**Lesson 8: Seeking Knowledge:**

**Knowledge helps us contribute to the betterment of the world**

Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 2 Material

## 4-4:10:

**Opening Prayers:**

To begin the class, you and a few children recite some prayers.

**Practice previous quotes and prayers**

**New Prayer:**

**“O my Lord! Make Thy beauty to be my food, and Thy presence my drink, and Thy pleasure my hope, and praise of Thee my action, and remembrance of Thee my companion, and the power of Thy sovereignty my succorer, and Thy habitation my home, and my dwelling-place the seat Thou hast sanctified from the limitations imposed upon them who are shut out as by a veil from Thee. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful.”**

This prayer is talking about **feeding our spirit with God’s guidance, love and light**. Having our actions **praise of God and that God is our companion** on the journey of our life. He is with us at all times- we are NEVER alone.

MAKE MOVEMENTS TOGETHER for at least first half and then say OR can do puzzle with words (or both).

## 4:10-4:25:

**Intro. To Lesson**

We are learning about the importance of seeking knowledge. Last week, we talked about how we need to **SEEK THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD** and that weknow God and what God wants for us through those Special Beings that He sends to humanity from time to time Who brings us His laws and teachings. These Special Beings include Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, Muhammad, the Bab and Baha’u’llah. By LISTENING to the Words of the Manifestation of God for today, by STUDYING His laws and teachings and DOING them in our lives, we DRAW CLOSER TO GOD. We also talked about how EVERY CREATED THING speaks to us of God’s GREATNESS and GLORY.

Today we are going to talk a little bit more about seeking knowledge. Knowledge is essential to human progress. We can’t advance and do better without it. In order to build a better world, we must gain knowledge of the sciences and the arts. When we apply what we learn, (SHOW PICTURES) we are able to improve the quality of the FOOD we grow, we make advances in MEDICINE that help us live healthier lives, we discover ways to COMMUNICATE with people in far-off places, and we CREATE things that beautify the world. Abdu’l-Baha encourages learning about the sciences and arts, as well as acquiring spiritual knowledge that comes from the teachings of God. These teachings give us a deeper understanding of the world around us, and inspire us to use our knowledge for the BENEFIT of OTHERS, to remove conflict and fighting and to promote COOPERATION and HARMONY- which leads to peace. DISCUSS-**how can knowledge help us learn things that we can then use to make our world a better place?** - i.e. become a doctor to help sick people, become a cook to feed people, an architect to build safe house to live in and beautiful houses of worship! A teacher to teach others, etc.

HAVE ON A POSTER: **“The happiness and pride of a nation consist in this, that it should shine out like the sun in the high heaven of knowledge…And the honor and distinction of the individual consist in this, that he among all the world’s multitudes should become a source of social good…that by the confirming grace of God he has become the cause of peace and well-being, of happiness and advantage to his fellow men…”** (Abdu’l-Baha, The Secret of Divine Civilization)

Once, while speaking with a teacher from England, Abdu’l-Baha asked what subjects he taught in school. The gentleman told Him that he taught Latin, English, Algebra (which is Math), and Geometry. Abdu’l-Baha then asked him if he also addressed spiritual matters in his classes. What do you think he said? The gentleman replied that there was time for spiritual education in school. Abdu’l-Baha made no comment, but He did not need to! From His question and His silence, the gentleman understood that **both material and spiritual education are necessary for human advancement**. He knew that most schools did not provide spiritual instruction, and so Abdu’l-Baha encouraged Bahai communities to have regular classes for this purpose. (and here we are- doing just that! What a blessing!) ☺

**Memorization:** To help us to remember how acquiring knowledge can help us contribute to the betterment of the world, let’s memorize the following quotation:

**HAND OUT QUOTE: “Exert every effort to acquire the various branches of knowledge and true understanding. Strain every nerve to achieve both material and spiritual accomplishments.”**

**Exert every effort**

1. Collis and his family lived in the countryside. He was tired from tending the crops but worked hard to finish the day’s work. He exerted every effort to finish the work before the end of the day.
2. The teacher spent many hours working with students to make sure they know their lessons well. The teacher exerted every effort to help her students.

**Understanding**

1. Amelia read the lesson twice. However, only after her sister explained the lesson to her did she gain the necessary understanding.
2. Arnold’s mother always spoke to him about the importance of unity, but his understanding grew as he made friends with children of many different backgrounds and experienced unity firsthand.

**Strain every nerve**

1. To climb to the top of the mountain required all of Franco’s strength. He had to strain every nerve to reach the top.
2. The jar was closed very tightly, and though Zayn strained every nerve, he as unable to open it.

**Accomplishments**

1. The old man never talked about his past, even though he had done much during his life. He was a humble man and never spoke about his accomplishments.
2. The discovery of fire was one of humanity’s earliest accomplishments.

Material and spiritual education are like the wings of a bird. What happens if only one wing is strong? We fly in circles or can’t even get off the ground. We need BOTH to fly and reach great heights! So we need to exert every effort and strain every nerve to learn both material knowledge and spiritual knowledge. We want to do well in school and also study and apply God’s spiritual teachings! That way we can reach the heights that God wants for us, both as individuals and also as a country and as a world!

4:25-4:35 **Songs**

* Light of Thy Knowledge by Tim Urbonya- Angels in the World CD (http://www.songsfromthewritings.com)
* Ask the children which songs they would like to sing.

## 4:35-4:45:

**Story- done as a play**

**Narrator:** We are going to hear a story about Susan Moody, a very brave doctor who was called upon by Abdu’l-Baha to journey from her homeland of the United States to IRAN in order to help the women of that country. Some years before leaving for Iran, Susan had prayed to God that she would be enabled to dedicate herself entirely to God and act in accordance with His Will. God blessed her greatly and allowed her to do just that!

**Susan:** Well hello there! My name is Susan Moody! I lived in Chicago in the United States in the early 1900s, about 110 years ago. At that time, it was very rare for women to be doctors, but at the age of 52, I was inspired to study medicine. I soon completed medical school and started to work as a doctor. Around the same time, I was introduced to the Bahai Faith and became an active member of the Bahai community, teaching children’s classes, like the one you are having today, and hosting visitors and gatherings in my home.

**Narrator:** Now, in Iran, there was a team of doctors who were planning to establish a hospital in the capital city, Tihran. Perhaps you know that, because of the religious traditions there, many women considered it improper for them to show their faces to a male doctor, and female doctors in the country were very few. So this team of doctors asked for a female doctor from the United States to join them, and Abdu’l-Baha encouraged Susan Moody to go!

**Susan:** Not surprisingly, my family and friends objected to the idea of my leaving my medical practice in the United States to help people in a far-off land, where I might have to deal with strange diseases and difficult problems. But I was ready to respond to Abdu’l-Baha’s call! Now I realized why I had so strongly felt the desire to study medicine several years earlier.

**Narrator**: At almost 60 years of age, she set off at once! Of course, in those days, it took a long time to travel from one part of the world to another, and Iran was very far way from the United States. On her way to Iran, Dr. Moody was able to stay for a few days in the Holy Land.

**Susan:** Oh what glorious days spent in the Holy Land with Abdul-Baha! What a priviledge for me to be in the Master’s presence! He told me that I would need PATIENCE once I arrived in my new home, but assured me that He would often pray for me and would always be with me!

**Narrator:** She then started out on the final part of her journey, sailing by boat across the Caspian Sea and arriving in a city in Northeastern Iran called Bandar-e Anzali. From there she traveled by horse and carriage across the mountains to the capital, Tihran, stopping along the way to meet with the Bahai friends and to treat people who were ill. Already Susan began to see how pressing was the need for a female doctor, such as herself, for many women came to her for assistance.

When Dr. Moody finally arrived in Tihran, she immediately began caring for the sick and soon became fluent in the Persian language. She established a medical practice in her home, in addition to working at the hospital. She was compassionate, kind and tender-hearted, and everyone loved her very dearly. A local newspaper praised “her good qualities and kind attributes” and went on to say:

Every day from morning till noon she is in her office, No. 10 Avenue Aladauleh, receiving her patients for consultation, examination and treatment, excepting Friday and Sunday afternoons, when she goes to the Hospital Sehat…We give the utmost thanks and gratitude that such a noble woman, to such a respected person, whose presence here is a great privilege to the country of Persia…

**Susan:** Not long after establishing a medical practice in Tihran, I saw a need to help others learn about health issues and began to provide instruction to women in nursing and childbirth. Eventually, I also joined hands with others to set up a formal school called the Tarbiyat School for Girls. The school offered education to many young women, many of whom went on to become teachers themselves, making it possible to establish other schools for girls throughout the country.

**Narrator:** The Tarbiyat School for Girls became highly respected and was attended by young ladies from all backgrounds, until it was forced to close down by the government because of hatred and suspicion. That, however, is another story, and someday you may want to learn more about this remarkable school. But today, you should know that Dr. Susan Moody died in Iran at the age of 83, after having spent some 20 years of her life applying the knowledge she gained to better her new homeland and helping others, especially women, to have the opportunity to do the same.

**Susan:**

What a blessing it was to live a life of service to humanity. I am so thankful that I was allowed to serve and help others through my love for God and knowledge of medicine. When I entered the next realm and met Baha’u’llah face to face, He was very pleased with me, which has made me eternally happy!

## 4:45-5:00:

**Drama**

The activities that follow will help the children continue developing the skills and abilities of creative drama.

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.*

1. Next have the children sit in a circle, yourself among them. Pick up a small item, such as a twig or a pen or pencil, and say, “I could use this, pretending it is a comb.” Then pretend to comb your hair with it. Then pass the item to the child sitting next to you and ask the child what he or she could use it for. Following your example, the child should reply and demonstrate how else the item could be used. He or she might say, for ex. “I could use this, pretending it is a harmonica,” or “I could use this, pretending it is a fishing pole”. The item should then be passed to the next child in a similar manner and each child needs to come up with something new, using their creativity, until everyone in the circle has had a turn.
2. (This next activity is to help reinforce the idea that knowledge is central to the advancements of civilization and the betterment of the world.) Today, we are going to use DRAMA and ACT OUT different characters from the story you heard about Dr. Susan Moody. Remember how she went to Iran to help the women who would otherwise not have received medical attention? **What spiritual qualities did Susan Moody have to show in order to be of service to the many women in Iran?** Assign each character in the story to one child (or a small group of children), remembering that no one should ever assume the Figure of Abdu’l-Baha in a reenactment. **You will each describe Susan Moody from the point of view of a different character. (**If necessary, more than one child can act out each character, or you may whish to come up with other characters with whom Susan Moody may have come into contact. The characters may include:
   1. A member of Susan Moody’s family who did not want her to go to Iran but who understood why she decided to move there.
   2. A fellow male doctor working in Iran who knew how much women needed help and who was glad Susan Moody was there to care for them.
   3. A woman who became a patient of Susan Moody
   4. A young girl who attended the Tarbiyat School for Girls and later became a doctor.

5:00-5:17: **Drawing**

Today in your drawing journals, you are going to do a drawing inspired by the story of Susan Moody, such as the hospital or school where Dr. Moody worked, or anything that comes to your heart about the story!

## 5:17-5:22: **Give children a chance to share their drawings with the group if they would like to share.**

## 5:22-5:27: **Review**

Repeat the quotations from today's lesson and help the children to recite the following quotations that they learned in Grade 1 about HOPEFULNESS and THANKFULNESS

**“Be thou ever hopeful, for the bounties of God never cease to flow upon man.”**

**“Be thou happy and well pleased and arise to offer thanks to God, in order that thanksgiving may conduce to the increase of bounty.”**

## 5:27-5:30:

**Closing Prayers**

The class closes with a prayer or quotation recited in the usual manner. **BLESSED IS THE SPOT**