**Ruhi Grade 1**

**Lesson 22: Faithfulness**

*Slightly modified from Ruhi Grade 1 material*

Have children paint rock one color and then come and sit for the start of class (or have this done before class by teacher so is ready for craft towards the end of the lesson)

**PRAYERS**

Prayer Sharers

Review prayer taught in Lesson 18 (“O my Lord! O my Lord! I am a child of tender years…”)

If have already learned it, you could teach the following prayer:

**“Make firm our steps, O Lord, in Thy Path and strengthen Thou our hearts in Thine obedience.”**

We are walking in God’s Path. We are seeking His good pleasure. We want our actions, our steps, to be doing what He has asked us to do. What does God ask us to do- how do we know what that is? Through God’s great Teachers that leave us Writings to guide us. The Torah, Bible, The Quran are all examples of these Holy Writings, and in this Day, Baha’u’llah has also given us many, many Sacred Writings to guide our steps. He has asked us to be full of love for all humanity- everyone- without any regard for their color, religion or class. He has asked us to be unifiers. And He has asked us to obey His Teachings. When a thought of war comes, opposing it by a stronger thought of peace, a thought of hatred we must destroy with a more powerful thought of love. So, we want to walk firmly in this path. If we don’t walk firmly, what happens? We slip- which hurts a lot. Or we walk another path, which will never really lead us to happiness. So we ask in this prayer, Make firm our steps O Lord, in THY Path.

And then we want our hearts to be strengthened in what? In obedience to God. The Messenger of God in each age brings laws to help guide us on the right path. Some of these laws are eternal and never change, and some change as humanity changes and grows. Out of our love for God, we should follow these laws- like praying every day, reading the Holy Writings, not talking badly about people, and staying away from things that harm or hurt our spirit- because we know that God tells us what is best for us and to obey His laws is a protection to us. So we also ask to be strengthened in our obedience to Him.

(REPEAT prayer a couple of times and then SING- Joe Crone, Make Firm Our Steps song)

**INTRO TO VIRTUE OF FAITHFULNESS:**

Today we are going to talk about the spiritual quality of faithfulness. Here we are talking about being faithful to God. Has anyone heard of the word “covenant”? A covenant is a promise between two or more people or parties. God has made a covenant with us. God’s part of that promise is that He will never leave us alone without guidance. Whenever the world needs guidance- He sends a Messenger of God- or what Bahais call a Manifestation of God- and these holy Beings manifest- or make known to us- the Word and the Will of God for this day.

Our part in the Covenant with God is that we are to recognize this great Teacher of God in each age, and be faithful to His teachings, by arising to do what He has asked us to do.

Faithfulness is belief that stands up to the test of time.  It is starting out on a path and staying on it no matter how many times you stop or get distracted. Faithfulness is being like a rock in the midst of rushing waters. You stand firm no matter what.  It comes from really knowing and living what you believe. You walk your talk. When you are faithful you can be counted on and trusted.  You show up when you said you would show up. You keep your commitments regardless of what you would rather do. If you are faithful to your beliefs, such as belief in God, honesty or friendship, others can see your values in the way you act.

**SONGS:**

I Want to Be Happy  (from Ruhi Grade 1 lesson in Ruhi 3 book)

There is something you must know

In this Faith we have to show

We are men of deeds, not of words

Our very life should show our Faith to friend and foe

**CHORUS:**

**I want to be happy**

**I want to be strong**

**To be His servant**

**My whole life long**

**So, I must obey the laws of God**

**Yes, I must obey the laws of God**

There is something you must know

In this world of pomp and show

People are tired of empty speech

They want to see you practice what you teach

**CHORUS**

**GAME:** East Wind Blows

Begin with all the children in a circle sitting on mat. The circle should be wide enough to give all the children space to move when they are called.

All the children sit in a circle except one, who is chosen to be the game-caller (for the first round, this can be the teacher). The game-caller stands in the middle of the circle and calls out “The east wind blows on everyone who…”, continuing by referring to some characteristic that more than one child shares, such as brown eyes, black hair, blue pants, and so on.

All the children who share that characteristic must then get up and switch places with each other. **Each child must find a different seat from the one he or she was occupying before the call.** When the children get up, the game-caller tries to find a seat along with everyone else. Whoever is left standing at the end of the round then becomes the new game-caller.

Care should be taken that children do not push or collide with each other when switching seats.

**STORY illustrating the virtue of FAITHFULNESS:**

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a young boy, His family, which was part of the nobility of Persia, had a servant by the name of Iṣfandíyár. He was very loyal to the family, and they trusted him a great deal. When the authorities, out of prejudice and ignorance, had ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s beloved Father, Bahá’u’lláh, arrested, all of the family’s possessions were taken away. They were left with nothing, and anyone close to Bahá’u’lláh was in danger. Still, Iṣfandíyár continued to look after the family. Knowing that many officers would be looking for Iṣfandíyár, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mother urged him to leave the city. But Iṣfandíyár would not leave.

“I cannot go,” he said, explaining that he owed money to many shopkeepers for items he had purchased. “How can I go?” he asked. “They will say that the servant of Bahá’u’lláh has bought and consumed the goods and supplies of the storekeepers without paying for them. Unless I pay all these obligations, I cannot go. But if they take me, never mind. If they punish me, there is no harm in that. If they kill me, do not be grieved. But to go away is impossible. I must remain until I pay all I owe.”

For one month Iṣfandíyár went about in the streets and bazaars, selling small things he owed. When he had paid every last debt, he went to the family and said good-bye, for he knew he could stay with them no longer. A minister agreed to take him in and protect and shelter him during this dangerous time.

Many months later, Bahá’u’lláh was released from prison and He and His family were exiled from Persia by the authorities. They went to Baghdád, a city in the neighboring country. Iṣfandíyár, ever faithful to Bahá’u’lláh, journeyed to Baghdád to ask whether he could once again serve in His household. Bahá’u’lláh said to him, “When you left us, there was a Persian minister who gave you a place to stay when no one else could give you protection. Because he gave you shelter and protected you, you must be faithful to him. If he is satisfied to have you go, then come to us; but if he does not want you to go, do not leave him.”

Of course, Iṣfandíyár was so upright, so trustworthy and loyal, that the minister did not want him to go. “O Iṣfandíyár!” he exclaimed, “I am not willing that you should go, yet, if you wish to go, let it be according to your own will.” But Iṣfandíyár remembered Bahá’u’lláh’s words. He remained in the minister’s service until, some time later, the minister passed away and Iṣfandíyár once again returned to the family he so loved, serving ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the end of his days.

**MEMORIZING QUOTATION:**

A faithful soul never forgets its love for God. It is out of our faithfulness to Him that we always put forth effort to follow His teachings and obey His laws, even when it becomes difficult. So it is that we work hard to serve others and to do worthy deeds, with no other thought than attaining God’s good pleasure. For the faithful soul there is no greater joy than striving to please God. Let us memorize this quotation of Bahá’u’lláh:

**“Happy is the faithful one who is attired with the vesture of high endeavour and hath arisen to serve this Cause.”**

**Attired-** wear something (usually something special- like wearing your finest clothes)

**Vesture**

1. In some places, judges must wear a white wig and a long black robe in a court of law. They must wear the full vesture of judges.

2. Before leaving the palace, the prince puts on his sash and crown. He puts on his royal vesture.

**Endeavor**

1. The students decided to plant trees around the school. The community supported their endeavor by providing seedlings and soil.

2. Pierre and Arlene decided that they would climb to the top of the mountain. They knew that this would be a difficult endeavor, but they were determined to try.

High endeavor- service to humanity!

Arisen to serve this Cause- God’s Cause is the Cause of unity and peace among all humanity- we want to be peacemakers and builders of unity between people- by arising to serve this Cause- it means we are serving through our actions. We have to make that choice every day. **And we should make a joyous thing of the little services, because you can never tell which is little and which is big in God’s sight!**

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| **ART ACTIVITY:** Painting inspirational rocks  The Teachings of God for this day are all about unity and helping to heal the divisions between people in this world. So what are some words that remind you of what God wishes for you to do in the world?  Love  Kindness  Service  Faithful  Do Good  Obedience  Patience  Friendship  You get to pick the word that will remind you of what you need to do in the world to be faithful to God’s call to you. We are going to decorate stones that we can put in a special place to remind us of our mission in life.  Example: |  |



Can also do coloring sheet found in Ruhi lesson.