

## **Appendix 1: *Book Seven: Walking Together on a Path of Service***

### **Theme headings**

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#### **Unit 1: The Spiritual Path**

##### Section

1. Introduction
2. The conditions of a pure heart
3. True wealth
4. Striving for excellence to develop our spiritual capacities
5. Knowledge, love and fear of God
6. Obeying the laws
7. Faith and certitude
8. Hope and trust
9. Longing desire to grow spiritually
10. Will, determination, effort
11. Sacrifice
12. Walking the spiritual pathway with joy

#### **Unit 2: Becoming a Tutor of Books 1-6**

##### Section

1. Introduction
2. Motivation: transitory/permanent
3. Motivation: enthusiasm, vigour, zeal of the tutor
4. Motivation: understanding – the greatest of all motivators
5. Advancing understanding – three levels of comprehension
6. Motivation: attraction to beauty
7. Motivation: the environment – physical and behaviour
8. Participation (1)
9. Participation (2)
10. Methodology: small groups and tutor, sequence of courses, individual pace
11. Methodology: flexibility
12. Sequence of courses: walking a path of service; Book 1
13. Book 2
14. Book 3
15. Book 4
16. Book 3a
17. Book 6
18. Branch courses

19. Study circles
20. Study circles: scenarios - examples of situations
21. The tutor
22. Tutor gatherings: reviewing “To the Collaborators” – Book 1
23. Tutor gatherings: reviewing specific passages and exercises – Book 1
24. Tutor gatherings: reviewing specific passages and exercises – Book 1
25. Tutor gatherings: reviewing specific passages and exercises – Book 1, Unit 2
26. Tutor gatherings: reviewing specific passages and exercises – Book 1, Unit 3
27. The study circle: the role of the individual, the community and the institutions
28. How study circles contribute to the empowerment of the individual
29. Nurturing and encouraging the individual

#### **Unit 3: Promoting the Arts at the Grassroots**

##### Section

1. Introduction – increasing awareness of the arts
2. Art is a gift from the Holy Spirit
3. Attraction to grace and beauty
4. Art engages the heart and spirit
5. Music
6. Incorporating music into the study circle
7. Story-telling
8. Drama
9. Crafts
10. Artistic expression as an element of moral and spiritual empowerment

## Appendix 2: Quotation Memorization Handout (Book 7)

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### Unit 1 – The Spiritual Path

#### *Section 3*

O My servants! Were ye to discover the hidden, the shoreless oceans of My incorruptible wealth, ye would, of a certainty, esteem as nothing the world, nay, the entire creation.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, No. 153

#### *Section 8*

He is the Compassionate, the All-Bountiful! O God, my God! Thou seest me, Thou knowest me; Thou art my Haven and my Refuge. None have I sought nor any will I seek save Thee; no path have I trodden nor any will I tread but the path of Thy love. In the darksome night of despair, my eye turneth expectant and full of hope to the morn of Thy boundless favour and at the hour of dawn my drooping soul is refreshed and strengthened in remembrance of Thy beauty and perfection. He whom the grace of Thy mercy aideth, though he be but a drop, shall become the boundless ocean, and the merest atom which the outpouring of Thy loving-kindness assisteth, shall shine even as the radiant star.

Shelter under Thy protection, O Thou Spirit of purity, Thou Whom art the All-Bountiful Provider, this enthralled, enkindled servant of Thine. Aid him in this world of being to remain steadfast and firm in Thy love and grant that this broken-winged bird attain a refuge and shelter in Thy divine nest that abideth upon the celestial tree.

'Abdu'l-Bahá

#### *Section 11*

Thus I exhort each of you, realizing its power and beauty, to sacrifice all your thoughts, words and actions to bring the knowledge of the Love of God into every heart.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 81

#### *Section 12*

... ye must in this matter -- that is, the serving of humankind -- lay down your very lives, and as ye yield yourselves, rejoice.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 35

If only thou couldst know what a high station is destined for those souls who are severed from the world, are powerfully attracted to the Faith, and are teaching, under the sheltering shadow of Bahá'u'lláh! How thou wouldst rejoice, how thou wouldst, in exultation and rapture, spread thy wings and soar heavenward -- for being a follower of such a way, and a traveller toward such a Kingdom.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 64

Hold ye fast to the hem of God's garment, and direct all your efforts toward furthering His Covenant, and burning ever more brightly with the fire of His love, that your hearts may leap for joy in the breathings of servitude which well out from the breast of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 42

Let us put aside all thoughts of self; let us close our eyes to all on earth, let us neither make known our sufferings nor complain of our wrongs. Rather let us become oblivious of our own selves, and drinking down the wine of heavenly grace, let us cry out our joy, and lose ourselves in the beauty of the All-Glorious.

Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 195

Ye are the angels, if your feet be firm, your spirits rejoiced, your secret thoughts pure, your eyes consoled, your ears opened, your breasts dilated with joy, and your souls gladdened, and if you arise to assist the Covenant, to resist dissension and to be attracted to the Effulgence!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í World Faith

At all times do I speak of you and call you to mind. I pray unto the Lord, and with tears I implore Him to rain down all these blessings upon you, and gladden your hearts, and make blissful your souls, and grant you exceeding joy and heavenly delights....

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 17

My only joy in this swiftly-passing world was to tread the stony path of God and to endure hard tests and all material griefs. For otherwise, this earthly life would prove barren and vain, and better would be death. The tree of being would produce no fruit; the sown field of this existence would yield no harvest. Thus it is my hope that once again some circumstance will make my cup of anguish to brim over, and that beautiful Love, that Slayer of souls, will dazzle the beholders again. Then will this heart be blissful, this soul be blessed.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No. 190

Then rose the Sun of Truth and the splendours of the Kingdom were shed over east and west. Those who had eyes to see rejoiced at the glad tidings and cried out: 'O blessed, blessed are we!', and they witnessed the inner reality of all things, and uncovered the mysteries of the Kingdom. Delivered then from their fancies and their doubts, they beheld the light of truth, and so exhilarated did they become from draining the chalice of God's love, that they utterly forgot the world and their own selves. Dancing for joy they hastened to the place of their own martyrdom and there, where men die for love, they flung away their heads and hearts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, No.16



## Unit 2 – Becoming a Tutor of Books 1 – 6

### *Section 4*

O God, O Thou Who hast cast Thy splendour over the luminous realities of men, shedding upon them the resplendent lights of knowledge and guidance, and hast chosen them out of all created things for this supernal grace, and hast caused them to encompass all things, to understand their inmost essence, and to disclose their mysteries, bringing them forth out of darkness into the visible world! "He verily showeth His special mercy to whomsoever He will.

O Lord, help Thou Thy loved ones to acquire knowledge and the sciences and arts, and to unravel the secrets that are treasured up in the inmost reality of all created beings. Make them to hear the hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is. Make them to be ensigns of guidance amongst all creatures, and piercing rays of the mind shedding forth their light in this, the "first life". Make them to be leaders unto Thee, guides unto Thy path, runners urging men on to Thy Kingdom.

Thou verily art the Powerful, the Protector, the Potent, the Defender, the Mighty, the Most Generous.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I

### *Section 7*

Apart from these provisions Bahá'u'lláh exhorts His followers to consort, with amity and concord and without discrimination, with the adherents of all religions; warns them to guard against fanaticism, sedition, pride, dispute and contention; inculcates upon them immaculate cleanliness, strict truthfulness, spotless chastity, trustworthiness; hospitality, fidelity, courtesy, forbearance, justice and fairness; counsels them to be "even as the fingers of one hand and the limbs of one body"; calls upon them to arise and serve His Cause; and assures them of His undoubted aid.

Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 214-5

### *Section 21*

The tie of servitude established between the worshiper and the adored One, between the creature and the Creator, should in itself be regarded as a token of His gracious favor unto men, and not as an indication of any merit they may possess. To this testifyeth every true and discerning believer.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, No. 94

If thou seekest eternal glory, let thyself be humble and meek in the presence of the beloved of God; make thyself the servant of all, and serve all alike. The service of the friends belongs to God, not to them. Strive to become a source of harmony, spirituality and joyfulness to the hearts of the friends and the maid-servants of the Merciful. This is a cause of great satisfaction to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablets of Abdu'l-Baha v1, p. 61

### *Section 25*

... 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...

The Báb, Selections from the Writings of the Báb, p. 99





5. Brainstorm ideas for aids for personal memorization and add them to this list:
- Make a tape and listen to it in car or at home.
  - Have a small book with quotations – take on walks or elsewhere where you may have a few spare moments to practice.
  - Mindmap, imagery.
  - Put prayer to actions.
  - Write out the quotations.
  - Put on a large poster – visual aids posted around the home.
  - Practice out loud in front of family and friends.

### **Tips for tutors for memorization in study circles**

- Discuss with participants the reason for and importance of memorization at the start of the study circle.
- Make memorization a part of every study circle session.
- Use different methods to maintain motivation.
- Discuss memorization aids for personal memorization.
- Encourage the group to support and assist one another. For example, learn together, practice in pairs.
- Go back and revise to ensure long term retention of memorized passages and prayers.



## The Importance of the Study and Memorization of the Sacred Texts

1. Peruse ye every day the verses revealed by God. Blessed is the man who reciteth them and reflecteth upon them. He truly is of them with whom it shall be well.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 188)

2. The understanding of His words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitab-i-Iqan, p. 211)

3. When a person becomes a Baha'i, actually what takes place is that the seed of the spirit starts to grow in the human soul. This seed must be watered by the outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These gifts of the spirit are received through prayer, meditation, study of the Holy Utterances and service to the Cause of God.

(Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 70)

4. The principles of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah should be carefully studied, one by one, until they are realized and understood by mind and heart...

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 22)

5. It is my hope that you may put forth your most earnest endeavor ...to investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. Be not satisfied with words, but seek to understand the spiritual meanings hidden in the heart of the words.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 459)

6. Number me not with them who read Thy words and fail to find Thy hidden gift which, as decreed by Thee, is contained therein, and which quickeneth the souls of Thy creatures.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh, p. 83)

7. Read ye The Hidden Words, ponder the inner meanings thereof, act in accord therewith. Read, with close attention, the Tablets of Tarazat (Ornaments), Kalimat (Words of Paradise), Tajalliyyat (Effulgences), Ishraqat (Splendours), and Bisharat (Glad Tidings), and rise up as ye are bidden in the heavenly teachings.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 35)

8. Meditate upon that which hath streamed forth from the heaven of the Will of thy Lord, He Who is the Source of all grace, that thou mayest grasp the intended meaning which is enshrined in the sacred depths of the Holy Writings.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 143)

9. To deepen in the Cause means to read the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so thoroughly as to be able to give it to others in its pure form. There are many who have some superficial idea of what the Cause stands for. They, therefore, present it together with all sorts of ideas that are their own. As the Cause is still in its early days we must be most careful lest we fall under this error and injure the Movement we so much adore. There is no limit to the study of the Cause. The more we

read the writings the more truths we can find in them and the more we will see that our previous notions were erroneous.

(Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 565)

10. Surely the ideal way of teaching is to prove our points by constant reference to the actual words of Baha'u'llah and the Master. This will save the Cause from being misinterpreted by individuals. It is what these divine Lights say that is truth and therefore they should be the authorities of our statements.

(Shoghi Effendi, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 215)

11. The sanctified souls should ponder and meditate in their hearts regarding the methods of teaching. From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation. I swear by My life! This Revelation is endowed with such a power that it will act as the lodestone for all nations and kindreds of the earth. Should one pause to meditate attentively he would recognize that no place is there, nor can there be, for anyone to flee to.

(Bahá'u'lláh, Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 200)

12. We should memorize the Hidden Words, follow the exhortations of the Incomparable Lord, and conduct ourselves in a manner which becometh our servitude at the threshold of the one true God.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 197)

13. Memorizing the texts of the holy Tablets, and of perspicuous words and statements is highly praiseworthy. You should exert the utmost endeavour in your efforts to educate, to expound and to instruct.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, The importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith, p. 11)

14. The Master used to attach much importance to the learning by heart of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. During His days it was a usual work of the children of the household to learn Tablets by heart.

(Shoghi Effendi, Lights of Guidance, p. 150)

15. There is no objection to the friends memorizing prayers; on the contrary it is excellent for them to do so.

(Shoghi Effendi, The Compilation of Compilations vol. I, p. 228)

## **Appendix 3b: The Vision of a Tutor**

*(Supplementary material for Book 7, Unit 2, Section 10)*

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**Extracts from REFLECTIONS ON GROWTH** Number 8, July 2005

*Prepared under the auspices of the International Teaching Centre for the Institution of the Counsellors.*

### **The Vision of a Tutor: Individual Initiative and Community Building**

From the beginning of the Four Year Plan when the Bahá'í world embarked on the enterprise of establishing a network of training institutes, it was expressed in messages of the Universal House of Justice that this training would endow believers with “the spiritual insights, the knowledge, and the skills needed to carry out the many tasks of accelerated expansion and consolidation, including the teaching and deepening of a large number of people—adults, youth, and children.” Through participation in institute programs the friends would “develop abilities of service” and be enabled “to intensify [their] individual... exertions in the teaching field.” Although this purpose was generally understood from the inception of the training institutes, the effectiveness of the institute process in raising up believers who were “trained to foster and facilitate the process of entry by troops” has now been strikingly illustrated in an approach that demonstrates what a single tutor with a vision for growth can accomplish.

In the country where this approach originated, each pioneer acted as the initiator of several study circles with the aim of having 20 seekers involved. The objective was to enable five of these participants to eventually become tutors on their own, constituting the second generation, each of whom would likewise work with another 20 seekers. Thus, the original pioneer would in time follow the progress on this spiritual path of 120 individuals, 20 of his own direct contacts and 100 others.

Initially this mode of growth revolved principally around study circles, but when it was taken to another region of the world and implemented by a local homefront pioneering couple, both of whom were trained tutors, all three core activities were utilized to engage a network of seekers. Beginning with a children's class for the neighborhood children, the couple then turned their attention to the parents, who very naturally became attracted to devotional meetings and study circles, resulting in a number of them becoming Bahá'ís. These new believers proceeded through the sequence of courses, tutored by this couple, and ultimately started a second generation of core activities with their friends and families.

Here is an approach that illustrates a scope for individual initiative that was previously not imagined. In a short time, a Bahá'í tutor may have 20 to 40 persons he or she is working with. Groups of individuals, or often a number of families in a neighborhood, are connected to each other through a tutor, and they are collectively walking a path of spiritual progress and becoming a nascent Bahá'í community. In describing the impact of this approach, the House of Justice explained to a National Spiritual Assembly:

In this way, a handful of believers can significantly extend the spiritual influence of the institute and lay a strong foundation for the accelerated expansion of the community.

Having observed the effectiveness of this practical approach in a number of countries and settings, we wish to share with you some examples from the field that will give a vivid picture of how one individual or family can “extend the spiritual influence of the institute,” and almost singlehandedly develop a cluster and advance the process of entry by troops.

## A LITTLE COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

### Portishead, England

A married couple who regularly attended the weekly fireside in Portishead were reaching the point of boredom. Every time anyone new came to the fireside, the conversation went back to basics and these two seekers were clearly no longer advancing in their understanding of the Faith. Their Bahá'í friend who was holding the fireside told them about the course “Reflections on the Life of the Spirit” and they eagerly asked to join, but said that they could attend either the course or the fireside; they did not have time for both. The fireside became a weekly study circle.

Fortunately, the isolated believer who hosted the fireside was also a trained institute tutor. The couple and several others began to go through the sequence of courses. They embraced the Faith. The new believers began devotional meetings as part of the practice component of their course. These proved to be especially attractive to their friends, relatives, and neighbors and led in turn to more people becoming interested in attending study circles.

After that husband and wife declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh during the first year of the Five Year Plan, Portishead began to move forward. They, and others taken through the sequence of courses by that lone tutor, have since initiated many other activities such as regular firesides, more study circles, and a small class for junior youth. Thirteen people from the area have declared—four within the past six months. But their broad community of interest is much larger. Of the new believers, 4 have now completed the sequence of courses and are serving as tutors, with 21 participants in either a study circle or junior youth class. Another 24 people come to Bahá'í events occasionally and usually 30 or so attend the community's Holy Day programs.

As the believer who started it all says, “small and simple is the best way.” The new believers and other contacts all live within walking distance and so are very supportive of each other. “We used to think that to teach we had to go far away” but now she understands that it is better to reach out to those who surround our daily life. Those interested investigate the Faith as families, and as they go through the sequence of courses, they practice mainly with their relatives and close friends. Home visits are proving to be especially important. “The home visit is so key because it shows that Bahá'ís are normal—it relaxes people” when contacts get to know the Bahá'ís in their own home.

This veteran believer remarked that in the past she offered anyone who showed interest in the Faith a book, but now she invites them to a study circle. The devotional meetings have become the primary means of attracting people. For example, when asked what Bahá'ís do, she responds that we meet and pray in each other's homes and that we have very beautiful prayers. She still holds firesides occasionally; her approach is to hold four weeks of introductory firesides for a limited period to prepare new participants for the study circles. And at times small advertisements are used in the local paper to attract people.

Even the junior youth class began quite naturally. One family of new believers had a junior youth who would attend study circles with her parents. The tutor would take time out to give her a small lesson. This youth then brought a friend to a Holy Day observance who became interested. They invited another school friend to join them and a class was begun. Their junior youth class is held immediately after school at a facility next to their school, which has made it convenient for them. One youth says that the day of her Bahá'í class is her favorite day. Similarly, another family with younger children is now progressing through Ruhi Institute Book 3 with the goal of beginning a children's class.

And it all began with one believer, a tutor.

## **MOTHERS UNITE THROUGH THE INSTITUTE PROCESS**

### **Chang Hua City and County, Taiwan**

A believer in Taiwan took the first step along the path of service and divine assistance followed. Living in Chang Hua City and County cluster, an area with almost no active believers, she took the initiative to begin a Bahá'í-inspired moral education class in a public elementary school. One parent was so impressed by the content of her child's class that she wished to know more. The Bahá'í teacher happened to be a trained tutor so she invited the mother to study Ruhi Institute Book 1. Not only did the mother agree, she asked five of her friends to join her!

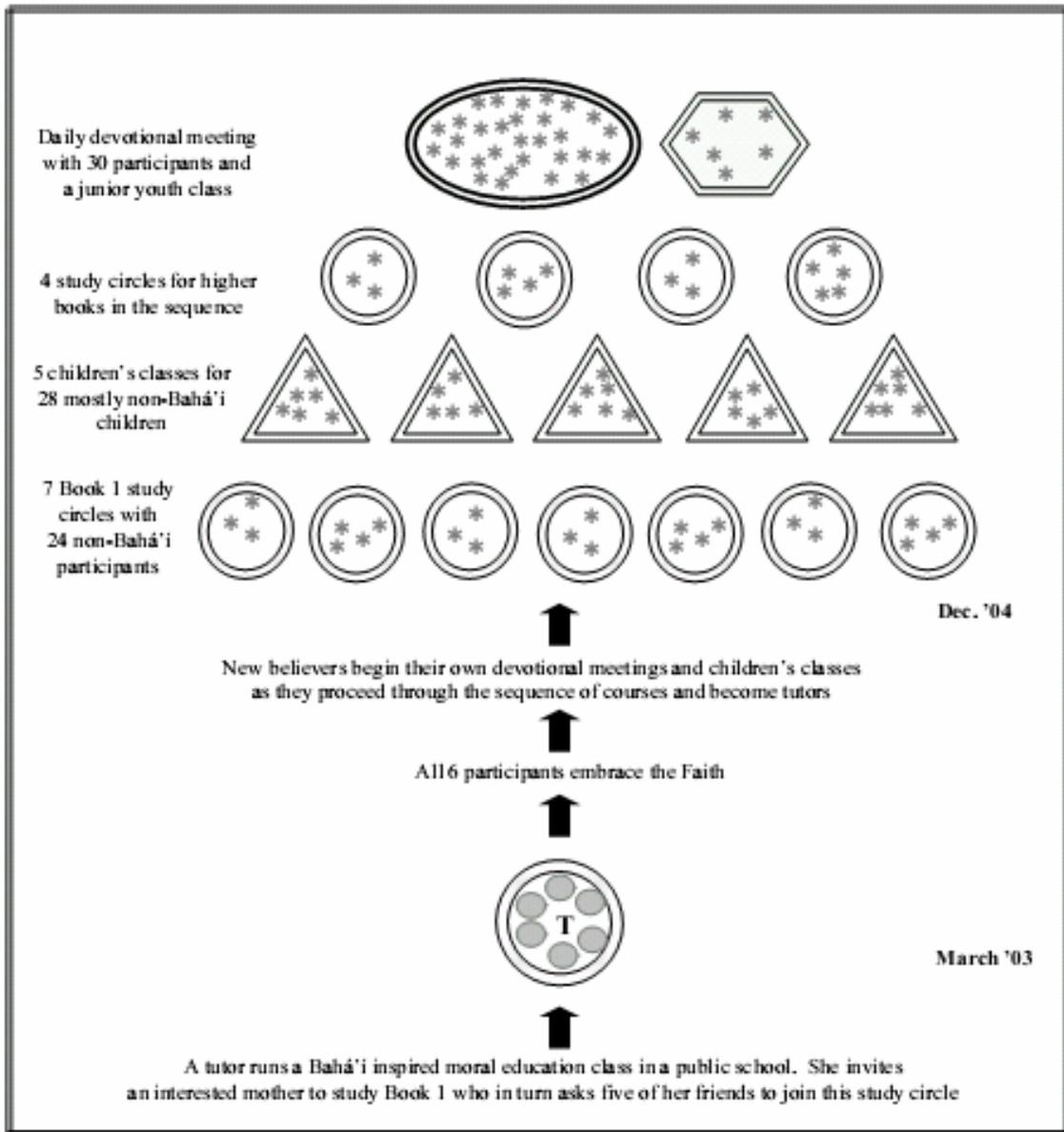
This first study circle in the cluster, which began in March 2003, was held weekly and was supplemented by occasional deepenings on Bahá'í topics. By the time they started Book 2, all six mothers had embraced the Faith. As their faith deepened and their skills were enhanced by what they were learning through the institute process, these new believers began to hold devotional meetings and children's classes on their own. Three of these ladies in particular reached out to their friends, co-workers, and relatives, introducing them to Book 1 as well.

By December 2004, the original six participants in the first study circle had completed the entire sequence of courses. They were carrying out seven Book 1 study circles that included 24 non-Bahá'í participants in addition to four study circles for the higher courses of the sequence. They had established five children's classes for 28 mostly non-Bahá'í children, and were running a daily devotional meeting, which was attracting about 30 people. They even formed a group for junior youth after they observed the positive effect the Bahá'í Teachings had on their younger children. In total, there were 78 people regularly participating in their activities. All of the adults were mothers of preschool or school-aged children.

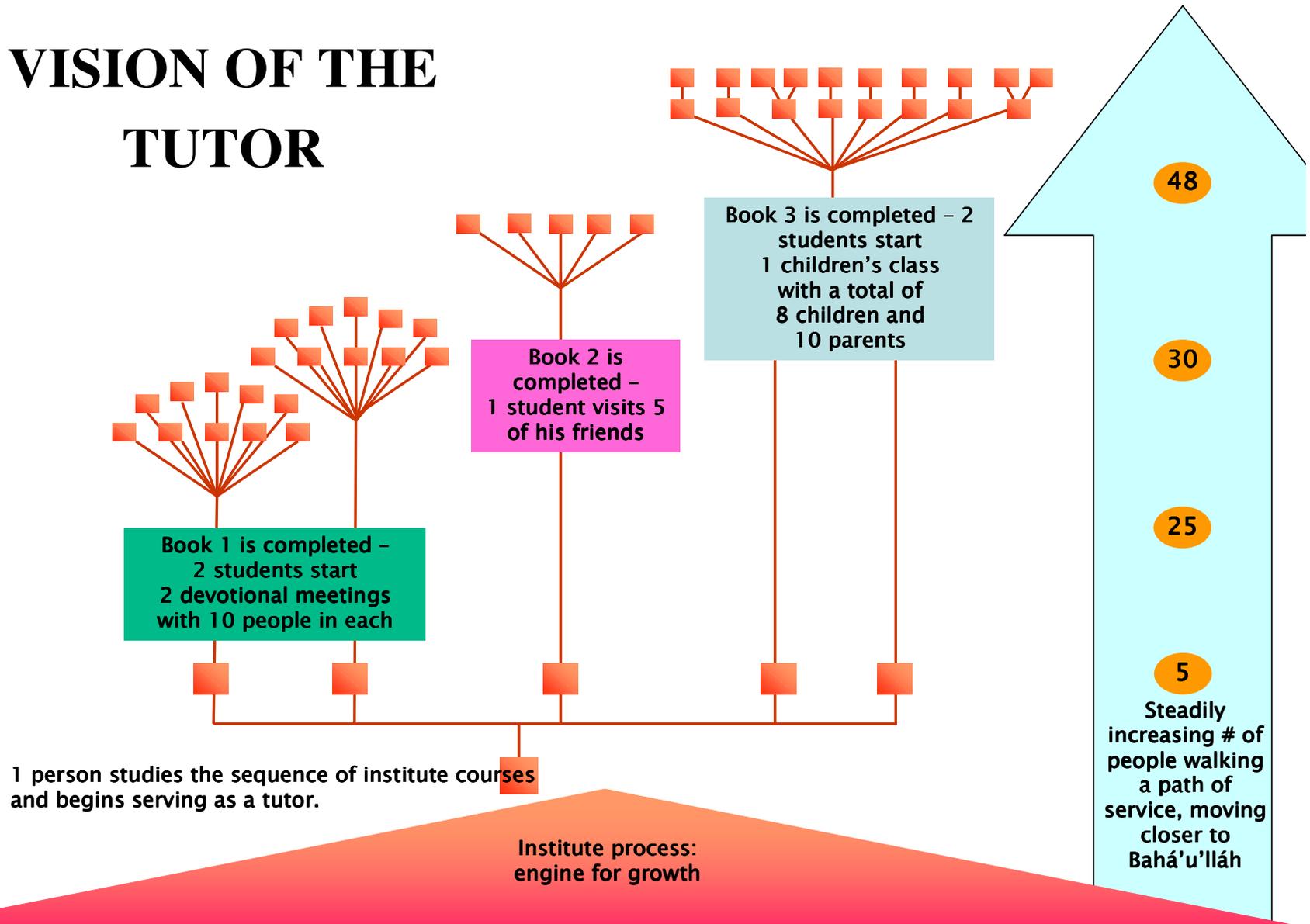
This group was successful in part because they capitalized on a pre-existing social network of mothers with children in the same school. They also began their service together as a group, thereby supporting each other and demonstrating the power of unity. It was only natural that their friends and family would be drawn to the process through them.

While most of these 78 participants in Taiwan have not yet declared their faith in Bahá'u'lláh, the community is clearly on its way to becoming strong and well established because it is based upon a firm foundation. As of June 2005, the number of new believers had grown to eleven, reflecting the addition of five friends who declared while studying Book 2. Three people are going through the sequence of courses at an accelerated pace by studying the institute courses 12 hours a week in order to gain additional skills to contribute more effectively to the community.

In a neighborhood steeped in materialism and pastimes such as gambling and gossiping, these friends are inspired as they transform their lives, and in turn motivate others, by walking a spiritual path.



# VISION OF THE TUTOR



## Appendix 3c: Principles and methodology of the Ruhi Institute

*(Supplementary material for Book 7, Unit 2, Sections 11, 19)*

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### Section 1: The institute process *(after Unit 2, Section 11)*

Read the quotations below then discuss the following questions:

1. What is an institute?
2. What is its function?
3. What are its essential characteristics?

**“An institute refers to the entire range of activities necessary to carry forward an ever more effective programme of human resource development...”**

*Institute Training Programmes, International Teaching Centre, June 1995*

**“The essential function of an institute is the delivery of courses.”**

*Institute Training Programmes, International Teaching Centre, June 1995*

**“These centres of Bahá’í learning will have as their goal one very practical outcome, namely, the raising of large numbers of believers who are trained to foster and facilitate the process of entry by troops with efficiency and love.”<sup>3</sup>**

*Universal House of Justice, Ridvan 153BE*

**“The purpose of such training is to endow ever-growing contingents of believers with the spiritual insights, the knowledge and the skills needed to carry out the many tasks of accelerated expansion and consolidation...”<sup>4</sup>**

*Universal House of Justice, 26 December 1995, to Continental Board of Counsellors*

**“Institutes are most effective in inspiring the friends to serve when the explicit goal in designing and carrying out their programmes is the spiritual empowerment of the believers.”<sup>5</sup>**

*International Teaching Centre, 2 November 1989, to Continental Board of Counsellors*

**“...the institute seeks to develop in the participants self-confidence, reliance on God, profound love for humanity, eagerness and burning desire to teach and serve mankind, steadfastness in the face of tests and trials, abundant joy and radiance of heart: in short, all those attitudes and attributes that are essential for a life of dedicated service to the Cause.”<sup>6</sup>**

*International Teaching Centre, 2 November 1989, to Continental Board of Counsellors*

## **Section 2: The Ruhi Institute: Some aspects of its educational philosophy and principles** (after Unit 2, Section 11)

### **1. Potential of every human being**

- A human being is noble by nature.
- Each participant is a “mine rich in gems of inestimable value”.
- Education brings forth attributes and puts them to the service of humanity.

**“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.”** - Bahá'u'lláh

### **2. Spiritual education through the Word of God**

- There is a need for universal participation in a consistent, progressive process of spiritual education.
- The sacred Word of God is the source of all progress and transformation.
- Every individual has the right to have access to the Word of God and has the capacity to understand it.

**“The Holy Word has been prescribed by the prophets of God as the means of celestial power and the source of all spiritual, social, and material progress. Access to it, its study and daily use in our individual lives, are vital for the internal personal transformation for which we are striving and whose final external manifestation will be the emergence of a divine civilization which is the promise of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.”** - The Universal House of Justice

### **3. Memorization of the Sacred Word**

- Memorization of the Sacred Word helps in the process of transformation, sharpens the intellect and develops the gift of understanding.

**“The sanctified souls should ponder and meditate in their hearts regarding the methods of teaching. From the texts of the wondrous, heavenly Scriptures they should memorize phrases and passages bearing on various instances, so that in the course of their speech they may recite divine verses whenever the occasion demandeth it, inasmuch as these holy verses are the most potent elixir, the greatest and mightiest talisman. So potent is their influence that the hearer will have no cause for vacillation.”** - Bahá'u'lláh

### **4. The education process**

- The main purpose of the education process is to develop in the participants the gift of understanding.
- Individuals will tread their spiritual paths at different paces.

**“It is my hope that you may put forth your most earnest endeavour...to investigate and study the Holy Scriptures word by word so that you may attain knowledge of the mysteries hidden therein. Be not satisfied with words, but seek to understand the spiritual meanings hidden the the heart of words.”** - 'Abdu'l-Bahá

## 5. Special tutor-participant relationship

- There is a special relationship between the tutor and the participants. They learn together.
- The education process requires active participation of the students in their own learning. The responsibility for learning falls on the participants.
- The tutor helps participants in the process of reflection and understanding, stimulating them to: think, analyze, formulate ideas, respond to questions.

**“In accordance with the divine teaching in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle any one and call him ignorant, saying, ‘You know not, but I know.’ Rather, we should look upon others with respect, and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying, ‘Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found.’ The teacher should not consider himself as learned and the other ignorant. Such a thought breeds pride, and pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.”**

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá

## 6. A posture of learning

- A posture of learning achieves new capacity for progress.

**“The posture of learning avoids searching for formulas that are to be followed strictly. ...In a learning environment, fear of failure is eliminated and the friends are helped to focus on achievements and the new capacity for progress that learning creates.”**

- International Teaching Centre, 1995

## 7. Reflection

- The curriculum promotes an attitude of continuous reflection on the Sacred Word in order to foment actions that lead to the harmony and well-being of the races of the earth.

**“Pursue every day the verses revealed by God. Blessed is the man who reciteth them and reflecteth upon them. He truly is of them with whom all shall be well.”**

- Bahá'u'lláh

## 8. Attraction to beauty

- The curriculum strives to awaken in the participants an attraction to beauty.

## 9. Service

- The process of transformation can be reached through service.
- Service is the backbone of the institute process.

**“That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race. The Great Being saith: Blessed and happy is he that ariseth to promote the best interests of the peoples and kindreds of the earth.”**

- Bahá'u'lláh

(extracts from: *Institute Training Programmes*, International Teaching Centre June 1995, and *Learning About Growth: The Story of the Ruhi Institute and Large-scale Expansion of the Bahá'í Faith in Colombia*, The Ruhi Institute, 1991)

### Section 3: Study Circles (after Unit 2, Section 19)

#### **A study circle is:**

A group of approximately 8-10 people consisting of participants and a trained tutor that meets regularly to:

- Study one or more of a sequence of a courses that focus on understanding the Word of God to acquire knowledge, spiritual insight and qualities, attitudes and skills for service.
- Undertake social, recreational and cultural activities.
- Undertake acts of service to the Bahá'í community.

**“The House of Justice was particularly heartened to see from your proposal that you intend to form “study circles” of six to ten believers in the towns and villages throughout the country, who will go through a series of basic courses together with a tutor.”** Quoted in *Training Institutes*, International Teaching Centre, April 1998

**“...much is being learned about how to motivate and maintain study circles over an extended period of time. It is becoming clear, for example, that they (the participants) must undertake extra-curricular activities, particularly in the realm of cultural enrichment.”** *Training Institutes*, International Teaching Centre, April 1998

**“A distinguishing feature of study circles is that in many countries, and across diverse cultures, they have created a new dynamic within the community and have become nuclei of community life and catalysts for teaching, service, and community development. In addition to study of the institute courses, the members of the study circle, both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, often participate in service and extra-curricular activities that bind the group together in fellowship and attract others to this mode of learning.”** *Training Institutes and Systematic Growth*, International Teaching Centre, February 2000

**“The Five Year Plan ushers in a new stage in our efforts to promote the arts in the life of the Cause. ...A natural channel through which the friends can express their artistic talents and sentiments is the study circle.”** International Teaching Centre to Continental Board of Counsellors, 5 November 1991

**“Tutors are encouraged to integrate the arts into study circles so as to enhance the spiritual development of the friends and open avenues for meaningful service. By being a promoter of the arts at the grass roots, a tutor opens up ‘creative channels through which can flow inspiration and the force of attraction to beauty.”** International Teaching Centre to Continental Board of Counsellors, 5 November 1991

**“Having experienced the participatory learning style of the courses, the members of the study circle gradually take on a stronger commitment to actively serve and apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining to the work of the Faith. Some members of study circles are eventually trained as tutors and then initiate their own study circles.”** *Training Institutes and Systematic Growth*, International Teaching Centre, February 2000

**“Since the effectiveness of the tutors is critical to the success of the institute process, more and more attention has been given to the content of the training, the skills needed to organize a study circle and lead the participants through the courses, and the attitudes necessary both to nurture the**

**participants in their learning and maintain the cohesion of the group. Tutors require training in how to keep the participants focused on the material, how to formulate questions that stimulate reflection, and how to foster active participation within the group. They need to combine the qualities of love, humility, and patience, with the dedication, perseverance, and commitment required to create a spiritual atmosphere conducive to learning. It should be emphasized that tutor training is not a one-time event but an ongoing activity where tutors come together periodically to share experiences and ideas.”** *Training Institutes and Systematic Growth*, International Teaching Centre, February 2000

## **Appendix 3d: A technique for study**

*(Supplementary material for Book 7, Unit 2, Section 11)*

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*This can be done as a plenary session.*

Review the technique for study of quotations in Book 1 (see 6 steps in handout on next page).

### **Questions for discussion:**

1. Why use this technique?
2. Why is it important for each person in the pair to take turns to ask questions?
3. Why do we work in pairs?
4. What is the tutor's role working with pairs?
5. How would we introduce the technique?
6. How do we maintain the use of the technique throughout Book 1?

### **Practice:**

In groups of 3, use Section 1 in Book 1 to practice introducing and modelling the technique. Take turns to be the tutor, choosing one quotation from Section 1 to introduce and model with the others in your group. Emphasise the use of concrete examples for key words and phrases (e.g. 'commendable', 'seemly', 'pure')

### Analogy of a diver to explain study technique

You could use the analogy of a diver for explaining the method of study for Book 1 passages (see picture on handout):

*When we are studying the Writings we are looking for pearls of wisdom and insight. When a diver decides to look for pearls on the ocean floor, s/he must use weights to help her/him go deeper. Otherwise, the diver mostly stays on the top of the water. Likewise, when we want to go deeper and look for pearls of insight, we can use a method of study that allows us to go a bit slower, to look in greater depth and then to share with others the pearls we've discovered.*

## Study of the Sacred Word

*This is the way we will be studying “Reflections on the Life of the Spirit” (Book 1)*

### In pairs:

1. Read the text aloud once each.
2. Form several questions from the text, to be answered with the exact words of the quotation.
3. Give concrete examples of key words and phrases.
  - a. Try to understand their meaning by giving concrete examples (applying concepts to one’s daily life),
  - b. Then relate them back to the text to clarify your understanding.
4. Take time to memorize the text (this may be done at a different time).
5. Write the answers to the questions in the book (do this individually).

### All together:

6. The whole group will then discuss answers to the questions in the book.

*“Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.”*

*(Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 136)*

When we are studying the Writings we are looking for pearls of wisdom and insight. When a diver decides to look for pearls on the ocean floor, s/he must use weights to help her/him go deeper. Otherwise, the diver mostly stays on the top of the water. Likewise, when we want to go deeper and look for pearls of insight, we can use a method of study that allows us to go a bit slower, to look in greater depth and then to share with others the pearls we’ve discovered.



## **Appendix 3e: Overview of Book 1 – “Reflections on the Life of the Spirit” Study of introduction: “To the Collaborators”**

*(Supplementary material for Book 7, Section 22)*

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Read through pages 1 and 2 of “To the Collaborators” in Book 1. Then answer the following study questions and do the exercises.

### **The Collaborators**

*Paragraph 1*

1. Who are the “collaborators” in Ruhi courses?
2. What is the relationship between the tutor and the students?
3. What process of learning is described?

### **Three levels of understanding**

*Paragraph 3*

4. What is the first level of comprehension?

*Paragraph 7*

5. What is the second level of comprehension?

*Paragraph 8*

6. What is the third level of comprehension?

*Paragraph 9*

7. What is achieved by examining ideas at these three levels of understanding?

### **Exercises**

1. Examine the three units of Book One and categorize each exercise according to the three levels of comprehension.
2. Identify some exercises from each unit which appear ambiguous. Discuss the implications of these questions.
3. Think of questions or exercises that will stimulate consultation about some of the concepts introduced in each unit.

Read through pages 3 to 5 of “To the Collaborators”, and answer the following questions.

### **Unit 1**

*Page 3, paragraph 1*

1. What is the purpose of the first unit “Understanding the Bahá’í Writings”?
2. What results from reading the Sacred Word?
3. What is required to reach true understanding?

### **Unit 2**

*Page 3, paragraphs 2-4*

4. What are the three objectives of the second unit “Prayer”?

Objective 1

Objective 2

Objective 3

5. Identify the objective (1, 2 or 3) of each section in the second unit.

### **Unit 3**

*Page 3, paragraph 5*

6. Why is the theme of life and death included in Book One?

*Pages 4 and 5*

7. Match the objectives listed on pages 4 and 5 to each section of the third unit.

## Appendix 3f: ‘Liberating the Spirit’

### *Promoting Creative Expression in Study Circles*

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Janet Khan, in her recent work on the life of Bahiyih Khánum, states that, “*The purpose of religion is to give rise to true liberty of the human spirit, so that each individual can be free to develop his or her own capabilities.*” We can see the Ruhi sequence of courses being implemented at this time by Training Institutes across the world in this regard. Indeed, they have been specifically designed with this in mind – to release the potential of every believer to confidently, systematically, and (as a result of these two combined) effectively teach the Faith. We can now truly become agents of change and growth in our communities. Through putting into practice what we learn through this unique process of education, we ‘liberate’ ourselves from the ‘fear’ and ‘inertia’ that often dog our efforts.

Janet Khan continues, “*This liberation is the basis for the expression of the powers of creativity and innovation.*” A new release of creativity can be both an impetus to and a by-product of this liberation. Artistic expression and creative exploration in the training process is an essential part of the tapping into and releasing of the potential of the individual. Not only do individuals come to understand themselves and their spirit better, but they also come into closer association with their fellow participants as they explore their potential together, and can nurture talents and skills within themselves that can then be used to enhance the entire community, releasing potential on all levels. This article will explore these three precious benefits of promoting and experimenting with arts in study circles.

Both Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá have written much about the strong link between artistic expression of the individual and communion/worship of God, making it clear that we are reflecting or channelling God's light when engaged in creative acts. In their writings, the words ‘craft’ and ‘art’ can be read synonymously:

**“One of the names of God is the Fashioner. He loveth craftsmanship. Therefore any of His servants who manifesteth this attribute is acceptable in the sight of this Wronged One.”**

**“The One True God, exalted be He, loveth to witness handiworks of high craftsmanship produced by His loved ones ... Please God, every one of His friends may be enabled to acquire one of the crafts, and be confirmed in adhering to what has been ordained in the Book of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.”**

In some of the clearest, and indeed most mystical, passages on this subject, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states:

**“Art is worship ... If a man engageth in the perfection of an art, it is as if he has been worshipping God in churches and temples ...”**

**“All art is a gift of the Holy spirit. When this light shines through the mind of a musician, it manifests itself in beautiful harmonies. Again, shining through the mind of a poet, it is seen in fine poetry and poetic prose. When the light of the sun of Truth inspires the mind of a painter, he produces marvellous pictures ... These gifts are fulfilling their highest purpose when showing forth the praise of God.”**

So, in any artistic endeavour we are channelling God's Spirit, but it is in those endeavours where we are exploring the Word of God and praising Him that art achieves the purpose for which it

was ‘created’ so to speak. The Ruhi courses are “*a sequence of courses that seeks to build capacity for service by concentrating on the application of the spiritual insights gained through a profound study of the Writings*” involving “*discussions that revolve around the Creative Word, in the serious and uplifting atmosphere of the study circle.*” (Universal House of Justice, 27 December 2005). Artistic expression within the study group should not be a momentary distraction or relaxation from the study itself, but seen as an *essential* part of the exploration of the infinite meanings and subtleties of the Word of God and its implications for our lives. In this way, the creation of this kind of art becomes a profound spiritual act, connecting more closely the individual with his or her creator.

The second benefit of artistic activity within the study circle group is that it serves to bind the participants together, as they explore their potential in a highly encouraging and supportive environment. Often people, especially older adults, experience a certain degree of vulnerability and its associated anxiety when asked to ‘create’ something, whether a picture or painting, a drama dialogue, a song, a dance, a poem ... This is, unfortunately more often than not, either due to their experience of creating art as a child and the lack of encouragement in their first attempts, or a damaging competitive approach that focussed excessively on the quality of the product rather than the process of creation. For many, this avenue of worship, then, must be lovingly and tactfully re-opened to them. And it is the tutor’s responsibility to create as nurturing a creative environment as possible. By focussing primarily on the *process* rather than the *product*, and by making it clear that their creations do not have to be shared with anyone if the participants choose not to do so, a certain amount of that anxiety can be alleviated. This in turn allows creativity to flow, unblocked by any self-consciousness, releasing a depth of joy not often felt in the hectic pace of our lives that does not give us much time to undertake such acts.

When the participants do feel emboldened to share their art with each other a very intimate relationship bond can develop, as it is through art that we reveal our innermost selves, whether consciously or sub-consciously. And it is important to realise that this bond is often a result of actually overcoming the hesitancy and fear people might feel at the beginning. Without fear there is no courage, and without courage there is no joy! When the group has reached the point where all feel comfortable doing this, it is a great moment to be celebrated.

One tutor shares her thoughts and experiences about the effect that creative acts undertaken by the study circle group can have:

*I always notice that the entire atmosphere of the course uplifts when they are doing an artistic activity. They are probably the greatest moments of joy for me as a tutor, just listening to the chat and sharing of their lives with each other as they focus on a creative task together. And the sharing afterwards of what they’ve worked on, which is something I never insist on, is always so full of laughter and sheer pleasure, that I would never contemplate not having a series of arts sessions in any course I tutor. They are the best bits!*

Another youth tutor shares his experience of working with (and transforming) ‘anti-art’ people in a study circle:

*...the scepticism felt when the word ‘art’ is mentioned to a bunch of scientists! Apart from one gal who does an art course at college, the rest somewhat lacked experience in the traditional strands of art (i.e. using a pencil). So is art off the menu? Oh no – we simply took a piece of card and threw a load of paints, sprays, inks, pens and pencils at it in as creative a way as possible, then stuck our favourite quote from Book 1, printed on transparent paper, on top of it. The result: a genuinely attractive poster to get a Bahá’í quote stuck on their wall; but more important than the product was their glee at mining their inherent artistic gems that they never knew existed.*

The third precious result from art in study circles is the myriad ways that the entire community benefits. If participants feel courageous enough to share what they have created in the study group – a drama piece, a poem, a piece of embroidery – and have seen the joy it brings, they might also feel that the local community Feast could be enhanced by it as well, or the cluster reflection meeting.

But when feeling the urge to share an artistic work, it is important to detach the act of creation and the created object from the ego of the creator. If we reflect again on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words that the piece of art or craft is primarily created by the Holy Spirit "*shining through the mind*" of the artist, we cannot ascribe total ownership of what we create! (and by 'artist' is meant here *anyone* who creates anything artistic at whatever level). We become *channels* as artists, not *sources*. It is not the desire for self-glorification that prompts us to want to share what we create as spiritual agents. On the contrary, it is a desire to assist others in the development of their attraction to beauty, a desire to uplift a holy gathering of souls, a desire to shed the light of the spirit of God that has shone through the mind of the creator into the created object.

This is a direct way that art can enhance community gatherings, but there is another indirect, but no less potent, way which may be of even greater benefit. As the Universal House of Justice explains in their monumental 27 December 2005 message, "*... the graceful integration of the arts into diverse activities enhances the surge of energy that mobilises the believers*". The arts have a very crucial role to play in actually spurring the believers on, and giving them the energy and joy they need in order to carry out the tasks of wide-scale expansion and consolidation. The participants of study circles in every corner of the world, are being systematically nurtured by their tutors in an open and supportive environment to create increasingly wonderful works of art that explore the implications of the Word of God that can then be "*gracefully integrated into divers activities*" of the community. One tutor describes below an activity of her study circle that was shared at a local community gathering and its effect:

*We made puppets from wooden spoons to enact a short story on the life of the soul. The play was shared at a 19 Day Feast, at another Book 1 study circle and also at a cluster reflection meeting with great effect and enjoyment of the 'players' and 'audience'. Using puppets and drama to tell a story really helped to illustrate the meaning of the life of the soul and our understanding of the writings. In the 19 Day Feast and the Book 1 study circle the play led to more discussion afterwards of the Writings and their application to our daily 'true' life.*

We have been told so clearly in the 27 December 2005 message that "*the elements required for a concerted effort to infuse the diverse regions of the world with the spirit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation have crystallized into a framework that now needs only to be exploited*".. What is an 'element'? The dictionary defines it as 'a basic, necessary part of something'. Based on the above thoughts, perhaps one of those 'basic, necessary' elements required for the concerted effort is in fact the exploration of our creativity and the production of artistic works of beauty as part of the study of Ruhi courses in study circle groups. If we are to "*steel [our] resolve and to proceed with the full force of [our] energies on the course that has been so decidedly set*", then each individual and their art has a vital 'pART' to play. Let's get discovering those gems!

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