**Grade 4 Lesson 4**

**Baha’u’llah’s Commandment to Proclaim His Mission and Spread His Teachings**

*Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 4 Book*

**Opening Prayers**

Begin the class with opening prayers, and then review with the children the prayer they have been memorizing over the last three lessons…

**“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 Grade 4 Lesson 1 for this prayer in a 4 x 6 format.

Afterwards, you can introduce the following prayer and help them learn the first few phrases. Most of the students should be able to memorize the prayer in three class periods.

**“O my Lord! O my Lord! This is a lamp lighted by the fire of Thy love and ablaze with the flame which is ignited in the tree of Thy mercy. O my Lord! Increase his enkindlement, heat and flame, with the fire which is kindled in the Sinai of Thy Manifestation. Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Assister, the Powerful, the Generous, the Loving.”** –Abdu’l-Baha

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

Munirih Sparrow has set this prayer to a beautiful melody: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bl9GAST2Ha4>

It is so much easier for the kids (and teachers ☺) to learn it when it is set to music!

**Introduction to the Lesson:**

*Today’s Lesson is intended to enhance the children’s understanding of Baha’u’llah’s commandment to proclaim His Mission and spread His teachings. A few ideas are provided below to assist you in explaining this theme to them. Remember that you will need to put the ideas in a language they can easily grasp.*

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

The purpose of Baha’u’llah’s Mission is to unify humankind in one universal Cause and to establish a just and peaceful world where all people can find true happiness and prosperity. His teachings need to reach every human being on the face of the planet- young and old, men and women, in the villages and in the cities, in the East and in the West. It is therefore the duty of all of His followers to proclaim His Message and spread His teachings far and wide. In many of His Writings, Baha’u’llah Himself calls on us to teach His Cause and explains to us the importance of this act in the sight of God.

To teach the Cause is to give to others the glad-tidings of Baha’u’llah’s coming. When we share with them the Word of God brought to us by Baha’u’llah, we are teaching His Cause. In this sacred act, the words we use become like a key that opens the gates of the human heart, enabling it to be filled with the light of the Sun of Truth and set afire with His love. We teach in order to connect people’s hearts to Baha’u’llah’s Revelation, His most precious gift to humanity. To be effective teachers, we do not use words alone. We must have an upright and praiseworthy character so that our deeds will be in harmony with our words and will attract people to the Faith. And if we come across opposition when spreading His Message, we should not be troubled by it, for Baha’u’llah assures us that we will receive Divine assistance and that eventually the forces of darkness that oppose the Cause will be defeated.

**Questions:**

* What is the purpose of Baha’u’llah’s Mission?
* Who do His teachings need to reach?
* What is the duty of every one of His followers?
* What are we doing when we give others the news of Baha’u’llah’s coming?
* What are we doing when we share with others the Word of God brought to us by Baha’u’llah?
* What happens to our words in the act of teaching?
* What is needed in addition to words, if we are to become effective teachers?
* What does Baha’u’llah assure us we will receive when we are teaching His Cause?

**Memorization of Quotation:**

*In the following quotation, Baha’u’llah calls on us to teach His Cause. We all have the duty to proclaim His Message, which He says is more meritorious than any other deed. (May also mention that the peoples of the world are in great need of this- and how Baha’u’llah said that the greatest oppression is to be seeking after truth but not know where to find it. We should let them know about Baha’u’llah and His Writings of truth!)*

**“Say: Teach ye the Cause of God, O people of Baha, for God hath prescribed unto every one the duty of proclaiming His Message, and regardeth it as the most meritorious of all deeds.”**

–Baha’u’llah

**Songs:** Here are some options… Please see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for songs and lyrics.

* **Be on Fire with the Love of the Kingdom**
* **O Lord, my God! Open Thou the Door**
* **Light Up the Whole Wide World** (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php)
* **Rise Up and Sing** (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php)
* **I Have Found Baha’u’llah** (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php)
* **Radiance** (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php)
* **The Light of a Good Character** (see video on supporting the coreactivities.org under this lesson)
* **There’s A New Wind Blowin’** (http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs.php)

**Historical Episode:**

*Today’s historical episode focuses on Baha’u’llah’s exiles to Constantinople and Adrianople. In relating the events of this period of His life, you should make it clear to the children that, although the enemies of the Faith arose against Him and caused Him great suffering, no one could stop Him from carrying out His Mission.* See pictures for the highlighted words on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson.

Baha’u’llah and His family stayed in Constantinople for four months. During that time, the Persian Ambassador in the court of the Sultan- the ruler of the Ottoman Empire- was constantly spreading terrible rumors about Baha’u’llah. The Sultan’s ministers and their associates were in their majority corrupt and unworthy people, and Baha’u’llah did not want to have anything to do with them. This insulted their pride and made them even more receptive to the Ambassador’s lies. Finally the Sultan was persuaded to issue an order exiling Baha’u’llah to the city of Adrianople, still farther from the Persian border.

Baha’u’llah responded to the order with an act of extraordinary courage. He immediately revealed a Tablet in which He addressed the Sultan himself and scolded him and his ministers for the terrible way they ruled over their people. The Tablet was delivered to the Prime Minister in a sealed envelope. It is said that when he opened the letter and began to read it, he turned pale and remarked: “It is as if the King of Kings were issuing his behest to his humblest vassal king and regulating his conduct.”

The twelve-day journey from Constantinople to Adrianople was extremely difficult for Baha’u’llah and His family, who were now going to their third place of exile. It was the month of December and the weather was mercilessly cold. Most of the exiles did not have the necessary clothes to protect them from such harsh weather. Even to obtain water from springs on their way, they had to light a fire to thaw the ice.

Baha’u’llah entered Adrianople on December 12, 1863 and stayed in that city just over four and a half years. As always, suffering followed Him, but so did great victories for His Cause. As the influence of Baha’u’llah grew, the fire of jealousy burned more intensely in the hearts of some. Foremost among the foolish people who opposed Him was His half-brother Mirza Yahya, who had accompanied Him on His exile. Mirza Yahya tried everything he could to prevent the Babis from accepting the Manifestation of God for this Day. He caused enormous trouble for the community, and his mischief encouraged the enemies of the Faith to increase their attacks on Baha’u’llah and His followers. He even decided to poison Baha’u’llah and schemed and schemed until he finally succeeded. The effect of the poison on Baha’u’llah was grave, and although He recovered, He was left with a shaking hand until the end of His life.

But you already know that Baha’u’llah had no fear of suffering and that no one could stop Him from raising the banner of the oneness of humankind. So in the midst of all these troubles, He continued to reveal the Word of God and sent to Persia outstanding believers to visit the Babis and give them the glad-tidings that the One promised by the Bab- He Whom God shall make manifest- had declared His mission.

One of the great teachers who traveled throughout Persia during that time was named Ahmad. He was born in Yazd, a city in the central part of the country, and from early childhood showed an extraordinary thirst for spirituality. By the age of fifteen he had already begun his search for the Qa’im. His desire to enter His presence had no limit; he would pray for hours and fast and meditate on how to find the Beloved of his heart. One day, he wrapped his clothes in a small bundle and left home. He travelled from village to village looking for spiritual leaders who could assist him in his search. But all this effort got him nowhere and, finally, with a sad and heavy heart, he settled in the city of Kashan, to earn a living as a cloth-maker. In that city, he became a successful and respected businessman. But the comforts of this world did not satisfy him; he was restless.

While in Kashan, Ahmad began to hear rumors of One who claimed to be sent by God. This awakened in him the enthusiasm of his youth. He asked and asked about this great Person, but no one could give him any information. Then someone told him to go to the far away province of Khurasan where a certain clergyman could provide the answers to his questions. The very next day he left his home and headed for that province. Though He arrived exhausted and ill, he was not about to rest. The clergyman whom he sought was actually a follower of the Bab, but at the time the Babis were so persecuted that they took their time before deciding to trust a stranger. When at last Ahmad found this man, he was given the runaround and not told what he was so ready to hear. Finally he was taken to one of the Bab’s prominent followers who opened to him the doors of knowledge.

Ahmad returned to Kashan a changed man. He went back to his work, but all he wanted to do was to teach the Faith. He knew, however, that he had to remain cautious. For a while he thought he was the only Babi in the city, but to his great happiness, he found another believer. And imagine his joy when one day this new friend told him that the Bab Himself was passing through Kashan and that he would be able to enter into His presence.

The bounties showered upon Ahmad by God did not cease there. Later he went to Baghdad and attained the presence of Baha’u’llah. He was among those fortunate people who lived for several years in close proximity to the Manifestation. Yet every reunion must end in separation. When Baha’u’llah was exiled to Constantinople, Ahmad was not included with those chosen to accompany Him.

Ahmad spent a few years away from Baha’u’llah, but finally he could stand the pain of separation no longer. He set out for Adrianople hoping that he would be allowed to live in that city, to which his Best Beloved had been further exiled. But he only got as far as Constantinople. Waiting for him there was a Tablet revealed by Baha’u’llah with instructions that he should go to Persia and convey to the Babis the new Message of their Lord. The Tablet is not well known among Bahais, who recite it often especially in times of difficulty. As you grow up, you will probably learn to say this Tablet by heart in its entirety. For now you can listen to the first few lines: **“He is the King, the All Knowing, the Wise! Lo, the Nightingale of Paradise singeth upon the twigs of the Tree of Eternity, with holy and sweet melodies, proclaiming to the sincere ones the glad-tidings of the nearness of God, calling the believers in the Divine Unity to the court of the Presence of the Generous One, informing the severed ones of the message which hath been revealed by God, the King, the Glorious, the Peerless, guiding the lovers to the seat of sanctity and to this resplendent Beauty.”**

Ahmad immediately obeyed. The task before him would be far from easy. But he was reassured by the words of Baha’u’llah in His Tablet that **“…if thou art overtaken by affliction in My path, or degradation for My sake, be not thou troubled thereby. Rely upon God, thy God and the Lord of thy fathers.”** And so he made his way back to Persia and, unrestricted as the wind, carried Baha’u’llah’s Message throughout the country.

Among the places he visited was Khurasan, that every province in which he had received the news of the appearance of the Bab many years before. There he went to the home of a man prominent among the Babis by the name of Furughi. Furughi was an audacious person, not easy to convince. Ahmad explained in clear terms that the One promised by the Bab, to Whom He referred as He Whom God shall make manifest, was Baha’u’llah. But Furughi objected. They argued for hours. In the end, Furughi became angry, hit Ahmad in the mouth, broke one of his teeth and threw him out of his house.

Ahmad, of course, would not give up. In the Tablet addressed to him, Baha’u’llah had told him to be like “a river of life eternal to My loved ones”. Ahmad went back to Furughi’s home, knocked on the door and entered into discussion with him once again. How, he asked, could Furughi deny that Baha’u’llah was the Promised One when so many passages in the Writings of the Bab referred to the greatest name Bab. If Ahmad could prove this, Furughi said in response, he would accept. At the time the persecutions against the Babis were so intense that they had to keep their books hidden from sight, usually in places inside the walls of their houses. So Furughi went to the wall, tore part of it open and took out a bundle containing the Writings of the Bab. And what do you think happened? The very first page they opened mentioned the word “Baha”. Furughi and his entire family instantly recognized Baha’u’llah, and he went on to become one of the greatest teachers of the Faith.

Thus, it was through the efforts of outstanding Bahais like Ahmad who obeyed the commandment to teach that soon the vast majority of the Babis accepted Baha’u’llah and became His faithful followers.

**Facts:**

* Baha’u’llah and His family arrived in Constantinople on April 16, 1863.
* Baha’u’llah remained in Constantinople for about four months
* From Constantinople, Baha’u’llah was exiled to Adrianople.
* Baha’u’llah and His family arrived in Adrianople on December 12, 1863
* Baha’u’llah stayed in Adrianople for just over four and a half years.

**Drama:**

Your students will enjoy reenacting some of the scenes from the story of Ahmad. Depending on the talents and abilities of the children in the class, you could ask one of them to assume the role of a narrator, if appropriate, or take on the role yourself. The narrator would connect the various scenes, while small groups of children act out each, beginning with Ahmad’s search as a young man for the Promised Qa’im and ending with his turbulent meeting with Furughi.

**Drawing:**

Think of an image that will reinforce in the children’s minds the ideas conveyed in the lesson and encourage them to draw it. You could ask them, for example, to draw a key opening a gate, reminding them that in the act of teaching our words become like a key that opens the gates to the human heart.

**Review:**

**“He is, and hath from everlasting been, one and alone, without peer or equal, eternal in the past, eternal in the future, detached from all things, ever-abiding, unchangeable, and self-subsisting.”**

-Baha’u’llah

(See [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for this quote set to music)

**Closing Prayers**