

1.

What are we trying to achieve?

In 2s read each of the following quotes carefully. Discuss what the statement implies about our aims for the classes, and make notes for reporting back your ideas. Spend 2 or 3 minutes on each quote, considering carefully what it means. 20 mins

Afterwards spend several minutes reporting your ideas to the rest of the group.

“We have decreed, O people, that the highest and last end of all learning be the recognition of Him Who is the Object of all knowledge”

(Baha'u'llah: The Kitab-I-Aqdas, page 57)

“The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying Their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.”

(Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, pages 156-157)

“But the indispensable basis of all is that he should develop spiritual characteristics and the praiseworthy virtues of humankind. This is the primary consideration.”

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, page 282)

“But education is of three kinds: material, human and spiritual. Material education is concerned with the progress and development of the body, through gaining its sustenance, its material comfort and ease. This education is common to animals and man. Human education signifies civilization and progress -that is to say, government, administration, charitable works, trades, arts and handicrafts, sciences, great inventions and discoveries and elaborate institutions, which are the activities essential to man as distinguished from the animal.

Divine education is that of the Kingdom of God: it consists in acquiring divine perfections, and this is true education; for in this state man becomes the focus of divine blessings, the manifestation of the words, "Let Us make man in Our image, and after Our likeness." This is the goal of the world of humanity.”

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Some Answered Questions, page 8)

“Our meaning is that the friends must direct their attention toward the education and training of all the children so that all of them, having, in the school of true learning, achieved the power of understanding and come to know the inner realities of the universe, will go on to uncover the signs and mysteries of God, and will find themselves illumined by the lights of the knowledge of the Lord, and by His love. This truly is the very best way to educate all peoples.”

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Education, page 277)

“Every child is potentially the light of the world - and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance. From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God's love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.”

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, pages 130-131)

Part 2 To be a Bahá'í

30 mins

Read the following quotation, and then consult on the questions.

5 mins

“ O thou who gazest upon the Kingdom of God! Thy letter was received and we note that thou art engaged in teaching the children of the believers, that these tender little ones have been learning The Hidden Words and the prayers and what it meaneth to be a Baha'i.

The instruction of these children is even as the work of a loving gardener who tendeth his young plants in the flowering fields of the All-Glorious. There is no doubt that it will yield the desired results; especially is this true of instruction as to Baha'i obligations and Baha'i conduct, for the little children must needs be made aware in their very heart and soul that `Baha'i' is not just a name but a truth. Every child must be trained in the things of the spirit, so that he may embody all the virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God. Otherwise, the mere word `Baha'i', if it yield no fruit, will come to nothing.

Strive then to the best of thine ability to let these children know that a Baha'i is one who embodieth all the perfections, that he must shine out like a lighted taper - not be darkness upon darkness and yet bear the name `Baha'i'.”

(`Abdu'l-Baha: Selections ... `Abdu'l-Baha, page 143)

1. `Abdu'l-Bahá assures us that the instruction given will yield the desired results. He says this is especially true in two areas -- what are they?
2. The children must be aware in their heart and soul that Bahá'í is not just a name but a What?
3. Why must the children be trained in the things of the spirit?
4. We must strive to let the children know that a Bahá'í is one who

We are told that our aim is for the child to ‘embody all the virtues and become a source of glory to the Cause of God’ . Together brainstorm what these virtues are, and what will make them this source of glory.

5 mins

Part 3

The National Curriculum

30 mins

We have looked at the aim of becoming truly Bahá'í in character. But we also want the children to become functioning members of the administrative system, with a thorough understanding of how it works, as well as having a knowledge of the history of the Faith.

“The deepening and enrichment of the spiritual life of the individual believer, his increasing comprehension of the essential verities underlying this Faith, his training in its administrative processes, his understanding of the fundamentals of the Covenants established by its Author and the authorised Interpreter of its teachings should be made the supreme objectives of the national representatives responsible for the edification, the progress and consolidation of these communities.”

(Shoghi Effendi: Letters to Aust. and New Zealand, page 93)

Aims of the Curriculum

When we start to look at detailed aims we can be quite daunted by the enormity of it. To help us the National Curriculum has simplified and organised all the elements into a usable document that we will be referring to as we go on.

Turn to page 28. The second half of the page summarises the aim of the education we are trying to give. Take turns reading from: “Perhaps, more simply,”.... to the end of the page. (This is reproduced in the appendix, page 2, for those who do not have a curriculum.)

Attainment Targets

The aims of the National Curriculum are called attainment targets. Take turns reading from the last para on p29 ...”Before we get into the details...” right through to the bottom of p31. (This is reproduced in Appendix 3)