

Set 1: Maintaining a Prayerful Attitude

Lesson 1 - The nature of prayer:

A. Reciting and memorising prayers:

Use a picture of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh to evoke a sense of reverence in the children, and 'guiding' them down the path to assist them to centre their thoughts prior to opening prayers.

Learn from "O Lord!" up to "...loving-kindness."

(or to "Thy bounty", depending on your children)

The children could draw pictures for key words in this part of the prayer.

Act out & sing 'O Lord! I am a child...'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMkYxv-jQvw>

<https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/o-lord-i-am-a-child>

Claire McGrail's version

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XJI_PzFN6I&feature=youtu.be

Explanatory sentences/pictures may be needed for:

tender plant

nurtured

bounty

B. Memorising quotations:

i) Intro: Give the children some honey/sugar/chocolate to taste when explaining that there is nothing sweeter in life than prayer.

Elicit from the children things in life that are sweet (literally and figuratively), and explain that prayer is even sweeter.

ii) Presentation of Quote: image cards

iii) Concrete examples: intone, kindle (campfire), attract

intone - Each child can take turns intoning a phrase, e.g. The first part of the prayer they have just learnt, or the first phrase/s of the quote. Focus on the manner of intoning – out loud, with sweetness and sincerity, not too quiet or too loud, not too fast or too slow.

verses of God – elicit from the children some of the verses of God they learnt in Grade 1, have some children's prayer and quote books available to reference.

draw nigh unto – call the children close to the teacher (i.e. call them nigh unto you);

show the children a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with children close to Him. them who have drawn nigh unto Him – elicit from the children some of the people they learnt about in Grade 1 whose hearts were close to God ('Abdu'l-Bahá will be obvious, but also Bahiyih Khanum, Thomas Breakwell, Dorothy Baker, May Maxwell); indicate that this lesson we will be learning about a child whose heart was close to God kindle – the example of starting a campfire, could also refer to the process of enkindlement of Thomas/Dorothy)

attract - A magnet and cardboard hearts with magnet dots on the back

iv) Memorisation: Use picture prompt cards (hand drawn is fine) & quote song

<https://soundcloud.com/innocentinheart/intone>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jEeoAosTx4>

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/01-intone-o-my-servant-duet-w?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-two-album>

C. Songs

Quote song as above

Prayer increases <https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/prayer-increases-our-capacity>

Let the Love & the Light <https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/let-the-love-and-the-light>

Strive #1 <http://bahai-song-project.de/strive-that-day-by-day/>

<https://soundcloud.com/user-171062455/strive>

Strive #2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_l6gYN0ROU

Glory Glory <https://soundcloud.com/bahai-blog/glory-glory-clara-haskell>

O Son of Spirit - song or chant

D. Story

* Have a photo of Ruhu'llah and his father handy.

* Draw out the aspects of the story that illustrate elements of the attitude and habits related to Bahá'í prayer.

* Story video: <https://youtu.be/7RRQBiaQzRM>

E. Drama

Part 1, #3: It can be useful to have images of the animals, especially for an online class.

Part 2, #1: It can be useful to get the children to firstly brainstorm a number of heavy objects. Each pair can then consult privately as to which heavy object they will 'carry' together. The other children then guess which object they are 'carrying'. Each pair could have two or three turns 'carrying' different objects. You could conclude by having

the whole class 'carry' a really large object all together.

Part 2, #2: A picture of a well might also be useful if the children are not familiar with them. An alternative to the digging a well in the Aotearoa context, is digging a hangi. The teacher can encourage the children to ensure they are cooperating – that their 'spades' don't clash and the 'dirt' doesn't get in each other's eyes.

Part 3, #1: A further example of a flower that closes its petals at night, but then opens them during the day and turns its face expectantly to the sun, praying to it to shine its light on it to help it grow and thrive. Pictures, as always, are helpful.

Part 3, #2: Have shakers and drums available for the thunderstorm.

F. Drawing

Draw a sapling before and after rain.

Bring two identical pot plants. Leave one covered and without water for the week, but water the other and expose it to the light. Children can compare the difference after a week; then another week.

Draw a child with a joyful face, and draw or craft an open heart aflame with God's love in the centre of their chest. (*referencing the introduction to the spiritual concept*)

Draw Ruhu'lláh intoning sweetly and sincerely before the surprised official.

Play Ruhu'lláh song while drawing?: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu1nwt820WU> or play 'Intone' and the songs learnt this lesson.

Strive colouring sheet – *Baha'i Colouring Pages*.

G. Review

Quote 1: *Link to how Ruhu'lláh expressed sincerity in the way he intoned his prayers.*

Quote 2: *Review with actions and explore how we should approach prayer with a joyful and grateful heart. Discuss the kinds of things we might express gratitude to God for, and how expressing our gratitude further increases our joy and spiritual gifts.*

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/10-arise-to-offer-thanks-sung?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-one-album>

H. Closing Prayers

Displaying the picture of Ruhu'lláh and reminding the children of the way he prayed could help them turn their hearts to God for the closing prayers.

Lesson 2 - Why We Pray:

B. Reciting and memorising prayers:

Showing a picture of Ruhu'lláh and eliciting from the children the way he prayed could help them turn their hearts to God and heighten the devotional character of the opening prayers.

Learn from "I am a tender plant..." up to "...Thy bounty."

(Or up to 'fruitful tree' depending on your children.)

The children could draw pictures for key words in this part of the prayer.

Act out & sing 'O Lord! I am a child...'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMkYxv-jQvw>

<https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/o-lord-i-am-a-child>

Explanatory sentences/pictures may be needed for:

tender plant

nurtured

bounty

saplings

fruitful tree

C. Memorising quotations:

i) Intro to the spiritual concept:

This introduction can be framed around a number of key questions, e.g. Who knows what is in our hearts and what we need most to grow?

Why do we pray?

What does 'Abdu'l-Bahá tell us about prayer?

When should we pray?

For whom can we pray?

Does God answer our prayers?

Have a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá handy for the second part.

ii) Presentation of Quote: poster with symbols to support word meaning

iii) Concrete examples:

longing, immerse, communion, entreaty

Going to the beach story integrating all four words.

Can personalise 'longing' by asking the children about something they are longing to do, and something they entreat their parents and God for.

iv) Memorisation: song & actions, whiteboard rub-off with symbols to replace words

It is the greatest longing of every soul ...

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/02-the-greatest-longing-of?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-two-album>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hN9u3cvP-1c>

Can also be sung to the 'Barney' theme song tune.

D. Songs

Man is in Reality

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A5j2zbRyj14>

Make My Prayer

<https://soundcloud.com/user-795808864/make-my-prayer-o-my-lord-1>

Strive #2

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_l6gYN0ROU

Kindle the Fire of Love

https://soundcloud.com/nehs_panchgani/kindle-the-fire-of-love-group

Let the Love and the Light

<https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/let-the-love-and-the-light>

I'm building me a home

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgshhXux41A>

E. Story

* Have pictures of Lua and 'Abdu'l-Baha ready.

* Setting a goal for the children to establish this habit at home every day ("Kai for the soul before kai for the bowl") might be done immediately after the story or just prior to closing prayers.

F. Drama

Part 1: After the candle, an additional exercise is to ask the children to pretend to be tiny seeds that are growing up higher and higher as the teacher counts from 1 to 10 and 'gives them' water, sunshine and compost.

Following this/at the end of the drama, they can crouch down and 'grow' as the teacher says a short prayer to demonstrate how their souls grow and are strengthened through prayer.

Part 2: Images for the people in the verbal expression exercise might be useful prompts.

Part 3: As above for the tasks (lifting, jumping, building) in the final exercise.

Jumping to throw a basketball into a hoop is a good alternative/additional option.

G. Drawing

* Flip book of person getting stronger or of a heart growing larger.

* Tri-folded page showing the person before (weak), in the middle praying, and after (strong). They could draw the strengthened heart of the person in the final picture.

The children could then tell the story of the child in their picture, or the children could

all pass their pictures to the left and the next person tells the story of their picture.

* The children could decorate a paper plate or bowl and write on it "Prayer is food/kai for the soul" and decorate it. They could also glue the prayer for this set on one side of it.

H. Review

Quote 1: *Revise with actions*

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/20-the-fire-of-his-love-sung?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-one-album>

Quote 2:

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/07-rejoice-in-the-gladness?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-one-album>

<https://soundcloud.com/haylee-alai/rejoice-in-the-gladness-of-thine-heart-nava-mateen-nadeem-haylee>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQqt7jIF-ko>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9GunLzqbyQ>

I. Closing Prayers

Displaying the pictures of Lua and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and eliciting from the children the importance of prayer prior to the closing prayer might aid them to approach it with a devotional attitude.

Lesson 3 - How we pray:

C. Reciting and memorising prayers:

Displaying the pictures of Lua and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and eliciting from the children aspects of the story from Lesson 2 that illustrate the importance of prayer prior to the opening devotions might aid them to approach this period with a stronger devotional attitude.

Learn from "I am a sapling..." (or 'Thou art...') up to "the All-Seeing.
The children could draw pictures for key words in this part of the prayer.

Act out & sing 'O Lord! I am a child...'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yMkYxv-jQvw>

<https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/o-lord-i-am-a-child>

Explanatory sentences/pictures may be needed for:

saplings

fruitful tree

D. Memorising quotations:

i) Intro:

* Using an analogy of the way we would approach a conversation with the principal of our school versus with our classmates helps preface the conversation about how we approach God in prayer. We can elicit from the children several relevant aspects, including style of language, tone, volume, attitude, posture, clothing, etc.

* The first part has a list of seven things we do to show respect and act with reverence when praying which are important to elicit and/or teach to help the children develop patterns of conduct that enhance their ability to deeply connect with God through prayer. We can explore these using questions to elicit the ideas, e.g. What should we do when another person is praying? Where should we centre our thoughts when we pray?

* We can also explore the diversity of ways people express reverence (the interfaith Golden Rule poster from *Baha'i Resources* is a useful prompt), and then establish acceptable norms together for our own class.

* The metaphor of a bird on the ground compared to a bird in the sky can be used to explain the relative effectiveness of prayer on our souls depending on where we are focusing our thoughts during prayer.

ii) Presentation of Quote: Have each phrase of the quote beside the relevant object in the memorisation walk (see below) and tour these for the initial exposure to the quote.

iii) Concrete examples: commune, essence

commune – could refer back to the example of Ruhu'lláh: When he prayed, his whole heart and all of thoughts were turned towards God.

essence – bring attar of roses or vanilla to help explain the concept

iv) Memorisation: quote song, memorisation walk (e.g. everyone walks to a light/light switch and says, "O son of light!"; then they walk to a card with the word "God" on it on a blank wall and say "Forget all save Me", to a prayer book for "and commune with my spirit", to the attar/essence for "This is of the essence of My command, and then turn 360 degrees back to the attar/essence for "therefore turn unto it".

E. Songs

Quote song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=68hU0MxnI2E>

O Man of Two Visions e.g. <https://soundcloud.com/steven-masua/o-man-of-two-visions?in=su-ellis/sets/grade-2-set-1>

"Look at Me" (Behold a Candle version) – add "Pray for peace, follow Me..."

Let Us Put Aside <https://soundcloud.com/dwayne-09/let-us-put-aside>

<https://soundcloud.com/elevationsensation/letus>

Thy Presence <https://soundcloud.com/bahai-blog/thy-presence-the-friends-in-bristol>

F. Story

Have a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America ready to show.

'Crack in the Wall' song <http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org/theme-1-lesson-3/>

G. Drama

Part 2, #2: A soft feather can be used to represent the baby bird. The children could also imagine they are holding a butterfly that has come inside and that they are carefully carrying outside to release – they must be especially careful not to damage its fragile wings.

Part 2, #3: A chair placed at the front of the room with a decorative cloth on it or paper crown can be used to represent the throne.

Part 2, #4: Have a hard cover prayer book ready to hand to use for this part.

H. Drawing

Draw a picture of the man thinking about all of the distractions in the story, and then a second picture with his face in a joyful state of prayer – all the distractions

forgotten. Or this could be of a child and a room of distractions vs a child joyfully focused in prayer. It might be helpful to brainstorm some things that distract them and some things that help them to focus during prayer first.

Golden Rule colouring of children praying – collective project for a class poster

<http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org/theme-1-lesson-3/>

Play some prayer songs in the background while the children draw.

I. Review

Quote 1: *Show pictures of children in different postures of prayer showing an attitude of reverence*

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/09-humble-thyself-sung-by?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-one-album>

Can be sung to a beat (knees, clap, knees, knees, clap).

Quote 2: *Link to the greater importance of spiritual food and spiritual treasures over physical ones. Memorisation could be done as a jigsaw review. Children could adorn themselves with op shop dress ups (costume jewellery etc.) which they all remove/cast aside as they go to sit down for closing prayers.*

<https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/14-detachment-from-all-save?in=larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-one-album>

J. Closing Prayers

Displaying a picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and guiding the children to put aside all internal and external distractions and focus their minds on the words spoken and their hearts on God prior to the closing prayer might aid them to approach it with a devotional attitude.

Other Songs for Set 1:

"He doeth as He doeth"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4y35ceAB_Tw
"Make my prayer"	https://soundcloud.com/user-795808864/make-my-prayer-o-my-lord-1
"I'm building me a Home"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgshhXux41A
"Prayer Increases My Capacity"	https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/sets/grade-2-set-1
"He doeth as He doeth"	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4y35ceAB_Tw
"O Lord! I am Weak..."	http://bahai-song-project.de/o-lord-i-am-weak/
"Spirit has influence"	https://soundcloud.com/parisafarid/spirit-has-influence-sydney <i>(quality not great, but can get the general idea)</i>
"The Soul is the Sun "	https://songs.ruhi.org/
"That is How Bahais should be"	https://songs.ruhi.org/
"At all times"	https://soundcloud.com/bahai-blog/at-all-times-by-jysep-gooda
"Rely upon God"	https://soundcloud.com/bahai-blog/rely-upon-god-sabria-efe-rafael-maarten
A Space	(Clendon crew)
An evolving playlist for this set:	https://soundcloud.com/su-ellis/sets/grade-2-set-1

Other Ideas for Set 1:

- * Set a goal for the children to say their prayers before having breakfast every day and every evening before bed.
- * A class poster can be developed as you go through the set to which you add concepts about prayer from the lessons each week.
- * At the end of the set, the children can prepare and host a devotional meeting for their friends and family.
- * Make a prayer book cover, e.g. tapa, sewn felt, leather, with traditional patterns
- * The children could also decorate a 'prayer mat' – e.g. permanent markers on canvas
- * Make a mini-book with the prayer and quotations from this set to practice at home
- * Make some devotions cards to take home for family devotions
- * Have the children prepare a beautiful quote/prayer card with magnets on the back to place on the family fridge.
- * Free colouring for the prayer: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Bahai->

[Fruitful-Tree-Prayer-Coloring-Page-5185406](#)

* Using a picture of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh to evoke a sense of reverence in the children, and 'guiding' them down the path to assist them to centre their thoughts prior to opening prayers.

* In the final session, it is good to get the children to make posters which explore a) What is prayer? & Why do we pray? and b) When, for whom and how we pray.

* Likewise, the children can glue pictures of Ruhu'llah, Lua, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá into a booklet entitled 'prayer' or a trifold picture frame as a keepsake and visual reminder of the concepts in the stories.