**Modified Version of Ruhi G3 Lesson 5**

*This lesson is long, and you may have to pick and choose which to include, or make two lessons out of it. The story can be divided into two lessons as well.*

**Opening Prayers- Prayer Sharers**

**Review quotes-** anyone who has memorized can share

(Including **“We summon you to God, We remind you of His Day, We announce unto you tidings of your reunion with Him, We draw you nigh unto His court, and send down upon you tokens of His wondrous wisdom…”)**

**Review prayer** that they have been learning

(See [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) for a 4 x 6 copy of this prayer that can be put in a prayer book for each child):

**“Glory be to Thee, O Lord my God! Make manifest the rivers of Thy sovereign might, that the waters of Thy Unity may flow through the inmost realities of all things, in such wise that the banner of Thine unfailing guidance may be raised aloft in the kingdom of Thy command and the stars of Thy divine splendor may shine brightly in the heaven of Thy majesty.**

**Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou, verily, art the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”** –Baha’u’llah

See movements at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under lesson 4

**Intro to Lesson:**

*In this class, you will speak to the children on several related subjects-* ***the purpose of life, the nature of existence in this world, suffering, and death****- in explaining to them that* ***the teachings of every Manifestation of God address the most profound spiritual yearnings of the human soul.***  *In this context, the children will become familiar with the life of* ***Buddha, Whose teachings helped people learn to exist in a spiritual state while living in the physical world.*** *As preparation for conducting the class, you may find it useful to review the third unit of the book “Reflections on the Life of the Spirit”. The following ideas will assist you in introducing today’s lesson to the children. It will be important, as always, to put the ideas in a language that they can readily grasp.*

**I will be asking you some questions based on what I am about to share with you, so please pay close attention.**

All the Manifestations of God teach us that true life is the life of the spirit. We know that life on this earth is the beginning of an eternal journey towards God and that our souls continue to progress forever and ever after their separation from our physical bodies. Every human soul yearns to draw closer to its Creator. While we are in this world, we must do all that we can to prepare for the spiritual worlds beyond. This material world has been adorned with so many beautiful things that can assist us. We know, too, that God has given each one of us the capacity we need to draw closer to Him in this world. We have been given outer sight to view the light of the sun and inner vision by which we can perceive the glory of God. With the outer ear, we enjoy the melodies of sound, and with inner hearing we are able to listen to the voice of our Creator. We should not miss the chances that God gives us in this world to sharpen our spiritual faculties and to grow spiritually. So we work and serve in accordance with Divine teachings, helping to make this world rich, both materially and spiritually. But we must never become attached to the things of this world, remembering that life on this earth is just the beginning of a long journey and that it is our soul which is eternal. And with our inner sight fixed on the horizons beyond, we walk a spiritual path with tranquility and contentment, no matter what happens along the way.

Buddha was a Manifestation of God Who appeared some two and a half thousand years ago. The penetrating light of His Words awakened souls to their true nature. His teachings helped people bind their hearts to the spiritual world that is changeless and eternal, while still appreciating the bounties of this material world. He taught people to walk the “Middle Path” to enlightenment.

**Questions:**

* **What do all the Manifestations of God teach us about the life of the spirit?** (that true life is the life of the spirit)
* **After its separation from our physical bodies when we die, what will continue to progress forever through infinite spiritual worlds?** (our soul)
* **For what does every human soul yearn?** (to draw closer to its Creator)
* **While in this world, for what must we prepare?** (we must prepare our souls for the spiritual worlds beyond)
* **What are our inner vision and inner hearing able to perceive?** (with our inner vision we can perceive the glory of God and with our inner hearing we can listen to the voice of our Creator)
* **To sharpen our spiritual faculties and grow spiritually, what do we do in this world?** (We work and serve in accordance with Divine teachings and help to make this world rich- both materially and spiritually- because we do not want to miss the chances that God gives us in this world to sharpen our spiritual faculties and to grow spiritually)
* **When we experience suffering, what should we always remember about life in this world?** (life on this earth is just the beginning of a long journey and that it is our soul that is eternal)
* **What guidance did Buddha offer to the people of His time?** (He awakened souls to their true nature. His teachings helped bind their hearts to the spiritual world that is changeless and eternal, while still appreciating the bounties of this material world. He taught the people to walk the “Middle Path” to enlightenment.)

**Memorization:**

In the following quotation, Baha’u’llah explains that, through the teachings of the Manifestations of God, we are able to gain understanding that helps us to live in peace, tranquility and contentment.

(see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for movements to the quote)

**“The purpose underlying the revelation of every heavenly Book, nay, of every divinely revealed verse, is to endue all men with righteousness and understanding, so that peace and tranquility may be firmly established amongst them. “**

**underlying:** something that is beneath; basic

The underlying reason that your parents said that you couldn’t walk around your neighborhood by yourself is that they care about you and want you to be protected from harm.

**revelation:** the act of revealing something that was not known before

Through the revelation of God brought by the Divine Teachers, we learn about what God wants us to do and how we wants us to be in the world.

**divinely revealed:** revealed by God

Every Messenger of God has brought a divinely-revealed Message for the world.

**endue:** to endow or provide with something

God endues each human being with special talents that they can use in service to Him and to humanity to help it become more developed and advanced.

**righteousness:** morally right; acting in line with divine teachings

When we choose the path of righteousness and do the right thing, we bless our lives with God’s good pleasure.

**tranquility:** the state of being tranquil or calm

After saying prayers and talking to her parents about her problems, Janice felt much better and her heart became full of tranquility.

**Songs:** (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) for lyrics and some music)

* **Man is in reality a spiritual being**
* **Seek ye first the Kingdom of God (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HniSUB3Qh0)**
* **Any requests from Songbook**

**Cooperative Games:**

From Cooperative Games and Sports (Second Edition) by Terry Orlick

**Frozen Tag**

**Description: (invite children to keep track honestly of how many people they help by unfreezing them in the game)**

-A few children are designated “freezers”. While the rest of the children scatter in all directions, the freezers count to 10, then take off after the runners.

-When a child is tagged, he freezes in a stride position with a hand extended out front. To unfreeze him, another child must either pass under his legs or shake his hand.

-The number of freezers can be adjusted to keep the game moving.

-When the children are tired or ready to play something else, the leader can end the game by asking the children, “How many of you unfroze your friends?” “How many people did you unfreeze?”

**Variations:**

* Frozen Tag can also be played in pairs- with twin freezers, twin runners, twin freezes, and twin unfreezers. Partners hold hands and run together, freeze together and unfreeze together, with both partners shaking hands with the frozen pair or going under the frozen pairs’ legs.
* The game can also be played in groups of three

**Box Ball**

**Equipment:** One soccer-type ball or ball that can be kicked on the ground; one skipping rope or similar length of rope for every four children; markers for the different bases that you will designate

**Description:**

Box Ball is played by four children working as a unit to keep the rope taught in the shape of a box while moving a ball from one base to another. First they just practice moving the ball along the floor or ground with their feet while walking and holding the rope taut in the shape of a square.

To play the real game of Box Ball, teams of four with ropes are scattered around the playing area at different bases. Each team of four kicks its ball to the next base, leaves the ball there, and runs back to its original base to get the ball that was dropped off by another team. The children must move the ball while keeping it within the confines of their taut rope. This ball-moving process continues until each team has its original ball back.

**Variation:** For additional challenge, the tie it takes for all balls to complete the circuit can be recorded, and all players can then get together to discuss how to help each other improve their collective time before playing the next game.

**Story**

**Props (optional):** pictures representing each of the highlighted words in the story (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for pictures for the highlighted words)

*Now explain to the children that you are going to tell the story of the life of Buddha. You may choose to share all or some of the account provided below with the students in your class, depending on the particular circumstances. Whatever you decide to do, it is important that they realize that* ***the teachings of Buddha helped the people of His time to walk the “Middle Path”, to avoid both overindulgence in the things of this world and excessive neglect of their material well-being in the name of spirituality****. In this context, you will also be discussing with them* ***the question of suffering in this world*** *and* ***the importance of detachment****. In doing so, you will want to make certain that* ***the conception of spirituality that emerges is not one of a passive state of goodness but one of active engagement in the life of society, as Baha’u’llah has stated: “Say: O concourse of monks! Seclude not yourselves in your churches and cloisters. Come ye out of them by My leave, and busy, then, yourselves with what will profit you and others.”***

Buddha was born some 2,500 years ago in a place called Lumbini, it is believed, part of Nepal on the border with India. His father was a king who had long wished to have an heir that would one day rule in his place. Soon after His birth, Buddha’s mother died. In a ceremony celebrating His birth, several wise men, upon beholding the beauty of His countenance, predicted He would grow either into a great emperor or into a great spiritual teacher. Naturally, His father hoped for the first, and so he decided to conceal from his Son all the suffering and sadness in the world and to surround Him with beauty and luxury. This way, His father thought, He would surely develop a love for material things and would become a great warrior and powerful emperor with vast riches. A high wall was built around the palace garden to shield the Boy from life outside, and the king made certain that His Son was never in want or need. He was determined Buddha should know only wealth and happiness. This, of course, was not to be.

At the age of twenty-nine, Buddha asked to leave the royal estate and visit the countryside. You see, though His father had tried to conceal the world from Him, He knew that there was more to life than material things, and He set out one day with His charioteer, Channa. Buddha was deeply struck by what He saw. He had been accustomed to comfort and happiness. Now He observed sickness and death. People labored and toiled under the yoke of misery. He turned to Channa and asked the meaning of what He had seen. “Your life of happiness, Master,” he responded, “is the unusual one.” Sickness, old age and death, he explained, are the common lot of man. So it was that Buddha became aware of pain and agony, oppression and cruelty, and He decided to renounce His princely life and to dedicate Himself to alleviating the suffering that existed in the world. In the dead of night, He left the palace and, exchanging His rich robes for the simple clothing of a monk, set out in search of His quest.

Buddha spent the next six years in prayer and meditation, living a simple life, free of earthly things. He had no home and ate what little food people offered Him. Perhaps you know that, in India at the time, those who chose to follow a spiritual path would often give up all that they possessed and would spend their days in quiet contemplation, while others would provide them with their daily nourishment. Buddha lived on the meager sustenance He received in this way (can show alms bowl) . Eventually, He went to study first with one, and then with another, of the great spiritual teachers of His time. So profound was His own spiritual insight and understanding that each hoped Buddha would succeed him. But He was not interested for the period of His search had not come to an end. Still He had not found a way to conquer old age, disease and death, and He continued on His way.

At last He went to the edge of a great forest and entered it, and there He lived a life of utter seclusion. He spent long hours meditating in the silence of the woods around Him and contented Himself with little. Food became of no importance to Him. It is said that, at one time, He lived on a single grain of rice a day. By then, His body had become weak from hunger, and His mind began to lose its sharp focus. He had abandoned every earthly thing, even food and drink, but, still, he had not found the knowledge He so desired. Yet He knew with certainty that such self-denial was not the way to spiritual truth, for how could knowledge be accessible to a mind so weakened by hunger that it cannot think. A bowl of sweet porridge rice, left by a kind woman named Sujata, helped Him to regain His strength.

Buddha then arose and sat at the foot of a tree. It was under this tree that God revealed to Him the knowledge of all things. A new and wondrous set of teachings flooded His heart and mind. His six-year period of search had ended. It was from that time onward that He became known as Buddha, which means the “Awakened One” or “Enlightened One”.

Buddha, who was thirty-five years of age, was in the present-day Indian state of Bihar at the time, and the tree is now referred to as the “Bodhi Tree”. He continued to meditate in the forest for some forty-nine days and then He set out to teach the Message He had received. Nearing the city of Benares, He came upon five monks who practiced severe austerity and self-denial, believing that it would lead them to spiritual truth. Initially when they saw Buddha in the distance, the monks thought that He had given in to a life of abundance and had abandoned His life of detachment. So they decided that, while it was acceptable for Him to sit among them, they would not go out to welcome Him- a sign of disrespect. But as Buddha approached them, they felt drawn to His Holy Presence and were filled with the desire to serve Him. They prepared a seat for Him and fetched water to wash his feet, a towel and a footstool. Then He announced to them the glad-tidings of a new Day of God. As soon as they heard His Message, they accepted its truth. They were among the first to recognize Buddha’s Station as a Manifestation of God and to follow His teachings.

With great love, Buddha began to proclaim His Message to the people of the region, His teachings endowed them with a new understanding of life and brought tranquility and joy to their hearts. Large numbers were attracted to the radiance and grandeur, majesty and beauty, that had become manifest in Him. He would sit in the fields and teach the many people that sought His wise counsel. He told them to look beyond the things of this world that decay and perish- its passions and harmful desires- and to seek true happiness in that which is everlasting. You realize, of course, that Buddha was teaching them the true way to conquer sadness caused by sickness, old age and death, the three signs of suffering that He had seen in the world when He first left the royal estate with His companion Channa many years before. Every person experiences misery and sorrow, His teachings explained, and it is only when we recognize that true life is the life of the spirit, not physical existence, that we can prevent suffering and sadness from ruling our hearts. You know that Baha’u’llah gives us the same lesson today in order to help us understand, as Buddha did with the people of His time, that all that is of this earth, both its joys and its sorrows, will eventually pass away. One woman called Kisa Gotami learned this lesson from Buddha Himself, and her story is still recounted by many.

Kisa Gotami was overcome by grief. Her first-born son had taken ill and died, and she became so distraught that she roamed the streets ceaselessly, asking for help to bring her son back to life. A kind and wise man took her to see Buddha. Buddha told her that, if she brought Him a handful of mustard seeds, He would give life back to her son. But, He indicated the seeds must come from a house that had never known the loss of a child or parent, a husband or wife, a friend or relative. Full of joy, Kisa Gotami set off to gather the seeds. She went from door to door, to every home in the village, asking for the precious seeds. But, at every door she would hear: “Oh, we have seen many deaths here,” “I lost my father,” or “I lost my sister”. There was no family that had not been touched by death. Kisa Gotami became sad and hopeless and sat down at the side of the road, watching the lights of the city as they flickered up and were then extinguished (can show an oil lamp). At last, there was darkness everywhere. As she sat in the darkness, she considered the fate of human beings; like flames (show candle), they come into this world and their lives burn away. She realized that both life and death are common to all, and this realization brought peace to her heart and enabled her to accept her suffering with contentment.

Of course, all the Manifestations of God teach about the life of the spirit, but They also tell us that, while we are in this physical world, we must take care of our bodies and work for the benefit of those around us. In India, at the time of the Buddha’s appearance, some people had forgotten that we must attend to both our physical and spiritual well-being. That is why Buddha taught the people of His time to walk the “Middle Path” (can show yin and yang symbol). Walking this path meant avoiding two extremes: one extreme was to spend life seeking material pleasures, heedless of the needs of the spirit, and the other was to reject the world and deprive oneself of the benefits of the physical world. He used the analogy of a lute player to help people understand this idea. A lute player must tune the strings of his instrument neither too tight nor too loose to produce a harmonious sound. Buddha explained that by freeing oneself from earthly desires and cravings and exercising discipline, the individual could reach an understanding of the nature of the physical life and of spiritual development which would allow him or her to achieve what He called “Nirvana” or “enlightenment”.

For forty-five years, Buddha traveled throughout northern India. The transformative power of His Words affected countless people- kings and princes, merchants and beggars, men and women. He was some eighty years old when He passed away in Kushinagar, today in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Until His very last day on earth, Buddha continued to teach vigorously, and after His Spirit ascended from this world, His disciples traveled around the country to share His teachings, recorded in a Holy Book called the Tripitaka, meaning the “Three Baskets”. As time passed, India and other parts of Asia were more and more influenced by the simple yet profound concept of the “Middle Path”. Buddha’s teachings led to the betterment of many aspects of life, and Buddha came to be known as “the Light of Asia.”

**Facts:**

*You may wish to include the following information in the games you are devising to help the children retain important facts.*

(see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) for the fact cards for this lesson; they can be used in the way described in Lesson 2)

* Buddha was born….a prince.
* Buddha’s father wanted to conceal from Him…all the sorrow and misery in the world.
* Buddha was twenty-nine years of age when…He left the royal estate in search of an end to suffering.
* Buddha received from God the knowledge of all things as…He sat under the Bodhi Tree.
* Five monks were among the first people to…accept the truth of Buddha’s Message.
* Buddha taught people to walk the “Middle Path” by…avoiding the extremes of indulgence in physical pleasures and complete rejection of all physical enjoyment.
* The Buddhist teachings are recorded…in the Tripitaka.

**Drama:** Today you may wish to have the students act out the story of Kisa Gotami, who wanted to bring her child back from death. In that case, depending on the talents and abilities of the children in the class, you could ask one of them to assume the role of narrator, if appropriate, or take on the role yourself. The narrator could then explain Buddha’s instructions to Kisa Gotami. Begin by reminding the children of the salient points of the story and helping them to think about the sadness that filled Kisa Gotami’s heart and the change she went through after realizing that every home she visited had been affected by death.

**Art/Drawing:** During this class period, you could ask the children to draw Kisa Gotami going from house to house trying to collect mustard seeds from families that had not known death.

**Alternatives:** (see Peace Pack worksheets on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson)

The symbol of Buddhism is a Wheel with 8 spokes. This represents the “Eightfold Path”- the way that leads to Nirvana or Heaven. Let’s read together the 8 spokes of the wheel that represents the Middle Way.

1. right understanding
2. right mindedness (1 and 2 which together are wisdom)
3. right speech
4. right action
5. right living (3, 4 and 5 which together are morality)
6. right effort
7. right attentiveness
8. right concentration (6, 7 and 8 which together are concentration)

You can color the wheel and also write one instruction of the Eightfold Path on each spoke of the wheel. Next, there are 5 promises that a Buddhist makes for right living (have kids read them one at a time)

1. I promise to train myself not to hurt or injure any living thing.
2. I promise to train myself not to take anything that is not mine.
3. I promise to train myself not to say what is not true.
4. I promise to train myself not to drink that which will make me drunk or lazy.
5. I promise to train myself not to misuse my body or the body of another.

Now on the second sheet, you can come up with 5 promises of your own for right living and write them on the worksheet. If you think it will be helpful, you can discuss these with your neighbor and perhaps come up with something together.

If there is time, or if you are doing two lessons on Buddha, you could have each student make a Buddhist wheel out of clay. Be sure to have pictures available as starting points for the children. You will need potter’s clay (no water added) already cut on a paper plate (one for each student). 4 x 2 cm is plenty. The students can use toothpicks to carve the finer features on the clay once they have made the basic wheel.

**Review:** As a final activity before closing prayers, review with the children the passage they learned today and the following one they memorized in Grade 2:

**“Waste not your time in idleness and sloth. Occupy yourselves with that which profiteth yourselves and others.”**

–Baha’u’llah

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

**Closing Prayer**