

Summer School 2021 Children's Programme

As Summer School will be held locally this year, we expect many aspects of the children's and junior youth programmes will also be addressed locally, taking into account the reality of the children attending, the teachers of the programme, the venue, and both human and physical resources available.

However, there are several options and principles we would like to recommend for consideration by the local team.

Summer School can be used as an opportunity to:

- a) progress classes further through their respective grades (especially if a whole class is attending together)
- b) begin study of a new grade together
- c) consolidate learning accrued over the year of study through the arts and other projects or extension activities
- d) strengthen the children's love and knowledge of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this Centenary year through the use of selected materials and activities.

Key principles that are worthy focus in the programme design are:

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá's life, example and exposition of Baha'u'llah' teachings should be a strong feature of the content of the classes.
- The arts should be integrated into the programme to advance the children's understanding of the spiritual concepts and bring them joy.
- There should be a range of different types of activities throughout the day, and a good balance between quiet and active elements of the class.
- Collaboration, consultation, and service to others should be promoted through the types of activities chosen for the classes, and in the nature of the conversations with the children.
- Effort should be directed towards creating elevated devotional spaces with the children.
- The pivot of the programme should be the Word of God. It is ideal if the children can learn one new prayer over the course of the four days, and one quote each day. At least one prayer and/or quote should be memorised in te re Māori – whether sung, chanted or spoken.

It may be helpful for the children to have small booklets to collate any printed materials (e.g. copies of the prayer and quotes). These can be easily created by folding several sheets of A4 paper and either side or centre-stapling them, or adding a folded A4 sheet of card to use as a cover, cutting two notches in the folded side, and then threading a piece of string or ribbon through the two holes to tie the pages to the cover.

Collaborative Art Projects:

In order to create a sense of unity across Aotearoa in the types of activities the children engage in, and to enable them to share their learning and efforts with others, several arts activities are proposed. Naturally, there are many other possibilities for artistic endeavours as well, depending upon the nature of the local programme, but if we aim to have some in common, this may help connect the children to those in other communities around the country.

Your community may wish to focus on a different art form each day, or to work on one or more larger projects over the four days.

Several options are presented below.

Drama – Video:

Support the children to stage a dramatic retelling of one of the stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (or another episode or concept relevant to the grade being studied). Over the four days, the children can create the backdrop, props and costumes, co-write the script, act it out, perform for the rest of the Summer School, and share a video of their drama with the rest of the country.

An example can be found here:

Different options such as puppet shows, stories narrated with mime or ‘slideshow’ frozen tableaux can also be used. In the ‘slideshow’ version, the children arrange themselves to portray a scene and then ‘freeze’ in place while the narrator tells part of a story. They then unfreeze and rearrange themselves and freeze again for the next scene (and so on).

Drama games can also be incorporated into the programme, e.g. 'What are you doing?', collaborative statues, charades, passing objects which each child uses for a different purpose/imagines to be something different.

N.B. Naturally, we will not have anyone act as 'Abdu'l-Bahá or any of the Manifestations of God.

Storytelling

Video the children retelling their favourite stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

See example videos here:

Art panels

Each child or pair of children can be given one square piece of card which they will use to depict one story or concept. These might be worked on over more than one session. Once completed, each picture 'tile' can be displayed together as one art work.

Another option is to use large paper plates (especially the rigid sugar cane variety available in most supermarkets) for each panel. These provide both the base for the artwork and a built-in frame.

Examples of overall themes might be:

- images related to stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá (for younger children; most effective if a single image is selected, such as a coat, a sheep, a fish; for slightly older children each artwork might incorporate the word that expresses the related spiritual concept (e.g. generosity; justice).
- images related to the titles of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, e.g. 'The Most Great Branch'; the Centre of the Covenant
- images related to the principles of the Faith that 'Abdu'l-Bahá shared with the world during his travels to the West, e.g. the oneness of humanity, the harmony of science and religion, the abolition of prejudice.

Different methods can be used to produce the artworks depending upon the resources available, eg painting, pastel, collage (wallpaper books provide a useful source of collage paper).

Concepts could also potentially be expressed through sculptural pieces, eg using clay or papier mache, or through costume creation. For the latter activity, each team of children can be provided with a paper rubbish bag or a length of butcher paper, making tape, string, newspapers, crepe paper and similar. One child in each team acts as the 'model' and the rest of the team create a costume for them based on a quote, spiritual principle or concept.

Use of nature can be incorporated into art projects, e.g. decorating quotes with found leaves and flowers and the result photographed; using found natural resources to create a collaborative sculpture based on the theme.

A photo of the finished artworks can be shared with the rest of the country.

Large Combined Visual Art Creation

The children (possibly in combination with the junior youth, youth and adults), could also work on one combined artwork using collage or paint to complete a single image progressively over the four days, eg the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the House of Abbud, or the fountain in the garden of Ridván (as a sign of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's devotion to Bahá'u'lláh).

Maps & Timelines

Older children might enjoy preparing a map of the exiles and travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, or a timeline of His life. These can be supplemented with mini-pictures of key events or places He lived or travelled to.

A photo of the completed maps and timelines can be shared with the rest of the country.

Waiata/Songs

One or more songs can be selected for the children to learn during the Summer School, especially those based on the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Where possible, it is ideal if at least one of these is in te re Māori. Depending on local possibilities, it might be possible to teach the children, or co-construct, a waiata-a-ringā, poi, or tititorea.

The children could also be helped to create their own poi, paint their own tititorea, or make their own shakers (e.g. papier mache over water balloons).

Musical games can also be incorporated into the programme.

The practised song can be videoed and shared with the rest of the country.

Collaborative Games

In order to increase the unity in the class, and to contribute to the children's ability to work in teams, it is important to incorporate some collaborative games and activities appropriate to the age of the children (and the resources available). Two sets of collaborative games are provided on the Summer School resources website as a starting point. Any of the games from the Grade 1 materials could also be used. More games are also available here:

<https://www.healthykids.org.nz/move/games>

Other ideas are to include:

- collaborative yoga as a regular part of the day
- collaborative challenges - such as using paper straws and masking tape to create towers or bridges, or a team egg drop challenge using a range of materials (newspaper, egg cartons, paper straws, bubble wrap, string, yoghurt containers, masking tape, etc.).

Adapted versions of games such as Pictionary, charades and articulate can be used to review words or concepts from each day's classes either in the afternoon or the next morning. A box can be kept in the class and card with words or concepts added to it over the four days. These can be drawn at random for the children to describe, draw or act out while the other children guess.

N.B. These general guidelines are provided to allow for flexibility in the programme provided by local teams. However, more comprehensive sets of materials and lesson plans are available for team who wish to use them. Any teams requiring further support or resources, may message 021 0237 8031.

Guidelines for a preschool programme will be provided separately.

Proposed Schedule:

	Day 1
Session 1	<p>Options while children are arriving:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative games (eg collaborative statues, Pictionary, “What are you doing?”, tī rākau) - Children decorate the cover page of their booklets - Begin work on part of a collaborative art work <p>Once children have arrived:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devotions • Sing a song they are familiar with • Learn a new song • Learn the first part of a prayer • Getting to know you games (if the children are unfamiliar with each other) • Introduce the spiritual quality/concept/theme for the day • Introduce the new quote • Activities to increase understanding of the new concept /quote
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative yoga/games • Memorise new quote • Tell story • Art related to the story/quote • Decorate a copy of the new quote to take home for whanau devotions • Activities to increase understanding of the new concept /quote • Last 15 minutes (optional): collaborative games outside, playground time
Session 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review songs and quote from the morning sessions • First 15 minutes (optional): collaborative games outside, playground time • Art activities related to the theme of the day (e.g. drama, visual arts, kapa haka) • Review first part of the prayer • Closing devotions (if joining the adults after the break)
Session 4?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be a combined arts or service session with adults. <p>If a separate session (options):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stretch Session 3 over the two afternoon sessions • Add another story related to the same concept • Add another craft or collaborative activity • Integrate a service project • Review first part of the prayer • Closing devotions

Each day would follow a similar pattern, continuing memorisation of one part of the prayer each day, adding in new songs and quotes to fit the theme of each day's programme.

The final afternoon may require extra time to complete any art projects and practise any songs, storytelling, or drama to present to the larger group.