

BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS

27. OBEDIENCE

Welcome the children to the class. Make sure that they are sitting comfortably. Then ask one or two children to read a prayer.

Today we are going to talk about obedience. What does obedience mean? Yes, it comes from the word 'obey'. What does obey mean? Yes, it means that you listen to someone, like your mother, or teacher, AND DO WHAT THEY SAY.

God is something like our father or mother and He knows what is best for us. But He is MUCH more important. He is the All-Knowing. He makes rules or laws for the people of the world which we should obey because we love God and want to obey Him. But also because we know that He is the All-Wise and He makes these laws so that the people will live good and happy lives.

Let me tell you a story: Once upon a time there was a sea captain who was Captain of a big ship called the Venture. This ship had a crew of 15 people. These sailors knew that their captain was the best trained captain in the fleet. He knew what to do at all times and he told his sailors exactly what to do. Not only that but he was fair to his men. The sailors always listened to their Captain. Whenever the ship was in a storm, the sailors obeyed their captain absolutely and they had never been in danger. They obeyed him completely and they were able to bring the ship safely through every storm. Sometimes they did not understand why the Captain told them to slow down, or why they were to go fast, why to turn to the left or right. They knew that he was the expert and they did what he said – immediate, exact, and complete obedience.

Some years went past and some of the older sailors retired. A group of new crew members joined the ship. They had been trained to sail and they knew what to do, but they thought that they knew better than the Captain. He was so old-fashioned they thought. He was just not 'cool'. They were modern and lived in the 'now' age. They thought that they could tell the Captain a thing or two, and they were just not used to obeying anyone! They had not obeyed their parents, they had not obeyed their teachers, and they did not plan to obey anyone now.

The ship sailed quietly out of the harbour as the evening grew darker. Stars shone out of the black sky. They sailed peacefully along and those sailors who were not on duty eventually went to sleep. After some hours a warning came on the radio that a storm was coming. The navigator called the Captain, and he immediately started making his plans. The alarm bell was sounded for all the crew to go to their special places. This is when the trouble started. Some of the new members did not want to get up, and when they eventually did they did not put on their life jackets and they could not remember where they were supposed to go. They did what they thought was best and shouted to their friends to do what they said. They did not listen to the wise Captain's orders.

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The storm raged with water gushing into the ship. Then engines flooded and stopped working. The storm blew the powerless ship onto the rocks. The Captain ordered the sailors to get into the life boats. Some sailors managed to get into the life boats. Last of all came the Captain. Some were saved, but many had not listened. They had no life-jackets and were just thrown against the rocks and drowned.

The storm was a terrible disaster, but if all the crew had listened to their wise Captain, it is likely that they would have been able to steer their ship away from the rocks and out to sea, where they could safely ride out the storm.

So it is with our own lives. We sometimes feel that our parents are not being fair when they stop us doing things that other kids are doing. We may wonder about some of the Bahá'í laws. We should just remember that our parents want to protect us from some of the dangers of life. And Bahá'u'lláh has given us laws from God for the benefit of humankind. So obedience to our parents and obedience to God are very, very important.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, **“These eternal (last for ever) commandments will never” end “they will last and remain established for ever and ever.”** These are spiritual laws, like truth, the love of God and patience.

ACTIVITIES

GROUP A. Colour the picture of the ship on the rocks.

GROUP B. Why is it important for the sailors to obey the Captain of their ship? Write some of the story.

GROUP C. Write a paragraph to explain why it is important for us to obey Bahá'í law, giving examples of laws and how we are harmed by not obeying them.

FINISHING

Ask the children to tidy up and then ask one or two to say some prayers.

OBEDIENCE. Group A. Why did the ship go onto the rocks? Colour the picture.

