

ONENESS THEME

(Many of the musical selections, memory verses, dramatic activities, and games from the unity theme apply to this theme as well. Thus, some are listed here again).

MUSIC—devotional music

- **May You Become as the Waves of One Sea** from Rose-Marie Peterson’s *Intone* CD:

May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind... ~’Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Adorning=decorating, beautifying

Establish=form, create

Available at <https://rosemariepeterson.bandcamp.com/>

- **“Prayer”** This selection is from Parrish and Toppano’s *The Shores of this Great Ocean*. It is actually 2 excerpts from 2 different prayers for mankind by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.
<https://music.youtube.com/watch?v=TOorG4QTQ4M&list=RDAMVMT0orG4QTQ4M>

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

...make all mankind as stars shining from the same height of glory, as perfect fruits growing upon Thy tree of life. (Baha’i Prayers)

The rest of these are also found in the devotional music section under the Unity Theme:

- **“Unite”** This lovely song is available for free download at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zfPzUZ_25yw

Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls...O Lord! Make these faces radiant through the light of Thy oneness. ~’Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Vocabulary: Bind=connect, attach, join, tie

Accord=harmony, agreement

Radiant=glowing, joyful, shining, bright

NOTES: If using only the audio version, which is also available on the same site, you may want to phase it out after the 3rd repetition, since the piece goes on for over 5 minutes, which is a bit too long for kids.

However, if you use the video, which contains many diverse instruments and faces, I don't think it's too long.

- **“If You Desire with All Your Heart”** from Joe Crone's *Immerse Yourself* CD: (Individual songs available at 9StarMedia for \$1.29 each: [Immerse Yourself](#))

If you desire with all your heart, friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will spread; it will become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the minds of all men. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, ([Paris Talks](#))

- **“Let All Associate”**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VMl2m1M7nLg>

Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side... 'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere and show that love through deeds... ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, ([Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá](#))

The Tongue of Grandeur hath, however, in the day of His manifestation proclaimed: "It is not his to boast who loveth his country, but it is his who loveth the world. ~Bahá'u'lláh, ([Gleanings](#))

Vocabulary: Sincere=genuine, heartfelt, real

Tongue of Grandeur=Messenger of God

Manifestation=appearance

Proclaimed=announced, declared

These last verses above we made into a slide show using charming children's book's drawn images. It will be added to the resources.

Just Audio version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oukJbyCjBkE>

With photography version: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hmKVcqAUwQ8>

- **“Mighty Sea”** from Munirih Sparrows’ CD *Morning to Midnight*. The first part goes perfectly with the theme of the power of unity. We briefly discussed the concept in the musical selection below. I asked the students to contemplate a drop of water. One or a few drops dry up on the pavement—but together they can form an ocean that can sail ships and provide life for the whole planet.

Whensoever holy souls, drawing on the powers of heaven, shall arise with such qualities of the spirit, and march in unison, rank on rank, every one of those souls will be even as one thousand, and the surging waves of that mighty ocean will be even as the battalions of the Concourse on high. What a blessing that will be -- when all shall come together...as rivers and streams, running brooks and single drops.... collected together... form a mighty sea. ~’Abdu'l-Bahá, (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá)

Now is the tie,... Struggle ye, and strive... and hear and ponder the counsels of God; let us fling away our lives, and renounce our brief and numbered days. ~’Abdu'l-Bahá, (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá)

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES to take home—place on attractive paper or below images color copied from a book that represent the concept, go over big or unfamiliar words

- ***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...So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)
- ***Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Members=body parts, limbs

To illustrate the verse above, we tried to pick up a book with just our pinky finger and pretended that one leg wanted to go one way, and the other leg, the opposite way. Falling was the result of course!

- ***Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice)
- ***Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Tablets of Baha'u'lláh)
- ***Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.*** ~ Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)
- ***He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)
- ***It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens.*** ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)
- ***All humanity are the children of God; they belong to the same family, to the same original race.*** ~Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Vocabulary: Original=earliest, first

- ***You all are the servants of one God and, therefore, brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers. In the sight of God there is no distinction between whites and blacks; all are as one.*** ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

- ***All peoples and nations are of one family, the children of one Father, and should be to one another as brothers and sisters!*** ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

NOTES: After the above 2 quotes, we discussed how the world would transform so profoundly if most or all children were taught the above concepts from birth. We may bicker with our siblings and get irritated and annoyed with them, but we would never kill them, beat them up, dump toxic waste in their space, let them starve, etc. If humanity truly believed that we are all spiritual brothers and sisters, then peace and well-being for all could become a reality.

- ***Your souls are as waves on the sea of the spirit; although each individual is a distinct wave, the ocean is one, all are united in God.*** ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)
- ***Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean.*** ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)
- ***May you serve the Cause of God as one single, united force.***
~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)
- ***We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree, that haply ye may become a source of comfort to one another.*** ~The Bab, (Selections from the Writings of The Bab)

Haply=hopefully

- ***The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity.*** ~ Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Foster=encourage, nurture, promote

MUSIC—Songs (some w/ actions to the lyrics)

- **We Are Drops**, Lesson 16 song, Grade 1 available for free at Ruhi.org. (Ages 4-7) Cute youtube video to this song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsDHH5T5B5M>

- **The Human Race is One**, under all songs, available for free at Ruhi.org
- **Working Towards Oneness** by Ernestine Atkins from *Singing with Ernestine* (I can't find this online, but some teachers may have their own copies.)
- **God is One** sung by Adrienne Ewing-Roush, music and lyrics by Margaret Jane King from *Lift Up Your Voices and Sing Vol. 1*

(I can't find this song online, but many of us older Baha'is have copies. And here is a youtube video of kids doing it, though they don't do all the actions described below—at least you can get the melody and an idea. This song is easy to teach and sing w/o music). [God is One](#) (Ages 4-7 or 8)

Pantomime to classic Baha'i song. It kind of has a waltz melody, so if you don't want to do the pantomime, one option is to just playfully waltz with each other.

God is one (point up, then lower hand and show 1 with index finger)

Man is one (point to others in sweeping motion, show 1 with index finger)

And all the religions are one (make sweeping motion with 1 or both arms to indicate “all”, show 1 with index finger)

Land (hold hands parallel to floor in front of and next to torso, move outward away from torso, keeping them parallel to floor)

and Sea (make wave motions with wrist and bent elbow, dipping & rising, etc.)

hill (form a hump or arch over head with fingers laying on top of each other)

and valley (lower hands, make triangle with fingertips connected pointing to floor)

under the beautiful sun (make circle by holding hands over head, as if grasping imaginary ball)

God is one (point up, then lower hand and show 1 with index finger)

Man is one (point to others in sweeping motion, show 1 with index finger)

And all the religions agree (make sweeping motion with 1 or both arms to indicate “all”, interlace fingers of both hands to show unity, connectedness, while shaking head yes)

When everyone learns the 3 onenesses (start with hands overlapping or touching at center of torso, flair outward away from body to indicate “everyone”, show 3 fingers, show 1 with index finger 3 times, as if shaking finger at someone, but not being mad)

We'll have world unity. (Kids can put arms around each other, hold hands in a circle, or individuals can make a large circle with arms and hands in front of them, then each hand clasp the wrist of the other to show unification).

- **“Isn’t It Wonderful”** from Susan Engle and Jean Mark’s *Loving Hands* recording (Ages 4-7) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K6O0TeuvReg> or at a Baha’i owned music service called 9StarMedia: [Wonderful](#)

Pantomime movements to lyrics about oneness and spirituality.

This is a slow and tender song by well-known Baha’i musicians, Jean Marks and Susan Engle. It is on their *Loving Hands* recording. Nice beginning or ending activity for group bonding.

We discussed what the sun might represent in this song, and what some of the lines could mean in a practical way. Then I presented this quote and we discussed it briefly. A nice touch, but not essential, is to give each participant a heart shaped mirror to tape over their hearts. You can make these with mylar from a craft store, or even cut up those shiny reflective disposable trays for parties and weddings—but they are thicker.

Every heart should radiate unity, so that the Light of the one Divine Source of all may shine forth bright and luminous..... ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, ([Paris Talks](#))

Here are the words and actions. Start by having the group sitting in a circle on the floor:

CHORUS:

Isn’t it wonderful we’re here together? (*Everybody places arms around each other’s shoulders or holds hands—which ever works best for your group*)

Isn’t it wonderful to see the sun? (*Hold fingers as if making eyeglasses around eyes, then gradually open fingers, raise hands and arms to form a big circle, indicating the sun, arcing arms back down to side*)

Isn’t it wonderful our hearts are open? (*Have hands over heart then open them as if a gate*)

Take my hand my hand my friend, for we are one (*everybody holds hands and holds them up, either grasping or palms flat against neighbors' flat palm*)

(End of chorus)

Let us all forget the past (*shake head once as draw flattened hand with thumb touching one's chest to almost behind oneself, straightening arm in process, as if in a salute--- but not from head, from mid torso instead*)

Let us clear our eyes to see the dawn (*rub or wipe eyes*)

And turn the mirrors of our hearts (*base of hands on each side of heart, as in open gate*)

continually to the sun (*raise hands and form circle/sun with arms*)

CHORUS

- **“Listen”** by Red Grammar on his *Teaching Peace* recording. Song available at 9StarMedia a Baha'i owned business, for \$1.29: [TeachingPeace](#) Also available for free on youtube at [Listenaudio](#) and video of lyrics and music on youtube: [ListenLyrics](#) and finally, a group of kids singing with Red: [ListenwithRed](#)
- **“Brothers and Sisters”** by Red Grammer on his *Down the Do-Re-Mi* recording. Song is available for \$1.29 at 9StarMedia: [DownDoReMi](#) or for free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lZKMLTp0ZYQ>
- **“Children of the World”** by Marie & Roger Gervais from *Feast at My House* available for 99 cents at <https://www.amazon.com/Children-of-the-World/dp/B08WZF5DH8>
- **“We Will Have One World”** from *Lift Up Your Voices and Sing*, Vol. 2.
- **“Part of the Family”** by Lois Lafond, from *One World*. This one was really upbeat, so kids could dance with scarves if they felt like it. Can Stream it on Amazon or buy MP3 https://www.amazon.com/dp/B004AE0XU4/ref=dm_rwp_pur_lnd_albm_fr or get it on Spotify at <https://open.spotify.com/track/04LrNejs5c8my8BT9dmql2>
- **“One World”** by Lois Lafond on recording by the same name. Also, very danceable. (See above)
- **“One Family”** by Red Grammar: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vOrr5xdvm_A

- **“Everyone”** by Susan Engle and Jean White from *Special Times*. Available at 9StarMedia, [SpecialTimesEveryone](#) or Amazon [SpecialTimes](#)
- **“I Love All My Brothers”** by Jack Lenz from *We are Baha’is Too*. [WeAreBaha’isToo](#)

STORIES/ARTICLES (Some have activities w/ them)

- **“Creation: An American Indian Tale”**, page 10, July/Aug 1999, *Brilliant Star* Baha’i Children’s magazine. It’s a very short and poignant story about how people create their own reality and that we are one, but don’t see it.
- **“When We Were One”**, pages 13-15, July/Aug 1999, *Brilliant Star*. It’s a story told in comic book style, using panels. It is a moral fable about how we are all related, but let our outer differences deceive us.
- **Baha’is are Friends to All People”** on pages 38-39 *Oneness of Humanity Activity Book Series* from *Brilliant Star*. I asked the kids to jump up from a sitting position if any of the statements were true for them. They were to return to squatting position for the next statement. The statements were mostly about who one likes and what one does for fun. I pointed out that who one hangs out with and what one does for fun often says a lot about one’s commitment to the oneness of humanity. (Unless one lives where there is absolutely no diversity, which is unlikely these days.)

I play a sport with someone of another race.

I like someone whose family comes from another country.

I like someone whose race is different from mine.

I like someone who speaks a different language than I do.

I like someone with a physical or mental handicap.

I play with friends of different colors.

I like someone who I think is richer or poorer than I am.

I play after school with friends of different races.

I sit with people of different races on the school bus.

I invite friends who are different from me to my house for meals.

I really admire someone of another race.

I worked on a school project with someone who is different from me in color or nationality.

I spoke up when someone made fun of a person for being different.

- **“Unityoids”** from page 7, *Oneness of Humanity Activity Book Series* from *Brilliant Star*. These are very brief facts about the unity/oneness of the human race.

- **“The Fruits of One Tree”**, pages 3-5 *Brilliant Star* Baha’i children’s magazine, July/Aug 1999. It addresses racial prejudice and helps kids understand what it is, how it affects us, and what we can do about it.
- **“What is Your Skin?”** on pages 18-19, *Brilliant Star* Baha’i children’s magazine, July/Aug 1999. It’s all about the science of skin color.
- **“From Prejudice to Peace”** on page 42 of *Oneness of Humanity Activity Book*. It explores the different kinds of prejudice and how all wars and violence stem from these various types of prejudices. (Religious, racial, patriotic, political, social). After reading the article, I asked each student to fill in one blank from the many statements. Before asking the question, my assistant would bat a balloon in the air, and before it hit the ground, the student had to answer. If they were listening to the article, they could easily get it. If the blank was preceded by many words, the balloon was batted in the middle of the sentence—otherwise by the time the blank would be heard, there would not be enough time for the student to answer. The balloon has the same design as the stickers described below. (Balloons available at noprejudiceballoons.com.)

Here are the statements, each of which was taken from page 42. I added the blanks, however, -- these were not a part of the original text. I also put in the full quote by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and added “dislike or” to “hate each other”. Kids should know that just b/c one does not feel hate, (but perhaps only dislike), does not mean they are free from prejudice. I also added the words “class” and “caste” (after defining them) to “social prejudice”.

Bahá’u’lláh came to unite people. He came to bring world peace. His message is really very simple. Peace is not possible until we take away prejudice. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

All prejudices, whether of religion, race, politics or nation, must be renounced, for these prejudices have caused the world's sickness. It is a grave malady which, unless arrested, is capable of causing the destruction of the whole human race. Every ruinous war, with its terrible bloodshed and misery, has been caused by one or other of these prejudices. (Paris Talks)

Renounced=rejected

Grave=serious

Malady=sickness, problem

Arrested=halted, stopped

Ruinous=destructive, harmful

Misery= grief, agony, suffering

What are these different kinds of prejudices?

Religious prejudice: People dislike or hate each other b/c they have different ways of worshipping the one true God.

Racial prejudice: People dislike or hate each other for the color of their skin.

Patriotic prejudice: People dislike or hate each other b/c they come from different countries.

Political prejudice: People dislike or hate each other b/c they follow different types of governments.

Social/class/caste prejudice: People dislike or hate each other for their money or education or ranking.

It's simple: War is caused by prejudice. Peace is caused by love.

God has chosen you for the worthy service of unifying mankind. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Worthy=valuable, important

When a child successfully deduced the word (or a synonym) that went in the blank, he/she got a sticker that says "No room in my heart for prejudice" All the words except "prejudice" are in a heart, prejudice is outside the heart. These stickers are available at: noroomheartprejudicesticker. They also got a small removable tattoo with the same design, available from the same source, to take home. Tattoos are available at: noprejudicetattoo

Then I shared this **quote**:

Prejudices of all kinds -- whether religious, racial, patriotic or political -- are destructive of divine foundations in man. All the warfare and bloodshed in human history have been the outcome of prejudice.

~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Patriotic=nationalistic, love of one's nation

Foundations=basic principles, fundamental teachings

- **“What If”** on page 17, *Brilliant Star* Baha’i children’s magazine, July/Aug 1999. It discusses the “recipe” for race unity that Shoghi Effendi gives in The Advent of Divine Justice. It explains in child-friendly language what white and black people must do to heal the wounds of racism.
- **“Stripes Don’t Count”**, from *Getting Along –A Fun-Filled Set of Stories, Songs, and Activities to Help Kids Work and Play Together* by the Children’s Television Resource & Education Center. (Ages 5-8) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pR3fSkKT97A>

This old book is filled w/ diverse stories and songs, lyrics included. Though all the characters are animals, each story teaches virtues necessary for unity and oneness. Each story ends with a song. The song that went with this story is called “Great Big World”. The story is about exclusion of those who are different from ourselves. We had a discussion on the reasons people are excluded (skin color, age, language, nationality, disability, gender, overweight, obnoxious, unattractive, economic status, etc.) We talked about how this story is also really about the root of racism: being prejudice towards differences. The story teaches about learning to value diversity. I pointed out that even if it’s obvious to them that all members of society should be valued and respected and have valuable contributions to make, it still is not the case in many parts of the world—for example women, poor people, lower castes, different tribes, etc. often still face the same kind of prejudice that the zebra in the story did.

I had a poster with the chorus, and encouraged the kids to see along:

Chorus: You and I live in a great big world, we don’t live in it alone. There are all kinds of people who share our world, because it is a world we all own, it is a world we all own.

Some people can’t do the things we can, some people look different too. But nobody’s better than anyone else. Let’s never forget that it’s true.

All of the people who share our world, deserve our respect and care. If we can give others what they deserve, we’ll brighten the world we all share, brighten the world we all share.

You can obtain the book here:

<https://www.biblio.com/9780929831008>

Free download at: [GettingAlongbook](#)

And here it is from Amazon: [GettingAlongfromAmazon](#)

CREATIVE DRAMATICS

All of Us All at Once

A dramatic cooperative activity which demands unity, consultation, cooperation and often synchrony. Ages 8 and up, at least 8 kids.

2 different teams had to work together to design a machine, object, plant, animal, or whatever, using everyone's body in the group. Then the other team had to guess. Sound effects are fine as long as they don't make the answer too obvious. Kids have done car washes, swing sets, washing machines, roller coasters, vacuum cleaners, toasters, etc. It's a good game to illustrate how individual parts are important to the functioning of the whole, unity in diversity, and even systems theory.

Floor Designs

A simpler version of the above activity. This one uses static forms. Ages 7 and up, at least 8 kids.

A group was to form shapes on the floor using their bodies together, such as a giant peace symbol or a heart. I challenged those on the floor to try to do it without using words, which proved most difficult, and then with using words—pointing out how much easier it is to have unity and to solve problems when we can communicate with each other. You can tie this into the Baha'i principle of a universal auxiliary language. Letters and numbers are also interesting to make with bodies. For younger kids, keep the letters simple, like a capital "T" or "X". Specify whether it is in capitals or not. If they can handle simple letters, ask them to make simple words. The group must be larger for this and its really hard if they can't talk, but older kids can do it. Kids also enjoy rotating being the director who gets to determine what shape will be made and when it is sufficient.

Incorporations

Need at least 16 kids, ages 7 and up

Ask the kids to form groups quickly based on your instructions. If a group can't do it, just move on. The game should move at a quick clip. Kids were instructed to form groups where everyone had on the same color, (or shared 2 colors in common) then form groups in which everyone was born in the same season and to link pinkies, then groups of 2+3, then groups of 3 lying on the ground to make a capital "H", then groups of 3 to form a bridge, then form groups based on having the same pet, such as dog, cat, or other, or none, (if you have both choose the pet you have had the longest) then a staircase of 3 by kneeling on all fours in ascending sizes,

etc. Another suggestion: Join hands with 1-2 people who share at least 2 letters in common from your first and/or last names, then jump up and down together while moving in a circle.

This game and the one called *Floor Designs* can be used when discussing the importance and challenge of obeying and fulfilling the guidance of the Manifestations. In this day and age, Bahá'u'lláh has given us the extremely demanding task of unifying diverse people under a common vision and then cooperating in building a new world order. We succeed only through our love for Bahá'u'lláh and of His institutions, and the practice of virtues such as? (Sacrifice, service, steadfastness, flexibility, cooperation, detachment, forbearance, and obedience).

Body Sculptures

Ages 6 and up, at least 10 kids

When we did this, I split the group into 2 teams, one all girl, and one all boy. The boys were asked to leave the scene. The girls were instructed to form a body sculpture/formation using their bodies, with everybody touching at least 3 other girls with their hands or feet or rear ends or legs or whatever. All bodies needed to be connected into one group, with no separate groups. Then the boys were invited back in. They were to then form a sculpture within and around the girl's without touching the girls, and they also had to be completely connected. That was a challenge. Then the girls were instructed to detach from each other, and w/o touching the boys, remove themselves from the boy's sculpture. They then were to appreciate the boy's formation and notice the space they had created by their leaving.

Another version of this game could be to simply instruct the group to make a formation in which every hand and every foot is connected to another person. You can make it even harder by requiring that it be 4 different people that one is touching. You can request that it be only hands and feet making the 4 contacts or allow other body parts to be included. This version would probably make the formation too dense for another group to come in and incorporate itself into the same formation.

Relevant quotes:

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

We, verily, have come to unite and weld together all that dwell on earth. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

GAMES

Many of these Games reflect these 2 verses:

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Counselleth=advises

Revelation=Divine teachings, divine knowledge

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. ~Baha'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

- **Rise as One (Also known as Unity Rise)**

At least 3 kids, ages 6 and up.

We all sat down in a circle with our knees bent and our feet on the ground and then we linked elbows. The goal is to simultaneously raise ourselves up as one complete unit using the support of each other. It can be done with group facing in or facing out, pressing backs together. Facing in requires more arm strength. It can also be done in pairs or groups of 3 -5 only. Larger groups are much harder, especially if there is a big variation in size of the kids. Also, a great metaphor for how a group or community is uplifted or achieves a goal only if everybody contributes, or pulls their own weight.

- **Streamer Tag** need at least 6 kids, paper streamers, outside, ages 7 and up

This game requires a high degree of unity and synchrony: Pairs are connected by holding onto a 2 foot or so segment of crepe paper party streamer and need to work together as one being. The "it" pair is connected also. The idea is basically tag but pairs could be frozen three different ways: If the pair ripped their streamer while running, if they were tagged by the "its", or if they let go of the streamer while being chased. A pair remained frozen until an unfrozen pair came to the rescue by having each person of the unfrozen pair touch one of the frozen pair—in other words both frozen kids had to be touched by one of the unfrozens. To be tagged required that only one be touched. If a pair's streamer ripped in half, they got a new one from the unfrozen pair who would come to the streamer depot to get new ones and locate the frozen pairs (who are yelling "help, help"). If the taggers (it pair) ripped or separated, they had to stop and get a new streamer or re-connect. Especially if the taggers had to get a new streamer, this provides an opportunity for others to rescue frozen pairs b/c the taggers are not chasing them if they're obtaining another streamer. It took a lot of cooperation and other-oriented awareness to run and escape as a unit. Pairs could not hold hands or link

elbows (thereby nullifying the effect of the streamers). I encourage kids to communicate with each other to reduce rips and harmonize their directions. It was a major challenge, but fun for all of them.

Variation for really large groups of 25-50 players: The chasers wear masks to represent all the ugly things that disunity causes, (like war, fighting, etc.). The chasers are not attached to another person, but to make it more fair, they can only skip or gallop sideways to pursue others. Some groups of that size will need only 2 chasers, some 3. It gets pretty chaotic, but the kids love it. B/c of the intensity and number of kids, I let newly unfrozen pairs get their own new streamer if theirs is ripped in half and only 1 in the pair has to be touched to be freed.

Variation for 4-6 year olds:

This version still requires a high degree of unity and synchrony, (or you can say oneness): Pairs are connected by holding onto a 2 foot or so segment of crepe paper party streamer. The adult chaser is hobbled by having to jump w/ 2 feet or gallop sideways. The idea is basically tag but pairs could be frozen three different ways: If the pair ripped their streamer while running, if they were tagged by the chaser, or if they let go of the streamer while being chased. A pair remained frozen until an unfrozen pair came to the rescue by having each person of the unfrozen pair touch one of the frozen pair—in other words both frozen kids had to be touched by one of the unfrozens.

To be tagged required that only one be touched. If a pair's streamer ripped in half, they got a new one from the unfrozen pair who would come to the streamer depot to get new ones and locate the frozen pairs (who are yelling "help, help").

It took a lot of cooperation and other-oriented awareness to run and escape as a unit. Pairs could not hold hands or link elbows (thereby nullifying the effect of the streamers). I encourage kids to communicate with each other to reduce rips and harmonize their directions. It was a major challenge, but fun for all of them.

- **Unified Body Parts**

Ages 6 and up, need at least 6 kids

I assigned groups of 3 and they had to get attached and move across the room to retrieve a chocolate chip cookie for each of them. The hard part was that while all 3 had to remain attached and move as a single entity, they all had to use different body parts to move. There are many ways to do this. For example: One child walked while holding a child by the ankles who used his/her hands, and the 3rd child held the ankles of the walking child and slid on his/her stomach. Or one child got on all fours, one child rode him/her while placing his/her feet on the floor and the 3rd child held the ankles of the child on all fours and slid on his/her stomach. Or one scoots on her butt, (or walks on her knees), while holding onto an ankle of a child sliding on

his stomach, who uses his arms and hands to pull himself forward. The 3rd child walks on his feet while holding onto the other ankle of the sliding child. It was really hilarious. I have also done this with groups of 5—one uses hands only, one uses feet, another knees, another must slide on his back, another can move only on her stomach. They also remained attached one way or another. Encourage kids to be creative in their formations.

- **Roll Over Variations:**

2 or more kids, ages 6 and up

Teams of two touch the palms of their hands lying on the floor facing each other on their stomachs. We put a lightweight coaster (the kind one uses to protect furniture from drinks) between their palms. We asked the kids to try to do a complete rolling over in unison without dropping either coaster. We also tried it with feet, having the kids starting on their backs. If they can't keep the coasters from falling, then they can just try to keep their feet connected as best as possible. Best to do this in bare feet, as the grip is better. We urge the kids to see if they can keep their arms straight and flat at their sides, i.e. don't use them to guide the body. If too easy, try putting pennies between index fingers, or even harder, big toes!

- **Silly Bones**

Ages 6 and up, 5 or more kids

Kids are clumped together standing up. They are instructed to touch a nose, or an ear, or a head, etc. It cannot be their own, and once they do, they can't let go. They can use fingers, or any other part of their body such as foot or head to make the contact. They can't touch the same person twice. After about 3 or 4 contacts, they are hopelessly tangled and then they attempt to move across the room. Of course, they fall apart, but that is part of the fun.

- **Hop Along**

Need at least 8 kids, 6 and up

This game comes from China. Teams line up in a row and the first person holds the right leg under the knee of the person behind her with her right hand or elbow. It is important to get this pattern straight b/c it is a lot harder to balance if kids are picking up left legs with right hands or if some on the team are lifting right legs and some are lifting left. You can also do it with everyone lifting left legs and holding with left hands. The important thing is that everyone is doing the same thing. The first person gets to walk on 2 legs and the last person of course is holding no leg. Kids should hold onto the shoulders of those in front of them with their

free hand for balance. The tiniest children should be either last or first b/c they have 2 legs to walk on if they are first or no leg to carry if they are at the end. Also, the line should be formed tallest to shortest or shortest to tallest b/c little kids can't place their hands on high shoulders or have their short legs lifted too high by tall kids. I made this game a race across the room, with the goal to be the first team to have the front person touch my hand. I always emphasize that from a spiritual perspective being first is pointless and unimportant or even self-centered in some cases—but to be first to love, share, care, be courteous, cooperate, is praiseworthy. But I never reward or glorify “winning” teams when I do use competition. This game taught that those who cooperate and are most unified will be the winners. If a team member falls or drops a leg, that team has to halt until they are all connected again.

- *Peace?*

Ages 8 and up, at least 8 players, preferably more.

Another game is a spiritual twist on a famous cooperative game called “tweetie” or “prui”. I renamed it “peace?” We discuss how there would be more peace in the world if people would listen to the voice of God within them. They could not hurt others if they were in touch with the voice of God. But we cannot hear the voice of God very easily if we are too busy, noisy, distracted, --talking on the phone, playing video games, etc. So in this game, when everyone is quiet, we have peace, and the game ends.

I also pointed out that we will have peace in the world when everyone feels connected, when everyone recognizes that spiritually we are one, we are connected like waves on an ocean, like leaves on a tree.

The game goes as follows: First we went outside on our deck. If playing outside, there must be a natural barrier keeping the players from wandering too far off. This game is easy to play indoors with some strategically placed furniture.

Everyone gets in a circle and closes their eyes. I walk around behind them and squeeze some one's shoulder. That person is the peacemaker. I walk around several times so they can't tell when I have chosen the peacemaker. When I say “Begin” everyone starts to mingle—keeping their eyes closed throughout the entire game. Everyone but the peacemaker is searching for peace and walks around the room holding their hand out asking “Peace?” The peacemaker, although they can wander around also, is totally silent throughout the entire game. If you find the peacemaker, you know b/c they do not answer back. So you hold their hand or arm, or whatever you happened to touch first, *and you also become quiet and do not answer back*. If you are not the peacemaker, or you have not found anyone connected to the peacemaker, you always answer back with “Peace?” The game ends when everyone is connected, and the room is quiet.

- **Heart Motion**

6 and up, at least 5 kids

Students gathered in a group and each child was given 2 paper hearts. Each child had to touch 2 different people, one on the cheek, and one on the stomach, keeping the heart in place with their hand or finger on each spot. Then, after they were a tangled mess, I asked them to try to move a few feet as a group without dropping any hearts. It proved quite a challenge--but very funny. The game symbolizes how we are all connected and how hard it is to always maintain love and oneness between diverse people. The game can be made really hard by asking kids to touch a 3rd location (but don't also require that the 3rd location be on a 3rd person, it will likely be impossible.) This will require that they use a foot or nose or...? because they will have used up their 2 hands on the first 2 locations. Maybe they can do nose to nose with their hearts in-between! But moving as a unit that way, w/o dropping any hearts, will be a small miracle.

- **Streamer Wrap**

At least 8 kids, 5 and up—but can do it w/ 5 kids

Clump yourselves together and have a separate person tie one end of a crepe paper streamer to one person's wrist then wrap and weave the streamer all over the group—around your necks, between your legs, around your torsos, etc. and then wrap the whole group several times and give the end to one person to hold. Now try to move across the room as a group without breaking the streamer. You need to be totally aware of how your movement is affecting the whole streamer. Now try to untangle yourselves without ripping the streamer. Again, you have to be very conscious of how your pulling on the streamer affects someone else's segment. And finally, work together to untangle the streamer and to roll it back up, without ripping it. (If this whole thing is too easy—try it with a roll of toilet paper instead!!)

One major cause of conflict and violence in the world is that people do not think about how their actions affect others before they do them---or they do not care. This activity goes great with the story called Swimmy by Leo Lionni. It is about a school of tiny fish that learn to swim in perfect unity in the formation of a giant fish so that they are not eaten. We discussed how the fish all had to go at the exact same speed and in the exact same direction to maintain their formation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDrR78REU8Y&t=22s>

This is also a great metaphor for how we are all really spiritually connected, how we are one in spirit. When we forget this, and act in ways that violate this truth, ----such as not being considerate to others and not thinking about how our actions affect them, ---then we “tear” the bonds of unity.

- **Grouped Soccer**

At least 8 kids, ages 7 and up, outside or in a gym (teams can be in connected groups of 2 or 3)

This is played the same as the regular game, but everybody is linked in pairs, so 3 pairs holding hands formed each team. I deliberately paired the super assertive players with younger or less aggressive kids--now that was interesting. It was a test of detachment for many, but they all seemed to enjoy it. To make the game last a little longer, there was a rule that a goal could not be made by kicking the ball over the heads of those guarding the goal. Kids can also be put in 3's, or connected by linking elbows, or put inside of hula hoops together. And it also can be played w/o goalies. Use a foam ball if possible.

- **Rock Me**

At least 2 kids, ages 6 and up

Facing partners sit on the floor with their knees bent and sit on each other's feet, grab the other's shoulders and try to get a rhythmic rocking motion going. With a little encouragement, they can really get rocking high, and it's quite fun. Pairs can also try to race other pairs, by using the rocking motion to move forward, (though one in the pair will be moving backward.)

- **Rope Shapes**

Ages 8 and up, at least 6 kids

An activity with a large loop of rope to teach 3 concepts: 1) Interdependence—how everyone's actions effect everyone else. 2) the power of a common language, and 3) the importance of a common vision. Students were taken outside on our driveway and asked to stand around the rope, holding onto one section. They were asked not to move from their position. Then I asked them to form one giant fish on the ground—without talking, using only body gestures. It was very difficult; some even gave up. I pointed out how every time you pull on your section of the rope, you effect someone else's section (interdependence). They discovered they were making 2 mouths, and often pulled out each other's fins. A fish-like creature eventually evolved, but your average person may not have been able to guess what it was. Then I brought out a dry erase board with a large outline of a simple fish on it. I reminded them how when they were playing sculptinary with playdoh they all had a different vision of what a cupcake or ribbon looked like. I said now they had a common, shared vision of the fish—for fish can be sharks, long and thin like a barracuda, fat and wide, with many or few fins etc. I also told them they could now talk and consult. In a much shorter time, they created a fish that looked very much like the drawing. It's a good idea to put the group on a time limit for each version. For a group of ten, 5 minutes is about right. At the end of the activity, I took a picture of the kids with their fish—some were pretending to be the meal inside it, others pretended their feet were being consumed by its mouth.

We discussed how one of the goals of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation is to provide a common, shared vision of justice, human rights, and laws for a peaceful and spiritually healthy world. Without this, it will be very difficult for nations to achieve unity and to accomplish goals that are world embracing. I also explained how Bahá'u'lláh taught that we must adopt a universal auxiliary language, to be taught in all schools in addition to the mother tongue—so that we can talk and communicate with each other. How much easier it was to form the fish when we could talk to each other. And Bahá'u'lláh also taught that we are the waves of one sea, the leaves of one tree—we are connected, and our actions affect many more people than ourselves, just like our movements of the rope. To elaborate further, I used the human body as an example, pointing out how impossible life would be if the different limbs of our body were not unified with our brain. Because the limbs are connected, unity is essential for wellbeing, effectiveness and reaching our potential. It's the same with the human world—we are more connected than we realize and our potential as a unified world is beyond imagination. We are so undeveloped and crippled by our disunity. This led right into the next quotes.

How much the organs, the members and the parts of the body of man are intermingled and connected for mutual aid and help, and how much they influence one another! In the same way, the parts of this infinite universe have their members and elements connected with one another, and influence one another spiritually and materially. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Some Answered Questions)

It is obvious that all created things are connected one to another by a linkage complete and perfect, even, for example, as are the members of the human body. Note how all the members and component parts of the human body are connected one to another. In the same way, all the members of this endless universe are linked one to another. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá)

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

- **The Knot**

8 or more kids needed, ages 6 and up

This is another game to polish communication skills and illustrate how we are all connected and affect each other. Stand in a circle, everybody reaches in and grabs hands of 2 *different* people who are not directly next to you and try to untangle yourselves without letting go of the hands you are holding. Consider the knot a conflict or "tangle" in a relationship, and the holding hands to the "bonds of unity", and that as Baha'is we should always strive to solve conflict and problems without breaking the bonds of unity, using consultation and virtues. Nine times out of ten players can successfully untangle themselves back into a perfect circle. A few tips: remember to be gentle and not squeeze too hard. It's OK to rotate your hands in the other persons' as you maneuver your arms and legs as long as you do not let go. Be flexible and creative—you will need to be stepping over other's arms, threading your way under other's connections, wiggling through openings

made by other's arms and torsos, etc. Consult with each other and work together. This game works best with 6-10 people. More than ten is usually very, very challenging. Remember to hold hands of different kids, otherwise you will form your own little circle and the game will end very fast for you! A perfect circle may have some facing in and some facing out, and that's fine. For larger groups of 11-15, or impossible knots, after 10 minutes w/o success, let one child let go of 1 hand. They still have to work in unity to untangle and everyone is still holding a hand to show unity and oneness.

- **Chair Island**

Need at least 12 kids, ages 4 and up

This is a cooperative version of musical chairs—and a lot more fun. I have played this game for 30 years and with hundreds of children and it is ALWAYS a hit. Place the chairs back-to-back in a line and perhaps one on each end. Of course, the number of chairs you use depends on the number of players. Use danceable drum music or something with a strong beat with no words. Encourage the players to dance as they encircle the chairs. You should point out what direction the kids are to go in as they move, explaining that this is the current around the island, and only sea creatures can swim against this current, i.e., go in the opposite direction. As in the traditional version, chairs will be removed throughout the game— (the number removed each round depends on how fast you want the game to end). But no person is removed for having no chair—the kids just share space and hold each other on as the chairs get fewer and fewer, yet the number of kids stays the same. It is important to have some help running a boom box and an adult or youth assigned to remove chairs. When the music stops kids will throw themselves into chairs—so the best time to remove sets of chairs is *after the music starts up* again. The helper just slips into the group and pulls 1-4 chairs out. They can't be removing chairs as the music is stopping b/c kids are diving for those seats.

Now here is the Island part, the dramatic part, which really gets their imaginations and giggles going. Some preschoolers may find it too scary. It adds to the drama if you have a shark nose &/or a shark fin on your back. (Costume shops and toy stores and catalogs carry vinyl animal noses with elastic bands. www.orientaltrading.com carries a foam shark fin for the back with arm straps.)

I explain that they all live on a gorgeous sunny island and I describe a classic postcard scene: Palm trees waving in the ocean breeze, clean white sand beaches, crystal blue or turquoise water, warm all year round, etc. I tell them they love living there mainly b/c they are spiritually enlightened (adjust your vocabulary to the age) and understand that they are all one family. Everybody loves everybody else and treats all the islanders, no matter how different they look, as brothers and sisters. Also, everybody spends their days fishing, swimming, snorkeling, and playing in the water around the island. But there are 2 big problems with the island: first of all, the sea level is rising, and so the island is shrinking—getting smaller by the minute. Pieces (chairs) of the island are disappearing into the ocean at a rapid rate and thus islanders' yards are sinking into the ocean and are lost forever. Chairs being removed are those parcels of land being lost to the ocean. The

second problem is that out in the deep of the ocean there is a very hungry shark who would love to eat an islander. (I tell the players that I am a brain-damaged shark, and assure them that most sharks are not human eaters and that I have even swam with sharks—which is true.) Then I explain that when the music stops, that means the shark has come into the shallow water for a meal. But the island has grown so small, it's hard to find a space on land to escape the shark. However, since you are all so enlightened and realize that people are more important than property, you invite islanders who have no property-land (a chair), to share with you on yours. You love each other and definitely do not want them to be eaten by the hungry shark. Any child that is not seated or on the chairs in some fashion, or on another person, is shark bait. If a child is seated, they can have their feet on the floor, but all others must have their feet off the floor—otherwise they could just stand next to a chair.

During the music I encircle the group, licking my lips, rubbing my belly, exclaiming how hungry I am and how that leg or arm looks so juicy, etc. I really ham it up as I dance-swim to the music. I need an assistant for the music so the kids don't know when it's going to stop (otherwise they will all just head for the chairs as they see me going for the boom box. Before beginning the game, I have taught the CD player attendant a somewhat subtle cue with my hand.)

There are always children who prefer to be pursued by the shark than to find safety on land, and I often catch them and drag them off to the deeps for dinner. Children are encouraged to rescue these rascals by leaping off their chairs and dragging them back towards land by their feet. We often have a hysterical tug of war—me pulling a child by the arms or carrying by the waist while a mob of kids pulls at the victim's legs. I always eventually let that child go and he/she is triumphantly carried back to the chairs. But if no one comes to help (and that is rare—especially b/c I reveal the rescue option while explaining the game) I carry the kid far from the chairs and pretend to eat him. Then he/she helps removes chairs. I don't want any child to be doing nothing for the rest of the game. It is important to explain ahead of time that they can't hurt the shark in any way b/c there is only one dancing brain damaged shark in the whole world, me, and point out the boundaries of “no return” —the area at which the water is too deep and the victim can't be rescued. Don't feel too sorry for these rare victims—they have plenty of offers for sharing land but prefer to show off and be pursued by the shark. You can also proclaim that once you start counting to 5 (after chasing a hot shot kid a little too long and often) that means that they drown unless they are on the island by 5. Point out that they can't swim as long or fast as a shark, and that you don't mind dead meat as long as its fresh! (Be sensitive to how graphic you get with little ones—the drowning aspect may be too heavy for preschoolers, but older kids think it's all part of the fun.)

It is *very important* that you tell the kids—better yet show them—not to hold onto the backs of chairs thereby putting their fingers between chairs. Also, not to place fingers between seats of chairs. Fingers will get smashed as kids move chairs as they maneuver their bodies. Encourage them to be flexible in how they use the chairs. Standing may be dangerous, though feet use less space than rear ends. Standing on the bars attached to the legs below the seats of the chairs and holding onto seated players works well. Also, some folding chairs have the dangerous tendency to fold up fast if the majority of the weight is placed on the back of the seat. Check this out and warn if necessary. Needless to say, the chairs need to be extremely sturdy.

And the players need to feel comfortable with a lot of close physical contact—including sitting on each other's knees and laps. Adults mixed with children is always a good combination—though often it is the tiniest child that takes the seat first and then the bigger ones have to sit on them!

End the game when it becomes obvious that the chairs will break or someone will get hurt. You be the judge.

Version 2: If you do not have enough sturdy chairs— use hula hoops on the ground instead. It then becomes *Hoop Island*. Players have to have both feet inside the hoop. They can place others on their backs, hold up a stray leg of someone else, whatever it takes to make sure everybody is inside the hoops. This works really well and is just as much fun as with chairs. You can play it outside and use a drum or maracas for the music. Remove hoops one at a time right after the music starts up and just as kids start moving again. One can also use outdoor furniture cushions.

Relevant Quotes—point out how they show and promote unity and oneness.

To give and to be generous are attributes of Mine; well is it with him that adorneth himself with My virtues. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Persian Hidden Words, # 49)

Be..... a haven for the distressed..... ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

Forget your own selves, and turn your eyes towards your neighbor. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Blessed is he who preferreth his brother before himself. ~Baha'u'lláh, (Tablets of Baha'u'lláh)

- **Tandem Two's**

At least 2 kids, ages 6 and up

A synchrony game: Students lie on their backs in pairs with feet touching and try to get a smooth cycling motion going without ever losing touch with their partners' feet. When they think they have it down, place a flat object between both partner's feet and see if they can do the pedaling w/o dropping the object.

- **Waddle as One**

At least 4 kids, ages 7 and up

This can be done as a race or just an attempt to make it to a goal post w/o falling over or disconnecting. A pair of kids squat downright next to each other, and the inside hand of both kids grabs the back of the other person's inside ankle. The outside hand of each child is holding the outside ankle of his own leg. They then try to move across a room or playing field like this, staying connected. It's quite a funny sight to race like this!

- **Rolling Duo**

At least 2 kids ages 8 and up

One partner stands and the other lays on her back and places her head at the standing person's feet and grabs the standing person's ankles. The person on the ground then raises her back, rear, and legs off the ground and allows the standing person to grab her ankles. Bending knees and tucking them is important. With the right synchrony, they can become a rolling wheel by propelling themselves forward, sort of like a giant somersault. And big and little kids can do this together. Sometimes the bigger person has to provide the momentum. It's really a neat thing to see and do.

ART/CRAFTS

- **The Human Race Body**

This art project is based on this quote below:

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

The teacher draws a large outline of a human body on banner paper. Kids fill in the entire body with images of diverse peoples. They can use magazines, paper dolls, or draw the images. Light beams can be drawn around the figure to suggest spiritual illumination and the light of unity.

Suggested Materials:

- [5.5inpaper dolls](#)
- [3inchpaperdolls](#)
- Markers
- Crayons
- Pencils, sharpeners, erasers
- If using magazines, have scissors and glue stick paste
- Magazines, like National Geographics, that have lots of diverse faces. The Baha'is Magazine is also perfect for this

- **Leaves of One Tree art project:** Each student was given a pre-cut green cardboard leaf. Then each used fabric paints to create their own unique iridescent or sparkling leaf, that also included their name. Using clear pushpins on a foam core base, all leaves were tacked onto the branches of an iridescent/shimmering tree. I had made the tree out of black and copper iridescent oil pastels and when it was dry, smeared gold shimmer powder on it. I wanted it to be really pretty in an unearthly way to emphasize that this was the spiritual tree of oneness as well as the hereditary tree from Adam. I also wanted the students to be able to take their leaves home, so they were not glued on. (The leaves had small holes in them, so they could also be hung with green yarn on a real miniature tree). On the back of each leaf, and under the lower branches of the tree, written in gold, was this quote: ***Ye are all the leaves of one tree...*** ~Bahá'u'lláh (Tablets) It was also pointed out that no 2 leaves on any one tree are exactly the same, so the diversity of leaves was in keeping with reality.

NOTES: The fabric paints were supplied in many colors, including metallic, sparkling, and iridescent. It's a good idea to have large needles and a pliers on hand for any clogged nozzles. Also, q-tips and tissue, and some rubbing alcohol for using to wipe away mistakes. If the mistake is caught right away before the paint has dried, moistening the tissue or swab with saliva will work fine. Paint brushes can also be supplied for the fabric paints. We distributed many paper plates around tables so kids could test the amount of pressure needed for extracting the paint. Some paint bottles come out really slow and need strong pressure, and some will gush out with just a little squeezing. Its best to know before applying to one's art. Kids were asked to not waste a lot of paint on the plates. Also, it helps kids to see the colors better if a little is squeezed out ahead of time, though I assured them that the colors are always much more brilliant when dry. We placed the wet leaves on individual napkins to dry on a high shelf so they could not be smeared accidentally. They turned out gorgeous, and will look really wonderful on the tree when dried—which they will see next class.

Suggested Materials—can easily improvise w/ more readily available and less messy materials:

For Tree:

- Before children arrive, draw tree on large thick poster or foam core board (size of tree will need to vary depending on size of leaves and number of children applying them).
- Iridescent oil pastels, also called Shiva Paintstiks. These iridescent oil pastels are really expensive. (Like \$75 for 12 sticks) so unless you plan to use them a lot, they are not worth it. If interested they can be purchased at [iridescentpaintstiks](http://iridescentpaintstiks.com).
- If don't want the pricey oil pastels, try using quality markers, paints, metallic markers, or metallic paints

- Gold shimmer powder can be bought from Amazon at [gold shimmer powder](#).

For decorating the leaves:

Thick paper green leaves with quote in gold on back from Creative Cut-outs: [5inchgreenleaves](#)
[3inchgreenleaves](#)

From Amazon, same as above [5inchgreenleaves](#) [3inchgreenleaves](#)

Or you can choose any size from these lovely leaves from an Etsy distributor—very reasonably priced: [Etsygreenleaves](#) There are many more options at Etsy—just type in *large leaf die cuts* in the search box

Gold metallic paint pen to write quote on leaves and on tree poster—before children arrive

Fabric paints in iridescent, sparkling, and metallic, as well as normal, in many diverse colors

Paint brushes

Clear pushpins

Optional: Permanent markers for drawing on leaves

Tissues and cotton q-tips for wiping up mistakes

Rubbing alcohol

Bowl of soapy water for dirty paintbrushes

Very large needles for unstopping clogged nozzles

Pliers for pulling out stuck needles

Paper plates or scrap cardboard for testing the paints

Old large t-shirts for smocks to protect clothes

Optional: Some samples of decorated leaves. (My daughter and her college aged artsy friends did this the night before, and their work really elevated the vision of the students.)

There are at least **2 craft ideas** related to the Oneness of Humanity in [Baha’i Crafts for Children](#) by Jodell Babbitt Sprague and Cindy Firooz. They are the *Glove Puppet* on page 61 and the *Hand Tree* on page 77.

This book is currently out of print, but is available as an e-book: <http://www.bahaicraftsforchildren.com/>

- **Drawings or playdough sculpture based on metaphors in Baha’i scripture**

Suggested Materials

- Markers
- Pencils, sharpeners, erasers
- Cardstock in different colors
- Some form of modeling clay
- Quotes for inspiration
- Metallic or sparkling pens

- Scissors
- Glue sticks

The Baha'i imagery relating to the oneness of humanity is fertile ground for many artistic expressions in diverse mediums: Flowers of one garden, leaves/fruits of one tree, waves/drops of one ocean, fingers of one hand, etc.

Some Examples:

May you become as the waves of one sea, stars of the same heaven, fruits adorning the same tree, roses of one garden in order that through you the oneness of humanity may establish its temple in the world of mankind... ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Adorning=decorating, beautifying

Establish=form, create

Unite and bind together the hearts, join in accord all the souls...O Lord! Make these faces radiant through the light of Thy oneness. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Vocabulary: Bind=connect, attach, join, tie

Accord=harmony, agreement

Radiant=glowing, joyful, shining, bright

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...So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Your souls are as waves on the sea of the spirit; although each individual is a distinct wave, the ocean is one, all are united in God. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

Be as one spirit, one soul, leaves of one tree, flowers of one garden, waves of one ocean. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

- **Round Robin Drawing** (Could be used in Unity Theme, but there is plenty of art for that already).

This is a "round robin" or cooperative drawing in which teams of two share one piece of paper and do not talk or use body language to influence each other. Each person gets one marker of a different color than their

partner. One person draws one continuous line in any shape and their turn ends as soon as they lift the marker up. Then the partner takes his or her turn and so on. They do this for about 5 minutes. At the end, each team shares with the group their creation. There were some really unusual looking creatures! You can tie this activity to oneness by emphasizing that this is an exercise in making one creation from 2 different minds.

- **Round Robin Sculpting** (Could be used in Unity Theme, but there is plenty of art for that already).

You can use playdoh or clay. The last time I did this with students I asked them to use the theme of creatures but told them that the creatures can be totally imaginary and fanciful. I have found that when I don't give students a theme, such as animals or buildings, their creations are so abstract that the kids can't relate to them. (Though sometimes even w/o a theme, a pair becomes united in their vision b/c the creation begins to remind both of them of the same thing, and so they begin to mold with a common goal.) I put younger and older kids together in pairs and designated each member of the pair as "A" or "B" person. The only rules were they could not talk to each other and they could not alter the other person's shapes. However, they could alter their own previous shapes, and affix their shapes to any other shape, their own or their partner's. All shapes by the pair had to be connected to form one entity. Each child received a different colored ball of playdoh. (That way, each pair could easily discern his or her contribution to the whole.) Then I said, "A" children may now begin. After a few minutes, I said, "A" children stop, and "B"s may now begin. This goes on for 10-15 minutes, alternating who is doing the sculpting. I encourage them to use their contribution to the whole sparingly, so they don't run out of playdoh, and to try and establish a front, rear, head, and mouth--but w/o talking. So basically, one pair member would make a shape with part of their ball, the other would add to it, then the first one would add to that, and so on. I warned them when they only had 2 rotations left so they could do finishing touches. They really got into it. You can tie this activity to oneness by emphasizing that this is an exercise in making one creation from 2 different minds.

When the time was up, I gave each pair a piece of paper and pen and instructed the pairs to now consult and decide on a name for their creature, where it lives, what it eats, and how it moves. I gave each pair a paper plate to put their creation on, so they could carry them upstairs and share their new creatures with the adults, along with the description of them. They had fun coming up with creative names, sometimes combining syllables from the colors used or from their own names. So, for example, a creation by an Oliver and a Nadia, became an "Olinad." Another creature that glided through the water and was yellow and purple, became a "Glidyelpur". The adults got a kick out of these cooperative creatures too.

This activity is a simplistic metaphor for building a new world order: Diverse thought, ability, and desires and inclinations come together in unity to create/mold a new form. With the students, this new form is their common creation. The diversity in humanity must unite to create/mold a new pattern of civilization---a much

more daunting enterprise I must say!! But we can help the process by training children to work together for a common end, rather than constantly socializing them to compete for mutually exclusive ends.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

- **Concrete metaphor for Unseen Oneness:** I showed the students a picture of the earth on a cardboard disk, with my five fingers sticking out through 5 holes. I wore a glove that had each finger decorated to look like a person of a different ethnic background. The fingers are spread apart. I explained that on the surface we seem as if we are disconnected and separate, but in the spiritual world we are connected, we are one, like the leaves of a tree or the waves of the ocean. Then I showed them under the disk, to make the point. I emphasized that we are one spiritually and biologically—through being descendants of the same parents. These quotes were shared again:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.....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)

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

- **The Fingers of One Hand:** All students were given a marker and a piece of paper. They were asked to write the words “All are One” holding the marker with just their pinky finger. Then they were then asked to write it holding the marker with only their middle finger. Then they were allowed to use all fingers together. We talked about how when we are not unified with others or avoid cooperating with others b/c they are different from us, or we think they are less important than us b/c they are different, we are less effective, we are limited in our potential. We are like the fingers of the hand that tried to write without the thumb, or the thumb that tried to write w/o the other 4. We are all connected in the spiritual world, and if we try to live as if we are separate, we are handicapped.

Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

- **Puzzle Activity:** Teams of 4 tried to be the first to put together a puzzle that consisted of a black and white photo of different colored hands touching. It's on page 41 of the *Brilliant Star Oneness of Humanity Activity Book Series*. I had color photocopied 4 copies, then used spray adhesive to adhere them onto mat board and cut them out with a paper cutter. The picture looks much better if its color

photocopied, even though it's a black and white photo. Each team got their pieces in a little zip lock baggie.

At the beginning, before starting, I say something like: “Ever notice how each piece is different and unique, but each piece is important b/c each contributes to making the puzzle whole and complete? The idea is to connect or unify all the separate pieces, so we get one complete picture. People are kind of like puzzle pieces—each person is unique, different, and important b/c each contributes to our one world to make it more beautiful and complete. When we all unify and connect hearts like puzzle pieces, we will have one beautiful, unified world.” Or you can say something like: “You are to work together in unity to make a divided/separated picture whole and one. This mirrors what we need to do in real life: Work together in unity to make our divided world as one”. A puzzle of the globe would also be a good choice to reinforce this concept.

It helps if you show the whole photo first, before starting on the puzzles. Teams then can race to put their puzzle together. I emphasized that in spiritually it's never important to be first to get something or somewhere, but it is a spiritually positive thing to be first in showing virtues, to be first in promoting/showing unity. (Another motivator can be that as soon as a team completes the puzzle, that team can go on play break).

This puzzle turned out to be quite challenging. It has 30 pieces. I needed to show the whole photo several times to each group for them to be able to succeed. After we returned from break, we discussed the virtues needed to finish the puzzle: consultation, patience, determination, perseverance, cooperation, etc. All these virtues we need to develop in order to unify our divided world as well as a puzzle.

- **The Pivot**

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind -- the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve...~Shoghi Effendi, (The World Order of Baha'u'lláh)

Vocabulary: Pivot=axle, hinge, fulcrum

Revolve=rotate, circle, orbit

This quote forms the focal point for the first lesson on the Oneness of Humanity in Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guide, *The Principle of Oneness*, Level One, pages 40-43. The guide provides instructions for building a full scale May-pole to model the concept of pivot, but I did not have time to do that. So, instead, I used the largest piece of a 3 piece garden pinwheel made of different colored ribbons. It is basically a black hoop with ribbons as spokes. The ribbons are attached in paired colors, with the paired colors repeated once on the opposite side of the wheel. First, I pasted a lovely round picture of children circling the globe onto

cardboard, then cut it out. Next, I wrote in sparkling gold ink in the center of the globe: “The Oneness of Humanity”. Then I attached that to the pivot with scotch tape. Then I used some white correction tape and figured how long the tape should be on each ribbon so that the words were not obscured by the circular picture representing the oneness of humanity. As it turned out, a nice pattern worked best: Each teaching took up 2 of the same-colored ribbons, given the length of the tape used. So, for example for a pair of dark blue ribbons, the white tape on the top dark blue ribbon said: “The Equality of” and the tape on the dark blue ribbon below it said: “Men and Women”. I used sparkling ink pens to make it pretty and tried to match the pen color to the ribbon color underneath its tape. (The correction tape, though more attractive than masking tape, fell off easily due to its inferior sticking ability. So, I covered each tape section with clear tape to hold it in place. One can also try white medical tape, or just writing with metallic ink pens on clear tape that is stuck directly on the ribbon).

When done, it was quite a lovely model. As a group we memorized the above quote, and anyone that could say it, got to spin the beautiful pinwheel. (And I made sure all got to do that). On one section of the circular center illustration, it says: “Peace”. After spinning, each child would read the principle that was most closely aligned with that word when the wheel stopped—and I re-emphasized that all these principles will be critical in creating world peace, they are what will assist the whole world to recognize and practice the oneness of humanity.

- The ideas for this discussion come from pages 58-59, in Core Curriculum Lesson Planning Guide, *The Principle of Oneness*, Level One.

O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

Vocabulary: Decreed=commanded

Presence=company

Tabernacle=tent, temple

Illumined=lit

Providence=divine guidance or care

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

Vocabulary: Dost=does

Conferrest=bestow, grant, give

Endowed=gifted

Faculties=abilities, capacities, powers

Submerged=immersed, covered

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.

Vocabulary: Establish=create, form

Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Vocabulary: Stronghold=fortress, refuge, fort

Providence=divine guidance or care

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Vocabulary: Shortcomings=faults, weaknesses

At the end of the program on oneness its nice to give small gifts to the kids to reinforce the concepts learned.

For example, Kids love temporary tattoos. Its fun to have them put on while at the conference. Just have some hand held mirrors, thick toilet paper like Charmin or paper towels, and a few spray bottles to dampen the paper with: [1Familytattoo](#) [worldcitizentattoo](#) [unityindiversitytattoo](#)

MISCELLANEOUS Extra QUOTATIONS

Underlined words are the ones students try to guess. Words were chosen that could be easily pantomimed or deduced from the context.

Close your eyes to racial differences, and welcome all with the light of oneness. ~Bahá'u'lláh (as quoted by Shoghi Effendi: The Advent of Divine Justice)

Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one ocean. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Tablets of Baha'u'lláh)

The Great Being saith: O well-beloved ones! The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Tabernacle=tent, temple

Regard=think of

Ye=you

It is not for him to pride himself who loveth his own country, but rather for him who loveth the whole world. The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Citizens=residents, inhabitants

The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Incomparable=unequaled

Substance=material, matter

Exalted=raised, elevated, lifted

The Prophets of God should be regarded as physicians whose task is to foster the well-being of the world and its peoples, that, through the spirit of oneness, they may heal the sickness of a divided humanity. ~ Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Foster=encourage, nurture, promote

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Vocabulary: Cherisheth=treasures

Beholding=seeing, viewing

***Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe.* ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)**

Vocabulary: Counselleth=advises

Revelation=Divine teachings, divine knowledge

We have created you from one tree and have caused you to be as the leaves and fruit of the same tree, that haply ye may become a source of comfort to one another. Regard ye not others save as ye regard your own selves, that no feeling of aversion may prevail amongst you...

~The Bab, (Selections from the Writings of The Bab)

Vocabulary: Haply=hopefully

Regard=think of, consider

Aversion=dislike, hatred

Prevail=exist, occur

***All humanity are the children of God; they belong to the same family, to the same original race. There can be no multiplicity of races, since all are the descendants of Adam.* ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (The Promulgation of Universal Peace)**

Vocabulary: Original=earliest, first

Multiplicity=numerous, variety

Descendants=offspring, children

***Your souls are as waves on the sea of the spirit; although each individual is a distinct wave, the ocean is one, all are united in God. Every heart should radiate unity, so that the Light of the one Divine Source of all may shine forth bright and luminous. We must not consider the separate waves alone, but the entire sea. We should rise from the individual to the whole. The spirit is as one great ocean and the waves thereof are the souls of men.* ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)**

Vocabulary: Distinct=separate, different, individual

Radiate=shine out with, glow with

Luminous=shining, shimmering, glowing

Let this gathering be a foreshadowing of what will, in very truth, take place in this world, when every child of God realizes that they are leaves of one tree, flowers in one garden, drops in one ocean, and sons and daughters of one Father, whose name is love! ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

All men are the leaves and fruit of one same tree, they are all branches of the tree of Adam, they all have the same origin. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

Vocabulary: Origin=source, beginning

Know ye, verily, that the happiness of mankind lieth in the unity and the harmony of the human race...~'Abdu'l-Bahá, (Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Bahá)

Vocabulary: Verily=truthfully

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light are 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 Day-Star 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)

For this next quote, I showed the kids the document from where this quote originated for two reasons: It is an incredibly important message from our Universal House of Justice about how to create world peace and the barriers to world peace. It is called The Promise of World Peace, published in 1985

World order can be founded only on an unshakeable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm..... recognition of this truth requires abandonment of prejudice -- prejudice of every kind -- race, class, colour, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others.

.....Universal acceptance of this spiritual principle is essential to any successful attempt to establish world peace. It should therefore be universally proclaimed, taught in schools, and constantly asserted in every nation as preparation for the organic change in the structure of society which it implies. (The Universal House of Justice, 1985 Oct, The Promise of World Peace)

Vocabulary: Consciousness=awareness, realization

Abandonment=rejection, leaving behind

Creed=belief system—political or religious

Essential=critical, necessary

Universally=across the world, commonly

Proclaimed=announced, declared

Asserted=proclaimed, stated

Implies=involves

For the parents:

Let there be no mistake. The principle of the Oneness of Mankind -- the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve -- is no mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a reawakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cooperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure of present-day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced. It constitutes a challenge, at once bold and universal, to outworn shibboleths of national creeds -- creeds that have had their day and which must, in the ordinary course of events as shaped and controlled by Providence, give way to a new gospel, fundamentally different from, and infinitely superior to, what the world has already conceived. It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world -- a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units.

It represents the consummation of human evolution -- an evolution that has had its earliest beginnings in the birth of family life, its subsequent development in the achievement of tribal solidarity, leading in turn to the constitution of the city-state, and expanding later into the institution of independent and sovereign nations.

The principle of the Oneness of Mankind, as proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh, carries with it no more and no less than a solemn assertion that attainment to this final stage in this stupendous evolution is not only necessary but inevitable, that its realization is fast approaching, and that nothing short of a power that is born of God can succeed in establishing it. ~Shoghi Effendi, (The World Order of Baha'u'lláh)