

The Bahá'í Faith



Photocopiable worksheets Set D

for teachers of R.E.

Produced by Ann and Paddy Vickers for the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop

In collaboration with the Bahá'í Religious Education Agency



Illustrations by Elena Appleton



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Information for Teachers

The Bahá'í Faith is the world's seventh largest religion. The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi (the "Lotus Temple") is currently the world's most visited building and the striking Bahá'í gardens on the slopes of Mount Carmel are becoming more well-known. These worksheets give basic information about the history, beliefs and practices of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í emphasis on the oneness of humanity and its acceptance of the divine origin of the world's major religious systems, may make it a useful topic for pupils to study as part of their Religious Education programme.

This series of photocopiable masters sets out to provide teachers of both primary and secondary schools with accessible materials which can readily be adapted and built upon. The simple publication format allows the teacher to store his or her additional material alongside these printed pages.

These worksheets are mainly intended for Key Stages 2 and 3 but some teachers may find them suitable for certain purposes within Key Stage 4.

The Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop allows the photocopying of pages marked "copiable page" for educational use within the educational establishment which has purchased this copy. (In the case of purchase by a local Bahá'í community for its own use, the pages may be copied for use by all the classes which are run by that Bahá'í community.)

These worksheets have been produced in collaboration with the Bahá'í Religious Education Agency (BREA), which is an arm of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom. BREA provides advice for R.E. teachers and can be contacted at brea@bahai.org.uk.

Photographs are reprinted with permission of the Bahá'í International Community and have been reproduced from <http://media.bahai.org>.

See Appendix 1 for a list of websites which provide further information on the Bahá'í Faith.

Books about the Bahá'í Faith can be ordered from:
www.bahaibooks.org.uk.

See Appendix 2 for details of leaflets available.

**Published by the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop,
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www.warwickbahaibookshop.co.uk**



The Nineteen Day Feast

On the first day of every Bahá'í month, in other words once every nineteen days, the Bahá'ís in each area come together in a meeting called the "Nineteen Day Feast".

This consists of three parts – the spiritual, business and social parts, and they are all equally important.

The spiritual part consists of prayers and readings, maybe in several languages, read by various members of the community.



The business part is where the Bahá'ís share news, discuss the Fund, and make plans. Every Bahá'í has the right to speak, including children and visitors.

The social part is where everyone talks together, shares food and often entertainment. Everyone should enjoy one another's company.



Activity

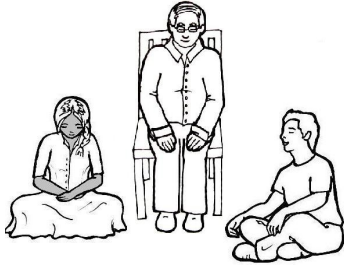
In which part of the Feast should the following happen:

Activity	Which part of the Feast?
Chat	
Singing	
Planning	
Prayers	
Eating	
Sorting out finance	
Reading the Bahá'í Writings	



Community Life

Apart from the Nineteen Day Feast which is the main meeting of the Bahá'í community, there are other regular meetings which cater for everyone.



Bahá'ís hold regular devotional meetings, at which prayers are said. These meetings help to bring a more loving and spiritual community life. Everyone is welcome, whether or not they are Bahá'ís.

Bahá'ís also invite other people to their study circles, where a group of people discuss writings on the meaning of life, using a workbook. They also study some of the Bahá'í teachings.



There are special activities for younger people. Bahá'ís set up classes for children, in which the children are taught how to tell right from wrong.

Bahá'ís consider that the 11-15 age group are at a very special stage in their development, in which most of them have a very strong sense of justice. Therefore, all over the world, the Bahá'ís are setting up junior youth groups, aimed at directing all this energy into making the world a better place.



Activity

1. Why do you think that young people are particularly interested in justice (fairness)?
2. Justice is very important to Bahá'ís. Why do you think this is?



Holy Days

The Bahá'í calendar has 19 months of 19 days each. That makes 361 days. There are also 4 extra days (or 5 in a leap year) which come before the last month in the year. These are for parties and for giving presents. There are 9 Holy Days when Bahá'í children often stay off school:

New Year's Day (Naw Ruz)	March 21 st
The First Day of Ridván	April 21 st
The Ninth Day of Ridván	April 29 th
The Twelfth Day of Ridván	May 2 nd
The Declaration of the Báb	May 23 rd
The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	May 29 th
The Martyrdom of the Báb	July 9 th
The Birth of the Báb	October 20 th
The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	November 12 th

Activity

Using the information above, fill in the dates in the table below.

Description	Date
This is when the Báb was born	
The day when the Báb announced His mission, and the start of a new age	
The day when the Báb was executed	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh was born and is often celebrated with a party	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Promised One, in the Garden of Ridván, where His tent was pitched	
This is the day when His family was able to join Him in the Garden of Ridván	
The day when Bahá'u'lláh and His family left the garden and started the journey to Turkey	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh died, at 3a.m.	
This is the New Year, and the Spring Equinox.	



Houses of Worship

All Bahá'í Houses of Worship have nine sides, with nine doors and nine paths, because every path can lead you to God. When the one in Chile is completed, there will be one in every continent. They are large buildings, and are open to people of any religion. They have 3 levels. The lowest level represents the world of humanity, the middle level is the world of the Messengers of God and the top level is the world of God.

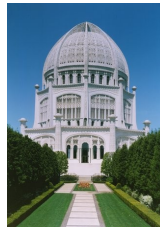
In the House of Worship there will be readings from all the sacred books, not just the Bahá'í scriptures. Only the Word of God will be heard—no talks or sermons.

No musical instruments are allowed in a House of Worship— only the human voice. But the human voice can make beautiful music and each House of Worship has its own choir. Individuals will also sing prayers as part of the programme.

A House of Worship is also open for silent, individual prayer.



Kampala, Uganda



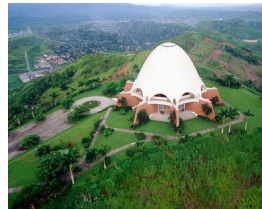
Wilmette, USA



Frankfurt, Germany



Sydney, Australia



Panama



Apia, Western Samoa



New Delhi, India



Chile

Activity

1. Why do you think that no talks are allowed in the House of Worship?
2. Why do you think that no musical instruments are allowed in the House of Worship?
3. Design your own House of Worship. Remember they need to have 9 sides and 3 levels.



Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage is a journey with the purpose of spiritual development. In most religions there are special sites which believers may wish to visit.



Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh

The highlight of a Bahá'í pilgrimage is the visit to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, at Bahjí, in the Holy Land. This is near the town of Akká. For Bahá'ís, this Shrine is the holiest place on earth and it is where Bahá'ís turn when they say their special prayers.

Only a few miles away, in the city of Haifa, is the Shrine of the Báb. He is buried below the floor of the central room. Bahá'u'lláh's son `Abdu'l-Bahá is buried in the room in front of Him. When people go to pray in the Shrines they remove their shoes, as a sign of respect.



Shrine of the Báb

Both shrines are surrounded by beautiful gardens. Although Bahá'ís can make short visits to these places at any time, there is a proper, organised, pilgrimage lasting 9 days which has to be booked in advance. People on this pilgrimage are able to visit various places associated with Bahá'í history, and have special times at the shrines. There are no rituals involved in the pilgrimage but there is a special prayer to be said at the two Shrines. In the future, the pilgrimage will include visits to the House of the Báb in Iran and the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Iraq.

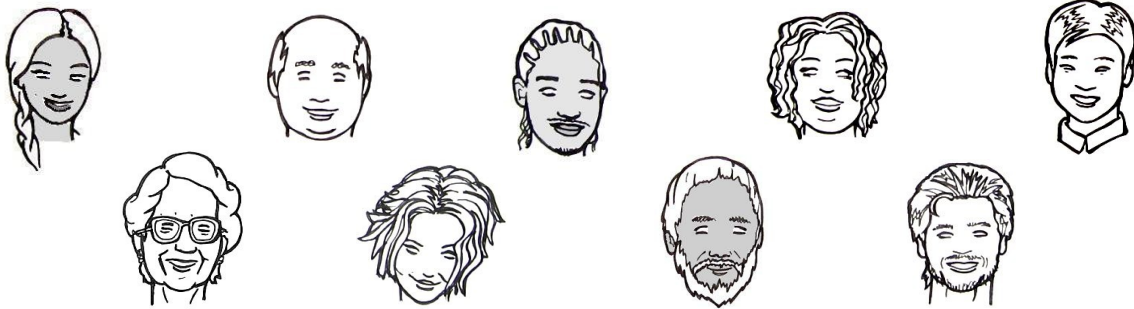
Activity

- Make up a set of questions you could ask someone coming back from a Bahá'í pilgrimage. You might like to ask questions such as:
- Is a pilgrimage different to a holiday? If so, how?
- Do you feel closer to God now you have been on pilgrimage?



Organisation

The Bahá'ís have no priests of any sort, but in any town where there are enough Bahá'ís, they elect nine people to be the Local Spiritual Assembly.



In each country the Bahá'ís elect a National Spiritual Assembly of nine people too. These Assemblies are there to help sort out every kind of problem.

The National Spiritual Assemblies elect the Universal House of Justice, which has offices in Haifa, in the Holy Land.

Elections

All adult Bahá'ís can vote for their Local Assembly. The vote is secret and no-one suggests anyone as a candidate. There are prayers before an election as it is a spiritual choice. Bahá'ís should vote for people they know who, among other things, have the best balance of the following qualities:

- Selfless devotion
- A well-trained mind
- Mature experience

Activities

- Looking at the qualities listed above, which of the four people below do you think would be the best person to vote for?
- A) A young man who is very organised but often prefers to go out with his friends.
- B) A young woman who is very devoted and has a degree in chemistry.
- C) An elderly lady who always attends meetings but doesn't always understand what is happening.
- D) A middle-aged doctor who faithfully attends every meeting.



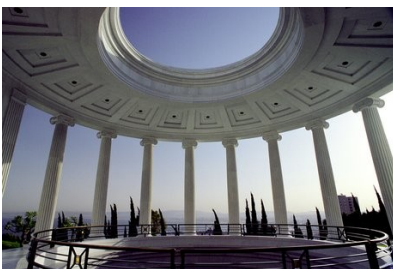
Bahá'í World Centre

Bahá'u'lláh was sent to the Holy Land by the authorities and this is where He ended His life. He was in prison in the city of Akká and He also visited Haifa, across the bay. The Bahá'í holy places are in this area, and have been made very beautiful with large gardens.



Because Bahá'u'lláh was sent here, this is still the Bahá'í world centre. The main buildings are in a curve on the side of Mount Carmel. This building is like a museum, where Bahá'u'lláh's original writings are kept, together with some personal things.

This is the building where the Universal House of Justice meets and has its offices. It is also where it receives guests such as prime ministers and presidents. The Universal House of Justice is the Bahá'í body which looks after the Bahá'í world.



This is a view from inside one of the other buildings, which is like a library. The buildings are all based on the Ancient Greek style of architecture, which is very beautiful, but also very practical for a hot country.

Bahá'ís can visit some of these buildings when they go on pilgrimage. They are very close to the Shrine of the Báb.

Bahá'ís can also spend time as volunteers to help in the offices or in the gardens.

Activity

1. Why is the Bahá'í World Centre in the Holy Land?
2. What jobs do you think the volunteers could do?



Woman

One of the basic principles of the Bahá'í Faith is that women and men should be valued equally. Women are better than men at some things, and men are better than women at others, but in most things they are just as good as one another. What matters is that they are treated equally.

“Divine Justice demands that the rights of both sexes should be equally respected since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of heaven.”

Bahá'ís do not believe in arranged marriage. The man and woman should be free to choose one another. A Bahá'í marriage should be a partnership, where decisions are made jointly. The husband normally has the main responsibility for providing for his family, and the wife has the main responsibility for bringing up the children to be happy and healthy. But these roles can be shared or changed if it suits the couple.

Boys and girls should both go to school, but if the parents can't afford to send all of their children, they should send the girls because they will become mothers and will educate their children.

Bahá'ís do not have priests, and women have an equal say in the Bahá'í community. Bahá'ís believe that when women have an equal voice in the world, they will be a great influence for peace. The world in the future will have a proper balance of masculine and feminine qualities which will bring great benefits to everyone:

“Humanity is like a bird with two wings... the one male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong... the bird cannot fly...”

Activity

1. Why do you think women will be a great influence for peace?
2. List one thing where women are usually better than men, another one where men are usually better than women, and 4 where there is no difference.
3. Give an example of where masculine and feminine qualities could be balanced to make things better in the world.



The Environment

Bahá'u'lláh said that:

“Nature is God’s will.”

and:

“Nature in its essence is the embodiment of My Name, the Maker, the Creator.”

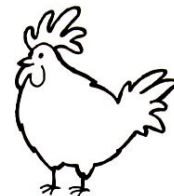
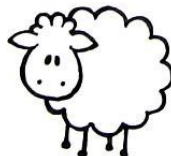
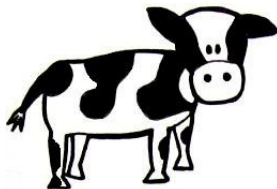
Bahá'ís believe that nature should be respected and protected. Many problems, like climate change, pollution and deforestation take no notice of national borders. They have to be tackled by the whole of mankind working together.

Bahá'ís believe that the world's wealth needs to be shared out more fairly, so that poor people do not need to destroy their environment in order to live.

Farming

Bahá'u'lláh taught that farming is the most important industry. As farming produces the food which keeps us alive, this must obviously be true. Bahá'ís want a system of support for farmers to help them cope with drought, floods and other problems.

Bahá'ís believe that our natural food is what grows out of the ground, so in the future people will gradually stop eating meat. This will also help the environment, because it takes more land to raise animals to eat than to grow food to eat.



Children should be brought up to be kind to animals. Bahá'u'lláh said:

“Show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every creature.”

Activity

1. Write down 5 things which you could do in your life to make your local environment better.
2. Do you think that there is any cruelty to animals in the world? Think of 3 examples and write about them. Do you think bringing children up to be kind would get rid of cruelty?



Appendix 1 - Useful Websites

The following websites provide further information on the Bahá'í Faith which may be of use to teachers of R.E.:

<http://www.bahai.org>

The official Web site of the Bahá'í International Community, offering information about the Bahá'í Faith and its worldwide community to the general public, as well as to journalists, academics, and researchers.

<http://www.bahaullah.com>

This contains details on the life of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Writings.

<http://info.bahai.org>

Bahá'í Topics, an information resource including a brief introduction to the Bahá'í Faith, its teachings, history, and community activities, in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Persian, and Arabic.

<http://reference.bahai.org>

The Bahá'í Reference Library, containing downloadable versions of all the authoritative texts of the Bahá'í Faith in English, Persian and Arabic.

<http://news.bahai.org>

The Bahá'í World News Service, reporting on news, activities, and developments around the world.

<http://media.bahai.org>

The Bahá'í Media Bank, a collection of more than 2,500 usable, high-resolution images of historical figures, holy places and buildings, and contemporary community activities. All photographs within this publication are from this website.

<http://library.bahai.org>

The official Web site of the International Bahá'í Library in Haifa. The site contains information about the Library's catalogue and collections, policies and services.

<http://statements.bahai.org>

A collection of statements offering the Bahá'í perspective on contemporary issues and themes, submitted by the Bahá'í International Community to United Nations agencies and conferences.

<http://www.onecountry.org>

One Country is the online newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. The site contains numerous in-depth feature stories on the United Nations, noteworthy social and economic development projects, environmental efforts, and educational programmes.

<http://terraces.bahai.org>

The history and purpose of, and useful visitor information about the garden terraces at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa.



Appendix 2 - Leaflets

The Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop produces a wide range of A4 3-fold leaflets, in a standardised two-colour format, many of which are suitable for classroom use. For the most part, these concentrate on one area of Bahá'í belief, ideals or practice. The price is 10p per leaflet, plus postage. The Bookshop will send out orders of any size, single or multiple copies. The list below indicates for which Key Stages each leaflet may be appropriate:

GENERAL (INTRODUCTORY)

The Bahá'í Faith-What Is It?	2 3 4
The Bahá'í Faith-Being A Bahá'í	3 4
The Bahá'í Faith-How It Began	2 3 4
Cyflwyno'r Ffydd Bahá'í [<i>Welsh</i>]	2 3 4
The Bahá'í Faith - What's in it for me? **	3 4
The Bahá'í Faith – A New Religion for a New Age **	3 4
Bahá'u'lláh - The Promised One	4
Bahá'u'lláh - Messenger Of God	4
Bahá'u'lláh [<i>simple text</i>]	3 4
** full colour	

SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS

The Nature of God	4
Prayer and Meditation	3 4
The Life of the Soul	4
Why Are We Here?	3 4 5
The Meaning of Suffering	4 5
Words of Inspiration [<i>quotations</i>]	4 5
Good and Evil	3 4 5
Fasting and the Bahá'í Fast	3 4
Health & Healing - A Bahá'í View	4 5

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER RELIGIONS

All Religions Are One	2 3 4 5
The Return of Christ	3 4
Hinduism and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4
Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4
Sikhism and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4
Islam and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4
Judaism and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4
Christianity and the Bahá'í Faith	3 4

continued...



Appendix 2 - Leaflets

Continued...

MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

Bahá'í Marriage	3 4 5
Family Life	3 4 5
Food and Farming	3 4 5
Treatment of Animals	3 4 5
Caring for the Environment	4 5
Sustainable Development	5
Consultation	4 5
Bahá'í Administration	4 5
The New World Order	3 4 5
God's Promise To Humanity	4
World Peace	3 4 5
Freedom From Terrorism	3 4 5
After Communism-What Next?	5
World Citizenship	3 4 5
The New Age	5
The New Millennium - A Bahá'í View	4 5
Space - The Final Frontier?	4 5
One Human Race [<i>on racism</i>]	3 4 5
The Status of Women	3 4 5
Religion and Science	3 4 5
Economics - A Bahá'í Approach	4 5
Bahá'í Education	4 5
Law and Order	3 4 5
Freedom Of Speech	4 5
The Bahá'í Centenary	3 4
The Bahá'í Faith & Queen Victoria	2 3 4
The Future of Monarchy	3 4 5

'PRESENTATION' series

A6 single fold, 5p each:

Bahá'í Prayers [<i>9 short prayers</i>]	2 3 4 5
Life after Death	3 4 5

The Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop can be contacted at:

The Haven, 6, Welsh Road West, Southam, Warwickshire, CV47 0JN,
or by telephone on 01926 817291.

Orders and enquiries also via www.warwickbahaibookshop.co.uk.

The text of these leaflets can also be viewed at www.warwickbahaibookshop.co.uk.