

Lesson Plan: Introduction to Character Development Neighbourhood Children's Classes (Lesson 1)

Preparation:

1. Purchase a binder for each child to keep their work in.
2. Purchase glue sticks, crayons, pencils and stickers (optional).
3. Purchase or borrow from the library the book: "You Are Special" by Max Lucado.
4. Provide a prayer book (preferably one for children).
5. Photocopy the Letter to Parents, Homework page, Prayer page (for children who can't yet read), Prayer page, Quotation, Person page and Virtue Gems page for each child.
6. Prepare a simple and healthy snack for the children.

A simple class:

You do not need to do each part of the lesson plan. These lesson plans are a tool or resource for you to help you conduct your Baha'i Children's Class. You can omit certain sections based on your skills, resources and time.

Ideas to make a more elaborate class:

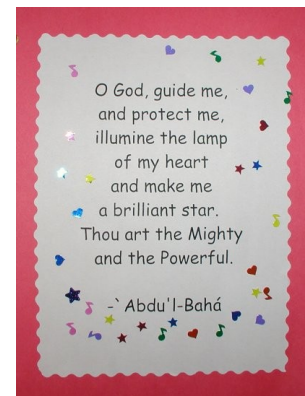
Purchase little plastic arts and crafts gems for each child (10 for each child). Make a mine/cave using chairs with a heavy blanket over it. Place all the gems on the floor of the mine. Have the children take turns bringing out ten gems each. Have a ziploc bag with each child's name to store their gems in until they are needed (one per lesson). The teacher should keep these bags so that they don't get lost or forgotten at home. Glue the Gingerbread Man Page onto heavy card stock to support the weight of the gems. As they learn each virtue, they will glue one gem onto the man with the quote.



Cut off one inch around the edge of the Prayer and Quotation pages (one of each for each child) with normal or zig-zag scissors and then glue each page to a three-hole punched coloured card stock and place one in each binder.

Have the names of each virtue written on index cards for the game. There could also be a poster listing all the names of each virtue in the classroom to help the children guess the names of the virtues being acted out.

Purchase name tag stickers for each child for the first class.



First Day Welcome:

Gather the children together sitting in a circle.

“Welcome to Children's Classes. My name is and I will be your teacher. Now let's try to learn each other's names by playing the Name Game. To play the Name Game, we must begin by making music together like this (start hitting your thighs twice with your hands and then snapping your fingers twice). Now if you can't snap your fingers you can clap your hands. We are going to say each person's name to the rhythm of our music. (each syllable of a name is said during a hitting of the thighs or snapping of the fingers, always start saying a persons name on the first hit of the thighs, repeat each name altogether to the rhythm at least four times and then ask the next child what their name is and repeat). Are you ready? (start with your own name four times and then stop and ask the child to your left what their name is, etc.).

Opening Prayers:

Be a model of how to sit respectfully during prayers.

“Each class will begin by saying prayers. Prayer is conversation with God. When we say prayers, we sit quietly and still. I will say the first prayer and then we will take turns in a circle. If you do not know a prayer by heart, you can read one from the prayer book, you can say 'O God!' or you can skip your turn.”

“O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate.” - `Abdu'l-Bahá

Praise and encourage the children for sitting nicely and saying good prayers.

Singing:

Give each child a binder.

“This will be your binder for Children's Classes. In it, we will keep prayers that we learn, our lessons and our homework. Please open it to the first page. Today, we will begin to learn how to sing this prayer together.”

“O God, guide me and protect me. Illumine the lamp of my heart and make me a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty, and Powerful.” - `Abdu'l-Bahá

Lesson: (# = praise and correct the children's answers)

“Today we are going to begin learning about the virtues hidden within ourselves. God has given each of us many virtues. Virtues are what is good about us. Virtues are things like: truthfulness, obedience, cleanliness, respect, love, patience, forgiveness, helpfulness. The more we practice these virtues, the more beautiful we become.

Bahá'u'lláh says: **“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”**

Q: “What is a mine?” #

A: “A mine is a deep hole in the earth that has been dug to take things out of the earth.”

“In this quote, Bahá'u'lláh says that we are a mine.”

Q: “What is in our mine?” #

A: “Gems of inestimable value.”

Q: “What are these 'gems of inestimable value'?” #

A: “Our virtues.”

Q: “How do we dig up our gems or develop our virtues?” #

A: “Through education, learning about what the virtues are and how to practice them.”

Optional: “Now, we have a mine here. Let's go in the mine and see what we find!”
Have the children line up and take turns going into the mine. Have each child collect ten gems.

Story:

Read the book: “You Are Special” by Max Lucado

Snack/break:

Have the children help serve each other and take turns getting food.

Arts and Crafts:

Have the children prepare a cover page for their own binders. It could have a title like: “(name of child, ex. Jennifer’s) Prayer Book”, “(name of child) Virtues Book” or “(name of child) Children’s Class Binder”. Have them decorate the cover with stickers (optional) and/or drawings.

Help each child put a copy of the quotation to memorize into their binder. Give each child a sheet of stickers (optional) and crayons.

Let the children decorate the prayer and quotation pages.

Help each child put a copy of the Person page and Virtue Gems page into their binder (the prayers and quotations should be at the front of the binder with homework and art pages at the back). Ask the children to colour the face of the person to look like them.

“As we learn about each virtue, we will glue a gem onto the picture of ourselves. The picture will become more beautiful just like we become more beautiful as we practice more of the virtues.”



Game:

Sherades: Have the names of some virtues written on index cards. (Optional) Have each child take turns picking a card and then try to act out the virtue without talking. You could instead just whisper the name of a virtue to each child. Have the other children try to guess which virtue they are acting out.

Closing Prayers:

Ask the children if anyone would like to say a prayer to end the class. Have them take turns in a circle. Or you could end by singing “O God, guide me” together.

Letter to parents

Introduction to Character Development Neighbourhood Children's Classes:

God has given each of us many virtues. Virtues are what is good about us. Virtues are things like: truthfulness, obedience, cleanliness, respect, love, patience, forgiveness, helpfulness. The more we practice these virtues, the more beautiful we become.

“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.”

-Bahá'u'lláh

Our gems of inestimable value are our virtues, hidden within us that we need to dig up. Through learning about what each virtue is and how to practice it, we dig up those gems and become more beautiful human beings.

Each week, your child will learn about a new virtue and will be given a booklet that explains each virtue and how to practice it. They will also be given a quotation to memorize, and a weekly calendar with suggestions about how to practice that virtue during the rest of the week. Each child will also be asked to repeat an affirmation about the virtue every morning to help them develop that virtue within themselves and remember to practice it throughout the day.

Please help your child develop these virtues within themselves by looking at and discussing the booklet with them and helping them with their affirmations and quotations. You will find that you gain great benefit developing these virtues within yourselves as you help your child. These virtues are the foundation upon which you can build a strong spiritual life within your child and your family.

Your child will also be learning how to sing the following prayer:

“O God, guide me and protect me. Illumine the lamp of my heart and make me a brilliant star. Thou art the Mighty, and Powerful.”

- `Abdu'l-Bahá

There is a copy of this prayer in your child's binder. You may help your child say or sing this prayer at home.

You are always welcome to stay and watch or participate in the class.

Sincerely,

Your child's teacher

Virtues

Homework:

Please help your child recite the following quotation every morning:
(pause and have them repeat each line after you say it before continuing to the next line)

**“Regard man
as a mine
rich in gems
of inestimable value.
Education can, alone,
cause it to reveal
its treasures,
and enable mankind
to benefit therefrom.”**

-Bahá'u'lláh

You may spend some time discussing the meaning of difficult words and the meaning of the quotation as a whole with your child.

Please help your child do the activities on the Weekly Activity Calendar.

Weekly Activity Calendar:

Put a check mark below each item when it is completed.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.	Recite the quotation.
Try to name as many virtues as you can. Ask your parents to help you.	Practice the virtue of cleanliness by brushing your teeth extra well.	Practice the virtue of love by giving your mom a big hug.	Notice other people practicing a virtue today.	Practice the virtue of kindness by being extra kind to a friend today.	Practice the virtue of obedience by being extra obedient to your parents today.	Try to practice as many virtues as you can today.



O God,



guide me



and protect me.



Illumine the lamp



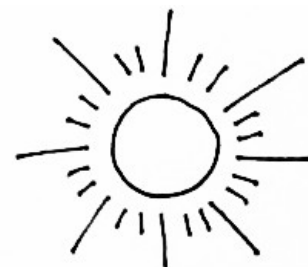
of my heart



and make me



a brilliant star.

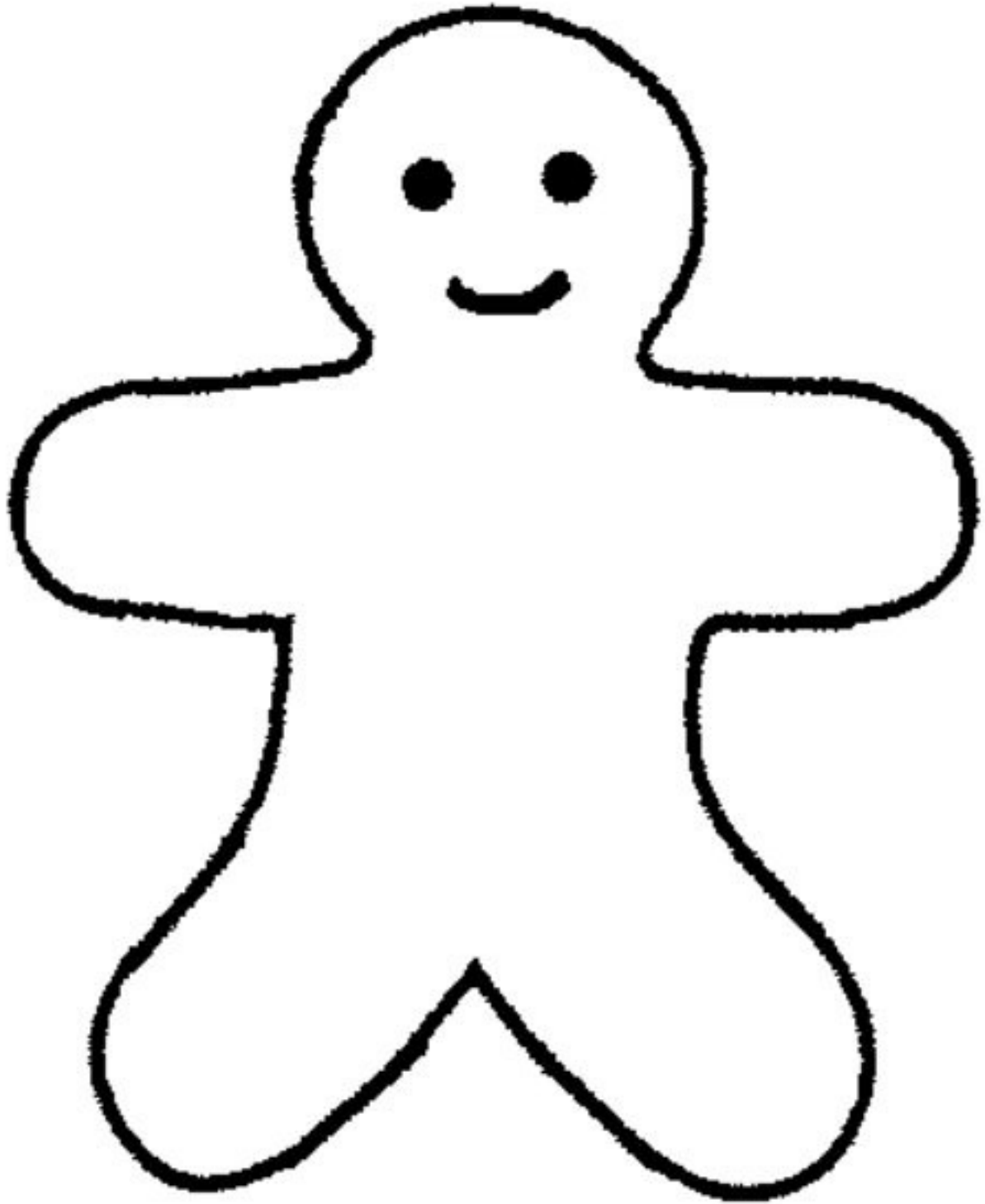


Thou art the Mighty
and Powerful.

“O God,
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and protect me.
Illumine the lamp
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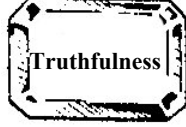

-Bahá'u'lláh



“Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.” -Bahá'u'lláh

Virtue Gems:

Colour and cut out the gem that matches today's lesson and glue it on your person.

 <p>Courage</p>	 <p>Unity</p>
 <p>Forgiveness</p>	 <p>Courtesy</p>
 <p>Patience</p>	 <p>Generosity</p>
 <p>Obedience</p>	 <p>Love</p>
 <p>Truthfulness</p>	 <p>Cleanliness</p>