



# Teaching Children's Classes

Second Branch Course  
of Book 3

Ruhi Institute





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## Books in the Series:

Below are the current titles in the series designed by the Ruhi Institute. The books are intended to be used as the main sequence of courses in a systematic effort to enhance the capacity of youth and adults to serve their communities. The Ruhi Institute is also developing a set of courses that branch out from the third book in the series for training Bahá'í children's class teachers, as well as another set from Book 5 for raising up animators of junior youth groups. These, too, are indicated in the list below. It should be noted that the list may undergo change as experience in the field advances, and additional titles will be added as a number of curricular elements under development reach the stage where they can be made widely available.

- Book 1     *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit*
- Book 2     *Arising to Serve*
- Book 3     *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1*
  - Teaching Children's Classes: First Branch Course of Book 3*
  - Teaching Children's Classes: Second Branch Course of Book 3*
  - Teaching Children's Classes: Third Branch Course of Book 3*
  - Teaching Children's Classes: Fourth Branch Course of Book 3*
- Book 4     *The Twin Manifestations*
- Book 5     *Releasing the Powers of Junior Youth*
  - Initial Impulse: The first branch course of Book 5*
  - Widening Circle: The second branch course of Book 5*
- Book 6     *Teaching the Cause*
- Book 7     *Walking Together on a Path of Service*
- Book 8     *The Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh*
- Book 9     *Gaining an Historical Perspective*
- Book 10    *Building Vibrant Communities*
- Book 11    *Material Means*
- Book 12    *Family and the Community*
- Book 13    *Engaging in Social Action*
- Book 14    *Participating in Public Discourse*

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## A Few Thoughts for the Tutor

This book is the second in a series branching off from Book 3 in the Ruhi Institute's main sequence of courses, *Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1*. It is intended to prepare teachers to offer twelve lessons, arranged into four sets, to youngsters who have gone through the lessons of Sets 1 to 3, which are provided in the first branch course. Many of the points raised in the introduction to that course apply equally here, and it is assumed that every tutor will be well familiar with the ideas discussed. Specifically, this branch course, like the one preceding it, focuses on those habits and patterns of conduct that are a manifestation of the spiritual qualities explored in Grade 1, qualities which can best be viewed as faculties of the human soul, as permanent structures on which a noble and upright character is built.

In offering the lessons of Sets 1 to 3, teachers will have gained further insight into the dynamic relationship between the development of spiritual qualities and the formation of attitudes and habits that are aspects of a commendable character. The nine lessons of those sets are elaborated around three themes which address ideas central to the relationship between human beings and their Creator—themes drawn from the Writings of the Faith that shed light on patterns of thought and conduct that an educational process should strive to strengthen in children. The twelve lessons here take up another four themes, each of which concerns the relationships individuals establish with their fellow human beings: living in harmony with others, respecting human dignity, being a good friend, and devoting one's life to service. The first unit provides participants with an opportunity to explore these four themes from the perspective of a teacher of young children, while the second unit contains the lessons themselves, along with some preparatory material for analyzing their various components.

In terms of the lessons, they are identical in structure to the ones in the first branch course, and the preparatory sections follow the same pattern of analysis, examining one component at a time. Now, of course, teachers will bring to this examination a wealth of experience and practical knowledge, which will greatly enrich their consultations. The tutor will want to ensure that they give sufficient attention to both the questions related to the statements that introduce the quotations for memorization and those related to the stories. As with Sets 1 to 3, the former will help teachers identify some of the spiritual concepts they hope to convey to the children and consider how to explain them in an accessible language, while the latter will assist them in their efforts to emphasize, when narrating the stories, how these same concepts find expression in action. Here, too, the introductory statements draw upon the words and deeds of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and nearly all the stories are associated with His life. In this, teachers will no doubt appreciate that the organization of the core components of each lesson will serve to reinforce in the minds and hearts of the children the importance of turning to the perfect Exemplar to guide them in all they think and do.

Further, over the course of the lessons of Sets 1 to 3, teachers will have learned a great deal about how to help consolidate children's understanding of the dynamics of spiritual qualities by weaving into the activities of each lesson ideas related to specific qualities

addressed in Grade 1. The tutor should strive to draw out this experience when taking participants through the sections that ask them to consider how best to approach this task. They should be encouraged to think about how, in teaching the lessons in Sets 4 to 7, they can build on what they have learned in this regard.

Similarly, teachers will note that here, again, it is suggested that they compose sentences, like the ones in the lessons, to explain the meanings of key words and phrases in the quotations the children memorize. Though this may not appear difficult at first glance, the teachers surely found that it requires a certain ability to compose sentences that expand the children's understanding of words and phrases from the Writings. This will be an occasion to help them enhance this ability and learn from one another. Likewise, choosing songs to reinforce the central ideas under discussion and finding ways to present the drama and art activities—which include some exercises related to skills and others related to themes—so that they remain tied to the core components of the lessons demands increased capacity on the part of teachers, and the tutor should create an environment in which participants can share with one another the practical knowledge they have gained.





# Love for Our Fellow Human Beings

## Purpose

To examine four themes, gleaned from the Writings of the Faith, that shed light on our relationships with our fellow human beings and on the habits and pattern of conduct that are a manifestation of the spiritual qualities teachers explored with children in Grade 1



## SECTION 1

In this course, the second branching off from Book 3 in the main sequence, you will be studying material that will help you conduct classes for children who have completed the lessons available in the first branch course. Those lessons, as well as the ones here, are, as you know, structured around certain interrelated themes, gleaned from the Writings of the Faith, that give us an indication of what habits of thought and patterns of conduct should be nurtured in youngsters in a program for their spiritual education. No doubt, in teaching the nine lessons of Sets 1 to 3, you gained many valuable insights into the significant contribution that fostering spiritual qualities makes to the sound development of character in children. As you now assist your students in undertaking the activities outlined in the four sets of lessons here—twelve in all—the strengthening of these essential attributes of the soul, as the foundation on which praiseworthy attitudes and habits are built, will remain uppermost in your mind.

The second unit of this book will give you an opportunity to become acquainted with the content of the twelve lessons, which are also included there. In this first unit, you will explore passages from the Writings that will help you deepen your own understanding of concepts related to the themes addressed in Sets 4 to 7, which revolve around the relationships we establish with our fellow human beings—that is, living in harmony with others, respecting human dignity, being a good friend, and devoting one’s life to service.

It is suggested that, to begin the explorations here, you take a moment to consider why deliberation on the above themes is essential to any effort that seeks to contribute to the development of good character in children. Write down some of your thoughts in the spaces provided:

Living in harmony with others: \_\_\_\_\_

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Respecting the dignity of every human being: \_\_\_\_\_

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Being a good friend: \_\_\_\_\_

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Devoting one’s life to service: \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 2

Living in harmony with others is an important theme to be addressed in classes that seek to reinforce in the young members of the community those patterns of conduct that are in keeping with a life guided by the teachings of the Faith. The three lessons of Set 4 are elaborated around this theme. They are intended to follow those in Set 3, which helped children gain an appreciation of the significant role knowledge plays in their lives and of the appropriate attitudes and habits they should acquire to reap its benefits.

It is not difficult to see how essential it is for the children in your class to begin, at this tender age, to develop attributes that will enable them not only to live in harmony with others but also to grow into individuals who will actively build unity. The educational process in which you are engaged with the youngsters hopes to set them on this path. These next several sections are meant to enhance your own understanding of concepts such as unity, unity in diversity, love, justice and cooperation, which are addressed in Lessons 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3, and to help you reflect on how you will explain them to the children.

God has created all humanity as members of one family, and relationships among individuals and groups, regardless of cultural, religious or racial backgrounds, should be characterized by true love and genuine affection. Unity is one of the most powerful forces in the world. It gives rise to life itself, whether in the single body of an individual or in the great body of humanity, and brings with it a strength that cannot otherwise exist. You may wish to spend some time considering the ways in which the subjects of diversity and unity are approached in the Writings. Reflect, for example, on the passages below.

**“So it is with the great body of humanity. The wonderful Law of Attraction, Harmony and Unity, holds together this marvelous Creation.**

**“As with the whole, so with the parts; whether a flower or a human body, when the attracting principle is withdrawn from it, the flower or the man dies. It is therefore clear that attraction, harmony, unity and Love, are the cause of life, whereas repulsion, discord, hatred and separation bring death.”<sup>1</sup>**

**“The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and color from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different colored roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.”<sup>2</sup>**

**“Consider the flowers of a garden: though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. Thus when that unifying force, the penetrating influence of the Word of God, taketh effect, the difference of customs, manners, habits, ideas, opinions and dispositions embellisheth the world of humanity. This diversity, this difference is like the naturally created dissimilarity and variety of the limbs and organs of the human body, for each one contributeth to the beauty, efficiency and perfection of the whole.”<sup>3</sup>**

**“It is certain that the greatest of instrumentalities for achieving the advancement and the glory of man, the supreme agency for the enlightenment and the redemption of the world, is love and fellowship and unity among all the members of the human race. Nothing can be effected in the world, not even conceivably, without unity and agreement . . .”<sup>4</sup>**

When speaking to the children about unity and harmony, you will no doubt find it helpful to bear in mind certain phrases from the quotations above. Write a few of them in the space below, making sure to include in your list some of the analogies that will enable your students to better understand the principles of the oneness of humankind and unity in diversity.

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### **SECTION 3**

To act as builders of unity requires a range of attributes that all of us need to develop to higher and higher degrees throughout our lives. What is required of you at this stage, as a teacher of young children, is to reinforce in them certain qualities and attitudes so that, in their inmost being, they cherish unity and feel an aversion to conflict. In a world where conflict and contention are regarded as norms, this will be a challenging task. To help you think about the nature of unity, and the forces in society that work on the tender hearts and minds of the youngsters in your class, consider each of the statements below and decide which are true, discussing their implications with the members of your study group:

\_\_\_\_\_ At the age of six or seven, children cannot understand the abstract concept of unity; they can only know unity through its concrete expressions, for example, in friendship.

\_\_\_\_\_ Children can only understand unity as the absence of conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_ Since differences invariably give rise to enmity, it is essential to cultivate tolerance in children as a way to avoid conflict.

\_\_\_\_\_ Diversity is meaningful because it can be harmonized and therefore manifest beauty, and children should grow in their appreciation of diversity, seeing it as inherent to the very conception of unity.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Appreciation for diversity implies that children should learn to take pride in what makes them different from others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children should learn to focus on what unites human beings and not allow the differences that exist among them to become a cause of division.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children will only excel if they are motivated by a sense of personal accomplishment.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The true basis for excellence is to be found in one's attraction to beauty and perfection, not in the desire to prove one is better than others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Humility before God helps to protect children from arrogance and a sense of superiority that breeds prejudice, so harmful to unity.
- \_\_\_\_\_ At the age of six or seven, most children are free from the prejudices prevalent in the society around them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The thirst for knowledge that you are helping the children to develop is one of the means by which they will become aware of the interconnectedness of the universe and begin to combat the ignorance that leads to prejudice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In order to help children to understand concepts such as unity and harmony, a teacher must treat them all the same.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In order to help children to understand concepts such as unity and harmony, a teacher must treat each one as an individual with particular needs and talents, while showing the same degree of love and justice to all.

## SECTION 4

A deep understanding of unity implies a recognition that all members of the human family are interconnected. In order for humanity to achieve true prosperity, the aspirations and needs of every individual must be considered, effort must be made to eliminate injustice, and all people must be treated with fairness. The analogy of the human body, found in the previous set of quotations, is especially useful in this respect. In addition to helping us understand the principle of the oneness of humankind, it gives us insight into the operation of the principle of justice. In the human body every part gives and receives whatever is needed for its individual function, as well as for the welfare of the whole. In this light, it is suggested that you read the quotations below.

**“It is obvious that all created things are connected one to another by a linkage complete and perfect, even, for example, as are the members of the human body. Note how all the members and component parts of the human body are connected one to another. In the same way, all the members of this endless universe are linked one to another. The foot and the step, for example, are connected to the ear and the eye; the eye must look ahead before the step is taken. The ear must hear before the eye will carefully observe. And whatever member of the human body**

is deficient, produceth a deficiency in the other members. The brain is connected with the heart and stomach, the lungs are connected with all the members. So is it with the other members of the body.”<sup>5</sup>

“Say: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Verily I say, whatsoever leadeth to the decline of ignorance and the increase of knowledge hath been, and will ever remain, approved in the sight of the Lord of creation. Say: O people! Walk ye neath the shadow of justice and truthfulness and seek ye shelter within the tabernacle of unity.”<sup>6</sup>

“The light of men is Justice. Quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of justice is the appearance of unity among men.”<sup>7</sup>

“That which is the cause of the unity of the world and its peoples hath flowed forth from the Pen of the Most High in divers Tablets. God grant that all men may be adorned with the ornament of fairness and enabled to observe justice that they may partake of the fruits of what hath been mentioned and bear witness unto that which hath been ordained by the one true God, exalted be His Glory. He is the One Who guideth, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.”<sup>8</sup>

To help you reflect on the above passages, answer the following questions:

1. Explain in your own words how the analogy of the human body gives us insight into the principles of unity and justice, and the relationship between them.

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2. What is the purpose of justice and fairness? Why is unity unattainable without justice?

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## SECTION 5

In engaging with the children in your class, you will need to enhance their understanding of the concepts of fairness and justice in the context of building unity, an understanding which will continue to deepen throughout their lives. Of course, they will already have

some conception of justice as a quality of the human soul from their study of the second lesson of Grade 1. They will also have thought, to a certain degree, about the relationship between justice, equity, and compassion in Lesson 13. You will recall, too, the discussions around the theme “seeking knowledge” that we undertook in the first branch course, in the unit “Love of His Beauty”, where we considered justice as a spiritual quality that assists us in our search after truth. You no doubt seized opportunities, in teaching the lessons on this theme, to help children appreciate the centrality of this quality to the acquisition and application of knowledge.

Here you will be helping the children to see that fairness and justice are essential if they are to live in harmony with others and act as builders of unity. For, if children do not acquire a correct understanding of fairness—based, for example, on the analogy of the human body—they may begin to view the concept from a perspective that is self-centered and develop undesirable attitudes as a consequence. Discussing the following questions with the members of your study group will enable you to reflect further on these ideas:

1. You may have noticed that, while children want to be treated with fairness, they sometimes forget that they must act with fairness themselves. How can you assist the children to be fair to themselves and to others?

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2. A willingness to subordinate one’s own desires for the benefit of the whole—say, the entire class, the family, or the community—is an expression of justice. How can you help the children to make this connection?

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3. Justice and fairness do not imply lack of love and compassion. On the contrary, there is a dynamic interaction between them. How can you make sure that you nurture these spiritual qualities together in children?

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## SECTION 6

In the sections above, you thought about some of the concepts that every individual must strive to understand in his or her efforts to promote unity and harmony. We must also, of course, develop the skills and abilities needed to work towards common goals. There are some things that cannot be achieved by one person alone, and we must help one another for the benefit of the families, groups, and communities to which we belong. Read the quotations below and carry out the exercises that follow.

**“Some of the creatures of existence can live solitary and alone. A tree, for instance, may live without the assistance and cooperation of other trees. Some animals are isolated and lead a separate existence away from their kind. But this is impossible for man. In his life and being cooperation and association are essential. Through association and meeting we find happiness and development, individual and collective.”<sup>9</sup>**

**“The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity. The stronger the ties of fellowship and solidarity amongst men, the greater will be the power of constructiveness and accomplishment in all the planes of human activity.”<sup>10</sup>**

1. Discuss some of the ways in which cooperation and association are vital to the development of humanity. How do cooperation and association foster the development of the individual? How does society benefit?

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2. In teaching the lessons of Grade 1, what opportunities did you have to strengthen the children’s understanding of the importance of cooperation? What attitudes and skills did the children develop by playing the games that required cooperation? How could these attitudes and skills be further developed?

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3. One of your tasks as a teacher, in carrying out the various elements of the lessons—the memorization of prayers and quotations, the stories, the songs, the drama and art activities—is to create an environment characterized by unity and cooperation. You may find it helpful to think about how such an environment enhances the effect that each element has on both the development of every child and the learning of the class as a whole.

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## SECTION 7

Certain spiritual qualities will be essential for the children in your class to develop well if they are to promote harmony among their fellow human beings. Justice is particularly significant in this connection, given the indispensable role it plays in creating unity among diverse people and in the acquisition and application of knowledge, ideas mentioned in the preceding sections. We should now ask ourselves: What are some other spiritual qualities that should adorn those who wish to contribute to unity in various spaces? Let us explore this question by reflecting on the three sets of quotations below. After reading through each set, discuss the statements that follow and add a few others.

**“The more love is expressed among mankind and the stronger the power of unity, the greater will be this reflection and revelation, for the greatest bestowal of God is love. Love is the source of all the bestowals of God. Until love takes possession of the heart, no other divine bounty can be revealed in it.”<sup>11</sup>**

**“The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.”<sup>12</sup>**

**“The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.”<sup>13</sup>**

**“O ye friends of God! Exert ye with heart and soul, so that association, love, unity and agreement be obtained between the hearts, all the aims may be merged into one aim, all the songs become one song and the power of the Holy Spirit may become so overwhelmingly victorious as to overcome all the forces of the world of nature. Exert yourselves; your mission is unspeakably glorious.”<sup>14</sup>**

**“Therefore, it is evident that the Prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them, to establish the law of love and not enmity. Consequently, we must lay aside all prejudice—whether it be religious, racial, political or patriotic; we must become the cause of the unification of the human race. Strive for universal peace, seek the means of love, and destroy the basis of disagreement so that this material world may become divine, the world of matter become the realm of the Kingdom and humanity attain to the world of perfection.”<sup>15</sup>**

- When children learn to love one another selflessly, they contribute to an environment of unity in the classroom.
- Children need to know that true love comes from the love of God and attraction to His beauty. It is this love that motivates one to work for unity and harmony among people.
- For love, unity, and harmony to be established, great effort must be exerted to eradicate all forms of prejudice.

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**“They that are endued with sincerity and faithfulness should associate with all the peoples and kindreds of the earth with joy and radiance, inasmuch as consorting with people hath promoted and will continue to promote unity and concord, which in turn are conducive to the maintenance of order in the world and to the regeneration of nations. Blessed are such as hold fast to the cord of kindness and tender mercy and are free from animosity and hatred.”<sup>16</sup>**

**“May each one of you become a shining lamp, of which the flame is the Love of God. May your hearts burn with the radiance of unity. May your eyes be illumined with the effulgence of the Sun of Truth!”<sup>17</sup>**

- Teaching children to manifest joy and radiance in their interactions with others is essential, if they are to grow up to be builders of unity in their communities.
- Just as radiant acquiescence creates environments of harmony, constant dissatisfaction leads to conflict and wrangling.
- To be a cause of unity, we should radiate divine attributes and diffuse widely the love and knowledge of God.

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**“O peoples of the world! The Sun of Truth hath risen to illumine the whole earth, and to spiritualize the community of man. Laudable are the results and the fruits thereof, abundant the holy evidences deriving from this grace. This is mercy unalloyed and purest bounty; it is light for the world and all its peoples; it is harmony and fellowship, and love and solidarity; indeed it is compassion and unity, and the end of foreignness; it is the being at one, in complete dignity and freedom, with all on earth.”<sup>18</sup>**

**“No soul should be hated, none neglected; nay, rather, their very imperfections should demand greater kindness and tender compassion. Therefore, if we follow the example of the Lord of divinity, we will love all mankind from our hearts, and the means of the unity of the world of humanity will become as evident and manifest to us as the light of the sun.”<sup>19</sup>**

**“Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch; be ye compassionate and kind to all the human race.”<sup>20</sup>**

- Children should learn that they will only be able to contribute to unity if they manifest compassion in the exercise of fairness and justice.
- To be able to manifest compassion, children should be taught to see everyone as members of the human family.
- Compassion requires the capacity to put ourselves in the position of others and see situations through their eyes, a capacity without which we would find it difficult to contribute to harmony and unity.

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Of course, we have not addressed here all those qualities that underlie the habits and patterns of conduct that will assist the children in creating harmonious environments. Many others, in addition to justice, love, radiance, and compassion, are also vital. Choose a few—for example, truthfulness and sincerity—and discuss the importance of acquiring them if we are to contribute to building unified communities.

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## SECTION 8

To complete your study of the theme of living in harmony with others, reflect on the following quotation in the context of your efforts to teach children and create an environment of unity in your class:

**“Wherefore, O my loving friends! Consort with all the peoples, kindreds and religions of the world with the utmost truthfulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindness, goodwill and friendliness, that all the world of being may be filled with the holy ecstasy of the grace of Bahá, that ignorance, enmity, hate and rancor may vanish from the world and the darkness of estrangement amidst the peoples and kindreds of the world may give way to the Light of Unity.”<sup>21</sup>**

You may wish to memorize the above quotation.

## SECTION 9

Now let us turn to a theme closely related to the one you examined in the last few sections—respecting the dignity of every human being. This is the focus of the lessons of Set 5.

One central idea children need to understand if they are to develop respectful attitudes towards others is that every human being has been created noble by God. We all have the potential to reflect His names and attributes. These attributes belong to our spiritual, our higher nature. Recognizing the inherent nobility of every human being helps us to appreciate the importance of showing respect to all who cross our paths and to act in ways that correspond to the dignity of the station God has bestowed on us. Read the quotations below.

**“O Son of Spirit! I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself? Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.”<sup>22</sup>**

**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me. For I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee.”<sup>23</sup>**

**“O Son of Being! With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light. Be thou content with it and seek naught else, for My work is perfect and My command is binding. Question it not, nor have a doubt thereof.”<sup>24</sup>**

**“To act like the beasts of the field is unworthy of man. Those virtues that befit his dignity are forbearance, mercy, compassion and loving-kindness towards all the peoples and kindreds of the earth.”<sup>25</sup>**

**“In man there are two natures; his spiritual or higher nature and his material or lower nature. In one he approaches God, in the other he lives for the world alone. Signs of both these natures are to be found in men. In his material aspect he expresses untruth, cruelty and injustice; all these are the outcome of his lower nature. The attributes of his Divine nature are shown forth in love, mercy, kindness, truth and justice, one and all being expressions of his higher nature. Every good habit, every noble quality belongs to man’s spiritual nature, whereas all his imperfections and sinful actions are born of his material nature. If a man’s Divine nature dominates his human nature, we have a saint.”<sup>26</sup>**

Decide which of the statements below are true.

- We have been created rich in the sense that we have been endowed with the potential to manifest divine attributes, attributes such as generosity, love, wisdom, and justice.
- We bring ourselves down to poverty when we act like the beasts of the field.
- God wishes us to become rich in worldly possessions.
- Only certain individuals are born noble.
- We abase ourselves when we let the promptings of our lower nature—jealousy, envy, selfishness, injustice—control our thoughts and actions.
- We abase ourselves when we show weakness, for example, by forgiving those who we feel have wronged us.
- Love of God and His knowledge enable us to manifest our inherent nobility.
- The more knowledge we gain, the prouder we should be about our accomplishments.
- Knowledge of God makes us truly humble before our fellow human beings.
- God, out of His infinite love, will never be displeased with us, no matter how we behave.
- If we leave room in our hearts for hatred and animosity towards others, we will not act in accordance with our nobility.
- Knowing that God has created us noble impels us to seek the beauty of divine attributes reflected in the souls of our fellow human beings.

- \_\_\_\_\_ We can find God standing within us by turning our sights to ourselves. This implies that we will be able to see God’s majesty and power by merely looking deep within ourselves.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We can find God standing within us by turning our sights to ourselves. This implies that, as we purify our thoughts and actions of all save God, we are able to reflect His attributes more brightly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All that is beautiful in human nature is a reflection of God’s light.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We act like animals when we are driven by greed, when we are cruel and deceitful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ It is in human nature to care only for oneself.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We act in accordance with our nobility when we show compassion and respect towards everyone.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Responding to unseemly conduct in a similar manner is justified. We do not abase ourselves by doing so.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We will only be able to manifest our inherent nobility if we look towards God’s mercy and justice and not towards the shortcomings of the people around us.

## SECTION 10

To show respect to our fellow human beings—to their words and thoughts—requires that we manifest the quality of courtesy. In fact, Bahá’u’lláh commands us to be courteous; He reminds us of the sublime station of those who are adorned with the vesture of courtesy. Unfortunately, this cardinal virtue seems to be losing its value and is becoming reduced to a set of meaningless and, at times, pretentious forms of conduct. Courtesy is not only necessary for personal development; it also beautifies human character and relationships among people. We read the following in the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh:

**“I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness. Whoso is endued with courtesy hath indeed attained a sublime station. It is hoped that this Wronged One and everyone else may be enabled to acquire it, hold fast unto it, observe it, and fix our gaze upon it. This is a binding command which hath streamed forth from the Pen of the Most Great Name.”<sup>27</sup>**

**“Courtesy is among the hallmarks of the human reality, an attribute whereby man is distinguished above all else. Whoso hath not attained thereunto, his nonexistence is assuredly preferable to his existence.”<sup>28</sup>**

**“Divest not yourselves of the robe of courtesy and fairmindedness, and speak not that which hath been forbidden you in the Tablets of your Lord, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Whoso is deprived of courtesy walketh naked among men, though he be clothed in all the world’s silk. This is that which hath been revealed through the power of truth in His mighty and guarded Tablets. He who is devoid of courtesy is indeed bereft of faith.”<sup>29</sup>**

**“It ill beseemeth the people of God to transgress the bounds of courtesy.”<sup>30</sup>**

**“This Youth hath ever been disinclined to breathe a word contrary to courtesy, for courtesy is Our raiment, wherewith We have adorned the temples of Our well-favored servants.”<sup>31</sup>**

**“Courtesy is, in truth, a raiment which fitteth all men, whether young or old. Well is it with him that adorneth his temple therewith, and woe unto him who is deprived of this great bounty.”<sup>32</sup>**

To reflect on the above passages, fill in the blanks in the sentences below.

- a. We are admonished to observe \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_ it is the \_\_\_\_\_.
- b. Well is it with the person who is \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and is \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- c. Whoso is endowed with \_\_\_\_\_ has indeed attained a \_\_\_\_\_.
- d. It is hoped that this Wronged One and \_\_\_\_\_ may be enabled to \_\_\_\_\_ courtesy, \_\_\_\_\_ unto courtesy, \_\_\_\_\_ courtesy, and \_\_\_\_\_ upon courtesy.
- e. This is a \_\_\_\_\_ which has streamed forth from the Pen of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. Courtesy is among the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- g. Courtesy is an attribute whereby the human being is \_\_\_\_\_ above \_\_\_\_\_.
- h. Whoso has not attained unto courtesy, his \_\_\_\_\_ is assuredly \_\_\_\_\_ to his \_\_\_\_\_.
- i. We should not \_\_\_\_\_ ourselves of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and we should not \_\_\_\_\_ that which has been \_\_\_\_\_ us in the Tablets of our Lord, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.



- j. Whoso is \_\_\_\_\_ of courtesy walks \_\_\_\_\_ among men, though he be \_\_\_\_\_ in all the world's \_\_\_\_\_. This is that which has been \_\_\_\_\_ through the power of \_\_\_\_\_ in His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ Tablets.
- k. One who is \_\_\_\_\_ of courtesy is indeed \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.
- l. It \_\_\_\_\_ the people of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ the bounds of \_\_\_\_\_.
- m. This Youth has ever been disinclined to \_\_\_\_\_ a word \_\_\_\_\_ to courtesy, for \_\_\_\_\_ is Our \_\_\_\_\_, wherewith We have \_\_\_\_\_ the temples of Our \_\_\_\_\_.
- n. Courtesy is, in truth, a \_\_\_\_\_ which fits \_\_\_\_\_ men, whether \_\_\_\_\_. Well is it with him that \_\_\_\_\_ his \_\_\_\_\_ therewith, and woe unto him who is \_\_\_\_\_ of this \_\_\_\_\_.

After reflecting with the members of your group on the above quotations, you are encouraged to write a paragraph that outlines the difference between the notion of courtesy common in the world today and the conception of courtesy as a spiritual quality as described by Bahá'u'lláh.

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## SECTION 11

No doubt, your reflections in the previous section have impressed upon you the vital importance of the quality of courtesy in the spiritual development of children. The standards you set in the class should help your students to respect and honor human dignity, to show forth courtesy in their words and deeds, a courtesy that springs from appropriate thoughts and sentiments. Such thoughts and sentiments are, in the final analysis, a reflection of the attraction of the heart to true beauty.

To explore how you can assist your students in manifesting courtesy, discuss with your fellow teachers how you will deal with situations in which you observe the following behavior in children. You might find it helpful to bring to mind specific situations you have encountered.

- Criticizing others
- Disturbing others in the class
- Using unkind language in speaking to others
- Mocking others
- Not paying attention during the class
- Backbiting
- Not being attentive to the needs of others in the class
- Interrupting others when they speak
- Bullying others

## SECTION 12

Often, disrespect for others is the result of deeply rooted prejudices that pass from one generation to the next. We see how in society people are ranked and classified according to such things as wealth, class, ethnic background, and gender. Yet in God’s estimation all are His children and deserve to be equally honored and given the same opportunities. Children are exposed to subtle manifestations of prejudice, which unconsciously affect their outlook and shape prejudicial attitudes in them towards people whose backgrounds are different from their own. The spiritual education they receive should not only convince them of the oneness of humanity but also teach them to dispel from their hearts every trace of prejudice.

**“The Blessed Beauty saith: ‘Ye are all the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch.’ Thus hath He likened this world of being to a single tree, and all its peoples to the leaves thereof, and the blossoms and fruits. It is needful for the bough to blossom, and leaf and fruit to flourish, and upon the interconnection of all parts of the world-tree, dependeth the flourishing of leaf and blossom, and the sweetness of the fruit.**

**“For this reason must all human beings powerfully sustain one another and seek for everlasting life; and for this reason must the lovers of God in this contingent world become the mercies and the blessings sent forth by that clement King of the seen and unseen realms. Let them purify their sight and behold all humankind as leaves and blossoms and fruits of the tree of being. Let them at all times concern themselves with doing a kindly thing for one of their fellows, offering to someone love, consideration, thoughtful help. Let them see no one as their enemy, or as wishing them ill, but think of all humankind as their friends; regarding the alien as an intimate, the stranger as a companion, staying free of prejudice, drawing no lines.”<sup>33</sup>**

**“Think ye at all times of rendering some service to every member of the human race. Pay ye no heed to aversion and rejection, to disdain, hostility, injustice: act**

**ye in the opposite way. Be ye sincerely kind, not in appearance only. Let each one of God’s loved ones center his attention on this: to be the Lord’s mercy to man; to be the Lord’s grace. Let him do some good to every person whose path he crosseth, and be of some benefit to him. Let him improve the character of each and all, and reorient the minds of men. In this way, the light of divine guidance will shine forth, and the blessings of God will cradle all mankind: for love is light, no matter in what abode it dwelleth; and hate is darkness, no matter where it may make its nest. O friends of God! That the hidden Mystery may stand revealed, and the secret essence of all things may be disclosed, strive ye to banish that darkness for ever and ever.”<sup>34</sup>**

As a teacher of classes for the spiritual education of children, you will need to nurture in the students the attitudes and habits of those who strive to free themselves from prejudice. The formation of such attitudes and habits requires a growing understanding of certain spiritual truths. Write down a few phrases from the above quotations that express spiritual truths, the understanding of which will create appropriate thoughts and sentiments in the hearts and minds of the children. How can you ensure that, in your interactions with your students, you help them advance in such an understanding?

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## **SECTION 13**

One of the main causes of prejudice is the type of ignorance that creates in individuals and groups a sense of superiority. In this connection, we should remind ourselves of Bahá’u’lláh’s admonishment: “Of all men the most negligent is he that disputeth idly and seeketh to advance himself over his brother.” As children are helped to gain greater and greater awareness of the nobility of all human beings and are assisted in developing the quality of humility, they will shun pride and arrogance and will treat everyone with dignity and respect. Reflect on the following quotations, some of which may already be familiar to you:

**“Humility exalteth man to the heaven of glory and power, whilst pride abaseth him to the depths of wretchedness and degradation.”<sup>35</sup>**

**“Wish not for others what ye wish not for yourselves; fear God, and be not of the prideful. Ye are all created out of water, and unto dust shall ye return.”<sup>36</sup>**

**“O Children of Desire! Put away the garment of vainglory, and divest yourselves of the attire of haughtiness.”<sup>37</sup>**

**“Ever since the seeking of preference and distinction came into play, the world hath been laid waste. It hath become desolate. . . .**

**“Indeed, man is noble, inasmuch as each one is a repository of the sign of God. Nevertheless, to regard oneself as superior in knowledge, learning or virtue, or to exalt oneself or seek preference, is a grievous transgression.”<sup>38</sup>**

It is imperative that the approaches we use in educating the young do not inadvertently encourage them to advance themselves over others; we should be wary of planting in them the seeds of pride and vainglory. Have you faced any situations in your class that required you to pause and reflect on how best you could respond without fostering a sense of self-importance and superiority in children? Share your experience with your fellow teachers in this course.

## **SECTION 14**

In Section 7, we examined how the development of the qualities of justice, love, radiance, and compassion is essential to the formation of those habits of conduct that enable one to live in harmony with one’s fellow human beings. Clearly, respecting the dignity of all those we encounter demands the exercise of these and other spiritual qualities. Let us now examine a few: patience, sincerity, and honesty. Below are three sets of quotations, each corresponding to one of these qualities. After reflecting on the passages, discuss the questions that follow each set.

**“If anyone revile you, or trouble touch you, in the path of God, be patient, and put your trust in Him Who heareth, Who seeth.”<sup>39</sup>**

**“Say: Sow not, O people, the seeds of dissension amongst men, and contend not with your neighbor. Be patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and confidence in God.”<sup>40</sup>**

**“They must endeavor to consort in a friendly spirit with everyone, must follow moderation in their conduct, must have respect and consideration one for another and show loving-kindness and tender regard to all the peoples of the world. They must be patient and long-suffering, that they may grow to become the divine magnets of the Abhá Kingdom and acquire the dynamic power of the hosts of the realm on high.”<sup>41</sup>**

- What insights do the above passages offer into the relationship between the quality of patience and a pattern of conduct characterized by genuine respect for others?
- Of course, spiritual qualities work in concert with one another to guide action. What other qualities should temper patience? How do we make sure that the exercise of patience does not allow for the perpetuation of injustice, an affront to human dignity?

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**“Thus, through the restoring waters of pure intention and unselfish effort, the earth of human potentialities will blossom with its own latent excellence and flower into praiseworthy qualities, and bear and flourish until it comes to rival that rose garden of knowledge which belonged to our forefathers.”<sup>42</sup>**

**“The third virtue of humanity is goodly intention, which is the foundation of all good deeds. Some seekers after truth have held intention to be superior to action, for a goodly intention is absolute light and is entirely sanctified from the least trace of malice, scheming, or deception. Now, one can perform an action which appears to be righteous but which is in reality prompted by self-interest. For example, a butcher raises a sheep and guards its safety, but this good deed of the butcher is motivated by the hope of profit, and the end result of all this care will be the slaughter of the poor sheep. How many are the goodly and righteous deeds that are in reality prompted by self-interest! But the pure intention is sanctified above such faults.”<sup>43</sup>**

- Sincerity is a fundamental quality that fosters respectful attitudes in us towards our fellow human beings. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states that an action can appear righteous but be prompted by self-interest. How can children be helped to understand that, when they perform good deeds and show respect for others, it is essential for them to have sincere motives and pure intentions?
  
- How can children also be helped to learn that courtesy is an outward manifestation of their sincere love for their friends, for their parents, and for other family members?

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**“... the friends are stars in the high heavens of guidance, celestial bodies in the skies of divine grace, who with all their powers put the dark to flight. They break down the foundations of malevolence and hate. They cherish but one desire for**

**the world and all its peoples: well-being and peace. By them, the ramparts of warfare and aggression are battered down. They have truthfulness and honest dealing and friendship for their goal, and kindness even toward a vicious foe; until at last they change this prison of treachery, the world, into a mansion of utmost trust, and turn this jailhouse of hatred and malevolence and spite, into God’s Paradise.”<sup>44</sup>**

**“If a man were to perform every good work, yet fail in the least scruple to be entirely trustworthy and honest, his good works would become as dry tinder and his failure as a soul-consuming fire. If, on the other hand, he should fall short in all his affairs, yet act with trustworthiness and honesty, all his defects would ultimately be righted, all injuries remedied, and all infirmities healed. Our meaning is that, in the sight of God, trustworthiness is the bedrock of His Faith and the foundation of all virtues and perfections. A man deprived of this quality is destitute of everything. What shall faith and piety avail if trustworthiness be lacking? Of what consequence can they be? What benefit or advantage can they confer? Wherefore ‘Abdu’l-Bahá counselleth the friends—nay, rather, fervently imploreth them—so vigilantly to guard the sanctity of the Cause of God and preserve their own dignity as individuals that all nations shall come to know and honor them for their trustworthiness and integrity.”<sup>45</sup>**

- Clearly, respect for others demands honesty. However, does being frank and honest justify treating others with disrespect? What attitudes and habits should your students develop in order for them to exercise honesty in their interactions without ever offending the hearts of one another?

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## **SECTION 15**

To bring to a close our discussions in these sections, which have aimed to deepen our understanding of the heights of nobility to which we are summoned, let us reflect on the following quotations:

**“We exhort you, O peoples of the world, to observe that which will elevate your station. Hold fast to the fear of God and firmly adhere to what is right. Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk. God hath forgiven what is past. Henceforward everyone should utter that which is meet and seemly, and should refrain from slander, abuse and whatever causeth sadness in men. Lofty is the station of man! Not long ago this exalted Word**

**streamed forth from the treasury of Our Pen of Glory: Great and blessed is this Day—the Day in which all that lay latent in man hath been and will be made manifest. Lofty is the station of man, were he to hold fast to righteousness and truth and to remain firm and steadfast in the Cause. In the eyes of the All-Merciful a true man appeareth even as a firmament; its sun and moon are his sight and hearing, and his shining and resplendent character its stars. His is the loftiest station, and his influence educateth the world of being.”<sup>46</sup>**

**“Thou hast, O my Lord, fashioned immutable realities in the world of existence and created beings of diverse natures. Thou hast desired naught for that noble species—the reality of the human soul—save that it should attain unto the most exalted station, perceive the signs, discover the testimonies, hoist the ensigns of Thy remembrance before all creation, lift up its voice and proclaim Thy name in the world of being, and diffuse the sweet savors of Thy holiness in this nether world—all this, so that its innermost being might mirror forth and reflect the image of the Concourse on high.”<sup>47</sup>**

**“Great is the station of man. Great must also be his endeavors for the rehabilitation of the world and the well-being of nations. I beseech the One true God to graciously confirm thee in that which beseemeth man’s station.”<sup>48</sup>**

It is suggested that you memorize at least one of the above quotations.

## **SECTION 16**

Friendship is the focus of the sixth set of lessons that the children will study and the theme that we will explore in the next few sections.

The understanding the children gained in the previous sets about concepts such as the oneness of humanity, unity and unity in diversity, and justice will be expanded on in Set 6 as you help them think about establishing true and abiding friendships with other souls—a vital aspect of human existence that requires of us the development of certain spiritual qualities. One of the first ideas you will want the children to understand in this respect is that God is their true Friend. Let us look at the following quotations, which give us insight into the nature of the unique bond that connects us with God:

**“O Son of Bounty! Out of the wastes of nothingness, with the clay of My command I made thee to appear, and have ordained for thy training every atom in existence and the essence of all created things. Thus, ere thou didst issue from thy mother’s womb, I destined for thee two founts of gleaming milk, eyes to watch over thee, and hearts to love thee. Out of My loving-kindness, ’neath the shade of My mercy I nurtured thee, and guarded thee by the essence of My grace and favor. And My purpose in all this was that thou mightest attain My everlasting dominion and become worthy of My invisible bestowals.”<sup>49</sup>**

**“O Son of Man! Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty.”<sup>50</sup>**

**“Worldly friends, seeking their own good, appear to love one the other, whereas the true Friend hath loved and doth love you for your own sakes; indeed He hath suffered for your guidance countless afflictions. Be not disloyal to such a Friend, nay rather hasten unto Him. Such is the daystar of the word of truth and faithfulness, that hath dawned above the horizon of the pen of the Lord of all names. Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the word of God, the Help in peril, the Self-Existent.”<sup>51</sup>**

**“O servants! If your heart acheth for the Beloved, lo, the remedy is come! If ye have eyes to see, behold, the shining countenance of the Friend hath appeared! Kindle ye the fire of knowledge and flee from the ignorant. Such are the words of the Lord of the world.”<sup>52</sup>**

**“Close thine eyes to this nether world, open them to the countenance of the incomparable Friend, and commune intimately with His Spirit.”<sup>53</sup>**

**“O Son of Being! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.”<sup>54</sup>**

**“O thou believer in the oneness of God! Know thou that nothing profiteth a soul save the love of the All-Merciful, nothing lighteth up a heart save the splendor that shineth from the realm of the Lord.”<sup>55</sup>**

**“Rely upon God. Trust in Him. Praise Him, and call Him continually to mind. He verily turneth trouble into ease, and sorrow into solace, and toil into utter peace. He verily hath dominion over all things.**

**“If thou wouldst hearken to my words, release thyself from the fetters of whatsoever cometh to pass. Nay rather, under all conditions thank thou thy loving Lord, and yield up thine affairs unto His Will that worketh as He pleaseth. This verily is better for thee than all else, in either world.”<sup>56</sup>**

On the basis of the above quotations, write down some of the phrases you could use in your conversations with the children to help them gain insights into the nature of the bond that connects human beings with their Creator.

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## SECTION 17

We know that there are many attributes of God mentioned in the Writings of the Faith—His grandeur and glory, His majesty and wisdom, His grace and forgiveness, to mention but a few. It is essential that you, as a teacher of Bahá'í children's classes, focus the attention of your students on those attributes that will make them ever aware of God's all-embracing love and His infinite mercy. They should feel surrounded by His bounties at all times and draw strength from the knowledge that He will always be with them.

Statements the children hear from time to time may create confusion in their minds about the nature of their relationship with God, and you will want to take care to avoid making comments that could give rise to such confusion. Look at the list of the names of God below, which represent only the smallest sampling of those we find in the Writings. These are among the attributes that should spring to the children's minds when they think of their Creator and turn their hearts to Him in moments of difficulty and in times of joy.

The Compassionate	The All-Bountiful
The Provider	The Ever-Forgiving
The Helper	The Most Generous
The All-Wise	The Gracious
The All-Knowing	The Most Benevolent
The Ever-Abiding	The All-Merciful
The Succorer	The Bestower
The Clement	The Loving
The Kind	The Help in Peril
The Sustainer	The All-Subduing

In light of the above names and attributes of God, reflect on the following statements. Which would be appropriate for a teacher to use in the context of the relationship the children are forming with their Creator, their true Friend? Try to move beyond simple "yes" or "no" replies and consider what ideas each statement might plant in the minds of young ones and what effects it might have on their tender hearts.

- \_\_\_\_\_ If you misbehave, God will be angry at you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you don't behave well, God will not let you into His Kingdom.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God does not like children who misbehave.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God knows all of our faults and shortcomings, but He overlooks them out of His infinite love for us.

- \_\_\_\_\_ God is watching you at all times and will punish you if you do something wrong.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God keeps track of your misdeeds.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God doesn't expect perfection from us; what is important is that we make an effort.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Do not look at your own weaknesses and shortcomings, but look at the greatness of God and be confident that He will assist you.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conduct of that kind will not attract God's bounties!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Upright conduct will attract God's bounties.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God promises to assist those who make an effort.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God helps those who help others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You have to be deserving of God's love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God's love for you is greater than anything you can imagine.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God tests us to see if we are worthy of His love.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When we put our trust in God, we realize that overcoming tests and difficulties in life can make us better people—more compassionate, more generous, more forgiving.
- \_\_\_\_\_ God knows what is best for us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When we remember that God is the Supreme Protector and put our whole trust in Him, all our fears fade away.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You can always turn to God in prayer and seek His aid and assistance.

## SECTION 18

We have explored in the previous two sections the idea that God is our true Friend and its implications for the way a teacher speaks to the children in classes held for their spiritual education. The idea that immediately follows is the nature of the relationships human beings establish with one another. You are familiar, of course, with the many passages in the Writings of the Faith in which we are exhorted to establish bonds of love, care, and affection with all people, irrespective of their background. To remind ourselves of this ever-present theme, let us read the following two statements of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

**“In whatsoever land they dwell, let them with a whole heart befriend and be companions to those who are either close to them, or far removed.”<sup>57</sup>**

**“Cleanse ye your eyes, so that ye behold no man as different from yourselves. See ye no strangers; rather see all men as friends, for love and unity come hard when ye fix your gaze on otherness. And in this new and wondrous age, the Holy Writings say that we must be at one with every people; that we must see neither harshness nor injustice, neither malevolence, nor hostility, nor hate, but rather turn our eyes toward the heaven of ancient glory. For each of the creatures is a sign of God, and it was by the grace of the Lord and His power that each did step into the world; therefore they are not strangers, but in the family; not aliens, but friends, and to be treated as such.”<sup>58</sup>**

What are some of the spiritual qualities that we should develop if we are to form the kind of relationships ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wishes us to have with our fellow human beings?

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## **SECTION 19**

Trustworthiness must have been one of the spiritual qualities you identified in response to the question in the previous section. You have already tried to foster this quality in children, especially when presenting Lesson 19 of Grade 1, and the corresponding quotations you studied in the second unit of Book 3 in preparation for teaching that lesson have no doubt been a great source of insight. You will now need to go further and help your students understand that trustworthiness is the foundation on which enduring bonds of friendship are formed. To explore this idea with your fellow participants in this course, read the passages below and discuss the questions that follow.

**“Beware lest ye encroach upon the substance of your neighbor. Prove yourselves worthy of his trust and confidence in you . . .”<sup>59</sup>**

**“The first, the fundamental purpose underlying creation hath ever been, and will continue to be, none other than the appearance of trustworthiness and godliness, of sincerity and goodwill amongst mankind, for these qualities are the cause of peace, security and tranquility.”<sup>60</sup>**

**“I counsel you, O friends of God, to comport yourselves with the utmost trustworthiness in your dealings with my servants and people. By its aid shall the Cause of God be promoted throughout the world and its exalted sanctity become manifest to all creation. Be ye the repositories of the trust of all men.”<sup>61</sup>**

**“It behooveth thee to be content with the Will of God, and a true and loving and trusted friend to all the peoples of the earth, without any exceptions whatever. This is the quality of the sincere, the way of the saints, the emblem of those who believe in the unity of God, and the raiment of the people of Bahá.”<sup>62</sup>**

1. What is the nature of trust in friendship?

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2. What makes us worthy of the trust of our fellow human beings?

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## **SECTION 20**

What your discussions of the above questions must have made clear to you is that children need to have some basic understanding of the concept of trust if they are to develop patterns of conduct that will enable them to establish lasting ties of friendship with others. While your aims will be modest in this respect, you will want them to appreciate that true friends trust each other. They should also gain some insight into what such trust entails—in other words, what it means to be worthy of the trust of a friend. There is one idea that you would do well to remember in discussing this subject with the children: When trust exists between two friends, it does not mean that one accepts blindly whatever the other says or does; a friend has an obligation to help the other when he or she strays off the straight path. In a similar vein, when a friend lies and cheats, despite numerous counsels, then this person cannot be trusted until he or she changes and becomes truthful and trustworthy. To help you think further about these points, decide which of the following statements are true:

\_\_\_\_\_ Children should understand that it is possible to be kind and courteous to all people, whether or not they know them well.

\_\_\_\_\_ Children should be taught to show kindness when a new child moves into their neighborhood or village, or is introduced into their class, and to make sure that he or she does not feel left out.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Children can learn to recognize when someone, under the guise of friendship, is trying to take advantage of them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Being friendly to all means never judging anyone and treating everyone the same.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If children grow up to be trusting individuals, they will be naive and will become victims of society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children should learn that we are worthy of the trust of our friends when we are truthful.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children cannot earn the trust of their friends if they take their belongings without their permission.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A good friend is trusting and does not question the choices his or her friends make.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Children need to learn that they become worthy of the trust of their friends when they keep their promises.
- \_\_\_\_\_ In true friendship, trust has no limits; there is nothing a good friend would not do for the other.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes true friends make promises that become impossible to fulfill, but their friendship remains intact because they trust and love one another.
- \_\_\_\_\_ True friends trust each other so much that they do not hesitate to raise their concern when they feel their friend is making an unwise choice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lying and cheating break the bond of trust between two friends.

## SECTION 21

Kindness is another spiritual quality that is vital in establishing enduring bonds of friendship with our fellow human beings. In our interactions with others, we are called upon to be “sincerely kind, not in appearance only”. An attitude of care is spontaneously expressed in words and deeds by someone who possesses a kind heart. Discuss some of the manifestations of this attitude in human relationships and write your thoughts in the space below.

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Some children in your class may come from large families, with brothers, sisters and cousins, both older and younger, and they know what it means to care for their younger siblings, for example. Indeed, they may even have specific responsibilities they must shoulder in this respect. You should build on this understanding to help them think about what it means to care for one's friends. It is important for children to learn that friends are not just those with whom they play and have fun. We accompany our friends through times of sorrow; we help them in times of need; we do not leave friends behind and find new ones at the first sign of difficulty. Read and reflect on the following quotations:

**“Never is it the wish of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to see any being hurt, nor will He make anyone to grieve; for man can receive no greater gift than this, that he rejoice another’s heart. I beg of God that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.”<sup>63</sup>**

**“Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another’s projects and plans. Grieve over one another. . . . Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all . . .”<sup>64</sup>**

You must have gained certain insights from teaching earlier lessons into how an attitude of care can be cultivated among a group of children. Describe some of the approaches you employed in this regard, specifically when children were interacting with one another as they engaged in the various activities of the lessons.

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Were there any instances in which the children manifested unkind conduct? Did you, for example, notice bullying among some of them, the use of harsh language, or rough behavior during a game? What steps did you take to address such conduct so as to nurture in them the quality of kindness and help them express it through caring for others?

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## **SECTION 22**

Generosity is yet another quality necessary to examine in connection with being a good friend. This quality, like trustworthiness and kindness, will be familiar to the children. They learned in the first grade that, just as God is generous with His creation, we, too, should give

generously to others of our belongings, our time, our love, and all the good things with which we have been blessed. You will now need to assist them in going further, as they learn about generosity in the context of developing patterns of conduct necessary for building bonds of love and trust with others. To reflect on this idea, read the quotations below and carry out the discussion that follows.

**“O ye kind friends! Uplift your magnanimity and soar high toward the apex of heaven so that your blessed hearts may become illumined more and more, day by day, through the rays of the Sun of Reality . . .”<sup>65</sup>**

**“In this wondrous age, however, praised be God, the commandments of God are not delimited, not restricted to any one group of people, rather have all the friends been commanded to show forth fellowship and love, consideration and generosity and loving-kindness to every community on earth.”<sup>66</sup>**

**“I entreat Thee moreover, O my God, to graciously enable my loved ones to show their hospitality unto Thee through their character and their conduct, that the heavenly table of Thy loving-kindness may thereby be spread before all Thy servants and that all the peoples of the world may gather round it. This, verily, is the true meaning of offering hospitality unto one’s fellow men.”<sup>67</sup>**

**“The magnanimity of man must be heavenly or, in other words, it must be assisted by the divine confirmation, so that he may become the cause of the illumination of the world of humanity.”<sup>68</sup>**

Discuss with your group some ideas, based on the above quotations, that you could share with children about manifesting generosity in all their relationships. Write down some of your thoughts in the space below.

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## **SECTION 23**

Let us take the above discussion further. Young children tend to have a natural desire to show their love and friendship for others by selflessly giving away material things. You will need to help them see that generosity is especially manifested when they give of things that are dear to them. They will surely have already learned that the act of giving brings joy to others

and that, when they give, they too share in that joy. You should do your utmost to reinforce this pattern of conduct, assisting your students to move beyond the offering of physical objects to other acts of giving—giving freely and joyfully of their time and energy, their talents and knowledge. You will want to encourage them to be friends with everyone in the class and to rejoice in their successes and in seeing love and friendliness manifested among all the people around them.

Consult with the members of your group about what approaches and strategies you could take to encourage expressions of generosity among your students as they strengthen bonds of friendship.

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## SECTION 24

Generosity and forgiveness are inseparable spiritual qualities. With generous hearts, we are able to overlook the shortcomings of our friends, to show mercy, and to focus on their praiseworthy attributes. Of course, your students learned about forgiveness in Grade 1, where they reflected on the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the governor of ‘Akká and memorized the following passage: “. . . let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favored of God.” Now, in helping to strengthen in them patterns of conduct that forging lasting bonds of friendship demands, you will need to encourage them to think again about the quality of forgiveness and the habits and attitudes that spring from it. In this connection, you should keep in mind the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that “souls are inclined toward estrangement”. The children should be assisted in understanding that, even among friends that deeply care for one another, the tiniest feelings of hurt, if not immediately addressed, can lead to separation. The quotations below will offer you further insight into the quality of forgiveness as it pertains to friendship.

**“O Emigrants! The tongue I have designed for the mention of Me, defile it not with detraction. If the fire of self overcome you, remember your own faults and not the faults of My creatures, inasmuch as every one of you knoweth his own self better than he knoweth others.”<sup>69</sup>**

**“Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy.”<sup>70</sup>**



**“One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race. If, however, we look at people from the standpoint of their faults, then being a friend to them is a formidable task.”<sup>71</sup>**

**“Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If someone commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him.”<sup>72</sup>**

Which of the following statements express ideas that you should assist your students in understanding about the importance of forgiveness in friendships? In going through the statements, discuss their implications with the other members of your group.

- \_\_\_\_\_ We show weakness if we forgive a friend who has hurt our feelings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We will be able to overlook the imperfections of our friends if we sincerely love them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We should not wait for our friends to apologize before we forgive them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We, too, should be ready to apologize to our friends when we make mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We should remember our own faults whenever we notice shortcomings in a friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When we love our friends for the sake of God, we are able to forgive them when they do something that hurts us.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If we look for them, we will always find imperfections in our friends and will be disappointed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The bond that connects us to our friends will endure if we always try to look to the good qualities in them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ We are better than our friends because we see their faults and forgive them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Since no one is perfect, we hope that our friends will be forgiving towards us and overlook our shortcomings.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a friend says something that hurts us, we should answer with words that are equally hurtful to teach him or her a lesson.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If our friends do something that hurts us, we should forgive them instantly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When a friend does something that upsets us, we should tell others what he or she has done.
- \_\_\_\_\_ As soon as some misunderstanding enters the relationship between two friends, they should forgive one another instantly and do their best to resolve it.

## SECTION 25

Having reflected on the importance of trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness in friendship, you are encouraged to meditate on the following passage before we move on to the next theme:

**“We love to see you at all times consorting in amity and concord within the paradise of My good-pleasure, and to inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counseleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful. We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us.”<sup>73</sup>**

You may wish to commit the above quotation to memory.

## SECTION 26

Devoting one’s life to service is a central theme that you will need to address in your efforts to cultivate appropriate attitudes in children and assist them in forming patterns of conduct in conformity with the teachings of the Faith. The three lessons of Set 7 take up this theme, and this and the next few sections will enable you to deepen your own understanding of the concept of service and its significance in the lives of your students.

First let us consider how, in teaching the children in your community, you have been striving to connect their hearts to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. You have helped them to reflect on stories from His life, stories that gave them a glimpse of how He dedicated Himself to the service of humanity and how He showered with genuine love every member of the human family, especially the poor and the downtrodden. Indeed, as you know, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá considered His station to be the station of complete servitude. Below are His own words in this regard.

**“My name is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. My qualification is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. My reality is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. My praise is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion . . . No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.”<sup>74</sup>**

**“No melody can fill this yearning soul with such joy and rapture as the call of ‘O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!’ And no sweet accents warbled by the birds of the orchards can thrill my heart with such delight as the dulcet tune of ‘O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!’ This melody causeth my heart to leap with joy, and these wondrous words fill me with blissful rapture, but only on condition that this name be accompanied by no other epithets of praise, and paired with no other titles. The designation should be ‘‘Abdu’l-Bahá’ alone for it to bestow boundless joy upon my heart and soul. This is my qualification and my station, this is my title and my glory, and this indeed is my highest aspiration throughout eternity.”<sup>75</sup>**

**“O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones, strengthen me in my servitude to Thee, illumine my brow with the light of adoration in Thy court**

**of holiness, and of prayer to Thy kingdom of grandeur. Help me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.”<sup>76</sup>**

And in these words He asks us to follow in His footsteps:

**“See ye, therefore, to your own tasks: guide ye the people and educate them in the ways of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Deliver to mankind this joyous message from the Abhá Realm. Rest not, by day or night; seek ye no moment’s peace. Strive ye with all your might to bring to men’s ears these happy tidings. In your love for God and your attachment to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, accept ye every tribulation, every sorrow. Endure the aggressor’s taunts, put up with the enemy’s reproaches. Follow in the footsteps of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and in the pathway of the Abhá Beauty, long at every moment to give up your lives. Shine out like the daystar, be unresting as the sea; even as the clouds of heaven, shed ye life upon field and hill, and like unto April winds, blow freshness through those human trees, and bring them to their blossoming.”<sup>77</sup>**

Having reflected on the above quotations, take a moment to discuss with the members of your group why it is so important that children’s understanding of what is meant by service be shaped by the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

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Let us now memorize these words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

**“My highest wish and desire is that ye who are my children may be educated according to the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh and may receive a Bahá’í training; that ye may each become a lighted candle in the world of humanity, may be devoted to the service of all mankind, may give up your rest and comfort, so that ye may become the cause of the tranquility of the world of creation.”<sup>78</sup>**

## **SECTION 27**

Of course, you will want the children you teach to understand that we are all God’s servants and abide by His commands. We serve God through our service to humanity, preferring others over ourselves. We see everyone as part of one family and strive to contribute to the benefit of all, with our thoughts fixed steadfastly on Him. Read the quotations below about the nature of service and carry out the exercises that follow.

**“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.”<sup>79</sup>**

**“It ill beseemeth men to center all their efforts on their own selves; rather must they ceaselessly strive for the betterment of the lives of one another.”<sup>80</sup>**

**“It is Our wish and desire that every one of you may become a source of all goodness unto men, and an example of uprightness to mankind. Beware lest ye prefer yourselves above your neighbors.”<sup>81</sup>**

**“Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare. In the path of God one must forget himself entirely. He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others.”<sup>82</sup>**

**“Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds and not through the tongue; for the latter hath no importance, as the majority of men are, in speech, well-wishers, while action is the best.”<sup>83</sup>**

**“You belong to the world of purity, and are not content to live the life of the animal, spending your days in eating, drinking, and sleeping. . . . Your thoughts and ambitions are set to acquire human perfection. You live to do good and to bring happiness to others. Your greatest longing is to comfort those who mourn, to strengthen the weak, and to be the cause of hope to the despairing soul. Day and night your thoughts are turned to the Kingdom, and your hearts are full of the Love of God.”<sup>84</sup>**

No doubt, in reading through the above quotations, you noted some important ideas that you will want to keep in mind in addressing the subject of service with the children. You may find it helpful to write some of these in the space below.

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From a tender age, children should begin to develop a real sense of enthusiasm towards serving others—their parents, their siblings, members of their extended families, their friends and neighbors. The qualities and attitudes that shape the patterns of conduct of those who will

become true servants of humanity should, then, be developed early in life. Youngsters should come to see servitude as a station to which they aspire, one of true honor. The Writings of the Faith make it clear that the merit of an individual is to be found not in the “pageantry of wealth and riches” but in service to the good of society and manifesting heavenly attributes. That your students feel the joy of what it means to serve their fellow human beings should be one of your central concerns. Look at the list below. Which do you feel would reinforce in a child’s mind the sense of honor that should be associated with service?

- \_\_\_\_\_ When a child misbehaves, he or she is punished with chores.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When a child behaves well, he or she is rewarded with time to watch television or play a video game.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child is helped to see that being of service to one’s family is a privilege that helps one grow spiritually.
- \_\_\_\_\_ An apologetic tone is used when a child is asked to undertake some form of service, for instance, helping another student or a brother or sister.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stories related to the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are woven naturally into the fabric of a child’s life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A relationship is established between a child and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at an early age.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child sees in those around him or her an eagerness to serve others and senses their joy in doing so.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child often hears those around him or her complaining when serving others.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child sees that members of his or her family spend a great deal of their time carrying out service to the community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child is taught about the importance of service but sees that family members take the greatest pride in the accumulation of material things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Though everyone talks about the importance of service, a child sees that those who earn a livelihood serving others, for example, the bus driver or the shopkeeper, are not treated with respect.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A child sees that his or her parents treat those who earn a livelihood serving others, for example, the bus driver or the shopkeeper, with great respect.

## SECTION 28

Integral to the concept of service is selflessness, and you will need to give this subject a great deal of thought. It is logical to assume, of course, that service, by its very nature, is selfless since one is helping others. But as with so many things we do, it is possible to approach the question of service from one of two positions: from the position of self or from the position

of selflessness. To approach something from a self-centered position is not necessarily to be egotistic. One may have a true desire to serve humanity, with purity of motive, with absolute sincerity, with no underlying objective for personal gain, yet approach one's service with self at the center, thinking in terms of "my service", the use of "my unique talents", "my spiritual development" and the satisfaction "I" derive from "my acts of service".

In your efforts as a teacher of Bahá'í children's classes, it will be important for you to bear the above ideas in mind, if you are to avoid reinforcing, however unintentionally, the "insistent self" in your students. This will not be an easy task. On the one hand, you will want to encourage and praise them and help them to become aware of the joy that one derives from service. On the other, you should avoid giving them the impression that the central concern in service is how they feel. By focusing primarily on the work to be done and on the desire to carry out such work well, rather than on their feelings, you can help protect your students from becoming trapped in the "prison of self". To end your study of this section, you may wish to reflect on the following quotations:

**"May no trace of self be detected from their conduct and manners, from their words and deeds. Man's greatness lieth in humility, and his abiding glory is found in lowliness, self-effacement, and servitude to the servants of the Lord. This, verily, is the greatest attainment in this resplendent Day."**<sup>85</sup>

**"Servitude to God lieth in servitude to the friends. One must be the essence of humility and the embodiment of meekness. One must become evanescence itself and be healed of every disease of the self, in order to become worthy of thralldom to the Threshold of the Almighty."**<sup>86</sup>

## SECTION 29

In the three lessons of Set 7, dedicated to the theme of service, you will help the children to see how the qualities they learned about in Grade 1 can be manifested in habits of thought and patterns of conduct. You know that passivity is bred by the many forces acting in society today. But the conduct you hope to nurture in your students does not only require good compartmentment and avoidance of wrongdoing; it involves active engagement in service. In the context of making diligent effort, remembrance of God takes on particular significance. To work diligently and to remember our Lord as we act helps connect our hearts with our Creator and attract His confirmations and assistance. Reflect on the following quotations:

**"Indulge not your bodies with rest, but work with all your souls, and with all your hearts cry out and beg of God to grant you His succor and grace. Thus may ye make this world the Abhá Paradise, and this globe of earth the parade ground of the realm on high. If only ye exert the effort, it is certain that these splendors will shine out, these clouds of mercy will shed down their rain, these life-giving winds will rise and blow, this sweet-smelling musk will be scattered far and wide."**<sup>87</sup>

**"Seize thy chance, exert every effort, and pay no heed to matters that do not yield any fruit."**<sup>88</sup>

**“O ye true friends! Make ye a mighty effort, that this world may become another world and this darksome earth may become shining and resplendent through the rays of the Sun of Truth.”<sup>89</sup>**

**“Service is the magnet which draws the divine confirmations. Thus, when a person is active, they are blessed by the Holy Spirit. When they are inactive, the Holy Spirit cannot find a repository in their being, and thus they are deprived of its healing and quickening rays.”<sup>90</sup>**

How do you explain to children the idea that a fruitful life is one that is dedicated to serving others?

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What is the significance of introducing to children the idea that confirmations of God are dependent upon exerting effort in His path?

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There are certain habits, inclinations, and attitudes that contribute to passivity in an individual. Below are some examples. Add a few others.

- pessimism
- desire to be entertained
- preoccupation with self
- fear of failure
- competitiveness

- distraction
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Below are examples of attributes that help one resist passivity. Can you name a few others?

- submissiveness before God
- trust in God
- hopefulness
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Obviously, the type of action that children are to be encouraged to undertake should focus on benefiting others. Consult with the members of your study group on the following question: How are passivity and apathy bred from childhood by educational approaches that promote self-centeredness?

### SECTION 30

You have already given some thought to how true service demands selflessness. It would be worthwhile, then, to examine a few other spiritual qualities that are essential to a life of selfless service. Reflect on the following three sets of quotations. As you do so, discuss the questions that follow each set.

**“So far as ye are able, ignite a candle of love in every meeting, and with tenderness rejoice and cheer ye every heart.”<sup>91</sup>**

**“Happy the soul that shall forget his own good, and like the chosen ones of God, vie with his fellows in service to the good of all . . .”<sup>92</sup>**

**“It is hoped that, through the bounties of the All-Glorious Lord, thou wilt achieve even greater success than before, wilt cheer all the friends through distinguished services, and wilt, at all times, arise as an obedient servant to render service to the loved ones of God, for service to the loved ones of God is service to God.”<sup>93</sup>**

- Children derive happiness from service, and naturally you will want to encourage them to serve others and to show forth joy in doing so. How can you help them increase the joy of service in their hearts without fostering in them an expectation for praise and recognition?



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**“Strive, therefore, with heart and soul that ye become ignited candles in the assemblage of the world, glittering stars on the horizon of Truth and may become the cause of the propagation of the light of the Kingdom; in order that the world of humanity may be converted into a divine realm, the nether world may become the world on high, the love of God and the mercy of the Lord may raise their canopy upon the apex of the world, human souls may become the waves of the ocean of truth, the world of humanity may grow into one blessed tree, the verses of oneness may be chanted and the melodies of sanctity may reach the Supreme Concourse.**

**“Day and night I entreat and supplicate to the Kingdom of God and beg for you infinite assistance and confirmation. Do not take into consideration your own aptitudes and capacities, but fix your gaze on the consummate bounty, the divine bestowal and the power of the Holy Spirit—the power that converteth the drop into a sea and the star into a sun.”<sup>94</sup>**

**“Be assured of God’s sustaining grace, and engage thyself with service to His Faith.”<sup>95</sup>**

**“Lift up your hearts above the present and look with eyes of faith into the future! Today the seed is sown, the grain falls upon the earth, but behold the day will come when it shall rise a glorious tree and the branches thereof shall be laden with fruit. Rejoice and be glad that this day has dawned, try to realize its power, for it is indeed wonderful! God has crowned you with honor and in your hearts has He set a radiant star; verily the light thereof shall brighten the whole world!”<sup>96</sup>**

**“Say: Beware, O people of Bahá, lest the strong ones of the earth rob you of your strength, or they who rule the world fill you with fear. Put your trust in God, and commit your affairs to His keeping. He, verily, will, through the power of truth, render you victorious, and He, verily, is powerful to do what He willeth, and in His grasp are the reins of omnipotent might.”<sup>97</sup>**

- What advice can teachers give children to help them understand that hopefulness is essential to service? How can they be assisted in seeing that this quality takes root in their hearts through faith in God?

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**“To whatever place We may be banished, however great the tribulation We may suffer, they who are the people of God must, with fixed resolve and perfect confidence, keep their eyes directed towards the Dayspring of Glory, and be busied in whatever may be conducive to the betterment of the world and the education of its peoples.”<sup>98</sup>**

**“O ye lovers of God! Make firm your steps; fulfill your pledge to one another; go forth in harmony to scatter abroad the sweet savors of God’s love, and to establish His Teachings, until ye breathe a soul into the dead body of this world, and bring true healing in the physical and spiritual realms to everyone who aileth.”<sup>99</sup>**

**“Rest not, even for an instant, and seek not comfort, even for a moment; rather labor with heart and soul that thou mayest render devoted service to but one amongst the friends and bring happiness and joy to but one luminous heart. This is true bounty, and by it the brow of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is illumined. Be thou my partner and associate therein.”<sup>100</sup>**

- Children need to learn that they are bound to face challenges and obstacles in serving God and humanity. How can they be assisted to persevere in their efforts and to understand that ultimately it is steadfastness in the path of God that yields luscious fruits?

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## **SECTION 31**

Service can be woven into the everyday life of a child. Even from an early age, children can learn to serve others in diverse settings: during class, in their homes, and in the community. As they seize opportunities such settings provide to perform goodly deeds that assist those around them, they develop, over time, the necessary skills and abilities, attitudes and habits. In this connection, think about what role the example of the teacher plays in attracting the hearts and minds of young ones towards selfless service. Why is his or her example so important? Write down some of the characteristics of a teacher who demonstrates a genuine spirit of service.

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Now think about your students. You have surely encouraged them to cooperate with each other and to assist you with simple tasks. What opportunities have you provided for them? What approaches have you taken to help them serve in the setting of the class? What have you learned from the experience you have gained thus far? Discuss these questions with your fellow teachers.

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In the context of a children’s class, it is natural for unexpected and perhaps challenging situations to arise. When they do, your students will often feel a desire to help in some way. Review the following scenarios and consult with the members of your group about how you might assist the children in finding opportunities to demonstrate a spirit of service:

- For one class, only two children show up because the other students are sick.
- One of the children becomes upset during the class and starts crying.
- A new student joins the class and finds it difficult to make friends with the others.
- The grandfather of one of the students falls sick.
- The courtyard where the class is held is full of mud and debris after a rainstorm.

## **SECTION 32**

Besides the times when you are together with the children for class, you can help foster their capacity for service by eliciting the assistance of their parents. What are some of the ways you can collaborate with parents to cultivate in their sons and daughters a desire to be of service to others? How might you explain to parents the concepts related to service that their children are learning in class?

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How might you work with parents to identify small acts the children could undertake to serve their families, their neighbors, and their community?

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### SECTION 33

To conclude our discussions of the present theme, devoting one’s life to service, it would be fitting to take a moment and reflect on the following statement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—this, in order to gain insights into the significance of the service those who teach the younger generations render to humanity:

**“How excellent, how honorable is man if he arises to fulfill his responsibilities; how wretched and contemptible, if he shuts his eyes to the welfare of society and wastes his precious life in pursuing his own selfish interests and personal advantages. Supreme happiness is man’s, and he beholds the signs of God in the world and in the human soul, if he urges on the steed of high endeavor in the arena of civilization and justice.”<sup>101</sup>**

**“Again, is there any deed in the world that would be nobler than service to the common good? Is there any greater blessing conceivable for a man, than that he should become the cause of the education, the development, the prosperity and honor of his fellow-creatures?”<sup>102</sup>**

Finally, you may wish to memorize the following quotation:

**“O ye lovers of God! Be kind to all peoples; care for every person; do all ye can to purify the hearts and minds of men; strive ye to gladden every soul. To every meadow be a shower of grace, to every tree the water of life; be as sweet musk to the sense of humankind, and to the ailing be a fresh, restoring breeze. Be pleasing waters to all those who thirst, a careful guide to all who have lost their way; be father and mother to the orphan, be loving sons and daughters to the old, be an abundant treasure to the poor.”<sup>103</sup>**

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# Lessons for Children's Classes Sets 4–7

## Purpose

To develop further the capability of teaching classes for children consisting of the memorization of prayers and quotations, songs, stories, drama, and drawing and art



## SECTION 1

The previous unit of this book was dedicated to the exploration of four themes, each concerned with some aspect of the relationships we establish with our fellow human beings: living in harmony with others, respecting human dignity, being a good friend, and devoting one's life to service. There you were given an opportunity to reflect on the significance of these themes to a proper education and to think about how spiritual qualities, as faculties of the human soul, underlie all the attitudes and habits associated with an upright and noble character.

In this second unit, you will examine four sets of three lessons each—twelve in all—that seek to assist children in exploring these same themes. The lessons here are much like the ones in Sets 1 to 3 in the first branch course of Book 3, as are the preliminary sections for teachers, which will help you to analyze their content. And, as with Sets 1 to 3, it will be important for you to pause after you have familiarized yourself with the various components of each set and practice carrying out the activities with your fellow teachers in this course. Remember, too, that, however you choose to distribute the suggested content of each lesson across class periods, you should try to establish a suitable rhythm between active and more tranquil activities. More crucially, you should make sure that its core elements, which are intended to shed light on the habits and pattern of conduct that are a reflection of inner spiritual qualities—particularly, the quotation for memorization and the story—remain the central focus from one class period to another.

## SECTION 2

In the lessons of Set 4, you will be helping your students to think about the implications of what it means to live in harmony with others, a requirement of being an effective member of any community. To begin, take a moment to look over the lessons, appended at the end of the unit, and write down a few sentences about the central ideas in each.

Lesson 4.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 4.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 4.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have identified some of the concepts you will be addressing with the children, you are encouraged to study the sections that follow to assist you in shaping your approach to their presentation.

### SECTION 3

It is suggested that, during these three lessons, the children commit to memory the prayer below, which resonates with the overall theme of Set 4. Of course, as usual, you will first endeavor to help them gain a reasonable understanding of the prayer by explaining any key words or phrases that may be unfamiliar to them or that may require some reinforcement. With the other members of your group, identify any such words and phrases. How might you explain their meaning?

**“O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.**

**“Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.”<sup>1</sup>**

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### SECTION 4

As you will have seen in your initial review of the lessons, in moving through them with your students, you will examine the nature of true unity, the need to treat all people with fairness, and the importance of cooperating with others—this, with the aim of reinforcing those habits and patterns of conduct that enable individuals to work together towards a common goal and reap the benefits of the power of unity.

In Sections 2 to 8 of the previous unit, we gave some thought to concepts relevant to the overall theme of this set, in light of the Writings of the Faith, concepts such as unity, diversity, unity in diversity, the interconnectedness of all things, and the oneness of humankind. We also explored the indispensability of justice and fairness to the establishment of unity and the need for cooperation in collective action. Further, it became clear that, to enable children to contribute to unity and harmony, certain spiritual qualities have to be fostered in them. Now, as you begin to think about how you will assist your students in strengthening the habits and patterns of conduct that are conducive to a life lived in harmony with others, it would be helpful

for you to read again the introductory comments and quotations for memorization in the lessons of Set 4 and discuss the following questions in your group:

- a. How does the analogy of a garden in Lesson 4.1 help children understand the concept of unity in diversity?

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- b. What will you say to the children to explain to them that the example ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sets for us through His words and actions shows us how harmony and unity can be established among all people?

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- c. How does the metaphor of the human body help the children gain insights into the oneness of humankind and the need to work together in unity?

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- d. What are some of the powers released through unified thought and action?

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- e. In introducing the theme of Lesson 4.2, you will want to help the children understand that we will treat everyone with fairness and justice if we see them as members of our own family. What insights do you hope they will gain into justice and fairness as requirements of living in harmony with their fellow human beings?

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- f. How will you, in discussing with children the ideas set out in Lesson 4.2, help them recognize the importance of showing forth fairness in the way they treat others rather than simply expecting others to be fair towards them?

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- g. What can children learn about the relationship between justice and trustworthiness by reflecting on the way ‘Abdu’l-Bahá treated people?

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- h. How do the introductory comments in Lesson 4.3 give children some idea of the importance of cooperation and what attitudes and dispositions are necessary if we are to accomplish things together? What attributes are mentioned?

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- i. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words of wisdom in relation to cooperation will help children see that, unlike some of God’s creatures, human beings cannot live in isolation but were, instead, created to cooperate with one another. How can you assist them in understanding that it is through association that we find happiness and develop individually and collectively?

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As in earlier lessons, you will need to help the children grasp the meaning of some of the key words and phrases in the quotations they will memorize here. As an assistance to you, some explanatory sentences for a few such words are, as always, provided in the lessons. You are encouraged to write an additional sentence for each one, placing it in a context familiar to the children in your class.



Powerful: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Illuminate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Endow: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Strive: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Supreme: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cooperation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reciprocity: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 5**

As you know, in every class period you will sing some songs with the children, and to prepare for this element of each lesson, you should choose at least one or two that are in some way connected to its theme. For example, singing together “In Japan”, one of the songs in the collection provided, could reinforce in the minds and hearts of your students the concept of the oneness of humanity. Of course, you may know other songs composed locally that may be suitable as well.

Lesson 4.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 4.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 4.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 6

Let us now turn to the stories of Set 4, each of which will help the children understand some dimension of what it means to live in harmony with others. After rereading them, discuss the questions below with your fellow teachers in this course.

The story in Lesson 4.1 is but one example from countless episodes in the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá—a life dedicated to raising consciousness of the oneness of humanity—which give us a glimpse of His spiritual power to create unity and concord among diverse, and at times contending, people. In this episode, two gentlemen, who are at odds with each other when they arrive to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, leave His presence as friends, their hearts uplifted by His loving guidance. In narrating this story, what details will you be sure to include so that the children understand the message it conveys? What spiritual qualities do you hope the children will recognize as essential to our efforts to build unity in our families and in our community?

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In Lesson 4.2, the children will listen to a story in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá helps a merchant set aside his prejudices towards Bahá’ís and act with justice instead. We know that ignorance is one of the root causes of prejudice. What truths did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá help the merchant understand? How will the story enable the children to see that, without justice, we cannot attain unity and that justice requires the abolition of prejudice?

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Finally, the story of Nettie Tobin in Lesson 4.3 illustrates how essential cooperation is to achieving noble goals. With great effort and the help of many people along the way, Nettie was able to bring a heavy stone to the site of the first Bahá'í Temple in North America, the stone that 'Abdu'l-Bahá would choose as its cornerstone. Which details will be most important to convey if the children are to grasp the central message of the story? What do you hope your students will understand about the need for cooperation in our undertakings and about the fruits that working together in unity can yield?

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## SECTION 7

While acknowledging that many spiritual qualities contribute to the formation of the habits and patterns of conduct that this set of lessons addresses, we examined four such qualities in the previous unit that seem especially significant in striving to live in harmony with others—justice, love, radiance, and compassion. In this connection, you will have noted that the quotations the children memorized last year related to these qualities are included in Lesson 4.1. Besides reviewing the verses with your students, you will no doubt wish to help them see how, in the absence of these qualities, it would prove difficult, if not impossible, to contribute to the establishment of harmony and unity. You should take some time now to identify where in the three lessons of this set, particularly in introducing the quotations and in narrating the stories, it would be natural for you to integrate relevant ideas into your discussions. Write a few of your thoughts in the space below.

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## SECTION 8

To prepare to lead your students through the drama portion of the class, review the activities suggested in each lesson. As in the lessons for Sets 1 to 3, there are two kinds of drama activities here: those that help the children develop certain basic skills and those that aim at reinforcing what they have learned in the lesson. You will, as always, need to give clear instructions to the children to guide them through the steps outlined, especially for the second set of activities, which may also require some advance preparation.

Now, turn to the activity in Lesson 4.1 about the fingers on Ramiro's hand. What would you say to make sure the children understand the instructions? Would you want to bring any props? Would it be helpful for the class if you demonstrated how they should move their hands as you tell the story of Ramiro's thumb and fingers?

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Similarly, the students may need some assistance in carrying out the improvisation in Lesson 4.2, in which you will play the part of the schoolteacher and they will take on the role of the villagers. How will you help your students think through the details of the scene and the two different endings they will act out?

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Finally, in Lesson 4.3, the students are asked to think of some situations in which multiple people must cooperate to achieve a goal. The instructions offer a few examples. Are there others you can think of that relate to the lives of the children in your class?

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## SECTION 9

The final component of the lessons relates to art and drawing. In Sets 1 to 3, the children developed some familiarity with the elements of line, shape, and texture. In Sets 4 to 7, they will explore a few more fundamental elements of art. Many of the activities will require a good deal of preparation on the part of the teacher, and you will need to give some thought as to how best to carry out each one in light of the particular circumstances of the class you are teaching. Additionally, the activities in these sets often call for more supplies than those in earlier sets, and teachers may at times find it necessary to make adjustments according to the resources available.

Reread through the art exercises in the lessons of Set 4, in which the children will begin to learn about the element of color. Discuss with the members of your group how you will explain to the children the purpose of each activity and what is expected of them. Think, too, of what preparations you will need to make in advance for this period of the class.

Lesson 4.1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Lesson 4.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Lesson 4.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 10**

The lessons of Set 5 seek to assist children in developing those habits and patterns of conduct engendered by respect for the dignity of all people and in understanding what it means to appreciate the inherent nobility of every human being. You are encouraged to read the three lessons and then describe the principal concepts addressed in each.

Lesson 5.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 5.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 5.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Now turn your attention to the sections that follow, which will assist you in preparing to teach the lessons of this set.

## SECTION 11

Over the course of these lessons, you will help the children to memorize the following prayer. Read it with the members of your group and then identify which words or phrases may require some explanation, if the children are to grasp to a sufficient degree the meaning of the prayer before they begin to memorize it. You can include some of your ideas below.

**“O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee.**

**“Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.”<sup>2</sup>**

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## SECTION 12

As you will have seen in reading through the three lessons of Set 5, they begin with a discussion of nobility, reminding the children that we should take care never to do anything that could rob us of the gems with which we have been endowed or undermine the inherent nobility of others. In this context, the children will think about how the quality of courtesy is essential in expressing our respect for every human being and why we must eliminate prejudice from our hearts if we are to uphold our own dignity and the dignity of all those we encounter.

You will recall that Sections 9 to 15 of the previous unit addressed many of the above concepts related to the theme of respecting human dignity, as well as others such as the potential inherent in every individual to show forth God’s names and attributes and the two natures of the human being, the higher and the lower. We also examined, in addition to courtesy, three spiritual qualities that are crucial to manifesting genuine respect for others: patience, sincerity, and honesty. Take a moment now to reread the introductory paragraphs in Lessons 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, as well as the quotations for memorization, and then discuss with the members of your group the following questions, which will assist you in considering how you will share the above ideas with your students:

- a. Children need to understand that God has created everyone noble—that we each have the potential to reflect His names and attributes. What erroneous conceptions about the reality of a human being are eradicated in their minds when children understand this truth?

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- b. How crucial is this understanding in compelling children to act in ways that respect their own dignity and that of others, even under challenging circumstances?

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- c. What differentiates courtesy as a quality of the human soul from mere outward acts of politeness in various social settings? What other spiritual qualities are present when we show forth true courtesy?

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- d. What examples can you give children to help them understand that courtesy is a spiritual quality that beautifies our character and our relationships with friends, family members, and members of our community?

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- e. What is the relationship between seeing the nobility of every human being and freeing oneself from prejudice?

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- f. How might the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá included in the introductory remarks for Lesson 5.3 reinforce in the hearts and minds of the children what it means to treat others in a way that acknowledges their nobility, no matter their background?



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After introducing the theme of each lesson to the children and sharing the quotation they are to memorize, you of course will take a few moments to help them understand the meaning of some of the words it contains. For this, you can draw upon the explanatory sentences provided in the lessons, as well as any additional sentences you may wish to compose that relate to situations well familiar to the children in your class.

Bountifully: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Shed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Favor: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Admonish: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Observe: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Attired: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Vesture: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Uprightness: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Endeavor: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Consort: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Moderation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Consideration: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Tender regard: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **SECTION 13**

As with earlier lessons, you will want to draw on songs to reinforce the central themes of these ones. Review the collection of songs, made available as a separate volume, and think of others with which you are familiar, and identify a few that would be appropriate to sing with the children in the three lessons of this set. One example may be “Look at Me”.

Lesson 5.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 5.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 5.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 14

The three stories from the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this set of lessons will enhance the children’s understanding of what it means to respect the dignity of every human being. After reading through the accounts again, discuss the questions below with the other members of your group.

In Lesson 5.1, you will tell the children a story about how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded to a group of young boys who acted discourteously towards Him. In what ways will the story help to demonstrate for the children the standard of conduct that human nobility calls us to uphold? What parts of the story will you emphasize in your narration so that the actions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, rather than the improper behavior of the boys, are given focus?

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The story in Lesson 5.2, which describes an encounter ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had with a journalist during His travels in the West, should serve to illustrate for the children the importance of manifesting courtesy in all our interactions with others, no matter the circumstances. What lessons about courtesy might those present with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the time have learned from the way He treated the reporter? How will you make sure the children understand this same lesson?

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The story you will tell the students in Lesson 5.3 focuses on the importance of eschewing prejudice and extending equal respect to all people, regardless of class, nationality, ethnicity, background, and so on. How will you introduce Fujita to the children to help them follow the story and grasp the significance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s actions? What do you hope the children will take away from the story about the courage and volition needed to uproot prejudice?

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## **SECTION 15**

As you know, three spiritual qualities—patience, sincerity, and honesty—are, together with many others, necessary for children to develop if they are to interact with others with the utmost respect. While teaching the lessons of this set, you will want to help the children grasp the significance of these qualities in this connection. You should also seek out the opportunity to review with the students in your class the corresponding quotations they memorized in Grade 1, which, you will have noted, are included in Lesson 5.1. Look through all three lessons now and identify at what points you could introduce a conversation on the abovementioned qualities and how you would relate them to the central themes.

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## SECTION 16

In this set of lessons, as in others, the children will undertake two kinds of drama activities, which are by now well familiar to you. In relation to the first kind, what is most essential is that you become thoroughly acquainted with the exercises so that you will be able to guide the children in carrying them out. As for the second, in addition to thinking about how to present the activities, you may find it helpful to consider the questions below with your group.

In Lesson 5.1, the children are asked to give thought to the importance of treating everyone with respect and of maintaining one's own dignity in interactions with others. How might you explain these two ideas to the children as they prepare to role play the four scenarios in small groups or pairs?

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The drama activities in Lesson 5.2 related to the theme of courtesy suggest the children first engage in role playing a scene that will likely be well familiar to many of them: greeting an older family member such as their grandmother. How might you use the suggested questions to assist your students in reflecting on the attitudes and dispositions that treating others with care and dignity requires? What other scenarios can you think of that will help them consider how courtesy should be manifested in their interactions with others?

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The final lesson of the set, like the previous one, suggests a few scenarios for you to present to the children—this time asking them to conclude each one in a way that demonstrates kindness. How might you help your students appreciate why they should show courtesy to all? What other situations could you suggest to the children—situations in which people might unconsciously be insensitive to others or think that lack of care and discourteous behavior might be justified?

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## SECTION 17

As the children think in Set 5 about what it means to respect the dignity of every human being, they will also learn to draw the human form, including the human face, while learning about the concept of “proportion” in art. It will be important for you as their teacher to help them make the connection between the nobility of every human soul and the temple through which its powers are made manifest in this world. Look again at the drawing activities in the three lessons of this set and discuss with the rest of your group how you might present each to the children and assist them in carrying it out. What preparations will you need to make in advance for this period of the class?

Lesson 5.1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Lesson 5.2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Lesson 5.3: \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 18

Lessons 6.1 to 6.3 explore the theme of what it means to be a good friend. Like the other themes you have addressed with the children, this is an important subject that requires ongoing reflection, and here you will only strive to get across to your students a few key ideas. As before, you may find it useful at this point to take some time to look over the three lessons of this set and write down the principal concepts they consider.

Lesson 6.1: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 6.2: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 6.3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Now that you have reviewed the lessons, you may move on to the sections below, which are intended to help you prepare to teach them.

## SECTION 19

The prayer below resonates with the overall theme of this set, and it is suggested the children memorize it over the course of these three lessons as they grow in the knowledge that, under all circumstances, they can place their complete trust in God. What words or phrases will you need to explain to the children to help them achieve a sufficient grasp of the prayer?

**“O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge, and toward all Thy signs I set my heart.**

**“O Lord! Whether traveling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.**

**“Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy!**

**“Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.**

**“Thine is the absolute authority to command.”<sup>3</sup>**

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## SECTION 20

As you reviewed the three lessons of this set, you must have noted that, in teaching them, you will first help the children understand that we are not alone in this world and that God is always with us, guiding us and strengthening us, and that He, indeed, is our true Friend. You will then assist your students in thinking about the importance of trust in a friendship, especially what it means to be worthy of trust, and in reflecting on the bonds of affection that exist between two friends.

Your own understanding of the above ideas will no doubt have deepened through your study of Sections 16 to 25 of the first unit of this book and your reflections on the passages from the Writings quoted there. In addition, you considered some of the spiritual qualities that we need to manifest if we are to forge enduring bonds of friendship with others. Four particular qualities—trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness—were examined in the context of relationships among friends. To help you think about how you will contribute to the desired patterns of conduct in your students, discuss the following questions with your group after you have reread the introductory statements and quotations for memorization in Lessons 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3:

- a. Why do you think it is important to help children first understand that God is their true Friend before talking with them about the requirements of friendship with our fellow human beings?

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- b. How does reminding children of God’s bounties—the love and care He showers upon us, the forgiveness and generosity He extends to us, the laws and teachings He has given to us for our protection, all the good things He has created for our well-being—assure them that God is their true Friend?

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- c. What do you hope the children will understand from your introductory remarks in Lesson 6.2 about how the quality of trustworthiness should be manifested between friends?

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- d. What examples can you give the children of ways friends can help one another do things that are pleasing to God?

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- e. How will you explain to the children that, as the fire of the love of God burns brighter in the hearts of friends, it strengthens the bonds of trust between them?

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- f. From what should friends derive joy, as mentioned in the introductory statement in Lesson 6.3?

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- g. What attitudes should be developed in children if they are to be assisted in focusing on what they can do to care for their friends rather than on what their friends should do for them?

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- h. What is the relationship between the spiritual qualities of generosity and forgiveness, both of which should be manifested in true friendship? Can a generous person

be unforgiving or a forgiving person, one who overlooks the faults of others, not be generous?

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After introducing the themes in each of the three lessons to the students, you will, as usual, help them to memorize the corresponding quotation. For the words below, sentences are provided to help you explain their meaning to the children. Review them now and then write an additional sentence for each that will be relevant to the circumstances of the children in your class.

Incline: \_\_\_\_\_

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True: \_\_\_\_\_

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Incomparable: \_\_\_\_\_

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Commit: \_\_\_\_\_

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Defile: \_\_\_\_\_

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Limpid: \_\_\_\_\_

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Destroy: \_\_\_\_\_

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Genuine: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Durable: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bond: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 21

As always, choose a few songs—either from the available collection or from others with which you are familiar—that will reinforce for the children the themes of the lessons. In the case of this set, “Looking for Good” would be an excellent choice.

Lesson 6.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 6.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 6.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 22

We will now turn our attention to the stories in this set, which are meant to deepen the children’s understanding of the ideas discussed in the lessons related to true friendship. Read through the stories again now and then consider the questions below with your group.

Lesson 6.1 tells the story of an Egyptian merchant who undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land to attain the presence of Bahá’u’lláh. How did the merchant prepare himself to be worthy of this priceless gift? What details will you be sure to include in telling the story so as to impress upon the children the love and care with which Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá welcomed this special guest? What insights can the children gain from the story to help them better understand the theme of the lesson, that God is our true Friend?

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The story in Lesson 6.2—the legend of Damon and Pythias—illustrates the unwavering trust that should exist between true friends. Which moments in the story will demonstrate this trust most for the children? How will you help the children translate what they understand from the story into their own efforts to build relationships of trust with their fellow students?

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In the story in Lesson 6.3, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá postpones a gathering when one member of a group of visitors, May Maxwell, falls ill. It will help the children see how important it is to care for our friends and bring joy to their hearts, even if it requires that we give up something dear to us. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words and actions teach this lesson to the visiting group? What are some of the attitudes and qualities illustrated by the story that enable one to be a true friend? How will you go about telling it so that these qualities and attitudes, and not the specific unfolding of events, remain the focus of the narration?

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## **SECTION 23**

As we have mentioned, the spiritual qualities of trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness are among the many that children will need to develop—this, if they are to

form the habits and patterns of conduct that will enable them to forge enduring bonds of friendship with others. It would be worthwhile for you, while teaching the lessons of this set, to review with the children the quotations they memorized in Grade 1 related to these four qualities, which are provided in Lesson 6.1 for reference, and to share with them a few ideas that will help them see their significance in true friendship. Take a few moments to discuss with the other members of your study group how you will try to deepen the children’s understanding of these qualities in a natural way as you move through the various elements of the lessons in this set.

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## **SECTION 24**

You will have noticed that, beginning with Set 6, it is left for you to decide what activities you will carry out with your students to continue building their basic skills in drama, choosing from among those outlined in earlier sets. You may wish to write down below the activities you plan to undertake with the class in these three lessons:

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Now let us turn to the second kind of drama activity, which relates to the theme of the set. The activity in the first lesson asks the students to prepare a simple skit on the basis of a story you will tell them of a mountain and its friends. Discuss with the other members of your study group how you will assist the children in carrying out this activity.

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In Lesson 6.2, the children will reenact, either as a whole class or in smaller groups, the story of Damon and Pythias. Bearing in mind the size and characteristics of the class you teach, how do you plan to carry out this activity? How will you prepare your students to reenact the story? What is the purpose of asking them the questions that are suggested following the reenactment of the story?

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Similarly, what steps will you take to help the children create an improvisation based on the story of a group of friends planning a Naw-Rúz celebration, as suggested in Lesson 6.3? How might you describe the significance of Naw-Rúz to those children in the class who are learning about it for the first time?

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## SECTION 25

In their lessons thus far, the children have created artwork in two dimensions only. In the lessons of Set 6, they will begin to create sculptures in three dimensions as they learn about a new element of art, “form”. The activities in these lessons are somewhat more complex than those in earlier lessons, and the children may require both more assistance and more time to complete them. Further, especially in the activities related to the themes of the lessons, which are largely cooperative in nature, you will want to help the children remember the importance of showing forth the qualities of a good friend as they cooperate to create different sculptures.

Review the artistic activities in the three lessons now. How will you prepare for each one? Are there any adjustments you may have to make for the activities to suit the particular circumstances of your class? What assistance might you need to offer the children? What will you say to them to make sure they know what they are to do and how they are to work together? Discuss these questions with your group and write down your thoughts below.

Lesson 6.1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Lesson 6.2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Lesson 6.3: \_\_\_\_\_

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## SECTION 26

The lessons in Set 7 address the theme of service, and the activities you will undertake with the children will help them grasp, to some extent, what it means to devote one's life to service. Read over the lessons now and write down the principal concepts discussed in each.

Lesson 7.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 7.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 7.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Having identified some of the concepts treated in this set of lessons, you are encouraged to study the sections that follow as preparation for teaching them.

## SECTION 27

To begin, think about how you can assist your students in understanding key words and phrases in the prayer below, which they should be able to memorize in these three lessons.

**“O Thou kind Lord! These lovely children are the handiwork of the fingers of Thy might and the wondrous signs of Thy greatness. O God! Protect these children, graciously assist them to be educated and enable them to render service to the world of humanity. O God! These children are pearls, cause them to be nurtured within the shell of Thy loving-kindness.**

**“Thou art the Bountiful, the All-Loving.”<sup>4</sup>**

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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## SECTION 28

You will likely have noted that the set of lessons begins by helping the children see that we express our love for God through service to His creatures and that we should strive with heart and soul to follow in the footsteps of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as we engage in service to God and to our fellow human beings. The second lesson focuses on the importance of putting forth effort as we selflessly serve those around us, while in the third the students think about how, throughout their lives, the talents and capacities that God has bestowed upon them should be drawn upon in service.

To enhance your understanding of these same ideas, you reflected on a selection of excerpts from the Writings in Sections 26 to 33 of the first unit. There, you also saw how four spiritual qualities are especially crucial to sincere service: selflessness, joyfulness, hopefulness, and steadfastness. With these thoughts in mind, you are encouraged to read again the introductory statements in the lessons of this set and the corresponding quotations for memorization. You should then consider the questions below with the members of your group.

- a. How could you explain to the children the idea that we serve God by serving His loved ones?

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- b. We have considered on a number of occasions the importance of connecting the tender hearts of children to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In this set of lessons, it is indispensable that their conception of service becomes shaped by His example. How does Lesson 7.1 try to achieve this objective?

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- c. The introductory statement in Lesson 7.2 provides examples of ways in which children can serve others. How might you help them find such examples in their own surroundings?

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- d. Children ought to learn that their hearts and minds should be turned towards God when they serve others. In what way will focusing on God help them remain constant in their efforts?

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- e. What is the value of discussing with children, at this early age, the significant role that learning a trade or profession plays in the life of every individual? How will you explain to them the idea that, through engagement in some work or occupation, we make effective use of our talents and capacities and also serve others?

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- f. How might you help your students gain assurance that they will receive God's confirmation and assistance when they selflessly serve others?

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As you know, once you have introduced the specific theme of each lesson, you will assist the children in memorizing a quotation, first explaining to them the meaning of key words and phrases. Examine the sentences that are provided in the three lessons for this purpose and, in consultation with the members of your group, create an additional sentence for each of the words that describes a situation with which the children in your class can identify.

Dedicate: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Service: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Human race: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Idleness: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sloth: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Profit: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Incumbent: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Engage: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Worship: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION 29

As with all the lessons, you will want to sing a few songs with the children to reinforce the central themes of these three. Choose from the collection of songs provided, or from others well familiar to you, at least one or two for each lesson. Examples might be “Busy Hands” or “Be Like the Earth”.

Lesson 7.1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 7.2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Lesson 7.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### SECTION 30

The stories of Set 7, which all revolve around the life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, will give your students insight into what it means to live a life devoted to service. As you have done for the previous sets, read through the accounts again and discuss with your fellow teachers how you will go about presenting the stories to your class, keeping in mind the ideas and questions below.

The story of Lua Getsinger in Lesson 7.1 will reinforce in the minds and hearts of the children the understanding that, in order to serve God, we must serve our fellow human beings. How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá teach Lua this lesson? In narrating the story, you should make sure that Lua’s description of the conditions in which she was asked to serve is not given undue attention or exaggerated. Rather, what should be emphasized is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s counsel and His example of selfless service. In the way you tell the story, what might you do and what should you avoid to achieve this objective?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The story in Lesson 7.2 is another one that will help the children learn about service through the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. A proud man, who referred to himself as “Moses”, was invited by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to accompany Him in visiting the poor and sick, and he soon came to recognize the degree of effort ‘Abdu’l-Bahá exerted in caring for others, serving humanity day and night. The allusion made to Moses is a subtle point in the story. How will you explain the intention behind what the man said to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá? Discuss the significance of how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went about helping the man see the error in his thinking.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The final story of this set, about a young boy who hoped to please ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with his calligraphy, will encourage the children to reflect on the concept of striving for excellence. What moral message does the story convey? How will it help the children understand the danger of cutting corners in the pursuit of noble goals? What can teachers learn from the example of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about encouraging their students to strive for excellence?

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### **SECTION 31**

In order for youngsters to form the habits and patterns of conduct that are vital to a life devoted to service, many spiritual qualities should come to adorn their souls. Among these, as was mentioned previously, are selflessness, joyfulness, hopefulness, and steadfastness. To support the children in the development of these qualities in the context of service, you are encouraged to review with them from time to time the corresponding quotations from Grade 1, included in Lesson 7.1 for your reference. While teaching the three lessons of this set, you will naturally continue to foster these qualities in your students, helping them to reflect on their significance in relation to service. Discuss with the other members of your group how you might achieve this aim.

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### SECTION 32

As for the portion of the class related to drama, you will have seen that, in this set of lessons, like those in Set 6, it is left for you to select, from among the activities you have carried out with the children before, a few that will reinforce certain basic skills and abilities. Which would you select for each of the three lessons?

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Now let us consider the drama activities related to the themes of the lessons in this set. Lesson 7.1 asks the children to enact a scenario in which they offer service in the context of the extended family. What can children learn from carrying out this activity? How can you ensure that your students are able to perform it effectively?

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In Lesson 7.2, you will assist the children in dramatizing a story that illustrates the importance of hard work—not only the immediate benefits it brings but also the fruits it yields for later generations. How can you make sure this idea gets across in your narration of the story? To help the children improvise it, you have been given examples of questions you could ask to spark their imagination. In addition to the ones suggested, what other questions might you pose?

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The drama activity related to the theme of Lesson 7.3 focuses on the idea that each individual can serve humanity through his or her work and occupation. What should you say and do to assist the children in carrying out this activity successfully? After each child has improvised a few tasks associated with the work he or she has chosen to act out, what questions could you ask the class to help them see how it contributes to the betterment of the world?

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### **SECTION 33**

In this final set of lessons, for the component dedicated to art, you will draw on the experience you have gained to devise activities which, allowing the children to apply their skills and abilities, reinforce in some way the overall theme of service. One possibility, suggested in the first two lessons, would be to have them construct different kinds of puppets and carry out simple skits, which would combine their artistic skills with those they have developed in creative drama. In the last lesson, the children could be asked to use the abilities they acquired in Set 6 to create three-dimensional objects. Of course, you will need to look at your own possibilities and choose what you think would be most suitable to the capacity of your students and to the circumstances of your class. Discuss this now with your fellow teachers in this course. What will you do? What kind of preparations will be required? Some extra space is provided here for you to set down your ideas.

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Lesson 7.3: \_\_\_\_\_  
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## Set 4

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Living in Harmony with Others



## LESSON 4.1

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

You can open the class by reciting a prayer you have selected in advance and then ask two or three of the children to say one they know by heart. Afterwards, the students can start to memorize the prayer below, which they should be able to learn well in this set of lessons. Remember to explain to them any words and phrases they may find unfamiliar.

**“O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.**

**“Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.”<sup>5</sup>**

As you did in the lessons of Sets 1 to 3, you should look for opportunities in these lessons to weave into your conversations with the children ideas related to the spiritual qualities they learned about in Grade 1. In the case of Set 4, which is concerned with living in harmony with others, the qualities of justice, love, radiance, and compassion will be of special importance. While teaching the lessons, you will also want to ask the children to recite from time to time the verses they memorized in Grade 1 related to these qualities:

**“Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.”<sup>6</sup>**

**“O Friend! In the garden of thy heart plant naught but the rose of love . . .”<sup>7</sup>**

**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me.”<sup>8</sup>**

**“The Kingdom of God is founded upon equity and justice, and also upon mercy, compassion, and kindness to every living soul.”<sup>9</sup>**

### B. Memorizing quotations

The ideas below are intended to assist you in formulating your introduction to the quotation that the children will memorize in this lesson.

All the people of the world were created by one God, and all are His servants. We all breathe the same air, live on the same earth, and receive light and warmth from the same sun. We are all part of one human family. And just like a garden bursting with flowers of every shape and color, humanity is made up of peoples of different colors and races, different talents and capacities, which are harmonized in a beautiful whole. When the diverse people of the world come together in unity, the true strength and potential of humanity can be seen.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá showed us through His words and actions how we can build unity. His home was often full of people from different parts of the world living happily in one household, and wherever He went, He insisted that gatherings include everyone who

wished to join, bringing all together in harmony and never allowing differences to separate people. He always reminded those around Him that we are waves of one sea, grass in the same meadow, leaves on the same tree, united by the love of God. We see everyone as our brothers and sisters, and we treat every soul with kindness. If misunderstandings arise among us, we resolve them with friendliness, remembering our love for God and for each other. We avoid arguments and fights. Think of the human body; all the different parts work together to make it healthy and strong. In the same way, as we all work together, each doing our part, we see the power of unified action, and great things can be accomplished. To help us remember the importance of unity, let us memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”<sup>10</sup>**

You know that the children will find it easier to learn the above passage by heart if they gain an understanding of its meaning. Below are two words key to this understanding, along with some sentences that will help you explain them to your students. You could also create an additional sentence for each one that places it in a context relevant to your culture.

#### *Powerful*

1. The sun's rays warm the earth and give life to all beings. The sun's rays are powerful.
2. As Kumar read the poem, its sweet words touched his heart and brought tears to his eyes. The poem was very powerful.

#### *Illuminate*

1. The room was dark until we turned on the light. The room was illuminated by the light.
2. In the morning, the sun rises and shines its light on the land and sea. The sun illuminates the land and sea.

### **C. Songs**

While teaching this lesson, which may take two or three class periods, you will want to sing some songs with the children, including a few they already know, perhaps related to the abovementioned spiritual qualities, and one or two new ones that reinforce the theme of unity.

### **D. Story**

You can begin this part of the lesson by reminding the children that, throughout His life, 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought all different kinds of people together—old and young, rich and poor, of all religions and backgrounds—and helped them to learn the ways of unity. And in following His ways, you can tell them, we never allow differences to come between us; if misunderstandings ever arise, we think of our love for God and look for those things that unite us. Here is a story that shows how 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought two hearts together.

*Every day many people came to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His home, and He welcomed them all with open arms. One day, a gentleman arrived at the house and was greeted warmly. Sometime later, while this gentleman was still visiting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a*

*second man came to call, and he, too, was warmly welcomed. Now, it so happened that these two gentlemen had had a disagreement, and they were not at all happy to see each other. In fact, they did not even want to be in the same room together. What would happen? Both wanted to be with the Master. Would one of them decide to leave?*

*'Abdu'l-Bahá resolved the matter immediately. He started by telling some funny stories and, before long, both men were laughing. Then He said that His home was a home of peace and joy, a home of laughter and exultation. He did not want them to leave with feelings of enmity in their hearts. The gentlemen listened carefully, thinking about the Master's words. After a while, 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave them each some sweets and a silk handkerchief. These were to be, He indicated, a token of their pledge of friendship. Both men smiled. They recognized that it was God Who had directed their steps to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's home that day. The two, now friends, went away from His presence with joyous hearts, brimming with loving-kindness.*

## **E. Drama**

In these activities, the children will continue to strengthen the skills and abilities needed to participate in creative drama that they began to develop in the lessons of Sets 1 to 3.

1. By now, your students will be ready to start this period of the class by standing about two meters apart in their imaginary squares. Begin by asking them to walk along the borders of their squares. They should then do three or four times the usual stretching exercise: have them raise up their arms towards the sky, stretching from the tips of their toes to the tips of their fingers, and then relax, letting their arms and head hang freely.
2. As an additional warm-up exercise, you could ask them to do the arm circles that they also know from earlier lessons. Ask them to stretch their arms out to their sides and rotate them, first making small circles and then slowly making circles that are bigger and bigger. Once their arms feel very heavy, they can let them drop and shake them out. Then encourage them to do the exercise again, but this time rotating their arms in the opposite direction.
3. For the next exercise, the children will remain in their imaginary squares. Tell them to pretend they are doing the following: washing dishes, washing a dog, feeding chickens, carrying wood, planting seeds, picking a crop, pouring and drinking a glass of water. Call the actions out one at a time, giving the children a minute or so to improvise each.
4. Now have the children form a circle, sitting down, yourself among them. Create a face—a happy face, a sad face, a frightened face. Turn to one of the youngsters sitting next to you and pass the face on to that child. He or she should assume the expression and pass it on to the next child, and so on. You may do this several times, allowing a different child to create the face each time.

Now you can move on to the activities related to the theme of this lesson, the importance of living in unity. Begin by reminding the children of the analogy you drew earlier between the oneness of humankind and the workings of the human body. What would happen if some of our fingers refused to grab on to something we needed to pick up? What if each leg tried to walk in a different direction? The next set of activities should help illustrate for the children what it means to be united.

1. Tell the children the following story about a hand whose fingers and thumb stopped working together and ask them to act it out with their own hands:

One day the fingers on Ramiro’s hand fought with the thumb. They decided they didn’t like it, they didn’t need it, and they could manage just fine without it. That seemed a great idea to the thumb, who took advantage of the time to rest. Meanwhile the fingers began a new life. But . . . when they tried to pick up a pencil, they had difficulty. When they finally managed, it was even harder to write. Neither could they hold the spoon easily when it was time to eat. And buttoning up a shirt was impossible. So they decided to play instead. But, to their surprise, they couldn’t grab the ball. Feeling sorry, they turned to their brother, the thumb, and asked him to join them again. The thumb, who was bored being alone, did not have to think twice and gladly went back to his duties.

2. For the next activity, divide the children into pairs. Ask one child of each pair to stand behind the other. The child behind should be facing the back of his or her partner. Explain that each pair is going to act as one person. The child in back will be the arms, and the child in front will be the rest of the body. The hands of the child in front should be placed behind his or her back, allowing the arms of the child behind to be extended, as though they were the arms of the front child.

Now explain that each pair will first act out a situation in which the arms are not united with the rest of the body. The child in front should describe what is happening to the body. For example, he or she may say, “There is sun in my eyes, I need to protect them with my hand” or “My nose is itchy, I need to scratch it.” The child behind should do something different from what the body has said, for example, wave his or her hand, fold his or her arms, or wiggle his or her fingers.

Next, ask the two children of each pair to act in harmony, with the arms doing the jobs the body needs them to do. Allow the children to swap roles, so each has a chance to pretend to be the arms.

## F. Drawing and art

In the lessons that make up Sets 1 to 3, you introduced your students to a few fundamental elements of art—line, shape, and texture. In this set of lessons, they will learn about another basic element, already familiar to them: color. For the activities below, you will need to have a copy of Sheets 1 and 2, provided at the end of the unit, for every child, as well as some blank pieces of paper and paints or crayons.

1. To begin, ask the children if they can name the three primary colors: red, blue, and yellow. You should explain that these are called *primary colors* because, with them, all other colors can be created. What color is created, you could ask, when we mix red and yellow? What about yellow and blue? And blue and red? You should be prepared to help them, if necessary, to identify the *secondary colors*: orange, green, and purple.

Now give each child a copy of Sheet 1, which has an empty color wheel—a hexagon with a space designated for each of the primary and secondary colors. Have them fill in the spaces for red, blue, and yellow using paint or crayons. Then ask them to mix these three colors to fill in the spaces for orange, green, and purple.

Afterwards, you can give each child a copy of Sheet 2, which shows how to draw a daffodil. Ask the children if any of them know what kind of flower it is and what color it often is when found in nature. Have them color in the petals in yellow and the stem and leaves in green.

2. For the next activity, you will want to remind the children of the analogy of the garden that you discussed with them earlier to help them understand the concept of unity in diversity. Tell them that it is the wonderful diversity of color in the flowers that makes a garden so beautiful. Using Sheet 2 as a reference, the children can then draw daffodils and other flowers of different colors on a blank sheet of paper. Finally, you can ask them to show one another their drawings and think about how we are all flowers in the garden of humanity.

### **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 4.2

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

You can begin the class with opening prayers and then help the children to continue memorizing the prayer introduced in Lesson 4.1. Remember that, in teaching this lesson, you should be prepared, when the opportunity arises, to incorporate into your discussions with the children ideas related to the spiritual qualities of justice, love, radiance, and compassion and to have them recite the corresponding quotations they memorized in Grade 1.

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas will assist you in presenting the quotation that the children are expected to memorize in this lesson:

We know that all the peoples of the world are meant to live in unity as one family. In a family, everyone is treated with fairness. We learn to find ways to work together for everyone's benefit. The well-being of every member is connected to the well-being of the family as a whole. Should any harm come to one member, all are affected. Similarly, we should be fair in our dealings with all those who cross our path, never taking advantage of anyone. We strive to show forth such fairness and justice in our daily lives that we become worthy of the trust and confidence of our fellow human beings.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was known for His justice and fairness. In the Holy Land there lived people of many races and religions who seldom trusted one another. But everyone trusted 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was considered by all to be a man of such wisdom and justice that they would seek His help when they had quarrels or faced difficulties. They trusted Him completely because they knew that He dealt fairly with everyone, regardless of religion, nationality, or race. He worked to bring comfort to all. To help us remember to be fair in our dealings, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all . . .”<sup>11</sup>**

As always, you should help the children grasp the significance of the quotation for memorization by explaining to them the meaning of new or challenging words. The following sentences may assist you in this respect:

*Endow*

1. Meng is very intelligent. He is endowed with intelligence.
2. Claire was frightened to go to the doctor to get her shots, but her parents told her that God has endowed every human being with courage. Claire thought about this and decided she would no longer be afraid.



## *Strive*

1. Edward decides that he wants to do better in school. He studies diligently every day so that he will reach his goal. Edward is striving to be a better student.
2. Gabriela tries to do her best at any task that she is asked to undertake. She strives for excellence in every task.

### **C. Songs**

In teaching this lesson, sing a few songs with the children at appropriate times, remembering to choose at least one or two related to its theme.

### **D. Story**

To live in harmony with others, we strive to treat all people fairly, without thought of their religion or background, their age or circumstances. Of course there are times in our lives when we encounter injustice. This story will show the children how, through His kindness and knowledge, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá helped others overcome their prejudice and act with fairness.

*In the days of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the people of ‘Akká had been misled about the Bahá’is and did not think they deserved to be treated fairly. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, with His great wisdom and love, changed the hearts of many of these people. He showed kindness to the people of all religions and helped them become united.*

*There was a Christian merchant in ‘Akká who, like his fellow citizens, did not respect the Bahá’is. One day, outside the gates of the city, the merchant saw a camel-load of charcoal that belonged to the Bahá’is. He stopped the driver and said, “This is better charcoal than I can get!” Without paying any money, he took the charcoal for himself.*

*When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá heard of this incident He went to the merchant’s shop to ask for the return of the charcoal. There were many people in the office, and the merchant did not pay Him any attention. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sat there and waited patiently. Finally, after three hours, the merchant turned to Him and asked coldly, “Are you one of the prisoners? What have you done that you were imprisoned?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied that His crime was the same one for which Christ was persecuted. The merchant was surprised. “What do you know about Christ?” he asked. Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá calmly and kindly began to talk to him about Christ and His teachings. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke, the merchant’s heart began to melt and his pride and arrogance disappeared. At last, he explained to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that unfortunately the charcoal was gone, but he would gladly pay for it. Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rose to leave. The merchant also rose and walked with Him to the street, treating Him with great respect and honor. So it was that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, through His wisdom and kindness, assisted the merchant in overcoming his prejudice and in acting with fairness.*

### **E. Drama**

The following activities will contribute to the students’ ability to participate in creative drama:

1. As before, begin by having the children do the usual stretching exercise in their imaginary squares. You may then take them through another exercise, familiar to them from a previous lesson, in which they form four random shapes using their heads, arms, and legs. Have them move into their first shape, Shape 1, and hold it for a few seconds. Then tell them to move into a second shape, Shape 2, and hold it. Now have them move between the shapes, counting out a rhythm of “1, 2, 1, 2”. When they have done this a few times, call “Freeze”. Next ask them to hold a third shape for a few seconds. They can then move between the three shapes at your instruction of “1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3”. Again, after a few rounds, tell them to freeze. Finally, have them add a fourth shape and move through all four shapes in the same way, several times, making sure to establish a steady rhythm as you count.
2. Now explain to the children that the same word can be said in different ways. Depending on how we say it, the meaning changes. Ask them to say the word “oh” as if
  - someone has stepped on their foot
  - they are sleepy
  - their mother is calling them to get up in the morning
  - someone is giving them a present
  - their father says he is going to take them fishing
  - he says they cannot go after all
  - they are invited to take a trip to the moon
  - they are petting a dog
  - they took a bite of something they did not like
  - they are running hard and are out of breath
  - their grandfather has just come to visit

You may now have your students improvise a story related to the theme of the lesson, unity and fairness.

1. Explain to the children that they are going to improvise the same situation twice. The first time, the situation will end unfairly. The second time it will be resolved fairly. The children should be encouraged to fill in the details of the story with their own imaginations. You can guide them through the first scenario as follows:

It is harvest time. The fruits are ready to be picked from the trees. The sun is rising, and everyone is preparing to make their way to the orchards. As they slowly gather in the village square, they talk about the harvest, which promises to be abundant. Since a storm is predicted for tomorrow, they decide that they will have to pick all the fruit today. Just then you enter the scene, pretending to be the village teacher. You, too, have heard about the coming storm. You explain to them that there is a leak in the roof of the school that has to be fixed. “Last time it rained,” you tell them, “the children’s books got soaking wet.” Everyone agrees that the roof should be fixed immediately, so two or three of the villagers volunteer to go and do it. The others go off to the fields.

It is now the end of the day. Dark clouds are starting to roll in, but, thankfully, the roof has been fixed. Those who repaired it are tired as they return to the village square. The others, too, are returning from a hard day's work, their baskets filled with fruit. But do they want to share their fruit with those they sent to fix the roof? No. They keep all of the fruit for themselves. They are unfair to their friends.

2. Now have the children improvise the situation again. This time, however, those with the fruit show fairness towards their friends. They decide that, since everyone agreed it was urgent to fix the roof, it is only fair that the day's harvest should be shared with those who repaired it. Everyone joyfully gathers together, and they divide the fruits among themselves.

## **F. Drawing and art**

In this lesson, the children will continue to learn about the use of color in art. Specifically, they will be introduced to the idea of shadow and light and will explore how to create the effect of light by using simple shading. In addition to copies of the four sheets designated for the lesson, you will need to bring to class several blank pieces of paper, pencils, and paints or crayons.

1. It is suggested you begin by talking to the children briefly about light, using a few examples to demonstrate how the color of something can appear to change depending on how the light is shining on it—the direction it is coming from and how weak or strong it may be. If possible, it might be helpful to demonstrate this by using, for example, a flashlight and a colored object. Help the children to see that the color looks brighter when the object is flooded with light and darker when there is less light. Tell them they can create similar effects in their artwork.
  - a. Hand out to each child a copy of Sheet 1 with an empty color wheel. Explain to them that they will fill in the empty space for each color—primary and secondary—as they did in the previous lesson, only this time they will create different “shades” of each color, from very intense to very light. With one color at a time, they should start at the center of the wheel and begin coloring it in with the most intense shade of the color—for example, deep red—and gradually make it lighter and lighter as they move outward. If they are using a crayon, they can control the shading by putting more or less pressure on it. If they are using paint, you can teach them to add water little by little to make the color less and less intense.
  - b. Having gained some ability to control the intensity of a color, the children can next learn how to create the effects of light and shadow—first using only black and white. Pass out copies of Sheet 2, either one to each student or a few to be shared. It shows how to draw an apple and how to shade it in with a pencil. To begin, ask them to draw on a blank piece of paper the outline of an apple, following the progression shown. It may be helpful to mention that apples are not perfectly round. You may also wish to bring an apple to the class and have the children observe its shape.

When they have drawn the basic shape of an apple with a few details, such as the stem, they can add in the shading. Tell them they can do this by applying different amounts of pressure on their pencils, making the apple darker where there is little

light shining on it. You will need to point out to them where the light in the image is coming from—towards the top of the apple and slightly behind it. You can also explain that they can shade the area underneath the apple to show that it is sitting on a surface and not floating in the air.

2. For the final activity, the children will combine what they learned in (a) and (b) above to create a colorful bowl of fruit. Remind the class of the drama activity they did earlier in the lesson, where some of them pretended to be villagers who fixed the school roof before an approaching storm, while others harvested fruit, which was then divided fairly among them all. Pass out copies of Sheet 3—one to each student or a few to be shared—with an image of a bowl of fruit that has been shaded in black and white to show light and shadows. Again, it may be helpful to point out the positioning of the light shining on the fruit. Next, give each child a copy of Sheet 4, which has the same bowl of fruit without shading. Ask them to color in the fruit, using paints or crayons, and create shading by making each color more or less intense.

### **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 4.3

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

After opening devotions, you should help the children to finish memorizing the prayer introduced in Lesson 4.1. Remember that they will start to learn a new prayer in the next set, so you should make sure they can recite the one from this set well. You will also want to continue to look for opportunities to discuss with your students how the spiritual qualities of justice, love, radiance, and compassion relate to the theme of living in harmony with others and have them recite the corresponding verses they know, when appropriate.

### B. Memorizing quotations

It is suggested that you put the following explanation into your own words in order to present the specific theme of this lesson and the quotation the children will memorize:

Knowing that we are members of one human family, we work together for the good of all. We cooperate with one another and do everything we can to contribute to goals we all share. Many things cannot be done by one person alone. Without cooperation, little can be accomplished in this world. For a home to be kept tidy, all the members of the family must make sure to put things in their proper place. For a bridge to be built, many people must work together and contribute their time and energy. To improve the quality of the food we grow, to make advances in medicine, to discover ways to communicate with people in far-off places—these and so many other wonderful things we have talked about in our classes are the result of cooperation. Think of all the people of the past who have worked together to help improve the world. And we, too, work together in harmony in our class here, in our families, and at school. Sometimes this means that we must be ready to give up what we want for ourselves for the good of the whole. We show kindness to those with whom we are working and patience when someone makes a mistake.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá often spoke about the importance of cooperation. Some creatures can live solitary and alone, He explained. A tree, for example, can live without the assistance and cooperation of other trees. Some animals, too, exist in isolation, away from other animals of their kind. But human beings are meant to cooperate and associate with one another. Through association, He told us, we find happiness and develop, as individuals and collectively as a group. To always be reminded that we should cooperate with one another, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity.”<sup>12</sup>**

Besides the sentences provided below, you could compose a few more that explain the words in a context well familiar to your students.

#### *Supreme*

1. Everything in the universe was created by God. He is the Supreme Creator.
2. More than anything else, Anibal wants to serve his fellow human beings. His supreme wish is to serve others.

### *Cooperation*

1. It is not unusual to see two or three ants carrying a large bit of food together. Only when they cooperate can ants carry such large, heavy objects.
2. When everyone works together to reach a goal, they feel united and happy. Cooperation helps to build unity.

### *Reciprocity*

1. The village where Zhu Li lives grows many vegetables and other crops. Li Li lives in the village nearby that raises animals. Each village provides the other with what it needs. Because of reciprocity, both villages prosper.
2. Meera has plenty of water in her well and helps Fabio by watering the plants in his garden. Fabio is good at climbing and helps Meera by picking fruit from the trees in her yard. Fabio and Meera understand the importance of reciprocity.

### **C. Songs**

As always, choose a few songs the children can sing at suitable times during this lesson.

### **D. Story**

The following story will illustrate for the children what can be accomplished through cooperation:

*During 'Abdu'l-Bahá's travels in America, one of the places He visited was a special piece of land that had been purchased in order to build a Bahá'í House of Worship, a beautiful edifice where all people could come and commune with God. Before construction on the House of Worship began, a gathering was held to say prayers on that spot, after which 'Abdu'l-Bahá would lay with His own hands the first stone of the building—the cornerstone.*

*One of the friends, a lady named Nettie Tobin, longed to give something to help build the House of Worship. She did not have any money to offer, but the day before the meeting, she had an idea. She went to a building under construction near her home. Cast off to the side was a pile of large stones, and she asked whether she might take one.*

*"Help yourself," said the builder. "These are rejected." You see, the builder needed a particular kind of stone, and the ones in the pile could not be used. Nettie chose a stone but discovered that it was too heavy for her to lift. So, she went home and got an old baby carriage, loaded the stone into it, and wheeled it home. That was as far as she could manage on her own.*

*Now, in those days, many cities had streetcars to take people from one place to another, much like we have buses today. And, with the help of a friend, Nettie took the stone on three streetcars the next morning. Together, they lifted the baby carriage onto the first streetcar, then off again. They waited for the second streetcar, loaded the carriage onto*

*it and then off again, and finally heaved it onto the third streetcar, which took them close to the spot where the House of Worship was to be built. There was still some distance to walk, and the two friends started pushing the baby carriage over the broken pavement. But suddenly it collapsed. They were at a loss what to do. Even together the two of them could not carry the heavy stone the remaining distance. It was late, and the gathering had already started. After such a long journey, it seemed that Nettie and her friend would miss everything.*

*Just then, two boys with an express wagon came along. With their help, the stone was loaded into the wagon, and off they all went to the gathering—Nettie, her friend, the two boys, and the stone. Imagine Nettie's joy when 'Abdu'l-Bahá chose that stone to be the cornerstone and laid it in the ground. In time, a beautiful House of Worship was built on that piece of land, and the stone which Nettie and her friend and the two boys worked together to bring to that spot is still there to this day.*

## **E. Drama**

To assist the children in developing further their skills and abilities to perform creative drama, you may have them do the following activities:

1. To begin, have your students stand in their imaginary squares and carry out the usual stretching exercise.
2. Next ask them to pretend to be: a teardrop, a cloud, an umbrella in the wind, a boiling egg, a frying egg, a spinning top, an airplane, a car, a rocking chair.
3. Now tell the children to start walking around the space in which the class is being held. They should, of course, be careful not to bump into one another. Explain to them that they are going to pretend they are “walking in someone else's shoes”. At your instruction, they should walk as if they were
  - a baby who has just learned how to walk
  - a huge giant
  - someone in a great hurry
  - someone who has poor eyesight
  - someone who is walking a dog on a leash
  - someone whose foot is caught in a bucket
  - someone carrying something on his or her head
  - someone who has stepped on a thorn
  - someone walking on hot sand
  - an astronaut on the moon

After taking the students through the above exercises, you can move on to the activities related to the theme of this lesson, cooperation. Begin by reminding the children that there are many things in this world which we cannot do alone and which require cooperation if they are to be achieved.

1. Divide the children into small groups. Ask them to name some large, heavy objects. First have each child pretend to move one of the objects, by himself or herself, from one point to another, for example, between two trees or across a room. Next each group should pretend to move the object together. Afterwards, ask the children a few questions: Was it easy to move such a heavy object alone? What happened when they worked together as a group to move it?
2. Now ask the groups to think of some situations they can act out in which people need to work together to reach a goal. Scenarios might include any one of the following: using a ladder to retrieve an object on a high shelf, trying to take a large object from one room to another through a locked door, making sure a picture is hanging straight. The children may also think of scenarios that require a group to complete a task in which responsibility is shared, for instance, a family working together to make the home ready to receive guests, preparing a meal, or washing and drying dishes.
3. Finally, ask the children to act out the story of Nettie and the cornerstone. You could assist them by reviewing the sequence of events, assigning them roles, and helping them think of some simple dialogue. Of course, it would not be reverent for any of the children to dramatize the person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, so their reenactment should end with the arrival of Nettie and her companions at the meeting, and the conclusion of the story could then be narrated by you or one of the students.

#### **F. Drawing and art**

In this lesson, you will take the discussion of color a step further and introduce to your students the idea of complementary colors. Be sure to have on hand, as always, a sufficient number of copies of the sheets marked for Lesson 4.3, in addition to several blank pieces of paper, paints or crayons, scissors, and glue.

1. To begin, show the children a color wheel, with the three primary colors and the three secondary colors, similar to the one they created in Lesson 4.1. Point out to the class how each color on the wheel is opposite another color: yellow and purple, orange and blue, red and green. Tell your students that these pairs are called *complementary colors*, and explain to them that two complementary colors, like blue and orange, are especially pleasing and beautiful to the eye when placed next to one another.

Now pass out copies of Sheet 1, which has three rectangles—each divided into three smaller rectangles and labelled with a pair of complementary colors. Tell the children that they are going to see the beautiful effect of complementary colors and learn something more about them.

- a. First, have the children color in the smaller rectangles on the left-hand side with the colors designated. This will enable them to see the effect of placing two complementary colors next to each other.
- b. Then have them color in the smaller rectangles on the right-hand side, in each case mixing together the two complementary colors designated. Now they will see how two complementary colors cancel each other out, creating the color grey. While this activity works best with paint, it can also be done with crayons.



2. In the next activity, the class will learn about a special kind of pattern called a *tessellation*—that is, a pattern formed by one shape that repeats itself multiple times, covering a surface with no gaps and no overlaps. In carrying out this activity, the children will see how two complementary colors and the many pieces of a tessellation work together to create a beautiful design.
  - a. Begin by reminding the children of the theme of the lesson, cooperation and reciprocity. Show them an example of tessellation in their immediate environment—for instance, a tiled floor, a checkerboard, or a patterned rug. If there is nothing to be found in their immediate surroundings, you may wish to bring some examples with you. Draw their attention to the repeating shape that forms the pattern.
  - b. Divide the children into pairs and give each pair a copy of Sheet 2 as a reference. It provides an example of tessellation in black and white. Point out how each identical simple shape fits into the ones that surround it on every side. Next give each pair a couple of sheets of blank paper, together with Sheet 3 that has a grid. Using the blank paper, they should trace out the simple shape 20 times, color 10 of them in one complementary color and 10 in the other complementary color, and cut them all out. Then, using the grid as a guide, they should glue the shapes onto Sheet 3, fitting them together in alternating colors. Each pair of youngsters can choose the two complementary colors they will use and decide together as a team how they will cooperate to complete the project, helping one another to draw and color in the shapes, cut them out, and glue them on the grid. You will, of course, caution the children to use the scissors with care.

As an alternative to (b), you could have the children simply draw the tessellation directly onto the grid and color it in. This, of course, will not give them the experience of fitting the pieces together, which will reinforce their understanding of shape and pattern, but it will be effective nevertheless.

## **G. Closing prayers**



## Set 5

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Respecting the Dignity  
of Every Human Being



## LESSON 5.1

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

In this lesson, the children will begin learning a new prayer by heart. After opening prayers have been recited, you can introduce the following one to your students, which they should be able to memorize over the course of the three lessons in this set:

**“O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee.**

**“Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.”<sup>13</sup>**

As you move through the lessons of Set 5, which addresses the theme of respecting human dignity, you will want to give special attention to the spiritual qualities of patience, sincerity, and honesty, making sure to weave ideas related to these qualities into your discussions with the children and reminding them of the following verses they learned in Grade 1:

**“He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience.”<sup>14</sup>**

**“We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity . . .”<sup>15</sup>**

**“Beautify your tongues, O people, with truthfulness, and adorn your souls with the ornament of honesty.”<sup>16</sup>**

### B. Memorizing quotations

You may wish to draw on the following ideas in introducing the quotation the children will memorize in this lesson:

God has created us noble and has placed within us His light. This means that each one of us can reflect the names and attributes of God: His love and generosity, His justice and compassion, His kindness and patience. Human beings express their nobility through acts of kindness, through being generous and forgiving, through showing patience and sincerity. That we are able to manifest these qualities makes us rich, and we should not do anything that robs us of the ability to draw out these gems from our inmost beings. And we should never treat those we meet in a way that disregards their inherent nobility. God forbid that we should ever get into fights or belittle anyone. Even when we encounter situations in which someone demonstrates a behavior that is unworthy of their nobility, we should strive to act in the opposite way. We should at all times have the utmost respect for everyone and never do anything that undermines our own dignity or the dignity of others.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá overflowed with love for all those who crossed His path, whether friend or stranger. How they treated Him did not prevent Him from seeing their inner nobility. Even if they showed malice, aggression, and hate, He associated with them in

affectionate fellowship. He disarmed hostility with loving-kindness, never asking whether a person deserved to be loved or respected but treating every individual as a noble being. To help us remember this important idea, let us memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“ . . . I have created thee rich and have bountifully shed My favor upon thee.”<sup>17</sup>**

### *Bountifully*

1. The heavy spring rain gave fresh life to the meadows. It bountifully watered the thirsty plants.
2. Neela was happy that she could help when her mother fell ill. She was grateful that God had bountifully provided her with the strength she needed to care for her mother.

### *Shed*

1. As the sun rose, the valley grew brighter and brighter. The sun shed its light on the valley.
2. Aidan loved his younger cousins and taught them many things. He shed his love and affection on them.

### *Favor*

1. The sun brings warmth and light to the world, and all things blossom and grow under its favor.
2. The people trusted in the governor, who they knew was just and fair. The people looked on him with favor.

## **C. Songs**

## **D. Story**

The following story will help the children see how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, no matter how people behaved, disarmed them with love and kindness:

*You know that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, though greatly advanced in years, traveled from the Holy Land to the United States to share His Father’s teachings and to spend time with the early Bahá’ís of the West. Of course, in those days, to go such long distances, one had to travel weeks by ship, and so you can imagine how blessed the Bahá’ís felt to be in His presence.*

*Now, one day when He was in New York, a small group of Bahá’ís decided to take Him to a park to have an outdoor gathering. The park was not close by, so they had to go there by taxi. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in the first taxi to arrive, and He quickly got out and began to make His way into the park, ahead of the others.*

*Soon, a group of boys from the neighborhood gathered around Him. Seeing His unfamiliar clothes, they began to snicker and behave disrespectfully. Concerned, some of the Bahá'í friends rushed over to assist Him, but He told them to wait where they were. Now, the boys came even closer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and tugged at His long robes. Still 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not upset. He simply gave them a radiant smile, but they continued to act poorly. It was then that 'Abdu'l-Bahá turned towards the Bahá'í friends and said, "Bring me the cake." The friends looked at one another in surprise. You see, it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's birthday, and though they had not told Him, they had made a special cake for the occasion. "But 'Abdu'l-Bahá," some of them protested, "the cake is for your birthday." 'Abdu'l-Bahá just repeated His request: "Bring me the cake."*

*One of the friends then uncovered a large cake with white frosting and handed it over to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As soon as the boys saw the cake, they began to calm down. He then asked for a knife, counted the number of boys who were standing around Him, and cut the cake into that exact number of pieces. Each boy eagerly took his piece, ate it with relish, and then ran away with a smile on his face!*

## **E. Drama**

The following activities will contribute to the development of skills and abilities needed to perform creative drama:

1. After the children have done the usual stretching exercise in their imaginary squares, ask them to make their bodies as tiny as possible, as large as possible, as low as possible, as high as possible, as stiff as possible, and as wrinkled as possible.
2. Begin the next exercise by asking one of the students to leave the area where the class is being held. This child is the "explorer". Have the rest of the children choose a spot that the "explorer" must find when he or she returns, and then help them decide on a posture he or she must take upon reaching that spot. Make sure that the posture chosen is not too difficult. For example, they might want the "explorer" to stand at a particular spot under a tree with his or her right hand on its trunk. The children will communicate this to the "explorer" by clapping. As the "explorer" gets closer and closer to the correct spot, the clapping should get louder and louder. The farther away the "explorer" gets from the spot, the softer the clapping. Once the "explorer" has found the correct spot, clapping is used in the same way to help him or her find the right posture. If time allows, repeat the exercise several times so that every child is given the opportunity to be the "explorer" at least once.

Now explain to the children that the next activity will help them think about how we should behave under circumstances that make us feel angry, sad, or upset. You could then introduce each of the following situations to your students, one by one, and discuss with them what kind of response would enable them to maintain their own dignity, as well as the dignity of the others involved. What should they do? What should they say, and what tone of voice should they use? Once they have discussed how best to respond to the situation, call two or more students to the front of the class and have them act out the response. Make sure each child has an opportunity to participate in one of the scenes.

- During a soccer match, a player from the other team begins to yell at you.
- One of your siblings does not want to share a toy with you.

- A friend talks to you in a way that hurts your feelings.
- You see a fellow student bullying another child in your class.

## **F. Drawing and art**

By now, the children are familiar with four basic elements of art: line, shape, texture, and color. In learning about these elements, they have also gained insight into the use of patterns in art and the role of “color value”, that is, lightness and darkness. In this set of lessons, they will build on what they learned about shape to explore the idea of proportion. All they will need to carry out the activities here are copies of Sheet 1, blank paper, and pencils.

1. To start, give each of the children a couple of blank pieces of paper and ask them to practice drawing as many shapes as they can think of. Mention some of the shapes they learned about in the Set 2 lessons—circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles—and how these can be combined to create other shapes, like diamonds and hexagons. Once they have carried out this exercise, remind them that, when looking at an object, we can see how it is made up of different shapes, like the fortress they drew, which had rectangles, triangles, and squares.
2. Next pass out to each child a copy of Sheet 1, outlining the general shape of the human body, and remind them of what they discussed earlier—that we have all been created noble and that we respect every human being. Tell them that they are going to learn how to draw the human body, which generally follows certain “proportions”, as shown on the sheet. Help them to see, for example, that the neck and shoulders are the same length as the head. You could point out that the length from the knees to the feet is the same as two heads. You may have them stand up and see that their hands all come to the middle of their thighs. Once you think they have understood the general idea of “proportion”, ask them to draw the human figure in the space provided on Sheet 1, telling them to begin with the head and to look carefully at how each part they draw is shaped.

## **G. Closing prayers**



## LESSON 5.2

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

Following opening devotions, you can help the children continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the previous lesson. You should also have them recite, from time to time, when it seems appropriate, the verses they memorized in Grade 1 related to the spiritual qualities of patience, sincerity, and honesty—qualities that will be particularly relevant to the discussions in this lesson.

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas may assist you as you consider how to introduce the quotation the children will learn in this lesson:

Among the virtues and praiseworthy qualities that distinguish a human being is courtesy, and we are commanded to observe it in all our interactions with others. Courtesy beautifies our characters and the relationships we forge. It is manifested outwardly, for example, in the way we greet one another, listen to each other, show sincere regard for those older than us, and care for those younger than us. But, courtesy is, in its essence, a quality that springs from within our hearts, from the recognition that every single human being has been created in the image of God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá is, as always, our guide and example in this regard. One person who had the bounty of spending time in His presence used these words to describe His interactions with others: “He ‘saw the Face of His Heavenly Father in every face’ and revered the soul behind it.” Another individual referred to Him as “the most perfect gentleman” he had “ever known”. And, in responding to a question about why guests always came away from Him with shining countenances, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself said, “I cannot tell you, but in all those upon whom I look, I see only my Father’s Face.” That we may always remember to show forth courtesy, let us memorize these words of Bahá’u’lláh:

**“I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy and is attired with the vesture of uprightness.”<sup>18</sup>**

#### *Admonish*

1. The music teacher admonishes her students to practice playing their instruments every day if they want to improve.
2. During the drought, the government admonished the people to use as little water as possible, so that there would be enough water for everyone.

#### *Observe*

1. All drivers must observe traffic laws, otherwise the streets will not be safe.
2. We find true joy when we observe God’s teachings.

### *Attired*

1. The members of the community are always attired in their best clothing for Holy Day celebrations.
2. God teaches that we must be attired with spiritual qualities such as love, courtesy, and honesty.

### *Vesture*

1. When students graduate from college, the professors put on special robes. They wear special vestures for the graduation ceremony.
2. Just as we clothe our bodies with spotless and beautiful garments, we attire our souls with the vesture of courtesy.

### *Uprightness*

1. No matter what, Ali will not cheat on his schoolwork. He shows forth uprightiness.
2. Mrs. Wilson, who is a tailor, has many customers because she is always trustworthy, honest, and fair. She is known for her uprightiness.

### **C. Songs**

### **D. Story**

Now explain to the children that you are going to tell them a story which will help them understand the importance of showing courtesy to everyone.

*During His visit to the West, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and a group of friends met with a man who was writing an article about the Bahá'í Faith. The man had many long and complicated questions, mainly about the history of the Faith. Throughout the interview, the Master sat quietly, listening with patient attention to the man's inquiries. Now, his questions were quite lengthy indeed, and the man seemed to talk on and on. Only every so often did he pause long enough for others to say a few words, sometimes no more than a yes or no. Most of the friends in the room grew impatient—but not 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He sat perfectly relaxed, His eyes full of love and understanding. If the man hesitated for a moment, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke briefly in reply to his question and then waited courteously for him to continue.*

*At last the man finished speaking, and there was a long silence. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed the man with great dignity and care. His melodious voice filled the air. In only a few short minutes, the man was transformed. His heart had been touched by the Master's gentle and loving words. Now he could see the spirit of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá rose, warmly embraced the man, and walked with him to the door. At the doorway He paused. A large bunch of roses brought by one of the friends had caught His eye. So large was the bunch and so long the stems that they had to be placed in a stand for umbrellas. No vase was big enough to hold them. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gathered the flowers in His arms and presented them to His guest. The man's head could barely be seen*

*peeking out above the mountain of flowers, but the joy radiating from his face could not be missed. Sometimes a few words said with thoughtful care are all that is needed.*

## **E. Drama**

To help the children continue developing the skills and abilities of creative drama, you may have them carry out the following activities:

1. Begin by having the students do the stretching exercise in their imaginary squares. Ask them to remain in their squares and pretend to change from: an elephant into a mouse, a snake into a lion, a frog into a horse, a fish into a whale, a ballet dancer into a football player, an old man or lady into a young boy or girl.

2. Now ask the children to purse their lips together and say: oooo ooooo oooooo.

Tell them to take a deep breath and see how long they can make it last: oooooooooooooo  
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo.

Ask them to make a short sharp sound: a. a. a. a. a. a. a. a.

Now tell them to put the two sounds together: ooooo a.a.a. ooa. ooa.a. oooooooooa. oa.  
ooooa. ooa.a.a.a.a.

Let the children experiment with making different combinations, and then divide the youngsters into pairs. Tell them to use only these sounds, “oooo” and “a”, to talk to each other in the following situations:

- Two children are trading marbles for crayons
- Two children are bathing a puppy
- One child is teaching another to skip
- A mother is getting a child ready for school
- Two people are harvesting corn
- A child is telling a bus driver that he or she has no money
- Someone who is lost is asking someone else for directions

You could now have the children undertake the following activities, which are intended to help them think about the quality of courtesy.

1. First, ask the children to imagine that their grandmother has just arrived from another town to visit them for a few days. The children excitedly meet her at the door. How do the grandchildren approach her? What tone of voice do they take in greeting her? What are some ways that they can show courtesy as they welcome her into the house? Do they, for example, offer her water or take her bags? Once you have presented the scene in this way, divide the class into pairs and have one child in each pair pretend to be the grandmother and the other the grandchild and act it out together. They can then switch roles. Afterwards, gather the class around you and ask them some questions: How did they show courtesy? How did they demonstrate care? What did it mean for them to conduct themselves with dignity? Help them think through how their words and actions reflected these attributes.

2. Next, ask the pairs to improvise a few more short scenarios in which they will demonstrate the quality of courtesy. You should think of some appropriate situations suited to the capacity of the students in your class. For instance, one child could pretend to be an older brother or sister helping a younger sibling in his or her efforts to learn a short quotation by heart. In another scenario, two children could be trying to decide what game to play, one wanting to play a particular game and the other wanting to play something else. With your help, the pairs can embellish the scenarios with relevant details before acting them out.

## **F. Drawing and art**

For this lesson, in which the students will continue to develop their understanding of shape and proportion, you should have a sufficient number of copies of the three designated sheets, as well as pencils.

1. Begin by reminding the children of what they learned in the previous lesson where they drew the human body according to some general proportions. Tell them that, in this lesson, they will carry out a similar activity with the human face. Have them look at the faces of their friends in the class. Ask them whether their faces are all the exact same shape. You should point out to them that, while all resembling an oval, some faces might be quite round and others may be longer or more narrow. If you wish, you could have them practice drawing a few ovals: some roundish, some narrow, and some wider on the top and narrower on the bottom, like an upside-down egg.
2. Now, as a reference, pass out copies of Sheet 1, either one to each child or a few to be shared. Like the outline of the body they saw in the previous lesson, this one provides some general proportions to keep in mind when drawing a human face.
  - a. First, have them look again at each other's faces, while glancing at the sheet, and notice how the corners of their mouths line up, more or less, with the pupils of their eyes. Help them to see how the sides of their noses line up with the inside corners of the eyes. Tell them to look at each other's ears, which, though different sizes, generally start at the level of the eye and go down to the bottom of the nose.
  - b. Now point out to your students the dotted vertical line, which shows the center of the face, and the dotted horizontal line, on which the eyes generally sit. They should notice, too, how the face can be divided in four equal parts above and below this horizontal line.
3. Next, hand out Sheet 2—again, either one to each student or a few to be shared—which shows how to draw a face step by step. At the same time, give each child a copy of Sheet 3. It has dotted vertical and horizontal lines which they can use as a reference in drawing a face following the progression shown in Sheet 2 and keeping in mind what you explained to them with Sheet 1. Once they have drawn all the features of the face, it can be left to each child to decide what kind of hair to add. At the end, you can encourage them to share their drawings with one another and remind them that, in every face, we can see the beauty of our Creator.

## **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 5.3

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

Begin the class, as always, with the recitation of prayers. The children can then finish memorizing the prayer introduced in Lesson 5.1. Remember, too, that you should continue to find ways to bring to their attention the spiritual qualities of patience, sincerity, and honesty throughout the lesson and recite the related verses at appropriate times.

### B. Memorizing quotations

You may wish to draw on the following ideas in discussing with the children the quotation they will be memorizing in this lesson:

Showing genuine respect to every human being we encounter requires that we keep our hearts free from prejudice. We should remember that the more we develop our spiritual qualities, the more we attract God's good pleasure. Unfortunately, sometimes people judge those around them according to such things as wealth, background, education, and age. They forget that God has created all of us from the same dust and that we are all God's children. To follow the path of God, we need to remind ourselves of the inherent nobility of all human beings and strive with all our hearts to honor every person, no matter where they come from, whether rich or poor, young or old, man or woman.

'Abdu'l-Bahá always focused on the heart of a person, not on his or her material condition. Once, a Bahá'í, who was a laborer of modest means, heard that a traveler was passing through his city on his way to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who was in London at the time. Now this laborer wanted with all his heart to send a gift to the Master. But he had nothing to offer except his own simple dinner. So, he decided to wrap it up in a cotton handkerchief and send it with the traveler as a token of his love and devotion. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was sitting down to a luncheon with some guests when the traveler arrived and presented to Him the laborer's gift. 'Abdu'l-Bahá quickly untied the cloth and found a small piece of dry black bread and a shriveled apple inside. He immediately set aside the carefully prepared meal served at the luncheon and instead ate of the food He had received. Sharing it with the other guests, He said, "Eat with Me of this gift of humble love." To remember the importance of showing respect to every human being, let us memorize the following exhortation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to all the loved ones of God:

**"They must endeavor to consort in a friendly spirit with everyone, must follow moderation in their conduct, must have respect and consideration one for another and show loving-kindness and tender regard to all the peoples of the world."<sup>19</sup>**

#### *Endeavor*

1. Students try their best to pay attention during the class. They endeavor to focus on the words of the teacher.
2. Chloe and Dylan endeavor to memorize the prayer. They persevere until they have learned it fully by heart.

### *Consort*

1. All the cousins are looking forward to seeing one another at their grandparents' home. They are happy to spend the weekend together and to consort with one another in joy.
2. Even though Elijah often feels shy, he consorts with everyone in his class with friendliness.

### *Moderation*

1. There was a drought throughout the land, and everyone agreed they should use water in moderation until the rainy season began, when water would be in abundance.
2. Olinga is courteous and always careful not to say anything that might hurt others. He observes moderation in his speech.

### *Consideration*

1. Lou's uncle always cooks her favorite meal when she comes to visit. He shows love and consideration for his niece.
2. Imani showed her elderly neighbor care and consideration by carrying her heavy bags of fruits and vegetables for her.

### *Tender regard*

1. Sophia gently nursed the little bird back to health after it was injured. She showed tender regard for the bird.
2. Elio noticed that his friend was sad during lunchtime, so he went to speak with him and cheer him up. He showed tender regard for his friend.

## **C. Songs**

## **D. Story**

The following story will give the children insights into how we treat our fellow human beings:

*During His visit to the United States, 'Abdu'l-Bahá often helped people He met to understand, through both His words and actions, the principle of the oneness of humanity. One day, after returning to the hotel where He and His companions were staying, 'Abdu'l-Bahá commented that it would be nice to have their meal in the garden. Recognizing 'Abdu'l-Bahá from His picture in the newspaper, the hotel manager immediately arranged for a large table and chairs to be brought out to the garden for the important guest and His companions.*

*Now, among those who accompanied 'Abdu'l-Bahá on this visit was a dedicated servant named Fujita. When the table had been set and the chairs arranged, 'Abdu'l-Bahá counted and noted that there was no chair for Fujita. He asked the hotel staff*

*why this was so. “Well, he is your servant,” one of the waiters replied. “That does not matter,” was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s immediate response. “Make another place,” He said. “It does not make any difference whether servant, or different color. We are all one.” And, to the waiter’s surprise, He then invited Fujita to join everyone else at the table.*

## **E. Drama**

To help the children continue developing the skills and abilities of creative drama, you may have them carry out the following activities:

1. Begin by having the students stretch as usual in their imaginary squares. Ask them to remain in their squares and pretend to do the following, first with a sad look on their faces: sweeping the floor, building a table, helping someone to find something he or she has lost on the floor, climbing a ladder to pick some fruit from a tree, washing dishes, making soup. Next, ask them to go through the same movements, but this time with happy expressions.
2. For the next exercise, the children will work outside of their imaginary squares. Have them sit in a circle, yourself among them, and explain that you are going to pass around an object and each of them should think of a different thing that the object could be, as they did in one of the lessons of Set 3. For example, one child could pretend a piece of cloth is a blanket, another child could pretend it is a bird, and another a hat, and so on. You could make the exercise more challenging by giving the children a category within which they must work. They might have to pretend, for instance, that the object is some kind of animal or musical instrument, an article of clothing or a household item.

You can then help your students improvise a few scenarios that will serve to strengthen their understanding of what it means to treat people with kindness. Divide the students into groups of three and describe to them the scenes below, one by one, as well as any others you may devise. After setting each scene, ask the groups to complete it in a way that demonstrates kindness.

- At the beginning of the school day, a classmate enters the room using crutches because she broke one of her legs over the weekend.
- A child who is new to the neighborhood is sitting and watching a group of friends play a game together but feels shy in asking to join them.
- A student who sometimes bullies and belittles others in the class falls ill and is absent from school for a few days.

## **F. Drawing and art**

To carry out the following activities, the children will require blank paper, pencils, paints or crayons, and the sheet designated for this lesson.

1. Remind your students of the faces they drew in Lesson 5.2. Tell them that, today, they will draw another face on a blank piece of paper, only this time they will also use color and, instead of hair, they will add a hat. Ask the children questions that will help them to remember what they learned about drawing a face, such as “How big are the ears?”

and “What do the corners of the mouth line up with?” If needed, you could provide them with copies of Sheets 1 and 2 from the previous lesson as an assistance.

2. Now, when they are ready to add hats to their drawings, you can pass out copies of Sheet 1 for this lesson, either one to each student or a few to be shared. It shows different styles of hats from around the world. You could say a few words about each style and where it is worn. You could remind them, too, that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá showed us how we should see every human being, no matter where he or she may be from, as a member of one family and treat them all with love and kindness. As the children share their completed drawings with one another, they should take delight in seeing the beauty that diversity creates.

#### **G. Closing prayers**



## Set 6

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Being A Good Friend



## LESSON 6.1

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

Open the class with devotions in the usual manner. You may then introduce the following prayer to your students, which they should be able to commit to memory over this set of lessons.

**“O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge, and toward all Thy signs I set my heart.**

**“O Lord! Whether traveling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.**

**“Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy!**

**“Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.**

**“Thine is the absolute authority to command.”<sup>20</sup>**

In exploring with the children what it means to be a good friend, the main theme of this set of lessons, you will want to help them think often about how the spiritual qualities of trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness are manifested in true friendship and encourage them to recite, as appropriate, the verses they memorized in Grade 1 related to these qualities:

**“Trustworthiness is the greatest portal leading unto the tranquility and security of the people.”<sup>21</sup>**

**“Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love.”<sup>22</sup>**

**“To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues.”<sup>23</sup>**

**“... let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favored of God.”<sup>24</sup>**

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following explanation will help you present the quotation that the children will memorize in this lesson:

None of us is alone in this world. There are so many people alongside each one of us, encouraging and assisting us as we grow—our fathers and mothers, our aunts and uncles, our brothers and sisters, our cousins and classmates, our teachers and neighbors. Throughout our lives we make friends with more and more people. Some of these friendships will last a long time, and others may not. But no matter how many come and go from our lives, we know that God is always with us. He loves each one of us and cares for us all. He has created every good thing in this world for our well-being

and has given us laws and teachings to guide and protect us. He overlooks our shortcomings and faults and sees that which is praiseworthy in each one of us. When we do something wrong and sincerely ask for His pardon, He forgives us. He is the All-Merciful, the Compassionate. We listen to His counsels and follow them, through times of joy and times of difficulty, because we know that He is our Creator and our true Friend.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained that we should thank God under all conditions and be guided by Him in all our affairs. At all times, whether in difficulty or at ease, we should trust in the bounty and bestowals of God. His Bounty never ceases to flow, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assured us. It is everlasting. What chance do we have of attaining true happiness if we turn away from God’s blessings and forget His love for us. We should always remember, as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has told us, that God is our “Haven” in times of “distress”, He is our “Companion” in our “loneliness”, and in our “solitude” He is a “loving Friend”. Let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá’u’lláh:

**“Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend.”<sup>25</sup>**

#### *Incline*

1. Emmet noticed that all the flowers in the field leaned in the direction of the sun. The flowers were inclined towards the sun.
2. From the back of the classroom, Ayumi was not able to hear the teacher well, so she leaned forward and turned her head to listen to him. Ayumi inclined her ear towards the teacher in order to hear him better.

#### *True*

1. The table in the kitchen was old and scratched, so Ludo decided to remove the layer of paint, revealing the beautiful wood underneath. When Ludo finished, the true color of the wood could be seen.
2. Odam always did what he promised. His words always matched his deeds. Odam was true to his word.

#### *Incomparable*

1. The Himalaya Mountains are the tallest in the world. No other mountains compare with them in their grandeur. The Himalaya Mountains are incomparable in their majesty and grandeur.
2. The melody touched her heart like no other she had ever heard. She found the melody incomparable in its beauty.

### **C. Songs**

## D. Story

You can now tell the children the following story, which will help them to see that we should never despair, knowing that we can trust in the bounties and bestowals of God.

*There was an Egyptian merchant by the name of 'Abdu'l-Karim who was on fire with the love of God and had a burning desire to enter the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. So he wrote for permission to visit the Holy Land. Bahá'u'lláh answered that he could come on pilgrimage, but only after he had paid all his debts.*

*Now, 'Abdu'l-Karim had a very large business and also many, many debts. When he received Bahá'u'lláh's answer, he instantly obeyed and began to pay the money he owed to his creditors. But, to his surprise, this did not turn out to be so easy. He had to stop expanding his business. Each time he received some money, he paid a debt instead of buying new merchandise to sell. So business shrank and shrank until finally, after five years, when all his debts were paid, 'Abdu'l-Karim was no longer a rich man. In fact he only had enough money to provide for his wife's needs and buy a ticket on a boat to the Holy Land. And he did not travel in the comfort to which he had grown accustomed as a wealthy merchant; he remained on deck and could hardly keep himself warm from the chill of the wind.*

*The day 'Abdu'l-Karim's boat was to arrive in Haifa, Bahá'u'lláh told His family that He was expecting an honored guest. A carriage was sent to the port to pick up the respected merchant and drive him to 'Akká. But the man who went looking for 'Abdu'l-Karim was expecting a wealthy guest and did not recognize the poorly dressed man who came off the boat carrying only a few possessions. So he went back and reported that the guest had not arrived.*

*Try to imagine 'Abdu'l-Karim's disappointment when he saw that there was no one at the port to receive him. He had no addresses in Haifa and did not even have enough money to take a carriage to 'Akká. He sat on a bench drowned in sorrow. Unwanted thoughts kept creeping into his head. Had Bahá'u'lláh actually forgotten him? Had he freed himself of every obligation so that he could enter the presence of his Lord only to find himself in a strange land with no one to turn to? Oh, how happy he had been while he was preparing himself for pilgrimage. Was this to be the end to all those years of preparation?*

*In spite of the report He had received, Bahá'u'lláh of course knew that His guest had arrived. So this time He asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to go to Haifa and bring the respected merchant to His presence. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived at the port, He immediately recognized that the honored guest was none other than the lonely man sitting on the bench lost in sadness. He approached him, greeted him with love and affection, and explained to him what had happened. It was now late and night was falling. He asked 'Abdu'l-Karim if he desired to go to 'Akká that very night or wait until morning. With all the bitter thoughts that had passed through his mind, 'Abdu'l-Karim no longer felt ready to enter the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. He wanted to spend the night in prayer and meditation to prepare himself for the great bounty that awaited him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, of course, understood this. He sat on the bench by 'Abdu'l-Karim, opened the long cloak He was wearing and wrapped it around him so they would both have some protection from the cold. All throughout that night, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and 'Abdu'l-Karim prayed and*

*let their souls be filled with the joy of the Kingdom. Then in the morning 'Abdu'l-Karim, freed and purified, appeared before Bahá'u'lláh and received a plentiful share of Divine love and bounty.*

## **E. Drama**

You can begin this period by having the children do the usual stretching exercise in their imaginary squares. Then have them carry out one or two activities that you have selected from earlier lessons, either here or in Sets 1 to 3, that are intended to sharpen their skills and abilities to perform creative drama.

Next, explain to your students that they will act out a story about a mountain and its friends. You could first narrate for them the story below and then help them form groups to act it out, assigning different students to the various characters—the mountain, the clouds, the sky, the meadow. Tell them that they should try to show the corresponding emotions for their characters at each point of the story. For example, you could ask them how they might show that the mountain is feeling sad when, at the beginning of the story, it misses its friends, the clouds. Make sure that every child has some role to play.

Once there was a mountain whose peak was so high that it might have been the tallest mountain in the world. It was so tall that the clouds were its only company. But how the mountain enjoyed playing with its big billowing friends! And the clouds, too, were happy to gather around the mountain's snowy peak. Sometimes they would laugh so heartily that they would cry, raining tears on the earth below.

Then one hot summer the mountain found itself alone for many days. Not a single cloud could be seen in the sky, and the mountain felt very sad, missing its blustering friends. "Why don't the clouds run and play in your big bright blueness anymore?" it asked the wide sky.

"They have all gone to the kingdom of winter, very far from here," the sky replied. "They will not return until the end of summer."

"But I miss them so much!" cried the mountain with a sigh. "Maybe I should go to the winter kingdom as well and visit my friends."

"You are a mountain," the sky said firmly. "Mountains are heavy and cannot fly as the clouds can. You must remain in the same place."

Now the mountain became very sad indeed and started to cry. Huge tears ran down its face, and soon streams and rivers were flowing from its snowy peak. Then something wonderful happened. The dried, cracked soil in the plain far below began to drink up the mountain's tears. Before long, the plain was covered in fresh green growth.

The grateful plain called up to the mountain. "Kind mountain!" it said. "Thank you for saving me from a terrible fate! Your pure water has healed all my wounds. Look at how it has helped me!"

The mountain was so surprised that it stopped crying. Until then nobody had ever spoken to the mountain from below. It looked down and gasped when it saw the

flourishing green meadow, shining and fresh. To see its beauty made the mountain content. How happy it was to have found a new friend in the meadow.

## **F. Drawing and art**

In the artistic activities for Set 6, the children will learn about another element of art: form. All the pieces they have created so far have been done on a flat surface. Now they will create objects that occupy space—that is, which have depth, width, and height. For this lesson, you should have copies of the requisite sheets, scissors, glue or tape, crayons, and several pieces of blank paper, including one that is somewhat larger.

1. To begin, you can remind the children of the regular shapes they know well by now: circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles. Have them draw these on a blank piece of paper. Next ask them, “What do we call six squares that are joined together on their sides?” To assist them, you could show them an object that is shaped like a cube. Afterwards, show them a pyramid and ask them, “What shape are the four sides?” Confirm it is a triangle, and then tell them that, in this lesson, they are going to learn how to make a cube and a pyramid from squares and triangles.
  - a. First, pass out a copy of Sheet 1 to each student, with a template for making a cube. Help them to cut out the template along the solid lines, making sure that they do not cut any of the dotted lines, which indicate where the paper will be folded. Remind the children that they should always use scissors with care. Once they have each cut out the template, you could encourage them to color in the side without the dotted lines. Then help them to fold the template along each of the lines and glue the seams together to form their cubes.
  - b. Next give out copies of Sheet 2 and have them follow the same steps to create a pyramid.
2. Now remind the children of the story they acted out during the drama portion of the lesson: Who were the characters? The mountain, the clouds, the sky, and the meadow. Explain that, for the next activity, they will use their cubes and pyramids to build a mountain together. Lay out a large piece of paper and tell them to figure out as a group how they can combine the cubes and pyramids to create a sculpture that reaches to the sky. Provide them with glue so that they can attach some cubes to the paper, as the base of the mountain, and then let them decide how the rest of their sculpture will take shape. Of course, for them to succeed, you will need to guide them along the way.

## **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 6.2

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

As usual, begin class with devotions. Afterwards, you can help the children continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the first lesson of this set, focused on being a good friend. Remember, in teaching this next lesson, to look for opportunities to connect what you are discussing to the spiritual qualities the children learned about in Grade 1, especially trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness. Be prepared, too, to recite with them at appropriate times the verses they memorized related to these qualities.

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas will assist you in explaining to the children the quotation they are expected to learn during this lesson:

True friends trust each other. A trustworthy person is honest and truthful and can be counted on to keep his or her word. True friends know that they can rely on each other to do what is right, that one would never lie to the other or deceive him or her in any way. Each sees the good in the other and overlooks his or her shortcomings. Of course, friends sometimes make mistakes, but they are forgiving and kind to one another; each helps the other to do what is pleasing in the sight of God. A true friend is careful not to ask us to do that which is unacceptable before God. The bonds of trust and confidence that exist between friends become stronger and stronger as the fire of the love of God burns brighter and brighter in their hearts and as each one shows that he or she is worthy of trust and wants what is best for his or her friend.

We should all be trustworthy and learn to choose friends who are trustworthy, those who wish to please God, who are striving to follow His path, and who will help us to stay on the straight path. We should not allow ourselves to be cheated or deceived by those who are not trustworthy. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the essence of kindness and courtesy, but He never allowed those who were dishonest or deceitful to take advantage of His kindness. You will recall that once a driver demanded an unfair price from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for a carriage ride. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá paid what He rightly owed to the driver and told him that, had he been honest, he would have received a handsome tip as well. Trust is a special bond between friends, and we should take care not to do anything to break it. So that we each remember the importance of being a true and trustworthy friend, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá’u’lláh:

**“O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship.”<sup>26</sup>**

*Commit*

1. When one is learning how to write, one will surely make a few errors. It is not unusual to commit errors when one is learning how to write.
2. Portia does her best to obey the laws of God. She does not want to commit any act that would displease Him.



### *Defile*

1. The garden had once been beautiful, but some of the people who visited it left garbage and litter when they departed. The visitors defiled the garden with the garbage they left.
2. The stream always ran clear and clean from the mountain. But a lot of chemicals and waste have been dumped into it recently. The stream has been defiled by waste being dumped into it.

### *Limpid*

1. The water in the pond was perfectly clear, and it was possible for Tibor to see many fish swimming along its bottom. Tibor could see to the very bottom of the limpid pond.
2. The water from the well is very clean and pure. Everyone felt refreshed to drink from the limpid waters of the well.

### *Destroy*

1. The young boy built a huge castle out of sand on the seashore, but when a wave came in and covered it, the castle was completely destroyed.
2. The farmers built a dam to stop the river from flooding onto their crops during the rainy season. Without the dam, their crops would be destroyed by the floods.

## **C. Songs**

## **D. Story**

There is a well-known legend of two friends, Damon and Pythias, that has come to symbolize trust and loyalty in friendship. It is suggested that you tell the story to the children today, explaining that it is a very old tale from the early history of humanity.

*Ever since they were children, Damon and Pythias had been friends. They played together and studied together and shared many of their thoughts with each other. They were so close that they trusted each other completely. Theirs was a true friendship; they would do anything to help each other.*

*Now, Damon and Pythias traveled to a city called Syracuse, which had a powerful king named Dionysius. There Pythias began giving public speeches that called into question the king's unlimited power. Any king who took power without the permission of the people was an unjust tyrant, he told the crowds that stopped to listen. When he learned of Pythias' growing influence among his people, Dionysius became convinced that he was trying to overthrow him. Angry and fearful, the king had Pythias and his friend Damon brought before him.*

*"Why are you causing unrest among the people?" Dionysius questioned Pythias.*

*"There is nothing wrong in what I do," answered Pythias, "I speak only the truth."*

*“I do not believe you. You are trying to overthrow me. Tell the people you were not speaking the truth,” demanded the king.*

*“I will not,” was Pythias’ reply.*

*“Then you must die,” pronounced Dionysius. “What is your last request?”*

*Pythias asked that he be allowed to return to his family to say good-bye and put his things in order. Dionysius scoffed at him, saying he would be a fool to let Pythias leave Syracuse and expect him to return. Pythias pledged to return, but the king would not hear of it. Just then Damon suddenly broke in.*

*“Pythias will return if you keep me as your prisoner while he is away,” Damon suggested. “And if he breaks his promise, you may kill me instead. Surely you have heard of our friendship. You must believe, as I do, that Pythias would never allow his friend to be executed in his place.”*

*Dionysius thought about this unusual proposal and decided to accept it. But he gave a warning. Pythias must return by a set day; otherwise Damon would be killed.*

*As the days passed and Pythias did not return, the king was sure that Damon would regret his selfless act. He decided to visit Damon in jail to see whether he thought himself a fool for trusting Pythias. But Damon confidently replied, “Pythias must be delayed. He will return.”*

*The king laughed scornfully, “We shall see.”*

*On the appointed day, Pythias still had not returned. The king had Damon brought before the executioner. Smugly, Dionysius said to Damon, “The time has arrived, and yet your friend has not come for you. What do you say now?”*

*Damon calmly replied, “I trust my friend completely.”*

*At that very moment, the doors opened and a bruised and breathless Pythias staggered into the room towards Damon’s open arms. “Thank God, you are still alive! I was afraid I would not reach here in time. My ship was wrecked in a storm and bandits attacked me on the road, but still I could not give up hope that I would make it.” Turning to the king, Pythias said that he was ready to die.*

*The king was so astonished by the fidelity and steadfast trust of the two friends that he could not bring himself to carry out the unjust execution. “Never in my life have I seen such devotion and faith in friendship. Because you have shown me that I was wrong to have doubted you, I have decided to pardon you Pythias—on one condition.”*

*“What is that?” asked the two friends in unison.*

*“That you teach me how to be such a friend.”*

## **E. Drama**

This period of the class can begin with the usual stretching exercise. Afterwards, you can ask the children to carry out one or two activities from previous lessons that will sharpen their skills and abilities to perform creative drama.

Next, to help your students gain further understanding of the theme of this lesson—that true friends trust each other—you may wish to have them reenact the story of Damon and Pythias. Depending on the number of children in your class and the time available, you could either divide them into groups for this purpose or have all the children participate in one large reenactment. In the latter case, some of the children could be part of the crowd to whom Pythias spoke or members of the king’s court, while others could be Damon’s jailers or the bandits that attacked Pythias. Following the reenactment, you could ask the children a few questions such as:

- Why was Damon willing to be in prison for his friend?
- Why did Damon trust that Pythias would return?
- Why was the king astonished when Pythias returned for the execution?
- What qualities did Pythias demonstrate by returning as he did?
- Why do you think the king changed his mind about the execution?
- What do you think Damon and Pythias could teach the king about friendship?

## **F. Drawing and art**

As with the previous lesson, you will need to have available for this one copies of the designated sheets, scissors, glue or tape, crayons, and several pieces of blank white or colored paper. You should also bring copies of the two sheets for Lesson 6.1.

1. Remind the children of the two objects they learned to make in the last lesson from shapes they know: a cube and a pyramid. Tell them that they will now make two new objects. First pass out to each child a copy of Sheet 1, with the template for a rectangular object, and take the class through the same steps they followed when building their cubes and pyramids.

When they are finished, provide each child with a copy of Sheet 2, which has a template for making a cylinder. In this case, after cutting out the main shape—the rectangle—the children will need to cut small slits in it along each edge as indicated. They should then fold up the small tabs created and bend the rectangle into a cylinder, taping or gluing it closed. Afterwards, they can glue to the small tabs at the top and bottom of the cylinder the two circles they have cut out.

In introducing these two new objects, you could encourage the children to name some things in their daily lives that have the same shapes. For example, in the case of the rectangular shape, they might mention a brick, a shoebox, or a book. For a cylinder, they might name cans, pencils, or pipes.

2. The next activity relates to the story of Damon and Pythias in the court of the king. Explain to the children that they are going to build a castle together, using cubes,

pyramids, cylinders, and rectangular objects. You can help them think through how they will build their sculpture by reminding them that a castle is a kind of fortress and by asking them questions such as: Who remembers what the fortress we drew before looked like? What kind of shapes did it have? How many cubes and rectangular objects will you need to build the castle walls? In this connection, you should hand out copies of the templates for making all the objects, along with blank paper for tracing them out, and then let the children work as a group to create their sculpture, while you guide them as necessary.

#### **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 6.3

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

You can begin the class with the recitation of prayers and then help your students finish memorizing the one they started to learn in Lesson 6.1. As you conclude this set of lessons, you should continue to draw connections between what you are discussing with the children and the importance of manifesting the spiritual qualities of trustworthiness, kindness, generosity, and forgiveness. Reciting the verses related to these qualities will no doubt touch their hearts and serve to enhance their understanding of what it means to be a good friend.

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas will assist you in presenting the quotation that the children are expected to memorize in this lesson:

True friends care for each other. They enjoy spending time together, and each wants what is best for the other. If we see our friends are sad, we do what we can to bring joy to their hearts. If a friend is sick, we want to make sure he or she is well cared for. Because we want what is best for our friends, we listen to them and always try to pay attention to their wishes. It is a joy to give something up when we know it will make our friend happy or help him or her to progress. In friendship we give of our time and our possessions and share our happiness and our learning. What a blessing to have many true friends.

Of course, sometimes a friend makes a mistake, and we may feel sadness in our heart, but we remember that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was always forgiving, and so we are forgiving too. And when our hearts are filled with generosity and we remember our love for our friend, the sadness goes away. You know there are times when you make mistakes, and your friend is forgiving to you. What is important is that you both know neither would ever want to bring sadness to the heart of the other. It was the wish of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that no soul should ever be hurt or grieved. There is no greater gift, He told us, than bringing joy to another heart. “I beg of God,” He prayed, “that ye will be bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven.” That we may form such loving bonds of friendship with many souls, let us memorize the following quotation:

**“ . . . strive ye with all your might to create, through the power of the Word of God, genuine love, spiritual communion and durable bonds among individuals.”<sup>27</sup>**

#### *Genuine*

1. The bag looked like it was made of leather, but it was really made of a plastic material. The bag was not made of genuine leather.
2. Some rings only look like they are gold, but the king’s ring is genuine. It is gold with a beautiful red stone.

### *Durable*

1. When choosing a fabric to make her children's clothes, Mrs. Singh looked for one that would not tear easily. She chose a durable fabric that would last a long time.
2. The wheels on a tractor are big and thick so that they can go over rocks and dirt easily and still work fine. The wheels on a tractor are durable.

### *Bond*

1. A dog often feels an attachment to its master. There is a special bond between a dog and its master.
2. There is a strong bond between a mother whale and her young calf, and they stay close together for long distances in the ocean, with the mother feeding the calf and protecting it from enemies.

### **C. Songs**

### **D. Story**

The brief account below will help to illustrate for the children the care and consideration 'Abdu'l-Bahá exemplified in His love for others.

*You know that, during the later years of His life, as the Bahá'í Faith started to spread around the world, many people came from faraway places to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Holy Land and to listen to His words of wisdom. What a great bounty it was for these blessed souls to spend time in His presence, and they cherished every moment they could be with Him.*

*Now, one of these blessed souls was a Bahá'í named May Maxwell, who had come to the Holy Land with a small group of friends. One day, she and her friends were invited to go with 'Abdu'l-Bahá to a very special place. On the slopes of Mount Carmel, there were several large cedar trees, and in the shade of these trees, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had often passed many hours with His beloved Father, Bahá'u'lláh. How excited May and her friends were to go to this sacred place, and they all arose early to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. But, when He went to greet May, He saw that she did not look well. After feeling her forehead and taking her pulse, He turned to the group and told them, "There will be no meeting on Mount Carmel today . . . we could not go and leave one of the beloved of God alone and sick. We could none of us be happy unless all the beloved were happy." That day the group learned what it means to show true consideration for one another and to treat each other with compassion and loving-kindness.*

### **E. Drama**

After carrying out the usual warm-up exercise, the children can undertake one or two other activities you have selected to strengthen their drama skills. You can then proceed to the next activity, which is intended to help them think about the theme of this lesson, that true friends care for each other. Divide the students into groups of three and explain to them that they are going to improvise a story based on the following situation:

Naw-Rúz is a few weeks away, and the community is planning to have a special celebration. Sarah, Marion and Marco have been working especially hard to prepare a children's program. One day Marion and Marco wait for Sarah so that they can continue their work, but she does not arrive. Later they inquire after her and find out that she has fallen down and hurt her ankle, and the doctor has told her to stay off of it for a while. At first Marion and Marco are worried about the children's program. How will they finalize everything without Sarah's help? But then they think of Sarah and realize how sad she will be if her ankle does not heal fast enough for her to participate in the program. They remember the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that a most wonderful way to help those who are not well is to bring joy to their hearts. So Marion and Marco decide to visit Sarah every day to cheer her up. By the time Naw-Rúz arrives, Sarah's ankle is fine and the three friends together carry out the program for which they have worked so hard.

To help the children begin their improvisations, ask them what they think Marion and Marco did when they visited Sarah. How did they bring joy to her heart? Did they continue, for example, to plan the program with her during their visits?

#### **F. Drawing and art**

For the final artistic activity of Set 6 related to form, the children will require the following: a copy of the designated sheet, colored paper, pencils, scissors, tape, and glue.

1. Explain to your students that, for the artistic activity in this lesson, they are going to make a flower out of paper. You should tell them that they can think of their flowers as having two parts—the stem, which is like a narrow cylinder or tube, and the petals, which form a circle.
  - a. To begin, have each child make the stem of a flower by placing a pencil in the corner of a piece of paper and rolling the paper tightly around it. One or two small pieces of tape can be added to hold it in place and the pencil can then be removed.
  - b. Next hand out copies of Sheet 1, either one to each student or a few to be shared. It shows how to fold a piece of paper into smaller and smaller triangles and how to cut it to form petals. Pass out several pieces of blank paper, in a variety of colors if possible, and take the class through the series of steps shown on the sheet one by one. Once they have cut out the petals and opened the flower, they can glue a small piece of colored paper to the center.
  - c. Finally, assist each child in gluing or taping the flower to the end of the stem.
2. Now you can remind the class of the drama activity they carried out earlier, where two friends visited someone who was unwell, and can share with them the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that we should all be “bringers of joy, even as are the angels in Heaven”. Suggest that they put all their flowers together into a beautiful bouquet, which can be presented to a neighbor or a friend to bring joy to his or her heart. They might also use the bouquet in their skits during the drama activity, depending on how you choose to organize the various components of the lesson across class periods.

#### **G. Closing prayers**





## Set 7

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Devoting One's Life to Service



## LESSON 7.1

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

After opening class with devotions in the usual way, you can assist the children in memorizing the prayer below. It should be possible for them to learn it by heart over the course of these three lessons.

**“O Thou kind Lord! These lovely children are the handiwork of the fingers of Thy might and the wondrous signs of Thy greatness. O God! Protect these children, graciously assist them to be educated and enable them to render service to the world of humanity. O God! These children are pearls, cause them to be nurtured within the shell of Thy loving-kindness.**

**“Thou art the Bountiful, the All-Loving.”<sup>28</sup>**

Among the many spiritual qualities the children learned about in Grade 1, selflessness, joyfulness, hopefulness, and steadfastness seem to be especially significant in living a life of service—the overarching theme of this set of lessons. You should not find it difficult, then, to integrate ideas related to these qualities into your discussions with your students and to bring to their attention the following verses:

**“Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself.”<sup>29</sup>**

**“O Son of Man! Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet Me and to mirror forth My beauty.”<sup>30</sup>**

**“Never lose thy trust in God. Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man.”<sup>31</sup>**

**“Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord.”<sup>32</sup>**

### B. Memorizing quotations

The following ideas will assist you in explaining to the children the quotation they will learn in this lesson:

God loves us and always wants us to be near Him. Through prayer, obedience to His teachings, and service, we are able to draw closer and closer to Him. We serve God when we serve His loved ones. There are many ways in which we can serve our fellow human beings. We can, for example, visit the sick, help those in need, and share what we learn with others. We should strive to serve all people, whether rich or poor, friends or strangers.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was our perfect Exemplar. He showed us what it means to serve the entire human family. His whole life was dedicated to helping people. In fact, His very name means “Servant of God”. He was never concerned for His own needs or comfort. He did not seek after wealth or power. He never wanted any titles or recognition. His only desire was to serve God and humanity. “My station is the station of servitude”, He

often told the friends. This is the highest station—to place oneself in the service of others. This is the station that we are all trying to achieve. What greater joy than to bring comfort and cheer to another soul. What greater honor than to be seen as a true servant of God and humanity. That we may all follow the example set for us by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, let us memorize the words of His beloved Father, Bahá’u’lláh:

**“That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race.”<sup>33</sup>**

#### *Dedicate*

1. Dervi always pays close attention during art class and spends many hours preparing herself for each class. Dervi dedicates much of her time to the arts.
2. Hung Wei’s father has a vegetable garden. Every day Hung Wei helps his father weed and water the garden. Hung Wei is dedicated to helping his father.

#### *Service*

1. Mumbi, Apiyo and Tocho cleaned the schoolyard after the storm had left it full of broken branches and leaves from the trees. They were happy to render this service to the school.
2. Sachiko walks four kilometers to give a children’s class. She is happy to walk this far each week because she wants nothing more than to be of service to the community.

#### *Human race*

1. At school we saw pictures of people from many different countries. All of these people belong to the human race.
2. The museum has musical instruments from all over the world. Looking at their many shapes and sizes, the children were reminded of both the diversity of the human race and of the love of people everywhere for music.

#### **C. Songs**

#### **D. Story**

You can remind the children of the story of Lua Getsinger they heard in Lesson 1.2 regarding prayer and then tell them the following story, which will help illustrate for them what it means to be a servant of God.

*You remember from our lesson on prayer that Lua Getsinger was one of the early Bahá’is in the West who visited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the prison-city of ‘Akká. One day during her visit, the Master took her aside and explained to her that He had many pressing matters to attend to and would not be able to call upon a friend who was very sick. He wished Lua to go in His place. He told her to take some food to the sick man and care for him as He had been doing.*

*Lua learned the address of the man and immediately set off to do as 'Abdu'l-Bahá had asked. She felt proud that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had entrusted her with a task that He would usually have carried out Himself. But, only a short while later, she returned to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a state of excitement. "Master," she exclaimed, "surely you cannot realize to what a terrible place you sent me. I almost fainted from the awful stench, the filthy rooms, the degrading condition of that man and his house. I fled lest I contract some terrible disease."*

*'Abdu'l-Bahá gazed at her sadly and sternly. If she wanted to serve God, He explained, she must serve her fellow man, because in every person she should see the image and likeness of God. Then He told her to go back to the sick man's house. If the house was dirty, she should clean it. If he was hungry, she should feed him. He asked her not to come back until all of this was done. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had done these things for His friend many times, and she should be able to do them this once, He told her with firmness. That is how Lua learned an important lesson about what it means to serve her fellow human beings.*

## **E. Drama**

Begin this period, as usual, by having the children carry out the warm-up exercise and one or two other activities that will enhance their skills and abilities to perform creative drama.

You may then lead the class in the next activity related to the theme of this lesson, that is, the spirit of service. Explain to the children that today they will improvise a situation that will help them gain further understanding of what it means to serve humanity. To begin, guide them through the following scenario:

Ask the children to imagine that they arrive home one day and their mother tells them that their aunt, who lives a few houses down the road, is sick. Their mother has prepared some soup for her, and the children ask whether they can take it to their aunt and look after her for a while. Their kind offer brings joy to their mother's heart, and the three children set off with the pot of soup. Have the children show you how they would carry the soup carefully to the aunt's house, making sure not to spill it. When they arrive at the house, they greet their aunt and inquire after her health. First, they take care of her needs. Ask the children to tell you what specific things they would do for her. Perhaps she is cold and needs more blankets, or requires water or a book, and they bring these things to her. They can demonstrate for you how they would carry out these tasks. Next, they look around the aunt's house to see what chores need to be done, for example, washing the dishes, sweeping the floor, or doing the laundry, and they practice performing these tasks. Once the children are familiar with all the elements of the scenario, divide them into groups of three and have each act it out in its entirety.

## **F. Drawing and art**

By now the children in your class have experience in working with several fundamental elements of art—they have drawn images with lines and shapes; they have created different textures, both real texture and the illusion of texture; they have utilized color to produce patterns and value to give the appearance of light; they have thought about proportion in representing the human form; and they have worked in the three dimensions of depth, width, and height to make sculptures. In this final set of lessons, they should be given an opportunity to apply the many skills and abilities they have developed to create pieces that relate to the theme of service.

You are encouraged to take into account the circumstances of your class and identify a suitable set of activities.

While the options are many, one possibility for this lesson may be to have the children build on what they have learned about art to create puppets, which they could then use, for example, to reenact the scene from the drama activity or other scenarios that you can devise for them in advance. Of course, most cultures have some traditional forms of puppetry, on which you may wish to draw in considering this possibility. But one of the simplest kinds of puppets to make requires no more than a piece of paper and a stick, as follows:

- a. Give all the children a blank piece of white paper and have each one first draw an outline of the character he or she will need for the scenario. You can remind the class of what they know about drawing the human figure, including the face. After they have an outline of their character, they can add color and the necessary details.
- b. You can then help each child cut out the figure he or she has drawn and glue or tape a stick on the back, making sure that at least a few centimeters remain at the bottom for him or her to hold on to.
- c. A few students at a time can then use a desk, table, or even the back of a chair as a stage and act out the scene by holding the sticks at the bottom of their puppets just below the surface of the “stage” and moving them about the scene as they exchange dialogue.

#### **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 7.2

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

Following opening devotions, you can help the children continue memorizing the prayer introduced in the last lesson. Remember, too, while teaching this next lesson, to find opportunities for the youngsters to review the quotations they learned in Grade 1 related to selflessness, joyfulness, hopefulness, and steadfastness and to reflect on the significance of these qualities in a life dedicated to service.

### B. Memorizing quotations

The ideas below will assist you in explaining to the children the central theme of this lesson and in introducing the quotation they will memorize.

If we are to serve God and humanity, effort is required. We must be diligent and hard working. Like trees that give forth goodly and wondrous fruits for the benefit and enjoyment of all, we make effort and work for the good of those around us. And we know that God promises to assist our efforts. So we rise every day, turn our hearts to Him in prayer, and then set out, confident that His love surrounds us and eager to do what little we each can to lend a hand to someone in need, to bring joy to a saddened heart, to comfort the sick, to befriend the lonely. And at the end of each day, we reflect on what God has enabled us to do and thank Him for His aid and assistance, knowing that we will try even harder to selflessly serve others the next day. How sad if we waste the time we have been given in this world, and all the talents and capacities with which we each have been blessed, and do not use them in service to God's loved ones.

Throughout His life, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was constantly active, working for the good of all. Early each morning He would make His round of visits to the inhabitants of 'Akká. He would visit the elderly, the sick, and the suffering, seeing to their needs and offering them comfort and assistance. During the rest of the day, He would tend to the affairs of the Bahá'í community. He would direct various projects to improve the lives of others, dictate letters, write, and receive visitors. People from all walks of life would bring their problems and concerns to Him, seeking His guidance and counsel. He would give them encouragement and advice and would help to ease their difficulties. Those who worked for the Master had difficulty keeping up with the fast pace of His busy life, but they were assisted and strengthened by His great spirit and words of encouragement. And we strive to follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá's example and spend our time in active service to others. To help us remember to always be working hard for the benefit of all, let us memorize the following quotation of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others.”<sup>34</sup>**

#### *Idleness*

1. When Furio came home from school, he did his homework, then helped his mother and assisted his younger brothers and sisters with their studies. Furio did not rest for a single moment. He was never idle.

2. An old steam train ran through the town for many years but now it is no longer in use and sits idle by the side of the tracks.

### *Sloth*

1. We avoid laziness and sloth when we are active, using our minds and our energies at all times to serve others.
2. Iman does not give in to laziness and sloth, so he studies hard every day to become a mechanic. He wants to be a useful member of the community.

### *Profit*

1. Fei Li was very gifted at making crafts, which she had learned from her grandmother. Fei Li wanted to teach crafts to others so they could also develop the ability to make beautiful things. Fei Li wanted her talents to profit others.
2. The doctor looked at the old woman. He could see she was not well and told her that her health would improve if she spent more time in the sunshine. She would profit, he said, from taking a long walk outdoors every day.

## **C. Songs**

## **D. Story**

With His heart filled with the love of God, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent every moment in service to humanity, and you may wish to remind the children, before telling them the following story, that He was the perfect Example of how we should serve:

*There once was a very proud man who did not understand the Station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. One day, he approached the Master in the street and said, “So, You are called the Servant of God.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied that, indeed, that was His name. You know, of course, that the name ‘Abdu’l-Bahá means “Servant of Bahá” or Servant of God.*

*“Well,” said the man proudly, “I am Moses.” Now, the man was referring to the Prophet of God, Moses, and it was not really his name at all. We will learn more about Moses in a later class, but for today you need to know that Moses was one of the Messengers of God that came long before Bahá’u’lláh. The man was trying to annoy ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but the Master did not respond to his jest. Instead, He told the man to meet Him the next morning at the same spot on the street, and they would go together and serve the people like the great Moses had done.*

*The man agreed, and the next day from morning to evening he accompanied the Master as He visited the sick and the suffering, served the needy and met with the people who were thirsty to receive His love and His wise counsel. By evening, the man who called himself Moses was extremely tired. Yet, he would not let go of his pride, and when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked him to accompany Him the next day, he accepted.*

*Again by the evening of the second day the man was exhausted, but he accepted to accompany ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for yet another day. On the third day when they returned*



*from their arduous work, the man could not bear the thought of working so hard, not even for another minute. He had learned his lesson and had caught a glimpse of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s greatness. So as they went to part ways, and before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could invite him for another day of work, the man said with great humility: “‘Abdu’l-Bahá, tomorrow morning I will no longer be Moses.”*

### **E. Drama**

After the usual warm-up exercise, carry out one or two activities with the children that will strengthen their skills and abilities related to creative drama. They can then improvise in pairs a short scene that will help them gain further understanding of the theme of this lesson: working hard for the benefit of others. Begin by telling them the following story, making sure they grasp it well:

A king is traveling through the countryside and sees a very old man working in a field. The king is surprised to see such an old man so hard at work and asks the man what he is doing. The old man explains that he is planting fruit trees. The king inquires how long it will take for the trees to bear fruit. The old man tells him it will take a very long time, indeed, and that he will not live to taste the fruit from the trees he is planting. The king is confused. He wants to know why the old man is using his energy to grow fruit that he will never be able to eat. The old man smiles and explains that, in his life, he has eaten fruit from many trees that were planted by others and that he wanted to plant trees for the benefit of those who will come after him. The king is pleased with this answer and gives the old man a gold coin. The old man smiles and tells the king that the trees did not take so long to bear fruit after all. He has hardly finished planting them and already they have brought him a reward from the king.

Select two students with strong drama skills and have them improvise the story in front of the class. As the skit is being performed, you can help the children imagine the scene described in the story by asking questions such as “What is the king wearing?” “How is he traveling in the countryside?” “Who does he see on his journey?” “What is the old man doing?” Next, divide the class into pairs and help them to each act out the story.

### **F. Drawing and art**

For the period of this lesson dedicated to art, you should again select one or two activities that, while reinforcing the theme of the lesson, will enable the children to draw on the skills and abilities they have been developing. If it seems suitable, for example, they could create puppets, as well as backdrop scenery, in order to reenact the story from the drama portion of the lesson about the king and the old man planting seeds.

### **G. Closing prayers**

## LESSON 7.3

### A. Reciting prayers and sacred verses

The children can finish committing to memory the prayer introduced in Lesson 7.1, after opening prayers have been recited. As before, you should look for appropriate times during the lesson for them to recite the verses they know related to selflessness, joyfulness, hopefulness, and steadfastness and discuss with them how these qualities manifest themselves in a life of service.

### B. Memorizing quotation

The following ideas will assist you in presenting the quotation that the children are expected to memorize in this lesson:

With love and kindness, joy and eagerness, we work diligently throughout our lives, striving to contribute to the good of those around us. As we grow up, we each become engaged in different kinds of work and make effort to acquire the skills and abilities, knowledge and qualities, we need to serve. There are many things that must be done in this world, and each person must determine how best to apply the talents and capacities he or she has been given by God. Think of the farmer who works from early morning until evening to produce the food others need to survive; think of the factory worker who lends his or her skills to the manufacture of goods that will benefit many; the schoolteacher devotes his or her days to helping young students learn to read and write; the musician practices for hours upon hours in order to create music that will bring joy to the hearts of others; the scientist spends a lifetime observing the universe and looking for patterns in its workings, to make discoveries that will lead to new understanding and that will give rise to new technologies. The Bahá'í writings tell us that work done in the spirit of service is accepted by God as worship.

You, too, will need to think about how you will contribute to the welfare of society as you grow older. In preparing yourself for whatever path you might take in the future, you will, of course, need to study and strive for excellence. There will be many ways for you to apply the talents and capacities God has given to you, and as you make effort and work diligently, Divine confirmations will reinforce you, and you will begin to see more and more possibilities to serve others. Even the Bahá'ís who followed Bahá'u'lláh into exile from His homeland and who had little means learned the art of weaving mats out of dried grass. It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá who found an instructor to teach them this skill, a skill which He Himself had earlier acquired. During His travels in the West, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained to someone: “. . . it is incumbent upon every soul to acquire a trade and an occupation. For example, I know how to weave or make a mat, and you know some other trade. This, in itself, is an act of worship, provided that it is conducted on the basis of utmost honesty and faithfulness.” To remember the importance of engaging in some form of work, in a spirit of service to humanity, let us memorize the following words of Bahá'u'lláh:

**“It is incumbent upon each one of you to engage in some occupation—such as a craft, a trade or the like. We have exalted your engagement in such work to the rank of worship of the one true God.”<sup>35</sup>**

### *Incumbent*

1. Parents must be responsible for making sure that their children receive an education. It is incumbent upon parents to see to their children's education.
2. It is incumbent upon every person to pray each day.

### *Engage*

1. Jacob's brothers all have different jobs. One is an electrician, one is a fisherman, one is a teacher, and one is a painter. Each of Jacob's brothers is engaged in a different occupation.
2. Each day, Marwan goes to school, assists her brother with his studies, practices playing football, and helps with the household chores. Throughout the day, Marwan engages in many activities.

### *Occupation*

1. Ariadne spends most of her time looking after her family—caring for their home, tending to their well-being, and making sure they have what they need. Ariadne's main occupation is the care of her family.
2. Penelope is an architect. She spends her days designing apartment buildings in which families live. Penelope is an architect by occupation.

### *Rank*

1. Firefighters must always follow the orders given to them by the head of the fire department. The head of the fire department holds the highest rank in the department.
2. After many years of wood-working, Alberto became very skilled in carpentry. He achieved the rank of Master Carpenter.

### *Worship*

1. Once a week, Miguel's parents invite their neighbors to their home to pray for the well-being of their village and their families and to offer gratitude to God. They gather together to worship and praise God.
2. In every part of the world, one finds special places where people gather to give praise and thanks to God. People go to these places to worship God together.

### **C. Songs**

### **D. Story**

The story below, about a young man named Muḥammad who grew up in 'Akká in the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, will help the children to see the joy that working hard to achieve excellence brings.

*In 'Akká, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had organized a small school for the Bahá'í children who lived in the Holy Land. There were very knowledgeable Bahá'ís in 'Akká at the time, so the children had the opportunity to learn from a most wonderful group of teachers. Among the subjects taught at the school was calligraphy, which is an art highly esteemed by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is the art of writing profound and meaningful phrases, poems, and tablets in a most beautiful way, almost as if they were paintings.*

*On Thursday afternoons the children of the Bahá'í school had a special bounty. Each would take the best piece of calligraphy he or she had written during the week and show it to 'Abdu'l-Bahá who would inspect it, praising and encouraging the child as He saw fit. If the calligraphy piece was particularly well done, He would write a short sentence of praise at the bottom of the paper in His own handwriting. For the children, a sheet ennobled by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's handwriting was a treasure they would cherish for the rest of their lives.*

*One year, there was a young boy of twelve or thirteen in the school who was intelligent, but eager to avoid unnecessary exertion. He loved to play and, as a result, did his homework hastily and poorly. Now this young boy, whose name was Muḥammad, had an ardent desire to win the good pleasure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. But when it was time to sit down and practice his calligraphy, he would get the urge to go out and play. Then one week Muḥammad managed to show tremendous willpower. He worked hard, and when Thursday came, he presented to 'Abdu'l-Bahá a very nice piece of calligraphy. The Master was delighted and wrote at the bottom of the sheet words of commendation.*

*As you can imagine, Muḥammad was beside himself with happiness. He looked at the handwriting of 'Abdu'l-Bahá under his calligraphy, convinced he was the most fortunate boy in the whole universe. "Why could I not do this every week," he thought, "and receive this honor every Thursday?" So the next week he tried again, but unfortunately his willpower was not strong. He did not produce a single piece of calligraphy that could possibly win 'Abdu'l-Bahá's approval a second time. Then Muḥammad said to himself, "'Abdu'l-Bahá is so busy. He has so many things to do. He would never remember the calligraphy of a little boy." So he took a fine pair of scissors and cut off the bottom of the sheet that he had presented the week before, removing 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words of praise. You can see what Muḥammad's intention was. He was going to show the same piece of calligraphy to 'Abdu'l-Bahá again. This was a blameworthy act, although Muḥammad had always been a truthful and trustworthy child. He tried to forget his plan, but could not. His mind had been poisoned by a dishonest thought, and he was not strong enough to overcome it.*

*On Thursday afternoon, Muḥammad stood in line with the calligraphy piece from the previous week in his hand. He was already feeling the pangs of remorse. He was so ashamed of himself that he could hardly look at 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Then finally, his turn came. As always, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was loving and kind. But, of course, the moment He saw the calligraphy, He knew what had happened. How do you think the Master reacted? Did he announce Muḥammad's wrongdoing to his companions and shame him before the others? Not at all. With great love, but also with unmistakable firmness, He noted how closely the piece of calligraphy matched the one that Muḥammad had presented the week before. He said no more, but patted the boy in such a way that made it perfectly clear to Muḥammad that 'Abdu'l-Bahá realized what he had done.*

## **E. Drama**

As always, have the children stretch in their imaginary squares as a warm-up and then carry out one or two other exercises from previous lessons related to the skills and abilities of creative drama. Then explain to them that the next exercise will help them to think about how they can serve humanity as they grow up.

Ask the children to sit silently and imagine some of the types of work done by their parents, relatives, and neighbors. After a few moments ask them to choose one of them without mentioning it to their classmates. Next, call them to the front of the class one by one and have them act out some of the tasks involved in the work they have chosen. For example, if one child has in mind a doctor, he or she might pretend to examine a patient; another might think of someone who is a teacher and pretend to give a lesson. After each child has finished his or her improvisation, the other students should guess what he or she was pretending to do and then discuss briefly how such an occupation can contribute to the betterment of the world. To begin the exercise, you might wish to choose a child with strong drama skills who can provide an example for the others to follow.

## **F. Drawing and art**

As with the other lessons in this set, you will need to select one or two activities for the children to carry out that will strengthen their artistic skills and help them think further about the theme of the lesson. The activity could, for instance, build on the exercise they did during the drama portion of the lesson, where they imagined some of the tasks that are part of certain professions. In that case, you could help them extend the skills they developed in creating forms in order to make objects that are used in those professions, for example, a doctor's bag, a judge's gavel, an artist's paint palette, a gardener's rake, and so on.

## **G. Closing prayers**



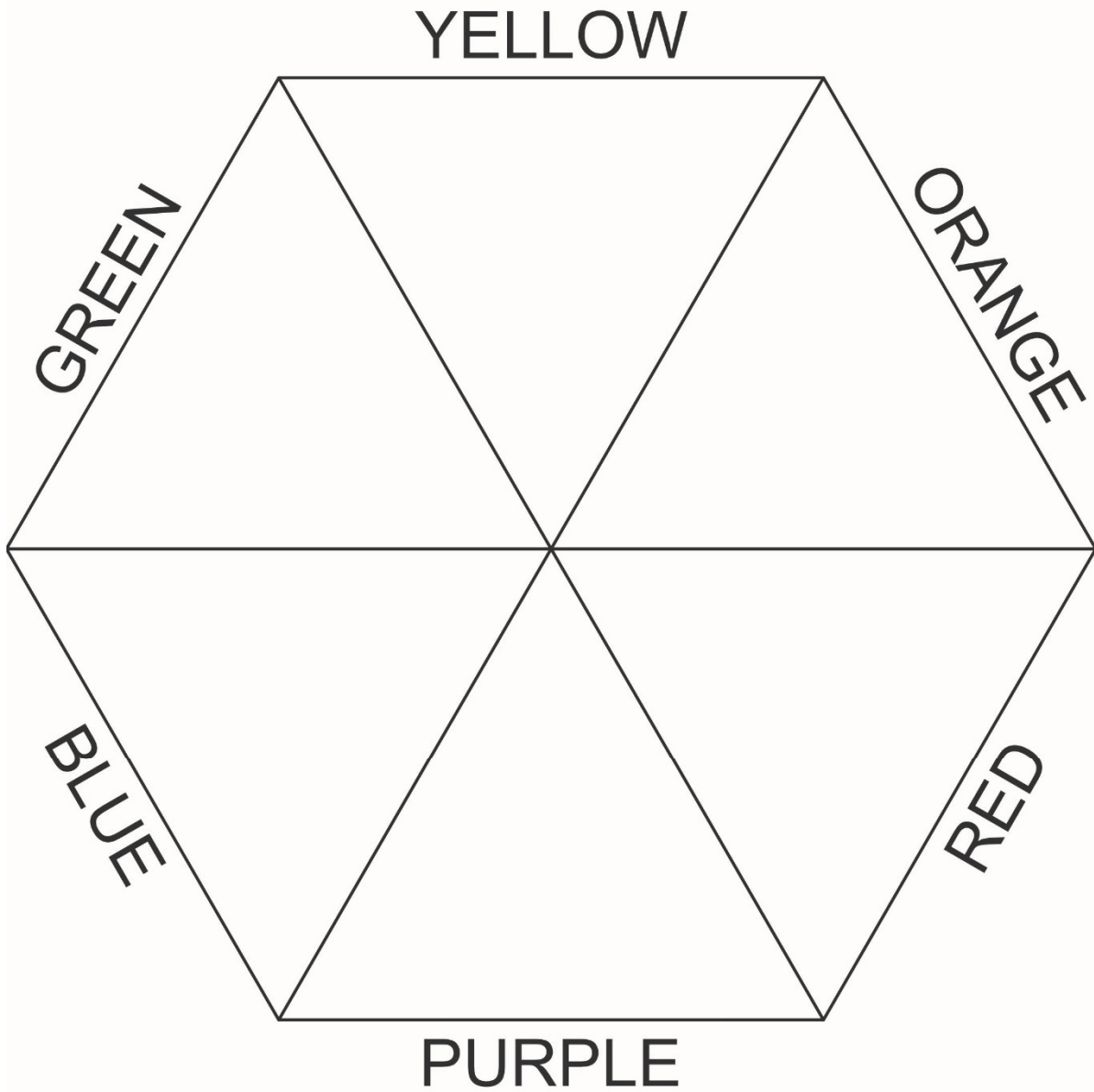
## Sets 4–6

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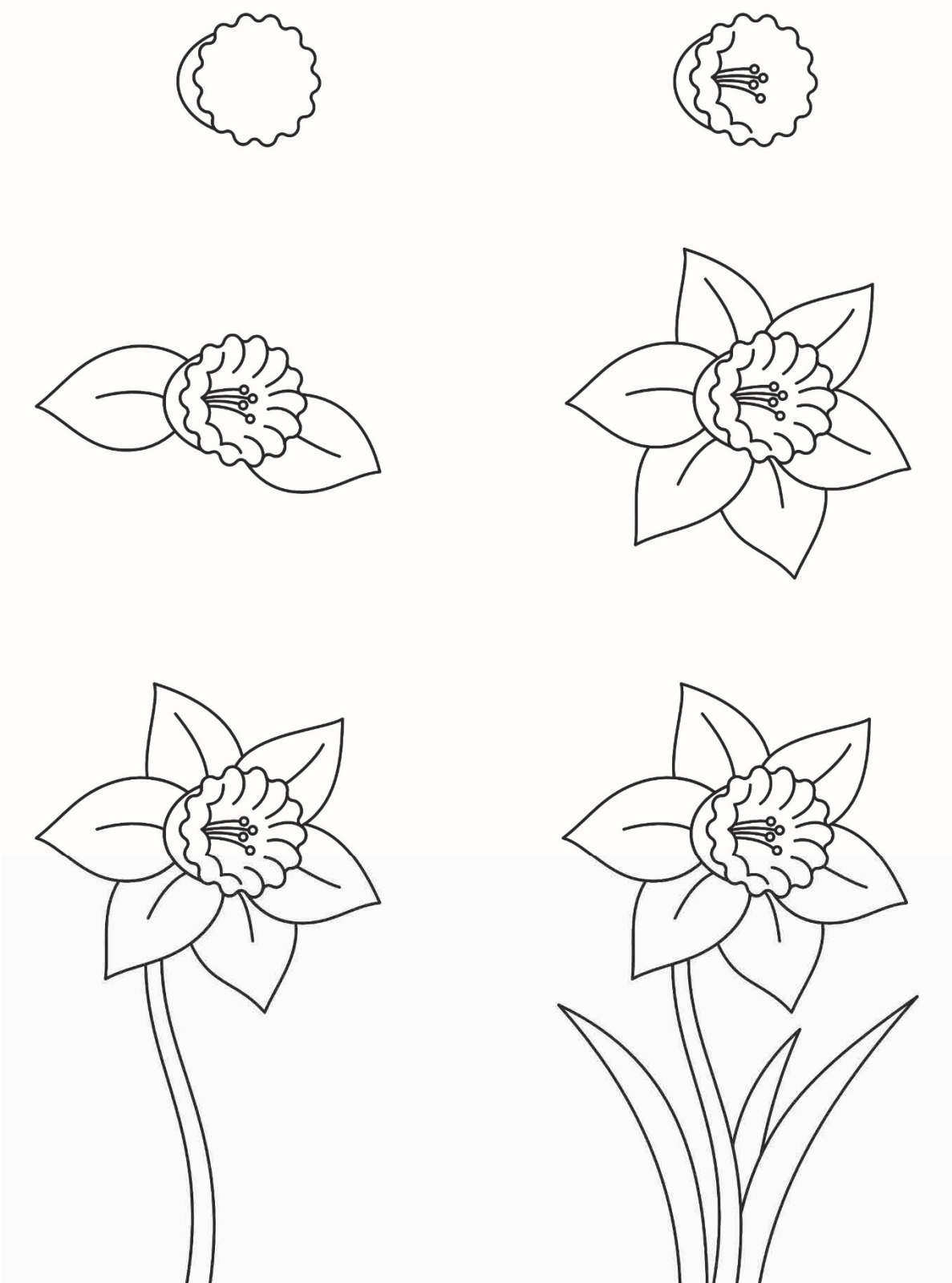
Drawing and Art Sheets



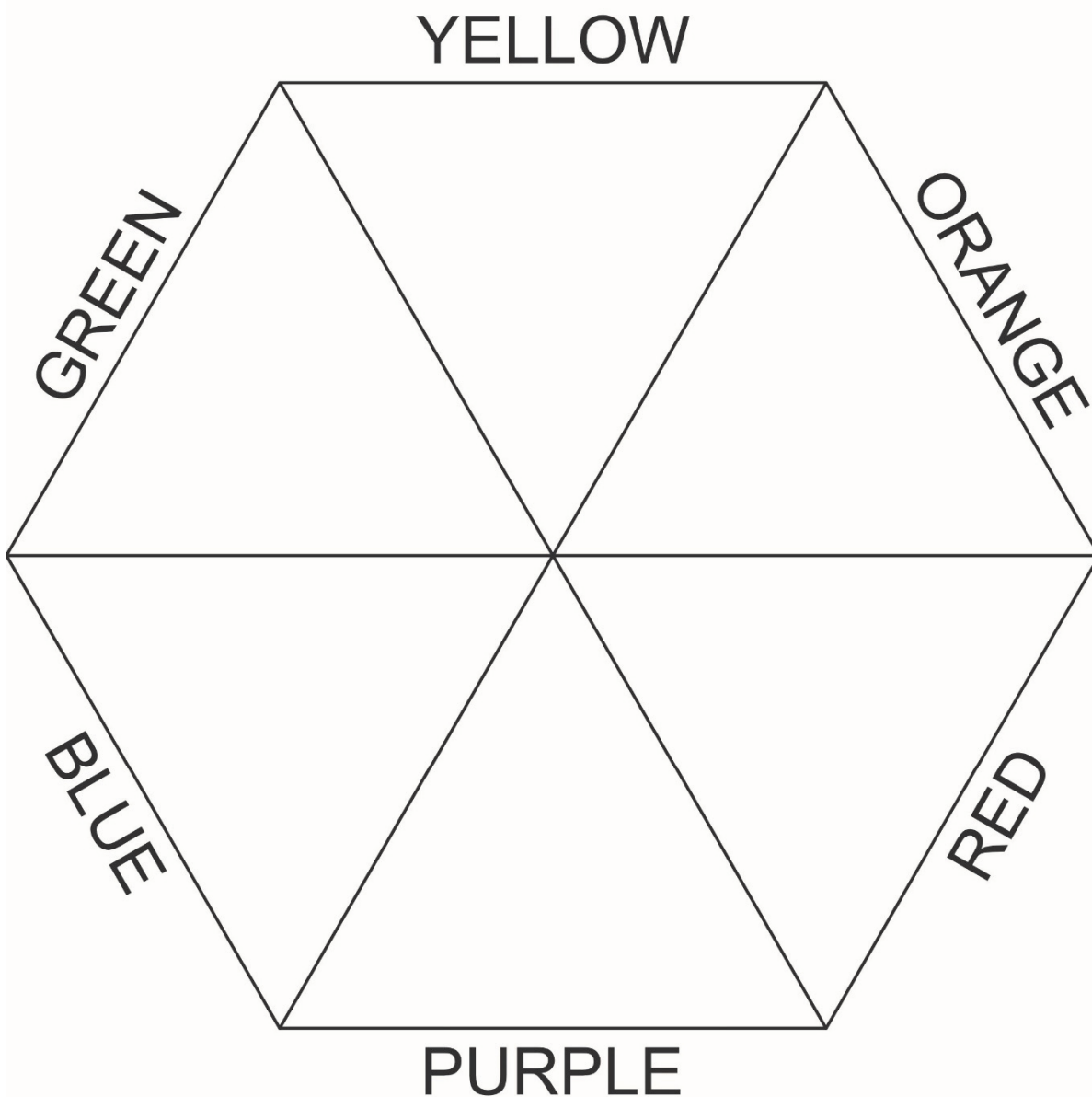




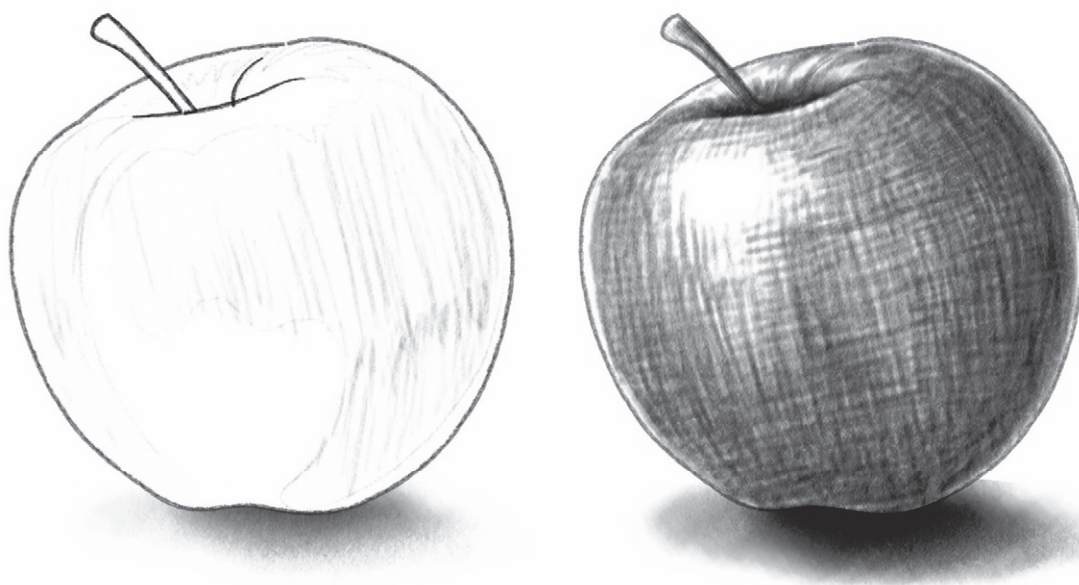
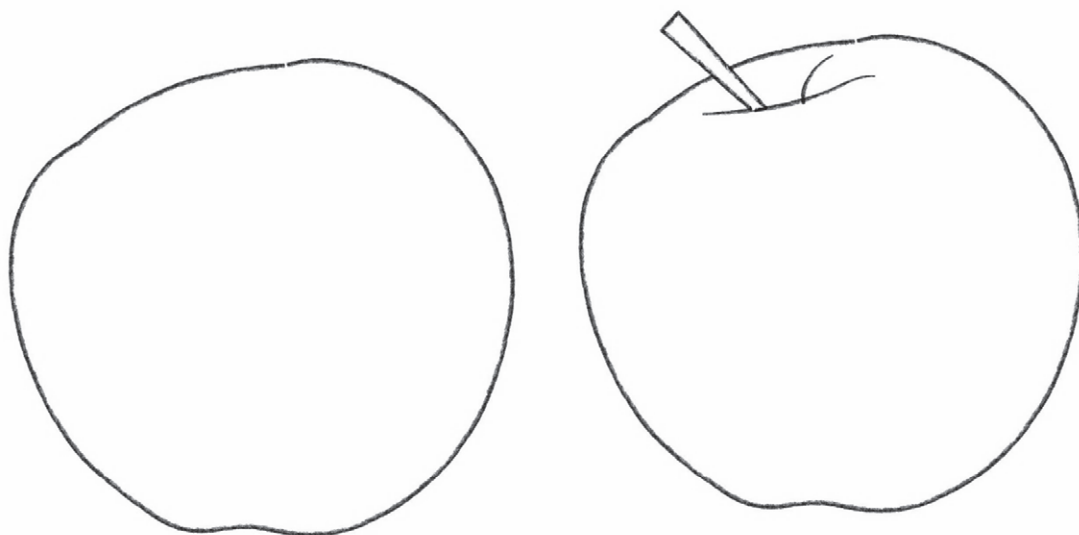






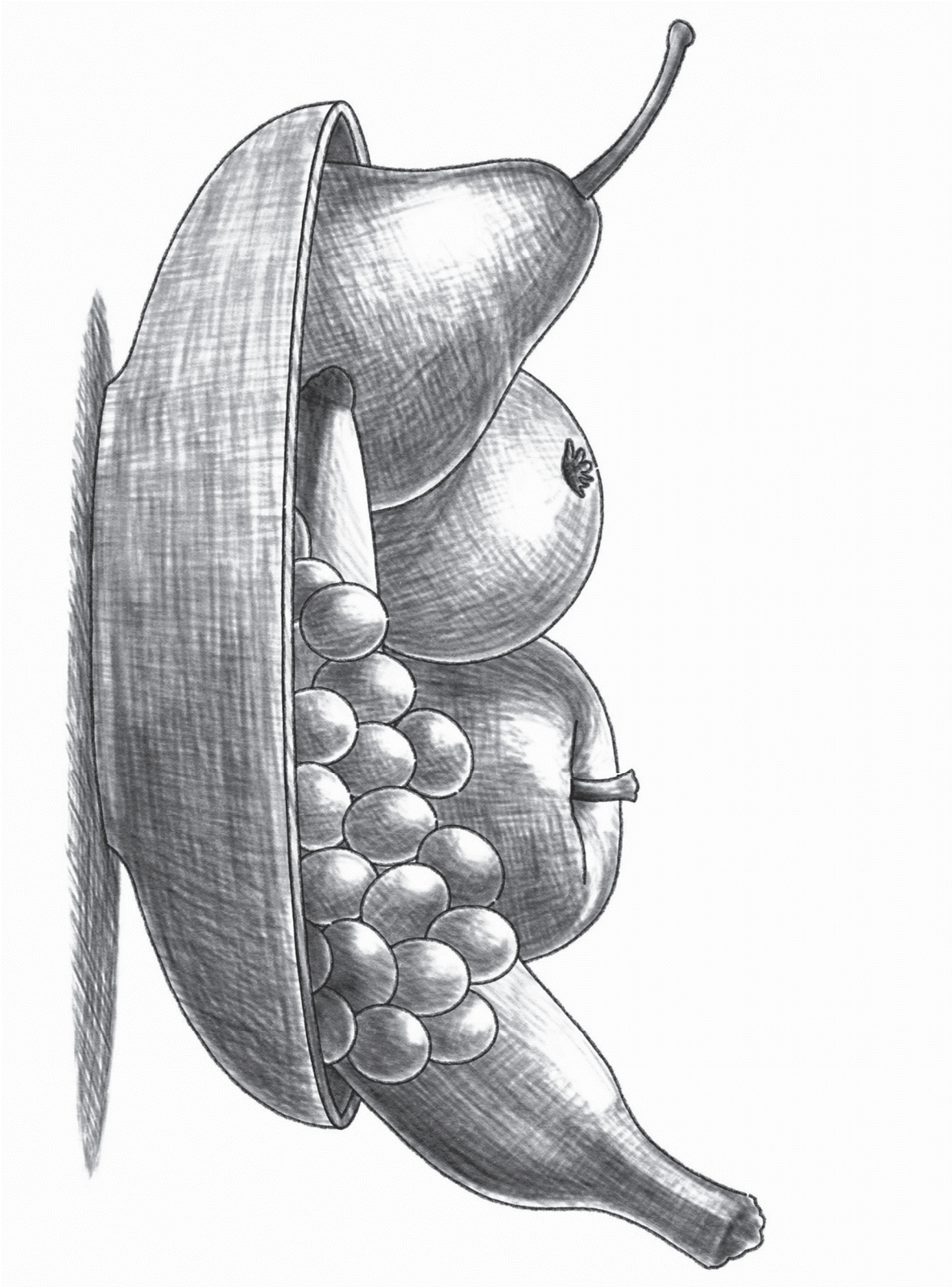




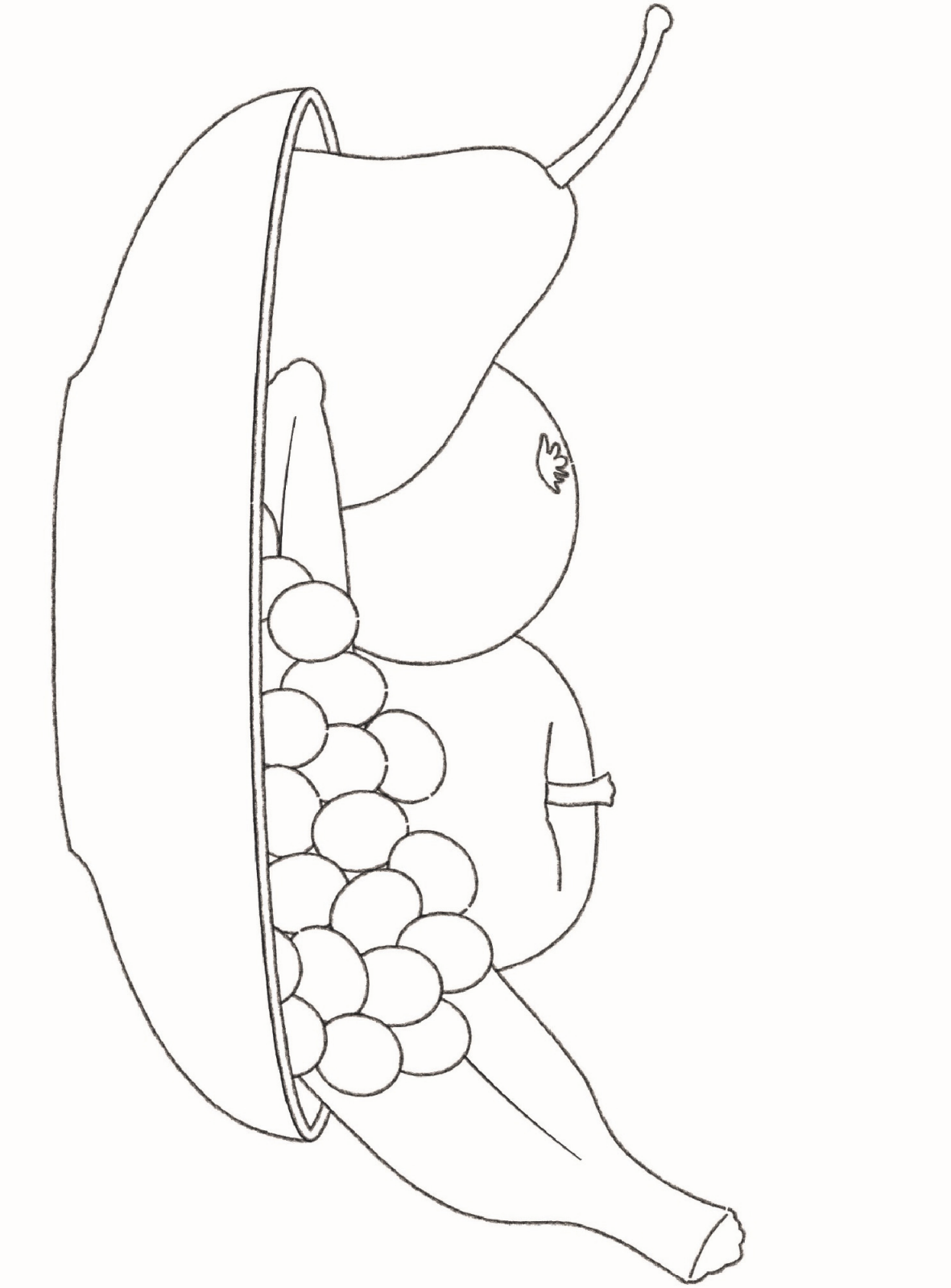














YELLOW

PURPLE

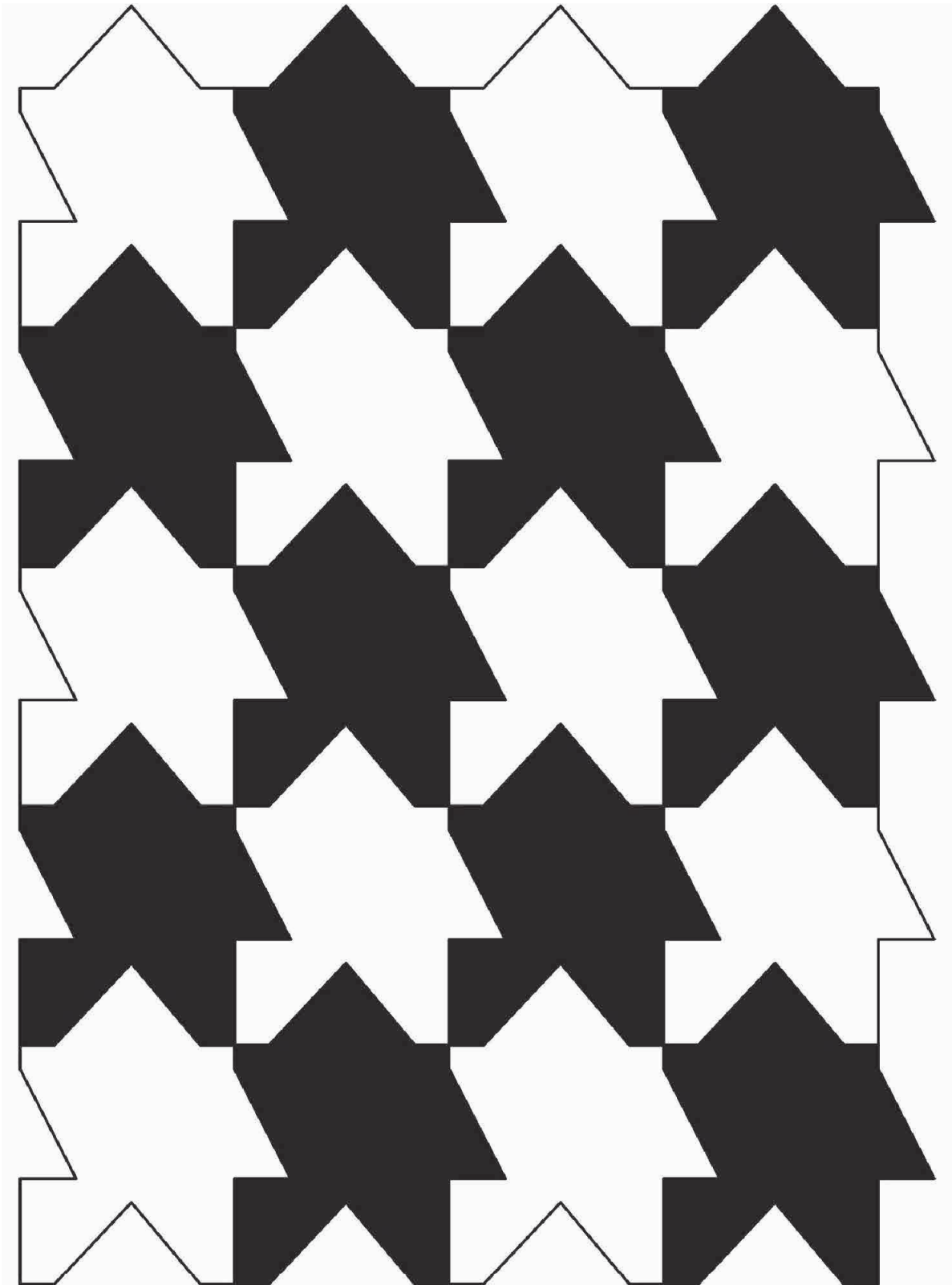
ORANGE

BLUE

RED

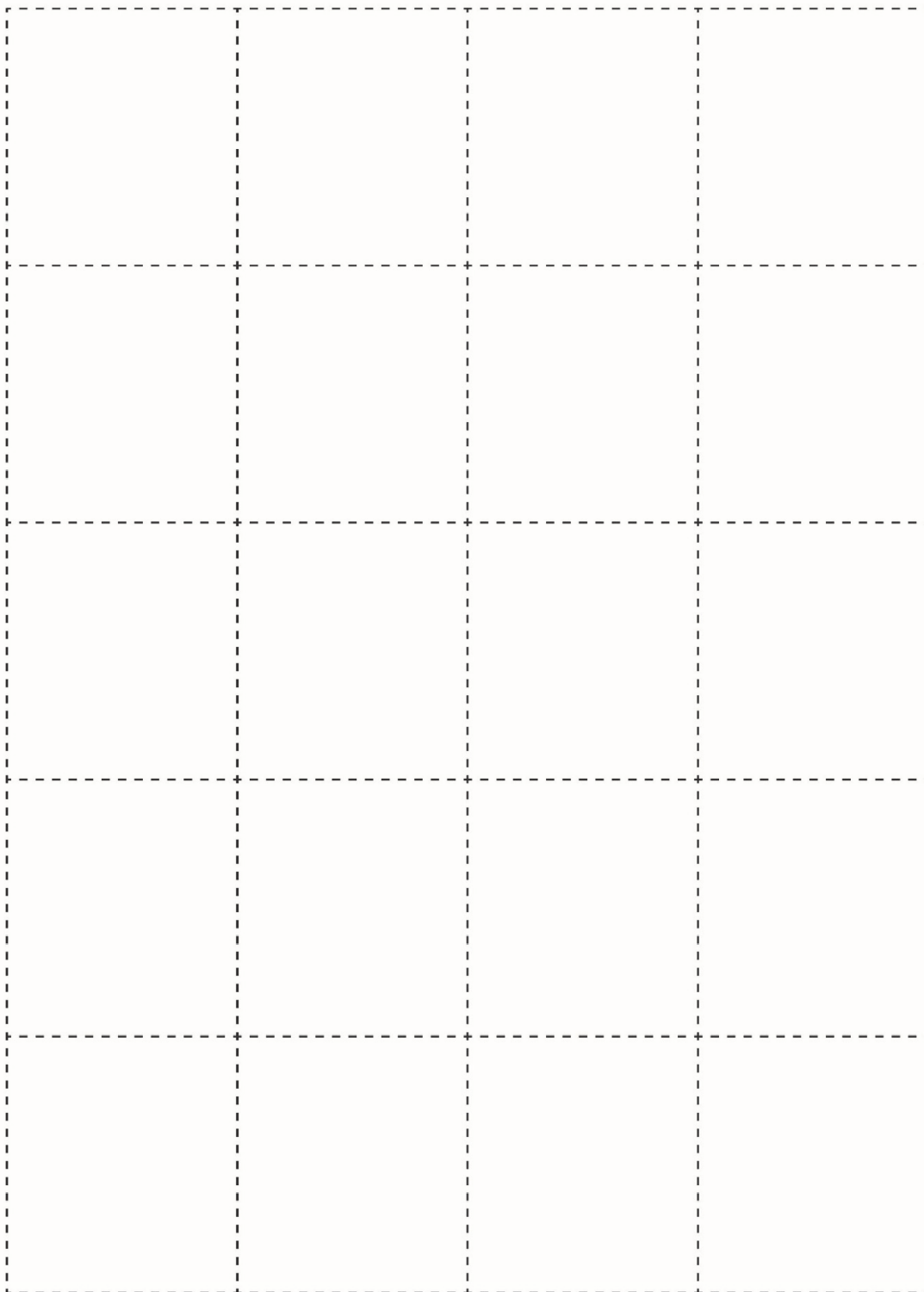
GREEN



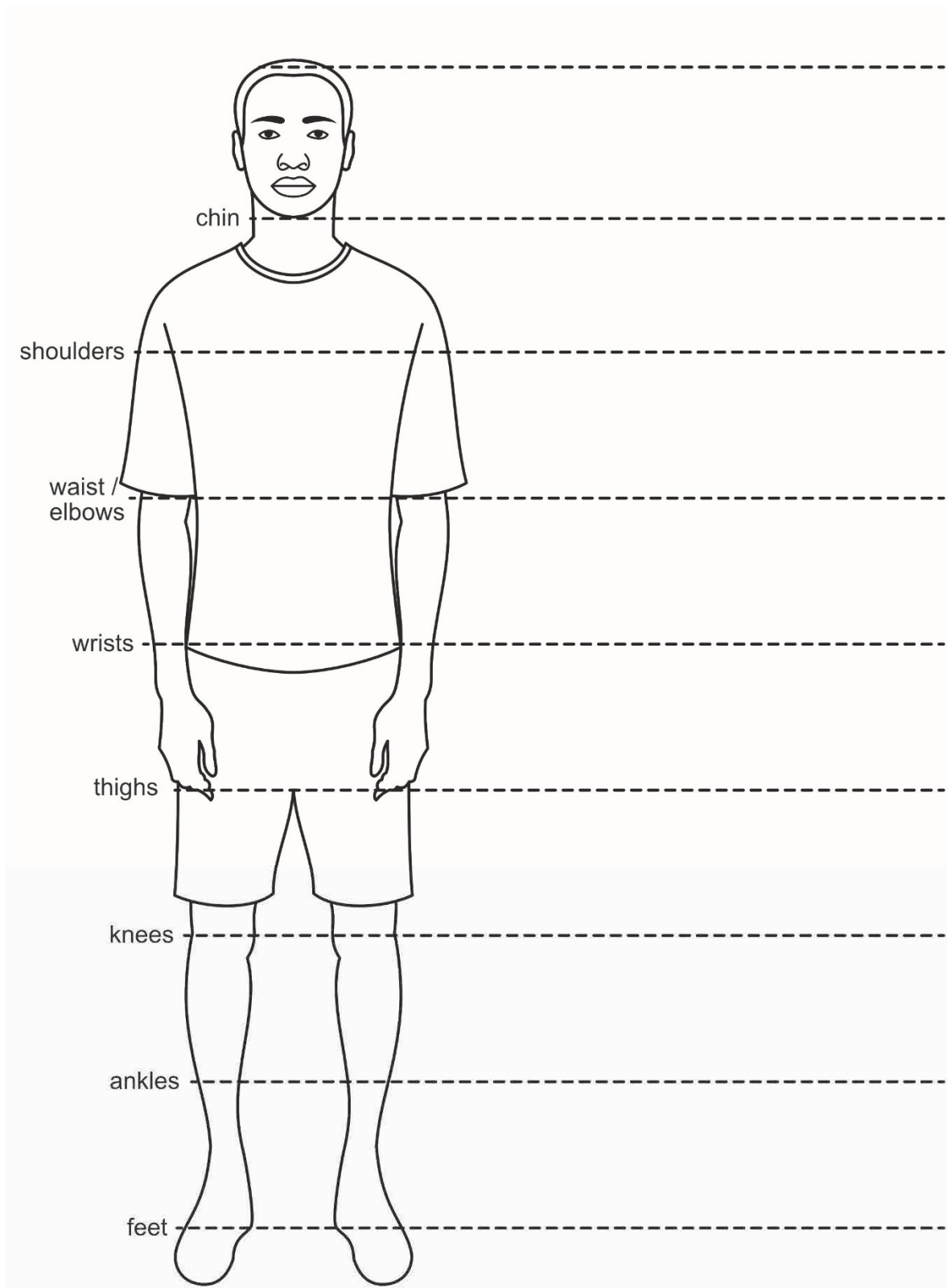




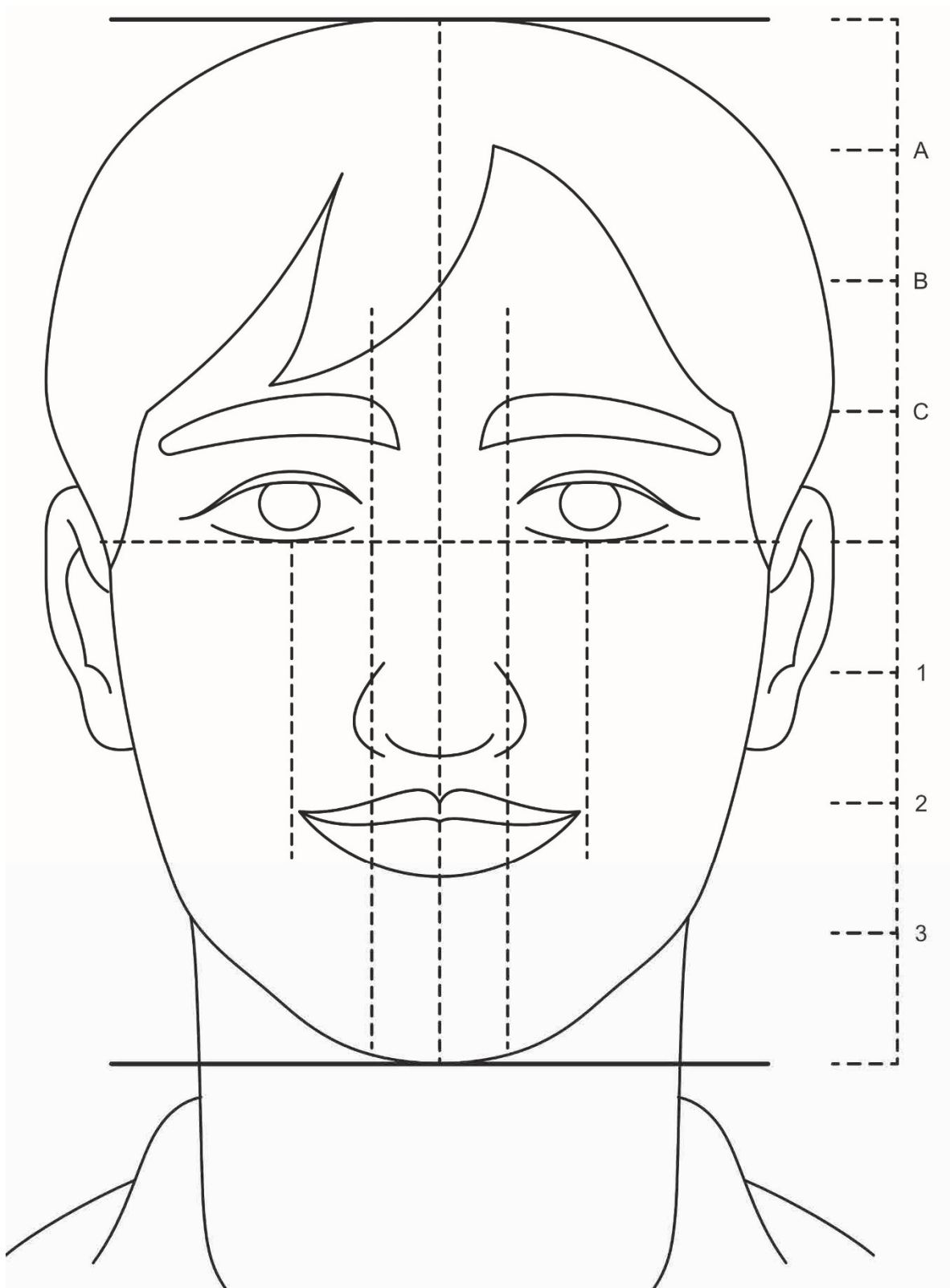




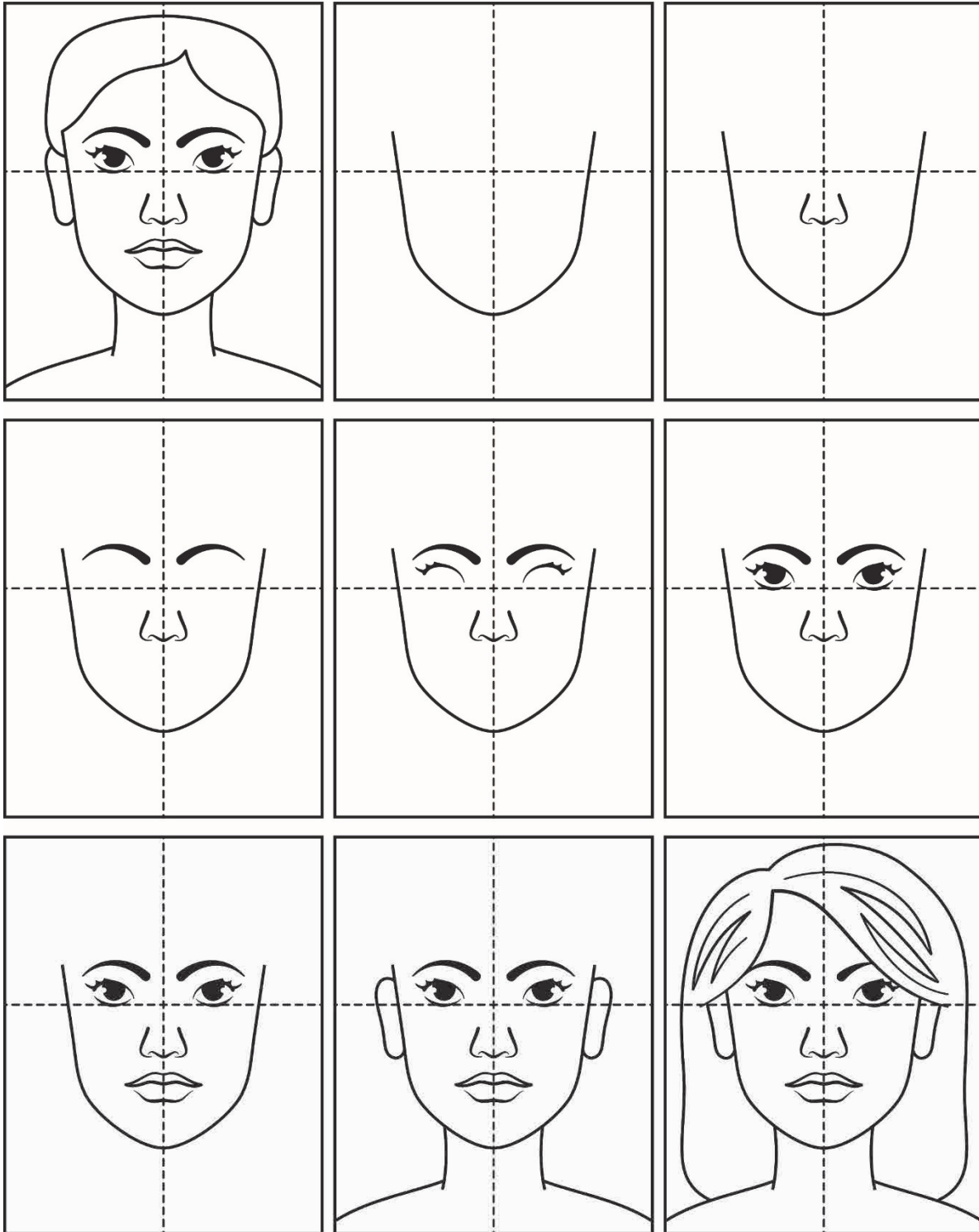






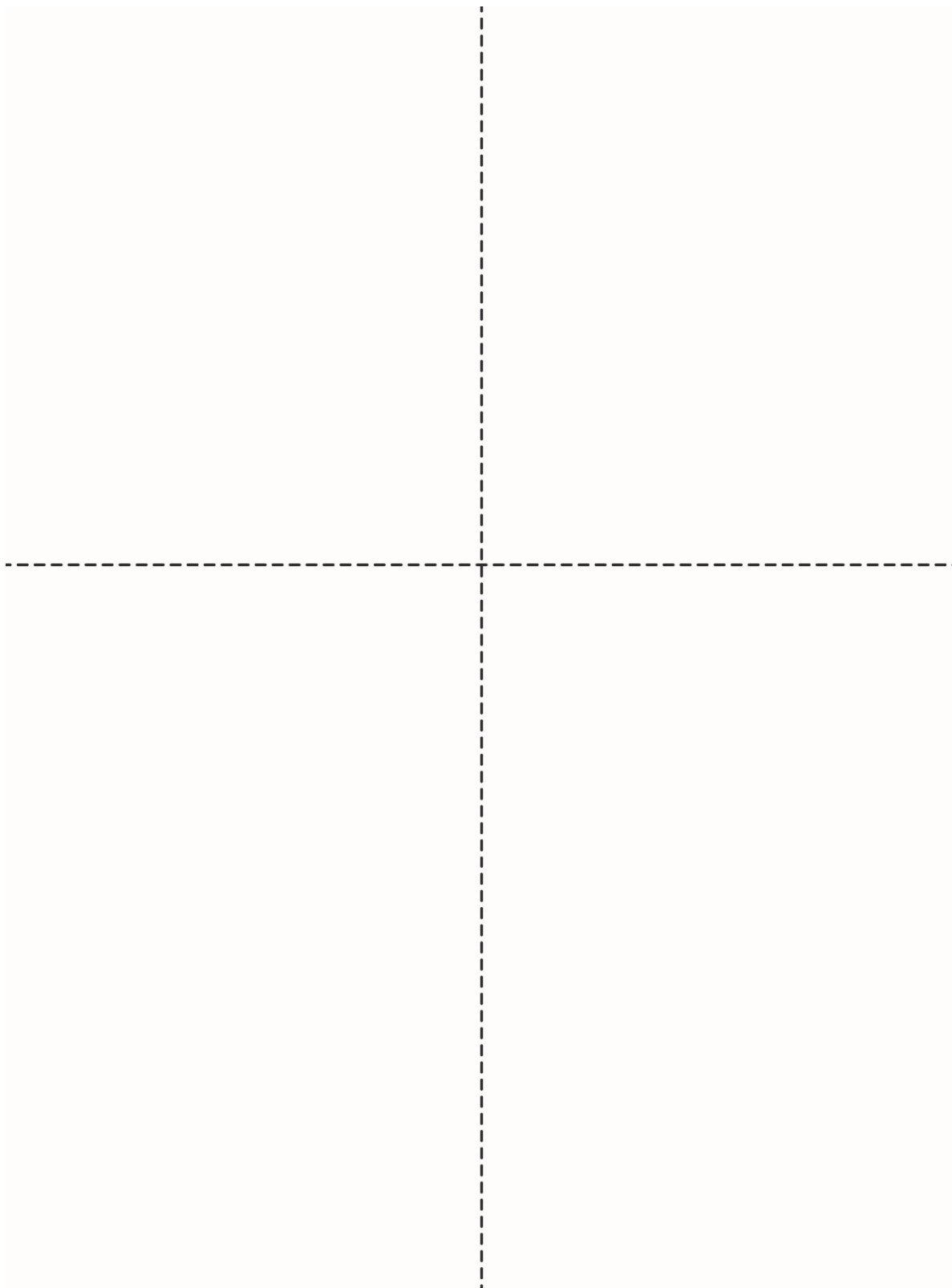




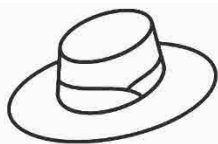












Spain



South Africa



Austria



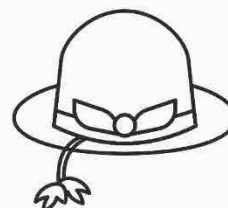
United States



Mexico



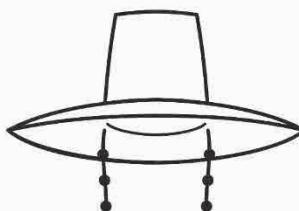
Mali



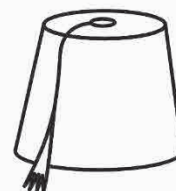
Bolivia



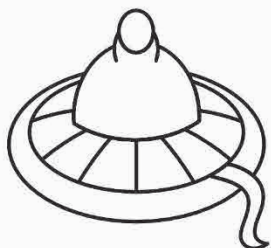
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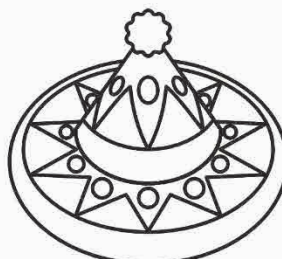
South Korea



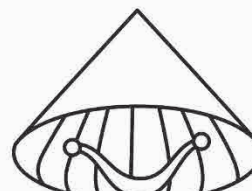
Morocco



Guinea



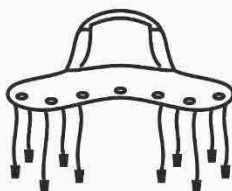
India



Vietnam



Scotland

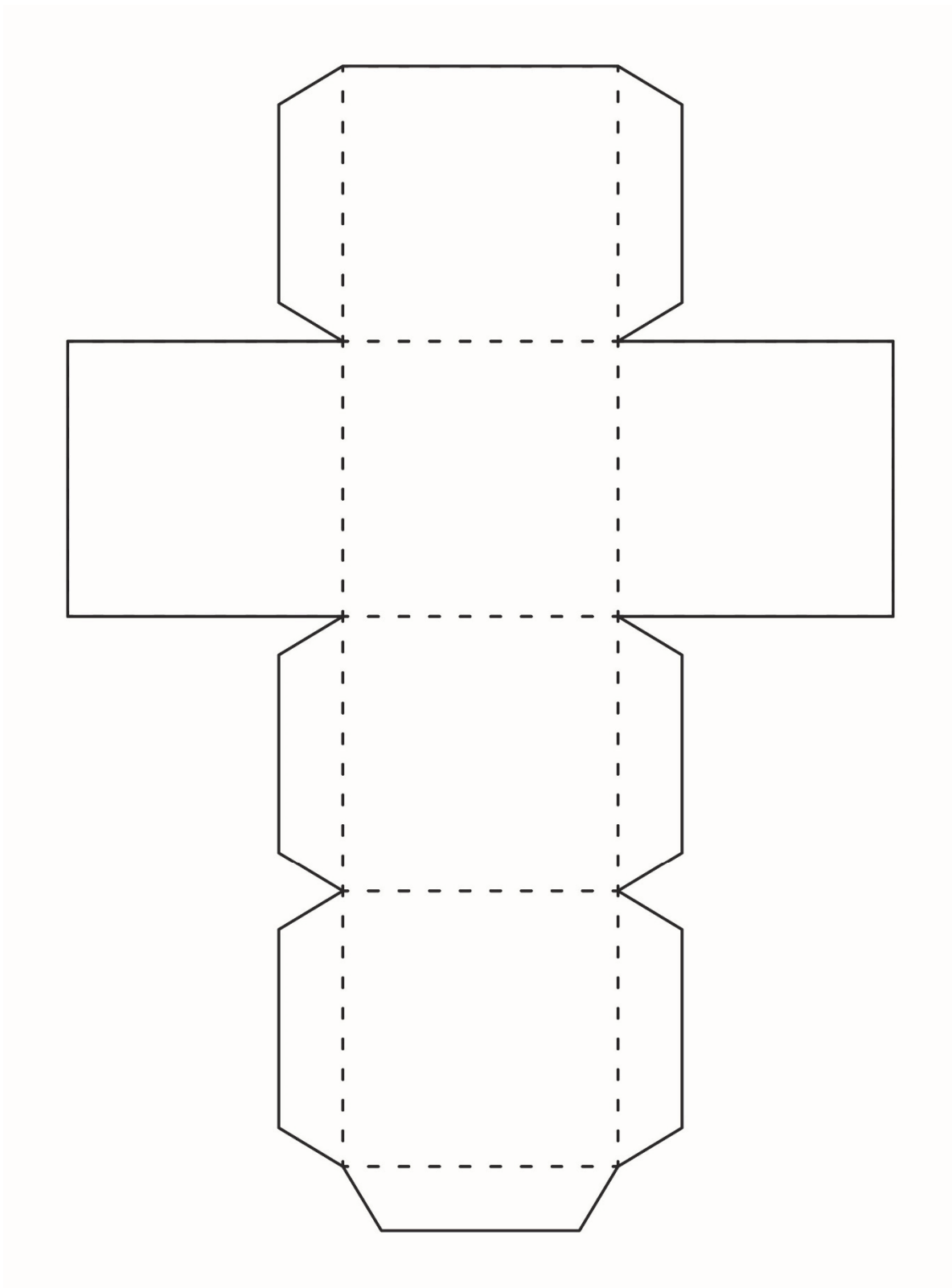


Australia

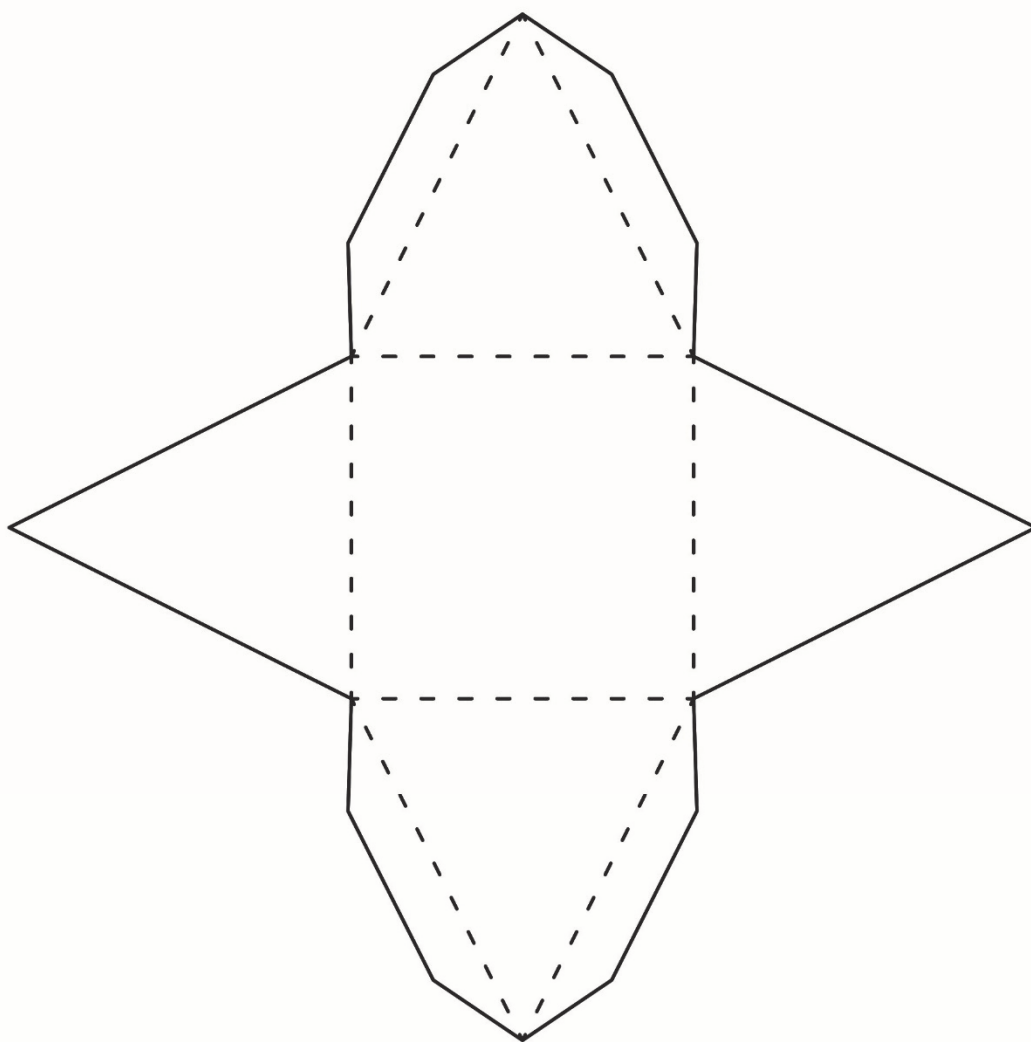


Colombia



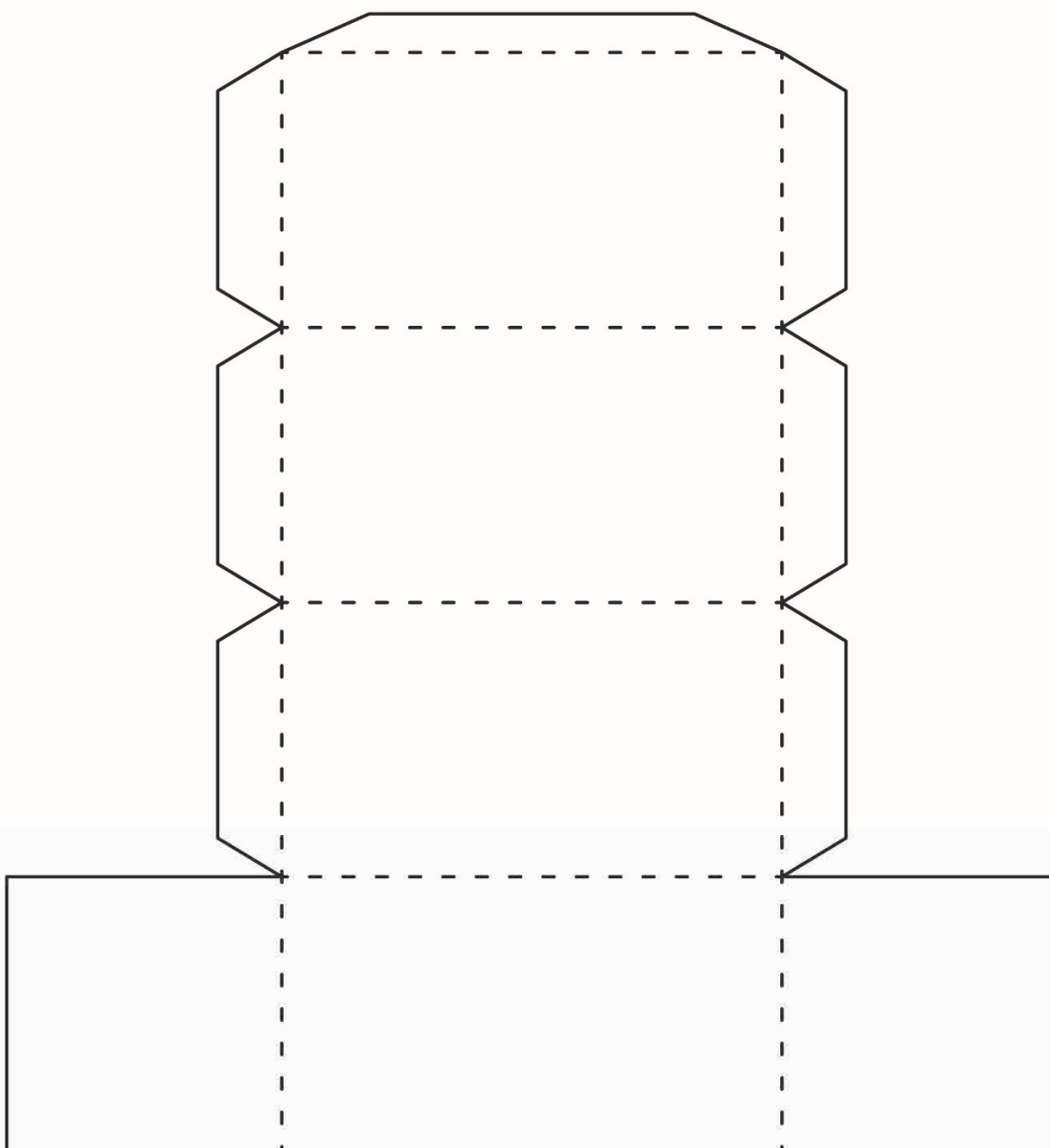




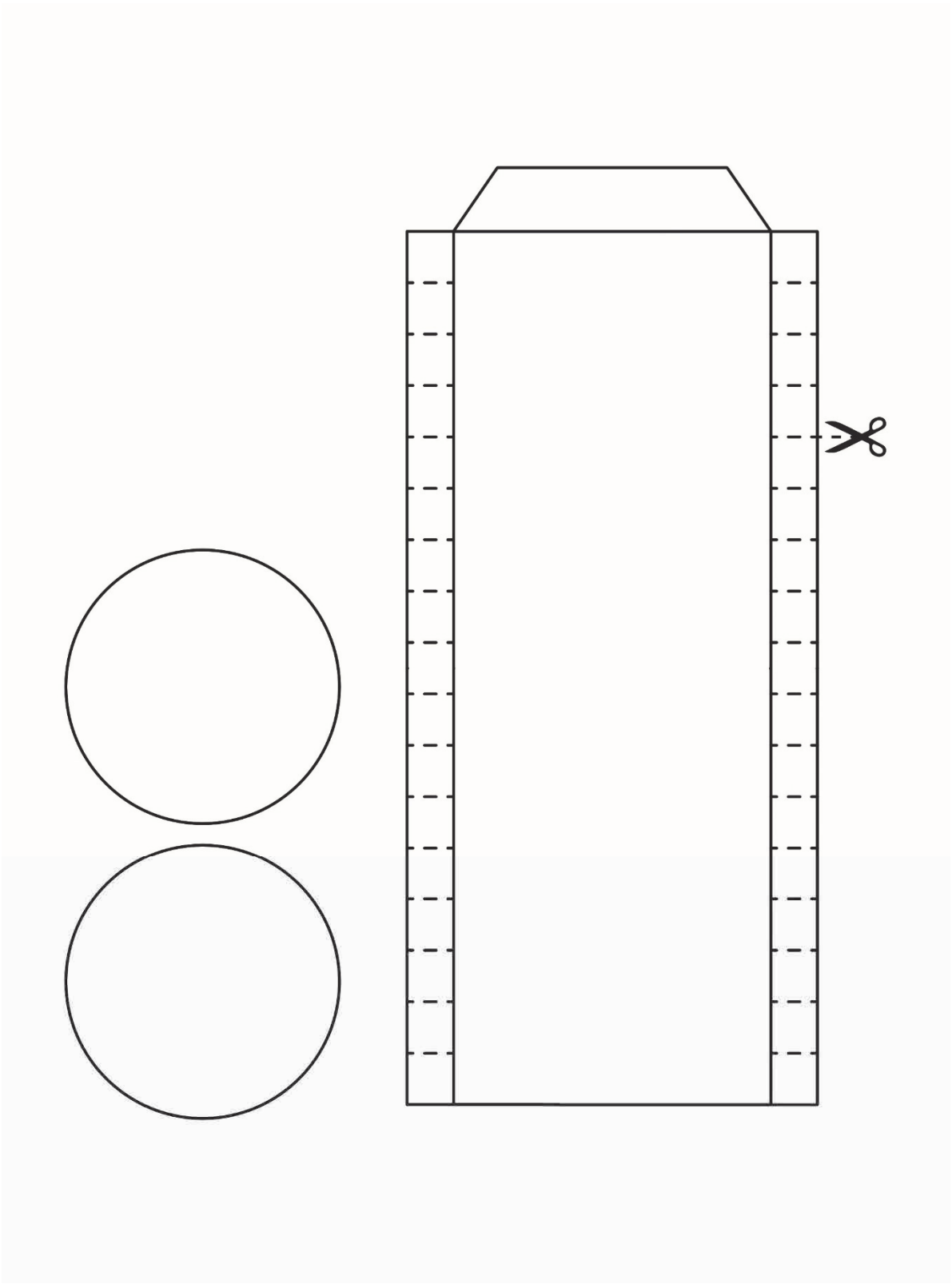




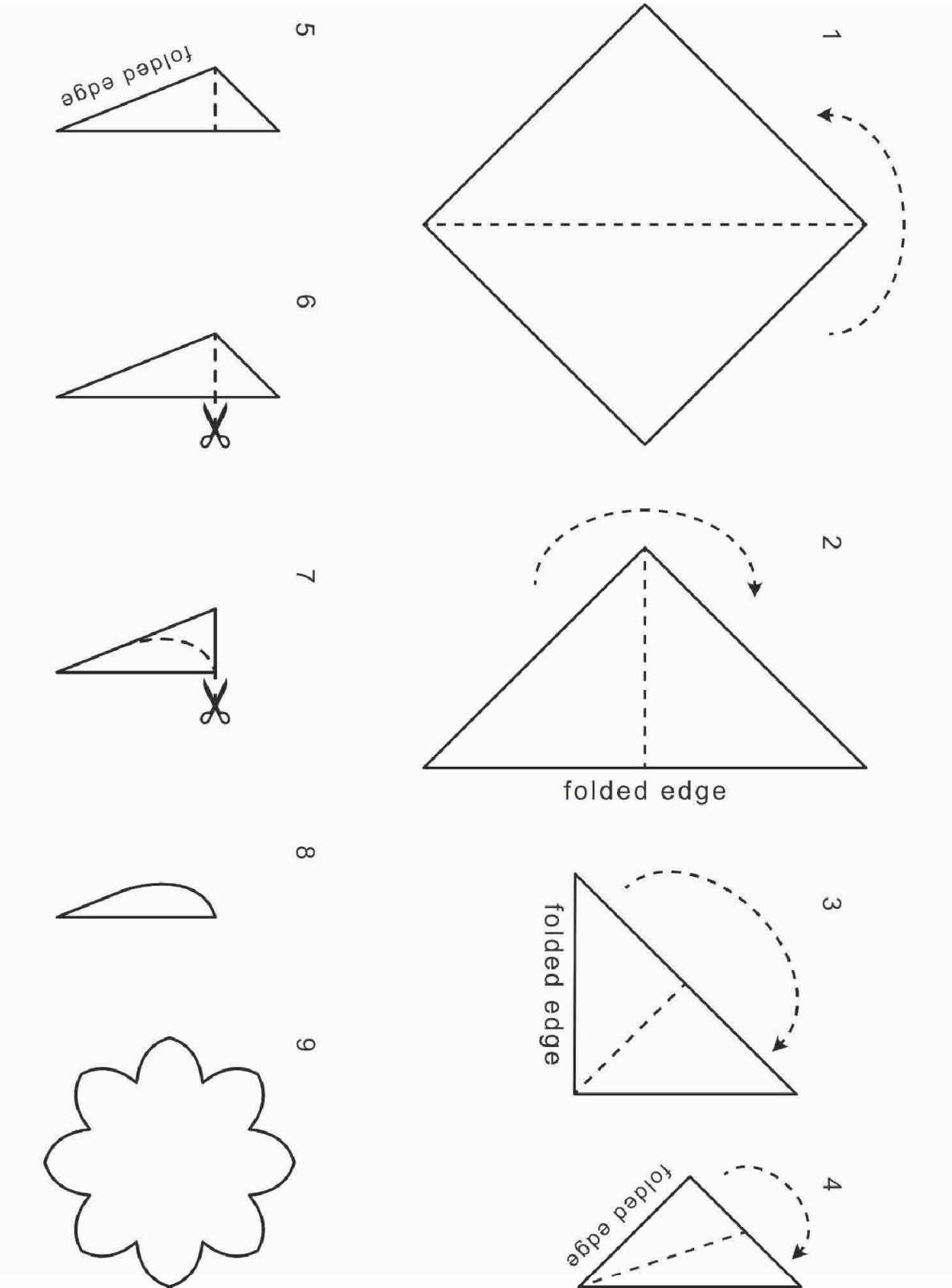














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