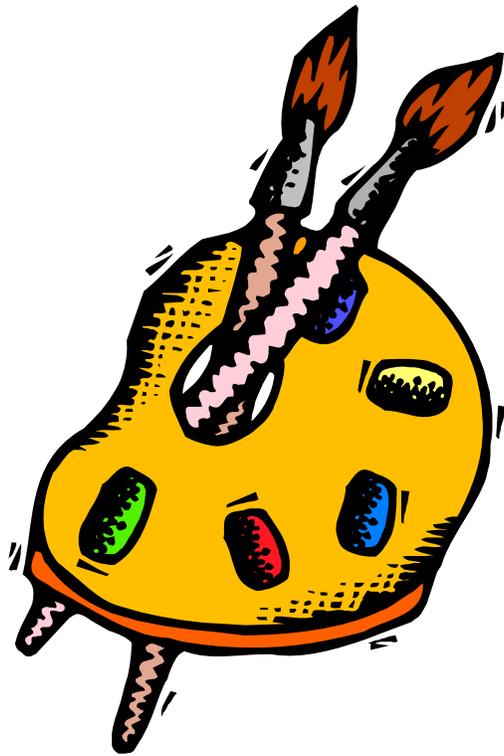


THE TRAINING INSTITUTE
FOR THE U.K.

ARTS MANUAL FOR
TUTORS OF BOOK 2



Promoting the Arts at the Grassroots: Creative Exploration in Study Circles

Unit 3 of Book 7 is called 'Promoting the Arts at the Grassroots'. Section 1 of this unit clarifies the role of artistic endeavour in study circles: You should not think of it as entertainment or as an extracurricular activity; rather it is *'an essential element enhancing the spiritual development of the participants'*.

The 27th Dec letter also mentions our attitude towards arts in the new 5 Year Plan:

"a graceful integration of the arts into diverse activities enhances the surge of energy that mobilizes the believers."

The term 'artistic endeavour' implies the use of all arts such as drama, painting, poetry, music and storytelling. But it also includes crafts of every description, from pottery to puppet-making, carving to crochet.

Bahá'u'lláh said:

"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. Craftsmanship is a book among the books of divine sciences, and a treasure among the treasures of His heavenly wisdom. This is a knowledge with meaning, for some of the sciences are brought forth by words and come to an end with words." (Cited in *Extracts from the Writings concerning Arts and Crafts*, published in The Compilation of Compilations [Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991], vol. 1, p. 1)

In your study circle you may use the arts in a variety of ways: as a tool of learning – for example to assist with a difficult piece of memorisation or to illustrate a particular concept or piece of information; as an expression of the joy and harmony developing in your group, or to bring joy to the hearts and spirits of the participants; to develop a deeper appreciation of art and crafts among your participants; to help the participants discover in themselves some of the gifts and talents bestowed on them by God.

Bahá'u'lláh said:

"The one true God, exalted be He, loveth to witness handiworks of high craftsmanship produced by His loved ones. Blessed art thou, for what thy skill hath produced hath reached the presence of thy Lord, the Exiled, the Wronged. Please God every one of His friends may be enabled to acquire one of the crafts, and be confirmed in adhering to what hath been ordained in the Book of God, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise." (Cited in *Extracts from the Writings concerning Arts and Crafts*, published in The Compilation of Compilations [Ingleside: Baha'i Publications Australia, 1991], vol. 1, p. 1)

However ultimately your study circle has a single purpose – to empower the believers *'morally and spiritually in their resolve to tread a path of service in the Cause and to humanity'*, so your use of the arts must always have this end in view.

It is hoped that the ideas in this small arts manual will stimulate artistic endeavour in your study circles. You can use the suggestions as described in the book, or you can allow them to spark your own creative initiative. The manual doesn't include the many games which can be used in study circles since these can be found in other sources.

General Arts Resources on the Web:

There are tons of arts ideas for Ruhi on the excellent website www.ruhiresources.org

<http://www.prayerwindows.com/index.html> – and go to ‘Creative Activities’ for some great ideas on simple, artistic activities suitable for use in study circles

<http://www.painterskeys.com/quotations.asp> - for some interesting quotations about art from thinkers and famous writers

ARTS IDEAS FOR BOOK 2: 'ARISING TO SERVE'



UNIT ONE: 'The Joy of Teaching'

The purpose of this unit is to understand that the joy of teaching is in the very act of sharing with others the Word of God, independent of immediate results.

The first section of Unit 1 introduces the concept of service, and asks you to pause and think systematically about your future service to the Cause. After the more introspective experience of Book 1 with only a small amount of action, this book looks outward through acts of service to humanity.

Idea 1



Having completed Section 1, Unit 1, and consulted on the concept and implications of service, supply the participants with paper and art materials and invite them to draw their own 'path of service'. This can be done as an individual exercise, or as a group exercise. If it's a group exercise supply large sheets of paper – flip chart paper or the back of old wallpaper will work – and let them design a 'path of service' based on the group's vision. The group exercise is always lighter and more fun.

The exercise helps to 'fix' the idea of a path of service in the minds of the participants.

Idea 2

Inspired by the 'Ocean' quotation from section 3, arrange for a group and community outing to the seashore or a nearby lake. As well as spending sociable time together, take the time to gather sea shells, drift wood, coloured pebbles etc., and when you next meet for study do a group collage or some other art/craft project using the materials you have collected. One thing might be to make necklaces or bracelets with the shells. Another could be to create a sand picture by gluing sand onto paper and then colouring it with paints. (If not time or opportunity to go to the sea, you could supply the shells, pebbles, sand etc for the group to make their collage/craft items).

Since using sea shells for decoration was once a popular craft, see if you can identify somebody locally (perhaps by asking at a local craft supply shop) who could come in to talk to your group about this craft.



Idea 3



'The Joy of Teaching' is rich in metaphor. Section 4 of this unit mentions that the Word of God 'may be likened unto a sapling'. There is much that can be done creatively to explore this quotation. The following are some simple ideas. The point is that the participants understand that the sapling of the Word of God must be firmly rooted in the heart and that it needs to be fostered in order to grow.

- Arrange for the participants to plant and nurture their own tree cuttings in pots (the art of gardening)

- Invite the participants to collect tree twigs, leaves and other 'tree things' to make a collage illustrating the tree of the Word of God. It is particularly interesting to paint pictures onto dried leaves and then set them into a tree on a piece of large card. You could also write the words of Bahá'u'lláh onto the leaves.

Idea 4



In Section 5, the participants are invited to list some of things they like **to do**, and to list them in order according to the joy they bring. Suggest that the following week each participant brings something that brings them joy to share with the group. So for example if listening to music brings you joy, you might bring in your favourite piece of music to share with your study circle friends. If being with your children brings you joy, you could bring a photo of them and tell a story about something they did that brought you joy. And so on. In inviting your participants to do this, suggest to them that they choose an active rather than a passive joy: for example, seeing a beautiful sunset may bring great pleasure, but it is a passive pleasure. The exercise calls for ‘doing’ joys rather than ‘being’ joys.

Idea 5

It is suggested that the participants memorise all of the quotations in Sections 7 and 9 of Unit 1. As an aid to memorisation put the quotations on card and have the participants embellish them with colour, learning each one a little better as they colour it in. The cards can be used as invitations to a study circle party, as Naw Rúz cards, as gift cards for Ayyám’i’Há, or as messages of encouragement and love to participants in other study circles.

UNIT TWO: ‘Deepening Themes’

The purpose of this unit is to develop the capability of making periodic visits to the homes of newly enrolled believers and sharing with them a number of deepening themes.

Idea 1

From time to time throughout their study of Unit Two help the participants to explore traditional means of passing on information and stories orally. This was the way learning was communicated in the past in close communities and the Bahá’í world is now attempting to reinvigorate that tradition. For example, information has been passed on through folk tales; dance; puppet shows; drama; cave drawings; celtic designs; songs and madrigals; paintings, etc.

The object of the exercise is to assist the participants to connect to the oral traditions of their own country, as well as helping them to come to an understanding that they are part of a great global tradition common to all cultures which is being reborn.

Some of the participants may know of unusual oral traditions from their own or other countries which they could share. They may use some of the techniques they learn about to assist them to learn the sequence of ideas in each deepening theme. They may also use some of the techniques to deliver the deepening when they come to do the practice of Unit 2. And they may share some of what they learn with the community in general, at the Feast, Holy days, Reflection meetings, or other community gatherings.

Idea 2

Section 2, Exercise 4 (p.29) calls for the sharing of stories that demonstrate firmness in the Covenant. The exercise suggests that some stories may lend themselves to being acted out in skits. If the story doesn’t lend itself to being acted out, consider inviting the participants to depict the story in some other dramatic way: through mime, creating puppets, or being told accompanied by dramatic music. The participants could be invited to stage their dramatic presentation for the friends at the next Feast, for the members of another study circle, or at the next Reflection meeting.

The following beautiful story was suggested by one of the Australian training institutes. It is told by Hand of the Cause Bill Sears:

'Black Sunlight'

"There is a natural poetry in the African speech. It is not dependent on education. One of the most eloquent of all those we met was an illiterate He wanted so sincerely to be a Bahá'í. We had come to determine his understanding, to see if he were ready to become a believer....

'Tell us in your own words,' we asked him, 'about the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh and `Abdu'l-Bahá.'

He nodded. Never taking his eyes from ours, he began to speak.

'When it is dusk, no one sees good. They fear. They hate what they don't see. Even if it is people. Then the sun comes and they do see a little. And things are not so bad. That was the Báb. He was good. They killed him because they liked it to be dark. But it needed to be brighter like hot day-time to see they are wrong to hate. This was Bahá'u'lláh. 'See everybody,' He said, 'how nice they are. Love, don't hate.' He died. Not really death because he left His son `Abdu'l-Bahá. Not so bright, but good like afternoon sun to see us safe home before it is black. `Abdu'l-Bahá said good things. People are alike even if they look different. All belong to God, so don't do what God wouldn't do. Be good men. Then He died. But he told us to go to the Guardian (Shoghi Effendi). He would be strong and guard us. He would take away our troubles. He will, too; I believe in him. `Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'Whatever the Guardian says is right. Do it.' And I will.'

When he had finished, a questioning look came into his eyes. It seemed to say, 'Please, am I a Bahá'í?' 'I know I am ignorant,' he told us, 'but I want to learn all there is in the world to know about my Faith. I can't find words for the fullness of my heart.' He sighed sadly, as he made a confession. 'I tried to tell a religious man what I believe. He stops me sometimes and says, 'Where are you when it is church?' I told him what I believe, but always he defeats me what I say. He defeats me with words.' Suddenly he looked up and smiled happily. 'But he only defeats my head, not my heart. This,' he said, touching his heart, 'belongs to Baha'u'lláh and no one can conquer it away from Him.'

When they asked us later if we thought the young man should be taken into the Faith, we replied, 'If you don't take him in, you had better put us out because we are learning from him every moment.'

-Sears, 'Black Sunlight,' *The Bahá'í World, Vol. XII, 926-2*

Idea 3



In section 2, it says '*let these words be engraved on our minds and hearts*' in reference to the quote, "The Ancient Beauty has consented ..."

To engrave means to impress deeply, as if by carving or etching, and it may help the participants to reflect on this concept in trying to understand why we are asked to memorise the Words of God. This is in preparation for the study of Unit Three, when they will be asked to 'engrave on their minds and hearts'

many words of 'Abdú'l-Báha and Bahá'u'lláh.

It is possible to buy a type of card from art and craft supply shops that has a black wax coating on it and underneath a brassy metal. With small scrapers, you can write or scrape pretty images onto it, giving the impression of an engraving.

Alternatively, gathering small pieces of wood from a forest and inviting the participants to carve images or patterns into it with small carving tools would also drive home this concept.

Idea 4

As your participants prepare to memorise the lengthy quotation in Section 3, pg 35, you (having done BK3) could teach the song 'Be like the Earth' (lesson 8) along with some suggested actions. Or indeed have some of the children from the community who have learned the song visit your study circle to sing and teach it for you! (This also may have the added effect of inspiring the participants to move on to train in Book 3).



Idea 5

Section 5 of Unit 2 deals with the Nineteen Day Feast. The quotation from the Universal House of Justice on p.46 says:

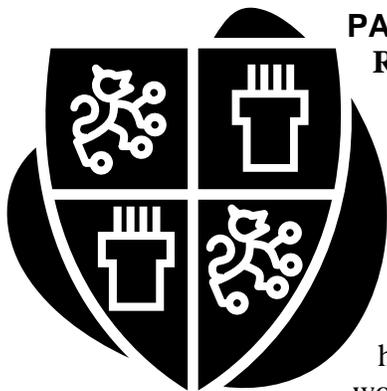
Important aspects of the preparation of the Feast include the proper selection of readings, the assignment, in advance, of good readers, and a sense of decorum both in the presentation and the reception of the devotional program....

Since good readers are important, suggest to the participants that you invite a person in the community who is noted for his skill in reading aloud to come and give them some tips; or perhaps somebody will know an amateur actor who could help them to develop their reading skills. However, reading aloud can be an ordeal for some and a great pleasure for others. It's important if doing this activity to ensure that nobody is put on the spot, or made to feel uncomfortable in any way. You will know your group well by now and if you feel that some may be burdened or distressed by such an activity, then of course you will not choose to do it.

Idea 6

"Open, O people, the city of the human heart with the key of your utterance." This sentence features in a passage from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh on p.52, Section 7.

Create a 'Coat of Arms' for the city of the human heart.



PARTS OF A COAT OF ARMS

Ribbon & Motto- A ribbon could be placed above the entire coat of arms or at the bottom of the shield. A motto (short goal or idea) is placed on the ribbon.

Crest- On some coats of arms a crest is included that almost always sets on top of a Torse.

Torse- Twisted fabrics make up a Torse that contains the same colours as the shield and one colour of metal (gold or silver). The Torse sits on the helm or helmet, and some say it is there to hold the Mantling in place.

Mantling- (this is usually on a coat of arms only if there is also a helm or helmet shown)- The Mantling may represent the tattered hooded capes or cloaks worn by a warrior after battle and is usually all one colour on a coat of arms.

Helm- Helm and helmet are the same thing and different helmets symbolize specific classes such as Bards, Earls, and Peers.

Supporter- Typically the supporters are humans or animals that hold the shield on either side.

Compartment- The compartment is the area on the coat of arms at the bottom of the shield. The compartment is there to hold the shield up and in many cases it is made to look like the ground.

Shield and Arms- The shield and arms make up the design on the shield itself. Traditionally, a woman's shield would have been in the shape of a diamond.

UNIT THREE: 'Introducing Bahá'í Beliefs'

The purpose of this unit is to help the participants acquire the ability to introduce Bahá'í ideas into conversation.

Idea 1

Section 2 of this unit begins the process of teaching those who study it to acquire the habit of looking to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as an example of how to teach the Faith. Paragraph 3 mentions that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Centre of the Covenant. By now those who are studying this book have gained quite a good deal of information about the Covenant. The following activity can help to reinforce their understanding.



You could create a group mandala inspired by the Covenant. A very large sheet of paper is needed, which is then divided into sections – rather like a pie. Each participant is responsible for filling his section of pie with colour and design. Although the design must represent the inspiration of his own soul as he reflects on the Covenant, in executing his design he must take notice of the designs adjoining his and attempt to harmonise with them, so that a unified whole is created.

Idea 2

Unit 3 covers the following 10 topics:

- The need for a perfect Educator;
- The independent investigation of truth;
- God can only be known through His manifestation;
- Bahá'u'lláh's life and Mission;
- Humanity's coming of age;
- The establishment of peace;
- The oneness of humanity;
- Justice;
- The equality of men and women;
- Universal education.

As you complete your study of each topic ask each person to express the ideas and concepts explored creatively. They could choose any way they feel moved – write a short poem, paint a picture, create puppets and make a little play, design a patch to go on a patchwork quilt Anything! Upon completion of your study of Unit 3, your group will have completed many little works of art which can be used in a variety of ways in the community: hung as an exhibition as part of a teaching project or at summer school; decorate the walls for the next Reflection meeting; given as a gift to the Local Spiritual Assembly; used by the participants at their celebration upon completion of Book 2 to describe what they've learned to their friends and family; and so on.

Idea 3

As you move through Unit 3, you could find Bahá'í songs related to some of the topics, and teach them to your participants to remind them of the ideas about which they have been learning.

For example you could learn one of the many songs about 'Abdu'l-Bahá or Bahá'u'lláh; the song 'Peace will Shine'; the 'Justice' song from Book 3; any one of a number of 'Unity' songs; and so on. There are songs in BK3 which you could begin now to teach to your participants in preparation for study of that course.

If no song comes to mind, and you have a good singer/musician in your group begin to put some of the quotations to music which the entire group can then learn.

RESOURCES

Celtic Design/Tattoos:

<http://www.celticlady.com/>

Oral Tradition Sites:

<http://www.irelandseye.com/aarticles/culture/talk/index.shtm>

http://www.ambaile.org.uk/en/sub_section.jsp?SectionID=3¤tId=402

<http://www.mrdowling.com/609ancafr.html>

<http://www.change.freeuk.com/learning/rethink/hebtrad.html>

<http://www.indians.org/welker/iroqoral.htm>

About Engraving:

<http://www.artlex.com/ArtLex/e/engraving.html>

About Heraldry and Creating Coats of Arms:

<http://www.rarebooks.nd.edu/digital/heraldry/>

http://www.nps.gov/timu/education_guide/clash_cultures/activities/create_coat%20of%20arms.htm

<http://members.tripod.com/~thedragonkeep/create.html>

About patchwork:

<http://planetpatchwork.com/beginners.htm>

About Bahá'í Songs:

<http://www.bahaibooksonline.com/musicindex.html>

<http://bahai-library.com/books/biblio/music.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/SoHo/7795/>

General:

<http://www.bahai-artsacademy.com>

<http://www.bahaindex.com>

<http://applemachine.com/artsforpeace.com/>

