

31. THANKFULNESS

Welcome the children to the class. Ask them to make sure that they are sitting comfortably so they will not fidget while prayers are being said. We need to sit very still and show respect to God during prayers. Ask one or two children to say a prayer.

What does thankful mean? Yes, it means that we want to say ‘thank you’ to someone. Let us think of things we would like to thank our parents for? (Wait for replies) What would we like to thank our friends for?What would we like to thank our teachers for? Yes, we have many things to be thankful for, but most of all we need to thank God who made us and gave us all the talents we have and because He sent His Messengers to teach us. Ask the children to detail some of the things that God has given them.

How do we show that we are thankful? Have the children make their suggestions. The first is simply to always say ‘thank you’ to people who do things for us, who help us, who are kind to us. Then we can also do kind and helpful things for them. This shows by our deeds that we are thankful

We also need to thank God every day, for everything He has given to us. Now the puzzle is how do we show God as well as tell Him that we are thankful, when we cannot see Him? ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told us that the best way to thank God is to love one another! He said that just saying ‘thank you’ is not enough. Our thanks must come from the heart. We must show that we really mean it. To show how thankful we are to God we must do good deeds. We must do what will please God. We must obey God. By doing this we show God that we are truly thankful.

Adapted from “Promulgation of Universal Peace” p.231, 465. Quoted in Pattern of Bahá’í Life.

Once upon a time, many years ago there was a little boy living in Iran, called Isaac Hamadan and he was 9 years old. He was so thankful for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that he decided to write a poem to express his thanks.

First there are some words that might not be easy to understand.

Nightingale – this is a little brown bird found in Europe and Asia that sings most beautifully and powerfully both day and night.

negligent – does not take care or pay attention

mindful – to take care or think about things

proclaim – say publically so all can hear what you want to say

Here is the poem :- (Translation slightly altered for a more modern sound)

“He is the Purpose! Rejoice O you servants,
for the King of kings has come!
Be glad, be happy, the shining Sun has come!

O you lovers! O you lovers!
Lights have been shed upon the world.
O nightingales! O nightingales!
The Rose has come to the garden.
O you who are negligent, be mindful!
O you who sleep awake!
O you who are dead, get life!
For the Life of lives has come.
How long will you remain ignorant?
Your time is but a waste.
Rejoice in this glad-tidings.
'Abdu'l-Bahá the beloved has come.
My Lord! My God! Thou who gave life again to my brothers.
His bounty has surrounded me.
His love has thrilled me.
Thy love makes Isaac proclaim:
His joy increase, O Bahá!
The world has 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
The sea has the brilliant pearl."

This poem was referred to in "Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" p. 404

Well, this shows how thankful Isaac was and what a beautiful poem he wrote to explain how he felt!

ACTIVITIES

GROUP A

Have children colour in the 'Thank You God" page making many more flowers and birds to make the page beautiful.

GROUP B

Have the children write some words or a poem of about 4–6 lines, thanking God for their blessings.

Decorate if there is time.

GROUP C

Ask the children to write a poem of at least 6 lines thanking God for their blessings.

Decorate if there is time.

FINISHING

Read the poems aloud. Remind the children to hold their chins up when they read to an audience, and read more slowly so that they can hear the words. Say closing prayers.

Leave the room tidy.

THANKFULNESS. Group A. Draw some more flowers and birds. Colour in.

