**Ruhi Grade 3**

**Lesson 1a: Our Purpose/The Importance of Seeking the Knowledge of God**

*Modified from Ruhi Grade 3 curriculum- Lesson 1 split into two lessons- Lesson 1a and Lesson 1b with some additional material added in.*

**Welcome**

**Prayer Sharing**

**Create Guidelines with students (have all children sign)**

**Get to Know You Game-** 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 (each has 30 seconds to introduce their partner). (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:**

This year we are going to be learning about the lives and teachings of the Messengers sent by God to humanity.*Look at sheet in binder that has God and the Messengers of God on it.*(available at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson)Every 500-1000 years, God sends us a Messenger of God to teach and enlighten us. We start with Abraham because that is the first Messenger of God that we have information about, but there have always been Teachers sent by God in each age, even before Abraham. This year we are going to learn more about Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bab and Baha’u’llah. We will learn about their Teachings and the Message they brought from God for the world.

To start, we are going to think about God and the reason that God created us. **Do you know why you have been created? What is the purpose?** (field answers) Ex. From the Bahai Writings: To work for the betterment of the world, to develop virtues and to grow spiritually, to draw closer to God. (can have on a poster, covered up by very large sticky notes so can’t see until time to show that part)

Let’s look at this verse from the Bahai Writings (can have written on bottom of poster and covered up until time to show): “I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.”

**So how do we know God?** God is of course far above anything we can think of, as He is our Creator and we are His creation. In general, what has been created cannot understand its creator. For instance, this table cannot understand the nature of the carpenter that made it. God is the Creator of all things and His essence is unknowable to us, which means that we should not make images of God in our mind- thinking of Him, for example as a man. He is far above all of our ideas of Him. Out of His mercy, though, God sends us a Manifestation of God in each age**. Does anyone know what “manifest” means?** The word “manifest” means to reveal, to bring forth something that which was not known before. The Manifestation of God are those special Beings who reveal to humanity the Word and the Will of God; thus when we listen to Them, we are responding to the call of God.

*See Ringstone symbol in binder-* This is a symbol that helps us to understand the role of the Manifestations of God. The bottom line is the Realm of Creation- this is where we are. The middle line is the Realm of the Messengers of God, Their station is high above us. The top realm is the realm of God. **What connects these realms?** The middle line is repeated because the Messengers of God each are the way of God that connects this world with the realms above. **Why are there stars on either side?** Because the Messengers of God come in human form- head, arms, legs, (*point to star and show those points).*

There is an example from the physical world that helps us to understand the concept of “Manifestation” as taught in the Bahai Writings. **Do you know what it is?**  **In this world, what is the source of all warmth and light, without which life would not exist on the planet?** (THE SUN!) Yet the sun itself does not descend to earth, and if we tried to approach it, we would be totally consumed. But suppose we take a well-polished mirror (SHOW MIRROR) and point it towards the sun. **What do we see in the mirror?** (THE IMAGE OF THE SUN) and the more perfectly polished the mirror, the more perfect the image will be. The Manifestations of God are like perfect mirrors that reflect the light of God in all its splendor. And all the mirrors reflect the same light.

While God is beyond our reach, these perfect Beings come to us from time to time, live among us, give us guidance and fill us with the energy we need to progress materially and spiritually.

Seeking the knowledge of God through His Manifestations should be the central concern of our lives.

**Is knowing God enough? What else do we need to do?** (see quote- worship Him)

**How do we worship God? Is saying prayers, in a temple, church, at home- enough?**

We obey His commandments. When we act in a spirit of obedience to the laws and teachings of God, all that we do becomes fruitful.

Let’s look at what the Bahai Writings say about worship (can look on the sheet called “Our Purpose” available under this lesson at www.supportingthecoreactivities.org): “**This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer.” (Abdu’l-Baha)**

God has sent us His Messengers to help us in our efforts to fulfill the purpose for which He created us- to know Him and to worship Him.

**Cooperative Games:**

Play one or two of the following games

*Balloon Bop*: (*Material: a few blown up balloons)*

* + Students begin by standing in a circle, holding hands. The teacher drops one balloon into the circle. The goal is for students to see how many times they can tap the balloon into the air (they can tap with hands, arms, heads, shoulder, chest or knees-No feet.), keeping it up in the air, without losing connection (all students must continue holding hands.) In order for this to work effectively, students have to work cooperatively, each of them making sure they are not letting go of their neighbor, hand. They will soon figure out that they must all move together, as a circle, so to make sure they do not lose connection. If the balloon falls to the ground or a student taps the balloon with their feet, the count begins again. Depending on grade level; you can add more balloons to make it more challenging! Before playing: teacher can model how to tap the balloon lightly in order to keep it up in the air.
* *Great Wind Blows (material: None)*
	+ Arrange chairs/carpet squares to form a circle (If using chairs, facing inward toward the middle). One player starts in the middle, standing up. He or she begins the round by standing in the middle starts by saying “Great wind blows for everyone who…” and then says any characteristic that is true for that person. For example, if the person has been to Canada before, he or she can say, “Great wind blows for everyone who has been to Canada.” All players who have been to Canada before must stand and quickly find a new seat that is more than 2 chairs away from them. If the player is not able to find a vacant seat, he or she is the new person who is in the middle.

**Bring children back inside for the rest of the lesson:**

There is one more thing I want to bring up- and I am going to ask you some kind of silly questions to make my point. Imagine a beautiful gemstone- shining and sparkling. **Is it aware of its own beauty?** (no) Think of a beautiful flower- color, fragrance. **Do you have it in your mind?** Okay- now I have a question to ask you- **does it know its own beauty?** (no) What about a bird that is singing the most melodious songs- **is it conscious of the value of its own singing?** Unlike the rest of creation that doesn’t have an understanding of their beauty and potential, we as human beings DO have the ability to know and to recognize beauty- not just physical, but spiritual beauty. **What is spiritual beauty?** The virtues- the qualities of God we have within us- that are shown in ACTION. A big part of our purpose has to do with developing those God-like qualities we have within us, so that we can reflect the light of God in our lives and in turn, be the source of guidance to others. **What are some of those God-qualities that we have within us?**

**Memorization of Quotation (hand out quote to be put in prayerbook):**

**“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 have bountifully shed My favor upon Thee.” –Baha’u’llah**

**Discuss briefly (**What does it say we are? God’s lamp. What is in us? His light. What should make us radiant? His light. God has created us what? RICH! So beauty is not about what we wear or what we look like on the outside, it is about what we do and how we fill our actions with VIRTUE- so that we are shedding God’s light in the world and being bringers of joy!).

**Songs:**

* **Sing song based on quote** (see [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) for the video and audio recordings of the song “Thou art My Lamp”)
* **Sing Beauty is What You Do by Full-Circle Learning** (lyrics at [www.supportingthecoreactivities.org](http://www.supportingthecoreactivities.org) under this lesson; song available for purchase at: <http://www.fullcirclelearning.org/music>)

**Drawing/Arts and Crafts:**

* Can color ringstone symbol- different color for the three Realms
* Can fill out the worksheet on “Our Purpose” for their albums, if there is time (otherwise will be done next week).

**Share art with others if children would like**

**Closing Prayer**