

UNITY THEME

MUSIC—devotional music

- ***“So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth”***. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

3 versions of the above verse:

“So Powerful” by Taraz Nasrat, on his The Divine Spark recording. Can be found at <http://9starmedia.com/taraz-nosrat-the-divine-spark> on the Divine Spark recording, song #2.

“The Light of Unity” by Nancy Watters and also by Anastasia Rene Master. These 2 are free for download, just scroll down to find them. <https://soundcloud.com/larrymagee/sets/bahai-ruhi-book-3-grade-two-album>

“Unite” This lovely song is available for free download at: [Unite - Ali Youssefi - Baha'i Blog](#)

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

Bind=connect, attach, join, tie

Accord=harmony, agreement

Radiant=glowing, joyful, shining, bright

(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—when my grandchildren were toddlers, they loved it and asked for it over and over again—and still do at age 8.)

- **“Friendliness Quotation”** taken from the *At First Light Vol. 1*, CD by Soulrise Melodies.

Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

- **“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. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1nPkahbjG_M

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 time, ... 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)

- **“Unity Quotation”** from Soulrise Melodies, *At First Light* CD, Vol. 1:

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

- **“Concentrate All the Thoughts of Your Heart”** from Joe Crone’s *Immerse Yourself* CD:

...concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love. ~’Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

- **“If You Desire with All Your Heart”** from Joe Crone’s *Immerse Yourself* CD; or from Ali Youssefi: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b56swILGDAs>

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)

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 is also available on YouTube, put to a video with photography.

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

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

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.

These first 2 verses are beautifully demonstrated in the short story Swimmy by Leo Lionni. Ages 4-7

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDrR78REU8Y>

- *No power can exist except through unity.* ~Bahá'u'lláh (Tablets)

Power=ability to do something great, ability, strength

Exist=to be, to be real

Unity=harmony, agreement

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

Members=body parts, limbs

We shared that there is spiritual and physical power and gave examples of both. To clarify the concept of “exist”, we asked: Do purple people exist? Do plants exist? Do 10 legged cows exist?

We 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.

To illustrate the second 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 down was the result of course!

- ***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, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

Deal=treat

Ye=you

Utmost=greatest

Harmony=agreement, peacefulness

Fellowship=friendship, cooperativeness

Unity=harmony, working happily together

Illuminate=light up, illumine

- ***...you must manifest the utmost kindness towards each other, and you may rest assured that whenever you are united, ... the heavenly favors will descend...~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)***

Manifest=show

Utmost=greatest, extreme

Rest assured=be sure that

Heavenly favors= blessings, gifts (we gave examples).

Descend=come down, come to, be received

- ***May you serve the Cause of God as one single, united force.***
~ `Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

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

- *O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you.* ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)
- *The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord.* ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

NOTES: To illustrate the veracity of this quote above, I asked the kids to name instruments from an orchestra. I asked them what makes all these diverse instruments unified? They quickly figured out it was the music—the instruments are playing the same song, the same notes. And how dull if all the instruments were the same—it is the diversity of instruments that makes a symphony so beautiful. And how awful it would sound if all the different instruments were playing a different song. And finally, I gave the example of a song—its diverse voices, unified by singing to the same music. To illustrate this, we all sang a different song at the same time. In contrast, we sang the same song. (It did sound quite a bit better, but not great!)

- *We love to...inhale from your acts the fragrance of friendliness and unity, of loving-kindness and fellowship. Thus counselleth you the All-Knowing, the Faithful.* ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

(I dropped Hyacinth oil onto 3D flower stickers at the top and bottom of the memory verse papers so that they would have fragrance. Indeed, this quote goes on further and says: We shall always be with you; if We inhale the perfume of your fellowship, Our heart will assuredly rejoice, for naught else can satisfy Us.)

- The brightness of the fire of your love will no doubt fuse and unify the contending peoples and kindreds of the earth, whilst the fierceness of the flame of enmity and hatred cannot but result in strife and ruin. Baha'u'lláh, (Tablets of Baha'u'llah)

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

Teamwork on Vitamin L's *Everyone's Invited* CD.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhCQq9Bt_Qk

This is a fun song to dance to with partners and rectangular scarves. Children were instructed to dance any way they pleased as long as they remained connected with their partner via the scarf, with each holding onto one end. Before beginning, the lyrics were read. Then we showed them a few fun maneuvers with the scarves, like how to wind their partner up in the cloth and then spin them to unwind by pulling on the scarf, how to step each leg over the scarf and do a complete circle, how to twirl around with the scarf over one's head, etc. About 2/3 through the song, on cue, we intertwined all the cloths together and danced as a unit. After the song, we untangled the scarves, w/o letting go of our end by stepping under, over and through the tangle. (This part was explained and demonstrated before beginning the song.) It was really fun!

Working Together Kids can do simple actions to this upbeat song. Read the lyrics then challenge the kids to come together in one of 3 ways every time they hear the word “together” in the song. There can be 2 or more kids coming together, but they have to do it fast and in the same manner—by linking elbows, high five-ing, or connecting at the hips. There are other fun ways to connect body parts, but since the lyrics move fast, we felt limiting it to 3 was enough of a challenge.

(This song is on a CD called *Gratitude* from the Full-Circle Learning Curriculum, from the Habits-of-Heart Songs series. Its available from www.fullcirclelearning.org. Click on Educator tab, then Audio and scroll down until you find the song. It's free.

Related Quotes to above Songs:

No power can exist except through unity. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Tablet)

...mutual helpfulness and cooperation are the two necessary principles underlying human welfare.

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

To Everyone in all the World: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2iDxS82szVY>

NOTES: A dance activity promoting international friendship. This song comes from Raffi's *Baby Beluga* recording. I first encourage the participants in their daily lives to seek out and befriend those that are different from themselves to promote world unity. I say that one way we do this here in the U.S. is to shake hands and introduce ourselves. Then I say something like this:

“In this song, you will shake hands with many different people and say your name. Try to shake hands with as many different people as you can. If you already know each other’s name, you can just smile knowingly, instead of saying your name. Whenever the singer says *To everyone in all the world, I reach my hand, I shake their hand, or I shake my hand like this, or we can shake hands, you* find someone to shake hands with. Then you link elbows, *facing in opposite directions*, and skip in a circle together. If you want, you can even switch directions by switching linked elbows like they do in country dancing. Have any of you ever been to a square or contra dance? Well, one of the moves in this dance comes from country dancing.

(Then I ask a child to come up and demonstrate with me the actions I just described. First, we shake hands, say our names, then skip in a circle with linked elbows, then switch directions. Then I mention that the song also goes into French, and the dancers should listen for “la main” and “de main” explaining that “main” means hand. (It’s pronounced me, with a short e, as it “let”.) When they hear “la/de main” they should also shake hands and link up. Often what happens, even during the English portion of the song, is that everybody just shakes and links throughout the song, not bothering to wait for the cues. As long as they are having fun, that’s OK too.)

Lyrics for To Everyone in all the World:

To everyone in all the world,
I reach my hand, I shake their hand.
To everyone in all the world,
I shake my hand like this.

All, all together,
the whole wide world around.
I may not know their lingo,
but I can say by jingo.
No matter where you live,
we can shake hands
French part—the first French stanza says the same as above.

A tous et chacun dans le monde
Je tends la main, je leur donne la main
A tous et chacun dans le monde
Je donne la main comme ca

Tous tous ensemble au monde entier je chante
C’est tres facile entre humains

Avec une poignée de main

N'importe où dans le monde on peut s'entendre

Related quotes to above song:

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.

~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Consort with all men, O people of Baha, in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship. ~Bahá'u'lláh (Gleanings)

Ye dwell in one world, and have been created through the operation of one Will. Blessed is he who mingleth with all men in a spirit of utmost kindness and love. ~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)

The advent of the prophets and the revelation of the Holy Books is intended to create love between souls and friendship between the inhabitants of the earth. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá

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)

Touch a Hand, Make a Friend

Perfect activity for warming up a crowd and making connections between folks. It also has a good dance beat.

This wonderful song is by Kids on the Block. The exact same quotes from above also apply to this activity/song. The song is no longer available from Kids on the Block, but they told me it was fairly faithful to the original 1974 version done by the Staple Singers. An audio only version is available for free at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oR7AiYm01Q8> or from Amazon as a MP3 download. <http://www.amazon.com/Touch-Hand-Make-Friend/dp/B000U8KIZO>

Ask the crowd to form one or more circles. No more than 20-25 per circle is about right. Explain that we are going to make new friends in this activity. Whenever the musician says: "Touch a hand, make a friend", we are all to *step* (not lunge, as some active young ones tend to do!) into the center of the circle and reach out both hands and touch someone else's. We should make eye contact and smile and try to touch the hands of someone different every time. After touching, raise both arms up high and step back to reform the circle. It

looks like a giant flower opening. Lower arms when circle is reformed. I also encourage people to groove to the music in the circle, between actions.

It is important to demonstrate what you mean with a group of 5 or so volunteers. Basically, it's like the arms form the spokes on a wheel when lowered to reach and touch. As people step back and raise both arms up in the air, it looks really neat. I won't list the words here b/c they come with the music and the only phrase that has a structured action is the "Touch a hand, make a friend".

Unity from Jennifer Russell's *The Virtues Songs*, Vol. 3.:

NOTES: Before starting to dance to this lovely song, we read the lyrics and asked kids to fill in key words, usually at the end of a line. We defined "diversity" as "differences" and "honor" as "admiration" or "a good sort of pride". We encouraged the kids to sing the chorus together. Kids can dance w/ silk scarves, and when the word "unity" is sung, they hold the end of another's scarf, so they are connected. Or if you don't have scarves, they can hold hands w/ or 2 other children. Or this gentle song can be used to calm and connect the group: Sit in a circle, hold hands, gently sway, and sing the chorus together. 5-8 yrs

The lyrics are:

I am connected to everything
I am connected to everybody
I am a part of God's universe
I am a member of humanity

Chorus:

Unity brings peace
Unity brings harmony
Unity is powerful
It creates beauty from diversity

Unity starts with my own family
The joy of one is the joy of all
The tears of one is the tears of all
The honor of one is the honor of all

Chorus

The power of unity solves conflicts
Let's listen to each other and find solutions
Like instruments in an orchestra

We blend in harmony and unison

Let's All Help Each Other

This is from a CD called *Virtues In Us, Children's Virtues Songs* (school age) by The Children's Virtues Development Project. Its listed under the virtue of "unity". We listened and danced as a group holding hands to this song. We read the lyrics first and explained a few big words. Each child and the teachers got to take turns leading the group in the actions we did—while not letting go of each others' hands,--- such as all coming in the center and back out, raising our arms up and down or back and forth in an alternating fashion, or swing both to the left and then to the right, kicking in one direction, etc. We demonstrated the action options before playing the song, and of course kids could come up with their own.

I'm a Peacemaker from the *Virtues in Us, Children's Virtue Songs* (school age) by The Children's Virtues Development Project.

All the World by Gemini, on their *Pulling Together* recording.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIUizyzshxc>

It gives many metaphors for the human diversity in the world, like colors of a rainbow, notes in a melody, sections in a tapestry.

We Are Drops, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsDHH5T5B5M>

Love the skin you are in by Joe Crone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icrciE6nR88>

Community is where I live by Jennifer Russel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOV0JxNj4bc>

Unity Brings peace by Jennifer Russel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kb-RPiuzh9g>

STORIES/ARTICLES

The Quarreling Quail

From India, in a book called The Sunshine Tree and other Tales from around the World, retold by Wendy Heller. It is a compilation of moral fables. It comes with a parent/teacher guide with relevant Baha'i quotes and discussion questions. The story provides a graphic example of how powerful unity is and the high price of disunity. It's a great example of the negative consequences of not overlooking the faults of others. A fowler imitates the quail leaders' call and by doing so is able to draw the quail together and throw a net over them. The quail hold a meeting and decide to work in unity by each poking his/her head through the net and flying in unison to a thorn bush and freeing themselves. This works wonderfully. But eventually they begin to quarrel and while doing so, neglect to fly away when netted. (Available in Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fei8y6pudJY>)

NOTES: The students were asked to point out which virtues were absent (courtesy, forgiveness, respect) which led to the disunity. We also asked the kids to label the negative behaviors the quails engaged in that created disunity. The first example of disunity by the quails was very similar to the puppet show in "The Accidental Bump", which demonstrated lack of forgiveness, name calling, blaming, etc.

The students were very engaged in this story. This was facilitated by them being invited to play the part of the quail leaders' and the imitating fowler's call. We asked the students to trill their tongues for this. Whenever the story mentioned the call being made by the fowler or quail leader, we would gesture with my hand for them to trill. We also gave them a "cut" gesture when we wanted them to abruptly stop so we could continue the story.

We had a net to do this story dramatically and had made holes in it big enough for human heads. So, the kids pretended to be birds scattered about the room and when the fowler made the call, they gathered together on a carpet. The net was then thrown over them and they "flew" away and dumped it in another room. (They had been instructed to hide it). Then the fowler begrudgingly had to search for it and pretend to get pricked by all the thorns. For the second round, the class played the quarreling quail role. This time, they pretended to argue, so they got entangled in the net, and the fowler pretended to catch and eat them! For a group over 5, 2 fowlers would be needed to be able to cast the net.

We reminded the kids that virtues are necessary for unity—it is nearly impossible to have unity if people are not courteous and respectful to each other—which is what happened with the ill-fated quail.

I Walk with Vanessa: A Story About a Simple Act of Kindness Hardcover by Kerascoet.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbFpcPJ10EU>

This lovely story ends with a powerful demonstration of the power of unity. We asked children to describe the power of unity illustrated in the story—and they got it.

The Mice Who Lived in a Shoe by Rodney Peppe, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYjfZvikUmo>

This Story provides an excellent example of the power of unity--a family of mice work together to build a weather and cat proof house out of an old shoe, each contributing their own unique talents. You can add a creative artistic element after the story: Each student is given a black and white photocopy of an old shoe similar to the one in the story about the mice family. Using markers, kids can design their own shoe house that would be cat-proof.

Red Ruby's dream. This is from *Brilliant Star Children's Magazine*, Nov./Dec. 1998 pages 16-18. It is a bizarre and silly story about how a pair of lips seeks out assistance in the form of a nose, legs, eyes, and hands to obtain a chocolate chip cookie. I made a puppet using velcro and doll body parts to go along with the story. It is truly a wild looking puppet!! (The legs are attached to the lips, and the eyes, arms and lips are attached to the nose). Since we are still working on unity in diversity and cooperation, I thought this story was a good example to use. We used a real cookie in the story and so I had the kids' total concentration!!

This story inspired and goes great with the game *Unified Body Parts*.

The Gnats of Knotty Pine by Bill Peet. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58T_EPmBD20

The students shared the virtues and the negative behaviors that threatened unity which the characters exhibited. When millions of good hearted Gnats get together in unity, they have the power to save even the largest forest animals from hunters.

Some Things You Just Can't Do by Yourself by Naomi Schiff

Together by George Ella Lyon. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovtM6x8y7Bo>

Horton Hears a Who by Dr. Seuss. It vividly portrays the power of unity in how the contribution of one tiny little being makes the difference between life and death. The story also illustrates virtues of loyalty, determination, respect, perseverance, caring, compassion, detachment, helpfulness/service, selflessness, sacrifice, and courage. It also shows the consequences of gossip and backbiting, not bothering to investigate

truth independently, and prejudice. Horton repeatedly exhorts the other jungle animals to respect the Whos b/c “a persons’ a person no matter how small!” I also like the underlying message that just b/c you can’t see or hear something, does not mean it does not exist—our faith in a spiritual world is strengthened by the acceptance of this basic principle.

People by Peter Spier. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wiLxhSqK8tY>

This large picture book is about the beauty and necessity of diversity in the human family. Throughout the book, to engage the students more thoroughly, I would ask them to choose the pictures they liked best—for example, which house would you want to live in for a year the most? Which skin color is closest to yours? Which style of clothing would you want to wear to a party? What pet would you like to own?

The Secret in the Garden by Winifred Barnum Newman. The story uses the diversity of a flower garden to teach unity and appreciation for differences to a group of diverse people.

We talked about how village leaders were threatened and jealous of the old wise woman’s influence on the villagers, just like religious leaders are threatened by new Messengers and their attracting power. The garden can be a metaphor for our religion, the flowers are the individual souls, and the old wise woman is a spiritual teacher. Just as flowers need sun, rain, and protection from weeds in order to blossom, souls need prayer, the Creative Word, and the weeding out of prejudice, hatred, greed, etc., and loving kindness, peace and unity in order for their virtues to blossom.

After the story, we discussed the following quote which relates perfectly to the story:

Let us look....at the beauty in diversity,and learn a lesson from the vegetable creation. If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, colour and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of colour is what makes for charm and beauty..... It is just the diversity and variety that constitutes its charm; each flower,... beside being beautiful in itself, brings out by contrast the qualities of the others, and shows to advantage the special loveliness of each and all.

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

Likewise, when you meet those whose opinions differ from your own, do not turn away your face from them. All are seeking truth, and there are many roads leading thereto. Truth has many aspects, but it remains always and forever one.

Do not allow difference of opinion, or diversity of thought to separate you from your fellow-men, or to be the cause of dispute, hatred and strife in your hearts. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

Beheld=saw, observe, view, consider

Monotonous=repetitive, boring

Hue=shade of color

Constitutes=makes up, creates

conventionality=traditional values, typical social behavior

aspects=characteristics, features, sides

dispute=argument, disagreement

strife=trouble, conflict, friction

CREATIVE DRAMATICS—skits, puppet shows

Most of these quotes are relevant to all these activities:

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. Thus counselleth you the Pen of Revelation, if ye be of them that believe. ~Bahá'u'lláh: (Gleanings)

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

The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá (Paris Talks)

If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, an rejoice to be among them. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

The most important thing for the believers is, of course, to be united and to really love each other for the sake of God...~Shoghi Effendi, (Directives of the Guardian)

Unity in Diversity Skits

Ages 7 and up

Partners were to create a skit or example of how 2 people working together are better than one or complement each other. For example, one child tried to carry a table, the second child enabled them to do it. One child wrote a phrase, another illustrated the phrase with a drawing, one child could not reach something high up, but together, with one on the other's shoulders, they could, one guided another to hang a picture straight, etc. For inspiration before the skits these books are perfect: Some Things You Just Can't Do by Yourself by Naomi Schiff and Together by George Ella Lyon. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tv9FkfsXJNA>) ; Kids should be requested to not use the same activities in the books but to think of their own.

Cooperation, Unity & the Difference Between Them

4 yrs and up—performers should be at least 7, but little ones love watching

Demonstration of win/win cooperation and how compromise is essential: 2 people pretend to be pigs or dogs or whatever. Those rubber animal noses with elastic straps add an element of humor, as do curly tails. They get down on all fours. They are attached to each other by a long rope, which depending on whether you are using adults or rambunctious kids, can be tied around the neck, if not, affixed to the torso. Two bowls full of real or pretend food (kids love to see adults stuffing real grass in their mouths) are placed at opposite ends of the room. At first each animal is tugging to get to the bowl nearest them—but neither can eat b/c each is pulling in the opposite direction, thus preventing either from getting to their bowl. (It is important that the bowls be placed far enough apart so that the animals, when pulling and expanding the rope to its limit, can't reach the bowls.) Then they both have an AHAH! expression on their faces as if they suddenly got a bright idea. They make animal noises as if talking to each other, then each proceeds to move in the same direction towards one of the bowls, of which they both eat out of. When finished, they then both proceed to the second bowl and eat out of it together. One could also demonstrate patience and detachment with this version: One animal waits while one eats out of the bowl alone, then they both proceed to the second bowl and the one who hasn't eaten yet gets to eat, while the other waits. They can even be more clever: They both proceed to one bowl, and push it with their snouts towards the other bowl so they can eat simultaneously, side by side.

With a group of age 6 and up, you can tell the kids before the skit that these 2 animals have a problem and that after they figure out what that problem is, they should come up with solutions and inform the animals. Then the animals act those solutions out. Tell audience members that they may not touch the pigs, bowls, or rope—b/c they will be itching to just intervene.

To illustrate cooperation and unity and demonstrate the sometimes-subtle difference between unity and cooperation we did the following:

We first had a brief discussion about how unity is greater than working together, cooperation, and peace, in that true unity also involves the hearts being connected and unified. I gave examples (such as a rowing team) where there might be cooperation and working together, but if members do not like each other, or are back biting about each other, or holding some grudge against some teammate, they do not have true unity. Where there is true unity, there is always cooperation on some level, there is always peace, but you can have cooperation and peace without unity.

A concrete example:

Two people are attempting to twirl and jump rope with a third trying to jump in the middle. The first round—they are twirling in opposite directions and the rope is not moving in rhythm and the jumper is incapable of jumping. They are arguing over which speed and direction is best or blaming the other for the lack of

success. Second round: They are moving the rope in perfect synchrony and the jumper is able to jump quite well, but they are arguing over who gets to be the jumper next. 3rd round: They are moving the rope in perfect synchrony and are enjoying the experience and complementing the skill of the jumper and one of them invites the other jump rope holder to be the next jumper. Discuss the differences in the 3 rounds. Point out or let children come to the conclusion that they are indeed cooperating, but they are not in unity in the second round. Their ability to analyze this demonstration without much adult input will depend on their age and verbal skills.

Practicing Being Unified

Kids did mini-skits and the rest of us had to guess what 2 things they are. Ages 6 and up.

The children were put in teams of 2 and given cards which described a scene with 2 objects or people. The 2 things each child was to represent were underlined. Each team got to do 2 of these scenes:

a person reeling in a fish
a mother trying to get her baby to smile
a child playing in the waves
a soul departing from a dying person
a cat playing with a ball of yarn
a person chasing a fly with a fly swatter
an artist sculpting with a piece of clay
a bird pulling a worm out of the ground
a kid climbing a tree
a leaf dancing/swirling in the wind

All of Us All at Once

A dramatic cooperative game which demands unity, consultation, cooperation and often synchrony. Ages 8 and up.

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 game. This one-use static forms. Ages 7 and up.

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 it's 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.

3 Puppet Shows about Virtues and Unity (with audience participation)

These puppet shows are designed to clarify the understanding that the expression of virtues is essential to creating unity. Ages 4-8.

We sat in a circle, listened to a prayer for unity to music, and then each child verbally shared an action or activity which they think creates unity, or is unifying.

Then I asked them to define and discuss the meaning of unity. I asked them what they thought unity means, or what it personally means to them. I shared that I thought unity was deeper than peace. "Being at one with another or being in a state of oneness" is how the dictionary defines it--which is certainly the Baha'i concept as well. Then I asked them, based on their answers, what would you say makes unity? Basically, all their original contributions were descriptions of virtues. And that is the main point of the lesson: The expression of virtues create unity. We talked about how we can all express virtues in a negative situation to help restore unity or at least prevent things from getting worse.

I presented a vase of multicolored daisies and told them that: "Virtues are to unity what the sun and rain are to flower seeds. Virtues make unity grow and blossom, virtues make unity happen. Unity brings joy and beauty to the world, just as flowers do. Unity is like a beautiful flower garden."

Then I told them that: "All of you can express virtues--when you are about to get into an argument, get upset, when you are not getting along--virtues can make unity."

Optional, extension activity to involve kids more: After the intro above, I gave the students *unity sticks*. This is basically a popsicle stick between 2 large notary seals. The notary seals have the word "unity" written on them and many symbols for unity using stickers. I asked students to try and guess what each sticker meant—

for ex. A heart b/c love promotes unity, a dove, roses (virtues, like flowers, bring joy and beauty to the world, and virtues create unity), a rainbow (unity in diversity), stars (when you create unity, it is like bringing light to the darkness), a heart shaped earth with a candle in it (love and unity in the world illuminate the earth spiritually). Obviously, a teacher can just use one symbol to simplify the preparation of this material. It's a good idea to remind the kids to handle the sticks gently and not chew on them even if they are on the suggestive popsicle sticks!

Next, we discussed how all virtues can promote unity and that wherever there is disunity, you can bet that one or more virtues is missing. I described things people say and do, and if it increased unity, they were to raise their sticks, if it decreased unity, they were to hide the stick behind their backs. After each action, students were to bring the sticks back to a neutral position, such as centered over their laps, so they could proceed to the next movement. I gave examples such as boasting, rolling eyes when you don't want a slow person on your team, backbiting, scooting away from someone who sits next to you, handing out valentines to only some people in your class, saying "so what" or saying "how can I help?", hugging someone who is sad, many examples of manners, etc. I wanted them to see that non-verbal actions can be just as hurtful/pleasing as verbal ones, so one should always be careful what their body/face is saying.

They had no problem ascertaining the unifying behaviors and comments versus the disunifying ones. Then each student gave examples they were familiar with, and we responded accordingly.

I told them that I was going to use puppets to act out various scenes and whenever they saw a puppet expressing a virtue, and thereby promoting unity, they were to raise the unity stick, and whenever they saw the puppet express a behavior that was un-virtuous, that was negative, and thereby jeopardizing unity, they were to put the sticks behind their back to symbolize that the action makes unity disappear. After each action, students were to bring the sticks back to a neutral position, such as centered over their laps, so they could proceed to the next movement.

I also gave the students a list of behaviors and actions which are negative, and likely to create a conflict and disunity or make a conflict worse. Also on the same paper is a list of virtues which can heal a conflict and create unity. Using these lists, students were to verbally specify what virtues were needed/missing in the situation, which negative behavior was being expressed, and if a virtue was expressed, to label it. If kids not reading yet, they can just guess these things. **(These 2 lists are at the end of this document).**

We pulled the couch out from behind the wall to make like a stage, and I knelt behind the back. In each skit I ask the students to think of names for the puppets. Here then are the skits the puppets did to demonstrate the power of virtues to create unity.

The Paint Job

In the 1st one I explain that the 2 puppets who are friends, buy a house together that has only one bedroom. It badly needs a coat of paint. I ask the students to listen as they "discuss" what color to paint the room. Each puppet begins by announcing what color the room is to be painted., (which happened to be the color of the puppet, one was a green frog, the other a yellow creature of some sort.) When the other one objects, wanting to paint the room his favorite color, the argument escalates. Finally, after much haggling and obnoxious behavior, I ask the puppets to stop and ask them what the problem is. Each one accuses the other of having bad taste and blaming him for the conflict. So, I ask them to ask the students who is right and to define the problem. The students aptly point out that neither is right and that the problem is that they cannot agree on what color to paint the room. I also ask the students to use the lists described above (or their observations if they are not reading,) to explain to the puppets what negative behaviors are preventing them from solving the problem. The children were extremely astute in labeling the negative behaviors of the puppets--which were: demanding, disrespect, insults, forcing, rudeness, yelling, selfishness, stubbornness, inflexibility, and bossiness. Then I asked the students to tell the puppets what virtues would be helpful to solve the problem, and again they were right on the mark: detachment, sacrifice, cooperation, courtesy, respect, flexibility, etc.

So, we asked the puppets to redo their discussion using the virtues. They politely asked each other what color they would like the room, and expressed how they wanted each other to be happy, and gently suggested their own favorite color as a possible option. Then I asked the puppets to ask the students for creative alternatives to their problem--and the students were really creative: Mix the 2 colors, do stripes, polka dots, alternate walls, do a mural using both colors, find a 3rd color they both liked, etc.

These quotes below relate to the conflict illustrated in the above puppet show—but they are also very relevant to healing disunity.

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

How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others? Whoso doeth this is accursed of Me. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Arabic Hidden Words, #26)

O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues. Well is it with him who is illumined with the light of courtesy...~Bahá'u'lláh, (Tablets of Baha'u'lláh)

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)

Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other.

~Bahá'u'lláh, (Arabic Hidden Words, #68)

Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.

~Bahá'u'lláh, (Epistle to the Son of the Wolf)

If any differences arise amongst you, behold Me standing before your face, and overlook the faults of one another for My name's sake and as a token of your love for My manifest and resplendent Cause.

~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

For the attributes of the people of faith are justice and fair-mindedness; forbearance and compassion and generosity; consideration for others; candor, trustworthiness, and loyalty; love and loving-kindness...

~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Secret of Divine Civilization)

Our greatest efforts must be directed towards detachment from the things of the world...~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

...mutual helpfulness and cooperation are the two necessary principles underlying human welfare.

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

Let not your heart be offended with anyone. If someone commits an error and wrong toward you, you must instantly forgive him. Do not complain of others. Refrain from reprimanding them, and if you wish to give admonition or advice, let it be offered in such a way that it will not burden the bearer. Turn all your thoughts toward bringing joy to hearts. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare..... He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Hasty Hester

This one is about a frog who is so skinny that all the pond animals mistake her for a salamander without a tail. She is always getting into quarrels with the other pond creatures b/c she is so cranky due to hunger. I explain that she is plenty fast, but for some reason she is unable to catch flies. So, I demonstrate the frog's technique for catching and ask the students what she is doing wrong. Most have figured it out: She leaps for the fly as

soon as she sees it, rather than waiting for it to come closer. The fly giggles mockingly at the frog every time she misses it. The kids point out that she needs patience. So, I ask the kids to tell the frog to practice patience. So, the next time a fly comes buzzing around, she waits until it is practically on her nose. I make the puppet tremble and gulp as if really struggling with not impulsively going after the fly. She catches it easily, gobbles it up & gently burps. Then I explain that she became so patient that soon she was renamed "Patient Pudgy Patty". We then talk about how easily impatience creates disunity and stress. Kids shared examples of when impatience has caused problems or disunity in their own lives. (The fly was made out of clay and pipe cleaners with plastic eyes. Wings can be cut from shiny paper or mylar.)

He will, certainly, repay all them that endure with patience and put their confidence in Him. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Be patient under all conditions, and place your whole trust and confidence in God. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

He, verily, shall increase the reward of them that endure with patience. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

The New Ball

There are 2 sisters, and the youngest sister has just had a birthday and received a brand-new ball which she is really thrilled about. She exclaims how happy she is about her new bright pink, high bouncing ball, and that it is "all mine". Then her older sister appears and comments on what a nice ball her sister has, who then forcibly exclaims that it is hers alone. Next, I ask the students what the older sister wants. (To shift the student's identification with the younger sister to the older). And then I say, "Let's see." Sure enough, the older sister politely requests to play with the ball. But her younger sister is really possessive and adamantly shouts "No way"! -- the ball is all hers and no one can touch it! Then I ask the students what negative behaviors the younger sister is displaying (selfishness, rudeness, yelling, inflexibility, etc.) I ask the students how the older sister feels, and what would make her happy. They of course are now identifying wholeheartedly with the older sister and know that to play with the ball would bring her joy. So, I ask the students to ask the younger sister to let the older sister play with the ball with her. The younger sister struggles and finally agrees. They both then have a really good time tossing the ball back and forth, and the younger sister realizes that playing with someone is more fun than playing alone. Then I ask the students how the puppets both feel now, and what virtues helped create this feeling. (Detachment, sharing, caring, unselfishness, etc.)

I end the show by asking kids to think of what the moral lesson in this simple puppet show might be—after some dialogue, they do figure it out—that sharing brings unity and joy to both the recipient and the giver.

Relevant quotes to above puppet show:

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)

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

Your utmost desire must be to confer happiness upon each other. Each one must be the servant of the others, thoughtful of their comfort and welfare..... He must not consider his own pleasure but seek the pleasure of others. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Promulgation of Universal Peace)

Our greatest efforts must be directed towards detachment from the things of the world...~`Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

4 Mini-Puppet Shows about Virtues & Unity

Ages 4-8

Like the 3 above, these puppet shows are also designed to clarify the understanding that the expression of virtues are essential to creating unity.

I did 4 mini puppet shows to illustrate to the kids what I wanted them to do with their puppets: create a simple situation in which the characters express negative behaviors and show the consequences, and then redo the situation with virtues from the virtues list and show how that affects the outcome.

The students again were given the unity sticks to be used as indicators for virtues which create unity and for actions which lead to disunity. They were also given the paper described above which contain 2 lists: behaviors and actions which are likely to create disunity or make a conflict worse and virtues which can heal a conflict and create unity. After each action, I stop the scene and ask the students to label the virtues and the negative behaviors expressed. (See *3 Puppet Shows about Virtues and Unity*, introduction, above, for description of unity sticks and the 2 lists).

The Accidental Bump

The first skit is about an accidental collision. Puppet 1 is admiring some geese flying in the sky and accidentally bumps into puppet 2.

In scene one puppet 1 says "excuse me!" (Kids raise sticks, I ask what virtue was shown--courtesy, etc.). Puppet 2 calls her a name and gets hostile. (Kids hide sticks, I ask what negative behavior was shown--insult, rudeness, unforgiving, and anger). Puppet 1 hangs her head.

In scene two, puppet 1 says excuse me, (courtesy) puppet 2 shoves her (revenge, anger, rudeness, unforgiving) Puppet 1 retaliates and a cycle of aggression begins.

In scene three, Puppet 1 says "sorry!" (courtesy, apologizing), puppet 2 says "that's okay, are you all right?" (forgiveness, caring)

The Bad Mood

In the second skit I explain that a girl (puppet 1) is in a terrible mood at school--her parents were fighting that morning and she got in trouble with them too. Puppet 1's friend, puppet 2, has just caused their team to lose a spelling bee.

In scene one, puppet 1 calls him stupid and berates him for causing the team to lose, (put down, blaming, anger) Puppet 2 calls her a name back (revenge). They begin a name calling fight.

In scene two, puppet 1 calls puppet 2 stupid and he tries very hard to not call her a name and then tells her how it makes him feel instead, (self-control, honesty, courage). Puppet 1 then apologizes, which showed humility. (I pointed out that it does not always happen like this in real life--but that calling a name back almost always makes the conflict worse. Sharing feelings with an aggressor is iffy-they may just use it against you.)

In scene three, puppet 1 calls puppet 2 a name, and puppet 2 immediately says "hey what's wrong with you today, you seem really upset about something?" (Caring, selflessness)

The New Toy

In skit three, puppet 1 has a new toy that she is totally thrilled with. (We have made it hilarious by making the new toy one of the children in the class which the puppet fawns over and "plays" with. Can choose new "toy" for scene 2).

In scene one, puppet 1 talks about how she has this toy and no one else does, how great it is, etc., (self-exaltation, boasting). Puppet 2 demands to play with it, when she says no, he says he won't ever play with her again, she still refuses, and so he then snatches the coveted item. (demanding, threatening, grabbing) They then fight over the toy.

In scene two, puppet 1 exclaims how happy she is with her new toy (joy). Puppet 2 asks "may I please play with your new toy?" (courtesy). Puppet 1 says No, because she just got it an hour ago, but that he could play with it later, (sharing) Puppet 2 says "ok, I'll go read a book," (patience, detachment).

Left Out

In skit four, puppets 1 & 2 are whispering, giggling and clearly enjoying each other's company. Puppet 3 is watching and looks lonely.

In scene one, puppets 1 & 2 deliberately ignore puppet 3, (excluding, unkind). Puppet 3 asks to play with them. They say no. So, puppet 3 insists loudly (demanding), then starts to whine (whining) and finally yells that if they won't play with him, he is going to beat them up, (threats, yelling, aggression). Puppets 1 & 2 quickly leave, and he is left alone.

In scene two, puppets 1 and 2 notice that puppet 3 is all by himself. They immediately invite him to play with them (kindness, including). Puppet 2 exclaims his pleasure at the invitation and says "thanks!" (Courtesy, gratitude).

After this I split the students into groups, usually pairing older with younger and they had to design their own puppet-skit. The rules were that there could be no violence, the virtues had to outnumber the negative behaviors, and that the negative behavior could not be extreme or unrealistic. (I have seen skits without these rules disintegrate into mayhem and be of no educational value!) Kids were asked not to do variations of the themes already done such as exclusion, sharing issues, name calling, etc. So, for the next half hour, In teams of 2 and 3, the students chose one or more negative behaviors and counteracting virtues to build a skit around.

We pulled out the couch away from the wall for a stage for the puppeteers to crouch behind. I gave them about 20 minutes to develop these shows. They all did a fantastic job and each skit displayed many virtues and were really enjoyable to watch. After each skit, students labeled the negative/disunifying and virtuous/unity building behaviors exhibited by the puppets. I really want the virtues to become deeply embedded in their consciousness' so they can call them forth under a variety of circumstances. I also want them to become keenly aware of what behaviors create disunity so they can instantly recognize them in their own actions and correct themselves.

All the negative behaviors and virtues in these mini-puppet skits are quite familiar to children—the kids have either expressed these virtues or negative behaviors themselves or they have been the recipients of them. I sincerely hope that students become very aware of these behaviors in their own life and of their power to create or destroy unity.

Unity House

Drama-dance about unity. Generally used as a performance piece—can be taught in an hour ½ or so depending on ages of kids and how many breaks they need. Ages 6-10

This song is by Jack Lenz and Doug Cameroon. There are 2 versions of it. The one I like best is on Lenz's *Encore* recording. The other version, which is not quite as lively or Calypso sounding, is on his *We are Baha'is Too* CD. Kids and I performed this at a Feast and at a Unit Convention. Both CDs are available at Jack Lenz's website. Here is the link for *Encore* which can be downloaded digitally: [Encore CD](#) The props may take a little time to collect if you don't have anything like them.

Here are the materials I used:

A large giant golden sun on a stick

A 10 foot long narrow blue cloth for the sea

A large sheer gray, white, or light blue cloth for the wind, which is not too heavy to flutter--- or streamers, ribbons, or a thin, long, lightweight scarf on a stick

I start by asking the kids what storms does unity protect us from? (War, terrorism, violence, alienation, prejudice, ethnic hatred, etc.)

Then I explain that this song is a metaphor about how unity protects us. As Baha'is, our job is to invite others into this house of unity Bahá'u'lláh has created—which is His Revelation, His teachings. Truly, Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are the source of unity for our world. Bahá'u'lláh has written:

"Verily, the words which have descended from the heaven of the Will of God are the source of unity and harmony for the world." ~Bahá'u'lláh, (as quoted by Shoghi Effendi in [The Advent of Divine Justice](#))

If you attain to such a capacity of love and unity, the Blessed Perfection will shower infinite graces of the spiritual Kingdom upon you, guide, protect and preserve you under the shadow of His Word, increase your happiness in this world and uphold you through all difficulties. ~Abdu'l-Bahá, ([Promulgation of Universal Peace](#))

Praise be to God that through the gracious assistance of the Abha Kingdom those devoted friends have been enabled to achieve that which befits the glory of the Cause of God and the protection of the community of the followers of Baha'u'llah. This is none other than to foster unity and fellowship under all conditions, to strengthen the bonds of harmony and concord in all things, and to avoid political matters. ~Shoghi Effendi, ([Bahiyiyih Khanum](#))

There is a nice long instrumental introduction before the words begin. Kids are lined up and come on stage in a stylized choreographed walk-movement to the music. Just listen to it and you will be inspired I can't describe how we did it, except that involved start/stop to the beat with bending of the knees. When words

begin, kids face audience, as opposed to having audience to their side, as when they entered. Encourage kids to sing as they perform.

CHORUS 2X:

Come into my unity house (*Children make beckoning movement with both hands by rocking fingers back and forth, palms facing child. On the word “house” they form triangular roof over their heads with the fingertips touching as the peak.*)

The rain falls down (*make raindrops by wiggling fingers as move hands downward from above head*)

The wind is strong (*blow with lips and rock on hips as if strong wind is moving them. Additional option: 2 kids who are positioned at each end of the line, pick up a giant long cloth that was laid there before kids entered, and make it billow in front of the line, but not so high it covers the kids in the line. They should hold it so the cloth is vertical to the floor, one hand upholding one corner, the other down holding the other corner, each positioned at both ends—otherwise it may look like the sea. It should look more like a sail. Another option is to have a child quickly run pass the front of line of children holding/waving a long thin scarf or streamer on stick.*)

But I’m warm inside (*cross arms over chest, smile as if comfortable*)

Come into my unity house (*Children make beckoning movement with both hands by rocking fingers back and forth, palms facing child. On the word “house” they form triangular roof over their heads, the fingertips touching at peak.*)

The day is long (*Have child arch sun on stick from left to right, indicating rising and setting. The child can be behind and center of the group and raise the sun behind them. This is a good role for the shy kid b/c they aren’t seen. However, most want to be seen, so at this point the line is told to open at the center for this child, who steps forward and does her movement, then steps back behind the group to deposit her prop on the floor and rejoins, or just waits back there for next time sun is mentioned—if prefers the shy route.*)

We’re singing a song (*cup mouths, bring hands outward and away from face in angle, to form a triangle, with mouth at point, audience at base of triangle.*)

In the Unity house (*form triangular roof over their heads, the fingertips touching at peak.*)

(End of chorus)

Here comes one, coming on the run (*all hold up finger to indicate #1, and then child chosen ahead of time comes from either end and runs past line in the front, all heads turn and follow his movement with their heads, eyes, and pointed fingers. Runner then joins other end of line. It looks great if all can use same arm to point, but little kids aren't good at remembering their lefts and rights under pressure, so I did not insist.*)

Here comes two, coming after you (*all hold up fingers to indicate #2, and then child chosen ahead of time comes from same end as #1 and runs past line in the front, all heads turn and follow his movement with their heads, eyes, and pointed fingers. Runner then joins other end of line.*)

Three is me out on the deep blue sea (*all hold up 3 fingers to indicate #3, and then point to themselves with both thumbs, fingers curled, then make swimming-breast-stroke or rowing movements. It looks better if all do the same—just see what movement looks best with your group. Additional option: as in the wind, have a big light blue, white, or gray long sheer cloth laid in front, and 2 kids at the end lift it so its parallel to the floor and shake it to make waves—keeping it low so it does not cover torsos and faces of kids in line, who are making swimming or rowing motions.*)

Number four is knocking at the door (*all hold up fingers to indicate #4, and then child chosen ahead of time who is not in line at this point, knocks loudly on a piece of wood or door and comes and joins the group—where in line will depend on where he/she is coming from. All heads turn and follow his movement with their heads, eyes, and pointed fingers. Or any child in the line can step forward and make knocking on door movements in the air, while someone off stage does the actual sound. Child then steps back in line when done. If its done this way, instead of pointing with outstretched arms, the rest of the kids in line point just with thumb and fingers curled, elbow bent. Which hand they use will depend on which side the knocker is on in relation to themselves.*)

CHORUS

At the end, the singers repeat the words “unity house” over and over. The performers invite audience members to join their “house”, and they can hold hands with everybody while grooving to the music or face another person and form a bigger peaked roof by connecting fingertips of both hands of partner in the air. You will need to inform the crowd at the beginning that they should come up for the last extra-long chorus and show them how to make the roof with a partner or tell them we all want to end holding hands. A nice touch, but not necessary is to have 5 giant poles with a cloth tied at the corners to each pole, the middle 5th pole holds up the center to make the roof—you may need 6 poles. This can be raised at the end while all are being invited in. And a really nice touch is to have a picture of the Greatest name dangling from the center and front of this makeshift cloth roof—or it can be affixed to the center pole.

GAMES

Most of these games go very well with these 3 quotes:

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

Members=body parts, limbs

No power can exist except through unity. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Consultation)

Power=ability to do something great, ability, strength

Exist=to be, to be real

Unity=harmony, agreement

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)

Cherisheth= dearly loves

Beholding=seeing, observing

United We Stand, Divided We Fall

Ages 6 and up, need at least 8 kids, outside

This game comes from Angola. So, I asked where Angola was. It is originally called *Numbers Safety* but I renamed it. Being the metaphorically inclined teacher that I am, I added a lot of meaning to the game: I explained that unity is beautiful and pleasing to God in all its forms, but organized unity is the most powerful. For example, if one has a large picnic and everyone is laughing and talking and having a good time and feel good about each other, or if you have thousands of people in a country who care about and love each other—that is fantastic. But if you take those same people and ask them to focus on a common goal, ask them to become organized into a work force or project, they will accomplish great things. (In the Baha'i faith, systematic implementation of Baha'u'llah's spiritual principles and teachings is done through the local, national and international administrative order He designed—i.e. His teachings are expressed through organizations with goals as well as individually.) So, I said, in this game you all each stand for a nation. Kids were asked to name a nation they would like to represent. (Some need work on the difference between nations, continents, and states!)

I then explained that I would call out numbers and the “nations” (individual kids) were to form a group of that number as fast as possible. The numbered groups represented organization. Everyone in a group must be

connected by linking elbows or holding hands or touching hands to shoulders. This stands for the unity of the organization. I also told them that I would not always call out numbers that the group was divisible by, so someone might never be able to escape the chaser unless one kid saw that a fellow nation was tiring and give up their position so that nation could rest with the group. The chaser would be me, and I explained that I would be wearing a monster mask. I showed them the mask and explained that it is very ugly b/c it stands for evil, disunity, greed, selfishness, violence, and most relevantly, terrorism. I emphasized that organized unity protects us from these destructive forces. I also told them to really work together and not run off by yourself or climb a tree, b/c you may be ruining the chances of a group who needs you. I pointed out the boundaries of the play area and urged them to be aware of how your actions affect others.

I also explained that if I touched an individual or any one in a group of the wrong number, they were all frozen and only a group of the correct number could rescue and unfreeze them. It is basically, a “united we stand, divided we fall” concept. So, if I call out a “3” then only those in groups of 3 are safe. At the beginning of each round, the kids have to spread out, so there is suspense in getting together as the chaser closes in. I told them that the nations are spread out all over the world, so they must be too! I also shared with them this quote by Baha’u’llah:

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

I told the kids that Bahá’u’lláh goes on to explain in this quote that only by obeying the teachings He has given us can humanity achieve international unity. The whole purpose of His mission was to guide humanity to world unity.

We had a blast with this game, and they got better and better at working together at each session of number calling. The higher numbers were the hardest.

Unity Chase

Ages 8 and up, outside, variations (see below for 4-7 yr olds).

We talked about how when people are disunified, bad/evil things happen like war, violence, hurt, anger, and racism. These were the evils they were going to try and avoid. We discussed the idea that in order to escape evil in real life, we must be unified. Evil is ugly like a monster, so I was going to play the role of evil using a monster mask. This game involved tying pairs of children’s inside legs together with a cloth strip—not tightly. I told them to link elbows for more stability and cohesion. They were also encouraged to chant “inside/outside” as they walked to cue each other when to move the inside legs or the outside legs. I gave

them a practice period. Those pairs that mastered walking or running in unity (if they didn't, they went really slow or fell down) were able to escape me. To make it fair, I tied my legs together so I could only jump with 2 feet. If kids were unified in their movements, there was no way I could catch them. If I caught a disunified pair, they were frozen and yelled for help until a unified pair "healed" them by tagging them. It is important to emphasize that there is no unity if you are dragging or hurting your partner in trying to escape me, and I will certainly catch you in this situation. To discourage being too forceful in running, I tell the players that if one or both of the partners fall, that is an automatic freezing, even if not touched by the bad guy. For older groups, like over 10 years old, those playing evil just tie their legs together in pairs just like the kids. This is b/c for this age group, they can be mighty fast and coordinated, and its therefore a more even competition. 6 pairs per bad guy is about the right ratio.

Also, once the cloth strips are used, they are quite impossible to untie. I have found that leaving them in a loop is fine, kids can just slip their feet in. The loops should be plenty big if the legs were not bound tight. Bigger feet may require shoe removal first. Also, never use rope—it will be too uncomfortable. Wide strips of a soft cotton cloth are best. For this game, it is best to pair children of similar size together.

I emphasize that the virtues of cooperation, respect, and courtesy are absolutely necessary to unity and to escape! You can not run in the opposite direction or too fast or you may hurt your partner. Point out the importance of unity and being aware of your teammate's pace and comfort. If you run too fast and make your partner fall you would be caught anyway--only by being totally unified and synchronized could they escape being tagged. And yes, it can be a bit uncomfortable and challenging---but creating & maintaining unity can also be that way! For both the version above and below, my assistant and I demonstrate the effects of unity and disunity in our movement as a connected team in a funny and exaggerated way so the players can understand how they are to move.

Variations: If you feel the kids are likely to hurt themselves being bound together, especially if they are playing on a hard floor, give each pair 2 feet of a crepe paper streamer and follow the guidelines under *Streamer Tag*. This works great.

With younger children, describe evil as hurtful things like hitting, fighting, mean words, hate, etc. Also, for kids under 8 years old, tying legs together is too hard and they hurt themselves. So here are some alternatives—which older children enjoy as well. The metaphor is the same (but you will need to dispense with the mask with kids under 7). 2 Kids can be placed inside a hula hoop and have to run that way. They can have a lead runner, or both run side by side instead—which is safer and easier. 3 kids inside one is much harder. If this is too challenging, the rule can be that teams fast-walk, instead of run. Or they run holding onto the outside of the hoop, with no one inside. Another option: 2-3 kids can ride on poles about the length of

broom sticks and have to run holding the sticks between their legs—teach them not to yank up on the sticks! The taggers can do the same to make it fair, but if the taggers are adults, they will have no trouble catching the little ones, so what I do is stand back to back with another adult or youth, link elbows, and we have to gallop sideways—that really slows us down and makes it harder to tag since our arms are considerably shortened this way. If that is too uncomfortable, a youth or adult tagger can gallop sideways or skip alone. This really slows down the gait.

Or, if the kids are 4-7 years old, I have found that the above method of putting my 2 legs in a loop and jumping or doing baby steps in the loop is just about an even match. (And its easier than the back-to-back version with another adult). Chasers can also squat jump like a frog. As in the harder leg-tying version, the taggers would freeze those who they touched, but they could be unfrozen by others who were untagged. Those frozen should yell for help. (I practically always avoid elimination elements in my games b/c then once the child is tagged, the rest of the game is a drag, and they only get to watch the fun from the sidelines. Those kinds of games do not foster joy and unity).

Also, for most young kids under 7, metaphors are completely incomprehensible. Just have the kids strive for courtesy and cooperation to avoid a chaser. If in the practice session, they constantly fall (which can actually be somewhat fun) you can dispense with the chaser altogether and just have them endeavor to get from point A to point B in a large open area.

A few more tips: Only one member of the stick or hoop group needs to be tagged to be frozen or freed. If anybody falls or goes off the stick, that equals disunity and they are automatically frozen, even if not touched by the bad guys. Encourage kids to communicate to their partners about direction, speed, etc. Tell them communication promotes unity and peace.

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. 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 are 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 fairer, 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: 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.

Unity Ball

Need at least 8 kids, ages 5 and up.

You need an inflatable ball for this one, preferably one representing planet earth. It can be played indoors if it's OK with the owners of the building. It is best to remove lamps and anything that can be easily knocked

over from the room. If played indoors, (unless ceilings are really high) the group should sit down or be on their knees. It can also be fun to play on your backs using heads, feet and hands. If using feet, players must be spaced far enough apart so that they can't kick each other. In a small group, each child gets a chance to see how many times he or she can hit the ball up in the air by themselves, with no assistance from the rest of the group. (For large groups invite just a few to demonstrate). It is too easy to tap it only a few inches high—it must go several feet to be fair. Everybody counts the number of hits. After everyone has had a chance to do it by themselves, it is time to see how powerful unity is and do it as a group. Always remember to hit the ball up either underhand or pushing up with your fingertips as in volleyball—never slam or whack it down—remember the goal is to keep the ball *up!!!* Also, don't forget to be courteous---let others have a shot—no hogging!! Again, everybody counts. The all-time record is 240! You will do much better if you stick together as a group and do not leave huge areas open and unattended—and you hit straight up as possible.

Hopefully, the group number of hits will far outnumber the individual hits and it will show how much more effective a group working together is than a lone soul. For world peace to happen, we need large numbers of people working together in unity—individuals can't do it alone. If there are large numbers of adults, youth and children, and wee ones, either the older should hold the little ones up so they get a shot at hitting the ball or put the little ones in the middle and make sure you deliberately hit the ball to them, b/c taller folks will always get to it first, otherwise, adding another ball also helps.

Out of doors is harder b/c there are no walls to bounce off of and there is always more space than bodies can cover. One of the most joyful and effective games was played outside and was inter-generational. The adults and youth stood in a circle around the younger ones about 4 feet behind them. The younger kids sat (or they can kneel) down in the grass, filling the space inside the circle. The standing people were able to deliberately aim the ball to those areas that did not get as much opportunity. As the kids got better, the standers moved farther back.

If you have a gigantic balloon or very large nylon ball—both of which are very light and slow in descent—ask kids who are 9 and over to only use their feet, shoulders, elbows, heads, hips etc. No hands, forearms, or fists. The other rule should be that one can't hit the ball or balloon twice in a row—this makes it more challenging and discourages hogging. Admonish kids to be careful to avoid kicking others. Remind kids that hogging or shoving to get to the ball does not promote unity! Either before the game or if there are complaints that several never made contact with the ball or balloon, I ask everyone to form a line with at least 4 feet between each person. You may need to form two or more lines, depending on length of room and # of kids. Then I ask them to each hit the ball to the one behind them, until everyone has had that magic moment.

Unity Toss

Need at least 8 kids, 7 and up, outside, version 3 can be played inside

You need two (preferably double sized/full) sheets and an inflatable or foam ball about the size of a soccer ball or larger. (The inflatable ball can be too light for the first 2 versions—though some have succeeded with it.) I assigned students in even numbered groups and asked each player to come up with a national identity. I said the ball stood for peace. I gave each group a large sheet and explained that only by working together in synchrony and unity, being aware of our inter-connectedness as members of 1 human family, would they be able to toss the ball of peace to each other using the sheet as the propeller. I told them that it would be a challenge and that at first, they probably would not be able to do it, but if they persevered they probably would. I explained that the process of nations attempting to build world unity would also be extremely difficult and we would make many mistakes and have many failures, but we should never give up. For all versions, kids should hold sheet with both hands, several inches up on the sheet, so they have about a 4–5-inch bundle.

Version one: I demonstrated how they had to stand around all the sides but one (the side the ball would be coming out of). They are then to lift the sheet in unison so that the back side is higher and thrust the ball to the other team who will have to move as a unit to catch it in their sheet. So that version just involved tossing it back and forth using the sheet.

Version two: The second version is harder, and they could only do it once: The team encircles all 4 sides of the sheet, makes the sheet very tight, and lowers it onto the ground with the ball in the center. On the count of 3, they all have to thrust the sheet straight up so that the ball goes straight up (instead of to the side as in version one) then they need to run out from under it while the other team runs under it to catch it. Even though the 2 teams are placed very close together, the ball has to go up really high to provide time for the second team to move under it.

Version three: The third version involves being very aware of how your actions affect the whole and being a counterbalance to others. A large red circle is drawn in the center of each sheet. I said this stands for a conflict zone. The goal is to keep the ball of peace rolling around and around the world (the sheet) from nation to nation, w/o letting it pass into the conflict zone. Everybody's actions have an effect, and you have to be acutely aware of how high or low and when to move your section of the sheet to prevent the ball from rolling into the center. This involves the kids having to go slowly, pay attention, and know when to raise or lower one's section. Another slightly *different metaphor:* You can also use an inflatable earth ball, and say the goal is to keep the world out of war and conflict. In real life, this can only happen when the nations are

unified. Those children gathered around the sheet stand for different nations. This time the ball stands for the world, and if they are really unified, they will be able to keep the earth out of the war zone.

Tips: the tighter and tauter the sheet is, the more control kids will have. Have them hold tight, separating their grasping hands by about 2 feet.

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.

Streamer Wrap

Need at least 8 kids, ages 5 and up

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. Here is the youtube link of the story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDrR78REU8Y>

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.

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. This game is a great metaphor for one of the memory verses relating to unity:

Unity Lift

Ages 4-8, at least 8 kids if below 6 yrs

This game is best played with little kids. A brave adult or youth lies down on the ground. If female, she should not be wearing a dress. You ask kids for a volunteer who is very strong. Ask her to carry (not drag) the adult across the room. She will not be able to do it. Then ask for another child to help her. Then another, up to 4 or 5 kids. Frequently remind them that they must lift off the ground and carry.

Then invite the whole group to help. They should be able to carry if they position themselves well. No one has ever been dropped yet. It is reassuring to have another adult in the room who can guard the head, though. Make sure you tell them not to hold onto hair! Point out how much more powerful and strong they are as a group working together than alone. (If the kids are bigger, just 2-4 of them will be able to carry the adult and the point will not be well made).

If there are not enough children to carry the youth/adult, or you want to extend the game, here is another version we played:

Unity Carriage

Ages 5-8, at least 3 kids

Each child gets their turn to pretend to be sick or injured and can't walk. The other children get on all fours lined up, shoulder to shoulder. The sick/injured child then lies across the other children's backs on their stomach.

The carrying children have to move in perfect unity to keep the carried child from falling off. They move across the room, and when they get to the other side, our youth teacher pretended to quickly heal them using a children's doctor kit.

They loved this game, and the medicine of course! (Fruit juiced flavored jellybeans). It's helpful to have carpeting for the knees—but as in real life, caring for and serving others can sometimes be difficult and uncomfortable—so if you don't have carpet, it can be another metaphor!

Unity Carriage Version #2

Ages 5-8, at least 3 kids

Each child gets their turn to pretend to be injured and can't walk. Two other children get on all fours lined up, shoulder to shoulder. A large pillow is laid across their backs. The injured child then kneels on the pillow facing the same direction as the two on their hands and knees, with one knee on each back. The carrying children have to move in perfect unity to keep the carried child and pillow from falling off.

They move across the room, and when they get to the other side, our youth teacher pretended to quickly heal them using a children's doctor kit. She also gave each patient 2 fruit juice flavored jellybeans from a prescription bottle. It's helpful to have carpeting for the knees—but as in real life, caring for and serving others can sometimes be difficult and uncomfortable—so if you don't have carpet, it can be another metaphor!

Many Hands make Light Work

Ages 4-8, at least 5 kids

For this game, a child lays in a blanket. Another child is chosen to move the blanket child across the room. They can drag if they are strong enough, but it's not very fun or efficient. Then the other children are invited to be helpers, and they lift and carry the child in the blanket across the room. Every student gets a chance to "ride" in the blanket.

When some of the students complained that their fingers were strained or tired from clinging to the blanket w/ a child inside, we did not pity them. We used it as an opportunity to remind them about the discussion we had regarding the musical selection in the devotional part: that service or helpfulness is not usually easy and often we have to struggle and push ourselves if we want to make a difference

World Rescue

Need at least 6 kids, earth ball, yard stick for each child, ages 7 and up

In this game I told the kids they each represented a nation. Then I gave each student a yard stick and said this represents your government. I put them in two equal teams of 4 (3-5 can also work). I said their goal was to rescue the world from pollution, violence, and war. In order to do this, they must work together. Each team got an earth ball. (I used 2 balls and 2 teams simply so more children could play at the same time). The goal was to carry the earth ball using only the sticks as support. Students had to learn how to put relatively equal pressure on all sides and place at least 2 sticks under the ball and move in synchrony. Each team came up with their own techniques and structures. They could use both hands but not touch the ball or another's stick with their hands, nor use their bodies as support. I put on a monster mask and for the 1st round crawled after them. I, of course, symbolized war, pollution, and violence and the goal was to get across the yard to the safety zone (world unity) marked by cones or a banner suggesting peace or world unity themes, w/o me touching their earth ball. If I touched it, that meant that a war, fighting or environmental disaster took place. If the ball was dropped, this signified disunity, and that round was considered a loss too. In the 2nd round, when they were faster and more experienced, I jumped after them with 2 feet held together in a cloth loop. You can make it harder by allowing kids to hold their stick with 1 hand only. This game can easily be played indoors as well.

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

Variation: For the 3rd round, we tried a different version—Each team got in a circle facing outward and I put the earth inside and their backs held it in place. Again, they had to move in synchrony to the safety zone while I pursued them by jumping with 2 feet held together in a cloth loop.

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.

Balloon Bump Trio

Need at least 3 kids, ages 6 and up

First, we talked about how people have different abilities and skills, and all are important. The students were asked to think of examples of jobs in which people contribute to the world by primarily using their brains, (like computer programmers) hands (like carpenters, artists, etc.) and feet (rainforest guides.) To start, Students are to get in a group of 3 and decide who will represent the head-- they can use their heads and shoulders. Then they are to decide who gets to be the hand person---they can use their hands and arms, and the foot person can use their feet and legs. If time permits, each person can then verbally share a job that uses their body part a lot. I encourage them to focus on occupations that are of service to others and help improve the world. It is important and far more challenging if you have the rule that the same person can't hit the balloon twice in a row—it must alternate. If that is too hard then allow the feet and head people to hit it twice in a row, but not the hand person b/c that is too easy for them. How long can you keep your balloon up as a group? When the balloon hits the ground, rotate who plays what parts. The smaller the balloon, the faster it falls—experiment. This game demonstrates unity in diversity.

Unity Balloon

Ages 4 and up, 2 or more players—the more the better

The goal was for the whole group to keep a balloon up as long as possible. Players can use any body part except their hands. If that is too easy, we can also eliminate their forearms, or make the balloon smaller so it falls faster. We time each attempt to see if the students can continuously improve their score. If they are really

good at it, we can introduce a second balloon. (Numbers of balloons can be increased depending on size of group, for a group of 6, 2 is plenty.)

Elbow Tag

At least 8 kids, ages 8 and up, outside

Some kids were linked in pairs by the elbows. They always had to run with their free arms' hands on the hips, thereby forming an open triangle. Some kids were singles, and they could be tagged and frozen by the tagger. The only way to be immune from tagging was to link elbows with a pair—you could not be chased if you were in a pair. However, if a pair had a child link on the right side, the left side person had to release—only pairs are allowed. If a pair had a child link on the left side, the right-side child had to release. It took some practice for the kids to think about running alongside a person being chased so they could find rest and safety. Also, free kids could not form new pairs, otherwise the game would come to a standstill if even numbers of kids are playing. If uneven numbers are playing and all but one paired up, there would not be enough chasing b/c once in a pair, you can't be chased. So, the same number of pairs had to remain as in the beginning so there were always free and paired units. Frozen children can only be unfrozen by a linked pair, but the pair who unfreezes then has to add the now unfrozen child. This means that when a pair rescues, one member of that pair will have to let go to allow the frozen child to be in a pair. For a group of ten, assigning 2-3 pairs is about right. If kids are really having no trouble escaping the bad guy, assign 2 bad guys. The bad guys win if all the singles are frozen at the same time—which is very unlikely unless you have a group that has no concept of cooperation.

You can make it metaphorical by saying that the linked pairs represent an Eastern and a Western culture or nation, and they are only safe from war, terrorism, violence and conflict (the tagger) when they are linked in unity. The tagger can wear an ugly mask to symbolize conflict, war, disunity, etc.

Cooperative Yaks & Wolves

Needs to be played outdoors, with at least 10 kids ages 7 and up. Need yarn strips for tails.

In this game we first talk about how Yaks work together to form a circle with their horns facing outward, encircling the sick, old, and young, when wolves try to attack. So, I gave all the kids a segment of yarn which represented tails. They tucked them in their pants with the instructions that they must have about a foot dangling out. One child (or an assistant) plays the wolf who does not have a tail ---for identification purposes. At the beginning of the game everyone spreads out and the wolf begins to chase. If he grabs your tail, that means you have been caught--and you become a wolf. The best way to protect yourself is to form a cluster with 1 or more kids, facing out. The wolf is not allowed to slide his "paw" in between to get the tail--the tail must be fully exposed to be snatched. Saturday's class worked in unity so much that for the first time

ever (and I have played this game dozens of times over the years with hundreds of kids in all sorts of camps and conferences), the wolves could not win by completely eliminating all the yaks.

And the yaks are not allowed to just spend the whole game in a cluster—I told them they must go graze independently b/c in the wild the yaks would starve if all they did was remain in a circle. Yaks must separate and spread out immediately once the danger is past. The wolves gradually got better at ambushing, but it took some consultation to learn how to hunt as a pack and use cooperation to snatch a yak tail. Also, yak tails should never be tied on—this of course results in rope burn for the wolves and ripped clothes for the yaks. Girls wearing dresses are a problem--there is no place to tuck the yarn. Try taping the yarn tail on, or tying yarn around their waist like a belt, then tucking the tail yarn under that.

Unity Rise

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.

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.

Shoe Drop

Need at least 8 kids, ages 6 and up

In this game children remove one shoe, drop it into the center of a circle, and while holding hands in a circle without letting go, pick up someone else's shoe, (not someone's next to you) and pass it to the owner who has to put it on. This all has to be accomplished without anybody in the group letting go of hands at any time.

Synchrony Straw Pass

At least 8 kids, 7 and up

Sit in a circle and put a straw in your mouths, and without the use of hands, try to pass a ring around the circle just using straws. One can not touch the ring or straw with hands at any time. The ring should not be so big that it's too easy, nor so small that 2 straws can't fit in it at the same time. It takes a lot of synchrony—knowing just when to lower and raise the straw. Synchrony is an expression of unity and cooperation—think of acrobats, synchronized swimming, dancing, etc. –it means moving and working together in a planned, harmonious way, like fingers on a hand. (Demonstrate two hands moving in synchrony, like mirror images or as in climbing a ladder.) Synchrony does not necessarily mean doing the exact same thing at the same time, though in some cases it does. Unity and synchrony in relationships means adjusting one's behavior to another's and being sensitive to feelings. For example, you would not choose the day in which your friend got chewed out by the teacher to complain to her about something you don't like in her behavior. Being “in synch” would mean that on that day, you would be especially loving and kind.

Tips for the game: Do not lower the straw until you are sure the other person has it hooked. You can lower and raise your bodies physically to use gravity. You can use straight or bendable straws. The bending of the straw makes the ring less likely to fall off, but it also makes it harder to get the ring off onto another straw!

Think of the ring as representing love, and that one of our main goals in life is to share our love with others—and this is not always easy. People will annoy and frustrate us, and some people are difficult to show love to. When we are out of synch with others, it is almost impossible for them to feel love from us.

If you want to add a competitive aspect and you have enough kids, create 2 teams of equal numbers of kids sitting in a circle and of course the goal is to be the first team to get the ring around the circle back to the starting player. If the ring falls or someone uses their hands, the ring has to go back to the starting player—but it can go around either way—which makes sure that all kids get a turn.

Block Buddies

Partners try to walk across the room holding a wood block between their noses w/o dropping it. No hands allowed.

Unity in Diversity Rescue

At least 4 kids, old enough to catch and throw rapidly. 8 and up?

I explained that I would put on an ugly mask to represent racism and prejudice, which are truly ugly and scary forces in our world. The goal of the game is for the students to keep objects that represent unity in diversity away from me. We used 4 sets of 4 large pom poms of different colors that had been glued together. These are soft and light and thus cannot hurt others or damage windows, lamps, etc. Thus, this game can be played indoors in a relatively small space with any soft, (preferably multicolored) object that can be easily thrown and caught. It can be played with players on their knees or standing. Running is not allowed for the standing version. It's basically a metaphorical version of *keep away*.

NOTES: This game can also be played outside with larger objects like large foam frisbees, and then there can be a lot of running and chasing. Beamos are ideal for this, just give kids time to practice with these giant fabric discs of varied colors stitched together. They come in 20inch and 30-inch diameters, and some places even have 16inch. Walmart has knock off brands as well. If you get these make sure you tell kids not to bend them or play tug of war in an attempt to get it from someone else. Use on grassy areas only as blacktop may tear the fabric around the hoop. They usually cost anywhere from \$18-25 a piece.

The children have to work together to keep the pom poms away from me. This game demands a lot of fast paced cooperation—I go after kids who are holding the pom poms. They are not allowed to run with it—they must pass it on to prevent me from touching it. If I touch it in the air or on the ground, it means I have destroyed unity in diversity and won that round. We played 3 rounds, and the winner would be the side that won 2 of those. Rounds should be timed, so that there is a definite ending to it if I can't grab a pom pom. I win a round only if I can intercept it in midflight or if it hits the ground and I get to it first. But those holding

it have only to the count of 3 to release it, otherwise they would just hold it indefinitely. (With groups over 10 players, 2 or more pom poms should be used and a round ends when time is up, or all pom poms have been confiscated. With really large groups, it works best that I also can claim a pom pom if I just touch it while someone is holding it—this forces kids to get rid of it fast and discourages hoarding. And there are plenty of eager takers in a large group).

The kids LOVE this game, but I had to several times ask those who had not thrown or caught a pom pom to raise their hands and then request that those students get more opportunities—otherwise the older, taller kids hog the pom poms. I realize that when a bad guy with a mask is closing in on them—kids don't have time to be selective in who they throw it to! Sometimes I even stop the game, ask kids to be honest and raise their hand if they have not had a chance throwing the pom poms. Then I give the pom poms to those kids, and ask the others who have not had a chance to spread out. All other players get around the edge of the playing area. Then the pom poms are thrown to those who still need a chance, before the dominant ones can join in.

A strategy that the teacher can point out is that when the monster is closing in on a pom pom, many can surround the pom pom like a barricade, especially if its on the ground. But it still needs to get tossed fast, b/c I will get to it eventually. Players are not allowed to tug at it with me or anybody else.

3 Parachute Games (I have some parachutes I can loan if someone can get them).

Save the World Parachute Game

Need around 16 players, ages 6 and up

This same game can be played in a more non-religious setting, using a different metaphor: Explain that the parachute represents the world and the individuals around it are the nations. (Or ethnic groups, tribes, etc.) You can ask each child to name a nation they would like to represent if there is time, or you can just give them a nation when you call on them. (Kids can have stick on badges which say their nation if you want to get even more educational and you call them under the parachute using their nation' name). Ideally, they should all be different nations. Explain that the world of so many millions of people is crashing down b/c the nations or tribes are fighting, and they have to get unified and understand we are all one family before the world collapses from nuclear disaster, war, climate change, etc. (If you don't want to focus on such a downer concept, just be more vague and general, especially for younger children). So, when I say 1-2-3-UP! we will all raise the parachute and 2 of you who I will have already chosen will run under, shake hands (to symbolize unity) and exchange places before the parachute comes down.

I always give the cue to lower the parachute, making it so that there is barely enough time to shake hands and exchange places—runners are often sliding out from under just in the Knick of time. When the parachute is

lowered, 2 more are chosen. Players are admonished to be honest and fair and not raise their hand if they have already gone under. To make it a teachable moment, I explain that we can't have world unity if people or nations lie and cheat and take more than their fair share. Greediness and dishonesty do not promote peace, and truthfulness, trustworthiness, and fairness are necessary for unity and peace. I encourage the runners not to hold onto the parachute and raise it with the others so that they can immediately run under. Younger kids may find it easier to give a quick hug or a high five than to shake hands. If you have a huge group and giant parachute, and limited time, you can send up to 8 under at a time. In this case, choose 4 pairs of kids on opposite sides of the parachute, making sure they know ahead of time who is the person/nation they will be shaking hands with or hugging.

The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established. ~Baha'u'llah: Gleanings, page 286

Remove the Barriers Parachute Game

Need at least 16 players, ages 5 and up

This game's metaphor was created by Aurelia Blake: Talk about the barriers that keep people apart: prejudice, fear, language, national identity, religious prejudice, skin color, class, age, etc. If the kids have the attention spans—you can also ask them what brings us together in unity. Then have everybody practice inflating the parachute to create a giant mountain of air (the barrier). Participants must raise the chute together, lower it quickly to capture the air, and seal it by holding the edges on the ground. Then 2-3 kids are invited to walk on this mountain of air (the barrier) and using their feet and hands, eliminate it. They end up pressing all the air out. When the barrier is completely gone (all the air is out) the kids on the parachute should shake hands to symbolize friendship. Little ones can hug. It is important to emphasize that they should walk and not throw themselves around b/c it is only a barrier of air and you may end up knocking heads w/ another child on the other side of the mountain. With a large group, the seal is better and the air stays in more effectively. (Make sure the top/center of the parachute is sealed closed). If this is the case, walking on it may be just right—but if the air comes out too quickly, have the kids crawl on it. Older youth and adults should crawl, for otherwise they obliterate the barrier too fast.

Parachute Formations

Need at least 16 players, ages 6 and up

First, we practice raising and lowering the parachute in unity. Then I explain that I will choose 3 children (if the group is really large up to 8 can go under) to go under the parachute and form a unique formation or sculpture with their bodies. The formation can be an abstract sculpture or symmetrical design. People can be

sitting, laying down, standing or all 3—but they must all be touching in some fashion—this represents unity, i.e., separate individuals connected to make one formation. (Have a group demonstrate what you mean before playing with the parachute.) Every group's formation should be different than the others'---this is one of the diversity aspects. Diversity is interesting, fun, and exciting--for wouldn't it be boring if every time we lifted the parachute the formations were the same? The other diversity aspect is that diverse people under the chute are attempting to be unified in creating a formation.

At the count of 3, I will say “UP” and the 3 run under and we lower the parachute. Peeking is not allowed. (If the ceiling is high, players stand and hold the parachute at waist level while the formation is forming. If the ceilings are low, people kneel and hold it down on the floor). While the kids are making their formation, I play the “Rapp Song” from Red Grammer's *Teaching Peace* recording which is about the beauty of diversity. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYbXk4r5K8Y>

(It's a good idea to record the song 3x in a row if you are using tape, b/c otherwise it will end before the end of the game.) When the music stops, -- I will give them about 20-30 seconds--(have someone to man the deck and watch for your signal) we will lift the parachute to behold their formations.

The kids really had to cooperate quickly to create their body sculptures. After we admire the formation, that group joins the outside group, and the parachute is lowered. Then I select another group, the parachute is raised, they go under, the parachute is lowered, and the music begins again. When it stops, we raise it and behold the new formation and the cycle begins again. With some youthful groups, sending boys and girls under at the same time inspires sexual commentary. In this case, just send girls only or boys only. Also, if you are playing with little ones, adults and youth should kneel when raising the parachute so you don't force the parachute out of the smaller kids' hands. Ask kids to be honest and not raise their hands to go under if they have already done so. It's a good idea for most groups to have at least 1 adult go under the chute with a group of kids.

At a secular peace camp, I emphasized that being a peacemaker often means being able to cooperate with those who are different than you—sometimes under pressure. We need to be able to work with and achieve goals with those who may have very different ideas and values than our own. (The time limit of each formation forces kids to not cling stubbornly to their own ideas and to communicate). And Nations also are under pressure to cooperate with each other to avoid wars, famine, etc. They must learn to cooperate quickly and create organizations and structures (formations) which promote peace, health, and wellbeing for their peoples.

Also, children love to make waves with the parachute by shaking it. This is not a good idea while the group is trying to form a formation under the parachute. It makes it hard to hear and focus if one is under the chute and

it is being shaken wildly. The group is trying to come to some consensus and be creative, --this is enough to deal with. So, I let the kids do their shaking after they view the formation and those under the chute are departing. I say: "OK! Let's give them some air to cool them off!" Or I explain at the beginning that this is our form of applause, and I say: "Let's give them a gigantic applause!"

Free download of Red Grammer's Rapp Song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYbXk4r5K8Y>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/6wLKNjF4m0tnaDNui6xL12>

ART/CRAFTS

I showed the students a **poster** used in the class on the role of virtues in creating unity. It portrays unity as a beautiful diverse flower garden and virtues as the rain and sun. Then I explained to the kids: "Virtues are to unity what the sun and rain are to flower seeds. Virtues make unity grow and blossom, virtues make unity happen. Unity brings joy and beauty to the world, just as flowers do. Unity is like a beautiful flower garden."

Have kids **design their own flower garden**, with rays of the sun and rain drops labeled with various virtues. This can be done on poster board or cardstock, or even just plain paper.

Suggested materials:

- Markers
- Pencils, sharpeners, erasers
- Silver foil paper for rain drops and/or silver ink metallic markers
- Gold foil for sunrays and/or gold ink metallic markers
- Flowers can be drawn, or made up of felt pieces, colored paper cut to make petals, or even cut out of old flower catalogs
- If using materials to make flowers (as opposed to drawing them) have glue sticks and scissors
- Wet wipes for sticky hands
- List of virtues (see end of this document for suggested list)

Variation: You can also use many of the materials above and ask the children to create a beautiful diverse flower garden to go with this quote:

If you beheld a garden in which all the plants were the same as to form, colour and perfume, it would not seem beautiful to you at all, but, rather, monotonous and dull. The garden which is pleasing to the eye and which makes the heart glad, is the garden in which are growing side by side flowers of every hue, form and perfume, and the joyous contrast of colour is what makes for charm and beauty.~' Abdu'l-Bahá, (Paris Talks)

Unity in Diversity craft activity reinforces the concept that diversity makes things more interesting—and challenging. Children were instructed to use at least 4 diverse items (not counting mat board, scissors, and glue) to create a work of art on a piece of mat board---in 20 minutes or less. I explained to the kids that good art is simply taking diverse colors and shapes and unifying them into one beautiful or interesting creation. This is kind of like what we should all strive to do in our daily lives with diverse people, unite them into a unified whole or grouping. The glue represents the feelings of love and unity that bind us to each other.

I actually prefer the use of natural materials such as shells, seeds, leaves, twigs, pebbles, beans, etc. But I did not have the time to collect these. That said, it's actually more of a challenge to create an attractive example of unity in diversity with the materials below than with natural materials.

In various trays on the buffet counter there were many different supplies:

Diverse colors and shapes of Wonderfoam, which is a soft, flat foam

Yarn

Pom poms

Sticky backed gems

Markers

Feathers

Colored popsicle sticks

Paper in many different colors

Plastic eyes

Glue

Scissors

Mat board of different colors and sizes (these are scraps that are obtained very cheaply from a local framing store)

Unity Banner. Kids can create a banner together using a roll of banner paper. The Banner can have the words “Unity in Diversity” written on it in large letters by the teacher or youth, or “Unity in Diversity is Powerful and Beautiful” or something like that. Or it can have no writing and just images drawn by the kids. Need crayons and/or markers. If you want to make it more elaborate, give the kids large paper dolls of various skin colors to decorate and glue sticks (paste) to paste onto banner.

More finely shaped human shapes: <https://roylco.com/shop/r52004-card-characters/>

10-inch doll pad <https://roylco.com/shop/r51448-paper-doll-pad/>

Hands, feet, faces, and bodies kit: <https://roylco.com/shop/r51450-human-paper-shapes-kit/>

Hands: <https://roylco.com/shop/r51220-hand-padlet/>

You can also give them scissors and various patterned papers to cut out for clothing. Have pencils, sharpeners, and erasers too, for tracing dolls on back side of patterned paper to cut out for fitted clothing, and for drawing on banner before going over w/ marker. Also, some paper in hair colors for those who want to cut out hair for their dolls.

We sometimes even provide plastic eyes to paste on—available at any craft store or amazon.

And here are 180 self-adhesive eyes, various sizes, includes many with lashes painted on:

World Unity Art Project. Provide 12X12 scrapbook cardstock and let kids paste an earth on it and surround it with diverse little paper dolls. Some kids will really enjoy drawing unique clothing and faces on each one, some will leave them naked.

Suggested materials:

- Glue stick paste
- Colorful 12x12in cardstock
- Markers
- Crayons
- Pencils, sharpeners, erasers
- 5x7in earth shape
- 3-inch person shapes in different skin colors

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES

The power of unity sticks. We gave each child a popsicle stick and asked them to break it, which of course was no problem except for one child, who eventually managed. Then we handed them a stack of bound sticks with faces, all different skin colors, each with a heart sticker, and explained that these represent diverse unified people who love each other. A gold cord held them together, which symbolized their spiritual bonds of unity. We asked them to see if they could break the stack and they could not. (It is important to explain that it is cheating if you spread them apart and separate them in any way). We encouraged the kids to verbalize how strong and powerful the stick people were when united but how weak when single. (We reminded the students of the lyrics from the “Hearts and Hands” song: *When we stand together, we keep each other strong*).

Virtue/unity sticks (Also used in puppet shows) This is basically a popsicle stick between 2 large notary seals. The notary seals have the word “unity” written on them and many symbols for unity using stickers. I asked students to try and guess what each sticker meant—for ex. A heart b/c love promotes unity, a dove, roses (virtues, like flowers, bring joy and beauty to the world, and virtues create unity), a rainbow (unity in diversity), stars (when you create unity, it is like bringing light to the darkness), a heart shaped earth with a candle in it (love and unity in the world illuminate the earth spiritually).

Obviously, a teacher can just use one symbol to simplify the preparation of this material. It’s a good idea to remind the kids to handle the sticks gently and not chew on them!

Discuss how courtesy is essential to unity and how all virtues promote unity and that wherever there is disunity, you can bet that one or more virtues is missing. I described things people say and do, and if it increased unity, they were to raise their sticks, if it decreased unity, they were to hide the stick behind their backs. After each action, students were to bring the sticks back to a neutral position, such as centered over their laps, so they could proceed to the next movement. I gave examples such as boasting, rolling eyes when you don’t want a slow person on your team, backbiting, scooting away from someone who sits next to you, handing out valentines to only some people in your class, saying “so what” or saying, “how can I help?”, hugging someone who is sad, many examples of manners, etc. I wanted them to see that non-verbal actions can be just as hurtful/pleasing as verbal ones, so one should always be careful what their body/face is saying. They had no problem ascertaining the unifying behaviors and comments versus the disunifying ones. One of the main goals of this exercise was to get them to see how crucial courtesy and good manners are to unity. Then each student gave examples they were familiar with, and we responded accordingly.

I read the students a **short paragraph on page 1 from the July/Aug. 1996 Brilliant Star Baha'i children's magazine describing how many small lights united can make a difference in darkness.** I reminded them of their new memory verse and of the one assigned in the first class in Oct. in which Baha'u'llah states that "so powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." To illustrate this concretely, we turned off the lights. I held up a few strands of fiber optic lights to the earth poster. Not very bright. But when I held up the entire bundle, it illuminated the whole earth. When I jiggled them, it seemed that even more light was produced. I explained that when we arise and are active in our efforts to bring the light of unity to the planet, the spiritual light is much more powerful than if we just hope for and think about peace and unity, but do not engage in active service to this end.

White light Fiber optic wands are a nice gift to give the kids to take home to remind them that together we are more able to spiritually illuminate the world with our unity, our virtues. They are available at Amazon.

Hand out a color copied **activity sheet** from *Brilliant Star Baha'i Children's magazine*, March/April 2010, p. 10. It has children from around the world dressed in native clothing, and kids are instructed to figure out which country they are from using clues. It celebrates the beauty of diversity. This can be given as an optional take home activity.

Then I shared the following **quote**:

If you meet those of different race and colour from yourself, do not mistrust them and withdraw yourself into your shell of conventionality, but rather be glad and show them kindness. Think of them as different coloured roses growing in the beautiful garden of humanity, and rejoice to be among them. ~`Abdu'l-Bahá,
(Paris Talks)

Vocabulary: Conventionality=traditional values, typical social behavior

Demonstrations and examples of the importance of unity in diversity. On a dry erase board, I drew a garden and a rainbow. However, I used only one color for the rainbow arcs and one color and kind of flower. Thus, the garden and the rainbow were rather dull and boring. Then I redid the picture, using many colors for the rainbow, and asked each student to draw a different kind and color of flower on the dry erase board. It was plain to see that the diversity of the colors and kinds really improved the attractiveness.

We discussed acrobats—how each has a different movement, but they must work together in total unity in a routine. (If we had more time, I would love to show them a segment from a Cirque du Soleil video). We also discussed how the human body is a marvelous example of unity in diversity---all the different cells and organs working selflessly together for the wellbeing of the whole. Cancer is the perfect example of selfishness: cancer cells are only intent on multiplying themselves at the expense of the body. In the end they

destroy themselves b/c they destroy their host body. Their extreme “selfishness” ends of killing them. And human beings are like individual cells in the body of humanity. If we are spiritually healthy, we will benefit the whole of humanity. But if we are greedy and selfish, we are destructive. And if there are too many of those types...will they destroy the whole through environmental destruction or war?

Consider how these diverse parts and members of the human body are closely connected and harmoniously united one with the other. ~'Abdu'l-Bahá

Know thou that they who are truly wise have likened the world unto the human temple. ~Bahá'u'lláh, (Gleanings)

Then we did another concrete demonstration on the benefits of unity in diversity. I handed out tabs of cardstock and told the kids to pretend that we were going to teleport ourselves to a tropical island for a picnic, since it is winter here. I asked them to write down secretly what they would want to bring to this picnic. Then I collected all their tabs and wrote on a dry erase board what they had written. It quickly became clear that our picnic would not be much fun... So, I asked the children what tool, besides prayer, has Bahá'ulláh given us to assist diverse opinions in becoming unified? With some hinting, they got it---consultation. Because we did not consult, we were not unified in our diverse thoughts of what would make a good picnic. There would be no plates, no drinks, nothing to light the fire with...etc. Then, using the dry erase board to make a list, we all worked together to come up with a great combination of foods and objects that would ensure a delicious and successful picnic. Now all we needed was a way to teleport!!!!

2 Lists for analyzing conflicts

VIRTUES that are likely missing in a conflict and needed to solve the conflict:

Love Humility Forgiveness Courage Tolerance Friendliness Honesty Patience Helpfulness

Caring Fairness Contentment Respect Generosity Steadfastness Empathy Kindness Self-control

Courtesy Cooperation Consultation Flexibility Detachment Gentleness Sacrifice

NEGATIVE ACTIONS AND RESPONSES

Which usually:

- **Start a conflict**
- **Make one worse**
- **Create disunity**

EXAMPLES

- All put downs such as:
- Name calling
- Making faces
- Sneers, sarcasm
- Excluding
- Whispering, secrets
- Bragging
- Insults, backbiting
- Self-exaltation

Also:

Hitting Grabbing Carelessness

Poking Demanding Dishonesty

Pinching Scratching Hair pulling

Tripping Rudeness Interrupting

Stealing Yelling Selfishness

Biting Threats Stubbornness

Lying Teasing Hatred

Cheating Fussing Disobeying

Bossiness Forcing Inflexibility

Ignoring Blaming Snobbiness

Greed Pushing Disrespect

Revenge	Whining	Impatience
Kicking	Laziness	Showing off
Gripping	Tattling	Gossip

Virtues to Bring Unity to the World

caring
cleanliness
compassion
consideration
contentment
cooperation
courage
courtesy
creativity
detachment
determination
discipline
enthusiasm
excellence
fairness
faithfulness
flexibility
forbearance
forgiveness
friendliness
generosity
gentleness
gratitude
helpfulness
honesty
humour
humility
joyfulness
justice
kindness

love
loyalty
mercy
moderation
modesty
obedience
orderliness
patience
peacefulness
perseverance
reliability
respect
responsibility
reverence
sacrifice
self-control
service
steadfastness
tactfulness
tolerance
trustworthiness
truthfulness
wisdom

At the end of the program on unity it's nice to give small gifts to the kids to reinforce the concepts learned. 3 popular gift ideas for large groups:

For example, Kids love **temporary tattoos**. It's fun to have them put on while at the conference. Just have some handheld mirrors, thick toilet paper like Charmin or paper towels, and a few spray bottles to dampen the paper with: [worldcitizentattoo](#)
[unityindiversitytattoo](#) Ages 4 and up

Make Your Own Kaleidoscope

When giving these out, say something like: "The kaleidoscope would not be beautiful if when we looked inside, all we saw was all one color and one shape. Its beautiful b/c of the variations, or diversity, of the colors and shapes, ---which are all unified inside the kaleidoscope." Good quality kaleidoscope kits we have used: [KaleidoscopeKits](#) Ages 6 and up

Diverse Colored Pens Inside One Pen Ages 4 and up
Great Metaphor for unity in diversity. [DiversityPens](#)