

## **Virtue Workshop**

### **Children, Youth and Adults Learning Together**

**Printable resources are included**

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## **Acquiring Virtues**

### **General Introduction**

This Material is designed for workshops/conferences, children's classes, families, and individual learning.

Unless we can make deep spiritual concepts understandable, we risk losing future generations to the distorted thinking of a deteriorating materialistic world..

Each spiritual concept explored includes activities specifically designed for groups of youth and adults and activities designed for children.

It is a method of group learning, based on the model of the oneness of humanity.

Everyone is a student, and everyone is a teacher. Our mission is not to provide exhaustive research and explanation of concepts for scholars. Our goal is to enable everyone to gain a basic knowledge of concepts indispensable for spiritual survival.

It is our hope that parents and teachers gathered in living rooms, backyards; in cities and villages, will use these spiritual concepts to improve the lives of children, youth and adults.

The writers, as members of the Bahá'í Faith, are guided by its teachings and principles. We have used language that allows the concepts to be accessible to the wider community. Reference is made to the sources of authority of the Bahá'í Faith. We are referring to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice.

This material reflects the personal interpretations of the authors and should not be taken as authoritative.

### **Instructions**

Materials listed in the Resource section of each activity, including images, should be carefully prepared. Images can be enlarged and are essential for presentation. If some of the materials listed are not available, facilitators may modify and adapt material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.

Activities for youth/adults may be completed in approximately one hour.

Activities for children are approximately twenty minutes to an hour in length.

## **Adult Activity 1**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

### **Materials in Resource Section**

**Facilitator says:** The attributes of God flow from God through the Prophets of God and then to mankind, bringing new life to all of humanity. It does seem to be the case that one attribute, in each era, assumes a dominant role in sustaining personal relationships and the restructuring of society. In the Christian era, the focus of Christ's message was the critical need for unconditional love between individuals. It appears that the virtue of justice will assume that same role in the Bahá'í era.

Bahá'u'lláh clearly states:

**“The best beloved of all things in my sight is justice.”**

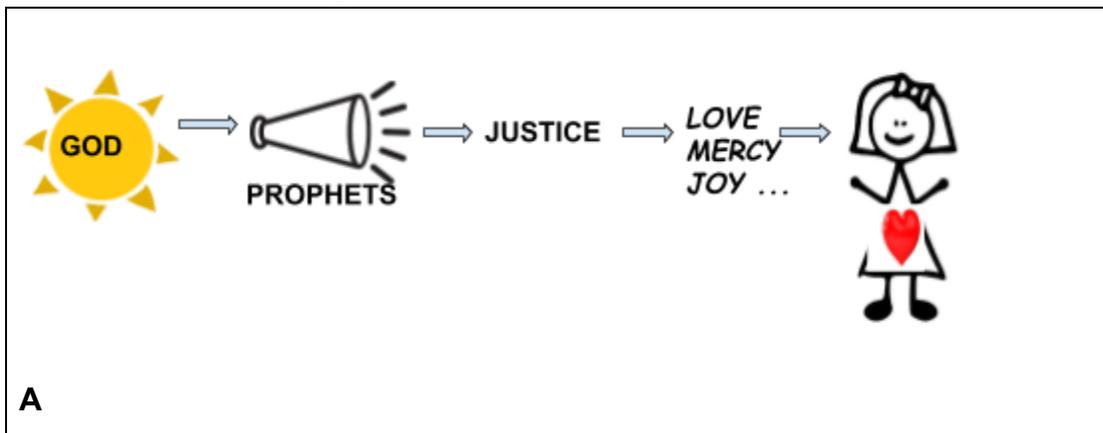
Bahá'í Reference Library: *The Hidden Words*: Part One: From the Arabic: 2

Many of the problems we have in our relationships is that someone believes they have been treated unjustly. Our souls know that everyone deserves to be treated in a just manner. The source of this awareness originates from the Manifestation of God. **“The best beloved of all things in my sight is justice.”** We can feel it in our entire being, when we have been treated unjustly.

Just as all physical life cannot long survive without water, our spiritual life cannot long survive without love. This means that our relationships cannot survive without love. But love is also in a web-like relationship with all the other attributes of God. Our relationships are held in a delicate balance by the cohesive presence of the attribute of justice.

Dr. William Hatcher makes the point in his book, *Love, Power and Justice*, that love is the indispensable power that creates a relationship, but love cannot long survive in an unjust relationship. If you value love, then you must value justice to the same degree or you will lose both indispensable spiritual qualities.

**Facilitator shares Image A with participants:**



**Facilitator says:** For the purposes of this exercise we are asking you to visualize that all the infinite attributes of God flow through the filter of justice before they enter their eventual home -- the human heart. In this day, all virtues are subtly affected by the virtue of justice.

Individuals are constantly trying to create their version of what a just relationship should look like. Without the Guidance of the Prophet of God for the age in which we live, we will try to make others live by our own fallible version of justice. The problem is that the other person is also trying to do the same thing and there will be an inevitable clash. The heart of many relationship problems is the belief by one or both parties that they have been treated unjustly. We would do better by trying to resolve all conflicts through respectful consultation.

We are going to consider the descriptions of 27 virtues included in a list published by the Families of Character Organization. Bahá'ís and other religious groups would commonly label virtues as attributes of God. The list is endless, because virtues are qualities that all human beings potentially possess.

<https://www.familiesofcharacter.com/devblog10809/2018/3/21/what-are-the-40-virtues-full-list>

**Facilitator asks participants in turn:** to read the definitions of virtues on the list.

**Participants respond**

**Justice:** giving to others what they are rightly due [and only accepting from others what I am rightly due]

**Orderliness:** achieving our goals by doing the things we should do, when we should do them, and how we should do them. This is also involved with keeping oneself physically clean and neat and one's belongings in good order.

**Fortitude:** the courage to stand up for what is right, even in the face of pressure.

**Prudence:** the virtue that allows us to determine what's right and what's wrong and then act accordingly. Prudence could also be called wisdom.

**Assertiveness:** achieving goals by setting appropriate boundaries, asking for help when we need it, and being confident and positive about our abilities.

**Purposefulness:** having a vision, clear focus, and concentration on goals.

**Modesty:** purity of heart in action, especially in regards to dress and speech.

**Peacefulness:** having a sense of inner calm, no matter what is happening around you.

**Service:** being helpful to the entire family of man. This can also be called beneficence, which means helping the greater community for the common good.

**Clemency:** handling disobedience, poor choices, and disputes in a reasonable and consistent manner by not being too strict, but not being too lax either.

**Good Counsel:** seeking advice from a reasonable person.

**Responsibility:** fulfilling one's just duties; accepting the consequences of one's words and actions, intentional and unintentional.

**Honesty:** sincerity, openness, and truthfulness in one's works and actions.

**Respect:** recognizing the worth and dignity of every single human person.

**Tolerance:** allowing other people to have their opinions about non-essential things and accepting the preferences and ideas that are different from your without compromising your own beliefs.

**Perseverance:** taking the steps necessary to carry out objectives in spite of difficulties.

**Gratitude:** having a thankful disposition of mind and heart.

**Humility:** having an awareness that all one's gifts come from God and appreciation for the gifts of others.

**Obedience:** assenting to rightful authority without hesitation or resistance.

**Patience:** remaining calm and not becoming annoyed when dealing with problems or difficult people. This could also mean paying attention to something for a long time without becoming bored or losing interest.

**Truthfulness:** acting in a way that inspires confidence and trust; being reliable.

**Moderation:** attention to balance in one's life.

**Loyalty:** accepting the bond implicit in relationships and defending the virtues upheld by Church, family, and country.

**Courtesy:** treating other people with respect, recognizing that all are made in God's image and likeness.

**Sincerity:** trustfulness in words and actions; honesty and enthusiasm toward others.

**Prayerfulness:** being still, listening, and being willing to talk to God as a friend.

**Foresight:** consideration of the consequences of one's action; thinking ahead.

**Facilitator says:** Now, we will all complete an activity in which we will think about which of these 27 virtues we would consider critical in four different relationship groups.

**Facilitator distributes response sheets (two-sided, including description of 27 virtues) and pens/pencils to all participants**

**Facilitator says:** We will each look over the list of virtues -- spiritual qualities -- and each decide which five virtues would be indispensable to create healthy relationships in

different areas of our lives. Because of the supreme importance of the attribute of justice for Today’s world, we have placed justice in the number one position. Let’s take a few minutes to individually look over the virtues list and choose virtues for each category.

The choices and order of virtues may not, and probably should not, be the same in each type of relationship. For example, we may feel that some virtues are of primary importance in a relationship with co-workers, but a set of some different virtues is of primary importance in a family relationship.

**Response sheet Image for facilitator reference:  
Spiritual Virtues Needed**

<u>Family</u> 1 Justice 2 3 4 5 6	<u>Workplace</u> 1 Justice 2 3 4 5 6
<u>Friends</u> 1 Justice 2 3 4 5 6	<u>Everyone in the World</u> 1 Justice 2 3 4 5 6

**Allow up to 5 minutes** for individuals to complete the response sheet.

**Facilitator says:** Now let’s divide into four smaller groups, to discuss with others what influenced our choices.

**Facilitator divides participants into four groups**

**Participants respond**

**Allow approximately 5 - 10 minutes for discussion**

**Facilitator says:** We can remain in our groups for now.

As a group, discuss these questions:

Were we surprised by the diversity and order of virtues chosen by other people in our group for each category? What do we think this means? What does this tell us about human individuality?

**Participants in groups respond -- Allow 3-5 minutes**

**Facilitator says:** Would anyone from any group like to share what they have learned about the concept of the oneness of humanity?

**Participants respond -- Allow 3-5 minutes**

**Facilitator's closing comments:** What we have learned from this exercise is that virtues are the key to healthy relationships. We are all unique, as witnessed by what we have just done. This uniqueness is demonstrated as we have all chosen different virtues that we believe are critical to the health of our relationships. We must always remain careful not to engage in blind imitation of past behavior. The virtues which were needed to sustain a healthy relationship yesterday, are not necessarily the same exact ones needed for today or for tomorrow. What stays the same, is that the virtue of justice must remain in the pre-eminent position. In an ever-changing world, it is important for us all to hold justice as a constant in every situation and in every relationship.

## **Adult Activity #2 The Many Facets of the Attribute of Love**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

**Facilitator asks** a participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**‘Abdu’l-Bahá was asked: “What is the purpose of our lives?**

**His response: “To acquire virtues”.**

- ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í Reference Library: *Paris Talks*: 55

**Facilitator says:** If the purpose of life is “to acquire virtues then what is the purpose of virtues?

**Facilitator asks** participant to read the following:

**The purpose of virtues is to improve our individual lives and our relationships. We become closer to someone when we discover what we have in common. We begin to see that we all love, we all forgive, as well as all the other spiritual qualities. We develop a relationship with God when we understand that God is the source of all the virtues we value so highly. Virtues don’t exist in the abstract. Virtues must be put into action through the vehicle of acts of service. A relationship becomes sustainable when both parties engage in mutual acts of service generated by virtues.**

**Facilitator says:** A word of caution is needed. Always ask the inner question as to what virtues are needed to energize what acts of service. Don’t blindly imitate what worked yesterday. We all change constantly. Blind imitation can siphon the life out of a relationship. We can only improve today’s relationship -- not yesterday’s and not tomorrow’s.

The foundation of a spiritual relationship in this Day is justice, and justice is maintained in a relationship when the parties are willing to both **give** and **receive**. If we are only able to give acts of service and can’t receive them, or vice-a-versa, then we have been unjust instead of just. We have created distance, instead of nearness between ourselves and others.

Our primary spiritual relationship is the relationship we have with God. This relationship becomes the foundation for all other relationships. The difficulty is that God is unknowable. But don’t despair! We are able to learn more and more about the virtues of

God through our interactions with the Manifestations of God, 'Abdu'l-Baha and the virtues of other people.

**Facilitator says:** Would anyone like to briefly share with the group, a personal relationship or situation needing improvement? It is not necessary to use specific names.

### **Participants respond - Allow 1- 2 minutes**

**Facilitator says:** We all can think of a relationship in our own personal lives which we would like to be more spiritual.

We will use two inner balance questions as a guide to transform our material relationships into spiritual relationships. A spiritual relationship is a relationship, based on justice and all the other attributes of God, in which both individuals are working to create a balance between their ability to give and their ability to receive.

These two balance questions will help us develop the skill of creating balance between our ability to give and receive. Love, forgiveness and all the other virtues are merely pleasant sounds until they change our behavior. We change our behavior by exchanging genuine acts of service with each other.

For a couple of minutes, let's each think of a relationship which we would like to improve. We can think of specific virtues that would help improve our situation. To begin, let's first hear the two inner questions:

**Facilitator asks** a participant to read the following:

1. **At this moment, what is the virtue that I'm capable of giving that will improve my relationship with this person?**



2. **At this moment, what is the virtue that I'm capable of receiving that can improve my relationship with this person?**



### **Allow 2-3 minutes**

**Facilitator says:** Okay, now we have taken the first step.

As a Chinese proverb says: "A trip of a thousand miles begins with one step."

Would anyone like to share a relationship that is challenging for them? Be careful not to use any names.

**Participants respond - Allow 2-3 minutes**

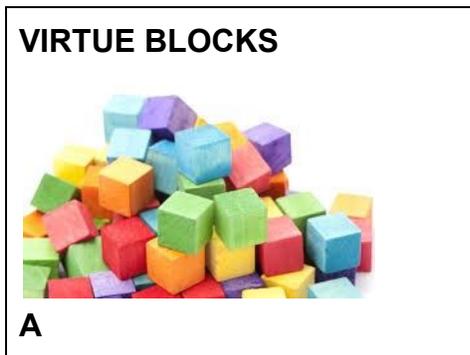
**Facilitator says:** What virtues can we suggest that would help to improve the relationship?

**Participants respond - Allow 2-3 minutes**

**Facilitator says:** Our spiritual nature is the only nature capable of creating a spiritual relationship. Our spiritual nature is animated by the spirit of faith. It is through the power of the spirit of faith that we are able to perceive spiritual virtues in ourselves and in other people.

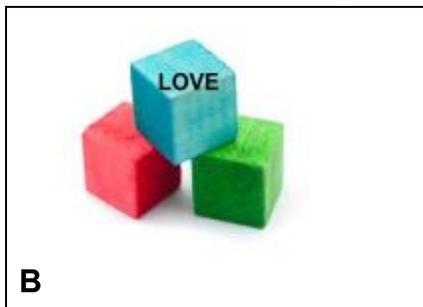
**Facilitator places:** pile of square blocks on the table in front of the group.  
**If blocks are unavailable, present images only.**

**Facilitator shares Image A** with participants:



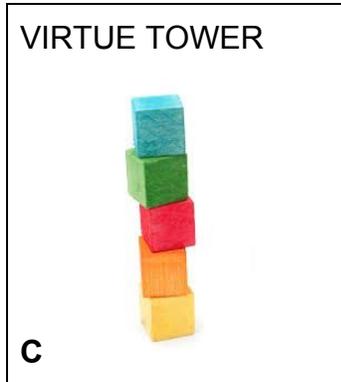
**Facilitator says:** This pile of blocks represents the infinite variety of virtues, given to each of us by God.

**Facilitator shares Image B** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** Each block represents a unique virtue we each possess, such as love, kindness, compassion, etc.

**Facilitator shares Image C** with participants:



**\*If using physical blocks:**

**Facilitator asks a participant:** Please select six virtue blocks from the pile of virtue blocks and proceed to build a virtue tower -- a tower of perfections.

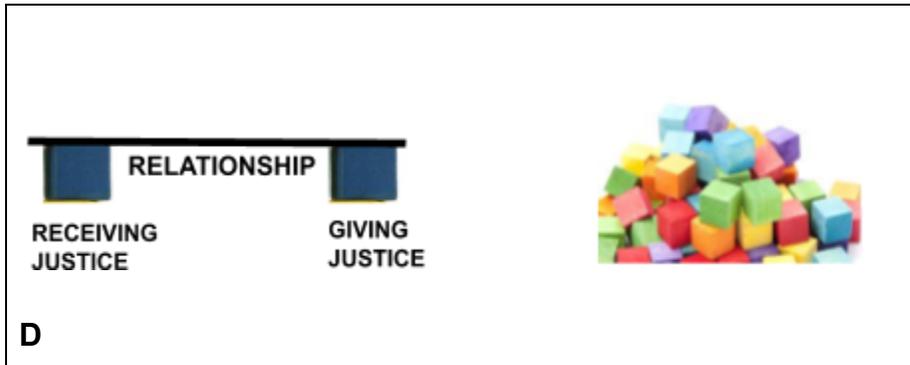
**Participant responds**

**Facilitator says:** As you grow your virtue tower, does it become easier or more difficult as it grows in height?

**Participant responds that it becomes more difficult.**

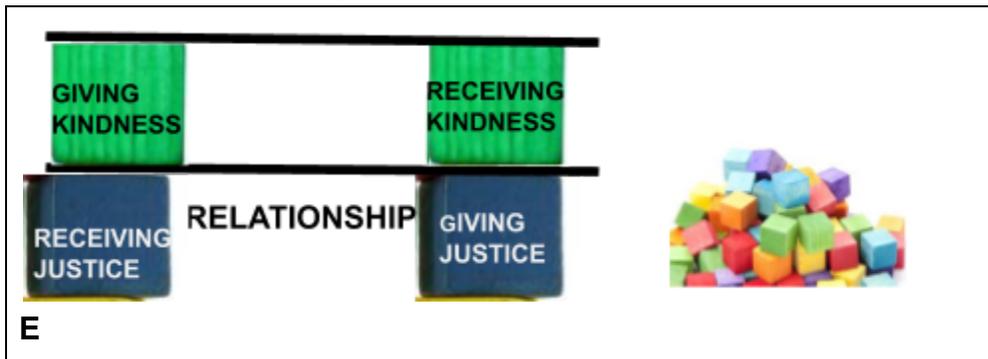
**Facilitator says:** We may find that it becomes more difficult and challenging as our spiritual virtue tower grows inside of us. We come to realize that one size does not fit all. The way we express kindness to one person, is not how we should express kindness to another person. Each day our awareness is growing that everyone is unique. We realize that there is a unique way to express kindness to each individual. One size does not fit all. How I am kind to one person will not be effective with another.

**Facilitator shares Image D** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** Our higher, spiritual nature wants to develop spiritual relationships in which everyone grows in their capacity in learning how to give and receive. The foundation of all successful relationships is justice.

**Facilitator:** shares image E with participants:



**Facilitator asks:** participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**According to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, each individual needs to know that their purpose in life is to acquire virtues. It follows then that each relationship also needs to know that its purpose is to acquire virtues. A relationship has a life of its own. As we continue to add our personal virtue blocks to a growing relationship, we each become stronger and our relationship becomes stronger.**

**Facilitator closing comments:** When the foundation of a relationship is built on virtues, beginning with justice, the relationship will be strong. It will grow upward toward God forever. It is unjust to simply accept kindness from another person without returning kindness. We must both give and receive kindness and all of the other virtues of God. As we mature spiritually, we will become more and more sensitive to any imbalance in ourselves as to how we give and receive virtues.

**To the Facilitator and all participants:**

**The physical world has been created by God to teach us deep spiritual concepts. It is the hope of the creators of this activity that we all make the transition as quickly as possible, from being student participants, to being teachers, sharing these ideas with others. Spiritual concepts are the building blocks for an ever-progressing world civilization.**

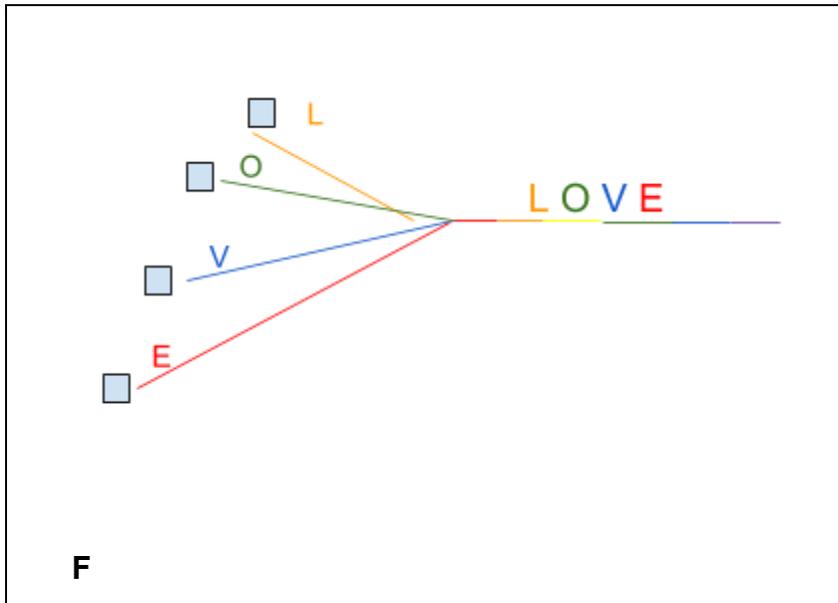
**Please feel free to adapt this material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.**

### Adult Activity # 3

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

Facilitator shares Image F with participants:



**Facilitator says:** In the illustration, the lines of different lengths represent different life experiences in which we learn about love. Love is an attribute of God. We will never be able to understand love, or any other virtues, unless we put them into an act of service. The longer the length of the line the greater the degree of difficulty in giving and receiving our acts of service and the more important it is for our spiritual growth. Let's look at four scenarios in which the expression of love requires increasing courage and the ability to overcome fear. We will have scenario **L**, scenario **O**, scenario **V** and **E**, spelling out **LOVE**. The line next to the beginning letter of each scenario becomes increasingly longer, matching the increasing degree of complexity of each situation.

**Facilitator asks** participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**Scenario L** \_\_\_\_\_

**It is Monday morning and you always bring in a cup of coffee for a close friend who works in your department. This is an easy act of service.**

**Facilitator says:** Can anyone share a similar experience?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator asks** a participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**Scenario O** \_\_\_\_\_

**On Tuesday morning I bring in two cups of coffee to work. One for my close friend and one for someone I have wanted to become friends with, but was afraid they wouldn't like me. This act of service is a little more difficult.**

**Facilitator says:** Can anyone share a similar experience?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator asks** a participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**Scenario V** \_\_\_\_\_

**On Wednesday morning I will begin a conversation with someone I usually ignore. I know this person would like to get to know me better, but I don't like interacting with new people. It always makes me very nervous. Again, this act of service is a little more difficult.**

**Facilitator says:** Can anyone share a similar experience?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator asks** a participant to read the following in a loud voice:

**Scenario E** \_\_\_\_\_

**On Thursday morning, I will take the first baby steps to be kind to someone I know doesn't like me. This is something I really don't ever do. I have always been so afraid of rejection. This is a very difficult act of service.**

**Facilitator says:** Can anyone share a similar experience?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** If we were going to the gym every day to strengthen our arms, would we, day after day and month after month, continue to lift only three kilos at a time? Would our arms get stronger?

Of course not. If we did the same acts of service we were comfortable with, we would not grow spiritually. We must continually challenge ourselves to do acts of service that are increasingly more complex --acts of service which require us to use virtues which we are not comfortable using. For example, if all my life, I have found it impossible to forgive other people, I will not choose the virtue of forgiveness to generate my acts of service. If I don't use forgiveness to motivate any of my acts of service, it will be like going to the gym and choosing to lift weights with only my right arm.

If we think that we can prevent change, we are mistaken. Change is inevitable.

**Facilitator asks:** Would anyone like to share their reflections?

**Participants respond - Allow 3-5 minutes**

**Closing comments:** Love, like all virtues, is not one dimensional.

We need to have the full range of human experience to learn the meaning of any virtue. If we don't, all that we will be learning about is fear and not faith.

There are many paths, many experiences, many ways of learning about love. The goal is not to let fear prevent us from leaving our comfort zone. If fear wins, we will only repeat acts of service that are easy for us and that we are comfortable with. We will end up leading lives of blind imitation.

**Blind imitation will drastically limit our life experiences.**

**To the Facilitator and all participants:**

**The physical world has been created by God to teach us deep spiritual concepts. It is the hope of the creators of this activity that we all make the transition as quickly as possible, from being student participants, to being teachers, sharing these ideas with others. Spiritual concepts are the building blocks for an ever-progressing world civilization.**

**Please feel free to adapt this material to best meet the unique needs of different groups.**

## Children's Activity # 1

### THE MANY FACETS OF THE ATTRIBUTE OF LOVE

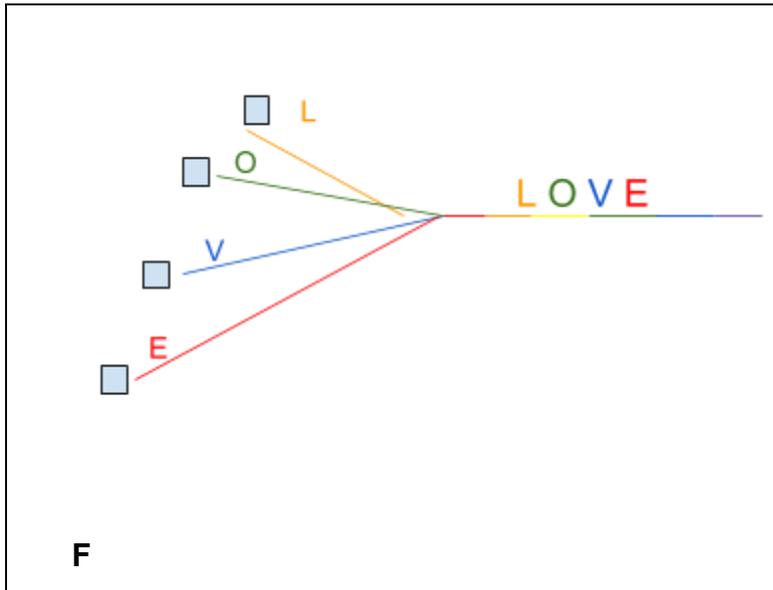
Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

Materials in Resource Section

#### Set Up:

**Facilitator:** set out the four cardboard squares in a row at a distance from participants. Each cardboard square will mark the beginning of one path. All four paths which will be made during activity will have one common ending point, merging into one path of Love (as pictured in image F).

**Facilitator shares** Image F with participants:



**Facilitator says:** We learn what love means through many different ways. All that happens to us -- happy and sad times -- are part of love. All our experiences are like paths that help us learn more about love. As we go on these paths, we can learn different ways of sharing our love with other people.

We will play a game. We are going to make four paths that will each be a path of love. All four paths will connect at the end.

We will make our first path with our set of 4 orange circles. We will take turns placing the circles on the first path.

We will think about different situations. For each one, we will have to think about what shows love. When we decide what shows love, we will add a circle to the path.

**Note to Facilitator:** The Scenarios - specific scenarios, tailored to the needs and ages of individuals or groups may be created and used in place of those given here.

**Facilitator says:** Let's begin by making our orange path. We will read some situations in which it will be very easy to feel happiness and how to show love.

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her an orange circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Orange Situation # 1:

I am at a farm on a class trip. My friends from class are with me.

What shows love in this situation?

**Participant responds to the question and places the first circle on the floor to start the orange path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her an orange circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Orange Situation: # 2:

I am on my way to visit my grandparents with my family.

What shows love in this situation?

**Participant responds and places the next orange circle on the path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her an orange circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Orange Situation: # 3:

I am at a swimming party for my friend's birthday.

What shows love in this situation?

**Participant responds and places the next orange circle on the path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her an orange circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Orange Situation: # 4

I am at the ice cream shop choosing flavors for my ice cream sundae. I am buying one for my friend too.

What shows love in this situation?

**Participant responds and places the last orange circle on the orange path.**

**Facilitator says:** Please remove the letter L from this last orange circle. Place it on the first square in the row of four squares.

**Participant responds**

**Facilitator says:** These first four situations that we have read have all been simple happy situations in which it is easy to feel love and show love to others.

Now we will make our green path. As we read the next set of situations we will have to make a choice. We will choose which is the best way to show love.

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a green circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Green: Situation # 1

I have just one cookie left and my friend just arrived.

Choice #1

I am going to swallow it in one gulp, before she realizes that I have a cookie.

Choice #2

I break the cookie in half and give her a piece.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the first green circle on the floor to start the green path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a green circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Green: Situation # 2

I wish I were just one inch taller. Then I could go on the rides that the bigger kids go on at the fair.

Choice #1

I am going to go to the shoe store and buy the highest shoes I can find to wear to the fair.

Choice #2

I will look forward to next year when I will be tall enough.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the next green circle on the floor to continue the green path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a green circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Green: Situation # 3 -

My new friend asked me to play outside, but my mom said I have to clean my room and wash all the dishes first.

Choice #1

I will get a box and put the dirty dishes and my clothes in it and hide it in my closet.

Choice #2

I finish my chores with a smile. Then I play with my friend.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the next green circle on the floor to continue the green path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a green circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Green: Situation # 4

T.V. time is over and I have to turn off the T. V.

Choice #1

I will hold my breath and stamp my feet.

Choice #2

I will turn off the T.V. right away and I won't get angry.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the last green circle on the floor to end the green path.**

**Facilitator says:** Please remove the letter **O** from this last green circle. Place it on the second square of the row of four squares at the end of the path.

**Participant responds**

**Facilitator says:** These four situations that we have just read have all been small tests -- small disappointments. It was a little harder to choose the best way to learn about love but not that hard.

Now we will make our blue path. As we read the next set of situations we will have to make choices again. Our choices will be a bit more difficult this time. We will choose which is the best way to learn about and show love.

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a blue circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Blue: Situation #1

I had been practicing all spring, but I didn't make it onto the baseball team.

Choice #1

When no one is looking, I am going to take all the baseballs and put them in my house so no one can practice.

Choice #2

I'll keep working hard and try out for the team again next year.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places a blue circle on the floor to start the blue path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a blue circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Blue: Situation #2

My friend and I always play together at recess. Today, she chose to play with someone else instead.

Choice #1

I am going to take her shoes so she can't play with anyone.

Choice #2

I'll play with another friend today too. Tomorrow maybe we will all three play together.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the next blue circle on the floor to continue the blue path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a blue circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Blue: Situation #3

I just got the new toy robot I really wanted. My dad said that I had to share with my two year old sister. She spilled juice on my robot and now it doesn't work.

Choice #1

I will take my father's new cell phone and bury it in the garden.

Choice #2

I love my sister more than my new toy. I will ask my parents to try to fix the toy.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the next blue circle on the floor to continue the blue path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a blue circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Blue: Situation #4

I really want to sing a song at a talent show, but I get so scared that no one will like my singing and that nothing happens when I open my mouth.

Choice #1

I will ask a really talented person to stand behind me and sing while I just mouth the words.

Choice #2

I will ask my friends to sing with me for this show, so I won't be so afraid. Maybe next time I will have the courage to sing by myself.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the last blue circle on the floor to complete the blue path.**

**Facilitator says:** Please remove the letter **V** from this last blue circle. Place it on the third square of the row of four squares at the end of the blue path.

**Participant responds**

**Facilitator says:** We had to think harder about our choices on the blue path. The last path that we will create will be the red path. We will have to think even harder about feeling and showing love. We will have to make more difficult choices on our last path.

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a red circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Red: Situation #1  
Our big black dog died.

Choice # 1

I will never mention his name again and I will never get another pet!

Choice # 2

Our family will talk about all of the great times we had with our faithful friend. When enough healing time has passed we will consult about getting another pet.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the first red circle on the floor to begin the red path.**

**Facilitator chooses participant and gives him/her a red circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Red: Situation #2  
My mom is going away for 2 weeks on a trip for work.

Red Situation 2: Choice # 1

I am going to be very angry and cry a lot so that both of us won't be happy. I will not do my chores at home.

Red Situation 2: Choice # 2

I will call her and talk with her every day. While she is away, I will also do some of the chores which mom usually does.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to question and places next red circle on the floor to continue the red path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a red circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Red: Situation #3

I broke my leg playing ping pong with my grandpa and I am on my way to the hospital.

Choice # 1

I will never play ping pong or any other game with my grandpa ever again!

Choice # 2

I will tell grandpa that it was not his fault that I hurt myself. I will look forward to spending time with my grandpa and to play pingpong again with him when my leg heals.

Which choice is the best way to learn about love and show love to others and why?

**Participant responds to the question and places the next red circle on the floor to continue the red path.**

**Facilitator chooses a participant and gives him/her a red circle.**

**Facilitator says:** Red: Situation #4

I was not being respectful and responsible at home, so I was not allowed to go on the big camping trip with my cousins.

Choice # 1

I will put honey in their sleeping bags.

Choice # 2

I will apologize and take responsibility for my mistakes. I will look forward to earning a future camping trip. I will give the cookies that I had made for the trip, to my cousins.

**Participant responds to the question and places the last red circle on the floor to complete the red path.**

**Facilitator says:** Please remove the letter **E** from this last red circle. Place it on the fourth square of the row of four squares at the end of the red path.

**Participant responds**

**Facilitator closing comments:**

Many times our first reaction when we are in a difficult situation is wrong. If we just take a deep breath and ask ourselves what is the right thing to do, God will help us to figure it out. We will always have difficult situations in our lives. What we learn now, when we are young, will help us for the rest of our lives.

Can anyone think of a time when they had to make a difficult choice between showing love and not showing love. What happened? What did you decide?  
Did you solve the problem? Did you make a good choice?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** We are going to make a souvenir to take home to remind us what we learned about love. We are going to make headbands. We are going to use the colors of our paths of love: orange, green, blue and red to write the word LOVE on our headbands. If we want we can make a rainbow design or we can make each Letter a different color.

**Facilitator note:**

Headbands will have to be measured to be cut to fit each participant. The two ends will later be taped together to form the back of the headband. Facilitator or older participants should assist younger participants with measuring and cutting strips before they draw on their headbands. Following completion of drawing, participants will need help taping their headbands together.

Facilitator or older participants may assist younger participants by drawing outlines of letters on the headbands.

**Participants complete activity**

## **Children's Activity # 2**

### **"Evolving Perfection" - The Path Toward Perfection**

Document with text to be read aloud by participants. Facilitator may choose to use a projector.

#### **Materials and Set up in Resource Section**

**Facilitator says:** How do we feel when someone tells us that we are "bad" or imperfect?

#### **Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** How do we feel when someone tells us we are "good" or that we are "perfect"?

#### **Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** Is anyone totally bad all the time?  
Is anyone totally good all the time?

#### **Participants respond: No**

**Facilitator says:** Of course not!  
Is anyone totally kind all the time?  
Is anyone totally unkind all the time?

#### **Participants respond: No**

**Facilitator says:** Of course not!  
Is anyone totally selfish all the time?  
Is anyone totally unselfish all the time?

#### **Participants respond: No**

**Facilitator says:** Of course not!  
Is anyone always unhappy?  
Is anyone always happy?

#### **Participants respond: No**

**Facilitator says:** Who here has had bad moments? Let's nod our heads if we have ever had a bad moment.

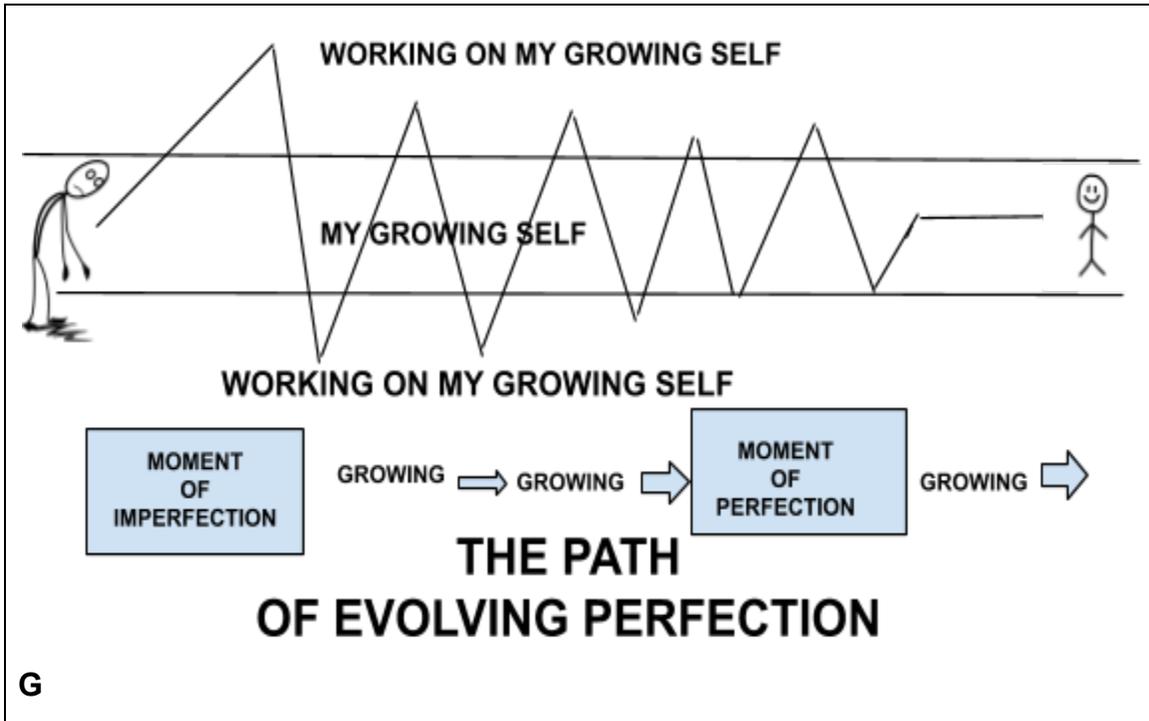
**Participants respond.**

**Facilitator says:** These are all normal feelings. Life has ups and downs. Sometimes we make good choices in how we act and how we treat our friends. Sometimes we treat our friends badly. Does it mean that we are totally good or totally bad?

**Participants respond: No**

**Facilitator says:** No, of course no one is always good and no one is always bad. We all have moments when we make good choices and we all have moments when we make not so good choices. We have already decided that no one is ever totally perfect and nobody's ever totally imperfect. But, we all have moments of perfection and we all have moments of imperfection.

**Facilitator: shares Image G with participants:**



**Facilitator says:** Let's look at this chart together. It shows a path. The person is starting to walk along the path called "My Growing Self". Our friend on this path wants to make good choices in his actions. The middle of the path is called "My Growing Self". His goal is to stay in the center of the path. His goal is to have many moments of perfection.

But we know that no one is perfect all the time. The path of growing is never a straight path.

So, sometimes our friend makes choices that are not so good. He has moments of imperfection. When this happens, he moves away from the center of the path. He falls off the path.

We have created a path here today. We will name the center of the path "My Growing Self"

**\*Note to Facilitator:** Activity set up: Path has been created with strips of tape (Resource Section)

**Facilitator places the text image of "My Growing Self"** on the floor in the center of the path.

**Facilitator says:** We will name the space on both the left side and the right side of the path: “Working On My Growing Self”.

**Facilitator places the text images of “Working on My Growing Self”** on outsides of the path

**Facilitator says:** We will all have turns walking on the path. Sometimes we will fall off the path.  
Let’s first look at some moments of perfection and some moments of imperfection. We will look at each image and then label it as a moment of perfection or a moment of imperfection. We will match our labels to our pictures. After we finish learning about these moments, we will take turns walking on the path.

**Facilitator shares Image H** with participants:



**Facilitator places image** on the floor in front of participants:

**Facilitator says:** This picture shows a little boy and girl.  
What quality is this boy showing? What could we call this “moment of perfection” that the boy is having?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** You’re right. This boy is showing the quality of sharing. He is sharing an ice cream cone with a friend.  
Sharing is his moment of perfection right now. He is staying on the path of “My Growing Self”.  
Let’s place the label “Sharing” with this image.

**Facilitator or participant places label:** Sharing below image.

**Facilitator shares Image I** with participants:



**Facilitator says:** This picture shows a little girl. She is showing the opposite of the quality of sharing. This girl is experiencing a moment of imperfection. What could we call this “moment of imperfection” that the girl is having?

**Participants respond**

**Facilitator says:** You’re right. This girl is showing the quality of selfishness. Let’s place the label “Selfishness” with this image.

**Facilitator or participant places label:** Selfishness below image.

**Facilitator says:** Selfishness is her moment of imperfection right now. She has gone off of the path and is now on the outside of the Path. These are the areas on the chart called “Working On My Growing Self”. Because she is having a selfish moment right now, -- a moment of imperfection, does it mean that she will never be able to get back to the center of the path? Will she be selfish forever?

**Participants respond: No.**

**Facilitator says:** What can this little girl do to get back on the path of “My Growing Self”

**Participants respond.**

**Facilitator says:** That’s right. This girl can learn how to share. She can get back on the path. We can always get back on the path of “My Growing Self” - where we want to be.

Now we have the idea of moments of perfection and imperfection. Let's look at some more pictures and decide which show moments of perfection or moments of imperfection.

**Facilitator repeats process above:**

- **Shares Images J - W (from Resource Section) one at a time with group.**
- **Asks participants to identify the quality in each image and whether it is a moment of perfection or a moment of imperfection.**
- **Places corresponding text label with image as each is correctly identified.**

**Facilitator says:** Now we will all walk on the path. I will mix up all the pictures. Each person will have a turn to walk on the path.

While each friend is walking on the path, I will give him or her a picture showing either a moment of perfection or a moment of imperfection.

The friend then tells the group the quality that is shown in his or her picture. If our friend gets a picture showing a moment of perfection, he or she can continue walking in a straight line of the path of "My Growing Self" and place the picture at the end. If our friend gets a picture showing a moment of imperfection, he or she will have to move off the path to the right or left into the area of "Working on My Growing Self" and place the picture on the outside of the center of the path.

We will then all invite our friend, who had a moment of imperfection, to get back onto the center of the path and continue walking to the end.

Remember, we can always get back on the path of "My Growing Self".

**Participants complete activity**

**Facilitator Closing Comments:**

Sometimes making good choices is easy and sometimes it is hard. Adults struggle to do the right thing and so do children. Big or small, no matter the person or situation, we can all make good choices and have moments of perfection. We also all make not so good choices and have moments of imperfection.

As we grow older, we want to make more good choices and less bad choices. We will have less moments of imperfection and more moments of perfection.

It is important to know that we can always improve. We never become totally perfect. Each time we have a moment of perfection, we are growing closer to God. God is Perfection! -- not us! We can experience moments of perfection, but we will never become perfect. Making good choices in how we treat ourselves and our friends, are moments of perfection

## **Resources**

### **Adult Activity #1**

#### **Materials:**

Virtues List/Response sheet - Print two sided

**Image A**

### **Adult Activity #2**

#### **Materials:**

12-24 square blocks - preferably at least 5cm in size

Use paper blocks If wooden/plastic blocks are unavailable

**Images A,B,C,D,E**

### **Adult Activity #3**

#### **Materials:**

**Image F**

### **Children's Activity # 1**

#### **Materials:**

4 blank squares made of cardboard or foam board

16 large cardboard or soft foam circles: Four each: orange, green, blue, and red.

Paper strips to make into headbands

Orange, green, blue and red markers, colored pencils, or crayons

Tape

Set of four large letters: L O V E cut out: L - orange; O - green; V - blue; E - red

On the fourth circle of each color, attach the following letters: orange L on orange circle; green O on green circle; blue V on green circle; red E on red circle.

**Image F**

### **Children's Activity # 2**

#### **Materials:**

Images **G,H,I,J,K,L,M,N,O,P,Q,R,S,T,U,V,W** each cut out,

Text labels corresponding to images - each cut out

Text label for center of path: "My Growing Self"

Two text labels for left and right sides of the path: "Working On My Growing Self"

Roll of colored tape or masking tape

**Set Up:** place two equal strips of tape on the floor to create borders of a path 150cm in length.

**Spiritual Virtues Needed**

<p><b><u>Family</u></b>  <b>1 Justice</b>  <b>2</b>  <b>3</b>  <b>4</b>  <b>5</b>  <b>6</b></p>	<p><b><u>Workplace</u></b>  <b>1 Justice</b>  <b>2</b>  <b>3</b>  <b>4</b>  <b>5</b>  <b>6</b></p>
<p><b><u>Friends</u></b>  <b>1 Justice</b>  <b>2</b>  <b>3</b>  <b>4</b>  <b>5</b>  <b>6</b></p>	<p><b><u>Everyone in the World</u></b>  <b>1 Justice</b>  <b>2</b>  <b>3</b>  <b>4</b>  <b>5</b>  <b>6</b></p>

**What are the 40 Virtues** - [familiesofcharacter.com](http://familiesofcharacter.com)

**Justice:** giving to others what they are rightly due.[and only accepting from others what I am rightly due.

**Orderliness:** achieving our goals by doing the things we should do, when we should do them, and how we should do them. This is also involved with keeping oneself physically clean and neat and one’s belongings in good order.

**Fortitude:** the courage to stand up for what is right, even in the face of pressure.

**Prudence:** the virtue that allows us to determine what’s right and what’s wrong and then act accordingly. Prudence could also be called wisdom.

**Assertiveness:** achieving goals by setting appropriate boundaries, asking for help when we need it, and being confident and positive about our abilities.

**Purposefulness:** having a vision, clear focus, and concentration on goals.

**Modesty:** purity of heart in action, especially in regards to dress and speech.

## Side 2

**Peacefulness:** having a sense of inner calm, no matter what is happening around you.

**Service:** being helpful to the entire family of man. This can also be called beneficence, which means helping the greater community for the common good.

**Clemency:** handling disobedience, poor choices, and disputes in a reasonable and consistent manner by not being too strict, but not being too lax either.

**Good Counsel:** seeking advice from a reasonable person.

**Responsibility:** fulfilling one's just duties; accepting the consequences of one's words and actions, intentional and unintentional.

**Honesty:** sincerity, openness, and truthfulness in one's works and actions.

**Respect:** recognizing the worth and dignity of every single human person.

**Tolerance:** allowing other people to have their opinions about non-essential things and accepting the preferences and ideas that are different from your without compromising your own beliefs.

**Perseverance:** taking the steps necessary to carry out objectives in spite of difficulties.

**Gratitude:** having a thankful disposition of mind and heart.

**Humility:** having an awareness that all one's gifts come from God and appreciation for the gifts of others.

**Obedience:** assenting to rightful authority without hesitation or resistance.

**Patience:** remaining calm and not becoming annoyed when dealing with problems or difficult people. This could also mean paying attention to something for a long time without becoming bored or losing interest.

**Truthfulness:** acting in a way that inspires confidence and trust; being reliable.

**Moderation:** attention to balance in one's life.

**Loyalty:** accepting the bond implicit in relationships and defending the virtues upheld by Church, family, and country.

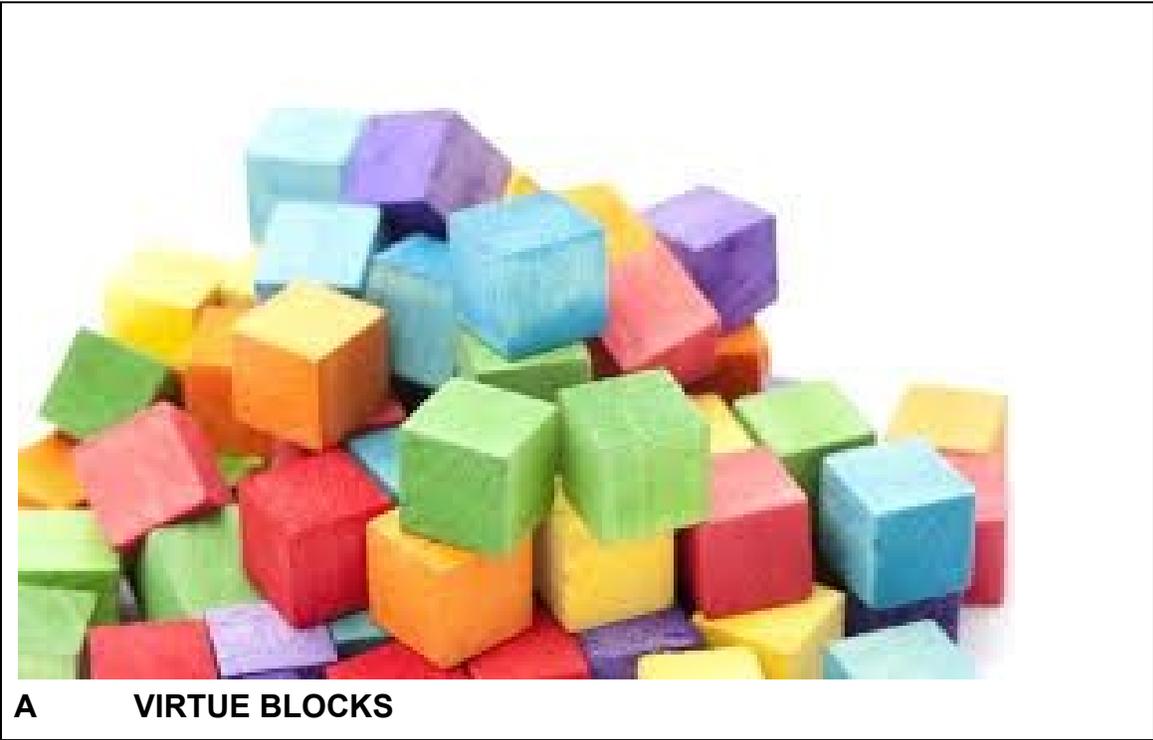
**Courtesy:** treating other people with respect, recognizing that all are made in God's image and likeness.

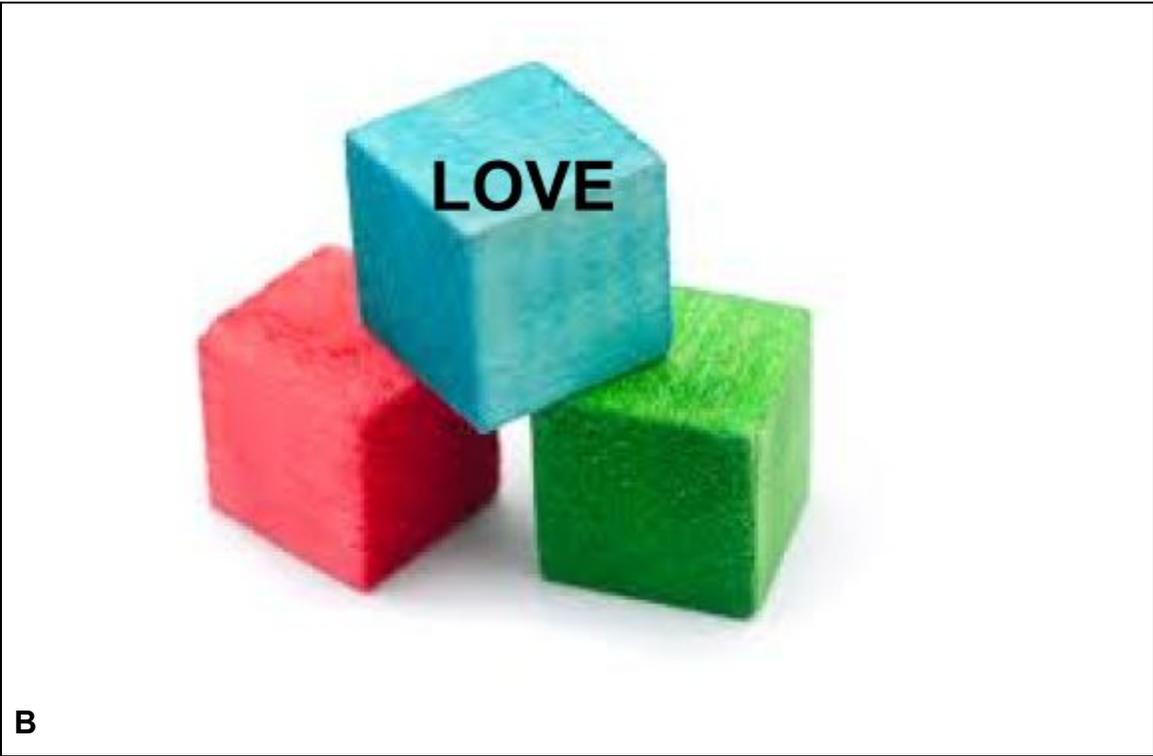
**Sincerity:** trustfulness in words and actions; honesty and enthusiasm toward others.

**Prayerfulness:** being still, listening, and being willing to talk to God as a friend.

**Foresight:** consideration of the consequences of one's action; thinking ahead.

**Images**





**B**



**C**

**VIRTUE TOWER**

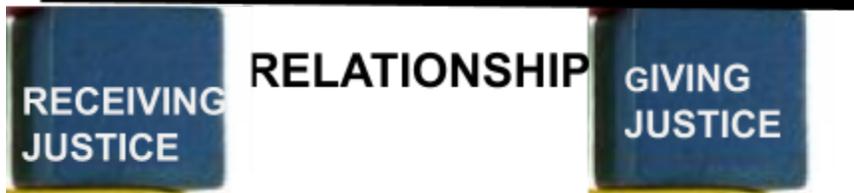


**RECEIVING  
JUSTICE**

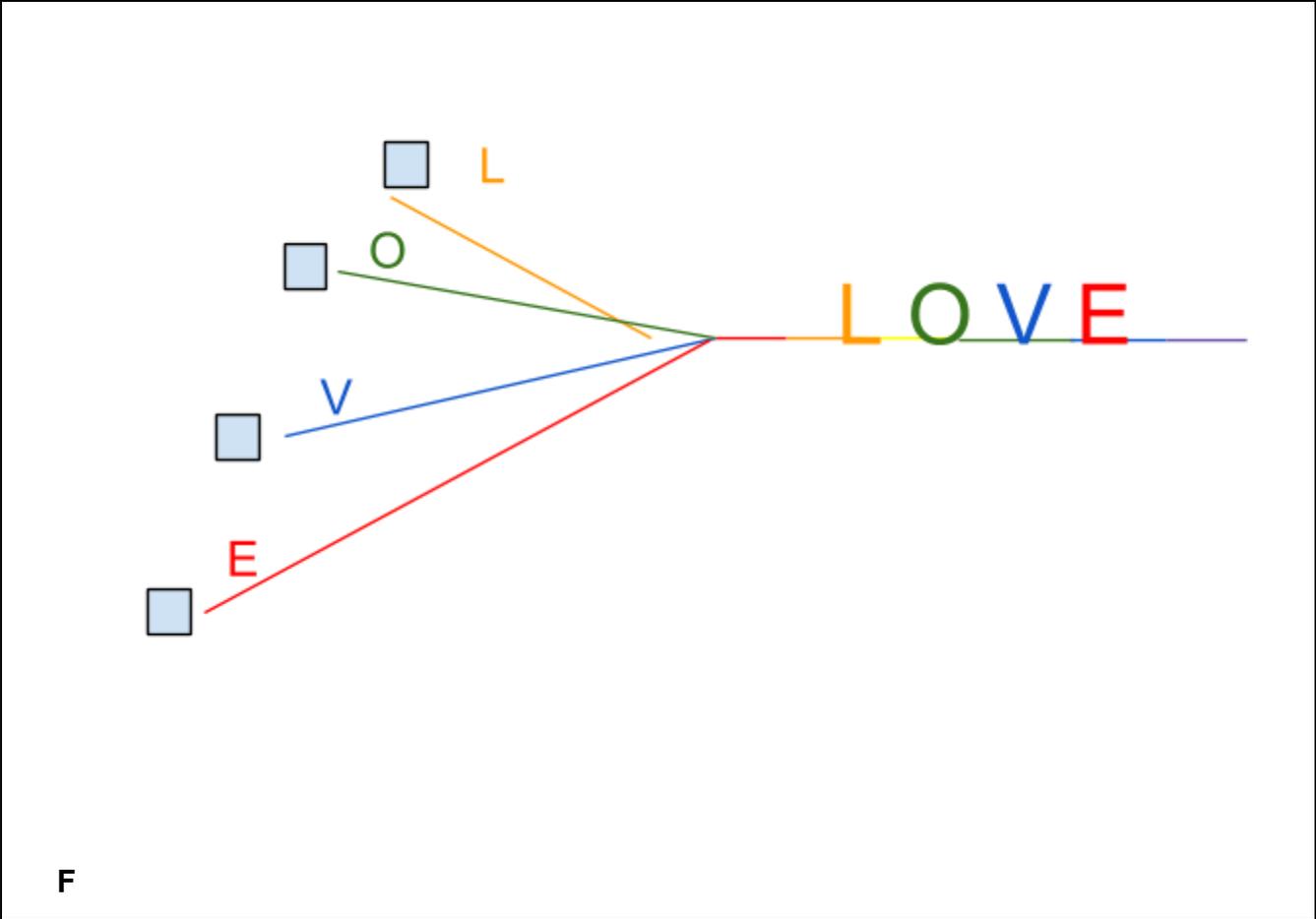
**GIVING  
JUSTICE**

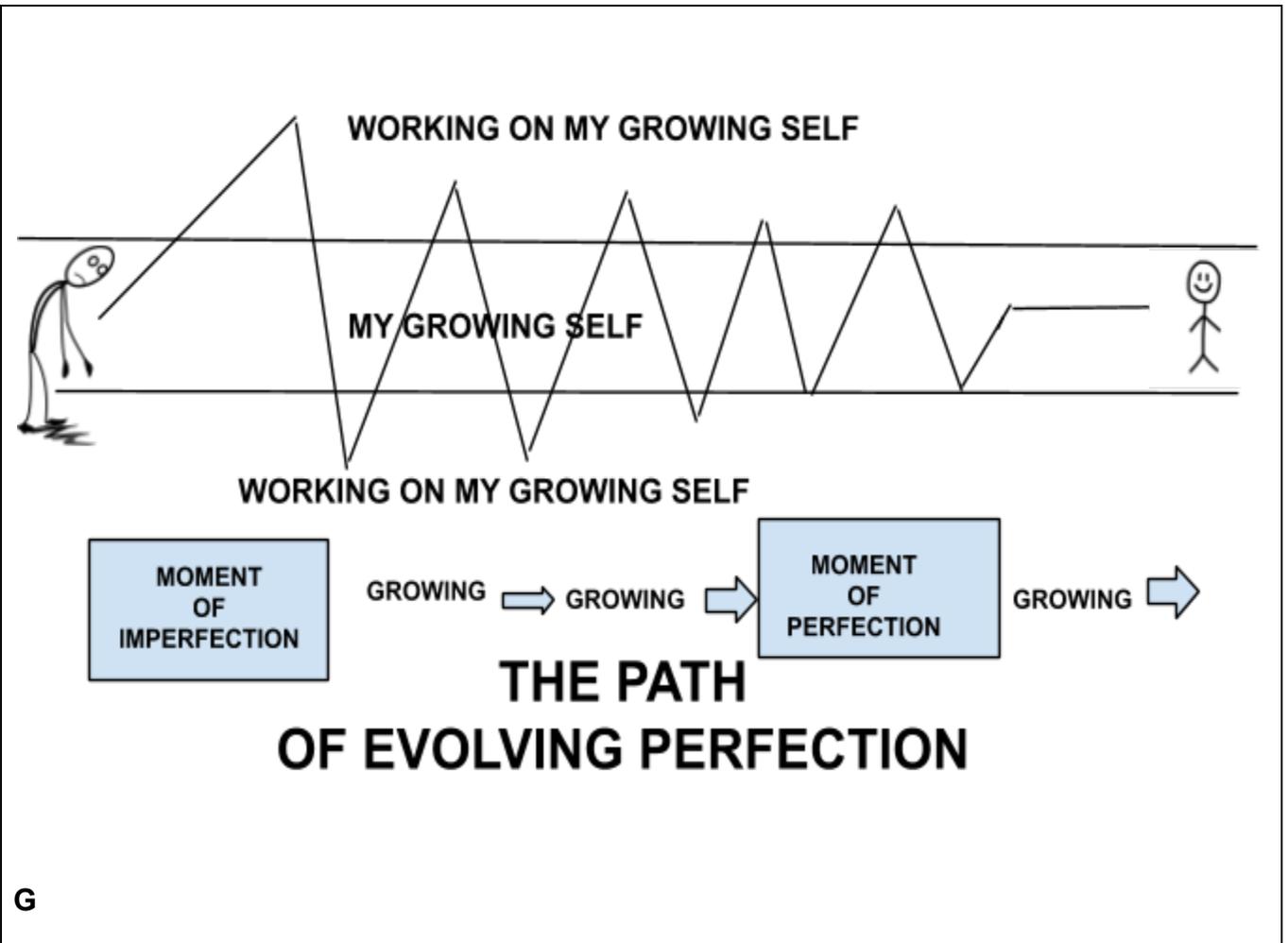


**D**



**E**







H

H

**SHARING**



I

I

**SELFISH**



J

**J ADVENTURESOME**



K

**K PRAYERFUL**



L

L

**DETERMINED**



M

M

**JEALOUS**



N

**FORGIVING**

N



O

**RESPONSIBLE**

O



P

P

**LAZY**



Q

Q

**APOLOGIZING**



R

R

**FRIEND**



S

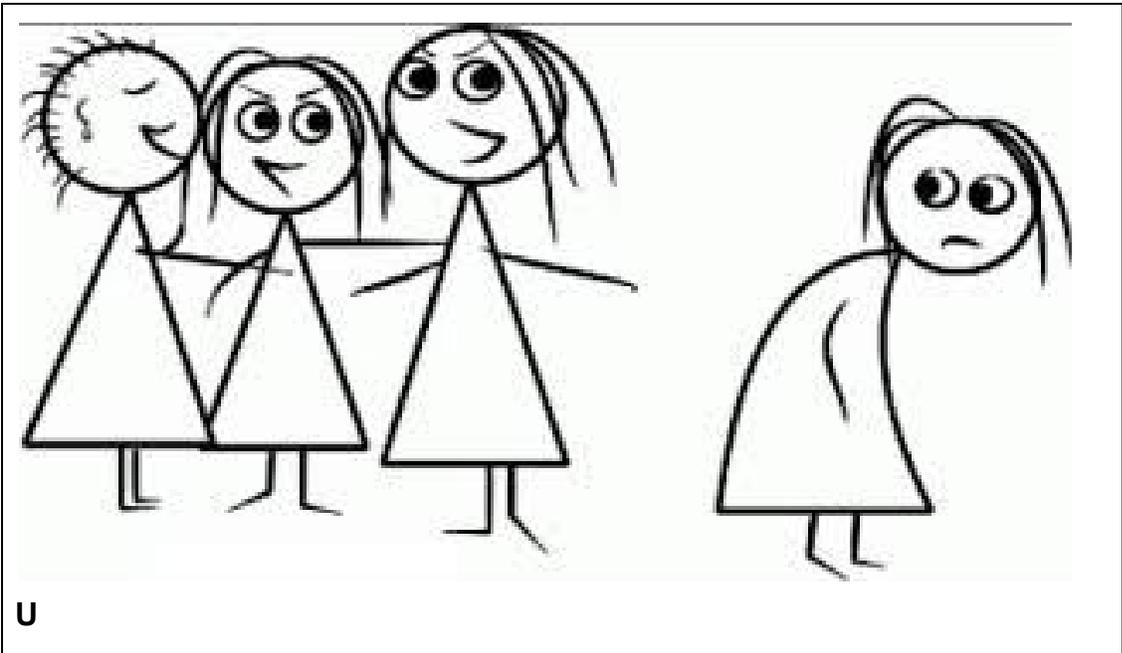
S

**PATIENT**



T

T **IMPATIENT**



U

U **EXCLUDING**



v

v

**UNIFYING**



w

w

**COMFORTING**

**MY GROWING SELF**

**MOMENTS OF PERFECTION**

**WORKING ON  
MY GROWING SELF**

**MOMENTS OF  
IMPERFECTION**

**WORKING ON  
MY GROWING SELF**

**MOMENTS OF  
IMPERFECTION**