**Grade 4 Lesson 1**

**Baha’u’llah is the Manifestation of God for Today**

*Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 4 Book*

**Opening Prayers**

**Memorization of New Prayer:**

After opening prayers have been recited, you can introduce the following prayer for memorization, which should take the children no more than three class periods to learn well by heart:

**“Glorified art Thou, O God of all names and Creator of the heavens! I render Thee thanks that Thou hast made known unto Thy servants this Day whereon the river that is life indeed hath flowed forth from the fingers of Thy bounty, and the springtime of Thy revelation and Thy presence hath appeared through Thy manifestation unto all who are in Thy heaven and all who are on Thy earth.”**

–Baha’u’llah

See [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for this prayer in a 4 x 6 format.

**Introduction to the Lesson:**

*This lesson is intended to provide your students with the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of the statement: “Baha’u’llah is the Manifestation of God for today.” Although they are already well aware of Baha’u’llah’s Station, for many it may be the first time that the subject is being studied in some depth. You can begin by sharing with them the following ideas:*

Please pay close attention as I will be asking you some questions on what I share with you afterwards.

You have already learned that the Manifestations of God are very special Beings Who come from time to time to guide humanity along the right path. They reflect the attributes of God as a mirror reflects the light of the sun. You have also learned that the Bab was a Manifestation of God who prepared the way for the coming of Baha’u’llah. Baha’u’llah is the Manifestation of God for today, which means that, by knowing Him, we are able to gain knowledge of God and that, by obeying Him, we live in accordance with the Will of God.

Humanity is like a child who needs to be educated. When a child has learned all that there is to learn in one grade, he must move on to the next. In this new grade, he will have another teacher, as wonderful as the previous one, who will teach him what he could not have understood before. If a child is too attached to the old teacher and decides to reject the new one, he will never progress. In the same way, when a Manifestation of God appears on earth, it is the duty of the followers of all earlier Manifestations to accept Him and learn to live according to His teachings. You already know that we live in a special Day, the beginning of a new Era in the long history of the human race. Baha’u’llah is the Manifestation of God that teaches us how we are to live in this Age. It is now the duty of the followers of every religion to investigate the claims of Baha’u’llah, recognize Him, and follow Him, as He is the new Teacher spoken about for thousands of years Whose teachings will enable us to build the promised Kingdom of God on earth- a peaceful and prosperous world civilization based on the principles He has brought to humanity.

**Questions:**

-Why do the Manifestations of God come to humanity from time to time?

-How can we live in accordance with the Will of God?

-Can you mention the names of some of the Manifestations of God that came before the Bab and Baha’u’llah?

-What should the people of the world do now that a new Manifestation of God has come to guide them?

**Memorization of Quotation:**

*In the following passage Baha’u’llah refers to Himself, and that which is of Him, as a reflection of God. Although the passage contains a few difficult words, its meaning is well within the capacity of the children to grasp.*

**“Say: Naught is seen in My temple but the Temple of God, and in My beauty but His Beauty, and in My being but His Being, and in My self but His Self, and in my movement but His Movement, and in My acquiescence but His Acquiescence, and in My pen but His Pen, the Mighty, the All-Praised.”**

–Baha’u’llah

**Songs:** Here are some options…

* **Baha’u’llah** by Creadell Haley
* **Who Is the Prophet of God for Today** by Saul Accouche
* **Siyah-Chal** by Leslie Garrett
* **The Spirit’s The Same** (from Peace Pack)

Please see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for the lyrics.

**Historical Episode:**

*Once the children have finished singing a few songs, ask them to sit quietly while you* ***explain to them how Baha’u’llah first received God’s Revelation****. Remember that you can modify the narrative according to your students’ level of comprehension.*

The summer of 1852 brought intense suffering to the followers of the Bab. The Bab Himself had been martyred two years before, and many of His most outstanding disciples had already given their lives for their Faith. A small group of Babis were so saddened by the martyrdom of their beloved Bab that they decided to take revenge. Although Baha’u’llah told them to let go of their foolish ideas, they would not listen to Him and plotted against the life of the King. Their pitiful attempt failed, but it aroused such anger in the King that he ordered yet another massacre of the gentle followers of the Bab. The cruel acts that were committed during those months against the Babis are so shocking that to describe them would bring too much sadness to your hearts. You will certainly read about them later in your lives and will wonder how any government could have promoted such savagery amongst its people. For now what you need to know is that this wave of persecutions brought great suffering to Baha’u’llah who, until then, had enjoyed relative freedom because of His position in society. An order was issued for His immediate arrest.

On the day the King gave the order, Baha’u’llah was staying in a village some kilometers away from the city of Tihran. The news that He was soon to be imprisoned did not disturb Him in the slightest, and He faced His arrest with His usual courage. The prison chosen for Him was called the “Siyah-Chal”. This is a word you need to learn and remember. It means the black pit. The Siyah-Chal was originally a reservoir of water for a public bath in Tihran and was, at the time, used as an underground dungeon in which criminals of the worst type were held. On His way to the Siyah-Chal, Baha’u’llah was forced to walk barefooted and bareheaded under the burning rays of the midsummer sun. The crowd that stood along the road treated Him with extreme rudeness. Yet His face showed His inner calm and His heart was filled with love even for those who wished Him harm.

As He was nearing the Siyah-Chal, an old and decrepit woman came out of the crowd with a stone in her hand. Her eyes glowed with determination and fanaticism. She had been so convinced that Baha’u’llah was a wrongdoer that she was totally unaware of the nobility and love shown forth by this extraordinary Prisoner. Her whole body shook with rage as she stepped forward and raised her hand to hurl the stone at Him. “Give me a chance to fling my stone in His face!” she pleaded as she approached Baha’u’llah. “Suffer not this woman to be disappointed,” were Baha’u’llah’s words to the guards as he saw her hastening behind Him. “Deny her not what she regards as a meritorious act in the sight of God.” Even in the midst of intense suffering, Baha’u’llah was not concerned with Himself. So great was His love for every human being that He would accept such abuse in order to bring happiness to the heart of a misguided but sincere old woman.

Baha’u’llah finally reached the Siyah-Chal. There He was imprisoned with several of the Bab’s followers. Their feet were placed in stocks, and around their necks were fastened chains so heavy that they were known by a special name throughout all of Persia. The air they breathed had the foulest of smells, and the floor on which they sat was covered with filth. No ray of light entered that dark dungeon or warmed its icy coldness. Yet the followers of the Bab were illumined by His teachings and their hearts were aflame with the fire of God’s love. They gladly accepted their sufferings and hoped to be among those who, each day, were taken out of the prison to be martyred.

Baha’u’llah and His companions were placed in two rows, each facing the other. Baha’u’llah had taught them certain verses which every night they would chant until the early hours of the morning. You probably remember the verses from the story you heard in our classes last year. “God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-Sufficing!” one row would sing, while the other would reply, “In Him let the trusting trust.” With such courage and joy did they chant that their voices would reach the palace of the King. “What means this sound?” the King once asked with agitation. “It is the anthem the Babis are intoning in their prison,” was the reply. The King kept silent and said no more.

Baha’u’llah was held a prisoner in the Siyah-Chal for four months. The conditions of the prison did not improve, but He endured His sufferings with peace and calm. For while His body was in chains, His spirit was free soaring in the heavens of nearness to God. Indeed, it was in these conditions of intense physical suffering that Baha’u’llah began to receive God’s Revelation, a Revelation that would continue to fill His soul for nearly forty more years. Baha’u’llah Himself has described those days: “During the days I lay in the prison of Tihran, though the galling weight of the chains and the stench-filled air allowed Me but little sleep, still in those infrequent moments of slumber I felt as if something flowed from the crown of My head over My breast, even as a mighty torrent that precipitateth itself upon the earth from the summit of a lofty mountain. Every limb of My body would, as a result, but set afire. At such moments My tongue recited what no man could bear to hear.”

One night, in a dream Baha’u’llah heard these glorious words: “Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth- men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him.”

How great is the Cause of God. How extraordinary are His power and might. The glorious Revelation of Baha’u’llah which is destined to change the fortunes of humankind had its beginning a most desolate prison at a most turbulent time. The Sun of Truth rose behind the clouds of the darkness of the Siyah-Chal, shedding its light on the whole of mankind.

**Facts:**

* The term “siyah-chal” means…the black pit.
* The Siyah-Chal was…an underground prison in Tihran.
* Baha’u’llah was taken to the Siyah-Chal in…the summer of 1852.
* Baha’u’llah was kept in the Siyah-Chal for…four months.
* While imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal, Baha’u’llah received…the first stirrings of God’s Revelation in His soul.

**Drama:**

It is suggested that you have your students reenact the scene from today’s story in which the Babis are imprisoned in the Siyah-Chal and the King hears their chanting in his palace. You know, of course, that it would be irreverent and disrespectful for any of the children to assume the role of Baha’u’llah.

**Drawing:**

Today you could ask the children to draw a picture that conveys their impressions of what the Siyah-Chal was like inside. Remind them that it was dark and icy-cold, with the foulest of smells and with a floor covered in filth. Explain to them that they should not include any figures in their drawings, for one could be mistaken as a representation of Baha’u’llah, which would not be appropriate.

**Review:**

**“These prophets and chosen Ones of God are the recipients and revealers of all the unchangeable attributes and names of God. They are the mirrors that truly and faithfully reflect the light of God.”**

-Baha’u’llah

**Closing Prayers**