Ruhi Grade 1- Lesson 11

Lesson Plan on FORGIVENESS

Modified from Ruhi Grade 1 curriculum

**PRAYERS**

Review Blessed is the Spot, O Thou Kind Lord, and share new prayer (if children already know Blessed is the Spot)

**NEW VIRTUE: FORGIVENESS**

What does forgiveness mean to you? Forgiveness means letting go of hard feelings like anger, sadness, or frustration that happen when you or someone else makes a mistake. It’s saying “Thank you” or “That’s okay” when someone apologizes and not staying upset about what they did. It’s having patience with yourself and others, and recognizing that no one is perfect—everyone makes mistakes. Forgiveness doesn’t mean that all of a sudden what someone did doesn’t hurt or isn’t wrong. It means that you find it in your heart to give the person another chance.

Did you know that forgiveness is one of the attributes of God? We all make mistakes, and God forgives us when we ask for forgiveness and try our best to do better. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá modeled forgiveness and always told us to be forgiving with one another. He said we should see with eyes of forgiveness and overlook one anothers’ faults. If we follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s example, we will show forgiveness not only to our friends when they make mistakes but also to those who are unkind to us.

Forgiveness also lightens our spirit (can show example by using paper airplanes**: Activity to use in explaining concept of forgiveness:** Make 2 planes hiding a penny in one. 2. They will look the same but not fly the same. Ask the children to look them over and figure out why. 3.Explain "the airplanes are like us and the penny is when we hold a grudge. A grudge is when we hold bad feelings inside of us because something someone did or said to us. These feelings can weigh us down and keep us from flying high.")

**SONGS:** Look for the Good in You (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs2/EN\_Looking\_for\_Good.pdf)

Other requested songs

**Let’s talk a little bit more about forgiveness DEMO: What are some of the feelings that you have when someone hurts you or breaks something of yours?** (angry, sad, frustrated, helpless, etc.) Part of forgiving someone is recognizing those feelings, letting them happen, and then letting them pass so that you can move on. One way to help your feelings move on is to let them out—in a healthy way- like crying it out, praying, talking to your parents about it, etc.

* What happens if you hold all of those feelings inside and stay sad or angry, or if you tuck those feelings away somewhere inside your heart? (Blow some air into a balloon.) This air is like anger or sadness that comes into us.
* If we keep it inside, and keep adding to it each time we get upset and hold it in (blow into balloon several more times) then what happens? What will the balloon do if we keep blowing into it.
* And watch what happens when I let it go. (Balloon deflates and flies all over room.)
* It’s pretty out of control. If you hold all your anger inside for a long time, it might all come out at once sometime, and you could have a much bigger reaction than the situation calls for. So we want to let it go each time so it doesn’t build up! Let’s see what that looks like.
* If we let it out each time we feel angry or sad, it’s not such a big deal—just a little air comes out and we’re back to normal. (Let air out of balloon.)

**GAMES:** BALLOON ACTIVITY- Each person has a balloon. First we are going to see what happens when we build anger up and don’t forgive.

Someone calls out names of emotions (sadness, anger, hurt, resentment, impatience, pain…) and each name you hear, you blow into your balloon until it becomes pretty big. Hold onto it. When gets big, then have everyone let go and release it.

Okay, now let’s practice with forgiveness. Blow anger into balloon. Now forgive- let it out, blow sadness into your balloon, now let it out. Blow frustration into your balloon, now let it out! GREAT JOB!

HOT POTATO: Children form a circle. Then ask:

**What are some of the things your body feels when you feel angry or frustrated?** One thing is that you might get really hot. I call those feelings “hot feelings” because sometimes your face can get red, you might feel a burning feeling in your stomach, and you might even feel like a volcano full of hot lava! **When you touch something hot, do you want to hold onto it?** No! You want to let it go as quickly as you can.

* In this game, the ball/[potato is a “hot feeling.” Pass it around the circle while the music plays, letting it go as quickly as you can.
* When the music stops, everyone looks at the person holding the hot potato and say: “We’re sorry!”
* The person holding the ball puts it down and says, “That’s okay. I forgive you.” Then the game continues…

**Role Plays: What Forgiveness Looks Like** Invite kids to give responses and act them out. Ask, “What does forgiveness look like when . . .” (HAVE ON SLIPS THAT THEY PULL OUT)

• Your friend accidentally broke your favorite toy

• You did something you feel is very bad (forgiving yourself)

• Your brother takes something of yours without asking

• Your friend got angry and said something unkind to you and then apologized.

• Someone keeps doing something hurtful to you over and over without being sorry\*

\*There are some times when forgiveness won’t help someone change their behavior, and it isn’t the only virtue you need to call on. While you can let go of the hot feelings, sometimes, you need to stay away from that person (if you can) and stop giving him or her the chance to hurt you. In these cases, respect for yourself and justice (making sure everyone is being treated fairly, including yourself) are just as important as forgiveness.

**MEMORIZATION:** To help us in our efforts to be forgiving, we are going to memorize at least one of the quotations from the Bahai Writings about forgiveness. (hand out quote)

**“…let your adorning be forgiveness and mercy and that which cheereth the hearts of the well-favored of God.”**

**Adorn** is how we dress/decorate ourselves

**Cheer**

1. Ursula was not feeling well. Her friend Elsie brought her flowers and sat with her for a long time, telling stories and talking. Elsie’s visit made Ursula feel much better. Ursula was cheered by her visit.

2. Mrs. Sanchez received a long letter from her husband who had gone away to a nearby town for work. The letter brought the good news that he would soon be coming home. The news greatly cheered her.

**Favoured**

1. The teacher loved all of her students and paid special attention to each one. She favoured them all.

2. James liked all of the subjects at school, but he did best in science. Science was the subject he favoured most.

So if we want to be pleasing to God and well-favored, what do we need to do? Forgive! Forgiveness is talked about in all the holy books!

Share quotes (pull from other religious sources too- like the Bhagavad-Gita): (have on chart paper)

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!" Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT)]

And in the Bahai Writings it also says: “**He should forgive the sinful, and never despise his low estate, for none knoweth what his own end shall be.”**

**Despise- judge strongly**

**We don’t know what will happen in our life. What virtue did we learn about last week that relates to this? HUMILITY- yes, we need to remember that we have to always ask God for His help to do the right thing at all times.**

**STORY:**

During the days Abdu’l-Baha lived in ‘Akká, there was a governor who, time and time again, tried to harm the Bahá’ís. On one occasion he came up with a plan to destroy their means of livelihood: he ordered his guards to close down the shops of all the Bahá’ís and to bring him the keys. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá learned of the governor’s plan and advised the friends not to open their shops the next day. He told them to wait and see what God would ordain. Imagine the governor’s surprise when he heard that his guards could not bring him the keys because the shops had not been opened. But before he could think of what to do next, something unexpected happened. A telegram arrived from his superiors dismissing him from his post as governor of the city. And so the shops of the Bahá’ís were saved. The ex-governor was ordered to leave ‘Akká and go to another city called Damascus. He did not know what to do. He had to leave quickly and alone. What would happen to his family? Who would help someone who had lost the favor of the government? The Master heard the news and went to see him. He showered the unhappy man with great kindness, as if he had never been an enemy of the Faith. Not once did He mention his past wrongdoings. Instead, He offered to help him in whatever way possible. The ex-governor was worried about leaving his wife and children behind. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá assured him that He would take care of the matter. Later He arranged for a comfortable trip, provided someone reliable to accompany the wife and children, paid for all the expenses, and sent the family on its way to Damascus.

When the ex-governor was reunited with his family, he rejoiced. With a heart filled with gratitude, he turned to the man who had traveled with his family and asked him about the cost of the journey. The man explained that it had been paid by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Then the ex-governor offered him a present for his kindness and diligence during the journey. But he would not accept the present; he said that he was merely obeying ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and did not wish to receive anything for his services. The ex-governor then asked the man to stay the night as a guest in his home. He said, however, that he was eager to follow the instructions of the Master, Who had told him to return to ‘Akká without delay. The ex-governor asked the man to wait at least long enough for him to write a letter to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This he accepted and upon his return to ‘Akká delivered the letter to the Master. The letter read: “O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, I pray you pardon me. I did not understand. I did not know you. I have wrought you great evil. You have rewarded me with great good.

If you are doing more than 1 lesson on forgiveness, you could read The Girl Who Never Made Mistakes by Mark Pett and Gary Rubinstein and talk about how we all make mistakes, and ways that we can repair them.

**ART:** Coloring sheet or make acrostic poem about forgiveness using the letters of the word. (show example) SEE [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org)

**Alternative activity- used in explaining concept of forgiveness:** Make 2 planes hiding a penny in one. 2. They will look the same but not fly the same. Ask the children to look them over and figure out why. 3.Explain "the airplanes are like us and the penny is when we hold a grudge. A grudge is when we hold bad feelings inside of us because something someone did or said to us. These feelings can weigh us down and keep us from flying high."