**Lesson 1: PURITY OF HEART**

*Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 1 Lesson 1 Curriculum*

**Snack** in playground

**Enter home and sit for PRAYERS:**

We are going to begin each class with prayers to ask God to bless our time together and help us grow in spiritual qualities. Prayer is conversation with God. How do we sit for prayers to show our reverence and respect? I am going to recite a prayer and then I will need 2 prayer sharers who would like to share a prayer they know by heart- maybe something you have learned at home or just a prayer that comes from your heart. Who would like to volunteer? If you don’t get a chance this time, there will be many other opportunities over the next few weeks!

**“O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate.”**

After the prayer, ask **2 prayer sharers** to share any prayer that they know by heart.

**CREATE GUIDELINES** with class so that we can have a safe, peaceful, and fun class!

**DISCUSSION ABOUT PURITY OF HEART:**

The first virtue that we are learning about is PURITY OF HEART. There is a prayer that I know that talks about it. It goes like this..

**“He is God! O God, my God! Bestow upon me a pure heart like unto a pearl.”**

Does everyone know what a pearl looks like? Show PEARL. In this prayer we are asking God to bestow upon us, which means to give us, a pure heart like a pearl. How is a pure heart like a pearl?

What helps make our hearts pure? What makes our heart impure?

Do **SCIENCE DEMO** about pure, then impure, then pure again heart. (see video on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson)

Then sing prayer.

**MEMORIZATION:** Here is a quote from the Bahai Writings that we can take a look at. Who would like to read this outloud for the class? **“O Son of Spirit! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart . . .”**

Let’s talk about what that means. Our hearts are like MIRRORS. We should always keep them clean. Hate, jealousy, and negative thoughts are like dust that stops the mirror from shining. When our hearts are pure, they reflect the light of God, and we become a cause of happiness to others.

So in this quote, Baha’u’llah starts off by saying O Son of Spirit! That is who we really are- our spirit- our soul. We are spiritual beings. We have a body, but we also have a soul that gives life to that body.

Then it says that His first counsel is this. I am going to read you two sentences with the word counsel in it and then I will ask you if you know what it means.

*Counsel*

1. One day Gerard and Mary were coloring some drawings. Gerard needed the yellow crayon, but Mary did not want to give it to him. The teacher told Mary that she should share. The teacher gave Mary good counsel.
2. Patricia has to decide whether to spend her money on cookies or on a storybook. Her parents advise her to buy the storybook. Her parents give Patricia good counsel.

What does counsel mean? So let’s hear what Baha’u’llah’s first counsel to us is. Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart. Here are two sentences with the word possess. See if you can tell what it means!

*Possess*

1. Tina likes to read prayers before going to sleep. She has a small prayer book to read from. Tina possesses a small prayer book.
2. There was a flood and many people lost everything they possessed, but friends came to their aid and soon they had the things they needed again.

What does possess mean? So what does He say we should possess? A pure heart. What makes a heart pure? Let me share two sentences and then you can tell me what you think.

*Pure heart*

1. Cathy became angry and screamed at Susan. Susan was sad but quickly forgave Cathy. Susan possesses a pure heart.
2. Jorge likes to share his cookies with all the children, even with Gustavo, who throws stones at him. Jorge possesses a pure heart.

Pure- what makes a heart pure?

Now what is the second quality our heart should be- He says PURE, and KINDLY. Listen to see if you know what kindly means.

*Kindly heart*

1. When people in need come to her house, Ming Ling always takes care of them. Ming Ling possesses a kindly heart.
2. Mr. Robertson is very old. Jimmy helps him carry his fruit harvest to the market. Jimmy possesses a kindly heart.

Kindness is caring about others. Kindness is shown in our words and actions- in small acts that bring joy and brightness to people’s lives.

Then what does Baha’u’llah say is the other quality our heart should have? RADIANCE. Let’s hear about that. *Radiant heart*

1. When I feel sad, my mother always cheers me up and makes me happy. My mother possesses a radiant heart.
2. Juan became ill and has to spend all his time in bed. He says many prayers, does not become sad, and continues to show forth happiness. Juan possesses a radiant heart.

What does radiance mean to you? Radiance is like the sun! It is shining out with the light of God- where other people can feel that light and love.

The last part of the quote says “That thine may be a sovereignty, ancient, imperishable and everlasting.” When we act this way- when we have a hear that is pure, kindly, and radiant, our spirit has power. Sovereignty is another word for power. This power is ancient- which means very old- all of the Teachers from God- like Jesus, Buddha, Moses, Muhammad, Krishna- they have all talked about it. This power is imperishable- it never dies. And it is everlasting- it lasts forever and is with us in all the worlds of God! Isn’t that wonderful?

**SING QUOTE** and practice it. <http://www.ruhi.org/resources/songs2/EN_My_First_Counsel.mp3>

**SONGS: (in songbook)**

* **Man is a Mine Rich in Gems**
* **Good Character**
* **Strive**

**STORY OF ABDUL-BAHA:**

Share a story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that will demonstrate further the importance of purity of heart.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá could always tell what was in a person’s heart, and He greatly loved people whose hearts were pure and radiant. There was a lady who had the honor of being the guest of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at dinner. As she sat listening to His words of wisdom, she looked at a glass of water in front of her and thought, “Oh! If only ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would take my heart and empty it of every earthly desire and then refill it with divine love and understanding, just as you would do with this glass of water.”*

*This thought passed through her mind quickly, and she did not say anything about it, but soon something happened that made her realize ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had known what she was thinking. While He was in the middle of His talk, He paused to call a servant and said a few words to him in Persian. The servant quietly came to the lady’s place at the table, took her glass, emptied it, and put it back in front of her.*

*A little later, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, while continuing to talk, picked up a pitcher of water from the table, and in a most natural way, slowly refilled the lady’s empty glass. No one noticed what had happened, but the lady knew that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was answering her heart’s desire. She was filled with joy. Now she knew that hearts and minds were like open books to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who read them with great love and kindliness.*

**Cooperative Games:**

Storm of Kindness

Explain that kids will make a “rainstorm” of kindness. Being kind is contagious (ask them what contagious means). It may start off with one small act of kindness, but soon that one act with spread to someone else and so on and so on. It will lead to other acts of kindness, and when those all get added together, they create an amazing “storm” of kindness.

Have kids stand in a circle. Tell them to each do what the teacher does when he/she looks at them and nods. Don’t do it until the teacher looks and nods. Starting at one spot in the circle, the teachers will have them:

* Rub hands together (sounds like rain starting to drizzle)
* Snap (or slap backs of hands, alternating) (bigger drops)
* Clap out of rhythm (even bigger)
* Slap thighs (heavy rain)
* Stomp feet (very heavy rain/thunder)
* Then reverse steps, slapping thighs, then clapping, then snapping, then rubbing hands.

Kids love this activity. I usually have to do it twice.

East Wind Blows

Begin with all the children in a circle, on chairs or cushions (can also take off their shoes and use them as markers). Each round begins with the teacher, who is outside the circle, calling out the following phrase: “The west wind blows on everyone who…”, continuing by referring to some characteristic that more than one child shares, such as blue eyes, black hair, blue pants, and so on. All the children who share that characteristic must then get up and switch places with each other. Each child must find a different seat from the one he or she was occupying before the call.

Care should be taken that children do not push or collide with each other when switching seats. The circle should be wide enough to give all the children space to move when they are called.

**Variation:**

All the children sit in a circle except one, who is chosen to be the game-caller. The game-caller stands in the middle of the circle and calls out the phrases that the teacher would call out in the basic game. When the children get up, the game-caller tries to find a seat along with everyone else. Whoever is left standing at the end of the round then becomes the new game-caller.

The Burning Thirst:

Tie sticks to the children’s arms so they cannot bend their elbows, and then tell them to pretend that they are walking in a desert and are very, very thirsty. When they come upon water in cups, they have to find a way to drink it. They will discover that the only way is to help each other, being careful not to get each other wet.

Cooperative Tag

**ARTS AND CRAFTS: Coloring Sheets OR quote puzzle collage**

**CLOSING PRAYER:**

At the conclusion of the class, two or three children can be asked to recite a quotation or prayer they know as a reward for praiseworthy behavior, or you may say the closing prayer.

Give HEART COOKIES when time to go home that say PURE, KINDLY and RADIANT in icing