

- Age Group: 9/10 years
Topic: How to Explore Religious Teachings Without Prejudice
- Objectives:
1. To discern the outcomes promised by the Manifestations of God to those who earnestly seek after truth
 2. To demonstrate commitment to a life as a true seeker by setting personal goals and developing the habit of regular self evaluation and the identification of next steps
- Materials you need:
- Dictionary
 - Pens, pencils, crayons, markers, etc.
 - Copies of the Activity Sheet (goal sheet) for each student
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1. PRAYER (3 minutes)

Choose one prayer from the attached page and have one of the children recite it.

2. CHECK HOMEWORK FROM LAST WEEK (5-10 minutes)**3. ACTIVITY (15-20 minutes)**

The purpose of this activity is to guide the children to set goals that will help them become true seekers and to show them how to check their progress.

Begin with a short review of what it means to be a true seeker from the last lesson.

1. Ask if someone can tell the class one of the qualities of a true seeker.
2. Ask if someone else can talk about how to apply that in their life.
3. Hand each student a copy of the activity sheet.
4. Ask them to write their names and/or draw a picture of themselves in the box along the top of the sheet.
5. Ask each student to write one goal for themselves that they will work on during the week. The goal should be related to one of the qualities of being a true seeker. If any of the students aren't able to think of goals, you may suggest some to them.

Continue the activity by giving the following assignment:

1. Ask them to post the goal sheet in their room and to put a smiley face in the circle for each day of the week that they work on their goal. If they forget to work on their goal they should put a sad face in the circle.
2. At the end of the week they should show the goal sheet to their parents and ask them to help them to answer the reflection questions.

4. STORY (10-15 minutes)

Read the attached story. Discuss the questions that follow the story.

5. SACRED WRITING (5 minutes)

Review the following passage and make sure everyone understands all the words:

...They should put their trust in God, and, holding fast unto Him, follow in His way. Then will they be made worthy of the effulgent glories of the sun of divine knowledge and understanding, and become the recipients of a grace that is infinite and unseen ...

The Kitáb-i-Íqán, paragraph 2

6. ASSIGNMENT (3 minutes)

1. Read aloud and write the sacred Writing once everyday. Memorize the passage for the next class.
2. Refer to the second part of the activity for this lesson.

7. PREPARE TO GIVE CLASS REPORT TO ENTIRE SCHOOL (2-5 minutes)

8. REFLECTION & EVALUATION (2-3 minutes)



last updated: 12/31/2003

PRAYERS

O compassionate God! Thanks be to Thee for Thou hast awakened and made me conscious. Thou hast given me a seeing eye and favored me with a hearing ear, hast led me to Thy kingdom and guided me to Thy path. Thou hast shown me the right way and caused me to enter the ark of deliverance. ...

Bahá'í Faith ('Abdu'l-Bahá)

O heavenly Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, we humbly pray Thee so to guide and govern us by Thy Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our daily life we may never forget Thee, but remember that we are ever walking in Thy sight; for Thine own Name's sake.

Christianity (Ancient Collect)

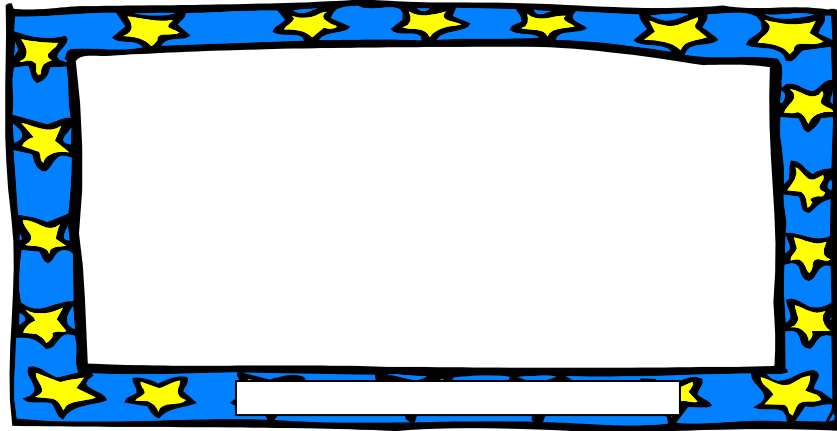
You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Judaism

May all I say and all I think be in harmony with thee, God within me, God beyond me, maker of the trees.

Native American (Chinook)

ACTIVITY



my goal is to: _____

MON

TUE

WED

THU

FRI

SAT

SUN

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Was it easy or was it hard to reach your goal? Why was it easy or hard? _____

Are you happy with how you did? Why or why not? _____

What could you have done to do better? _____

Set another goal for next week: _____

STORY

WATCH THEREFORE

by Rick Johnson

*from the Core Curriculum's Central Figures storybooks
Baha'u'llah, Volume III*

You don't know what you're missing sometimes. For years, I walked straight by one of the most amazing persons I ever met, and I didn't even say 'Hello'!

I like to go to a small neighborhood park where trains run past. You know how you can get a song 'stuck in your head'? When I was five years old, my parents took me to a folk music festival. One of the songs I especially liked begins: *Freight train, freight train, run so fast...*¹

That's how I got interested in playing the guitar. When I don't have to go to school or to work, I often go down to the park and watch the trains and play my guitar. You won't find too many other girls doing stuff like that...but that's me. And that's how I met Mrs. Roberts.

Actually, I walk past her house on the way to the park. But you can barely see her house for all the flowers she has, and she wears this very weird and extremely huge purple hat.

But, one day I saw her in the park and decided to say "Hello."

¹ Song composed and performed by African-American folksinger Elizabeth Cotton (1896-1987)

STORY

It turned out that she was almost eighty, but could she ever play the guitar! She was a complete surprise for me.

What really astonished me was that she came to the park to recite Bible verses. Do you know she had *memorized* every single prophecy in the Bible relating to Jesus? "I haven't been able to travel to look for Jesus, but I don't want to miss word of Him when He returns!" she chuckled.

"Jesus tried to tell folks that He'd come back at a time and place that they would never expect!" she continued. "Folks expect Him to put 'I'm Back!' on every neon sign. But Jesus said, '*Watch therefore for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*' He said he would come '*like a thief in the night*'—doesn't sound like neon to me," Mrs. Roberts grinned.

"So you think He might be riding into town on a freight train?" I asked.

"According to the Bible, He came in a stable the last time," Mrs. Roberts replied, "and at the height of His mission had no place to lay His head. I recite Bible verses to prepare myself spiritually to recognize Jesus when He comes. I want to be prepared—the Bible says that He will have a new name."²

"Mrs. Roberts, would you be offended if I said that I believe Jesus has already returned, and His new name is Bahá'u'lláh?"

Mrs. Roberts looked at me intently. "No, Corinne, not offended—excited and anxious to hear all about it! There's a special place in my garden that I call 'Lydia's Walk.' Come see it and have a soda. You can tell me all about it.

'Lydia's Walk' was at the rear of Mrs. Roberts' house. A brick path led to a small but lovely shelter with two benches inside. The tiny prayer house had a small but beautiful stained glass window with the words '*Watch Therefore*'...on it.

² Revelation 3:11-12; Cf. Isaiah 56:5, 62:2, 65:15

STORY

“My Great-Aunt Lydia gave my mother that stained glass when she left for Palestine in 1894,” Mrs. Roberts explained. “Aunt Lydia wasn’t very popular in our family, but my mother loved her dearly. She started preaching the Gospel in 1844, when she was 16. She heard a preacher’s sermon about Christ returning soon; and when the sermon was over, she spontaneously knelt down and led a prayer. That was the beginning of her preaching and a life-long search for the Promised One.”³

“What became of her?” I asked.

“She attended the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893. That gathering opened her eyes to truth that lay in religions other than Christianity. I’ve read letters she wrote to my mother. ‘Maybe this is what Jesus meant when He said He would have a ‘new name!’ she wrote. She was astonished to see so many different faiths, and many women addressing the sessions, and blacks giving speeches.’⁴ It was marvelous to her. In 1894, she left for Palestine. She sold everything she had and gave her stained glass window to mother. We think she died in a cholera outbreak in Palestine, because her last letter was postmarked Haifa...”

“Haifa!” I gasped. I could hardly hold my soda steady!

“Yes, she had heard something at the Parliament that greatly excited her about Palestine,”⁵ Mrs. Roberts responded, “and because many Christian prophecies point to Palestine as the place for Christ’s Return, she felt strongly attracted there. In the 1800s, some Christians expected the Return of Christ with such certainty that they moved to Haifa, because they were certain that was where He would appear. Great-Aunt Lydia had some of that spirit in her! I’ve wondered what she was seeking there, but I’ve never been able to find out.”

³ Although ‘Lydia’ is fictional, there were a large number of female preachers in the 1800s. Their churches officially encouraged some, while others worked independently.

⁴ Historically accurate.

⁵ The first public mention in America of Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings was at the Parliament.

STORY

“Mrs. Roberts,” I exclaimed, “those prophecies are about Bahá’u’lláh, whom Bahá’ís believe is the Return of Christ! He fulfilled every Biblical prophecy regarding Christ’s Return...and His mission came to its climax around Haifa!” Mrs. Roberts jumped from her seat and pulled on my arm excitedly.

“Corinne, you’ve got to take a look at something! Come with me!” We walked rapidly into her house.

Mrs. Roberts carefully opened a worn leather box. “These are the letters Great-Aunt Lydia sent my mother,” she said. “I want you to look at this one especially—it’s the last one she sent from Haifa.”

My dearest Abigail,

I arrive in Haifa and sense strongly I am close, agonizingly close to the answer I seek. I pray each day for my sight to be clear, and I feel that clarity opening before me. Jesus walks again I feel certain. Jeremiah 49:38-39—the Promised One comes from Elam—Persia!

I am feeling ill and do not have much strength, but my heart is happy. When I feel stronger, I will find this modern Elamite who is my Lord Returned!

Pray for me. Pray that my watchfulness, so long nurtured and sharpened, may not fail me now.

Your Lydia

“Corinne, tell me—did this man you call Bahá’u’lláh come from Persia?”

STORY

“Yes,” I replied.

“Ezekiel,” she continued, “saw a vision of the *Glory of God* coming to Palestine from the east by way of a gate...Bahá'u'lláh fulfills this prophecy?” It was less a question than a statement.⁶

“Mrs. Roberts,” I answered, “Bahá'u'lláh means *The Glory of God* in Arabic. He came to Palestine from the East, and His coming was foretold by a Prophet known as *The Báb*, which means The Gate.”

“Lydia went to Haifa,” Mrs. Roberts said, “because she knew the prophet Isaiah is very specific that the Promised One—he calls Him *the glory of the Lord*—will go unto Achor, Mt. Carmel, and the Plain of Sharon. Lydia knew that all these places were near Haifa.”⁷

“She was right, Mrs. Roberts. Bahá'u'lláh lived in 'Akká, His Shrine where He is buried is near there, and the World Center of His Faith today is on Mt. Carmel. Your Aunt Lydia found the Promised One.”

Mrs. Roberts covered her eyes with her hand as her eyes filled with tears. “I hope she lived long enough to know that for sure,” she said.

“Reading that letter, I don't have a doubt that she knew it,” I replied. “She knew the truth. Perhaps she was not able to meet Bahá'u'lláh in this life, but she knew she was in the Promised Land.”

“The Bible says, *‘And I will give...the valley of Achor for a door of hope,’*” Mrs. Roberts mused, wiping away her tears. “I'm ready to enter that doorway of hope...”⁸

⁶ Ezekiel 43

⁷ Isaiah 35:2, 65:10. Achor (modern day 'Akká) and Mt. Carmel are both on the Plain of Sharon.

⁸ Hosea 2:15

STORY

“Your Great-Aunt Lydia will be watching for you,” I laughed, looking at the sun being scattered into many brilliant colors through the stained glass window.

STORY

Discussion Questions for the Story:

- What was Mrs. Roberts' grandmother searching for in this story? Do you think she found it? What would you have done next, if you were her?
- What was Mrs. Roberts searching for in this story? Do you think she found it? What would you do next, if you were her?
- Could you say that Corinne was also searching for something in this story? Can you give some possible things she was looking for? Do you think she found them? What would you do next if you were her?
- Are you searching for something? How are you going about your search? How is your search similar to that of any of the characters in the story?
- What does it mean to search "earnestly"? Does it help you to set goals when you are earnestly searching?

REFLECTION & EVALUATION

*The Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education
Teacher Training Participant's Handbook, pg. 56*

1. What did you enjoy about teaching this lesson? _____

2. How did each part of the lesson match the interest of the learners? _____

• Did the learners actively participate? If not, why? _____

• Did the learners ask questions? If not, why? _____

• Did the learners answer questions with enthusiasm? _____

• Did the learners express interest in learning more? _____

3. Did the different parts of the lesson match the capabilities of the learners? _____

• Did all learners understand your instruction? If not, why? _____

• Did all the learners complete their assignments? If not, why? _____

• Did the learners remain focused? If not, why? _____

• Was the level of the lesson appropriate, difficult, or complex? _____

4. What would you change about this lesson if you were to teach it again? _____

