**Modified Version of Ruhi G3 Lesson 8 on Muhammad**

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

**Opening Prayers- Prayer Sharers**

It is suggested that today, after opening prayers, you review with the children the two prayers that they learned by heart over the preceding lessons.

**“O my God, my Lord and my Master! I have detached myself from my kindred and have sought through Thee to become independent of all that dwell on earth and ever ready to receive that which is praiseworthy in Thy sight. Bestow on me such good as will make me independent of aught else but Thee, and grant me an ampler share of Thy boundless favours. Verily Thou art the Lord of grace abounding.”**

-The Bab

AND

**“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 to understand that all the Manifestations of God call upon humanity to live in a state of submission to His Will. They will learn specifically about the life of Muhammad, Whose teachings spread among the Arab people, making them, as Abdu’l-Baha explains, “superior to the other nations of the earth in learning, in the arts, mathematics, civilization, government and other sciences.” In this connection, the children should gain a sense of the power of submission to the Will of God, one of Muhammad’s principal teachings, to unite people around a center and to promote order and prosperity. The following ideas are provided to assist you in introducing this lesson to the children.*

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

We know that, because of our deep love for God’s beauty, we constantly strive to do all that He asks of us. The teachings that the Manifestations of God bring to humanity tell us what He wants us to do, and what we should not do. By allowing the teachings of God’s Manifestations to fill our hearts and minds, we begin to want only what He wants, to desire only what He desires, and to take pleasure in that which is pleasing to Him. Order and harmony are brought about as more and more people live in a state of submission to God’s Will, all focused on His good pleasure. Think of the planets, all circling harmoniously, with the sun at their center. Through submission to the Will of God, humanity lives harmoniously and makes great progress- governments are just, communities are well organized, education flourishes, knowledge increases, and beauty is manifested in music and the arts.

Muhammad was a Manifestation sent by God some 1,400 years ago. He appeared among a people in a desert region at a time when their great capacity and rich potential were hidden behind selfish desires and ignorance. He taught them to put away such desires, to trust God, and to submit His Will. He raised them out of the depths of cruelty and contention and showed them how to live in harmony according to Divine teachings, causing them to become examples of orderly and civilized life.

**Questions:**

* **Whose good pleasure do we seek at all times?**
* **How can we be sure that we are acting according to God’s good pleasure?**
* **How are the planets that circle the sun orderly and harmonious? Do they ever fight with one another? Do the bigger planets ever want to control the smaller ones?**
* **When everyone is focused on God’s good pleasure and carrying out His commands, how does it change people? How does humanity progress?**
* **Who was Muhammad?**
* **What effect did the teachings of Muhammad have on the people of His time?**

**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)

*The following Words of Baha’u’llah remind us that what truly benefits humanity is to trust God , to humbly submit to His Will, and follow His teachings:*

**“The source of all good is trust in God, submission unto His command, and contentment with His holy will and pleasure.”**

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

**Source**- where something comes from

**Submission**- accepting and yielding to a higher force or will

**Contentment**- a state of happiness and satisfaction

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

* **Looking for Good**
* **Bestow Upon Me My Portion**
* **Any requests from Songbook**

**Cooperative Games: Trust Walks and Change Three Things**

**Trust Walks**

A Trust Walk activity is also known as a Blind Walk activity. Divide class into two smaller groups. Make sure that both the groups have the same number of players.

Blindfold one group and let one child from each group hold hands with each other to form a pair. Each pair should have one kid who has the blindfold and one who doesn’t. Depending on the level and intensity of the activity, you can let the path be regular or add obstacles. The kid who is not blindfolded has to guide his partner carefully through the path and reach a safe zone. Once all kids are in the safe zone, switch the blindfold and put it on the kids who did not wear it earlier.

To make it more challenging, you can have some obstacles in the path. Be sure to emphasize how trustworthy the people who are leading the blind need to be- and how they need to be slow and gentle in the way they lead them.

**Change Three Things (at the end of this game, you can ask them if they are still the same, even if outwardly some of the things about them have changed? Then you can talk with them about how the Messengers of God come with the same spirit, even though outwardly they look different and some of their laws and teachings have changed to fit that age.)**

Explain that one volunteer will stand up in front of the group. They will slowly turn around once or twice, during which time the group should observe them carefully looking for obvious and seemingly insignificant details about the person’s appearance.

After a couple of turns, the volunteer should leave the room and take about a minute to change three things about their appearance. Some suggestions include tucking or untucking a shirt, removing glasses or pieces of jewelry, untying a shoe, or anything else (within reason).

After they have changed three things, they return to the group. Tell the group that if they think they see something that has changed to raise their hands. Have the volunteer call on anyone with their hand up. After each change has been guessed – or after the volunteer has stumped the group – choose another volunteer.

Variation

Play the game in pairs. Each person has thirty seconds to observe their partner, at which time they both must turn around and take a minute to change three things. After a minute, have pairs face each other again. Have them shout out a changes as fast as they can or have them alternate guesses.

Game Tip

If playing as a whole class or a group, this game can easily be broken up or continued over a long period of time.

Game Tip

With younger children, begin by having them change one thing and work up to three.

Another option: Have the children switch partners with someone knew after they have each had a chance to go.

**Story**

**Props (optional):**

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

*Today you will share with the children an account of the life of Muhammad. In doing so, you should help them to understand that,* ***through the teachings of Muhammad, the Arab people became renowned for their learning in the arts and sciences and laid the foundations of an enduring civilization****. In this, the children should recognize, as Abdu’l-Baha explained on many occasions, that* ***the sure proof of the Mission of every Manifestation is the education and progress of the people****.*

Muhammad was born in Mecca, Arabia, some 1,400 years ago, at a time when many people in the region had turned away from God and forgotten how to live together peacefully.

Muhammad’s father died before He was born, and His mother passed away when He was only six. For most of His childhood and youth, He was raised by His uncle. There were no schools for formal education in Arabia at that time, and Muhammad was not taught to read and write, but learned the trade of His uncle, who was a merchant. Over time, as He helped His uncle with his business, Muhammad gained a reputation for His integrity. He was called “The Truthful”, because He never told a lie, or “The Trustworthy”, because He never deceived anyone and always kept His word. Once, a man with whom Muhammad worked asked Him to meet at a particular spot at a certain time. Muhammad went there, but the man had forgotten their meeting, and failed to arrive. Three days later, the man passed the place and was surprised to see Muhammad. He had been there for three days, keeping His promise to wait for the man. His noble reputation eventually came to the attention of Khadija, a widow with her own business, who was known for her purity. She came to admire Muhammad’s honest and upright character. At the age of twenty-five, Muhammad married Khadija, and they worked together as merchants.

Muhammad was deeply disturbed by the way the people of Mecca lived. Thousands of years before, a sanctuary had been built in Mecca for the worship of one God as taught by Abraham. But this sacred place, known as the Ka’bah, had long been filled with idols, some say 360 of them, each with a different name and all worshipped by different tribes. These tribes were constantly at war, and when one tribe claimed victory over another, the women and children of the losing tribe were taken captive and suffered greatly as slaves to merciless masters. The region had sunk to the lowest depths of cruelty and despair. Muhammad, unable to bear the godlessness and degradation of life in Mecca, would often retreat to a cave on Mount Hira, just outside the city, where He would pray and meditate. It was in this cave that Muhammad, then forty years of age, became aware of His Divine Mission. All around Him He heard the voice of the Angel Gabriel, calling upon Him to speak out in the name of the Lord, God.

Muhammad returned home and told Khadija what He had experienced. She became the first to recognize His Station as a Manifestation and to accept His Message: that there is only one God, He Who had also spoken to the Manifestations of the past; that people should turn to God with humility, worship Him, trust in Him and be obedient to His Will; and that, in accordance with His Will, all people should be kind to one another, honest, and just. For some time, Muhammad made His Station known only to His close relatives and friends, some of whom chose to follow Him, including His cousin Ali and His dear friend Abu Bakr.

Eventually Muhammad proclaimed God’s Message to the people of His tribe. Only a few, however, understood the import of His Words and began to follow His teachings. They became known as Muslims. The others did not want to give up their old ways and live according to the laws of God. The idea of change angered them. They behaved with the utmost cruelty towards Muhammad and the small but growing band of His followers. When Muhammad spoke of God’s Message, they laughed at Him and attacked Him with stones. For years Muhammad and His followers endured violent persecution. Some of His companions were killed and their property confiscated. From time to time, members of His tribe would try to persuade Muhammad to stop spreading His teachings, in return for wealth and power. He, of course, would refuse. His uncle and His wife were greatly respected in Mecca, and they were able to act as Muhammad’s protectors for a time. But after their deaths, both in the same year, the danger for Muhammad increased. Life for Muslims in the city of Mecca became even more difficult.

After many years of suffering, Muhammad was visited by two leaders from other tribes. They had decided to embrace His teachings and offered Him a safe place, in the city of Medina, for the Muslims to live. Muhammad instructed His followers to move to Medina, and they gradually left Mecca for that city. Meanwhile, however, His enemies decided to put an end to His life while they had the chance, and they plotted to kill Him. But in the middle of the night, just hours before the plan was to be carried out, Muhammad left Mecca with His faithful friend Abu Bakr. Now, Abu Bakr was one of Muhammad’s most trusted companions, and he served Him with devotion. It is said that, in his efforts to protect Muhammad from His approaching enemies, he concealed Him with a large bag. When asked about the bag, Abu Bakr hesitated at first, fearing that Muhammad would be discovered and killed. But then he remembered God’s commandment to speak the truth, and so faithful was he that he told the men the bag was begin used to conceal Muhammad. Thinking that Abu Bakr could not possibly be serious, they let him continue on his way. You realize, of course, that God is the greatest Protector, and not even the most treacherous and powerful enemy can prevent that which God wills.

According to tradition, Muhammad and Abu Bakr then traveled across the desert on camels by night, guided by the moon and stars, towards Medina. They took shelter in a cave, waiting for the danger to pass. By now it had been realized that Muhammad was gone, and His enemies were in fast pursuit of Him. As the sun rose the sound of galloping horses grew louder, and Abdu Bakr was filled with fear. How could he protect Muhammad now, in the desert, he wondered. Abu Bakr held his breath and listened as the enemies drew closer and closer, until there were footsteps just outside the cave. Abu Bakr heard voices, but he could not make out the words. He was sure that they would be found. But Muhammad reassured Abu Bakr, reminding him that God was with them. And, indeed, the search party soon left, without even looking inside the cave. You see, there was a spider at the opening of the cave, and the moment that Muhammad had entered, it had spun a huge web, closing off the entrance. When the men searching for Muhammad reached the cave, they assumed no one could be inside it because the web was perfect and unbroken. It must have been a very long time since anyone entered that cave, they thought. So they continued looking elsewhere, but with no success. Tired, frustrated and confused, they finally returned to Mecca empty-handed. Muhammad and Abu Bakr remained in the cave for three days to make sure the enemies had gone and then left through another opening, preserving the web that had served as their protection. Again traveling by night, they at last reached Medina in safety.

Muhammad’s move from Mecca to Medina is known as the Hijira. From this new home, He was able to teach God’s laws and commandments much more widely, and people from different tribes began to live together in harmony according to His teachings. Those who rejected them, however, were still determined to kill Muhammad and His followers. The Muslims were steadfast in their faith and devoted to God and His laws. They did their utmost to avoid contention. But, they knew the cruelty of their enemies, and at times they were forced to take up arms to defend themselves and protect their children from enslavement. Over time, the sacrifices of the Muslims and their transformed way of life helped people to realize the truth of God’s Message.

There are many accounts that show the transformative effect of the spiritual powers that emanated from the person of Muhammad. In one such account, it is said that Muhammad once awoke to find a soldier armed with a sword standing above Him, intending to take His life. The angry man asked, “Who is there now to save Thee?” Muhammad replied that God would save Him. The soldier became afraid and dropped the sword, which Muhammad picked up. He then asked the soldier who would save him. The man did not follow God’s teachings and realized that he was alone, with no one to come to his aid. Muhammad did not harm the solider but handed the sword back to him, telling him to learn to show forth mercy. The man was changed by this experience and devoted himself to Muhammad and His teachings.

After several years, the people of Mecca agreed to let the Muslims visit the holy sanctuary, the Ka’bah, where they could gather once a year to worship God. But soon the agreement collapsed, and the city was once again closed to the Muslims. The followers of Muhammad now numbered in the thousands, and they went to Mecca en masse, ready to draw arms if necessary. But the people, seeing the waves of His followers approaching the city, surrendered without resistance. Muhammad then made a pilgrimage, or hajj, to the Ka’bah, which He restored to a place of worship dedicated to the praise and glorification of the one true God.

Eventually, many of those who had at first rejected Muhammad’s teachings came to believe in one God and changed their ways, striving to align their will with the Will of God. Through His Words, which were recorded in a Holy Book called the Qu’ran, they learned to turn their hearts to God, especially through prayer and fasting, and to reflect those heavenly qualities that Muhammad had manifested throughout His life. Under His influence the people of the region rose from the sad condition in which He found them to the highest state of civilization. The warring tribes united and systems for organizing communities into well-ordered nations were established. Great universities were founded, knowledge of arts and sciences expanded, and new and beautiful forms of architecture emerged. At a time when other parts of the world were in decline, the Arab world flourished and the effects of Muhammad’s teachings ushered in a whole new era of human civilization.

(<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/meast/01/29/muslim.inventions/index.html>) shares some of the contributions of Islam to the modern world, that can be shared with students.

**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)

* Muhammad was a Manifestation of God born in…the city of Mecca, in the Arabian region, some 1,400 years ago.
* Muhammad was sometimes referred to as…”the Truthful” and “The Trustworthy”.
* Muhammad taught…that there is one God, that people should turn to Him, worship Him, trust in Him, and be obedient to His Will.
* Muhammad and His followers were persecuted by the people of Mecca and went to… Medina, where His Message reached many souls.
* After several years in Medina, Muhammad returned to…Mecca and the people soon embraced His Cause.
* The Words of Muhammad are recorded in…a Holy Book called the Qu’ran.
* Muhammad’s Message…united the Arabian tribes and raised their level of civilization.

**Drama:**

For this lesson, it is suggested that you ask the children to act out the story of the journey from Mecca to Medina, as told through the eyes of Muhammad’s companion Abu Bakr. One of the children may assume the role of Abu Bakr, another may pretend to be the spider, and a few others can portray the group from Mecca in search of Muhammad. You should go over the salient points of the story to help the children think about how they will enact the scene. Depending on the size of the class, you may find it useful to divide your students into groups of five or siz for this portion of the lesson. As always, it is important to ensure that no one plays the role of the Manifestation of God.

**Art/Drawing:** To remind the children of how Muhammad trusted in God and was protected, you may ask them to draw a picture of the opening of the cave covered by a spiderweb.

**Alternatives:**

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

Make a cave out of clay with a spiderweb made of yarn and decorate it with the saying, “God is our greatest Protector”. See pics at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson.

**Review:** You can ask the children to recite the passage below that they memorized in Grade 2, after reviewing with them the one they learned today.

**“Incline your hearts, O people of God, unto the counsels of your true, your incomparable Friend.”** –Baha’u’llah

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

**Incline**- to become drawn towards something

**Closing Prayer**