

Aotearoa Institute Resources for Tutors



Resources for Tutors

Contents

General resources for tutors:

1. Tutor responsibilities
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3. Building capacity for growth: The pyramid of courses
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6. Suggested schedules for first, second and final study circle sessions for Book 1
7. How to encourage devotional meetings through the study circle
8. Forms:
 - Participant feedback form
 - Tutor report form
 - Registration form

Resources for the study of Book 7:

Appendix 1: Theme headings for each section in Book 7

Appendix 2: Quotations for memorization in Book 7

Appendix 3: Supplementary material for the study of Book 7:

- a. Memorization (*Unit 2, Section 10*)
- b. The vision of a tutor: Reflections on Growth No. 8 (*Unit 2, Section 10*)
- c. The institute process: Principles and methodology of the Ruhi Institute (*Unit 2, Sections 11, 19*)
- d. A technique for study (*Unit 2, Section 11*)
- e. Overview of Book 1: To the Collaborators (*Unit 2, Section 22*)
- f. Liberating the Spirit: Promoting creative expression in study circles (*Unit 3, Section 1*)

Tutor Responsibilities

1. To initiate and maintain study circles.
2. To undertake ongoing training as needed, and to participate in Tutor Encounters organized by the Cluster Institute Coordinator.
3. To maintain records of participants in study circles.
4. To submit statistics to the Cluster Institute Coordinator. Keep the Cluster Institute Coordinator informed when study circles start, finish and who has completed them.
5. To ensure that the participants do the practices associated with each course, by providing as much support and assistance for each individual as necessary.
6. To encourage the participants to offer service to the cluster, using the skills gained through the course.

Resources to assist you

Your Cluster Institute Coordinator

Tutors are encouraged to work closely with their Cluster Institute Coordinators. Coordinators can help you find out what is most needed in your cluster. They have ideas for arts and games and can help find participants for your study circle, and can assist you with suggestions of how to encourage the practice elements in each course.

Guidance from the Bahá'í World Centre

Reflections on Growth is a newsletter published periodically by the International Teaching Centre. It summarises the learning from all over the Bahá'í world on topics such as home visits, children's classes, and how tutors can contribute to growth in their clusters. These are available electronically or by hard copy from your Cluster Institute Coordinator or the Aotearoa Institute.

Useful Websites:

Official website for Aotearoa Institute:

<http://aotearoa.institute.googlepages.com/>

For tutors—sharing ideas and resources for study circles:

<http://www.ruhiresources.org>

Training Institute for England—resources for tutors:

<http://bahai.org.uk/england/tife/>

Summary of the main ideas in Book 7

A quick overview for tutors

Tutors – checklist

- Participants and tutors are all engaged in a reciprocal process of learning
- Responsibility for learning rests with each participant
- Essential that the participants become increasingly conscious of the meaning and significance of what they are doing (e.g. Book 1 – a vision of life that is centred on God and His Revelation, rather than on one’s own self).
- The ability to focus attention on the immediate and explicit meaning of passages from the Writings contributes to the creation of unity in Bahá’í communities

Skills

- To keep participants focused on the material
- To formulate questions that stimulate reflection
- To foster active participation within the group

How much time will you spend on each one, the points you need to emphasise, and what you want to achieve

- Each unit in the book has an overall purpose
- Each section contains only one or two principle ideas that it tries to convey
- Some questions cannot be answered in a clear-cut way and are intended to raise awareness about a subject

True/false statements

- Are designed to take the students through a sequence of thoughts (some posed at the level of behaviour, and not in a philosophical sense)
- Or help them to understand a concept from various angles (not exercises on vocabulary)

Memorisation

- By now you yourself have learned many passages by heart
- Taught small children how to memorise
- And know the value of being able to draw on the power of the Creative Word
- Whether in moments of personal reflection,
- In times of difficulty,
- Or in teaching the Cause
- Memorisation also contributes to clarity of mind

“...and every breast which committeth His Words to memory, God shall cause, if it were that of a believer, to be filled with His love...”

Attitudes to nurture the participants in their learning

- Learn the art of encouragement
- And develop the ability to cultivate talent

Qualities – the need to combine qualities

- Of love, humility and patience
- With dedication, perseverance and commitment.

Arts

- An important element in the methodology of study...to develop the ability to work with one's hands is not a secondary educational objective. It is an imperative in the overall training of an individual, an essential element enhancing the spiritual development of the participant. Awakens attraction to beauty and perfection.
- Music is spiritual food for soul and heart – a ladder for the soul
- Story telling, not only to teach, also to inspire and incite action
- Drama, skits, puppets, the graphic and performing arts and literature
- Crafts – weaving, embroidery, needlepoint, knitting, crocheting, sewing, dying, ceramics, pottery, jewellery-making, leatherwork, basket weaving, carving, woodwork, frame making, candle making, toy making, print making, lace making, quilting, etc.

Music, storytelling, drama can be used at Feasts, firesides, children's classes, when teaching, etc.

Practice components in Books

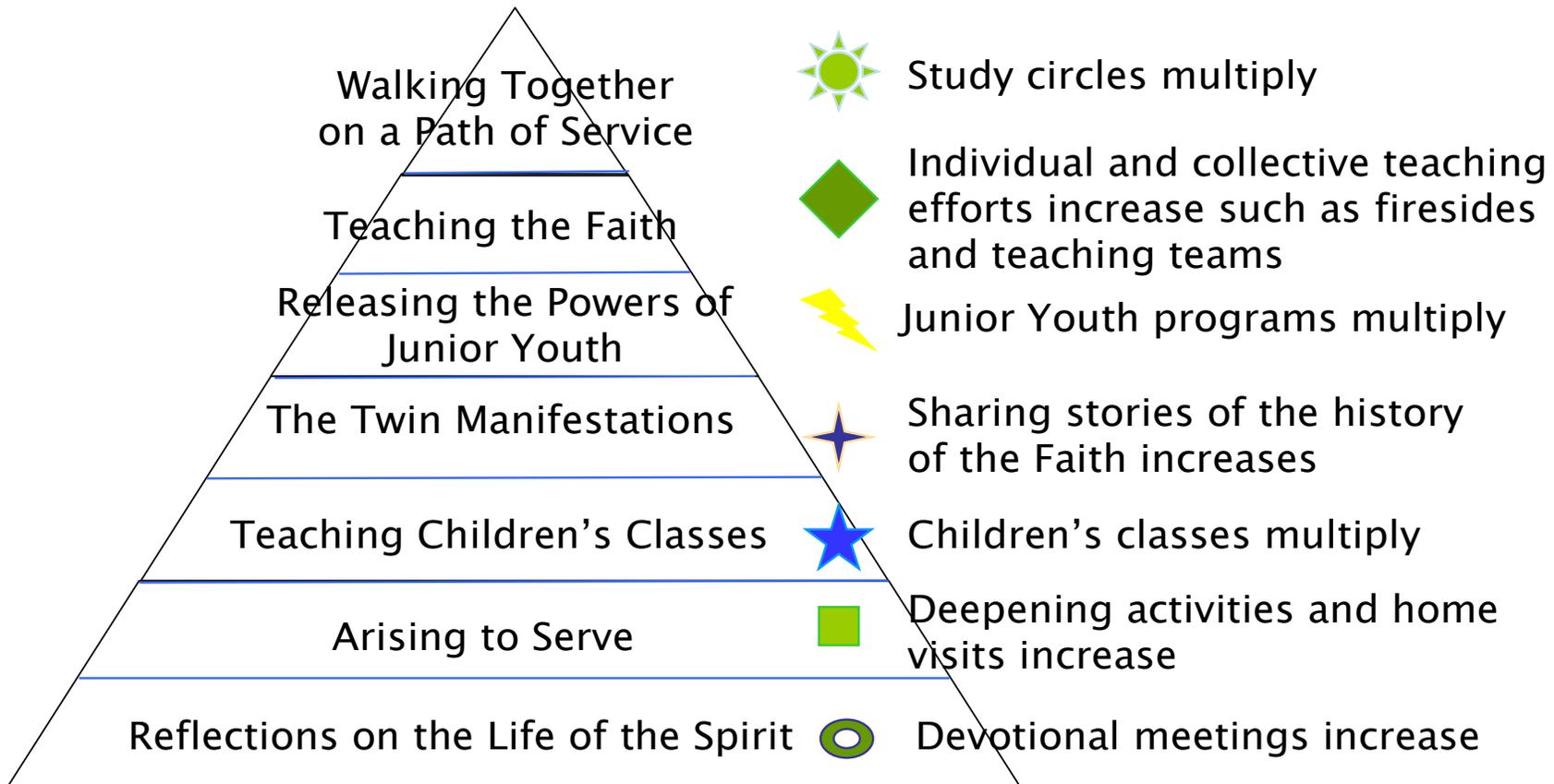
- Increases participants eagerness to teach and serve mankind
- In initial stages, during or after book is completed, tutor to assist and follow participants progress.

Three levels of comprehension

- Understand the meaning of the words and sentences from the Writings
- See how concepts in the Writings apply to one's daily life. The study of the Revelation should lead to concerted effort to apply the Teachings,
- To grasp some of the implications of the quotations, the participants think about the implication of passages from the Writings to one's daily life, which requires thinking, consulting and analysing one's understanding in the light of experience.

BUILDING CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

Proceeding Through a Sequence of Courses



Ruhi Book Time Requirements

Approximate minimum time commitments for each Institute Course are for general planning purposes to help tutors estimate how many Study Circle or Intensive Training sessions may be needed for a particular book. These estimates include time for art activities. Practice times are not included but must be planned for.

Ruhi Book #	Study Circle Time	Intensive Training	Estimated practice times
Book 1	36 - 44 Hours	3 full days	2 X 2 hour visits to 2 different people to study a prayer
Book 2	60 Hours	6 full days	3 X 2 hour visits to share deepening themes
Book 3	40 Hours	4 full days	1 extra day to run a children's class and then do group reflection process
Book 4	60 Hours	6 full days	2 X 2 hour visits to one or two people or families to share stories
Book 5	80 Hours	8 full days	Helping with or starting a junior youth group- times will vary
Book 6	80 Hours	8 full days	Taking part in a collective teaching project- times will vary
Book 7	80 Hours	8 full days	Starting a study circle – times will vary

Concerning pacing the courses, consider re-reading the "To the Collaborators" section in Book 1 where it says *"each course should establish a rhythm of progress, so that students will have a distinct sense that they are advancing rapidly according to their own capacities"*. The passage goes on to make some other really valuable points which are useful to reflect on when serving as a tutor for any book. There isn't an exact "formula" which can be applied to timing the courses. Instead, it is the judgement of the tutor who is interacting with a particular group of participants, who is relied on to speed up, slow down or just carry on.

Some examples of timetables and activities from tutors around New Zealand can be found on the website: <http://aotearoa.institute.googlepages.com>



Three Levels of Comprehension

First level of Comprehension

- Focuses on the explicit meaning of the quotations
- Helps participants achieve a basic understanding of words and sentences of passages from the Writings
- On this level, the questions are answered based on the Holy Texts presented.

Example in exercises: “How can the betterment of the world be achieved?”

Second level of Comprehension

- Questions and exercises on level two help the students apply some of the concepts in their daily lives.

Example in exercises: True/false “There are so few good people in the world that their actions do not have any effect.”

Third level of Comprehension

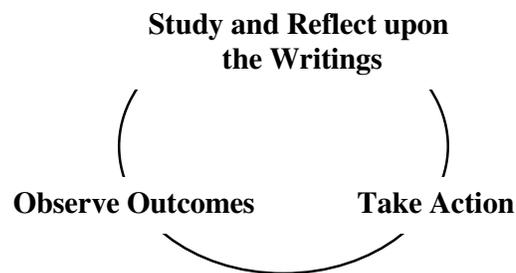
- Questions and exercises on this level require the students to think about the implications of the quotations for situations with no apparent or immediate connection with the theme of the quotation.

Example in exercises: “Is it possible for a Bahá’í to confess to another person?”

Suggested schedules for study circles

Posture of Learning

We should keep a posture of learning while we are starting and maintaining our study circle. The participants need to be assured that we are learning and exploring the material together, that there are many ways to respond to the exercises, and that, as tutors, we do not have all the answers. Study the material well before each session. Lots of unexpected things will happen.



We should remember that in a culture of growth “...Fear of failure finds no place. Mutual support, commitment to learning, and appreciation of diversity of action are the prevailing norms.” (Universal House of Justice, 9 January 2001).

Some suggested schedules are presented below. Note that these are **not formulas** that are to be followed strictly. Through a process of study, action and reflection you may end with a different schedule that best fits your study circle.

Suggested schedule for the first session of your study circle:

1. Warm welcome.
2. Prayers or short devotional.
3. Icebreaker exercise.
4. Explain briefly about the study circle (what is it, essential elements).
5. Expectations and concerns.
Ask each participant:
 - What are your expectations of this course?
 - What are your needs/concerns?You may want to make a list of them for all to see. Or at least make sure you take notes of it. The expectations/concerns, help the tutor understand the group. It shows their priorities and the vision of the group. Try to serve the group via their expectations.
6. Make “spiritual environment” contract with the group to assure a disciplined and loving environment.
7. It is important that the group is aware of the length of the course, timing of sessions, how they can “catch up” if they miss a session, are you still meeting during holidays? What about Feast days, etc.?
8. Start section 1, even if there is only time to study one or two quotations.
9. Explain the technique of study:
 - Read the text.
 - Phrase a question for which the answer is exactly from the text.
 - Clarify concepts (through concrete examples and analogies and NOT through definitions or synonyms).
 - Answer the written questions individually.
 - Share the answers in a plenary session.
10. Read together the purpose and practice of the first unit “Understanding the Writings”.
11. Closing prayer.
12. Social time (games, music, food, etc).



Suggested schedule for the second session of your study circle:

1. Warm welcome.
 2. Prayers.
 3. Icebreaker/ Energiser.
 4. Ask participants if they would like to share something they enjoyed from last week's session as a way to begin a review.
 5. Review the technique of study:
 - Read the text.
 - Phrase a question for which the answer is exactly from the text.
 - Clarify concepts (through concrete examples and analogies and NOT through definitions or synonyms).
 - Answer the written questions individually.
 - Share the answers in a plenary session.
 6. Memorise the text (depending on the needs of your group you may want to do the memorisation in a separate time).
 7. Review together the purpose and practice of the first unit "Understanding the Writings".
 8. Continue the study of the texts together as a group until the technique is well understood (it could be one text or all the first section). Then split the group into pairs and go from pair to pair to make sure that the objectives of each section are being accomplished.
- Note: the participants may have some difficulty with clarifying concepts through examples. If participants give definitions you could lovingly ask them "...like for example? or what could be an example of? ". Help the participants lovingly and patiently to follow the steps (some of them could take a few sessions, don't force them).*
9. Plenary. When everyone has finished the exercises in section 2, gather the group together for a plenary session. Be prepared to respond to difficult or challenging questions.
 10. Closing prayer.
 11. Social time (games, music, food, etc).

Once the study circle has achieved a steady pace of study, make sure that your study circle includes the following elements:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Prayers- Memorisation- Study in small groups- Plenary sessions to discuss answers- Consultation (about the progress of study, about skills for service activities outside the study session, etc)- Art and Craft Activities- Practicing and developing skills for service (study a prayer, host a devotional meeting)- Loving and disciplined environment (follow the contract of responsibility, games, music, etc) |  |
|---|---|

Suggested schedule for the final session of your study circle:

1. Welcome and prayers or devotional meeting.
2. Book study: The study should be completed at least by the middle of the final meeting. The final section in Unit 3 invites participants to meditate on a few themes that will to think about the decisions they will have to make in their lives. Think carefully about how you will facilitate this. For example, you could use quiet reflective music.
3. Break: Snacks, music, fellowship, games
4. Application question: Give real-life scenarios and ask the participants to determine what quotation or principle they have studied would guide a person's actions in this situation. Allow the participants to consult their books and each other when determining their answer.
5. Evaluation forms: These are provided on the website or from your Cluster Institute Coordinators, and should be filled out by the participants at the final meeting. Collect the evaluations and send them to your coordinator, along with your tutor's report on the course.
6. Ask participants who wish to, to share something that they have enjoyed or learned from the study circle experience
7. Next steps: Provide the study circle with information about other courses that will be available in the form of study circles. Tell them about additional training opportunities for those who may be interested in becoming tutors. You may want the group to discuss how they plan to use what they learned in the study circle in their local community or neighbourhood.
8. You may like to finish with some form of celebration.
9. Although no certificates are presented, a small token at the end of the course would be appropriate. For instance, a quote beautifully printed.
10. Closing prayers.



How to encourage devotional meetings through the study circle

In the Four Year Plan message, the Universal House of Justice calls on the Bahá'ís to practice *“the collective worship of God. Hence it is essential to the spiritual life of the community that the friends hold regular devotional meetings in local Bahá'í centres, where available, or elsewhere, including the homes of the believers.”* Again, in their message of December 28, 1999 the House of Justice encourages *“loving association among the friends in every locality, by worship as a community”* and *“the holding of regular meetings for worship open to all...”* and states that this represents a further step in the implementation of the law of the Mashriqu'l-Adkar.

Increasingly, communities are hopeful that friends who have completed Book One will begin offering devotional meetings for their friends, family, co-workers and neighbours, thus multiplying this core activity. Here are some suggestions for tutors, to increase people's understanding of devotional meetings, and also some ideas to help in holding them.

Ideas for Tutors:

- Prepare a short devotional meeting at the beginning of each study circle session. Include music where possible. After the first devotional, ask participants to sign up to be responsible for following sessions. Gradually, ask people to give feedback about what they find effective and meaningful. Ask for suggestions about what they would like to do differently next time. Have everyone practice hosting the opening devotional a second time.
- To provide more structure and support, especially with participants who are not Bahá'ís, initially ask all participants to contribute to a joint devotional meeting – to bring something from home such as a passage from the Writings or another Holy Book, a poem, a piece of music, etc. Also have available quotations on cards or something similar. After they have experienced this a few times, then ask for volunteers and give some guidelines to help them plan. For example they could be asked to include music and to think about creating a spiritual atmosphere and a beautiful environment.
- Offer a devotional meeting workshop as a branch course for the study circle. This workshop material is available from the Aotearoa Institute .
- Encourage all participants to consider hosting or co-hosting regular devotional meetings after the study circle ends. Encourage participants to support each other in this endeavour. In one community, people were encouraged to have several people be in charge of devotional meetings. These people would take turns hosting the devotional, often in one home but with many hosts. Each would be responsible to pray for the devotional meeting, to invite friends and to pray for them as well. This was a good way to get a larger number of devotional meetings happening while easing people into the practice.

Ideas for holding a devotional meeting:

Unity in diversity: Different people find different things meaningful. For instance, some groups find dim lighting and candles spiritually uplifting and some find it depressing, some feel worship of God should be quiet and reverent and some lively and spirit-filled (with clapping and audience response), some want to stand, clap, and sing, while others feel noticeably awkward with singing during worship. People should feel comfortable to choose a devotional programme that suits their own tastes but also should think carefully about the needs of the people that they invite to their devotional meeting.

Use the arts: Have music during your devotional: sing together, have live music, listen to a tape or CD. Use a PowerPoint presentation or video of beautiful images.

The Word of God: You can choose a theme and then choose Bahá'í Writings and prayers to explore this theme. Lots of different devotional meeting programmes can be found on the Internet to use or adapt to suit your circumstances. Quotes from other Holy writings are often appreciated as well as allowing friends of the faith to share a prayer, inspirational writing or poem.

A welcome, loving environment: Prepare yourself and your home or venue before the devotional. A warm, tidy space helps people to feel comfortable and in the right space for reverence. Welcome people individually. Make sure they know other people at the devotional by the end of meeting.

Prayer: Pray for the success of the devotional meeting as you prepare each one.

Consistency and systematization: create a framework for the devotions. Reflect after each devotional meeting about what would make it better. Take time in advance to plan, prepare, and pray for the devotional meeting. When things are left to the last minute, the devotions suffer.

Food: Consider offering refreshments after the devotional, or even a meal depending on when you have the devotional meeting. Eating together is an important part of worshiping together for many cultures.

Resources:

There are lots of great resources available on the Internet. Here are some:

<http://www.ruhiresources.org/>

- Select “Devotional Gatherings”

Devotional ideas; music ideas; prayers in different languages; examples of invitations to devotional meetings; deepenings and workshops on devotional meetings, as well as links to other sites.

<http://www.bahaidevotions.org/>

- Select “devotional meetings” for a range of programmes for devotional meetings, and downloadable songbooks.
- Select “devotional guides” for guidance on holding devotional meetings.

<http://www.tranquility-zone.org.uk>

Guidance for setting up “tranquillity zones” and samples of readings that can be used.

AOTEAROA INSTITUTE - TUTOR REPORT

Name of tutor/s: _____

Course Title _____

Date Started: _____ **Date Completed** _____

Location: _____

Number of Students: _____

Names of Students who completed the course:

1. What are the highlights of what you learned while tutoring this course?
2. What new thing did you try that you think worked well?
3. What would you do differently next time?
4. How did you encourage and assist participants to complete the practice component?
5. Do you have any games, art activities, or photos that you can share?
6. How could your Cluster Institute Coordinator be of service to you in the next course you tutor?
7. Other comments:

AOTEAROA INSTITUTE - REGISTRATION FORM

COURSE:

DATE:

VENUE:

TUTOR:

NAME	PHONE/EMAIL	ADDRESS	OTHER INSTITUTE COURSES COMPLETED	PAYMENT RECIEVED
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				