

LESSON 1

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

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

After the prayer, the children may be asked if any of them know a prayer by heart. Then, you may teach them the following prayer in the way that was explained in Section 2:

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

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

Ye Are Drops

C

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

of one ocean. (of one ocean)

F

Ye are leaves (ye are leaves)

G

of one tree. (of one tree)

C

Come and join us (come and join us)

F

in our quest for unity

C

G

C

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

All the earth is (all the earth is)

but one country. (but one country)

Man is one (man is one)

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

Come and join us (come and join us)

in our quest for unity

It's a way of life for you and me

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

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

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

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

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

Powerful

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

Illumine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two children stand together and tie the left leg of one child to the right leg of the other child. Then they walk from one designated spot to another.

Variations:

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

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

