**Modified Version of Ruhi G3 Lesson 7 on Jesus Christ**

*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**

**“The Lord’s Prayer”** set to music by Dash Crofts- COULD ALSO BE USED AS AN OPENING PRAYER (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L-BFHcDVAk>)

**Review prayer** that they have been learning.

**“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:**

*The purpose of this lesson is to help the children understand that all the Manifestations of God brought the same message of Divine love to the world. In this context, they will learn about the life and teachings of Jesus, a Manifestation of God Whose Message of love and fellowship eventually spread through the entire world. You may draw on the following ideas in introducing the theme of today’s lesson:*

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

Every Manifestation of God calls on people to love one another. Through both the beauty of Their teachings and the example of Their lives, the Manifestations establish bonds of love and fellowship between people. Love is an attribute of God, and it is out of His love for us that He sends us His Manifestations. They explain to us, one and all, that human beings are created in the image of God, Who is the All-Loving and the All-Merciful. So it is that we must strive to love one another and show mercy to one another. Love is one of the most powerful forces that exists. It can change a cold heart into one filled with joy and happiness. It can unite people and entire nations in peace and prosperity. And there is no limit to love. It is infinite. And through the teachings of God’s Manifestations we learn to express the limitless power of lover in the way we treat one another and in the good deeds we perform for our fellow human beings, in order to transform the world.

Jesus Christ was a Manifestation of God Who appeared some two thousand years ago. He taught people to love everyone, even their enemies, as they love their friends. His entire Being was an expression of love, and He was willing to suffer any hardship, and even the most cruel death, so that He could proclaim His life-giving Message, which spread to many people and nations, uniting them in loving fellowship.

**Questions:**

* **What is the most powerful forces that exists?**
* **What force can change a cold heart into one filled with joy and happiness?**
* **What force can unite people and entire nations in peace and prosperity?**
* **Is there any limit to the power of love?**
* **Through Whose teachings can we learn to draw on the limitless power of love?**
* **Who was Jesus Christ?**
* **Why is it that Jesus was willing to endure hardship and even death?**

**Memorization:**

(see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for movements to the quote as well as the quote in a 4 x 6 format)

*In the following quotation, Baha’u’llah reminds us that* ***the true purpose of religion is to establish love in the world.*** *Learning this quotation will help establish in the minds of the children the essential unity of all the great religions of the world.*

**“The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men.”**

**Here are some words that you may need to form concrete examples of for the children to understand:**

**Fundamental purpose-** main reason

**Animating-** bringing to life

**Safeguard-** protect

**Promote-**advance/further the progress of something

**Foster-**encourage the development of something

**Fellowship-** friendly association

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

**“Love is the Light That Guideth in Darkness” (two versions to choose from:** [**https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW3G2jltkMo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YW3G2jltkMo) **/** <http://bahai-song-project.de/love-is-the-light-2/> OR <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Nf2DZ8aAKQ/> http://bahai-song-project.de/love-is-the-light-1/

* **Love, Love, Love** from Ruhi Grade 1 songs
* **“The Lord’s Prayer”** set to music by Dash Crofts- COULD ALSO BE USED AS AN OPENING PRAYER (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3L-BFHcDVAk>)
* **Any requests from Songbook**

**Cooperative Games:**

* **Fruit basket**

**What you need:**

Enough chairs for all of your players (minus one) and an open room big enough to hold all of the chairs in a circle.

**How to play: First ask each person to choose a fruit.**

If you have young players or a smaller group, you might want to assign the fruits yourself, labeling players as *strawberry*, *orange*, *apple*, etc. Instruct players to remember their fruit. It’s okay (in fact, preferable) if multiple people have the same fruit, so you might use only two or three fruits.

Next set up the game by arranging all the chairs in a big circle and having everyone sit in a chair. One player will be left standing – say it’s Geoffrey. He’s It. Geoffrey starts the game by calling out the name of a fruit, like “strawberries!” As soon as he calls out a fruit name, any player sitting in the circle who picked that as their fruit would jump up and try to find a new seat. Geoffrey would also try as fast as he could to sit in one of the open seats. In the end, a player (hopefully not Geoffrey) would be left without a seat. That player would then call out another fruit and the game continues.

If you have some players that are the only ones assigned to their fruit (like the kumquat guy), it would be a good idea to have Geoffrey call out more than one fruit. That way if Geoffrey called out “kumquat!,” the kumquat guy wouldn’t feel all alone and hurt because he wouldn’t have anyone else’s chair to take and would be forced to be It. In a case like this, you can make a rule that the person in the middle always calls out two fruits, or you could leave it up to the person to call out however many fruits he or she wanted.

Either way you play, at any time, the player in the middle also has the option of calling out “Fruit basket!” When that happens, *all* players get up from their chairs and find a new one. Mass pandemonium and good fun ensues as everyone tries not to be left without a seat. The game continues until you want to stop.

Rules: You can set a rule that a player getting up from a chair must find a new one at least two seats away (to encourage players to get up and run around). Also, if you’re halfway through your game and realize that there’s one or two fruits that no one’s calling because everyone’s forgotten about them (like that kumquat guy), you might want to remind everyone of everyone’s fruit.

* **Reverse Musical Chairs**

Start with enough chairs (or can use pillows) in the circle for everybody. Music is played and one or two chairs are taken out. When music is stopped, they have to all share the remaining chairs. Continue in this way until they are all on one chair. They don’t have to be sitting, but one body part of each person needs to be touching the chair (can be a hand or foot). The goal is to collectively share smaller and smaller places in a spirit of love and unity.

**Story**

*Today you will relate to the children a brief account of the life of Jesus Christ. In whatever way you decide to narrate the episodes associated with His life, it is important that the children realize that He willingly accepted to suffer out of His love for humanity. Like previous historical episodes, it is written in a language accessible to the teacher, and you may need to simplify it to a level that will be suitable to the students in your class.*

**Props (optional):**

(see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for images that correlate with the highlighted words below)

Jesus Christ was born a little more than two thousand years ago in a city called Bethlehem, in the region we all know today as the Holy Land. You remember that Moses had led the Jewish people to this land after they had spent such a long time enslaved in Egypt. The teachings of Moses freed them from bondage and raised them to the highest state of civilization. But, now, several hundred years passed, and His people were beset by troubles once again, having been forced to serve the needs of other nations that did not believe in one God or follow His teachings.

There are many stories associated with the early life of Jesus. Before He was born, His mother, Mary, had been made aware of His special Station. One day she had a vision of an angel, which, at first, filled her heart with fear. But the angel addressed her, saying, “Fear not, Mary: for thou has found favor with God.” He told her that she would “bring forth a son” and would “call His name Jesus.” “He shall be great,” the angel said, “and shall be called the Son of the Highest.”

On the night Jesus was born, His mother Mary and her husband Joseph were traveling from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem. Like all the Jewish people in the region, they had to return to their native city at the request of the powerful Romans. The Romans controlled the land at the time, and they demanded money, labor and resources from the people. Every person had to be counted, one by one, in their native city, so that the Romans would know how much money they should take from each one. Now, Mary and Joseph had just arrived in Bethlehem after a long journey, and they stopped at an inn to spend the night. But the inn was full, so they had to stay in the stable with the animals. When Jesus came into this world, they had no place to lay the precious Child other than in a simple wooden box filled with hay.

Soon after the birth of Jesus, three wise men from a place far to the East noticed that a new star had appeared in the sky. Taking it as a sign of the appearance of a special Being, they followed the star. It led them to Bethlehem, to the Child that had been born in the manger. They laid gifts before Him as they knelt down in adoration.

From childhood, Jesus showed signs of His greatness, and everyone marveled at His knowledge and wisdom. One day, when He was still a young boy, Mary and Joseph traveled to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate a Jewish Holy Day, bringing Jesus with them. When they were ready to return home, He could not be found. They searched for three days until they finally discovered Him in the temple sitting with the Jewish elders, conversing with them and answering their questions. All who heard Him were amazed at the answers He gave and the depth of His understanding.

It surely will not surprise you to know that, around that time, many people were praying for God to send a new Manifestation to help them. They could see the corruption and confusion in the land, and they felt deeply in their hearts the need for Divine guidance. Among them was John the Baptist. He helped to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. He called upon people to purify both their inner and outer lives from those things that kept them remote from God. In a ritual called “baptism”, He immersed them in the water of the River Jordan as a symbol of their purification: just as one purifies and cleanses one’s body in water, one must strive to cleanse and purify one’s heart.

By now Jesus was nearly thirty years of age. He, of course, was in no need of baptism, for He was the essence of purity and detachment. But He went to the River Jordan and allowed John to baptize Him in order to show others that such an act was praiseworthy in the sight of God. It is said that, when Jesus came out of the water, He saw the Spirit of God coming down on Him, like a dove descending from heaven. At that moment He became aware of the Mission entrusted to Him by God, to deliver the people of the land fro the darkness of despair. A new set of Divine teachings had been revealed to Him. To prepare Himself for the great work that lay ahead, He spent forty days and forty nights in solitude, alone in the desert, fasting without much food or drink, communing with God. He then set out to proclaim His Message.

For the next three years, Jesus traveled on foot from place to place, largely around the Sea of Galilee, teaching the Word of God. Great numbers were drawn to His presence. From every direction they came to listen to His healing Message. During that time, He began to choose those who would act as His apostles, His closest and most trusted companions. He chose twelve in all, several of whom were fishermen, busy catching fish in the Sea of Galilee when they were called upon by Jesus to join Him. One was named Peter, and he was the first to testify to the Station of Jesus as a Manifestation of God. Perhaps you know that the name Peter means “rock”, and Peter’s faith in God was unshakable, as firm as a rock. Another of those who joined Jesus around that time was a woman named Mary Magdalene. Mary came from a village near the Sea of Galilee, and she, like Peter, recognized the Station of Jesus and was transformed by His Message. Though not one of the twelve disciples, Mary Magdalene became one of His most faithful followers.

The Message of Jesus was essentially one of love. In His Words and deeds people could perceive God’s loving-kindness and infinite wisdom. He taught them to love one another, as God loves them, and to forgive those who harm them, as God forgives them. God loves all human beings, He assured the multitudes who gathered around Him, no matter who they are or what they have done in the past. Thousands of people from different backgrounds were transformed by the power of His words.

Many of the most important lessons that Jesus taught the people of His time were in the form of parables, which are stories with special meaning about the nature and purpose of life. These stories and other teachings of Jesus, as well as the events of His life, are recorded in the Bible- the Holy Book of His followers. One of these parables is of the Good Samaritan. First you need to know that, in those days, the Samaritans and the Jewish people did not get along with each other very well. Here are the circumstances in which Jesus wrote that parable.

One day a Jewish man asked Jesus about how he could attain eternal life. Jesus answered the man with a question: What did the laws of Moses teach the people? The man replied: “Love God with all your heart with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus confirmed that this was, indeed, the path the man should strive to follow if he wished to have eternal life. You realize, of course, that by “eternal life” Jesus was referring to the life of the soul. But, still, the man was not satisfied, and he asked: “But who is my neighbor?” To this, Jesus replied with a story: A man was once traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho and was attacked by two thieves who beat him and left him to die at the side of the road. Now, this man was of the Jewish people. Sometime later a priest passed by and saw the beaten man, but he crossed the street and hurried away. Then another man walked by. He, too, was of Jewish background, and, though he assisted the priests in the temple, he ignored the injured man as well. Finally, a Samaritan came along the road. Now this man, like other Samaritans, had been taught to hate the Jewish people, just as the Jewish people had learned to hate Samaritans. But seeing the injured man, the Samaritan immediately went to help him. He took him to an inn where he could rest and recover, attending to his every need. The next day he had to leave on business, but he spoke to the innkeeper and made sure that all of the injured man’s expenses were paid. When Jesus finished the story, He asked which of the three men who passed by the beaten man acted as a neighbor. “The one who helped him,” was the reply. Those who wish to attain eternal life, Jesus said, should go and do the same.

There are many other wonderful stories in the Bible that tell us about the life of Jesus and the effect of His teachings on the people of His time. Once, for instance, a blind man by the side of the road called out to Jesus as He and His disciples entered a town. “Have mercy on me,” the blind man cried. When His disciples brought the man to Jesus, He told him to go and see again; because of His faith, Jesus said, he would be cured. Immediately the man could see. We know, of course, that the Manifestations are endowed with the power to do whatsoever God pleases. But what this story tells us, above all, is that inwardly the man had been blind, and Jesus restored his spiritual vision. He helped the man to fix his inner sight on God. In another story, Jesus turned five loaves of bread and two fish into baskets filled with bread and fish, enough to feed the large crowds that had gathered on the hillside to hear Him speak. Again, the deeper meaning of this story is that Jesus provided, without limit, spiritual sustenance to all who wished to listen.

Within a short span of time Jesus was so deeply loved that some authorities came to fear His rising influence. They could see that great numbers of the people listened to His Words, and many had begun to follow Him. They grew more and more concerned. They wondered what His intentions were. To help people understand His Station as a Manifestation, Jesus often referred to God as His Father, the Almighty, seated on His throne. Of course Jesus had no interest in worldly power, but, still, some authorities felt threatened. Around three years after He began His Mission, Jesus and His twelve disciples arrived in the city of Jerusalem, where throngs of people awaited Him, all hoping to lovingly greet Him. They called out in praise of Him. Jesus knew, however, that great suffering was ahead.

One evening, as Jesus ate supper with His twelve disciples, He told them that the following day His earthly life would come to an end. He called on them to take up the cause of spreading His teachings after His passing and promised that He would always be with them. Later that same night, with the love of God burning in His soul, and falling with His face to the ground, He prayed fervently that the will of God would be done. And just as Jesus had predicted, before the break of day, He was arrested and brought before the authorities. Now, at that time, the Romans crucified people who were found guilty of crimes, and Jesus, through He had committed no crime, was condemned to death by crucifixion. With a crown of thorns placed on His head to mock His majesty and greatness, He was nailed to a cross and left to die. In His final moments, He prayed to God, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

Jesus’ apostles were greatly shaken by His death, but Mary Magdalene strengthened them in their faith, reminding them of the assurance He had given that His Spirit would always be with them. Jesus, like other Manifestations, had willingly allowed Himself to suffer out of His love for humanity. And in His death, He was victorious. The fire of the love of God that burned in the hearts of His apostles could not be extinguished, and they set off in different directions to share His teachings. Through acts of tremendous heroism and self-sacrifice, they laid the foundations of a great civilization, and the Message of Jesus, Who is often referred to as Christ, meaning the “Anointed One”, eventually spread to every corner of the earth.

**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)

* Jesus Christ was born…in Bethlehem.
* John the Baptist prepared the people…for the coming of Jesus.
* Jesus chose…twelve apostles.
* Peter was…one of the apostles of Jesus.
* Mary Magdalene was one of the…most faithful followers of Jesus.
* Jesus taught many of His lessons…in the form of parables.
* Jesus taught the importance of…love and forgiveness.
* Jesus allowed Himself to be put to death…out of His love for humanity.
* After the passing of Jesus, Mary Magdalene helped to…strengthen the faith of the apostles, who spread out to share His Message.

**Drama:**

Today you may help the children enact the episode of the Good Samaritan. Ask the children if they can remember the main parts of the story, reminding them of the details as necessary. You may wish to divine the class into smaller groups of, say, four or five so that the story can be acted out with the following characters: the traveler who was robbed, the first passerby, the second passerby, the Samaritan, and the innkeeper. If there are not enough children in each group, one child can act out more than one character. The scene can start when the traveler has already been robbed and is left dying on the side of the road. Help the children in the class to think about how they will act out the various characters, placing particular emphasis on the praiseworthy conduct of the Samaritan.

**Art/Drawing:** During this class period, you can ask the children to draw examples of people carrying out acts of loving-kindness and friendship towards one another.

Other options: Do an art project with parts of the quote of Abdu’l-Baha about love:
“**Know thou of a certainty that Love is the secret of God's holy Dispensation, the manifestation of the All-Merciful, the fountain of spiritual outpourings. Love is heaven's kindly light, the Holy Spirit's eternal breath that vivifieth the human soul. Love is the cause of God's revelation unto man, the vital bond inherent, in accordance with the divine creation, in the realities of things. Love is the one means that ensureth true felicity both in this world and the next. Love is the light that guideth in darkness, the living link that uniteth God with man, that assureth the progress of every illumined soul. Love is the most great law that ruleth this mighty and heavenly cycle, the unique power that bindeth together the divers elements of this material world, the supreme magnetic force that directeth the movements of the spheres in the celestial realms. Love revealeth with unfailing and limitless power the mysteries latent in the universe. Love is the spirit of life unto the adorned body of mankind, the establisher of true civilization in this mortal world, and the shedder of imperishable glory upon every high-aiming race and nation.”**

 (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, p. 27)

Alternatively or in addition, could use 1 Cor: 13 about love from the Bible

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

**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:

**“O ye beloved of the Lord! Commit not that which defileth the limpid stream of love or destroyeth the sweet fragrance of friendship.”** –Baha’u’llah

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

**Limpid**- clear, pure

**Closing Prayer**