

## BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS

### 13. UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Greet the children. Ask them to find a comfortable place to sit. Have one or two children say prayers.

As Bahá'ís, we believe in 'unity in diversity'. This is a very important teaching, but what does it mean? Have the children discuss the meaning of these words starting with the word unity. Unity means oneness – the parts together make a whole. Diversity mean different. The Bahá'ís are united in spite of their differences. Bahá'u'lláh called on us to love each other despite our differences. Differences should be the cause of celebration. God loves every one of us and has made us different and given us different talents and skills. So we should recognise the importance of every human being regardless of our race, colour, or cultural background.

It is easy to see that we all look different. Some children are tall while some are short. Some have long faces and some have round faces. Let us get up and stand in line one behind the other, with the shortest child in the front and the tallest child at the back of the line. Yes, we are different sizes but God loves us all. He doesn't mind if we are tall or short. Now let us sit down again.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, **“Consider the flowers of a garden: although differing in kind, colour, form and shape, . . . yet this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. . . . How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and colour! Diversity of hues (colour), form and shape, enrich and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers (different) shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together . . . the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed.”** SWAB p.291

Let us sing “We are flowers of one garden”. Practice a few times to make sure that the children can sing the words and tune. We are going to make ourselves some flower faces which we can wear when we will sing the song.

But before we do that, let us hear another story from 'Abdul-Bahá. He was talking to a crowd of people in America and he was very happy to see both black and white people present.

**“I am very happy that white and black are together. This is the cause of my happiness for you all are servants of one God and, therefore, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers. In the sight of God there is no distinction between white and black; all are as one. Anyone whose heart is pure is dear to God, whether white or black, red or yellow. Among the animals colours exist. The doves are white, black, red, blue; but not withstanding this diversity of colour they flock together in unity, happiness and fellowship . . . for they are**

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**all doves."** Prom. Of Universal Peace, AB p. 425-6

God made us different because He loves us to be different. He gave us different talents. We can do different things and are good at different things.

Discuss with the children what things they enjoy doing and what they can do well. What would happen in the world if everyone was a singer? Discuss the problems.

### ACTIVITIES

The facilitator is to choose before the Feast, which type of flower face the children will make. If the paper flowers are chosen bring photo copies for Group A children and a plain piece of A4 paper for the Group B and C children. If the paper plate flowers are chosen bring a paper plate for each child.

### PAPER FLOWERS

#### GROUP A

Give each child a photo copy of the flower face. Encourage them to colour in the flower in bright colours. The facilitator will then push the scissors through the centre of the oval and cut out the centre, through which each child will be able to show his/her face.

#### GROUPS B and C

Take a sheet of A4 paper and fold it carefully in 4. Keeping it folded measure 6 cm. from the centre across the width and mark. Then measure 9 cm. down the length from the centre and mark. Draw a curve from one mark to the other. Now cut the curve carefully so that when open you have cut out an oval in the centre of the sheet of paper. Help the children to measure, draw, and cut the flower faces as needed. Colour them in. Some ovals may need to be cut VERY SLIGHTLY bigger to fit bigger faces.

#### OR PAPER PLATE FLOWERS

Have a paper plate for each child. The children draw a large face on the centre of their plate and draw petals all round like a sunflower. Using a sharp pair of scissors push through and cut out the eyes. The children will be able to hold their flower plates in front of them and look through the holes.

### FINISHING

Have the children tidy up and put any scraps of paper into a rubbish container. Sit very quietly while one or two children say the closing prayer.

### FOR THE SINGING

Have the children wear the paper petal faces, or hold up the paper plates, looking through the eye holes. They can then sing together "We are flowers of one garden".

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UNITY IN DIVERSITY.

Group A.

