**Lesson 12: Living in Harmony: COOPERATION AND RECIPROCITY**

Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 2 Material

## **4-4:10:**

**Opening Prayers:**

To begin the class, you and a couple of children recite prayers.

**Review prayer and practice with movements:**

“O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed, through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life. Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.”

Play Tim Urbonya’s song of this prayer- **United Agreed**

## **4:10-4:15 Intro. To Lesson**

Knowing that we are members of one human family, we work together for the good of ALL. We cooperate with one another and do everything we can to contribute to goals we all share. **Many things cannot be done by one person alone**. Without cooperation, little can be accomplished in this world. **For a home to be kept tidy**, what needs to happen? (all the members of the family must make sure to put things in their proper place) **For a building to be built**, what needs to happen? (many people must work together and contribute their time and energy). **To improve the quality of the food we grow, to make advances in medicine, to discover ways to communicate with people in far-off places**- these and so many other wonderful things we have talked about in our classes are the result of what? **COOPERATION**. Think of all the people of the past who have worked together to improve the world. And we, too, work together in harmony in our class here, in our families, and at school. **Sometimes this means that we must be ready to give up what we want for ourselves for the good of the whole.** To work in harmony, we have to **show kindness** to those with whom we are working and **patience** when someone makes a mistake.

Abdul-Baha often spoke about the importance of cooperation. Some creatures can live solitary and alone, He explained. A tree, for example, can live without the assistance and cooperation of other trees. Some animals, too, exist in isolation, away from other animals of their kind. But are human beings like that? No, we are meant to cooperate and associate with one another. **Through association**, He told us, **we find happiness and develop**, as individuals and collectively as a group.

Friendships in Nature by James Hines II is a great book to read that illustrates the importance of cooperation and reciprocity (but be sure to also share the story of Abdu’l-Baha and Nettie Tobin- don’t leave that out from the lesson as we want to link the hearts to Abdu’l-Baha and His example!)

**4:15-4:20 Memorization:** To always be reminded that we should cooperate with one another, let us memorize the following quotation of Baha’u’llah:

**HAND OUT QUOTE: “The supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity.”**

**Supreme**

1. Everything in the universe was created by God. He is the Supreme Creator.
2. More than anything else, Daniel wants to serve his fellow human beings. His supreme wish is to serve others.

**Cooperation**

1. It is not unusual to see two or three ants carrying a large bit of food together. Only when they cooperate can ants carry such large, heavy objects.
2. When everyone works together to reach a goal, they feel united and happy. Cooperation helps to build unity.

**Reciprocity**

1. The village where Zhu Li lives grows many vegetables and other crops. Li Li lives in the village nearby that raises animals. Each village provides the other with what it needs. Because of reciprocity, both villages prosper.
2. Meera has plenty of water in her well and helps Fabio by watering the plants in his garden. Fabio is good at climbing and helps Meera by picking fruit from the trees in her yard. Fabio and Meera understand the importance of reciprocity.

Who remembers last week’s quote? (have one person share) STICKERS done individually later on (during art) if come up to you and share memorized quote. **“We ask God to endow human souls with justice so that they may be fair, and may strive to provide for the comfort of all…”**

**(come to me during art time later and if you have memorized it, you can pick a sticker for your prayer book. We will be doing this each week from now on, as it is so important to memorize the Words of God that have been given to us by the Messengers of God, like Baha’u’llah.)**

## **4:20-4:30:** **Songs**

Here are some options:

* **Perfect Harmony by Tim Urbonya**: O Thou kind Lord! Unite all, let the religions agree…
* **Unity** by Virtues in Us: Side by side working together… (available at: https://www.amazon.com/Childrens-Virtues-Songs-Us/dp/7889290853)
* **Circle of Light by Red Grammer**

**4:30-4:40 Story**

**The true story that I am going to share with you will show us what can be accomplished through cooperation.**

During Abdul-Baha’s travels in America, one of the places He visited was a special piece of land that had been purchased in order to build a Bahai House of Worship, a beautiful edifice where all people could come and commune with God. Before construction on the House of Worship began, a gathering was held to say prayers on that spot, after which Abdu’l-Baha would lay with His own hands the first stone of the building- the cornerstone.

One of the friends, a lady named Nettie Tobin, longed to give something to help build the House of Worship. She did not have any money to offer, but the day before the meeting, she had an idea. She want to a building under construction near her home. Cast off to the side was a pile of large stones, and she asked whether she might take one.

“Help yourself,” said the builder. “These are rejected.” You see, the builder needed a particular kind of stone, and the ones in the pile could not have been used. Nettie chose a stone but discovered it was too heavy for her to list. So, she went home and got an old baby carriage, loaded the stone into it, and wheeled it home. That was as far as she could manage on her own.

Now, in those days, many cities had streetcars to take people from one place to another, much like we have buses today. And, with the help of a friend, Nettie took the stone on three streetcars the next morning. Together, they lifted the baby carriage onto the first streetcar, then off again. They waited for the second streetcar, loaded the carriage onto it and then off again, and finally heaved it onto the third streetcar, which took them close to the spot where the House of Worship was to be built. There was still some distance to walk, and the two friends started pushing the baby carriage over the broken pavement. But suddenly it collapsed. They were at a loss for what to do! Even together the two of them could not carry the heavy stone the remaining distance. It was late, and the gathering had already started. After such a long journey, it seemed that Nettie and her friend would miss everything.

Just then, two boys with an express wagon came along. With their help, the stone was loaded into the wagon, and off they all went to the gathering- Nettie, her friend, the two boys, and the stone. Imagine Nettie’s joy when Abdu’l-Baha chose *that* stone to be the cornerstone and laid it in the ground. In time, a beautiful House of Worship was built on that piece of land, and the stone which Nettie and her friend and the two boys worked together to bring to that spot is still there today!

**4:40-5:00 Drama**

To assist the children in developing further their skills and abilities to perform creative drama, you may have them do the following activities:

1. Ask your students to stand in their imaginary squares. 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 square.

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.*

2. Next I am going to ask you to pretend to be some things, which you have to act out (have on 8 slips that kids can draw out on ONE COLOR PAPER):

* A teardrop
* A cloud
* An umbrella in the wind
* A boiling egg
* A spinning top
* An airplane
* A car
* A rocking chair

3. Now you are going to start walking around. As always you should be careful not to bump into one another. We are going to pretend that you are “walking in someone else’s shoes”. Who hasn’t picked a slip yet? Ok- children can then take turns picking a slip and telling the class in whose shoes they will be walking (have on 10 slips that are on a DIFFERENT COLOR OF PAPER).

* A baby who has just learned to walk
* A huge faint
* Someone in a great hurry
* Someone who has poor eyesight
* Someone who is walking a dog on a leash
* Someone whose foot is caught in a bucket
* Someone carrying something on his or her head
* Someone who has stepped on a thorn
* Someone walking on hot sand
* An astronaut on the moon

After taking the students through the above exercises, you can move on to the activities related to the theme of this lesson, COOPERATION. Begin by reminding the children that **there are many things in this world which we cannot do alone and which require cooperation if they are to be achieved.**

1. Divide the children into small groups. Ask them to name some large, heavy objects. First have each child pretend to move one of the objects, by him or herself, from one point to another, for example, between two trees or across the room. Next each group should pretend to move the object together. Afterwards, ask the children a few questions: Was it easy to move such a heavy object alone? What happened when you worked together as a group to move it?
2. Now I’d like you to think of some situations that you can act out in which people need to work together to reach a goal. For example:

* using a ladder to retrieve an object on a high shelf
* trying to take a large object from one room to another through a locked door
* making sure a picture is hanging straight

THINK OF YOUR OWN SCENARIO in your group. You can also think of a scenario that requires a group to complete a task in which responsibility is shared- for instance, a family working together to make a home ready to receive guests, preparing a meal, or washing and drying dishes.

3. Finally, you are going to act out the story of Nettie and the cornerstone. Of course, because we want to be reverent, we will NOT be acting out Abdu’l-Baha, so your re-enactment should end at the arrival of Nettie and her companions at the meeting, and the conclusion of the story could then just be told by you or one of the students.

**5:00-5:23:** **ART**

Last week’s lesson, today’s lesson and next week’s lesson all focus on living in harmony together. We are going to do a two-part art project to illustrate the quote:

**“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”**

We are doing the SECOND PART of our art project- because we have been learning about living in harmony together, you will cut your watercolor and make a collage that resembles a sunrise- it can be over water or mountains. Then you will write the verse about the power of unity on it. You can pick today’s verse or So powerful is the light…

(show example)

**Art Activity: LIGHT OF UNITY (see Lesson 11 page on** [**www.supportingthecoreactivities.org**](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) **for more info on this activity)**

This is a two-day activity.

Materials:

First day:

1. White water-color paper, one page for each child

2. Water colors

3. Paint brushes.

4. Pots of water so children can rinse brushes

5. Paper towels so children can dry brushes between colors

Second day

6. White card-stock, one for each child, for background

7. Scissors

8. Glue

9. Pre-printed verse about unity, or pen or felt-tipped markers to write the verse.

On the first day, the children fill their paper with painted abstract and colorful swirls and swishes. Make sure there is plenty of yellow for the sun. Let his dry completely. See example on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) .

On the second day, cut the painted paper and create a collage that resembles a sunrise over water, or maybe over land, gluing the pieces to the background card-stock. The children can write in a verse about Unity, or create a pre-printed verse they can glue onto their art work. See example on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) .

**When done- can FINISH MURAL of prayer that they are memorizing- make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, etc**. (see pictures on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) )

If you have chosen not to do the art project as a teacher, you can have them draw in their drawing books an image that reminds them of the importance of COOPERATION

## **5:25-5:30:** **Review**

Review the quotation from today’s lesson with the children, and then review with the children the quotations they memorized last year about the qualities of RADIANCE and FORGIVENESS.

**“O Son of Being! Thou art My lamp and My light is in thee. Get thou from it thy radiance and seek none other than Me.”**

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

## **5:30:Closing Prayer- you may choose to use this beautiful song from the Johannesburg Bahai Choir- which goes with the concept of being a lamp filled with God’s light:**

<https://youtu.be/ZD9hsSLTt-E>

The class closes with a prayer- invite a child to recite a memorized prayer.