

LESSON 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

Love, Love, Love

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The activity that follows the story can be the game "The Bridge":

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

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