**Virtue: Thankfulness**

**Lesson Plan 1**

**Children ages 3-5**

**A light snack will be offered to those arriving a few minutes early (fruit, wholesome homemade muffin, etc.)**

**Opening Prayers:** Invite children to practice reverence by asking them to sit in their parent’s lap while the following prayer is said and then sung. "We always start with a prayer, because God is the source of all spiritual qualities, and we want to call on Him to aid us in our spiritual development."

**Prayer: Tender Plant** (CD-2: Tender Year, Julie Iraninejad and Shabnam Cyrus)

**O Lord! I am a child; enable me to grow beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness. I am a tender plant; cause me to be nurtured through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy bounty. I am a sapling of the garden of love; make me into a fruitful tree. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the All-Loving, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.** ~ 'Abdu’l-Bahá

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **O Lord** | both hands up toward the sky, as you look up |
| **I** | point to yourself |
| **am a child** | put your right hand out to your right side with palm facing down, as if touching the head of a small child |
| **enable me to grow** | move both hands, with palms facing towards your body, from your hips all the way to above your head, while you move your body from side to side |
| **beneath** | put both hands on your head and put your chin down to your chest as you look down |
| **the shadow** | keep chin down and move both hands and arms until they are outstretched to both sides in a T position, with palms down |
| **of Thy loving-kindness** | look up and make a heart with both hands and arms, rounding your hands above your head so your fingers come together at the top of your head, forming the top part of a heart |
| **I am** | point to yourself |
| **a tender plant** | put left hand out in front of you with palm up and then put your right index finger up against the side of your left hand, where your pinky is (as if your index finger is a little plant coming out of the soil) |
| **cause me to be nurtured through** | put both hands together, palm to palm, and then wiggle your fingers as you move them upwards towards the sky |
| **the outpourings of the clouds of** | move both hands down, with palms facing down and elbows bent, wiggling your fingers as you move your hands until they are at your side (as if you are mimicking rain falling) |
| **Thy bounty** | move both hands out to your side, with palms facing up and elbows bent, while you smile |
| **I am** | point to yourself |
| **a sapling** | put your right thumb and index finger close together |
| **of the garden** | move both hands to both sides, with palms down in front of you while wiggling your fingers |
| **of love** | form a small heart with both hands in front of you |
| **make** | clasp both hands together in front of you |
| **me** | point to yourself |
| **into a** | move both hands from your sides all the way to above your head, keeping your palms facing out |
| **fruitful tree** | move both hands from side to side above your head, while moving your hips from side to side |
| **Thou art** | point with both fingers up to the sky |
| **the Mighty** | put both arms out and show your muscles |
| **and the Powerful** | elbows bent but both arms in front, hands up, and slightly bow your head toward your hands |
| **and Thou art** | point with both fingers up to the sky |
| **the All-Loving** | form a heart with your hands in front of your chest |
| **the All-Knowing** | put your right index finger up to your right temple on your head and tap it several times |
| **the All-Seeing** | put both index fingers up to your eyes and move your head from side to side as you look from side to side |

Any child is then welcome to share a prayer with the group, if they have been learning one at home. This is a good time to review any previous verses they have learned as well.

**Welcome: Hello Song** (Music Together, Bongos CD)

*(Actions: Clap hands to knees in time with the music)*

Hello everybody! So glad to see you!

Hello everybody, we're so glad to see you!

Hello to \_\_\_\_, so glad to see you!

Hello to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so glad to see you too!

*(Repeat the second couplet as many times as necessary, singing each child’s name, until everyone has been greeted, include mommies/ daddies and teachers)*

*(For the last line, below, slow the last phrase, while slapping knees faster and faster, and end with "yoooooooou!" on a rising note)*

Hello everybody! So glad to see you!

Hello everybody, we're so glad to see yooooou!

**Introduction to the Virtue of Thankfulness:**

Thankfulness is an attitude of gratitude. It is appreciating the little things which happen around us and within us every day. We can be thankful for all that our Mommies and Daddies do for us each day, and most of all we are thankful to God for all of His many gifts in our lives! Even when times are tough, there is always something to be thankful for!

**Book: Thank You, World by Alice B. McGinty**

**Songs:**

**Song: Hooray for the World** (CD: Teaching Peace, Red Grammer)

NOTE: Google the names of the things in this song and print out a picture of it, then laminate them. Hold up the pictures when you come to each thing

*CHORUS:*

Hooray for the world, I’m glad to be on it.

Hooray for the world, I’m glad to be on it.

Hooray for the world, it’s a special place,

we got mother nature and the human race.

The world’s got buffalo. The world’s got bees.

The world’s got jellyfish swimming in the seas.

We got beavers and bears, bats and bugs,

miniature poodles and slimy old slugs. Oh…

*CHORUS:*

The world’s got salami, the world’s got cheese,

we got maple syrup and mulberries.

We got Egg Foo-Yung, bagels and lox,

corn on the cob, and raisins in a box, so…

*CHORUS:*

We got moms and dads, uncles and aunts,

brothers, sisters, grandmas and gramps.

We got neighbors next door, kids down the street.

Everywhere we go we got new friends to meet, oh…

*CHORUS:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS to CHORUS** | ACTIONS |
| **Hooray for the world** | both arms above head in a V with fingers open and spread out |
| **I'm glad to be on it** | thumbs pointing to yourself |
| **it's a special place** | roll hands in front of you with hands in fists |
| **it's got mother nature** | hold up picture of earth |
| **and the human race** | hold up picture of children holding hand |
|  |  |
| **Moms and Dads, uncles and aunts** | parents raise hands |
| **brothers and sisters** | brother and sisters raise hands |
| **Grandmas and gramps** | Grandmas raise their hands |
| **everywhere we go we got new friends to meet** | put both hands out in front of you with palms up and move them up and down while looking from side to side |

**Song: Gratitude** (CD: The Family Learning House, Favourite Children's Songs)

Thank the moon, thank the sun

Most of all, thank someone

Thank the stars up above

Thanks to everyone you love *(x 6)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **Thank the moon** | curve left hand above head facing down and towards the right, and the right hand to your side curved up, forming a crescent moon |
| **thank the sun** | put both hands in a large circle above head |
| **most of all** | put both hands out to both sides with palms up |
| **thank someone** | move hands forward straight in front of you with palms up |
| **thank the stars up above** | lift hands above head and wiggle fingers |
| **thanks to everyone** | make a big circle in front of you with arms |
| **you love** | touch your heart with both hands |

To show we are thankful for the gifts we receive...

**Song: Thankfulness (If You’re Given Something Nice)**

(CD: The Family Learning House, Virtues in Us - Preschool)

If you’re given something nice, say thank you! *(x 2)*

If you’re given something nice and you want another slice

If you’re given something nice, please say thank you! Thank you!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **If you're given something nice** | put both arms in front like you are giving a gift |
| **say thank you** | nod your head and say thank you with a big smile |
| **and you want another slide** | put right hand up to your mouth like you are feeding yourself |

There are many ways to say thanks, in many different languages:

**Song: A World of Thanks**

(Melinda Caroll, Girl Scouts Greatest Hits, Volume 11 CD)

For your time and presence here,

for the kindness that you share

Let us offer you a world of thanks and say,

‘Mahalo, gratzie, kamkam, dank, merci, nandri, arigato, salamat,

marooroo, tatendre, sincomo, xie xie, mamnunu, toda,

columpo, namaste, thank you!

*(Action: Tap hands on your thighs as you sway to the music and sing the song)*

Pass out eggs for children to shake during the following song:

**Song: Gratitude** (Sweet Honey in the Rock, Experience 101 CD)

Collect eggs and pass out scarves for the children to dance with during the following song:

**Song: Thankfulness is a Light**

(CD: The Family Learning House, Virtues in Us - School Age)

*CHORUS:*

Thankfulness is a light that can brighten up our eyes,

so that everything in our sight holds a promise and a prize

We are thankful for all the continents and islands,

the rivers and the seas

We are thankful for all the pebbles and the diamonds,

the seasons and the breeze

*CHORUS:*

We are thankful for all the billions of people,

their languages and names

We are thankful for all their songs and their stories,

their dances and their games

*CHORUS:*

We are thankful for loving-kindness and caring,

all the virtues we can learn

We are thankful for all the chances for sharing,

giving everyone their turn

*CHORUS:*

Collect scarves and then give children instruments to play during the following song:

**Song: Thanks** (CD: The Missoula Coyote Choir and Friends, Ask the Planet)

Put away instruments and invite children to sit in the circle for the verse on thankfulness.

**Verse to Memorize:**

**Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity.** ~ Bahá’u’lláh

(CD: The Family Learning House: 19 Quotation Songs: song #17)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **Be generous in prosperity** | put your left hand out in front of you with palm up, and then your right hand with palm facing up next to your left hand. Then move your left hand to the other side of your right hand (crossing over your right hand), still with palms up, and then move your right hand to the right side of you left hand, with palms up. Basically, what you are doing is moving your hands from left to right by doing this, making a kind of wave) |
| **and thankful** | draw a smile on your face, by your mouth, with the index fingers of both hands |
| **in adversity** | move your index fingers up towards your eyes and then move them down your cheeks as if they are tears, while putting your chine to your chest. |

**Story of 'Abdu’l-Bahá that reflects the virtue:**

**'Abdu’l-Bahá often made His points through the use of stories.**

When we look at our lives, we see that we are surrounded by blessings. But life does not only offer us sweetness. We must also have our share of pain and difficulties is we are to grow spiritually. When we remember with gratitude and thankfulness the blessings we have in our lives, it helps us to avoid bitterness in times of difficulty.

I would like to share a story with you, that 'Abdu’l-Bahá told:

**There was once a just and powerful king who had won the loyalty of his people, high and low. His court was filled with the most accomplished individuals in the kingdom, yet his favorite was a servant who had attended him selflessly for many years. One day he gave the servant a melon which when he cut it open looked most ripe and delicious. The servant ate one piece, then another and another with great enthusiasm, until nearly the whole melon had disappeared. The King, picking up the last piece, tasted it. His eyes widened in surprise when he found it bitter and disagreeable. “Why, this is bitter! How could you eat it with such joy?” asked the King. The servant responded: “Yes, my Master, it was bitter and unpleasant, but I have tasted so much sweetness from your hand that one bitter melon was not worth mentioning.”**

You see, the servant was thankful in adversity, remembering all of the blessings that the King had bestowed upon him.

**Game:**

**Play the following games:**

**We’ve All Got a Name Game-** have children sit in a circle, then chant “We’ve all got a name. A first and last name. Tell us your name and we will clap”, then roll the ball and have the child say their full name, then clap. **Then have the child say one thing they are thankful for.** Then it is their turn to roll the ball to the next person. Continue until everyone has gotten a turn.

**Cooperative musical pillows:** This game is played just like musical chairs, but with pillows on the floor. Everyone starts out on their own pillow, then one pillow is removed while music is playing. As the music is playing, the children are walking around the pillows. When the music stops, the one without a pillow has to share with someone else. Eventually, all will be left touching one pillow, and if everyone can have at least one body part touching that pillow, the group has won the game!

Then introduce the art activity.

**Art Activity: Make a Thank-you card**

Materials**:** paper, decorations, markers, etc.

Direction**:** Make a thank you card for someone who means a lot to you

**Virtue: Thankfulness**

**Lesson Plan 2**

**Children ages 3-5**

**A light snack** will be offered to those arriving a few minutes early (fruit, wholesome homemade muffin, etc.)

**Opening Prayers:** Invite children to practice reverence by asking them to sit in their parent’s lap while the following prayer is said and then sung. We always start with a prayer, because God is the source of all spiritual qualities, and we want to call on Him to aid us in our spiritual development.

**Prayer: Tender Plant** (CD-2: Tender Years, Julie Iraninejad & Shabnam Cyrus)

**O Lord! I am a child; enable me to grow beneath the shadow of Thy loving-kindness. I am a tender plant; cause me to be nurtured through the outpourings of the clouds of Thy bounty. I am a sapling of the garden of love; make me into a fruitful tree. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the All-Loving, the All-Knowing, the All-Seeing.**  ~ 'Abdu’l-Bahá

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **O Lord** | both hands up toward the sky, as you look up |
| **I** | point to yourself |
| **am a child** | put your right hand out to your right side with palm facing down, as if touching the head of a small child |
| **enable me to grow** | move both hands, with palms facing towards your body, from your hips all the way to above your head, while you move your body from side to side |
| **beneath** | put both hands on your head and put your chin down to your chest as you look down |
| **the shadow** | keep chin down and move both hands and arms until they are outstretched to both sides in a T position, with palms down |
| **of Thy loving-kindness** | look up and make a heart with both hands and arms, rounding your hands above your head so your fingers come together at the top of your head, forming the top part of a heart |
| **I am** | point to yourself |
| **a tender plant** | put left hand out in front of you with palm up and then put your right index finger up against the side of your left hand, where your pinky is (as if your index finger is a little plant coming out of the soil) |
| **cause me to be nurtured through** | put both hands together, palm to palm, and then wiggle your fingers as you move them upwards towards the sky |
| **the outpourings of the clouds of** | move both hands down, with palms facing down and elbows bent, wiggling your fingers as you move your hands until they are at your side (as if you are mimicking rain falling) |
| **Thy bounty** | move both hands out to your side, with palms facing up and elbows bent, while you smile |
| **I am** | point to yourself |
| **a sapling** | put your right thumb and index finger close together |
| **of the garden** | move both hands to both sides, with palms down in front of you while wiggling your fingers |
| **of love** | form a small heart with both hands in front of you |
| **make** | clasp both hands together in front of you |
| **me** | point to yourself |
| **into a** | move both hands from your sides all the way to above your head, keeping your palms facing out |
| **fruitful tree** | move both hands from side to side above your head, while moving your hips from side to side |
| **Thou art** | point with both fingers up to the sky |
| **the Mighty** | put both arms out and show your muscles |
| **and the Powerful** | elbows bent but both arms in front, hands up, and slightly bow your head toward your hands |
| **and Thou art** | point with both fingers up to the sky |
| **the All-Loving** | form a heart with your hands in front of your chest |
| **the All-Knowing** | put your right index finger up to your right temple on your head and tap it several times |
| **the All-Seeing** | put both index fingers up to your eyes and move your head from side to side as you look from side to side |

Any child is then welcome to share a prayer with the group, if they have been learning one at home. This is a good time to review any previous verses they have learned as well.

**Welcome: Hello Song** (Music Together, Bongos CD)

*(Actions: Clap hands to knees in time with the music)*

Hello everybody! So glad to see you!

Hello everybody, we're so glad to see you!

Hello to \_\_\_\_, so glad to see you!

Hello to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, so glad to see you too!

*(Repeat the second couplet as many times as necessary, singing each child’s name, until everyone has been greeted, include mommies/ daddies and teachers)*

*(For the last line, below, slow the last phrase, while slapping knees faster and faster, and end with "yoooooooou!" on a rising note)*

Hello everybody! So glad to see you!

Hello everybody, we're so glad to see yooooou!

**Review of the Virtue of Thankfulness:**

Thankfulness is an attitude of gratitude. It is appreciating the little things which happen around us and within us every day. We can be thankful for all that our Mommies and Daddies do for us each day, and most of all we are thankful to God for all of His many gifts in our lives! Even when times are tough, there is always something to be thankful for!

**Book: Thanks for Thanksgiving** by Julie Markes or **Thank You World!** By Alice McGinty and Wendy Halperin

**Songs:**

Explain: "We should be thankful for the gifts we receive."

**Song: If You’re Given Something**

(CD: The Family Learning House, Virtues in Us - Preschool)

If you’re given something nice, say thank you! *(x 2)*

If you’re given something nice and you want another slice

If you’re given something nice, please say thank you! Thank you!

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **If you're given something nice** | put both arms in front like you are giving a gift |
| **say thank you** | nod your head and say thank you with a big smile |
| **and you want another slice** | put right hand up to your mouth like you are feeding yourself |

**Song: Gratitude**

(CD: The Family Learning House, Favourite Children's Songs)

Thank the moon, thank the sun

Most of all, thank someone

Thank the stars up above

Thanks to everyone you love *(x 6)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **Thank the moon** | curve left hand above head facing down and towards the right, and the right hand to your side curved up, forming a crescent moon |
| **thank the sun** | put both hands in a large circle above head |
| **most of all** | put both hands out to both sides with palms up |
| **thank someone** | move hands forward straight in front of you with palms up |
| **thank the stars up above** | lift hands above head and wiggle fingers |
| **thanks to everyone** | make a big circle in front of you with arms |
| **you love** | touch your heart with both hands |

We are thankful for friends:

**Song: The More We Get Together**

(CD: The Family Learning House, Favourite Children's Songs)

The more we get together, together, together,

The more we get together the happier we’ll be,

Because your friends are my friends and my friends are your friends.

The more we get together the happier we’ll be!

*(Next verse*: the more we play together…, the more we love each other…

*Actions:* Hold hands and sway, show smile, point to yourself and then to others, hold hands and sway; on last verse, when singing- the more we love each other- blow kisses to people in the group

There are many ways to say thanks, in many different languages:

Pass out bells for children to shake to the following song:

**Song: A World of Thanks**

(CD: Girl Scouts Greatest Hits, Volume 11, Melinda Caroll)

For your time and presence here, for the kindness that you share

Let us offer you a world of thanks and say,

‘Mahalo, gratzie, kamkam, dank, merci, nandri, arigato, salamat, marooroo, tatendre, sincomo, xie xie, mamnunu, toda, columpo, namaste, thank you!

(Actions: Tap hands on your thighs as you sway to the music and sing the song.)

Collect bells and pass out ribbon wands for the children to dance with during the following song:

**Song: Thankfulness (Thankfulness is a Light)**

(CD;: The Family Learning House Children’s Virtues in Us - School Age)

*CHORUS:*

Thankfulness is a light that can brighten up our eyes,

so that everything in our sight holds a promise and a prize

We are thankful for all the continents and islands,

the rivers and the seas

We are thankful for all the pebbles and the diamonds,

the seasons and the breeze

*CHORUS:*

We are thankful for all the billions of people,

their languages and names

We are thankful for all their songs and their stories,

their dances and their games

*CHORUS:*

We are thankful for loving-kindness and caring,

all the virtues we can learn

We are thankful for all the chances for sharing,

giving everyone their turn

*CHORUS:*

Collect ribbon wands. Give children instruments to play during the following song:

**Song: Thanks** (The Missoula Coyote Choir and Friends, Ask the Planet CD)

Put away instruments

**Song: Hooray for the World Song** (CD: Teaching Peace, Red Grammer)

NOTE: Google the names of the things in this song and print out the pictures, then laminate them. Hold up the pictures when you come to each thing

*CHORUS:*

Hooray for the world, I’m glad to be on it.

Hooray for the world, I’m glad to be on it.

Hooray for the world, it’s a special place,

we got mother nature and the human race.

The world’s got buffalo. The world’s got bees.

The world’s got jellyfish swimming in the seas.

We got beavers and bears, bats and bugs,

miniature poodles and slimy old slugs. Oh…

*CHORUS:*

The world’s got salami, the world’s got cheese,

we got maple syrup and mulberries.

We got Egg Foo-Yung, bagels and lox,

corn on the cob, and raisins in a box, so…

*CHORUS:*

We got moms and dads, uncles and aunts,

brothers, sisters, grandmas and gramps.

We got neighbors next door, kids down the street.

Everywhere we go we got new friends to meet, oh…

*CHORUS:*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS to CHORUS** | ACTIONS |
| **Hooray for the world** | both arms above head in a V with fingers open and spread out |
| **I'm glad to be on it** | thumbs pointing to yourself |
| **it's a special place** | roll hands in front of you with hands in fists |
| **it's got mother nature** | hold up picture of earth |
| **and the human race** | hold up picture of children holding hand |
|  |  |
| **Moms and Dads, uncles and aunts** | parents raise hands |
| **brothers and sisters** | brother and sisters raise hands |
| **Grandmas and gramps** | Grandmas raise their hands |
| **everywhere we go we got new friends to meet** | put both hands out in front of you with palms up and move them up and down while looking from side to side |

Invite children to sit in the circle for the verse on thankfulness.

**Verse to Memorize:**

**Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity. ~ Bahá’u’lláh**

(CD: The Family Learning House: 19 Quotation Songs: song #17)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **WORDS** | ACTIONS |
| **Be generous in prosperity** | put your left hand out in front of you with palm up, and then your right hand with palm facing up next to your left hand. Then move your left hand to the other side of your right hand (crossing over your right hand), still with palms up, and then move your right hand to the right side of you left hand, with palms up. Basically, what you are doing is moving your hands from left to right by doing this, making a kind of wave) |
| **and thankful** | draw a smile on your face, by your mouth, with the index fingers of both hands |
| **in adversity** | move your index fingers up towards your eyes and then move them down your cheeks as if they are tears, while putting your chine to your chest. |

**Game:**

**Play the following games:**

**We’ve All Got a Name Game-** have children sit in a circle, then chant “We’ve all got a name. A first and last name. Tell us your name and we will clap”, then roll the ball and have the child say their full name, then clap. **Then have the child say one thing they are thankful for.** Then it is their turn to roll the ball to the next person. Continue until everyone has gotten a turn.

**Magic Carpet-**One child sits on a blanket and the other children hold on to the sides of the blanket, with some adult help, and drag the blanket from one side of the room to the other. Each child gets a turn to ride the magic carpet and the others help to pull it. The child sitting on the blanket gets to control the speed by saying, “slower please”, “faster please” or “just right, thank you!”

Then introduce the art activity.

**Art Activity: Making thank you cards**

**Materials:** construction paper, stickers, markers

**Direction:** Each child makes a card for someone that they are thankful for and then parents help them write down reasons that they are thankful to that person.

“To thank God for His bounties consisteth in possessing a radiant heart, and a soul open to the promptings of the spirit. This is the essence of thanksgiving.”

- 'Abdu'l-Bahá