

BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS

10. PERSEVERANCE

Greet the children and see that everyone is seated comfortably. Have one or two children say opening prayers.

Ask the children why we usually close our eyes when we say our prayers? Try to get answers like, "So that we can think about God. So that we are not distracted. So that we can think about the words of the prayer". Yes, God can hear us whenever we pray whether our eyes are open or shut, but we need to think about what we are saying in the prayer and that is why it is better to close our eyes. God can also hear us even if we say nothing aloud, but only THINK our prayer. This is wonderful because there are times when we don't want to say the words aloud, for instance when we are in school, but we can always talk to God!

Today we are going to think about perseverance. Can anyone tell us what perseverance means? Have the children give their ideas. What perseverance means is to stick to something and carry on even if things get tough. It is to carry on and on until we succeed.

This is what 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "**Perseverance is an essential condition. In every project firmness and steadfastness will undoubtedly lead to good results; otherwise it will exist for some days and then be discontinued.**"

SWAB p. 144

Discuss the meaning of these words.

We may be learning to make music, to learn a prayer by heart, or to have control over a football. All these things take time and there are days when we think that maybe we will not be able to learn. The big thing is to KNOW WHAT WE WANT TO DO. Then we know what we need to do to get there step by step. If we never think about what we want to achieve, we often try one thing and then another and never spend enough time on one thing – persevering – until we achieve something.

Sometimes the problem is that we get put off by our parents or our friends who don't think we can do it. When we know what we want to achieve, we should ask God to help us and then work at it with all our effort and we will surely succeed.

Sometimes our efforts are for spiritual things. Just think of the early Bahá'ís. They KNEW that Bahá'u'lláh was the Promised One, and then they went on trying to follow Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, no matter what their family and friends did to try to stop them. Many of them were rejected by their families, many spent years in exile. Some were imprisoned and even killed but they persevered, because they knew that they wanted to obey Bahá'u'lláh and serve Him.

There are times when we too may find that people think us strange to be Bahá'ís. "What is that?" they will ask us. "Why don't you join in this fun? Why don't you join in this

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argument? Why don't you have a cigarette – it's so cool?!" And you need to be able to say, "That's against my religion. We Bahá'ís are here to bring peace and progress to the world. We do not do things that we regret later." And in our hearts we can ask God to help us persevere. "Is there any Remover of difficulties....."

ACTIVITIES

Co-operative activities today. We will make pretend TV presentations.

EITHER children form small groups or pairs, and plan short skits to show perseverance under difficult conditions. Then act them out to the class.

OR have the children co-operate to make TVs out of cereal or similar boxes (only one or two boxes are needed) and the rest draw their stories on strips of paper. How to proceed –

Cut out a rectangle on one side of the box to be the TV screen (about 10 cm x 15 cm)

Then cut two slits - one on each side of the cereal box near the front and in line with the 'screen'. This is where the paper strips will be threaded in to be pulled across behind the 'screen' and presented one picture (episode) at a time.

If it is thought good, the facilitator can prepare the box TVs before the lesson.

The children then draw their pictures onto strips of paper showing how people have persevered under difficult conditions. Each picture will show the next episode as in picture comic books or cartoons.

The facilitator will need to prepare strips about 60 cm x 10 cm using sticky tape if necessary. The children need to leave a blank section at each end of their strips for the threading. A little practice beforehand by the facilitator might be helpful.

TO FINISH

Have the children tidy up and put things away neatly. They should then sit quietly while a couple of children say closing prayers. When the children go home they can perform their skits, or show their TVs.