**Ruhi Grade 3**

**Lesson 1b: The Importance of Seeking the Knowledge of God**

*Modified from Ruhi Grade 3 curriculum*

*(Lesson 1 is made into 2 lessons with some additions)*

**Prayer Sharing**

**Review memorized quote from last lesson:**

**“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, for I have created thee rich and bountifully shed My favor upon thee.” –Baha’u’llah**

**(SING SONG with this verse)**

\*Mention that if you have memorized the quote, please come to me at art time and say it to me and I will give you a sticker for your prayerbook.

**Learn New Prayer:**

In this prayer, we are asking God to help us become detached from this world so that we are not distracted by it, can rely solely on God, and receive His endless gifts.

**“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

Who are we calling on in this prayer? Our God, our Lord, our Master

We are saying that we have detached ourselves from everyone and are seeking through God to become independent of all that are on earth and ever ready for what? To receive what is praiseworthy in God’s sight . **What do you think are the things that are praiseworthy in God’s sight?** (anything that is in line with His Will as expressed by the Manifestation of God for the day that you live in, anything that shows forth His virtues- that helps us grow spiritually- that is in our best interests and in the best interests of all humanity.) Then we ask Him to bestow on us such good as will make us independent of all things and to give us an ampler share (which is a bigger share) **of what?** His boundless favours. **What are some of the boundless- which means limitless- favors of God?** (strength, courage, faith, determination, perseverance, vision and true sight, love even when there is hate, understanding and forgiveness when we have been hurt, etc.) Then we end by saying that verily (which means truly) Thou art- God is- the Lord of grace abounding. God’s grace is when He gives His gifts undeserved. Justice is what is deserved. Mercy is through God’s grace.

**So why would we be praying to be independent of all things?** **Why is it important to be clinging to God alone? Does this mean we don’t love our family or listen to them?** Of course not- we love our family and our friends, AND, we make sure that we are doing what will win GOD’s good pleasure. Sometimes what will win our friend’s good pleasure will cause us to LOSE God’s good pleasure. **Can you think of an example?** Ex. like if they are making fun of someone or excluding someone, and want you to join in or when you go along with things that people are doing that don’t feel right. We ALWAYS have to be thinking- would this be pleasing to GOD? That should be our goal. Also, seeking after truth independently- asking God to guide you to what is right- is very important. That is why we make sure we make time to pray and read Holy Writings regularly to be inspired and to walk a path that is pleasing to God.

DO MOVEMENTS- (see video on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson)

**Get-to-know-you activity:** Have each child pick out of a bowl a slip of paper that has a word on it. Once everyone has picked one out, they need to walk around the room and find their pair (ex. Shampoo goes with conditioner, macaroni goes with cheese, etc.). Once they have found their match, they are going to spend two minutes asking them questions (sample questions can be written out on a white board- such as: What is something that you love doing with your family? Where were you born? What is one of your favorite memories from growing up? When you are older, what career are you interested in pursuing that will be of service to humanity? Etc.) Then they switch the interviewer/interviewee so that each person in the pair gets a chance to learn about the other. After 5 minutes in total, you ask them to come back to the group and they each introduce their partner to the class. (can have some paper and pencils for those who want to write down the answers to the questions they ask their partner; may also want a bell to ring at the 2 min. mark and at the end when it is time to gather back together)

**Intro to Lesson:**

The beginning of all things is the knowledge of God; it is this knowledge that gives meaning to everything we do in this world. The end of all things is obedience to the commandments of God. Remember that last time we talked about how when we act in a spirit of obedience to the laws and teachings of God, all that we do becomes fruitful. **What does it mean for something to be fruitful?**  It bears fruit, which has seeds- it lasts and has a good effect on the world. People benefit from it.  **Are there some things that are not fruitful? What are some examples?** Usually because the actions are self-motivated; selfish, they don’t rise beyond ourselves; When we have the love of God in our heart and want to be of service in the world, then what we do makes a difference. **How do we acquire the knowledge of God?** Through His Manifestations. They educate us. **Why do They educate us? Do they get some gain from it?** They do this ENTIRELY for the sake of God.

Through their teachings, we learn to wash away from our hearts worldly desires. Is the desire to dominate and control others a worldly desire or a heavenly desire? What about seeking recognition? The desire to have more things that everyone else? The Words of the Manifestations of God- found in their Holy Books- burn away the veils that separate us from our Creator and lead us to His knowledge. For example, Baha’u’llah tells us in His holy writings that “Man’s merit lieth in service and virtue, not in the pageantry of wealth and riches.” So the veils get burned away, our eyes are opened, and we begin to see what is praiseworthy in God’s sight and how we can fulfill it. In this example, it is by filling our lives with service and virtue, right?

We talked last time about how human beings are unique in that we have been given a special gift by God- the gift of understanding. We spoke about true beauty- spiritual beauty- last time. What is spiritual beauty? (what we DO that is in line with God’s good pleasure) We have been created to know this beauty and to consciously strive for perfection. We are supposed to work hard in this life to make what beautiful? Our souls and this world- through pure and goodly deeds. **Are deeds enough? What else do we need to do?** We also need to recognize the Source of all good, in the Manifestation sent by God in each age to guide us. Right- we are supposed to KNOW GOD and to WORSHIP HIM. In the Beauty of the Manifestation of God, we are able to perceive the beauty of God. In His wisdom, we catch the glimpses of the inscrutable Wisdom of the Almighty. They are like a mirror that reflect to us the qualities and attributes of God.

God has given us the capacity to know Him, to love Him, and to carry out His commandments and He sends us His Manifestation to help us in our efforts to fulfill the purpose for which we were created.

**Questions:**

* **Who is the Source of all beauty and perfection?**
* **Who manifests, to the highest degree, all of the attributes of God?**
* **As we try to follow the teachings of the Manifestation of God, how does our conduct become? Does it become more beautiful? How do our souls become? Do they become adorned with the ornament of a goodly character?**

**Songs:**

-The Light of a Good Character Song, learned at Camp Green Acre (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for a video version of the song)

-9 Great Teachers by Hailey Merrill (see link above)

-Beauty if what you Do by Full-Circle Learning (see link above; song can be purchased at: http://www.fullcirclelearning.org/music)

**Memorization of Quote (hand out quote for their prayerbooks):**

**“Whatever, therefore, He saith unto you is wholly for the sake of God, that haply the peoples of the earth may cleanse their hearts from the stain of evil desire, may rend its veil asunder, and attain unto the knowledge of the one true God—the most exalted station to which any man can aspire.”**

**--Baha’u’llah**

Whatever the Manifestations of God say- they are saying wholly for the sake of whom? God. Because they know that God wants the hearts of the peoples of the world to be what? Cleansed from stains. Stains of what? Evil desire. (selfishness, hatred, greed, jealousy)

Also, we are often veiled- not seeing- and the Messengers of God want to rend the veils asunder- (can show a veil-like cloth covering a treasure chest full of plastic gems) so that we can attain unto the knowledge of God and not let anything stop us. Knowing God and serving God and having a pure heart is the MOST EXALTED STATION to which we can aspire. So being famous and rich- many think that is the best station- but what does this say?

Concrete examples:

**Haply** (hopefully):

Joan worked hard to plan the class so that **haply** the children would learn the material well.

**Evil desires** (negative thoughts and feelings):

Jaleh would say prayers every morning and evening so that she could fill her heart with the love of God and free herself from **evil desires** such as greed and jealousy.

**Rend asunder** (tear apart):

Niky attends children’s class so she can **rend asunder** the veils of ignorance and attain the knowledge of God.

**Aspire** (to aim):

Jamie **aspires** to be a good student so he can become a teacher and serve humanity.

Break up into groups with the quote written on white boards (one for each group). Then have them practice saying it, each getting a turn to erase a word or two each round until they can say it without anything written!

**Story:**

I would like to share with you a story that will give us a glimpse of the great knowledge possessed by the Messengers of God, by sharing a story about Baha’u’llah, the most recent Messenger of God. There are similar stories about each of the Messengers of God, as they all have innate knowledge given to them by God! There are many stories from the time of Baha’u’llah that demonstrate how people were attracted to His knowledge and awed by it. I am going to share with you one such story- **and you will need to pay very close attention to the details of the story- because we are going to ask you to act the story out later today.**  This story is about the visit Baha’u’llah made to Nur, the place He was born in Mazindaran in Persia, soon after He accepted the truth of the Bab’s Revelation.

The Bab was a Messenger of God that came right before Baha’u’llah. He prepared the way for Baha’u’llah’s coming. We will learn more about the lives of the Bab and Baha’u’llah later on this year, but for now, you should know that before Baha’u’llah told the people He was a Messenger of God, He first was a follower of the Bab. In this story, He was teaching the people about the Bab’s Message.

The enthusiasm with which the people of Mazindaran greeted Baha’u’llah was indeed extraordinary. They were spellbound by the eloquence of His speech. The arguments and proofs He set forth, as He announced the dawning of a new Day, convinced them of the greatness of the Cause of the Bab. They admired His enthusiasm and were deeply impressed by His detachment and self-effacement. No one dared oppose Him except His own uncle Aziz, who became jealous of the love and respect Baha’u’llah was receiving from the people.

Alarmed by Baha’u’llah’s success, Aziz decided to seek the assistance of a well-known Mulla of the region, presumably the possessor of great knowledge and defender of the truth of Islam. Mullas are the religious leaders of Islam- the clergy- kind of like ministers in the Christian church. **“**O viceregent of the Prophet of God!” exclaimed Aziz, talking to the Mulla, “Behold what has befallen the Faith of Islam! A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Nur, has invaded the strongholds of orthodoxy, and disrupted the holy Faith of Islam. Arise, and resist his onslaught.” The Mulla did not find in himself the strength to confront Baha’u’llah, so he did his best to quiet Aziz, assured him that he would be protected, and dismissed him. But the Message Baha’u’llah had brought to the region was rapidly spreading, and the Mulla’s students kept pressuring him to visit Baha’u’llah in person and find out for himself the nature of this new Revelation. Still the Mulla did not have the courage to do so. Finally, after much delay, he decided to send two of the most learned and trusted individuals in his company to visit Baha’u’llah and determine the true character of the Message He brought. He promised to everyone that he would accept the judgment of these two trusted souls and would abide by their decision.

When these two emissaries reached the presence of Baha’u’llah, He was in a gathering engaged in revealing a commentary on one of the chapters of the Quran. With great assurance, they entered the meeting and sat down prepared to ask questions and examine the extent of Baha’u’llah’s knowledge. But as they listened to the voice of Baha’u’llah, they were enraptured by the eloquence of His speech and the profound meaning of His statements. Mulla Abbas, one of these two emissaries, was entirely overwhelmed. He arose from his seat, walked back slowly and stood beside the door in an attitude of utter submissiveness. “You behold my condition.,” he told his friend as he trembled with emotion and with eyes full of joyful tears. “I am powerless to question Baha’u’llah. The questions I had planned to ask Him have vanished suddenly from my memory. You are free either to proceed with your inquiry or to return alone to our teacher and inform him of the state in which I find myself. Tell him that Abbas can never again return to him. He can no longer forsake this threshold.” His companion found himself in a similar state. “I have ceased to recognize my teacher,” he replied. “This very moment, I have vowed to God to dedicate the remaining days of my life to the service of Baha’u’llah, my true and only Master.”

So the two emissaries of the famous Mulla never went back to their teacher. The news of their conversion traveled fast. It awakened the people from their sleep. People of all walks of life journeyed to Nur in order to enter the presence of Baha’u’llah and partake of His Divine knowledge. A considerable number of them accepted the new Faith of God. But as you know, this and the many other early successes of the Cause aroused the envy of those who took advantage of the people’s ignorance in order to rule over them. Soon a tremendous wave of persecution arose throughout the entire country, bringing unimaginable sufferings to both the Bab and Baha’u’llah.

**Drama:**

Act out the story just told about Baha’u’llah, being sure that no one roleplays Baha’u’llah, as He is too holy to be portrayed in a drama.

You will need the following people to be portrayed:

* People of Mazindaran who are hearing Baha’u’llah speak and are convinced of the greatness of this new day of God brought by the Bab
* Baha’u’llah’s evil uncle, Aziz
* The well-known Mulla that was a teacher
* Several of the students of this Mulla
* Mulla Abbas- very learned and trusted individual
* Mulla Abbas’ companion- another very learned and trusted individual
* People who were in the gathering where Baha’u’llah was speaking
* New people hearing about the conversion of the Mullas, who then want to go learn about the Message Baha’u’llah is sharing

*This will be generally unscripted- just following the story line as described above. Describe each scene, one at a time, and ask the children to fill in the details, then act that scene out.*

**Scene 1:** The people of Mazindaran that are hearing the proofs Baha’u’llah is saying and are convinced of the greatness of the day of God being brought by the Bab.

**Scene 2:** Aziz goes to the well-known Mulla that is a teacher and speaks to Him; Aziz will need the following script as part of this scene:

Aziz: **“O viceregent of the Prophet of God! Behold what has befallen the Faith of Islam! A youth, a layman, attired in the garb of nobility, has come to Nur, has invaded the strongholds of orthodoxy, and disrupted the holy Faith of Islam. Arise, and resist his onslaught.”**

**Scene 3:** The students of the Mulla asking him to visit Baha’u’llah in person and find out for himself the nature of this new Revelation sent by God. The Mulla decides to send two of the most learned and trusted individuals in his company to visit Baha’u’llah and see if the Message is true, saying that He would abide by their decision

**Scene 4:** The 2 trusted mullas set out and then arrive at a gathering where Baha’u’llah is sharing the meaning of a Holy Book. They listen to His great knowledge and are transformed. Mulla Abbas and his companion will need the following script as part of this scene:

Mulla Abbas: *Arising from his seat, walking back slowly and standing near the door in an attitude of utter submissiveness, with a trembling voice and eyes full of joyful tears, say* **“You behold my condition. I am powerless to question Baha’u’llah. The questions I had planned to ask Him have vanished suddenly from my memory. You are free either to proceed with your inquiry or to return alone to our teacher and inform him of the state in which I find myself. Tell him that Abbas can never again return to him. He can no longer forsake this threshold.”**

Mulla Abbas’ companion: **“I have ceased to recognize my teacher. This very moment, I have vowed to God to dedicate the remaining days of my life to the service of Baha’u’llah, my true and only Master.”**

**Scene 5:** News of the conversion of the two Mullas spreads throughout the land and people of all walks of life journey to Nur to enter the presence of Baha’u’llah and partake of His divine knowledge.

**Drawing/Art:**

Can complete work from last time- Ringstone symbol, My Purpose (see Grade 3 Lesson 1a materials at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org)) ; if have finished this, than can draw something that they want to remember from the lesson

**Review Quote from last year’s lesson:**

**“The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence.” –Baha’u’llah**

(Sing verse- see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for the tune)

**Share drawings/sheets from art time if children want to**

**Closing Prayer**