

the history of
the major
religions

Learning objectives

- : To be able to articulate an understanding of the basic history of the Baha'i Faith
- : To become familiar with the life history of Baha'u'llah and the historical and social context of the time in which He appeared
- : To become familiar with the names of some of the Sacred Writings of Baha'u'llah

materials you will need

- :: Dictionary
- :: Copies of all the activity sheets for every child
- :: Copies of the Homework and Feedback sheets for each child
- :: Glue
- :: Scissors
- :: Pencils, pens, crayons, etc.
- :: Erasers

1. PRAYER (3 minutes)

Choose one prayer from the Prayers Page (section two). Recite it, and then have one of the children recite it. Alternatively, you can use any other prayer that corresponds with one of the stated learning objectives.

2. GO OVER HOMEWORK (5-10 minutes)

3. ACTIVITY & STORY (25-35 minutes)

The purpose of this activity is become familiar with the basics information relating the history of the Baha'i Faith.

Instructions:

1. Give each child a copy of the activity sheet "Map" and the jigsaw puzzle sheet.
2. Ask them to write down their names on the back of the Map sheet.
3. Then ask them cut out the jigsaw puzzle pieces which contain: the name of the religion, the name of the prophet, Baha'u'llah, the place where it started, approximate date when Baha'u'llah lived, and the name of the holy book of the Baha'i Faith.
4. Ask the children to place the pieces of the puzzle in the correct order and then glue them on the top of the Map page where the light colored lines are drawn up.
5. Ask the children to write down underneath each piece of the puzzle the category, such as: religion's name, the founder, place of birth, date of birth, and the holy book.
6. The ask the children to cut out the Star and Crescent from their puzzle sheets and glue them on the space shown on the Map sheet.
7. Ask them to color the symbol.
8. Now ask the children to draw a small point on the map of the world shown on the Map sheet, where they live. You may need to help them with this effort. It is okay to use an approximate location.
9. Then ask them to draw a straight line between this dot and the dot showing where Baha'u'llah came from.
10. With the help of the scale shown on the map, help them figure out how far Persia (modern day Iran), where Baha'u'llah came from, is from their home.

The scale is calibrated to show approximate “walking days”.

11. Ask them to write down the “walking days” distance on the line they have drawn from their home to Iran.
12. Now ask them to write down the sacred writing sheet in the box under the puzzle pieces on the Map sheet.
13. The Map sheet is now complete. Ask the children to keep this map sheet in a safe place because it will be helpful to them in the future.

4. SACRED WRITING (5 minutes)

Read the passage below (also known as the “Golden Rule”) out loud and make sure that everyone understands all the words.

The true seeker ... should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself ...

« Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 265 »

5. ASSIGN HOMEWORK (1 minute)

- › Everyone is to read the Sacred Writing at least once every day with an adult in the following week and try to memorize it.
- › In the following week, find at least one person who doesn't know the story of Baha'u'llah and share it with them.

6. PREPARE TO GIVE CLASS REPORT TO ENTIRE SCHOOL (5 minutes)

7. REFLECTION AND EVALUATION (3 minutes)

Your feedback and comments are very important because they will be used to improve this lesson. Please take a few moments after class to complete the "Reflection and Evaluation" sheet in section five of this lesson.

You may submit your feedback by e-mail to:

feedback@spiritual-education.org

Instead, you may wish to submit your feedback using the web-based form at:

www.spiritual-education.org/feedback

Thank you!

Choose one of the following prayers:

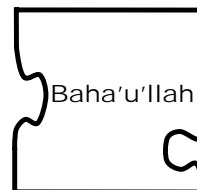
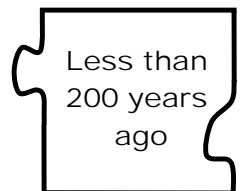
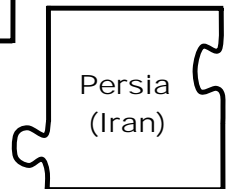
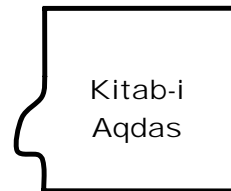
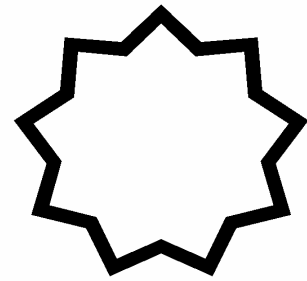
I bear witness that he who hath known Thee hath known God, and he who hath attained unto Thy presence hath attained unto the presence of God. Great, therefore, is the blessedness of him who hath believed in Thee, and in Thy signs, and hath humbled himself before Thy sovereignty, and hath been honored with meeting Thee, and hath attained the good pleasure of Thy will, and circled around Thee, and stood before Thy throne.

« Baha'i Faith (Baha'u'llah, Baha'i Prayers, p. 230) »

And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east. So the spirit took me up, and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house. And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me. And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever ...

« The New Testament, KJV, Ezekiel 43:4-7 »

Activity Map and Puzzle Pieces



Baha'i Map Sheet

| GLUE PUZZLE PIECES HERE | | | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------------|--------|
| NAME OF RELIGION | NAME OF FOUNDER | FOUNDER'S BIRTHPLACE | HOW LONG AGO? | NAME OF HOLY BOOK | SYMBOL |

WRITE THE SACRED WRITING HERE

GLUE MAP HERE

THE GLORY OF GOD

*based on a talk delivered by 'Abdu'l-Baha
29 September 1911, London*

Mirza Husayn Ali was born into great wealth. His father was a minister of the King in Persia. From childhood, everyone would say that, "this child has extraordinary power." His intelligence and knowledge were beyond His age. Everyone was amazed at his many talents. He was capable of solving the most difficult problems of all who came to him.

He was most generous, and always helped the poor. No one who came to him was turned away. The doors of His house were open to all. He always had many guests. His friends said He would eventually give all of his possessions and wealth away and become one of the poor, himself.

But some who were wise said that this person is connected with another world. They said that he has something powerful in him that cannot be seen now. When would he finally show what was in him?

He was given the title "Baha'u'llah" by the Bab. Baha'u'llah means "Glory of God". And his power and glory came out at a time when war had broken out among the nations of the world. It was a time when killing was considered an honour to mankind. Children were losing their fathers, fathers were without sons and mothers were weeping.

People with one color of skin hated their neighbors with a different skin color. The light of God was not shining very brightly on the face of the earth.

In that time Bahá'u'lláh rose like a shining star from the land of Persia. He brought a message of Peace and of Brotherhood among men. He brought light back to the world. He brought love back into the hearts of its people. He wanted to end prejudice and hatred.

He said that the world of humanity is like a tree, and that all the nations are its branches. He told us that we are the its leaves, blossoms and the fruits of this tree of humanity.

His mission was to change hatred into love, to unify humanity, and to bring justice and equality. He told us that we are all equal and should all love one another because we are created by the same God.

Baha'u'llah was the reason that the clouds of hatred began to clear away and the light of God began to shine on us with a new brightness.

But even though he brought a message of peace and love, Bahá'u'lláh spent his life suffering great pains and cruelty from those whose hearts were covered in hatred and anger and jealousy. They could not see his light.

In Persia He was thrown into prison, put into chains. He lived as if the swords of his enemies were constantly chasing after him. Those who could not see the light in his healing messaged laughed at him. Others swore at him and called him a fool – a fool trying to bring the light of love and peace back into a dark world filled with war and hatred.

When he was about thirty years old He was forced to take his family and leave his home. He was sent to the city of Baghdad, in Iraq, and then to the city of Constantinople, in Turkey. From there he was sent away, still a prisoner, to Adrianople and lastly to the prison of city 'Akká in Palestine.

Everywhere people who had pure hearts fell in love with his message and followed his light. Even though he was tied up in chains in His prison cell, people still tried to go and meet him.

Baha'u'llah wrote many letters to his followers, the Baha'is. In this way, although he was in prison, he was able to guide them and show them how to live their lives so they could grow closer to one another and to God. He even wrote several books. The most important one, called the Kitab-i Aqdas (or the Most Holy Book) that gave them new laws so they could help heal the ills of the world.

The most important thing about Baha'u'llah is that, like all the great messengers of the past, he suffered a great deal to bring God's message to us. He suffered much more than any of us can ever understand or endure. All through his life, even though a few jealous and powerful people tried to put out Baha'u'llah's light and end his life, he succeeded in spreading message of oneness. He did this because of his love for all of us. This is why we must show the same love and kindness to each other, so we can help spread the light of God that shined through Baha'u'llah.

Suggested questions for story:

- › What was Baha'u'llah's name?
- › What does Baha'u'llah mean?
- › Who gave Baha'u'llah his title?
- › Where was Baha'u'llah from?
- › What did Baha'u'llah's followers call themselves?
- › Can you name some of the places to which Baha'u'llah was sent away and imprisoned?
- › How did Baha'u'llah give his teachings to his followers?
- › What is the name of Baha'u'llah's most important book?
- › What did Baha'u'llah write in this book?

1. What did you like about this lesson? _____

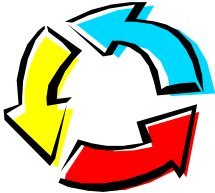
2. Which parts of the lesson did the students like? _____

3. Were the students able to answer the questions asked throughout the lesson? _____

4. Did the lesson's level match the students' capabilities? _

5. What would you change or add to the lesson? _____

You can submit your feedback by e-mail to feedback@spiritual-education.org
or by using the web-based form at www.spiritual-education.org/feedback.



TO THE PARENTS OF: _____

FROM: _____

DATE: _____

WHAT DID WE DO?



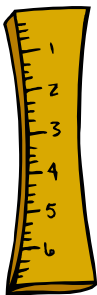
The topic for this session was:

The History of the Major Religions: the Baha'i Faith

The learning objective was:

- : To be able to articulate an understanding of the basic history of the Baha'i Faith
- : To become familiar with the life history of Baha'u'llah and the historical and social context of the time in which he appeared
- : To become familiar with the Kitab-i Aqdas

HOW DID YOUR CHILD DO?



- Preparation: [] **Great!** Homework was completed.
[] **Fair.** Homework only partially completed.
[] **Poor.** Homework was not attempted.
- Participation: [] **Great!** Active participation
[] **Fair.** Passive participation
[] **Poor.** Not active (needs to improve)
- Interaction: [] **Great!** Very understanding and cooperative
[] **Fair.** Occasionally helpful, occasionally disruptive
[] **Poor.** Distractive to others (Needs to improve)

Comments: _____



WHAT'S THE HOMEWORK?

- Read the Sacred Writing below at least once every day with an adult in the following week and try to memorize it.

The true seeker ... should not wish for others that which he doth not wish for himself ...

« Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*, p. 265 »

- Between now and the next class, find at least one person who doesn't know the story of Baha'u'llah and share it with them.

WHAT WILL WE DO AT THE NEXT SESSION?

We will begin review Topic 6:

The History of the Major Religions

We will have a quiz that checks students' understanding through:

- :: Knowledge Exercise: Recalling some key facts from some of the religions that we studied
- :: Storytelling Exercise (recounting one of the stories from Lessons 20-27)
- :: Memory Exercise (writing down one of the Sacred Writing passages that were to be memorized)

