**Ruhi Grade 3**

**Lesson 2: Abraham- The Oneness of God (Unity of God)**

*Modified from Ruhi Grade 3 curriculum*

*This lesson has more than you can do in a one and a half hour period, so please use what you think will be most meaningful for the children. Alternatively, it can be done over two class periods, possibly adding in a few additional things if needed.*

**Prayer Sharing**

**Can review memorized quote from last lesson- can say together or someone who has memorized:** The Messengers of God are pure and they come with pure motives, to help us attain the purpose for which we were created.

**“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

**Learn New Prayer:**

*(done in Lesson 1 in the Ruhi material, but adjusted for our needs to be included in this lesson, as it was too much for the first class, where some people are coming for the first time ever)*

We are going to learn a new prayer from the Writings of the Bab. In this prayer, we are asking God to help us become **detached** from this world so that we are not distracted by it, so that we can really connect and rely solely on God, and receive His endless gifts. We will see in the story of Abraham that you will hear later today, detachment and reliance on God are very important for being able to recognize truth.

**“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, wisdom, patience, detachment, 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)

**Intro to Lesson:**

*The purpose of this lesson is to provide your students with the opportunity to think about the concept of the oneness of God and to recognize that all the Manifestations proclaim the unity of God.* *At another level the children begin to see that the human heart was created to love and that, it is not filled with the love of God, it will find some object for its affection and adoration.*

Show timeline of Manifestations from Lesson 1 (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org))

Today we are going to learn about Abraham, a Manifestation of God Who appeared thousands of years ago to guide His people to an understanding of God’s essential oneness. I’m going to be asking you some questions about what I am about to share with you, so please pay close attention.

We know that God is the Great Bestower and Giver of life. He has created the universe and all that is therein. He is the Source of all that exists. No other force or power can compare with Him. From the beginning of time, God has sent His Manifestations to help humanity understand His oneness. Without Their instructions from age to age, people have often fallen into the worship of idols or spirits or even elements of nature, like the sun, the wind, and the moon. They would give God’s attributes such as love, justice, power and majesty, wisdom and generosity, to each of these idols or spirits and would worship them as though they were gods themselves that control the world and everything therein.

All the Manifestations of God remind humanity that there is only one God, the All-Glorious, the All-Powerful, Whom we worship, Who lovingly guides us, and whose aid and assistance we seek. Even today, unaware of the new teachings of God brought by Bahaullah, many people have begun to worship different kinds of idols, giving their hearts to the pursuit of wealth, power, and fame. The human heart was create to love, and if it is not filled with the love of God, it will find *some object* for its affection and adoration. God has created every good thing in this world for us to enjoy. But He wants our hearts to be attached to Him, and Him, alone. In the Hidden Words, Baha’u’llah says: **“O Son of Being! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.”** (can have up on a poster)

Abraham was a Manifestation sent by God several thousands of years ago, when many people had forgotten His oneness and worshipped idols and powers in nature. Few wanted to listen to the Message brought by Abraham that they should worship the one true God. Alone and without help, He withstood the forces that opposed Him. Though He was exiled from His native land by a king who feared Him, the light of His Message could not be extinguished, and His teachings spread, through His children and their descendants, to many nations.

Later today you will hear the story of Abraham’s life, but based on what we’ve said so far, I want to ask you a few questions.

**Questions:**

* What do all the Manifestations teach us about? The oneness of God
* Is there any power greater than the power and majesty of God?
* When human beings forget the power and greatness of God, their Creator, what do they often begin to worship instead of Him?
* If we do not allow our hearts to be filled with the love of God, to what might they attach themselves instead?
* To what does God want our hearts to be attached?
* What Message did the Manifestation of God Abraham bring to His people thousands of years ago?
* Did the people want to listen to His message?
* Could any of the forces of opposition prevent the Message brought to humanity by Abraham from spreading?

**Songs:**

* 9 Great Teachers by Hailey Merrill (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for music and lyrics)
* The Wives of Abraham (see lyrics and music under this lesson at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org))
* Lovers of Light (see lyrics and music under this lesson at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org))

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

In the quotation below, Bahaullah tells about the oneness of God. He explains to us that there is just one God, who exists alone, independent of all else.

Regarding oneness of God, Bahaullah says: **“He is and hath from everlasting been, one and alone, without peer or equal, eternal in the past, eternal in the future, detached from all things, ever-abiding, unchangeable and self-subsisting.”**

(see song and movements to quote on video under this lesson at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org))

**Cooperative Game:**

**Group Jump Rope**

**Objective:** For people of different skill levels to work toward a common goal

**Materials:** Need one very large rope for each group of 5 or 6 (climbing ropes work great) or several jump ropes tied together (to make it easier, you could have smaller groups of 3 people plus 2 holding the ends of the rope)

**Description:** Ask for two volunteers to turn the jump rope. Challenge the group to get as many people jumping at once as possible. You could have everyone start in the middle before the rope starts turning and it is turned for them to jump, or if they are up to the challenge, the group may decide to have everyone jump in while the rope is turning. Once everyone in the group has jumped once (if this occurs), challenge the group to jump as many consecutive times as possible as a group.

**Discussion prompts:** You may want to read these questions to students before the activity and say that you will be asked to reflect on them after the activity, or just highlight the need for **patience, flexibility, inclusion and problem-solving**.

-If jumping rope is easy for you, did you get frustrated during this activity at all? Why or why not?

-If jumping rope is difficult for you, how did you feel about this activity? Were others patient with you?

-Is everyone who is on the same team always working at the same skill level?

-How did you handle being on a team of people who have all different skill levels?

If you played the game Initiator/Investigator from Lesson 1b and not everyone got a chance to be the Initiator, you could also choose to play that game again so that everyone gets a turn.

 ***Initiator/Investigator*:** (*no material)*

\*With this game, emphasize the importance of being very united- so united that they can’t even tell who is the leader and who are following.

* + All participants sit in a circle. One kid will be send out (investigator).
	+ Another one in the group will start a repetitive movement (initiator) the rest will follow and as he /she changes the command everyone else will follow the movement.
	+ The children should do so without looking at the initiator.
	+ At this time the investigator will come and stands in the middle of group and trying to find the initiator.

He/she has three options, after which the role will change and investigator will choose the second child

**Story:**

*The**historical episode for this lesson provides an account of the life of Abraham, focusing principally on the opposition He faced. You should decide before class how you will approach this period. What we have done is provide you with one long narrative written in a language accessible to you, but perhaps too difficult for the children. Whether you tell it as it is written or simplify it substantially, will depend on your students’ level of comprehension. You can also as we mentioned earlier, recount only part of the episode to them at any given time. However you choose to proceed, it is important to make it clear that* ***no force no matter how powerful could prevent Abraham from achieving His mission*** *and that* ***His exile from the land of His birth became the cause of the progress of His descendants, who spread His teachings to many nations.***

Manifestations of God have come to guide humanity throughout the ages, appearing in different places at various stages of history. **Abraham, Whose name means “the father of nations”**, was a Manifestation Who lived thousands of years ago. He was born at a time when few people believed in one God. Tradition tells that on the night that Abraham was born, his father had many guests, including the wise men of the court of King Nimrod. As the visitors left the house at dawn, they saw a large star rising in the east, which seemed to consume stars from the each of the four corners of the sky.

The wise man believed this unusual occurrence must be a sign connected with the birth of Abraham, foretelling His great power. They decided to inform the king and went to see him at once. The most respected among them related to Nimrod what they had witnessed and what they believed to be the meaning of tis wondrous sign. Fearing that the child would one day take power from him, Nimrod called for Abraham’s father and offered gold and silver in exchange for the baby. Upon hearing Nimrod’s command to surrender his son, Abraham’s father decided to pose a question to the king. Not long before, Nimrod had given him **a beautiful horse**. Another man now wished to buy the horse for a good price, and he asked the king what he should do. Nimrod’s advice was clear: How could he ever think of selling so unique and precious a gift from his king? How could gold and silver ever replace such a gift? To this, Abraham’s father responded: just as money could not replace the gift of a king, so could it never replace his own child. This argument temporarily satisfied the king, but Abraham’s father knew that Nimrod would continue to insist on claiming his Son. So for ten years he kept Abraham in hiding, long enough for the king and his wise men to forget about what had happened on the night of His birth.

Like most people at the time, Abraham’s family worshiped idols, that is, figures made of stone, wood, or clay (**can have figures made of clay to show as an example**). Idols had first been created as symbols of the attributes of God, for example, of love and justice, but these physical objects had gradually come to be seen as gods themselves. So people prayed to idols, believing that such figurines had power to help and guide them, as well as to punish them. Some idols were even thought to represent powers in nature such as the sun, the moon, and the stars. **Do you know what Abraham’s father did for a living?** Abraham’s father made and sold idols, so Abraham was surrounded by them from childhood. When He was still young, however, it became clear to Him that such man-made objects had no powers, and He was drawn by Divine forces to seek the Source of true power that guided humanity.

As the story is told, Abraham was a child when, observing the stars, the moon and the sun, He came to know that there was one God, the Creator of all things. Seeing the brilliance of a **star** one night, He said, **“This is my Lord.”** When it set, however, He said, **“I love not those that set.”** Seeing **the moon** rise in its great splendor, even brighter that the star, He said, “**This is my Lord.”** But it, too, set. When **the sun** rose, illuminating all around Him, Abraham praised its greatness in comparison to the moon and star. Yet it, too, set, and, at the moment, He knew that there was one true Creator, greater than all these powers, who had brought the world into being and that He, alone, should be worshipped. Abraham declared, **“For me, I have set my face firmly and truly, towards Him, Who created the heavens and the earth, and never shall I give partners to God.”**

As a young man, Abraham was sometimes asked to look after His father’s shop and help sell idols. Yet he took every opportunity to discourage people from buying them, pointing out that idols could not eat or drink, walk or talk; how could they believe, He would inquire, that such figures had the power to help them. Abraham wanted to teach people about the one true God and to lead them away from idol worship. **How do you think Abraham’s father reacted?**  Not very well. So angry did His father become at His son for denying the gods of His people that he cast Him out from the family home. **(Do you see how much detachment and reliance on God were needed in following the truth?)**

Undeterred, Abraham continued to try to show the people the path to God. It is said that one day, to help them understand the powerlessness of the idols, He went to the place where they were kept when no one else was there and destroyed them all but one –the largest one. **(can do this with the clay idols- leaving the largest one on the plate- see** [**www.supportingthecoreactivities.org**](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) **under this lesson for pictorial examples).** Later, when the people returned and saw the broken idols, they remembered what Abraham had been telling them and called for Him. How could this happen, they inquired. Abraham pointed to the one remaining idol and suggested that perhaps this one had destroyed the others. They need only ask the idol to find out, He stated. **“But the idol cannot speak or move.”** Exclaimed the people, **“How could it have destroyed the others? How can it tell us what happened?”**

In response to their questions, Abraham called on them, as He had done many times before, to abandon their worship of such powerless idols and to follow the one true God, the Maker of all. Yet few would listen and Abraham was brought before the King Nimrod to be punished for destroying the idols. Upon hearing the accusations Nimrod asked Who this Mighty God was that Abraham had told his people to follow. Abraham’s answer was unequivocal: it is one true God Who gives life and death to all. Nimrod responded boastfully that he, too, as king, could give life and death by his very command. But Abraham went on to explain that it is God Who makes the sun rise in the east. He asked Nimrod whether, as king, he could make the sun rise in the west instead. Nimrod grew so angry this that he ordered Abraham to be burned to death. Yet nothing he could do could harm Abraham, Who came through the fire uninjured. Of course it was within the power of God to protect Abraham from any earthly affliction, but the fire that Nimrod enkindled burned in the *hearts of men*. It was *the fire of animosity and hatred* that he ignited against Abraham. But all that animosity and hatred could not prevent Him from proclaiming His message.

At last Abraham was exiled from His native land. With His wife Sarah, His nephew Lot and a few others who had accepted the Message of the one true God, Abraham set off from the place of His birth and headed westward. For many years they travelled, but Abraham never feared, for God had promised Him he would guide Abraham to another land and that, from Him, would come forth a great nation. Eventually the small group reached a place called Canaan, which came to be known as the Promised Land or the Holy Land. This was the land on which, as God had ordained, the children of Abraham would settle and prosper.

Abraham endured many hardships in the Promised Land, but He raised up a people which held firm to the belief that there is only one God, the Maker of all things. God blessed these people and assured Abraham that, through His descendants, people from many nations all over the world would one day recognize and worship their Creator.

And, of course all that God had decreed came to pass. From one of Abraham’s sons, Isaac, descended the Hebrew people who followed the laws of God taught by Moses. Later Jesus Christ was born among them, and people of diverse backgrounds and nations followed His teachings. Another son, Ishmael, became the father of the Arab people who were transformed by the Word of God revealed by Muhammad. The Bab, Whose teachings paved the way for Bahaullah, was a descendent of Muhammad through Muhammad’s daughter Fatimih. And the family of Baha’u’llah, too, traces its roots back to Abraham. We will learn about all of these Manifestations of God later, but for now you can see how God’s promise to Abraham was fulfilled*.*

**Facts**

(This can also be done at the beginning of next lesson as a review.)

*Children greatly enjoy participating in games that help them remember facts. The games we play in our class, of course are based on cooperation and do not promote the spirit of competition. One collaborative game you might introduce to the children involves matching. In every lesson for this grade, you will be given a list of relevant facts. You can divide the sentences conveying the information into two parts and write one half on each card. For example, you could write on one card “The name Abraham means….” and on another card “Father of nations”. Similar cards would then be prepared for all the facts you want your students to remember and these would be* ***distributed among them****. They would then, have to* ***walk around and find the person who has the card corresponding to theirs.******Subsequently, each pair would be asked to present to the class what they have learned together.***

*If the children readings skills are not yet at the level where they can do this, you could include some design or border on the cards, which they could easily put together. Once they match the cards, each pair could present them to you. You would acknowledge their efforts and then read the sentence out loud to the group.*

For this lesson, you could include the following information on the cards:

1. The name Abraham means…” Father of nations”.
2. Abraham taught… the oneness of God.
3. Abraham was opposed by many people and…exiled from His native land.
4. Abraham set out from His native land and reached… Canaan, which was the Promised Land.
5. Abraham’s descendants… spread throughout world.
6. Among Abraham’s descendants were… the Manifestations Muhammad, the Bab and Bahaullah.

SEE FACT CARDS FOR THIS LESSON AT [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org)

**Distribute the cards randomly. Then ask them to walk around and find the person who has the card corresponding to theirs. Then once they have formed pairs, each pair presents their fact to the class.**

*\*Alternatively, you can ask them to ask a question, the answer to which is the statement they have (example: Then they can call on people until the answer is said, at which time they show the match to the class. If there is not an even number of children, one can be the person that checks if the fact is correct, or can be the one that calls on the pairs to come up.)*

**Drama:** *(If time allows)*

*It is important to remember that we should never attempt to portray a Manifestation of God in a skit or play, as to do so would be disrespectful and irreverent.* For today’s lesson, then, the children might reenact the scene in which the idols are destroyed and Abraham is brought before Nimrod. In that case most of the children would portray the people in the temple or the members of Nimrod’s court, while you guide them through the story and indicate what Abraham said and did. Alternatively, if the children in your class have the capacity, one or two of them might be asked to do a monologue, narrating a part of this story.

**Drawing/Art:**

It is suggested that today you ask the children to do a drawing that will, in some way, reinforce the ideas treated in this lesson. They can pick anything from the lesson that is meaningful to them.

Examples: They might draw a picture of a star, the moon and the sun, each shining brightly than the last, to remind them that every power on earth emanates from God.

ALTERNATIVE ART ACTIVITY: Have children each paint a wooden heart in a way that reminds them that their heart is the home of God- with inspiring and uplifting colors. Then have them glue the quote: **“O Son of Being! Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My manifestation.”** (Have this quote typed up and print on bright yellow paper and then cut and have them paste it in the middle of their heart- see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson for pictorial examples and a quote template for the craft activity.)

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

You can review with the children the quotation they memorized in the class today before helping them to recite the passage below that they learned in Grade 2.

**“O SON OF LIGHT! Forget all save Me and commune with My spirit. This is of the essence of My command, therefore turn unto it.”**

(put to music and shared on [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson)

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

**Closing Prayer**