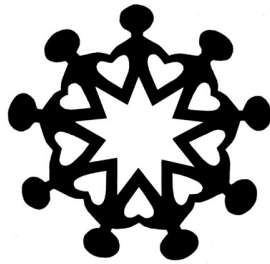


*Oneness*

# *Race Unity*



*Level Two*



# TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITY AND EQUALITY OF THE RACES CREATED FROM THE SAME DUST

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
DETACHMENT; COMPASSION; GENEROSITY**

Man is endowed with superior reasoning power and the faculty of perception; he is the manifestation of divine bestowals. Shall racial ideas prevail and obscure the creative purpose of unity in his kingdom? ... Man is endowed with powers to investigate reality, and the reality is that humanity is one in kind and equal in the creative plan. Therefore, false distinctions of race and native land, which are factors and causes of warfare, must be abandoned.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 118*

The children who are trained in the world embracing teachings of Bahá'u'lláh cannot but grow up to be a truly new race of men.

*Shoghi Effendi, Compilation on Bahá'í Education #145*

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



### KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings stating that all humanity has been created by God from the same dust
- To know that since all humanity is created from the same dust, there is no justification for any belief in the superiority of one race over another

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read, copy, and illustrate statements from the Bahá'í writings regarding the common origin of all people.
- Read talks which 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave on racial unity and equality.
- Memorize passages from the Bahá'í writings regarding the unity of the races.
- Listen to and sing songs regarding the unity and equality of the races.
- Recall stories about the qualities of unity and detachment.
- Retell stories in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's actions in the United States illustrate his commitment to racial harmony and the equality of all races.



### WISDOM OBJECTIVES

- To understand that there is a spiritual connection and interdependence among all humanity
- To understand that although there are some physical differences among the races, we are members of one human family
- To understand the fact that any distinctions among the races are artificial

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and discuss the Hidden Words which refer to the equality of all people in the sight of God. Invite students to express their understanding through art or poetry.
- Combine different colored beads in patterns to make jewelry or wall hangings.
- Research the Bahá'í writings for analogies pertaining to race unity.
- Use art and crafts to illustrate analogies presented in the talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- Use poetry and stories to demonstrate the essential oneness of humanity.
- Separate groups by any visible item, such as socks, hair, or eyes. Discuss 'Abdu'l-Bahá's observations of the unimportance of these distinctions.
- Read books such as *Terrible Things* by Eve Bunting and discuss the outcomes of extreme beliefs in racial differences.
- Encourage students to use the defining characteristics of the kingdom of God to show how humanity is of one race because all belong to the same kingdom of creation.
- Explore scientific evidence showing that items with the same properties are of the same matter.



## SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES

- To perceive that all people are equally subject to the various exigencies of human life
- To recognize that racial divisions are against the plan and purpose of God
- To perceive the connection between the quality of detachment and our understanding of racial unity
- To perceive the power of the words of Bahá'u'lláh to assist us when we are faced with feelings of distinction and separation from those other than ourselves

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use arts and crafts to explore visions of societies with racial amity and unity.
- Encourage students to identify their own essential life needs and relate these to the needs of all people. Invite them to express their learning through poetry and prose.
- Explore through the arts how racial division does not fit the plan of God.
- Invite students to meditate and reflect on the sacred writings that speak of racial unity.
- Discuss the feelings students have in unified friendships and as part of a united family. Compare this with their feelings about disunity and war.
- Invite students to record their observations of disharmony among people and consider ways to foster unity.
- Research the writings on detachment. Discuss how these relate to spiritual growth and our consciousness of the unity and equality of the races.



## ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To demonstrate certitude in our common spiritual source and our oneness as the basis for forming friendships
- To formulate and implement plans for self, family, and community to enable deeper understanding and application of the principle of the oneness of humanity
- To articulate to others the Bahá'í teachings on racial unity in their pure form
- To deliver clear arguments on racial unity from a spiritual and scientific perspective

### SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Plan presentations in which students recite verses on racial unity.
- Invite students to set goals for contributing towards racial unity in their community.
- Participate in community projects that promote racial unity and equality.
- Acknowledge students' efforts in sharing the Bahá'í teachings on racial unity.
- Acknowledge students' actions that demonstrate racial unity.
- Invite students to write poetry or prose about times they have recalled the words of Bahá'u'lláh about the importance of love and unity between all peoples, and how these words have assisted them to move forward in their understanding of the unity and equality of the races. Then, present these words at Feast or a devotional gathering.

## **TOPIC: CREATED FROM THE SAME DUST**

### **Sample Activities**

#### **ACTIVITY: THE EXIGENCIES OF HUMAN LIFE**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive that all people are equally subject to the various exigencies of human life

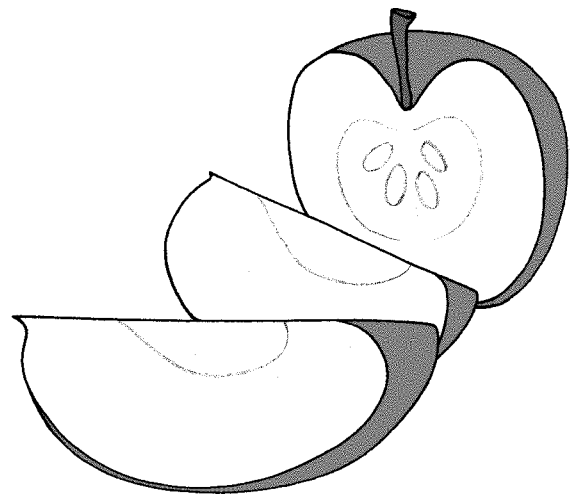
**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct Use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; Engaging the mind and heart; Use of science and nature; Use of stories; Use of questions

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- 1 apple or other whole fruit for each student
- Knife
- Cutting board
- Napkins
- stories of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Resource Pages 64-5

1. While the students watch, cut each piece of whole fruit into quarters. Then, without comment, distribute the fruit randomly among the students according to the following proportions: 25% get nothing; 25% get a small serving; 25% get a moderate serving; 25% get a large or very large serving. For example, if you have 8 students: Cut 8 apples into 32 sections. Give nothing or a few crumbs to 2 students; give 1 slice to 2 students; give 3 slices to 2 students; give 9 slices to 1 student and give 15 slices to 1 student.
2. Ask the students: What's wrong?
3. After allowing the students to describe the problem, invite them to fix it. Then explain that that this division of fruit approximates the way that food really is distributed among the people of the world. Many people in the world don't have enough food to eat, or proper clothing, or places to live. Yet the world, the wonderful creation of God, produces more than enough food and other necessities for everyone—just like there are plenty of apple slices in the room today. The problem is that things are not well organized!



4. Read aloud the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at least twice:

When we see poverty allowed to reach a condition of starvation it is a sure sign that somewhere we shall find tyranny. Men must bestir themselves in this matter, and no longer delay in altering conditions which bring the misery of grinding poverty to a very large number of the people. The rich must give of their abundance, they must soften their hearts and cultivate a compassionate intelligence, taking thought for those sad ones who are suffering from lack of the very necessities of life.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, p. 159*

5. Discuss: What balances and imbalances do we see in our communities and in our schools? Have you ever had the chance to share something with a person who really needs it? How do you feel when you do this? What about sharing friendship—have you noticed that some people at school have many more friends than others? Why do you think this is?

What are some ways that we can follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s advice to soften our hearts and take thought for ‘those sad ones who are suffering from lack of the very necessities of life?’ Is friendship a necessity of life? What examples can you remember of people going out of their way to make friends with others? What else can we share? Are there ways that we can also assist others with the practical necessities of life?

6. Read aloud the stories of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Resource Pages 64-5. Discuss: How did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá demonstrate these teachings in His daily life? How can we become more like ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

7. Whether individually or collectively, encourage the class—students and teachers alike—to plan practical action steps to express understanding that all people are equally subject to the various exigencies of human life. The options are many: actively cultivate a friendship with a person who seems to lack it; participate in a community-based service project; volunteer at a soup kitchen or homeless shelter.

8. Conclude with the following prayer:

O Lord God! Make us as waves of the sea, as flowers of the garden, united, agreed through the bounties of Thy love. O Lord! Dilate the breasts through the signs of Thy oneness, and make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life.

Verily, Thou art the Almighty, the Self-Subsistent, the Giver, the Forgiving, the Pardoner, the Omniscient, the One Creator.

*‘Abdu’l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 235*

### ACTIVITY: THE SAME DUST

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá’í writings explaining that all humanity has been created by God from the same dust

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that there is a spiritual connection and interdependence among all humanity

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of stories; Use of drama

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Resource Page 66
- Copies of Hidden Word No. 68, Resource Page 67
- Art supplies

1. Read aloud ‘The Teacher’s Story, Resource Page 66.
2. Discuss:
  - What is the point of the story?
  - Do you think the teacher is correct that people sometimes do not see people who are in need? Why or why not?
  - Do you think that there are “invisible” people in our town, community or

neighborhood? Who are they? Why do you think they are not seen?

- How does prejudice affect whether we “see” people or not? What people might be “invisible” because of prejudice?

**Activity continues on next page** ➔

## GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITY AND EQUALITY OF THE RACES

### TOPIC: CREATED FROM THE SAME DUST

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3. Read the story about Mother Teresa, Resource Page 66.
4. Discuss: What was Mother Teresa's attitude toward people who were "invisible"? Who else do you know that has this same attitude? What are some of the prejudices that we have seen in our community that might keep people from seeing the needs of others?
5. Provide the students with copies of Resource Page 67. Read the Hidden Word aloud twice. Then read it a third time and encourage students to state the meaning of each phrase in their own words. Provide time for the students to decorate this beautiful Hidden Word.
6. Invite the students to work in teams to develop a brief skit to illustrate the power of the principle of oneness to overcome the prejudices that lead to people being treated as if they are invisible. Encourage them to make these skits as realistic as possible to reflect actual strategies to resolve the problems in our community.
7. After all skits are shared, invite students to identify at least one practical idea from each skit that could be translated into action in our everyday lives. Encourage the students to privately select one such action to be carried out at home or school during the week.
8. At the next class, invite students to share the results of their efforts to demonstrate the principle of oneness in their lives.

#### ACTIVITY: ONE RACE

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know that since all humanity is created from the same dust, there is no justification for any belief in the superiority of one race over another

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To deliver clear arguments on racial unity from a spiritual and scientific perspective

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of science; Use of manipulatives; Use of peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

#### Materials Needed:

- Photographs of diverse people: Consider providing disposable cameras, taking students to a public place, and inviting them to take snapshots of the widest possible variety of people. Alternatively, borrow photograph books from your public library, refer to Bahá'í publications, or use magazines like *National Geographic* that provide a wide variety of human images. Gather the greatest possible variety of photographs to show the full range of human skin color.
- 12 or more clear plastic containers
- White cornmeal, yellow cornmeal, red Kool-Aid® powder, instant coffee or coca. Depending on availability, other types of flours, meals, and pigments could be used to gain the same effect.

1. Invite the students to read or recite from memory Arabic Hidden Word no. 68, Resource Page 67. Encourage them to think of examples from their recent experiences that demonstrate the truth that we are all one race, the human race.
2. Acknowledge that our culture includes the misunderstanding that there are many races, not just one, and that these races are based on

color. Invite the students to reflect on the different colors that are part of each human being. Then discuss: What "color" are human beings? It is likely that they will start by mentioning skin color, and possibly hair color, but help them to expand their responses to include the following: color of blood, color of internal organs, color of eyes, color of brain, color of soul or spirit.



3. From this discussion the students should come to the realization that human beings vary in color in some ways (skin, hair, eyes), share the same color in other ways (blood, organs, brain, etc.), and the soul or spirit has no color.
4. Explain that skin colors vary because different people have different amounts of a special substance, called melanin, in their skin. All people have melanin in their skin, but the amount varies. Freckles are high concentrations of melanin.
5. Refer the students to the photographs provided. In small teams, invite them to collect as wide a variety of human images, with as many different skin colors, as possible.
6. Be aware that students, because of social conditioning, may ‘automatically’ look for diversity of skin colors between ‘racial’ groups. Help them to expand their observation to discover and become more aware of the skin color variations within so-called ‘racial’ groups.
7. Encourage the students to combine their collections into a continuum of skin colors—from the darkest to lightest.
8. Notice that there are light-skinned Africans, for instance, and dark-skinned Europeans. Using diverse pictures with wide color variety and subtle shade variations, demonstrate that not all “white” people are the same shade, and not all “blacks” are the same shade of brown—in fact, “whites” may sometimes be darker than “blacks” and vice versa.
9. Invite the students to match their own skin color to one of the pictures. Students are often surprised at who they match in skin color. Assist the students to realize that they are part of this wonderful variation in human skin color, and that this variation is more diverse than “racial” concepts can explain.
10. Invite the students to work with you to illustrate how the wide variation in human skin color comes about.
11. Place the four different colored materials in four different plastic containers. Explain that these colors represent some broad variations in skin color that are sometimes said to be “races”—black, red, yellow, white.
12. Ask the students if, based on what they have observed, the four colors, as they are currently divided in the four containers, are adequate to accurately represent the color variations in humanity.
13. Invite the students to create mixtures of the colors in the plastic containers to match the continuum of pictures. Invite them to place these mixtures along the continuum of pictures to match the naturally occurring skin color variation.
14. Share the following information, taken from scientific journals:

“There is no genetic basis for race. All humans share 99.99 per cent of their genetic information and there is more variation within racial groups than between them.”

Philip Cohen, Andy Coghlan and Michael Le Page; “Genes That Count,” *The New Scientist*, 12 February 2001

“It is often the case that two persons from the same part of the world who look superficially alike are less related to each other than they are to persons from other parts of the world who may look very different.”

Savante Paabo, scientist-Human Genome Project, Max Planck Institute, “The Human Genome and Our View of Ourselves,” *Science*, 16 February 2001, 291:1219-1220
15. Explain that the mixing of different genetic material, from all of humanity, results in this variation in human skin color.

**Activity continues on next page** ➞

**TOPIC: CREATED FROM THE SAME DUST**

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16. Invite each team to use these materials and the Hidden Word to create a brief explanation of the fact that we are all one race, the human race. After a brief period for preparation, invite the teams to share their explanations with the class. Applaud all efforts.
17. Briefly discuss: Where and when can we share this information with others?
18. Encourage each student to find an opportunity to share this information with at least one other person before the next class. Remember to invite the students to describe their experiences at the beginning of the next class.

**ACTIVITY: ONE PHYSICAL PLAN**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the Bahá'í writings explaining that all humanity has been created by God from the same dust

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that although there are some physical differences among the races, we are members of one human family

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of Bahá'í sacred writings; use of science; use of art; use of logic and reason

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Illustrated human anatomy book from library, if available
- Resource Page 68
- Air-hardening clay
- Small gems or polished stones
- Assorted candles
- Matches

1. Read the words of Bahá'u'lláh:  
Ye are all created out of water, and unto dust shall ye return.  

*Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 72*
2. Follow with these words from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:  
We are one physical race, even as we are of one physical plan of material body—each endowed with two eyes, two ears, one head, two feet.  

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 299*
3. Discuss: What do these words mean? What other Bahá'í writings tell us how we were created?
4. Invite students to consider the physical plan of our material bodies. Share the information provided on Resource Page 68. Display illustrations from a book of human anatomy.
5. Encourage students to notice muscle systems, bones, and internal organs.
6. Invite students to think of every single person they have ever met, seen on television, or heard about. Discuss: Are all these diverse people built according to the same plan? Are there essential physical differences or just those of outward form and color? How does Bahá'u'lláh say we are all made? How does 'Abdu'l-Bahá say we are made? What does this tell us about people?

7. Share another passage from Bahá'u'lláh:

O Son of Being! With the hands of power I made thee and with the fingers of strength I created thee; and within thee have I placed the essence of My light.

Hidden Words, Arabic No.12

8. Invite the students to visualize the essence of God's light being placed within their physical beings, which He created.

9. Bring out lumps of clay. Demonstrate how to form a human figure: make a torso; add legs, arms and a head. As you form this figure, remind the students of the words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

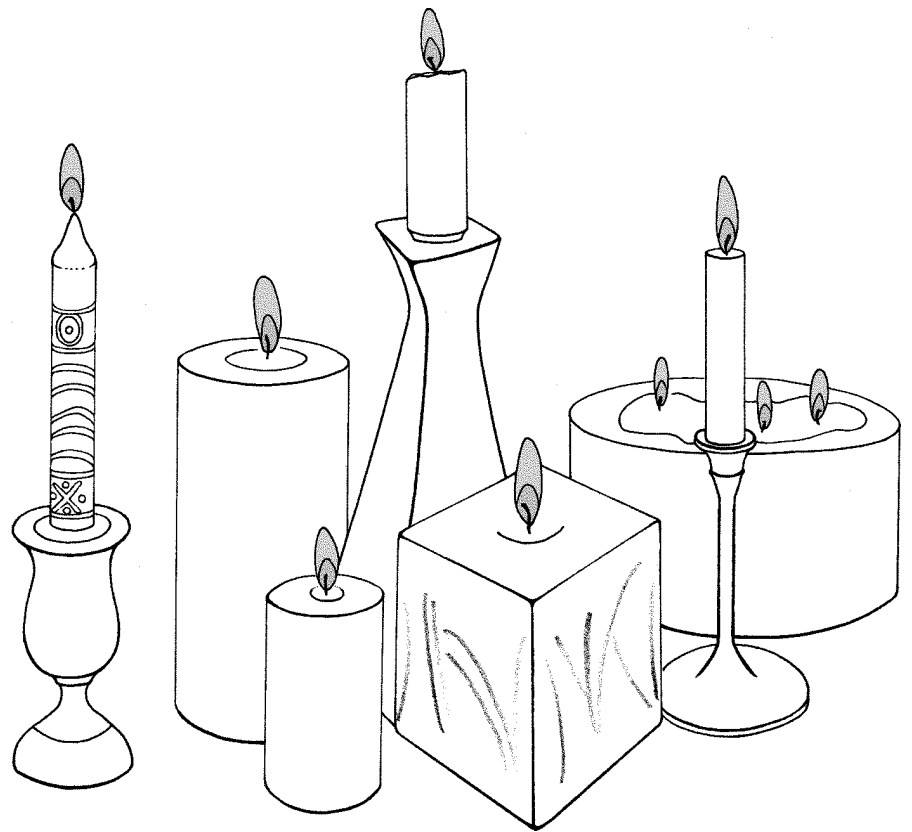
10. While repeating the words "and within thee have I placed the essence of My light," place a small gem or polished stone on the figure's chest, so that it is partly embedded in the clay. Ask: What could this gem represent?

11. Invite students to create their own clay figures and then to choose gems to place within the hearts. Set the figures aside to dry and harden.

12. Place a beautiful candle in the center of the room, light the candle, darken the room, and repeat the words "and within thee have I placed the essence of My light."

13. Discuss: How does the candle remind us of God's light? Which do we notice—the candle or the light?

14. Set out a variety of candles, of various colors, sizes and shapes: short, tall, skinny, fat, etc. Light them all; then darken the room again. Invite the students to again consider the flames as a symbol of God's light. Notice that the flames and their qualities are the same, no matter in what candle they are shining. Discuss: How are these candles like people? Can the light of God shine in everyone?



15. As a class, memorize this Hidden Word simply by reciting it over and over, while the candles continue to burn.

16. Encourage students to share this passage with their families and to recite it as part of the opening devotions for the next class.

## **TOPIC: CREATED FROM THE SAME DUST**

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### **ACTIVITY: A SPECIAL LOVELINESS**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand that any distinctions among the races are artificial

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive the connection between the quality of detachment and our understanding of racial unity

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To demonstrate certitude in our common spiritual source and our oneness as the basis for forming friendships

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of arts and crafts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Clay figures from the previous activity
- Names of students, placed in a basket
- Scraps of assorted fabric, yarn, ribbon, fur, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue

**Advance Preparation:**

Write the name of each student on a small piece of paper. Fold it and place in a basket.

1. Begin this activity with a recitation of the Hidden Words from the previous activity. Explain that this activity offers the opportunity to let the light of our good characters shine by practicing detachment and generosity. Invite each student to select the name of a student other than him- or herself from the basket.
2. Invite the students to decorate the clay figures they made in the previous activity as a gift for the student whose name they've selected. Invite them to carefully consider the special excellence, interests, and tastes of that individual and adorn the clay figure to represent these gifts.
3. Add hair, make clothing by cutting and gluing on swaths of fabric. The goal is not to create a portrait of the individual, but to prepare a gift for that person.

4. After completing these gifts, come together as a full group. Invite the students to present their gifts to one another. Read aloud the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and colour. . . .

So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different colour, white, black, yellow, brown and red—but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him. . . .

. . . Let us look rather at the beauty in diversity. . . . [Each] brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Paris Talks, pp. 44-5*



5. Discuss: How does the diversity of these clay figures bring out the “special loveliness” of each one? How does the diversity of human beings bring out the “special loveliness” of each one? How can we enjoy the beauty of each person’s “outward form and color,” while also showing our appreciation for the light within? What are some practical ways that we can look for and show appreciation for this light within ourselves, our friends, our family, people at school, and new people that we meet?
6. Encourage students to imagine themselves carrying out one of these actions this week, in a real-life situation. After a short period of imagining success, invite students to carry out their actions during the week and to tell one another about the results during the next class.

Resource Pages



‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Often when the family of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was about to sit down to dinner at night, the report would come of some unfortunate who was starving, and who had been overlooked in the visits of the day. Then quickly the hot appetizing meal would be bundled into a basket and rushed away to the suffering family, while ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would smile and say, “It does not matter for us, we had dinner last night, we shall have dinner tomorrow!”

Often He sent his bed to a feverish invalid whom he discovered, because it required thirty-six hours at least to procure a bed from Haifa, the nearest point of supply, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be perfectly comfortable wrapped in a blanket, and lying upon the floor of his room, or the roof of the house, while he would not have been able to sleep at all, conscious of a bedless invalid, feverish and pain-racked. He could not endure the sight of suffering which he was able to relieve.

When he reached the Occident, however, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá faced a condition which troubled him greatly, because it was beyond his power to assuage the misery he saw constantly about him. Housed luxuriously at Cadogan Gardens, London, he knew that within a stone’s throw of him were people who had never had enough to eat—and in New York there was exactly the same situation. These things made him exceedingly sad, and he said: “The time will come in the near future when humanity will become so much more sensitive than at present that the man of great wealth will not

enjoy his luxury, in comparison with the deplorable poverty about him. He will be forced, for his own happiness, to expend his wealth to procure better conditions for the community in which he lives.”

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá first arrived in England He was the guest of a friend in a village not far from London. The evident poverty around him in this wealthy country distressed him greatly. He would walk out in the town, garbed in his white turban and long Persian coat, and all eyes were centered upon this strange visitor, who, the people had been told, was “a holy man from the East.” Naturally the children were attracted to him, followed him, pulled at his coat, or his hand, and were immediately taken into his arms and caressed. This delighted them, of course, and children are never afraid of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but what pleased and amazed them still more was that when they were put down they found in their little hands a shilling or sixpence from the capacious pockets of “the holy man’s” long coat. Such bits of silver were a rarity in their experience, and they ran home with joy to tell the tale of the generous stranger from the Orient, possessed apparently of an endless store of shining sixpences.

The children crowded after him and so many sixpences were dispensed that the friend who entertained ‘Abdu’l-Bahá became alarmed, and talked the matter over with Miss Robarts, who was also a guest in the house. “It is a shame!” they said indignantly. “He comes to us

accepting nothing, and is giving to our people all the time! It must not go on!”

That day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had bestowed many sixpences, and people had come from the neighboring villages, bringing their children to receive the blessing from “the holy man,”—and of course the sixpences! About nine o’clock in the evening the ladies decided that no one else must see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that night. But as they waited outside the cottage, a man came up the path, carrying one baby, and with others clinging to him. When he asked for “the holy man,” however, he was told severely that he could not be seen, he was very tired and had gone to bed. The man sighed, as he said, “Oh, I have walked six miles from far away to see him. I am so sorry!”

The hostess responded severely, feeling that the desire for sixpences had prompted the journey perhaps more than religious enthusiasm, and the man sighed more deeply than ever, and was turning away, when suddenly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came around the corner of the house. The way in which he embraced the man and all the babies was so wonderful, that the hearts of the too careful friends melted within them, and when He at last sent away the unbidden guests, comforted, their hearts full of joy, their hands bursting with sixpences, the two friends looked at one another and said: “How wrong we were! We will never again try to manage ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!”

Perhaps the most beautiful encounters with the poor he had in the Occident were at the Salvation Army headquarters in London, and the Bowery Mission in New York. Here he

consoled the men for their poverty, saying: “Do not consider your poverty a degradation. The greatest of men have always been poor, the poets, and philosophers and benefactors of the race. Christ had not where to lay his head. The Messengers of God are ever overwhelmed by poverty and persecution. Moses was an outcast, and Mohammed a wanderer and an exile. Bahá’u’lláh suffered the utmost poverty and oppression, and I have known nothing but poverty and prison walls.”

In London he gave the men a sum for a New Year’s dinner which should duplicate the Christmas feast, and at the Bowery Mission he shook hands with each man at the close of the evening and gave him a quarter. A year afterward nearly every one of those men had kept his quarter because as one of them said:

“That was a heavenly man, and His quarter was not like other quarters, it will bring me luck!”

One result of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s charity was the example of personal contact which it established. He said: “If the rich should see for themselves the evil conditions which exist, they would become eager to alter them. It is necessary in relieving poverty to come into direct touch with its pain. Then the world will determine to abolish it.” . . .

. . . We cannot introduce the divine civilization by legislation alone, He says, there must be a change in the human heart before this is possible.

- *Star of the West*, Vol. 8, pp. 4-6

## **The Teacher's Story**

Once upon a time, a teacher asked her students: How do we know in a night that morning has dawned?

The students thought for a while.

“When I can see to eat my breakfast,” said one.

“When I can see to put on my shoes,” said the other.

“When I can see read my book,” another replied.

The teacher was not happy with any of the answers. She said, “I’ll tell you. We know that morning has dawned, when we can see our human brothers who have none of these things.”

## **Mother Teresa**

Mother Teresa was born in August 26, 1910 in Skopje, Albania. She was named Agnes Gonxha which means flower-bud. At the age of 18 Agnes made up her mind that all she wanted to be was a Christian missionary in India. She knew that to do this, she had to become a nun first. Agnes had no other plans for her future than to live a life of service and humbleness as a Catholic nun (a woman who devotes herself entirely to serving God and lives within a special religious order for life).

In 1929, Agnes entered this life of religious service and changed her name to Teresa. For 19 years, Sister Teresa lived the restricted life of a nun in a convent. But Teresa left the convent in 1948 to go to help the poor in India. Later four other women joined her and they called themselves the Missionaries of Charity. They decided that their religious order would be devoted to serving the poorest of the poor. Today the Missionaries of Charity is a big organization with many hospitals and clinics for the poor. It has more than 2,500 people working with the poor in more than 70 countries.

Mother Teresa’s first contact with the destitute was when she found a woman dying in the street, eaten by rats. She took the woman to a nearby hospital, but the people there were reluctant to take her. She was so insistent that they finally treated the woman. From then on, Mother Teresa decided to find a place for the dying and take care of them.

Mother Teresa began her Missionaries of Charity to help those living and dying in the streets with nothing to eat, nowhere to sleep, no money and no education. Since the beginning of her work, her nuns have picked up more than 54,000 dying homeless people from the streets of Calcutta and given them a place to die in the shelter of loving care and with dignity. Their hospitals and schools have served tens of thousands more.

Mother Teresa died in 1997 at the age of 87. She had suffered two heart attacks and had a disease that left her hands gnarled, but none of this had stopped her work.

“I choose the poverty of our poor people. But I am grateful to receive (the Nobel Peace Prize) in the name of the hungry, the naked, the homeless, of the crippled, of the blind, of the lepers, of all those people who feel unwanted, unloved, uncared-for throughout society, people that have become a burden to the society and are shunned by everyone.” —excerpt from speech by Mother Teresa accepting the Nobel Peace Prize (1979)

“The fruit of silence is prayer; the fruit of prayer is faith; the fruit of faith is love; the fruit of love is service; the fruit of service is peace.” —Mother Teresa’s business card



O CHILDREN OF MEN!

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is My counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.

Bahá'u'lláh, Hidden Words, Arabic No. 68



## One Physical Plan

1. All the human beings in the world are members of the same species (biological family). Despite all the obvious differences among people, there are no biological barriers among them.
  - a. All the men and women of the world could have children together and their children, in turn, could have their own children. All humans belong to the same race—the human race.
2. All human beings, regardless of where they live or how different they look, have the same origin and basic physical nature.
  - a. The first human ancestors were in Africa, several million years ago. These were the original ‘parents’ for all humans.
  - b. The reality is that all the people alive today—wherever they live—share, over and over again, the same ancestors. We are all direct relatives, although we may not be able to trace our ancestors easily.
  - c. Because we are all biologically similar, all human beings have 211 bones, about 60,000 billion cells, and about 100 organs (heart, liver, etc.).
  - d. There are different blood types (A, B, AB, O). For a blood transfusion between two people to be possible, the blood type must be the same. However, the blood types occur in all human ‘racial’ and nationality groups. The blood of a person from Zambia can save the life of a person from Canada or China.

This information is widely available in science textbooks. This version comes from the “All of Us are Related, Each of Us is Unique” exhibit sponsored by Syracuse University: <http://allrelated.syr.edu>

**LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star*, "What's in Your Skin? Melanin!" "Illusions" JA 99  
"Unityoids" MA 95  
"How Large Is Your Family?" JF 94  
"Best Friends" MA 93  
"What Is Racism?" "Race Unity Picnic" ND 91  
Hamanaka, Sheila, *All the Colors of the Earth*  
Kindersley, Barnabas and Annabel  
Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg, *God in Between*  
Wood, Douglas, *Old Turtle*  
*Uniting the Human Family*

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star*, "Walk With the Same Feet" SE 95

**Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star*, "My Skin" MA 93  
"Hooray for Skin" ND 91

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.



# TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITY AND EQUALITY OF THE RACES A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:  
LOVE, FAIRNESS, FRIENDSHIP**

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Daystar of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. The One true God, He Who knoweth all things, Himself testifieth to the truth of these words.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 14

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 45

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**



### **KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES**

- To become familiar with the analogies made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the beauty of the various peoples of the world and their composite harmony
- To know the contributions of the various peoples of the world to its scientific, technological, literary and artistic progress
- To become acquainted with some of the customs, manners, habits and ideas of diverse racial and cultural groups

#### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Read, copy and illustrate passages from the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that use analogies to describe the beauty and harmony of the peoples of the world.
- Study the contributions of the peoples of the world to human civilization.
- Learn the folk dances of different peoples. Learn the origin and purpose of each dance.
- Invite students to share special objects from their own cultural backgrounds and talk about their origins and meanings.
- Sing songs about unity in diversity.



### **WISDOM OBJECTIVES**

- To understand how the diversity of the various races contributes to the beauty and continuous advancement of human civilization
- To gain insight into how differences reinforce harmony, diversity strengthens love, and how multiplicity is the greatest factor for the coordination of human affairs
- To understand how diversity increases creativity and efficiency

#### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Research the Bahá’í writings to discover references to various races and their contributions to humanity.
- Visit museums and cultural centers to research the contributions of various peoples to the scientific, technological, and artistic progress of human civilization. Encourage students to teach one another about their discoveries.
- Encourage students to discover how diversity strengthens harmony through the study of the interrelatedness of the world of nature, for example, the rain forest. Explore the consequences of removing links in the chain.
- Invite students to create an art project or story alone and then in groups diverse in age, gender, nationality, or race.



## **SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVES**

- To perceive how appreciating the contributions of the various races enables one to value the special qualities and gifts of all, including one's own culture
- To perceive how the development of all the various peoples of the world is safeguarded within Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the unity of the human race

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Invite students to study the specific art forms of another culture, such as American Indian sand painting, and learn what the various elements of the painting signify.
- Research one's own lineage and share one's findings with a partner from another background.
- Encourage students to phrase questions that they can ask to deepen their appreciation of other cultural groups.
- Study the writings of the Universal House of Justice about Feasts reflecting culture. Watch newsreels and read articles about how Bahá'ís in various parts of the world celebrate Feasts and Holy Days.



## **ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES**

- To develop personal plans for expanding one's understanding and appreciation of different cultural groups
- To formulate plans for opportunities to interact and relate with people of other races
- To interact with those from other races in a spirit of inclusiveness, love, and friendship and as members of the same family
- To share with others the Bahá'í view on the harmony and beauty of the races and the joy and progress achieved through the unity and interaction of the various races

### **SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

- Encourage students to familiarize their Bahá'í community with various cultures by making presentations of their research through talks, artistic presentation, preparation and sharing of food, etc.
- Invite students to create teaching plans to increase the diversity of the local community.
- Participate in multi-cultural gatherings or celebrations of the various peoples of the world.
- Invite students to prepare and deliver speeches on unity in diversity.

## **TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

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### **Sample Activities**

#### **ACTIVITY: BEAUTIFUL FRUIT**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To become familiar with the analogies made by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regarding the beauty of the various peoples of the world and their composite harmony.

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá’í sacred writings; Use of science and nature; Use of the arts; Use of peer teaching

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- photographs of flower gardens and orchards, with a variety of plants
- diverse selection of fresh fruit, preferably 1 different type per student, including fruit less common for your region
- chalkboard or chart paper and chalk or markers
- writing paper and pencils
- paring knives and cutting boards
- paper plates
- bowls and spoons for students
- large bowl with serving spoon
- clean-up cloths or sponges
- copies of Resource Page 81

1. Distribute copies of Resource Page 81. Read the passage aloud, pausing to display photographs of flower gardens and orchards as these are mentioned in the passage.
2. Invite the students to use the photographs as visual aids as they describe the meaning of the passage, paragraph by paragraph, in their own words.
3. Repeat the last phrase, “each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all,” as you take different fruits out of a bag and place them on the table.
4. Arrange the fruits to demonstrate how the contrasting colors, shapes, and textures bring out the beauty of the others.
5. Encourage students to take turns arranging the fruits, to “show to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.” Discuss: What is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá teaching us with this metaphor?
6. Invite the students each to select a piece of fruit and place it where they can see it and touch it.
7. Provide writing paper and pencils. Encourage the students to list all the positive characteristics of their particular fruits. Some categories to consider include:
  - fragrance
  - exterior color, shape, patterns, designs, and texture
  - inner color, texture, and pattern
  - flavor—use adjectives and similes to describe this quality
  - how it can be eaten—raw, cooked, sliced, whole, juiced, etc.
  - the tree or plant on which it grows or the flower that becomes the fruit
  - memories associated with this fruit, its tree, or its preparation
8. Invite the students to arrange these words and phrases into a poem, rap, or song, in praise of their fruits. Collect students’ songs, raps, or poems to use in the next step.



**TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

9. Invite students to “bring out by contrast the qualities” of the other fruits, and “show to advantage the special loveliness of each and all,” by contributing their individual fruits to a collective fruit salad.
10. Remind students to wash their hands and the fruit. Provide knives and cutting boards, and supervise cutting the fruit into bite-size bits. Encourage students to reserve their prepared fruit pieces until all the fruits have been cut. Encourage the students to clean their work space.
11. Invite the students into a circle, with the large bowl in the center. Students should bring their prepared fruit and their poem, rap, or song.
12. Go around the circle, inviting students one at a time to contribute to the group’s salad by first reading, rapping, or singing about their fruit, and then adding that fruit to the bowl.
13. Mix the salad thoroughly and serve everyone. Encourage students to appreciate the flavor, color, and sweetness of each fruit while enjoying the diversity of colors, flavors, textures, and fragrances of all the fruit.
14. After enjoying the fruit and cleaning the work area, look again at Resource Page 81. Discuss: In which ways are people like beautiful fruit? A garden? An orchard? How does our experience with beautiful fruit assist us to see the beauty of diversity in human beings?
15. Encourage the students to bring examples of the special loveliness of human diversity to share at the next class. Encourage them to look for the beauty in differences of habits, cultures, modes of thought or expression, or any other differences that attract them. Remember to invite students to share these examples at the beginning of the next class.



**TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

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**ACTIVITY: ADVANCING CIVILIZATION**

**KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE:** To know the contributions of the various peoples of the world to its scientific, technological, literary, and artistic progress

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of independent investigation and private study; Use of peer teaching; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN. OR MORE AS DESIRED

**Materials Needed:**

- Research materials on diverse cultures: library books, *National Geographic* magazines
- Encyclopedias
- Copies of Resource Pages 82-5
- Computer with internet connection for web-based research, if available
- World map or globe
- Writing paper and pens
- Chalkboard or chart paper and markers

**Advance Preparation:**

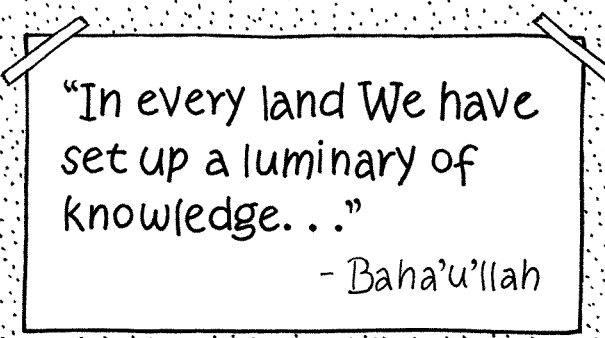
Write the following quotations on chart paper or chalkboard and display in the classroom:

In every land We have set up a luminary of knowledge. . . .

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 150

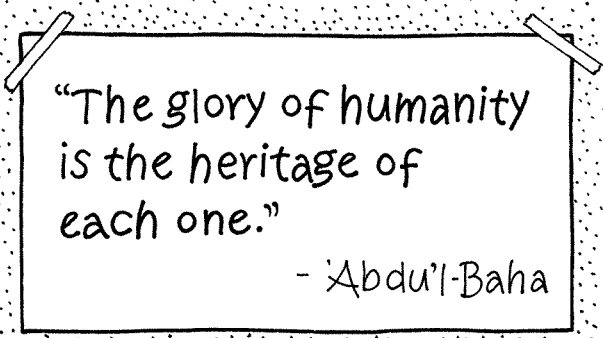
The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 132



"In every land We have set up a luminary of knowledge. . ."

- Baha'u'llah



"The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one."

- 'Abdu'l-Baha

1. Read aloud the posted quotations at least twice and invite the students to discuss their meaning. These quotations are also used in the next activity.
2. Explain that the class will explore the truth of these teachings by researching some of the contributions of various cultural groups to the progress of civilization. Display the world map or globe and invite the students to consider how they could select countries or groups to study, so that the class as a whole explores a wide diversity of groups and their contributions to human civilization.
3. Provide a variety of resource materials: books on varied human groups and their contributions to civilization, *National Geographic* magazines, encyclopedias, copies of Resource Pages 82-5, and a computer with Internet access, if available. Individually or in small groups, encourage the students to browse through these resources and select a human group that they find intriguing. Record their choices, assisting the class as a whole to explore the widest possible human diversity.

4. Assist the students as needed to discover information such as their group's religious heritage, ancient civilizations, contributions to science, technology, visual arts, music, dance, literature, stories, and brief biographies of important individuals.
5. Encourage each individual or team to prepare an outline so that they can describe some of the contributions of this group to human civilization. Circulate among the students to assist as needed.
6. Explain that they will introduce these wonderful contributions to the rest of the class and then to the community at large. Assist each student or team to write a brief summary of some of the main facts they have discovered to share with the class.
7. Invite each individual or team to share the results of their investigation with the class. Encourage the class to acknowledge points of special interest in each presentation.
8. Then discuss: What new interesting facts did we learn today? Why is it important to know about the contributions of all peoples to human civilization? When and where could we share some of this information with others?
9. Encourage the students to share at least one specific fact at home or at school during the week. Remember to invite the students to share the results of their efforts at the beginning of the next class.

### **ACTIVITY: PLANNING A MURAL TO HONOR ALL PEOPLE**

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand how the diversity of the various races contributes to the beauty and continuous advancement of human civilization

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation

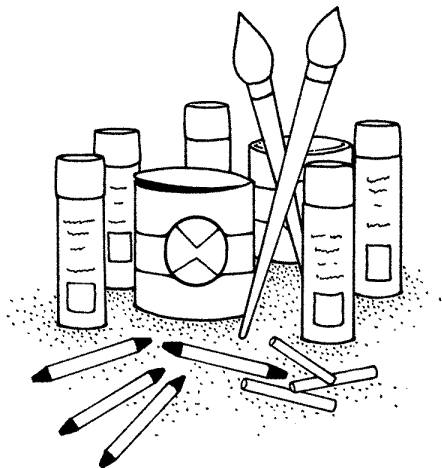
SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

**Materials Needed:**

- Chalkboard or chart paper and chalk or markers

**Advance Preparation:**

Identify possibilities for displaying the completed mural: At a devotional meeting or fireside? What materials will you use: paints, chalk, markers, crayons, spray paint on a wall—graffiti style, other options? Will you use large sheets of paper, cloth, cardboard, old paneling, or even a wall? Will the mural be permanent or temporary? Indoors or out?



1. Display in the classroom the quotations listed at the beginning of the 'Advancing Civilization' activity. Invite students to read them aloud and explain their meaning.
2. Explain that the class will plan and then create a mural based on the research done in the previous activity to honor the contributions of all people to human civilization.

**Activity continues on next page** ➔

**TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

3. As you plan, invite the class to practice using collaborative, consultative planning methods. Model the process of “unity in diversity” that the mural will display. Record your plans on chart paper or chalkboard. Some possibilities to explore:

- How will the mural reflect the historic contributions of the people studied? How will the mural express everyone’s research?
- What is a meaningful theme or message for the mural—so that the mural is not only aesthetically beautiful, but also educates, challenges, and inspires the viewers? Will you incorporate a short quotation from the Bahá’í writings?

- How will you share the many responsibilities for designing and producing the mural? Who will design the images? Who will transfer the images to the surface? Who will paint? Who will hang? Who will do other tasks?
- Will there be an “unveiling” or public showing? If so, plan and create a presentation, perhaps the devotional gathering described below, to go along with the mural.
- How will the contributions of all students—not just the “artists” in the class—unite to create a work of real beauty?

**ACTIVITY: CREATING A MURAL TO HONOR ALL PEOPLE**

**SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE:** To perceive how appreciating the contributions of the various races enables one to value the special qualities and gifts of all, including one’s own culture

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Use of art; Use of stories; Use of questions

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 60 MIN. OR MORE AS DESIRED

**Materials Needed:**

- Art supplies, as identified in the mural plans above
- *The Central Figures: Bahá’u’lláh, vol. 2*

1. Implement your plans (described above) to create the mural.
2. While the students are working on the mural, read the story, “Not in My Class” in *The Central Figures: Bahá’u’lláh, vol. 2*.
3. The story gives one example of how a person responded to a situation where another person was not being shown proper respect as a human being.
4. Ask the class to brainstorm additional ideas that could have been used to deal with the situation in the story. What questions could they ask that would make other people think?
5. If they were writing the story again, to show a different way of dealing with the same situation,



how would they write the story? What would happen?

## TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY

### ACTIVITY: A DEVOTIONAL GATHERING—OPEN TO ALL, HONORING ALL

**WISDOM OBJECTIVE:** To understand how the diversity of the various races contributes to the beauty and continuous advancement of human civilization

**ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE:** To interact with those from other races, nationalities and religions in a spirit of inclusiveness, love, and friendship and as members of the same family

**INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS:** Direct use of the Bahá'í sacred writings; Use of consultation; Use of teaching and service

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN. + DEVOTIONAL GATHERING

**Materials Needed:**

- Resource Pages 86-7
- Bahá'í books
- Musical instruments or song sheets, if available
- CD/tape player and diverse collection of recorded music, if available
- Materials to beautify the environment, if possible from diverse cultures
- Refreshments, if desired

1. Invite the students to memorize one or both of the following quotations:

The bright day is coming. The nucleus of the new race is forming.

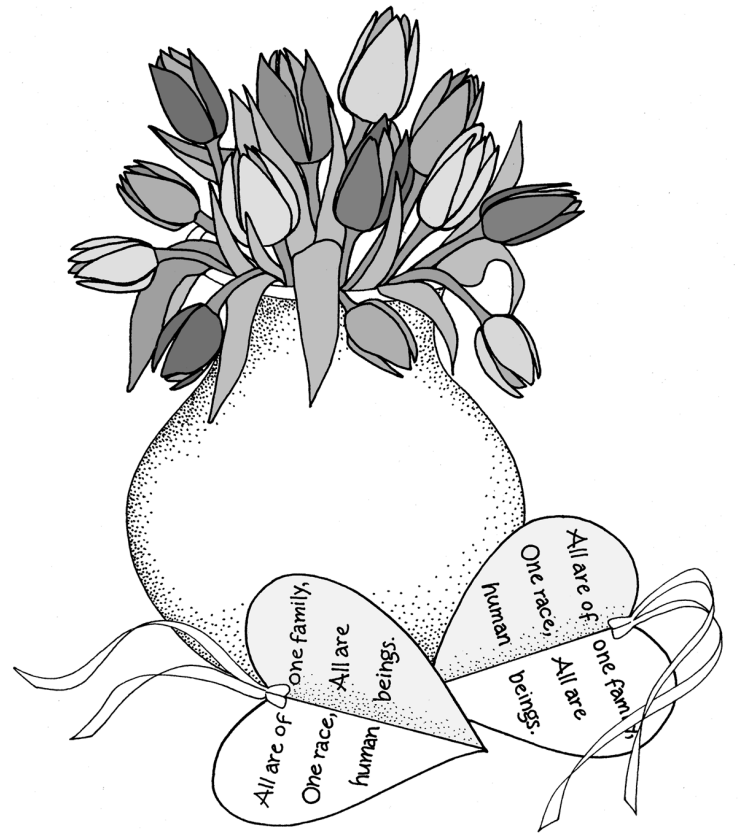
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá'í Scriptures*, p. 548.

All are of one family, one race; all are human beings.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 55

Consider making beautiful quotation cards using these words, as gifts for the guests of the planned devotional gathering.

2. Discuss: What do you think ‘Abdu’l-Bahá means when He says that “a new race is forming”? In what ways are old concepts of race worn out and not very accurate or useful?
3. Explain that we make a powerful contribution to the world by sharing our understanding that the various peoples of the world provide a composite harmony and beauty to humanity and that there is in reality only one race, the human race. One way to do this is to plan a devotional gathering and invite our friends and families to enjoy these beautiful teachings with us.



Activity continues on next page 

**TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

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4. Invite the students to remember the devotional meetings that they have enjoyed most. What were the factors that helped them to have this enjoyable experience? Were the readings long or short? Was there recorded music or singing? How was the environment made beautiful? How was reverence expressed?

5. Drawing upon these happy memories, consult about ways to make this devotional gathering meaningful to friends and family members.

Then explore what new elements they would like to add to this devotional meeting to express the composite beauty and wonderful contributions of all the human race:

- Which passages from the Bahá'í writings would they like to share?
- Who will read or recite memorized passages?
- How will they incorporate music?
- How will they create a feeling of reverence?
- How will they beautify the environment?

- Would they like to display their mural or other art?
- Would they like to share some information about the contributions of all people to human civilization?
- When and where will they hold the devotional gathering?
- How will they invite friends and family?
- How will they make the guests feel welcome?
- Will they serve refreshments?

6. Consider incorporating some of the quotations on Resource Pages 86-7 in the devotional gathering.

7. After carrying out the devotional gathering, debrief the experience: What were successes to repeat? What did they learn? What would they do differently next time? Acknowledge the contributions of each student to this devotional gathering.

Resource Pages



## Diversity in the Human Family

Consider the world of created beings, how varied and diverse they are in species, yet with one sole origin. All the differences that appear are those of outward form and colour. This diversity of type is apparent throughout the whole of nature.

Behold a beautiful garden full of flowers, shrubs and trees. Each flower has a different charm, a peculiar beauty, its own delicious perfume and beautiful colour. The trees, too, how varied are they in size, in growth, in foliage—and what different fruits they bear! Yet all these flowers, shrubs and trees spring from the self-same earth, the same sun shines upon them and the same clouds give them rain.

So it is with humanity. It is made up of many races, and its peoples are of different colour, white, black, yellow, brown and red—but they all come from the same God, and all are servants to Him. This diversity among the children of men has unhappily not the same effect as it has among the vegetable creation, where the spirit shown is more harmonious. Among men exists the diversity of animosity, and it is this that causes war and hatred among the different nations of the world.

Differences which are only those of blood also cause them to destroy and kill one another. Alas! that this should still be so. Let *us* look rather at the beauty in diversity, the beauty of harmony, and learn a lesson from the vegetable creation. If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, colour and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of colour is what makes for charm and beauty. So is it with trees. An orchard full of fruit trees is a delight; so is a plantation planted with many species of shrubs. It is just the diversity and variety that constitutes its charm; each flower, each tree, each fruit, beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, pp. 44-5



## HISTORIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO CIVILIZATION

The history of humanity represents a great exchange of creative energy and talent. All the world's peoples and regions have made significant contributions to the common heritage of humanity. The familiar features of daily life and modern society have been developed and created by diverse cultures and peoples.

“The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 132

INSTRUCTIONS: Below is a small sampling of contributions made by the world's peoples and regions. This information includes only some of the most ancient contributions to human civilization and sources of modern cultures. There is much more to explore!

- Depending on your team's interests, explore the contributions of your group to human civilization. Use the “tidbits” on these pages to begin your exploration.
- How will your team describe in your own words the contributions of the group you're studying to humanity's heritage and progress?

### HUMANITY'S FIRSTS

- Earliest Evidence of Human Ancestors: East Africa—more than 4 millions years ago
- Earliest Evidence of Modern Humans: Europe—more than 100,000 years ago
- Earliest Evidence of Religious Activity: Middle East and North Africa—careful burial of the dead, more than 100,000 years ago; Europe—ritual burials, 60,000-40,000 years ago; Middle East—evidence of systematic religious belief, more than 8,000 years ago
- Earliest Writing: Middle East and North Africa—more than 5,000 years ago; possible writing found in South Asia—more than 7,000 years old
- Earliest Evidence of Art: Sub-Saharan Africa—pigment making, 400,000-350,000 years ago; cave paintings in Europe—between 42,000-30,000 years ago; Sub-Saharan Africa—30,000 years ago; East Asia—30,000 years ago
- Earliest Evidence of Astronomical Observation: Europe—record of phases of the moon carved on animal bone, 30,000 years ago

**GLOBAL POTLUCK** Do you know where your favorite foods originated? You might be surprised to know that some foods that are considered ‘traditional’ by one culture, use food plants and animals that were originally domesticated somewhere else! Think of eating as participating in a potluck on a global scale! What is your favorite food? Where did your favorite or traditional foods come from? Here's just a few examples:



**GOAL: TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNITY AND EQUALITY OF THE RACES**

**TOPIC: A COMPOSITE HARMONY AND BEAUTY**

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- **GRAINS AND NUTS:** Sub-Saharan Africa—millet, sorghum, peanut; America—corn; Middle East/North Africa—oats, wheat, almond; Asia—rice.
- **VEGETABLES AND TUBERS:** Sub-Saharan Africa—yams; America—tomatoes, potatoes, cassava; Middle East/North Africa—radish; Asia—egg plant; Europe— asparagus, carrot.
- **FRUITS:** America—avocado; Middle East/North Africa—olive, grape, fig, date, apple, cherry, pear, plum; Asia/Pacific—banana, coconut, orange, peach.
- **LEGUMES:** Sub-Saharan Africa—peanut; America—beans; Middle East/North Africa—pea, lentil; Asia—soybean.
- **BEVERAGES AND SWEETS:** Sub-Saharan Africa—coffee; America—chocolate, vanilla; Asia—tea, sugar cane.
- **LIVESTOCK AND FOWL:** Sub-Saharan Africa—donkey; America—turkey; Middle East/North Africa—horse, sheep, goat, cattle, camel; Asia—pig, buffalo, dog, goose, chicken.
- **CLOTH:** America—cotton; Middle East/North Africa—flax (linen), wool.

**MANY ANCIENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEARNING AND SOCIETY**

- **NUMBER SYSTEMS WHICH INCLUDED ZERO:** America (Mayan), Asian (India), Middle East/North Africa (Arab)
- **DEVELOPMENT OF ALGEBRA:** Asia (India)—foundation concepts; Middle East/North Africa—development of algebraic system
- **FIRST GREAT RESEARCH LIBRARY:** North Africa (Alexandria)
- **PEOPLES WHO KNEW THE EARTH WAS ROUND BEFORE THE VOYAGES OF COLUMBUS:** Just about everyone! The Mayans and Greeks had even calculated the circumference of the earth very close to its real value.
- **EARLY ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATORIES:** Many peoples developed physical means to study the movement of sun, moon and planets. Some early observatories were in Middle East (Babylonian); America (Mayan, Aztec, Cahokia); Asia (China); Europe (Greece, British Isles); North Africa (Egypt)
- **EARLIEST GREAT CITIES:** Sub-Saharan Africa (Axum, Zimbabwe, Mali); America (Caral, Teotihuacán, Maya, Cahokia); Middle East and North Africa (Memphis, Thebes, Damascus); South Asia (Harrappa); North Asia (Xi'an); Europe (Cadiz)

**WORLD HERITAGE SITES** Every people and region has priceless treasures that make this planet a special place. The United Nations strives to officially recognize the most significant of these places as World Heritage Sites. To date, 754 places in 128 countries have been recognized as World Heritage Sites. These are the “most treasured” places of cultural, natural, and historical significance on the planet. Information about these sites is available at: <http://whc.unesco.org/nwhc/pages/sites/main.htm>. For a printed summary, see the October 2002 issue of *National Geographic* magazine.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following websites are only a few of the Internet resources that contain vast amounts of information for researching the contributions of different people from diverse backgrounds. Because website addresses change frequently, if the websites listed no longer exist, use key words with a search engine to find related resources at other current sites.

World History Projects—The United Nations has facilitated the preparation of a general history of humanity, as well as histories of the various regions of the world. You can find out more about this effort to create a “common story” of humanity at: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/history>

World History Archives: Original documentary evidence of humanity’s heritage  
<http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/index.html>

World History at Your Fingertips: Links on humanity’s history, by region  
<http://faculty.fullerton.edu/nfitch/history110b/world2.html>

Ten Lies About Indigenous Science: Fairly Examining American Indian Contributions  
<http://www.kporterfield.com/aicwtw/articles/lies.html>

Resources for American Indian Contributions and Heritage  
<http://www.kporterfield.com/aicwtw/excerpts/antibiasbooks.html>

Biographies of Notable American Indians  
<http://www.infoplease.com/spot/aihmbioaz.html>

Famous Indigenous People  
<http://fiha.org/people.html>

Biographies of Historic and Current Powerful American Indians  
<http://www.powersource.com/gallery/people>

Famous Indian Inventions  
<http://inventors.about.com/cs/nativeinventors>

Historic Contributions of American Indians  
[http://www.saskschools.ca/~aboriginal\\_res/bibc.htm](http://www.saskschools.ca/~aboriginal_res/bibc.htm)

Ancient Wonders of Africa: PBS special on ancient African societies

[http://www.pbs.org/wonders/fr\\_wn.htm](http://www.pbs.org/wonders/fr_wn.htm)

African-American Almanac Biographies

<http://www.toptags.com/aama/bio/bio.htm>

African-American Heritage in the United States

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bhistory>

African-Americans in the Sciences

<http://www.princeton.edu/~mcbrown/display/faces.html>

Famous Black Inventors

<http://inventors.about.com/cs/blackinventors>

Hispanic Heritage in the United States

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/hispanic>

Famous Hispanics in World History

<http://coloquio.com/famosos/alpha.htm>

Chinese Inventions and Inventors

<http://inventors.about.com/cs/chineseinventors/index.htm>

Biographies of Famous Women

<http://www.nwhp.org/tlp/biographies/biographies.html>

Women Who Changed History

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/women/index.htm>

Men and Women of Diverse Backgrounds—Contributions to Science

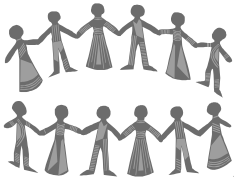
<http://www.lib.rpi.edu/dept/library/html/resources/courses/minorsci.htm>

Multicultural Achievers-Biographies

<http://www.cis.yale.edu/ynhti/curriculum/units/1998/5/98.05.01.x.html#b>

Awesome Library of Biographies on Diverse People in Many Fields

[http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Classroom/Social\\_Studies/History/Biographies.html](http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Classroom/Social_Studies/History/Biographies.html)



## A Devotional Gathering—Open to All, Honoring All

So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 14

In every land We have set up a luminary of knowledge, and when the time foreordained is at hand, it will shine resplendent above its horizon, as decreed by God, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Bahá'u'lláh, *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 150

The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 132

Consequently, when thou traversest the regions of the world, thou shalt conclude that all progress is the result of association and cooperation. . . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 302

In former days, in the time of the Buddha and Zoroaster, civilization in Asia and in the East was very much higher than in the West and ideas and thoughts of the Eastern peoples were much in advance of, and nearer to the thoughts of God than those of the West.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 69

In the early ages of Islám the peoples of Europe acquired the sciences and arts of civilization from Islám as practiced by the inhabitants of Andalusia. A careful and thorough investigation of the historical record will establish the fact that the major part of the civilization of Europe is derived from Islám; for all the writings of Muslim scholars and divines and philosophers were gradually collected in Europe and were with the most painstaking care weighed and debated at academic gatherings and in the centers of learning, after which their valued contents would be put to use. . . .

The purpose of these references is to establish the fact that the religions of God are the true source of the spiritual and material perfections of man, and the fountainhead for all mankind of enlightenment and beneficial knowledge.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 89-94

In the splendor of the reign of Solomon their [Jewish] sciences and arts advanced to such a degree that even the Greek philosophers journeyed to Jerusalem to sit at the feet of the Hebrew sages and acquire the basis of Israelitish law. According to eastern history this is an established fact. Even Socrates visited the Jewish doctors in the Holy Land, consorting with them and discussing the principles and basis of their religious belief. . . . Hippocrates and other philosophers of the Greeks likewise visited Palestine and acquired wisdom from the Jewish prophets, studying the basis of ethics and morality, returning to their country with contributions which have made Greece famous.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’i World Faith*, p. 272

Attach great importance to the indigenous population of America. . . . These Indians, should they be educated and guided, there can be no doubt that they will become so illumined as to enlighten the whole world.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, pp. 31-2

Bahá’u’lláh once compared the coloured people to the black pupil of the eye surrounded by the white. In this black pupil you see the reflection of that which is before it, and through it the light of the Spirit shines forth.

In the sight of God colour makes no difference at all, He looks at the hearts of men. That which God desires from men is the heart. A black man with a good character is far superior to a white man with a character that is less good.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, p. 68

The age has dawned when human fellowship will become a reality.

The century has come when all religions shall be unified.

The dispensation is at hand when all nations shall enjoy the blessings of international peace.

The cycle has arrived when racial prejudice will be abandoned by tribes and peoples of the world.

The epoch has begun wherein all native lands will be conjoined in one great human family.

For all mankind shall dwell in peace and security beneath the shelter of the great tabernacle of the one living God.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 370

The Lord of all mankind hath fashioned this human realm to be a Garden of Eden, an earthly paradise. If, as it must, it findeth the way to harmony and peace, to love and mutual trust, it will become a true abode of bliss, a place of manifold blessings and unending delights. Therein shall be revealed the excellence of humankind, therein shall the rays of the Sun of Truth shine forth on every hand.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 288

This American nation is equipped and empowered to accomplish that which will adorn the pages of history, to become the envy of the world. . . . I pray that this may come to pass, and I ask the blessing of God in behalf of you all.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 103

O Thou Provider! The dearest wish of this servant of Thy Threshold is to behold the friends of East and West in close embrace; to see all the members of human society gathered with love in a single great assemblage, even as individual drops of water collected in one mighty sea; to behold them all as birds in one garden of roses, as pearls of one ocean, as leaves of one tree, as rays of one sun.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, and Thou art the God of strength, the Omnipotent, the All-Seeing.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Bahá’í Prayers*, p. 182

LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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**Stories & Articles:**

*Brilliant Star*, “The Black Rose,” “Beyond Zebras” JA 99  
“Questions and Answers with Kevin Locke” ND 98  
“Questions and Answers with Sean Hinton” SO 98  
“Music from the Heart, Language of the Soul” ND 97  
“A Day to Remember” JA 97  
“Welcome to Limbe” ND 96  
“Welcome To NABI” SO 96  
“Strong and Joyful” MA 96

“Let’s Have a Unity Fair!” MJ 96  
“Fitting Into the Hoop of Life” MJ 94  
“Human Alert!” “Shy Boy” MA 95  
“World Music” JA 95  
“Family Reunion” JF 94  
“Bahá’ís Around the World” MA 93  
Spier, Peter, *People  
Uniting the Human Family*

**Worksheets and Coloring Pages:**

*Brilliant Star*, “Tasty Traditions” JA 99  
“Let’s Have a Unity Fair!” “Greetings” MJ 96  
“Be a Friend” JF 92  
*Unity Flows from Every Color, a Coloring Book for the Whole Family*

**Activities:**

*Brilliant Star*, “Let’s All Get Along Together Pudding” JA 99  
“Sand Art” SE 98  
“Let’s Have a Unity Fair!” “Bring on the Food!”  
“Anisa—El Arbol de la Vida,” “3-D Mapping” MJ 96

“People of the Garden” ND 95  
“World’s Comeliest Puppies,” “Strength in Action” SE 95  
“New Wedding Traditions,” “Family Match” JF 94  
“Hands of Humanity” MA 93

**Music:**

Bahá’í Gospel Singers, *We Have Come to Sing Praises*  
*Brilliant Star*, “The World’s Children” JA 99  
“I Have Found Bahá’u’lláh” MA 98  
“We Are All One” JA 96  
“Places in the World” MJ 96  
“We Have Come to Sing Praises” MA 96  
“Variety” SO 92  
Grammer, Red, *Down the Do Re Mi*, “Brothers and Sisters”

Grammer, Red, *Teaching Peace*, “Places in the World,” “Hooray for the World,” “Listen”  
Price, Tom, with various artists, *Lift Up Your Voices and Sing, Vol. 2*, “We Will Have One World,” “World Citizens;” *Vol. 3*, “We Are One,” “Toko Zani,” “One Planet, One People, Please”  
Sears, William, with Seals and Crofts, *Lote Tree*, “One Planet, One People, Please”

**Games:**

*Brilliant Star*, “Go Serve!” “Who Started It?” MJ 96

“The Race Unity Game” MA 95 and Game Kit

**Drama:**

*Brilliant Star*, “The World’s Comeliest Garment” SE 95

**Poetry:**

*Brilliant Star*, “The Anniversary” MA 98  
“Dream Dance” ND 97

“A House in Lome/Division in Africa” MA 96

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.