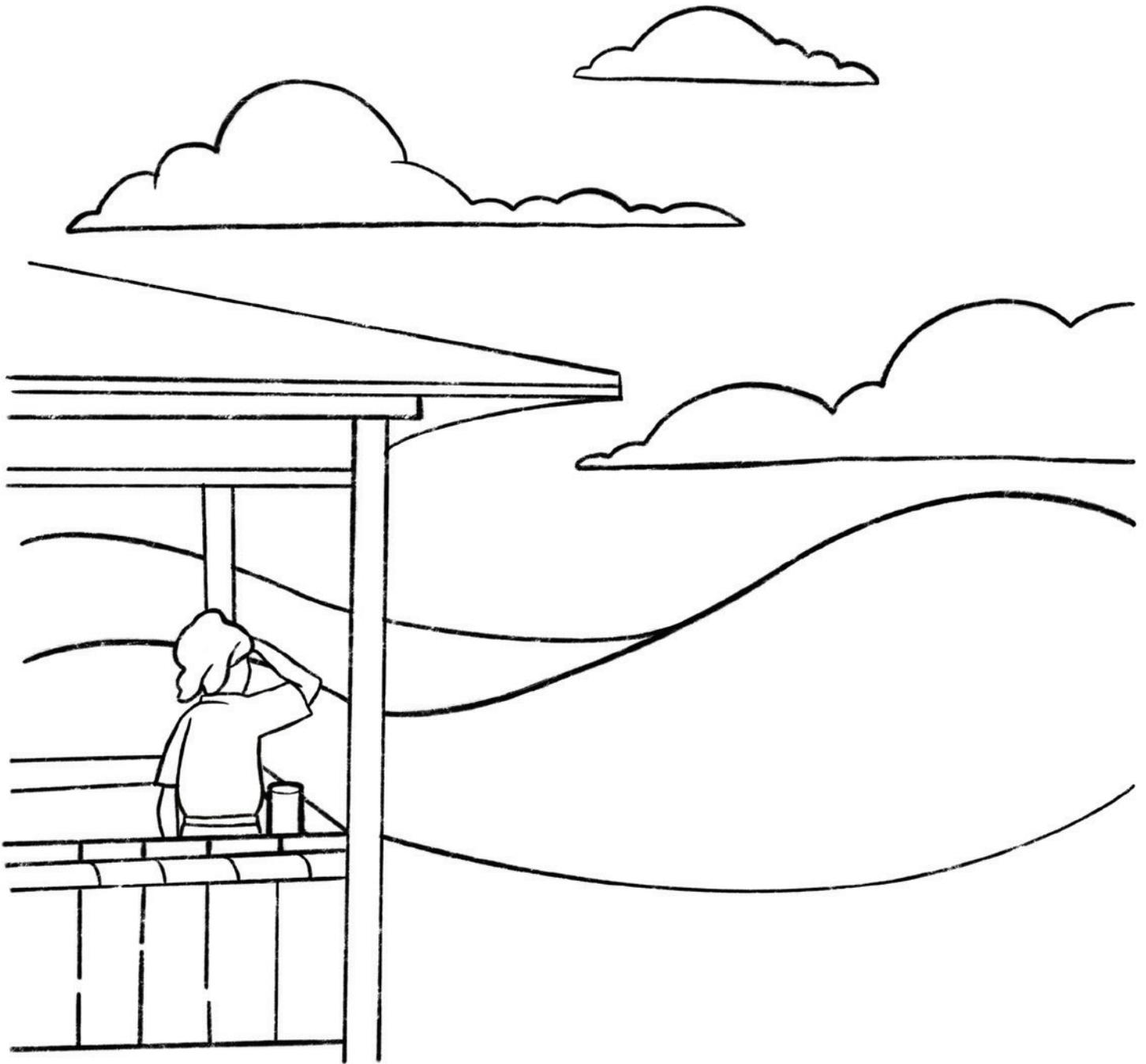
**“Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in  
a spirit of utmost kindness and love.”**





**“The source of courage and power is the promotion of the Word of God, and steadfastness in His Love.”**





**“Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful,  
for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man.”**





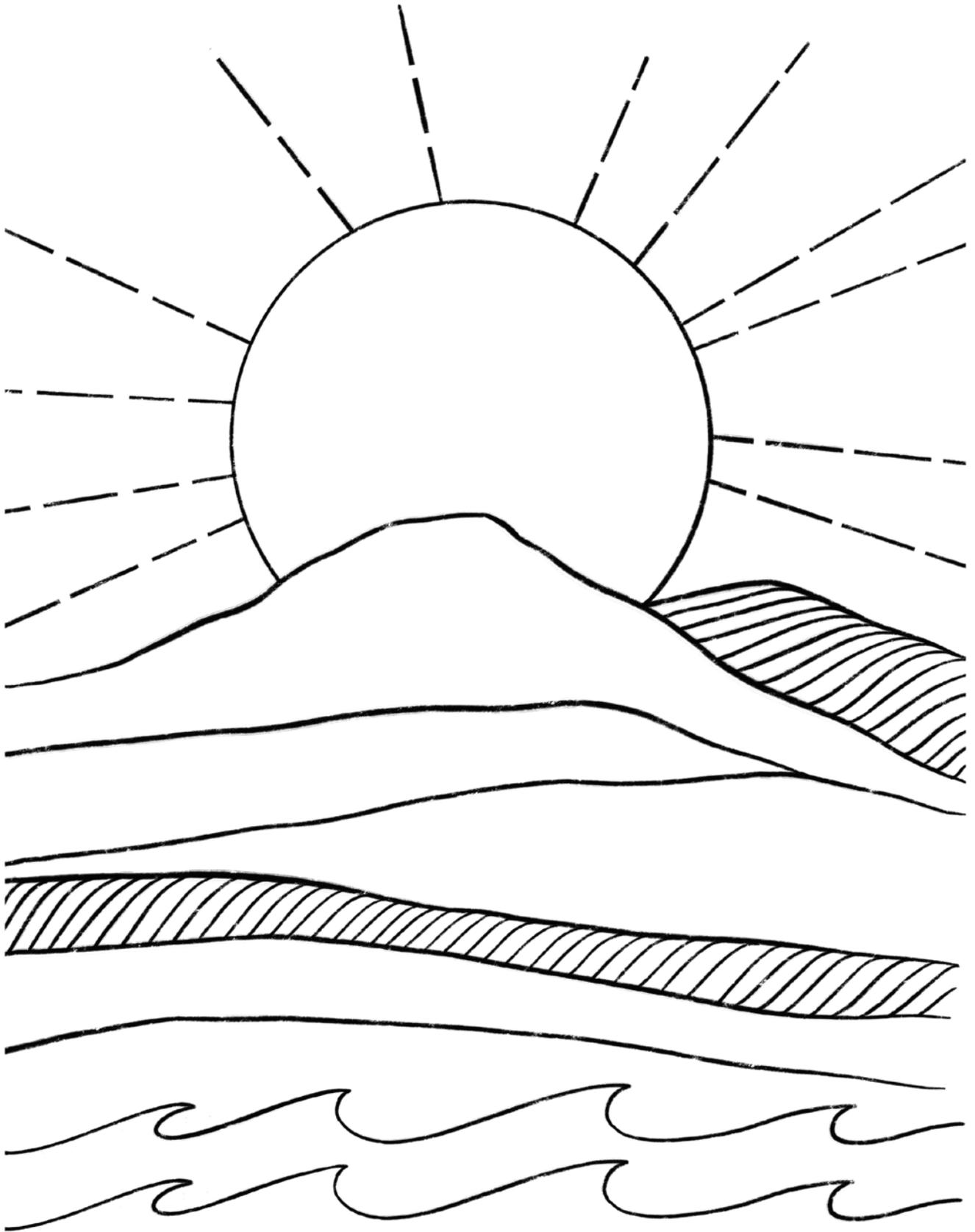
**“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people.”**





**“Be ye enkindled, O people, with the heat of the love of God,  
that ye may enkindle the hearts of others.”**





**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee.  
Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me.”**





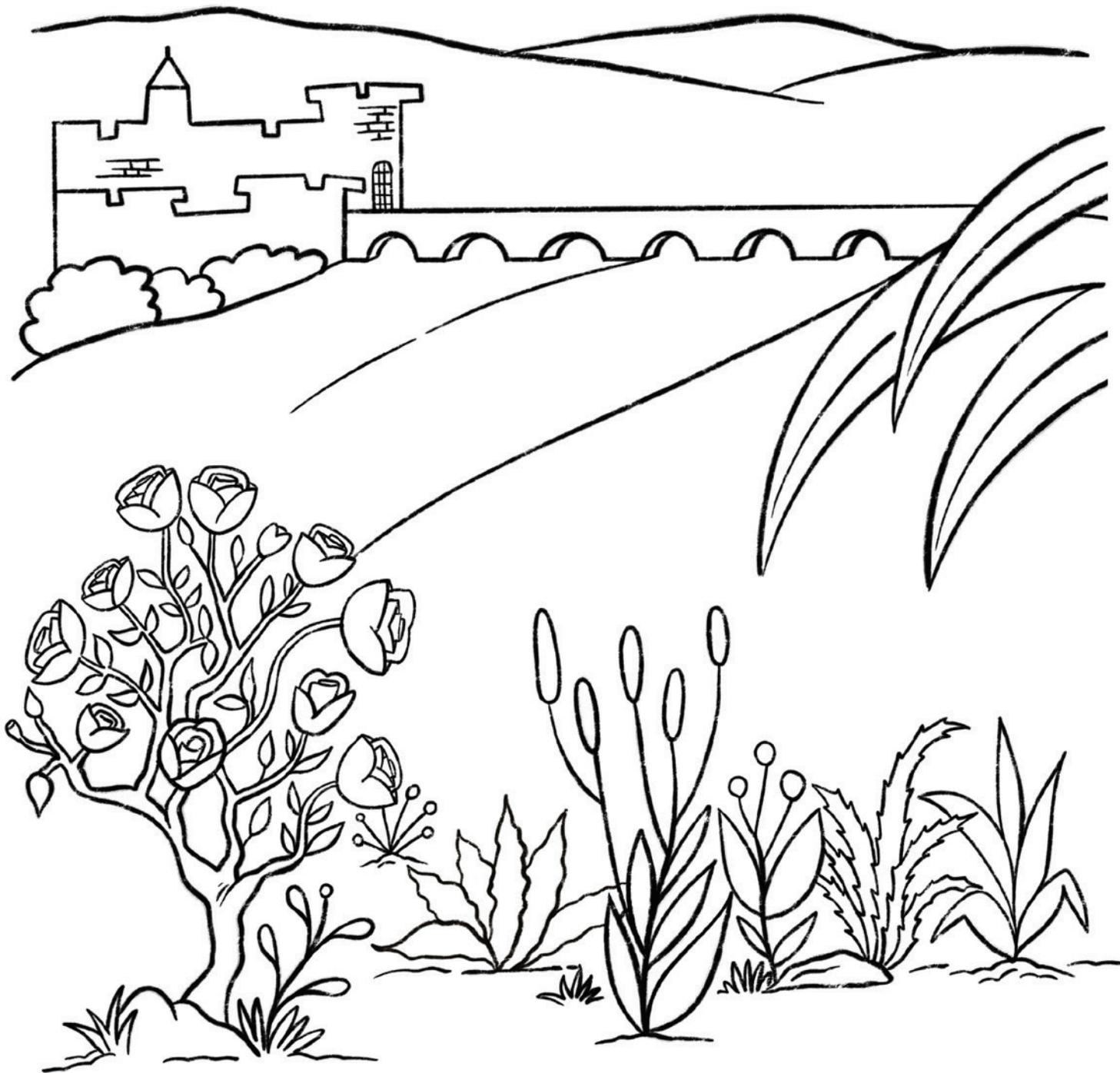
**“Happy is the faithful one who is attired with the vesture  
of high endeavor and hath arisen to serve this Cause.”**





**“He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.”**





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



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