

Book 1 Reflection on the Life of the Spirit

Unit 1 Sections 2, 3, 4, and 7

Unit 1: Understanding the Baha'i Writings

Music

You can start each session with prayers and music and have each participant have a turn in bringing music for the devotional and for breaks at least one time during the course. Often times during breaks, to get the energy going again- you can put on music and dance!

A Contemplation of "Beauty"

(This is especially effective when the participants groan and say "Oh no. Not crafts!!" when I tell them we're doing something with the arts next time.) This is also a good way to begin the skill of confidence in story telling.

We talk about the contemplation of "Beauty". I ask them to bring in any object next time that they find beautiful and tell us why they feel it is. It's also an interesting view of the diversity of subjective opinion in relation to the arts, and the beginning of understanding how the message of the Baha'i Faith must be geared to the needs of the seeker. We do this exercise right at the beginning of class when we have just had Devotions (usually with music.)

See? It isn't hard to incorporate the ARTS!!

Section 2:

"Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues."

Work with clay to build a foundation for all the virtues and then a sculpture representing the virtues; can use toothpicks and paper as well as markers to write virtues on little flags

Materials suggested: Different colours of modelling clay, Sequins, plastic gems, a list of virtues, Markers, Glue, Paper, Scissors

Section 3:

"A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men..."

Write quotation or draw an image related to the quotation on a piece of paper and then paste onto cardboard; glue a magnet on the back of it and put it on your refrigerator

Materials suggested: Cardboard cut into squares, White paper, Construction paper, Markers, Sequins, glitter, Glue, Scissors, Magnets/Magnetic tape

"When a thought of war comes oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love."

Turn out lights and little by little light the room with candles, talking about how hate is the absence of love like darkness is the absence of light; when light is brought in then the darkness goes away

Materials suggested: Candles, Matches

Section 4:

"Backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul."

Have a row of tea light candles on table and blow them out immediately to represent the concept of quench

Materials suggested: Tea light candles, Matches

“Backbiting” Unit 1 Section 7

Materials:

Glass bowl of water, Container of loose dirt, Beautiful colourful metal or plastic confetti, Spoons

Instructions:

1. Read this quote:

“...backbiting quencheth the light of the heart, and extinguisheth the life of the soul.” (Bahá'u'lláh: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 264-265) (Ruhí Book 1, page 16)

2. Place the bowl of water in the middle of a table and have participants sit around the table. Give each a spoon.
3. Pass the container of dirt around to each and have them scatter the dirt on the top of the water (don't stir). Talk about what happens in our lives when we backbite (the dirt) about other people and how the water looks with the dirt in it. Reflect on how difficult it would be to take back (clean up) what was said.
4. Stir up the water and talk about the damage that gossip--often the spread of information passed through backbiting--can be.
5. Dump out the dirty water and clean the bowl. Refill it with clean water.
6. Read this quote: **“We can never exert the influence over others which we can exert over ourselves. If we are better, if we show love, patience, and understanding of the weaknesses of others; if we seek to never criticize but rather encourage, others will do likewise....”** (Shoghi Effendi: *Lights of Guidance*, p. 83)

7. Give each participant a few pieces of coloured confetti. Ask them to pretend that these beautiful pieces are the good qualities in each other that we can talk about freely and cause encouragement to happen instead of harm. Have them each scatter a few pieces of the confetti on the surface of the water.

8. Stir up the “good qualities” in the water and see if the water is harmed and if beauty is created. Talk about how it looks and how differently you each feel looking at this bowl instead of the dirty water.

9. Give each participant a small container or bag of “good qualities” to take home and spread around their houses as reminders to notice and speak of each other’s good qualities.