

Program Materials Overview

The Program

The program, developed by the Ruhi Institute, is based on the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh is regarded by Bahá'ís as the most recent in a line of Messengers from God, which includes Moses, Zoroaster, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Muhammad. The aim of Bahá'í special religious instruction is to contribute to the awakening and development of the spiritual nature of every child. The instructors, who are trained volunteers and registered with the Department of Education, use 'hands-on' activities to instruct. All lessons have the following elements:

- Study and memorisation of prayers and quotations from the Bahá'í Writings
- Cooperative games or drama
- Music
- Storytelling
- Art

Central Tenets of the Bahá'í Faith

A central tenet of the Bahá'í Faith is the oneness of God, the oneness of religion, and the oneness of humanity. The equality of men and women is a significant Bahá'í principle. The Bahá'í Writings emphasise the value of education as the key to material and spiritual progress. At the personal level, the importance of daily prayer, independent search for truth, and high moral standards are stressed. Bahá'ís recognise that true religion is in harmony with reason and the pursuit of scientific knowledge.

The Nobility of Human Beings

Bahá'u'lláh teaches that all human beings are created noble. All have the capacity to know God's Messengers, to obey Their laws and to progress spiritually. No child is incorrigible. All can be good and all can develop spiritual qualities.

The Development of Character

To help students grow spiritually largely means the development of good qualities or virtues. Virtues such as kindness, honesty, love and courtesy, which are the building blocks of character, are explored in depth in Bahá'í religious instruction. The development of spiritual qualities, or virtues, in individuals is the foundation of a peaceful world.

Program Materials - Level 1

Bahá'í religious instruction at Level 1 focuses on the spiritual attributes or virtues common to the world's major religions. Bahá'ís believe that every child is a storehouse of virtues waiting to be

developed. By noticing when a child is practising a virtue, and by encouraging a child to practise the virtue, we support the child in their spiritual development. So, for example, lesson 2 of level 1 is about justice. Following time spent memorising a prayer, the children sing a song about justice, study and memorise a quotation about justice, hear a story that illustrates this theme, play a cooperative game, and then colour in a picture that also illustrates this theme, or express creatively their understanding of this virtue through drawing.

Program Materials – Level 2

At the second level the lessons take up some aspect of the conduct that is a manifestation of the qualities addressed in the previous level; so the first level explores a number of spiritual qualities and the second level explores how these would be applied and would influence our behaviour in daily life. The second level program material is divided into seven sets of 3 lessons each and the topics addressed are:

- Maintaining a prayerful attitude
- Adhering to the laws of God
- Seeking knowledge
- Living in harmony with others
- Being a good friend
- Devoting one's life to service
- Engaging in consultation

Program Materials – Level 3

Lessons at the third level are offered with the aim of introducing to the children the lives and missions of the Messengers of God. In this sense, these lessons are intended to build on what was learned earlier by establishing a connection in the minds of the children between the knowledge of God acquired through His Messengers and the habits of praiseworthy conduct they are striving to develop. Students are taught that all faiths come from the one God; that they are like chapters of one book - the title is different but the story continues. Therefore, at the third level, the lives and teachings of the founders of the major faiths of the world are briefly addressed from a Bahá'í perspective. The lives of Bahá'u'lláh and His Forerunner, the Báb are also covered in more depth.

Further Information

For further information contact: Regional Institute Board for South-Eastern Australia:
ph 0400485575 or email rib@sea.bahai.org.au.
For further information on the Bahá'í Faith visit www.bahai.org.au.