**Children’s Class Book 3A**

**Theme: Maintaining a Prayerful Attitude**

**Lesson: 1- Nature of Prayer**

Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 2 curriculum

**4-4:10**

**Opening Prayers:**

We always start our class with prayers because it is important to make mention of God and to ask for His help and guidance. I will start with a prayer learned by heart, and then we will have 2 prayer sharers for each week.

Say prayer by memory- by INTONATION

Two children offer prayers by memory

Practice new prayer- sing together:

**“O Lord! I am a child; enable me to grow beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness. I am a tender plant; cause me to be nurtured through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy bounty. I am a sapling of the garden of love; make me into a fruitful tree. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the All-Loving, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.”**

I will ask two children at the end of class to be the prayer sharers for next week, so you will have a week to get ready and prepare the prayer that you want to share. Everyone will get a chance to do this, you just need to be patient!

**Review guidelines- anything to add?**

**4:10-4:15**

**INTRO TO LESSON**

Today we are going to be learning about the nature of prayer. Abdu’l-Baha tells us that prayer is “conversation with God”. Last class we talked about what God is- POINT TO POSTER-far more than we can ever imagine, but we do know that He created us, watches over us and guides our lives. Through our prayers we speak to God. When one friend loves another, his greatest wish is to be close to the one he loves and to express the love he feels. In prayer, we are speaking to God of our love and thankfulness to Him. Even though God knows what is in our hearts, still we want to tell Him of our love for Him and thank Him for the blessings that He has showered upon us.

How many of you know who Abdu’l-Baha is? (ask them to share)- He is the son of Baha’u’llah, and is the perfect example of how to live a life full of virtues. Abdu’l-Baha lived in a state of prayer. His heart was always turned towards God. He often mentioned that there is nothing sweeter in life than prayer. When we talk with God each day in prayer, our love for Him grows stronger and we feel closer to Him. Our hearts are opened, enkindled with His love, and our souls become joyful. Did you know that God loves us more than we can possibly imagine? We are constantly receiving His blessings as we pray to Him to guide us, to protect us, and to help us become worthy of His love.

To help us in our efforts to live our lives in a state of prayer, with our hearts always turned towards God, seeking to do what is right- let’s memorize together a passage from Baha’u’llah about prayer.

**4:15-4:25**

**Memorization of Quote:**

(HAVE QUOTE TO GIVE THEM FOR THEIR PRAYER BOOK)

**“Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn night unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men.”**

**Intone-** She stood before the meeting with her head bowed and her eyes closed. Silence filled the room. Then she lifted her head and began to intone the verses of God in a melodious tone.

Jennifer taught her children to intone beautiful prayers at the beginning of each new day and in the evening before they slept.

WHO WANTS TO PRACTICE INTONING THEIR NAME? (have a few kids do this)

What does it say to intone? The verses of God that have been received by thee. These are the passages of the Holy Books- like the Bible, the Torah, the Quran, Hindu holy writings, and the Bahai Writings, for ex. That are brought by a Messenger of God in each age- like Buddha, Muhammad, Jesus, and others.

Kindle- The grass in the field was very dry. In the intense heat of the summer, the dried grass kindled and the fire spread to the edge of town.

After reading a few passages from the Writings of Baha’u’llah, Florence felt the fire of the love of God kindled in her heart.

So what does it say will kindle? The sweetness of our melody will kindle our own soul- help it to be become bright with the fire of the love of God!

Attract- We enjoy looking at flowers because they are beautiful. We are attracted to their beauty.

When we feel God’s love, we want to be near to Him. Our hearts are attracted to God by the power of His love.

What does it say our prayers that are intoned will attract? The hearts of all men. So our prayers have affect on the hearts. Isn’t that amazing?!

**SING the quote together**

**4:25-4:30**

**Songs:**

We talked about the idea of living in a state of prayer, with our hearts always turned towards God and open to His inspiration. This song is all about making our actions beautiful prayers.

**SING STRIVE**

**SING GOD IS ONE**

**4:30-4:45**

**Cooperative Games/Drama**

**Name Game:**

Form a circle. Throw a ball across the circle from one person to another. Make sure the people are ready to throw and ready to catch. Eye contact is important. Introduce yourself as you throw the ball across the circle- “Hi! I’m Julie.” Person that catches says- Hi Julie. I’m David. Then person who catches says- Hi David. I’m Raya..etc. until it all goes around. To ensure that everyone gets the ball, people who have not yet gotten the ball hold their hands out, those who have, fold their arms.

Then do a variation- Everyone calls out the name of the thrower.

Then word category- each person throwing the ball must say a virtue that has not been said before.

**Drama Activity**

This drama activity is related to the theme of our lesson= that state of prayer. So you are going to be improvising a situation about the state of prayers.

To start- please find a spot where you can form an imaginary square about your body length on each side. You should be able to move your arms completely around you without touching anyone. Is everyone in their imaginary square? Ok- we are ready. Although we pray to God with words, other things by their very existence are asking for God’s blessings and bounties. In this way, all created things are praying to God. A plant, for example needs rain to grow. By its very existence, the plant prays- “O God! Send me rain!

We are going to pretend that we are a field of corn. For some days there has been no rain on the field. How do you look as a corn plant that has received no rain? Let’s see it!

Days pass, but there is not a cloud in the sky. The plants droop more and more, day by day. Silently they are praying.

Then suddenly, there is a clap of thunder in the distance! (USE THUNDER MAKER) It grows louder and louder. (Snap, then rub hands, then clap with your hands to make sound of rain). The rain has come and little by little the plans raise their drooping leaves. Ahhhhh!

**4:45-4:55**

**Story: From RUHI BOOK 3A p. 12-13**

In the early days of the Bahai Faith, just like with any new Message from God, there are heroes who do extraordinary things in service to God. This is the story of a young boy, Ruhullah Varqa, who lived during the time of Baha’u’llah and Abdu’l-Baha. So great was Ruhullah’s love for God, and so absolute his dedication to His Cause, that whenever we hear his name we think of a life of devotion and servitude.

When Ruhullah was about 7 years old, he travelled with his father to the Holy Land, now called Israel. There he had the great privilege of meeting Baha’u’llah, Who had brought to humanity a message from God for this day. Ruhullah’s heart became filled with love for Baha’u’llah and he wanted nothing more than to serve Him. Upon returning home to Persia he spent his time sharing with others the news of Baha’u’llah’s coming. Ruhullah was truthful, honest, courteous, and kind, and his words has a great effect on all who heard him. He rose at dawn time, in the early morning, each day to pray, and with his heart turned towards God, passed each day in servitude to Him.

One day, Ruhullah was summoned to appear before an official. At that time, many people were fearful of the new message that was being spread throughout the land. They clung to the beliefs of the past, and the follower s of the new Faith often became victims of harsh punishments. This has happened with the coming of each Messenger of God- like in the times of Moses and Jesus, their early believers were also persecuted. For this reason, Ruhullah’s father was in great danger. As proof that he had raised his sons in this new Faith, Ruhullah was asked to say a prayer in the presence of the official. This, it was hoped, would be enough to convince the official to condemn his father.

Calmly, Ruhullah prepared his heart to offer supplication to God. Then, in a melodious voice, he chanted a Bahai prayer of exquisite beauty. The official was deeply moved. He dismissed the matter immediately, saying he would not condemn a man who had raised a child so wonderful. And so Ruhullah’s father was saved.

Later, when Ruhullah was about 12 years old, he would once again set out with his father to visit the Holy Land. This time, he would be blessed to pass his days in the presence of Abdu’l-Baha, who loved Ruhullah very much and especially enjoyed hearing him chant in his beautiful voice the many prayers he knew by heart. Ruhullah would leave the Holy Land ablaze with Divine love, ready to sacrifice his all for the Cause of God.

**4:55-5:15**

**Drawing:** We are going to be drawing in our drawing books for the first time! If you have not done your collage to decorate your cover, we have a bag for you to take home so you can do it in time for next week’s lesson.

Collage bag and stickers in bag to give to kids that are new or were absent day 1

You can choose one of two options:

You can draw a picture of the plants that you dramatized, first before and then after the rainfall, or you can come up with something that reminds you of something that we learned in our lesson today. It is your choice. There are regular pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons or gel pens you can use!

**5:15-5:25**

**Review:** Maintaining a prayerful attitude and living in a state of prayer are habits and patterns of conduct that come from spiritual qualities. In class last year we learned about SINCERITY and THANKFULNESS. These two qualities related to prayer.

**What is sincerity and why is it important?** When our words and deeds reflect what is in our hearts, we show forth the quality of sincerity. Sincerity inspires us to be truthful and faithful in our dealings with others. For example, when we say that we are sorry for something that we have done, we also know in our hearts that we will make every effort not to repeat our wrongdoings. It is through our sincerity that others can see the purity of our hearts and place their trust in us. When we pray we are also sincere in what we say to God.

**How does being thankful relate to prayer?**

When we receive even the smallest of gifts, we thank the person who gave it to us. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells us that we should be thankful to God for having given us so many gifts- including the gift of life itself- and for having caused our hearts to overflow with His love. We must be thankful to God at all times, even in times of difficulty. Giving thanks to God helps us to be open to receiving even more of His infinite bounties. – because we keep a sense of wonder as we go through life. Thankfulness is realizing how much you have to be grateful for within yourself and for what happens to you. When we are grateful, we see challenges as opportunities for growth and do not take even little things for granted.

**GIVE OUT REVIEW QUOTATIONS**

**“We should at all times manifest our truthfulness and sincerity…”**

Manifest

1. Asha cleaned the mud off the seashall that he found at the beach and polished it until it was smooth and shiny. When he was finished, the shell’s true beauty became manifest.

2. As the sun rose and the morning fog lifted, the splendour of the mountains became manifest.

Sincerity

1. Leo’s classmates often play games instead of studying. Leo is worried that they will not do well in school, so he suggests that they all study together and tries to think of ways that they can help each other learn. Leo’s concern for his classmates is sincere.

2. Rosa promised her mother that she would do her homework every day. When her parents are away, Rosa diligently works on her homework assignments. Rose was sincere in her promise.

**“Be thou happy and well pleased and arise to offer thanks to God, in order that thanksgiving may conduce to the increase of bounty.”**

Conduce

1. Nadia is always clean. She knows that cleanliness is important for spiritual growth. Cleanliness conduces to spirituality.

2. Seff’s family talks regularly about important family matters. Because they consult together, they live in harmony. Consultation conduces to harmony

**5:25-5:30 Closing Prayer: Blessed is the Spot**