**Children’s Class Book 3A**

**Theme: Maintaining a Prayerful Attitude**

**Lesson: 2- Why We Pray**

**Modified slightly from the Ruhi Grade 2 materials**

**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.

QUMARS says prayer by memory- by INTONATION

Two children offer prayers by memory

Practice prayer- sing together: ONE MORE WEEK AFTER THIS ONE TO MEMORIZE, then we will start a new prayer!

**“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!

**Did everyone sign the guidelines made in lesson 1 (prelesson)?**

**4:10-4:15**

**INTRO TO LESSON**

We know that God has created every one of us and that He is aware of what we need and what we want. He is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Why, then, should we pray? God does not need our prayers, but we pray because it serves to strengthen our souls, for prayer is like food for the soul. Just as we must eat every day so that our bodies do not become weak and sick, we must give nourishment to our souls by turning our hearts and minds to God daily and conversing with the One Who has created us. Abdu’l-Baha tells us that prayer brings life to the soul. We are exhorted to pray every morning and every evening, at times of difficulty and at times of great gladness. Of course, we do not only pray for ourselves, but also for our family, our friends, our community, and for all humanity.

Abdu’l-Baha assures us that if we pray for something that is in agreement with Divine wisdom, then God will bestow it upon us. But occasionally we unknowingly ask for things that will harm us, and God in His infinite wisdom, does not grant our wish. No matter how much we may desire something, we are confident that He will do what is best for us.

**4:15-4:25**

**Memorization of Quote:**

To help us remember why we pray, let us memorize the following quotation:

(HAVE QUOTE TO GIVE THEM FOR THEIR PRAYER BOOK)

**“It is the greatest longing of every soul who is attracted to the Kingdom of God to find time to turn with entire devotion to his Beloved, so as to seek His bounty and blessing and immerse himself in the ocean of communion, entreaty and supplication.”**

**Longing-**

1. When Tanya’s brother went away to university, she missed him very much. Tanya felt a great longing in her heart to be near her brother again.
2. Rodrigo was tired after working many hours in the fields, planting crops. At the end of the day, he longed to rest.

Are you attracted to the Kingdom of God and want to draw nearer to that spiritual realm? (ASK THE GROUP) What does Abdu’l-Baha say is the great longing of every soul that is attracted to the Kingdom of God? (ASK THE GROUP- answer: To find time to turn with entire devotion to his Beloved.) Who is our Beloved- what we love most? GOD. So we want to turn with entire devotion to God. Are we turning to God with ENTIRE DEVOTION if we are thinking of other things when we pray or picking at our nametag? No- we are fully focused. We will talk about this more next time. Let’s look at the next part of the quote.

We want to turn with entire devotion to God so that we can do what? (ASK GROUP- answer: so that we can seek His bounty and blessing AND immerse ourselves in the ocean of communion, entreaty and supplication. Let’s look at the meaning of those words.

**Immerse**

1. In order to boil an egg, it must be completely covered with water. To boil the egg, you must immerse it in water.
2. After working on the engine in the car, Norman’s hands were dirty and greasy. So he filled a bucket full of water and put his hands into the water, washing off the dirt and grease. His hands were immersed in the water.

**Communion**

1. Because of difficulties in their own country, all the brothers left their homeland and went to different places around the world to look for work. Many years went by, and they did not see each other or speak to one another. But they remained in communion through their thoughts and prayers, and eventually they were joyfully reunited as old men.
2. When we pray, we turn our hearts to God and converse with Him. Prayer is communion with God.

So we want to immerse ourselves in the ocean of communion. This is what we do when we pray. We also immerse ourselves in the ocean of entreaty and supplication. Let’s see what that means.

**Entreaty**

1. One of the king’s subjects was in great need, so he begged the king to assist him. The king considered his subject’s entreaty and agreed to help.
2. The teachers were concerned that the textbooks the children were using were out of date and did not cover the latest discoveries and the most recent information, so they asked the principal to order new ones. The principal listened to their entreaty, and now the children are using up-to-date textbooks.

So when we pray, we are immersing ourselves in the ocean of communion, entreaty and supplication- calling on God, asking for His assistance and communing with the very Source of our being- with our Creator. Wow!

PLAY SONG of QUOTE

**(if there is time) 4:25-4:35** MEMORIZATION ACTIVITY IN SMALL GROUPS- with white boards- erasing a couple words at a time. JULIE to show example in front of class, then we will break the group up into 3 groups, and Q, Nahid and Julie will each have a group to do this activity with- memorizing the quote by erasing a couple of words and then saying the quote (see example shown in front of the class).

**4:35-4:42 Story: From RUHI BOOK 3A p. 18-19**

I would like to share with you a story of one of the early Bahais in the West, Lua Getsinger, and a lesson she learned about prayer. This is a picture of Lua (SHOW PIC OF LUA- can be cover of book about her). Lua loved God very much, and she often turned to Him in supplication, that she might be enabled to live a life of service. She prayed, too, that her eager and enthusiastic spirit would learn to be patient. Of course, she wanted to learn it quickly, without having to wait too long! ☺

Lua knew that Abdul-Baha wanted her to learn patience. One day, when she was visiting Him in the Holy Land, He helped her to see that there are some things for which we must always make time, no matter how hurried we might feel. Rushing off to breakfast without having said her usual morning prayers, Lua met Abdu’l-Baha in the hallway. He looked at her, staring deeply into her eyes. And what do you think he said to her? “Lua,” He said, “you must never eat material food in the morning until you have had spiritual food.” So it was that Lua learned she must never fail to draw sustenance from God’s heavenly bounties, the source of true strength.

* What did you learn from this story?
* What would help you to learn the habit of daily prayer at the start of each day and at the end of each day?
* What ideas do you have to help your family get into that habit? What about planning a family devotional together?

**4:42-5:00**

**Cooperative Games/Drama**

**Game**

Name Show: Stand in a circle. Everyone must imagine that they are the host of a game show. One person at a time introduces themselves proudly to the rest of the group with a signature, by saying (or even singing) their name and making an action to go with it. Everybody else then copies the name and movement. When you have gone around the circle you can develop the game a step further. One person starts off by making someone else’s signature. That person must now choose another person in the group, and make their signature, and so on.

**Drama Activity**

1. As you did in the previous lesson, have the children stand about 5 feet apart and imagine that they are in their own squares. Ask them to walk along the border of his/her imaginary aquare.
2. Ask children to: raise up your arms and stretching from the tips of your toes to the tips of your fingers, reach towards the sky. Now you are going to relax and let your arms and head hang freely. *Repeat this several times.*
3. Next, as students to: stand as tall as you can and raise your arms over your heads, pressing the palms of your hands together. Imagine that you are candles burning brightly! Don’t do anything yet- just listen to the instructions. I am going to slowly count backwards from 10 and as I do this, I want you to pretend that you are a candle melting. By the time I reach zero, you should be like a pool of wax on the ground. You should remain in that position until I give you the signal to move again. Are you ready to slowly melt? Okay! 10, 9, 8…1 What was that like?
4. So, those activities were helping you to develop some skills in movement and physical expression. Now we are going to work on building skills of verbal expression. Say “good morning”. (have kids say it). Okay- know I want you to say Good morning as though you were:
	1. Respectfully greeting a teacher.
	2. As though you were excited to see a friend
	3. As though you had met a friend who was feeling sad
	4. As though you were trying not to wake a sleeping baby
5. The second set of activities has to do with the theme of today’s lesson- why we pray. We are now going to improvise a situation to show why we need to eat everyday to maintain our physical strength. Just like our bodies need food each day, our souls need to turn to God in prayer to grow and remain strong and healthy.
	1. Be in your imaginary square. Show that you are full of strength by:
		1. pretending to lift some imaginary heavy object
		2. by jumping up high to reach something in an imaginary tree
		3. by building an imaginary tower
	2. Now pretend that you are getting hungry and feeling weak. We are going to repeat what we did, but now remember that you are feeling weak because you have not eaten- how is that going to change how you:
		1. Lift an imaginary heavy object
		2. Jump up to reach something in an imaginary tree
		3. Build an imaginary tower
	3. Now you are receiving food and beginning to feel strong again. Let’s repeat these activities and see how it affects you doing them
		1. Lifting an imaginary heavy object
		2. Jumping up high to reach something in an imaginary tree
		3. Building an imaginary tower

LET THEM KNOW BEFORE THEY COME INSIDE WHAT THEY WILL BE DRAWING SO THEY CAN DRAW RIGHT WHEN THEY COME IN

**5:00-5:15**

**Drawing:** Today we are going to draw a child, first weak from hunger and then healthy and full of strength. Remember to draw first with your pencils and then fill in with color.

There are regular pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons or gel pens you can use!

**5:15-5:28**

**Review and songs:**

Every human being was created to know God and to love Him, and we all have the spark of His love in our hearts. It is important that we feed the flame of the love of God by **praying** **to Him daily**, **reading and thinking about the Writings** given to us by the Messengers of God, and **putting them into practice by serving others**. (this is something you can do in your home each day if you don’t already- prayers, read sacred writings, put them into action. Not just meant to be read, but to be lived!)

And as this flame burns with greater and greater intensity (become really strong), it can be felt by all those who cross our path and its light can illumine their hearts and minds. When we are so enkindled (on fire with the love of God), we become like burning candles that cannot help but to give forth light.

**“Verily, I supplicate God to enkindle in thy heart the fire of His love...”**

supplicate- ask fervently- What is Baha’u’llah asking God to do? Enkindle in our hearts the fire of the love of God.

Enkindle

1. The house was cold, so Axel’s father decided to start a fire. He put large logs in the stove and lit some small twigs below. The wood soon became enkindled, and the fire warmed the room.

2. A scientist came to the school and explained to the students many interesting things about the workings of the universe. They began to ask her various questions after the talk. She had enkindled in the students a desire to know more about the world.

So we have talked about enkindlement, but joy is also very important. Did you know that Abdu’l- Baha tells us that happiness helps our spiritual progress- our spiritual growth, and that joy gives us wings? When we are joyful, we are stronger and when we are happy we are able to more quickly understand things?

Joyfulness is one of the spiritual qualities that God has put in our hearts. A heart full of joy attracts the blessings of God. We need to try to be happy and joyful under all conditions. We are joyful when we trust that God is guiding us and we look for the gifts He sends us in each day.

Deep feelings of joy come from things that last- like the feeling of joy in serving others, the love our parents have for us, and knowing right from wrong and choosing to do the right thing. We must try to be like brilliant lamps shedding joy everywhere!

 (O Son of Man!) **Rejoice in the gladness of thine heart, that thou mayest be worthy to meet me and to mirror forth My beauty.**

REJOICE:- be happy

-Jasmine lived far away from her grandparents. When she heard that she would be visiting them during the school holidays, she became very happy! Her heart rejoiced!

-John had studied hard in school. His heart rejoiced when he saw the results from the test he took.

WORTHY:

-Sjona studied very hard and received excellent grades. The teacher praised her for her hard work. Sjona was worthy of her teacher’s praise.

-David always took good care of his brothers and sisters. His parents knew that they could trust him with the children. David was worthy of his parents’ trust.

**What does it mean to you when it says to mirror forth His beauty? Whose beauty? How can we do this?**

**Songs about** JOY

* I want you to be happy
* May this boundless love…
* Bluebird of Happiness with instruments

**Song about**  ENKINDLEMENT

* **Let the flame…(call and response)-** (Can do with DRUMS if won’t be too disruptive)

**5:28-5:30 Closing Prayer: Blessed is the Spot**