

Virtue Workshop

Children, Youth and Adults Learning Together

Printable resources are included

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Diversity

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 Baha'i 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: We will be exploring the concept of diversity and how diversity can be compatible with the realization of the oneness of mankind.

It is impossible to understand human diversity unless we can answer this question:

Who are we? What does it mean to be human?

For the first time in human history, God has given us a Revelation that defines who we are and, just as important, who we are not. We begin with presenting the three conditions of existence as a starting point and a foundation for understanding diversity.

Facilitator asks: a participant to read this quotation in a loud voice:

Know that the degrees of existence are finite—the degrees of servitude, of prophethood, and of Divinity. -

-‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í Reference Library: *Some Answered Questions*: 62

Facilitator says: This quotation defines the diversity of all life. We know that we are not, and never will be a Buddha, a Christ, or a Muhammad. We will never become the intermediary between God and another person. That is not our job and never will be. Most importantly we will never become God. We are servants of God.

But within the condition of servitude there is endless diversity. Diversity is not intrinsically good or bad. It is morally neutral. There are diverse ways to help someone and there are diverse ways to hurt someone. Diversity does not automatically result in love and harmony.

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

The Purpose of diversity is to create unity, not uniformity.

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

“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, Bahá’í Reference Library: *Paris Talks*: 15

Facilitator says: Healthy diversity promotes the clash of ideas and not the clash of people. Knowing we are a part of a oneness means that we are not alone in this world. Knowing we are unique will increase our self-worth because what is unique is irreplaceable.

We are a part of a oneness where the ones are irreplaceable. Oneness does not mean sameness. The oneness of humanity does not mean that everyone is the same. In fact, we are all physically and spiritually unique. There are billions and billions of people and yet no two people have the same fingerprints. If we are physically unique that means we are also spiritually unique.

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

“the outward is the expression of the inward: The earthly realm is the mirror of the heavenly Kingdom, and the material world is in accordance with the spiritual world.

-‘Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'í Reference Library: *Some Answered Questions*: 81

Facilitator says: This means that the oneness of humanity consists of physically and spiritually unique beings. Therefore oneness and uniqueness are inseparable.

Uniqueness without oneness would result in unhealthy relationships consisting of isolated, lonely individuals with inflated egos.

Conversely, oneness without uniqueness would result in unhealthy relationships consisting of individuals who believe there is nothing special or irreplaceable about themselves. Individual human life becomes almost worthless. Unfortunately, we are seeing societies around the world where human life has very little value.

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

Real diversity is the combination of oneness and uniqueness.

Oneness + Uniqueness = Diversity = Healthy Relationships

Facilitator says: We are going to do an activity to show how diversity improves relationships.

Facilitator asks: a participant volunteer who enjoys jigsaw puzzles to come forward.

Facilitator places a 12 piece puzzle in front of volunteer and asks him or her to begin putting together the puzzle.

Participant begins putting together the puzzle.

Facilitator, after thirty seconds, says:

STOP!You had a choice between two puzzles. Why did you choose this puzzle?

Participant responds {typical response: I chose the multicolor side because it is the only side to put together.}

Facilitator: turns over one or two pieces of the puzzle to show the back side --- the unicolor side.

Facilitator says: This is the other puzzle. Why didn't you put this puzzle together?

Participant responds {typical response: It is the wrong side and it is boring to put together.}

Facilitator shares: Image A with participants:



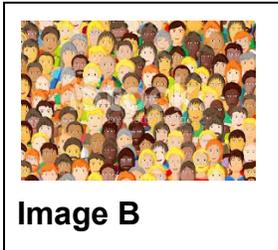
Facilitator says: Now let's each turn to someone next to us and discuss how the diversity in the puzzle is an important metaphor (example) for our own relationships with others.

Allow 1- 2 minutes

Facilitator asks: participants to share, with the whole group, what they have learned.

Allow 3-4 minutes for group discussion

Facilitator shares: Image B with participants



Facilitator says: Most people discover that the more diversity of colors, shapes and sizes the easier it is to connect the pieces in the puzzle of life. Diversity creates more meaningful relationships.

There is an even deeper meaning to the importance of diversity. We can look at connecting the different puzzle pieces in the same way that our spiritual qualities connect. Like how our kindness connects with the kindness of another person.

The result is that we see new facets of kindness that we never imagined were there.

Now let's each turn to someone different and discuss how the diversity in the puzzle pieces is an important metaphor (example) for diversity of spiritual qualities. You may have already shared this, but you may have additional insight.

Allow 1- 2 minutes

Facilitator asks: participants to share, with the whole group, what they have learned.

Facilitator's closing remarks: Everything that we think is timeless about diversity is an illusion. What is timeless and eternal about human beings is our diversity. It is how each of us in our own unique way reflect the attributes of God.

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 #2

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

Materials in Resource Section

Note to Facilitator:

Purpose of activity - Demonstrate the advantages of diversity by having groups of participants put together simple puzzles.

If there are not enough puzzles for all the participants a team of two-three may be selected to demonstrate activity.

Facilitator says: We will work in teams, first to complete the back side of the puzzle. Each team will have a puzzle to put together. You will notice that the puzzle pieces are mostly exactly the same except for the flat sided pieces around the sides of the puzzle. They will all fit together with a little extra wiggling of the pieces.

We will see how long it takes until all the puzzles are completed.

Facilitator: Divide participants into groups of two - three. Distribute bag of set of puzzle pieces to each group.

Facilitator says: Begin: Put together the back side of the puzzles.

Allow 3-4 minutes for completion of puzzles.

Facilitator says: Great work teams!
Now carefully turn over puzzle onto floor leaving puzzle put together.

Participants turn over puzzles

Facilitator says: Look at your puzzles. What is wrong?

Participants respond {likely response: Nothing matches. It doesn't make sense}

Facilitator says: Right - nothing matches. We might not even recognize what the picture is supposed to be.

But you didn't have to work that hard. You didn't need to think too much about how you were putting together the back side of the puzzle. You realized that most of the pieces were the same and fit together in every way.

Now we will take apart the puzzle carefully and put it together again on the picture side.

Allow 3-4 minutes for completion of puzzle (picture side)

Facilitator says: What do we see now?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: The puzzle is complete! It was a bit harder to put this side of the puzzle together. You had to work harder to find all the spots where the puzzle pieces connect.

How is this like our friendships? Turn and talk with someone next to you.

Allow 2 minutes

Facilitator asks: participants to share, with the whole group, what they have learned.

Allow 2-3 minutes

Facilitator says: We need to connect in more than one way with each other and not only in ways we are comfortable with. Consultation forces the individual outside of their comfort zone. If we believe the purpose of the consultation is important we will be willing to expand our hearts and minds. We may have to work harder, but wonderful and unlikely friendships will be forged. The connections made will form a new social reality. In a way, it is like slowly putting together the pieces of a puzzle.

Facilitator shares Image C with participants:



Facilitator says: It is easier to see how each piece fits into the front side of the puzzle because of the differences in the color and shape of the puzzle pieces give us clues.

Facilitator shares image D with participants



Facilitator says: It's okay to connect with others that are a lot like you -- that you have a lot in common with. Maybe they even look like you.

Facilitator shares image E with participants



Facilitator says: And it is also okay and exciting to connect with new others who are very different from you. It can be a life-changing moment when someone shows you the world in a way that you never imagined.

Sometimes we are afraid of diversity because part of us wants everyone to look and act the same as us. This is our lower nature -- our animal nature. It is afraid of differences or changes. If we just think with our animal nature, we will only make friends with people who look like us, like to eat the same foods as us and live in the same types of neighborhoods as we do.

Our higher nature -- our spiritual nature -- craves diversity. When we think with our spiritual nature, we look to spend time with people who are different from us.

We connect like puzzle pieces. We make strong friendships.

We learn new and interesting ways of doing things from different friends.

We can learn to enjoy new kinds of food; wear new styles of clothing; even learn about new cultures and languages.

Of course, what other people like to do is not going to be exactly what we like to do. We learn to participate in what our friends like to do and they learn to participate in what we like to do. We lose our fear of diversity when we find out what we have in common with other people. This is true diversity.

Facilitator: demonstrates putting together 2-3 puzzle pieces to show where the diversity of colors connect.

Facilitator says: The different colored pieces give us clues in putting together a puzzle. The differences in people give us clues on how to connect with them.

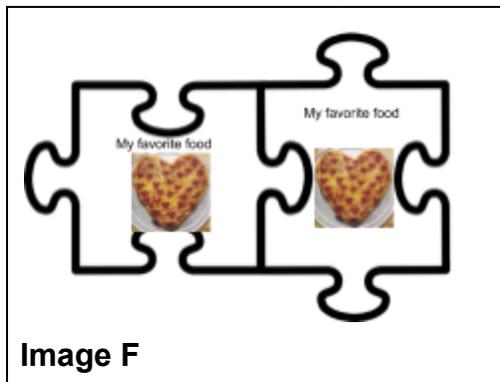
Facilitator asks: How many of us like to eat pizza?

Participants - most will respond that they like pizza

Facilitator asks: How many people like sausage pizza?

Participants - less will respond in favor of sausage pizza

Facilitator shares image F with participants



Facilitator closing remarks:

We learn that we have a lot in common, but not everything in common.

We both love pizza. My friend and I could both go to a restaurant and order pizza. We share one pizza I get peppers on my half and my friend gets olives on their half. I have never had peppers on a pizza before. I try a piece of his pizza and he tries a piece of mine. We have both learned a new way of enjoying pizza. This is diversity. Diversity means sharing what is different in each other. We connect like puzzle pieces.

Each friend can teach me different ways to love God -- new ways I have never seen before. We have used pizza as a simple example, because there can be so many

different kinds of pizza. The different pizza toppings represent infinite combinations. In a similar manner we interact with people of different races, religions, nationalities, political persuasions. This doesn't mean that we will agree with everything that someone else believes in. The spirit of diversity means that we will respect the differences in those around us. A healthy expression of diversity is seeking to interact with and learn from others. That is why each friend is valuable to me. Each friend teaches me something I can't learn from anyone else. I learn new ways to connect with each friend. We can remain friends for life -- forever.

We all connect as servants of God, but we all find unique ways to serve. Our eyes may be the same, but what we see is different. There are so many ways we can each see the beauty in everyone and in everything. No matter how different we all are we can always find ways to connect if we try hard enough.

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

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

Materials in Resource Section

Note to Facilitator:

Purpose of activity - Demonstrate the advantages of diversity by having groups of participants put together simple puzzles.

If there are not enough puzzles for all the participants a team of two-three may be selected to demonstrate activity.

Facilitator says: We will work in teams. Each team will have a puzzle to put together.

Facilitator: Divide participants into groups of two - three. Distribute bag of set of puzzle pieces to each group.

Facilitator says: Okay teams. start putting the puzzles together.

Participant teams begin putting together the puzzles.

Facilitator: after thirty seconds, says: Everyone STOP!You had a choice between two puzzles. Why are you choosing to put together the colorful side of the puzzle?

Participants respond {typical response: There is only one puzzle - the colorful side.}

Facilitator: turns over a few pieces of a team's puzzle to show the unicolor side.

Facilitator says: This is the other puzzle. Why aren't you putting this side of the puzzle together?

Participant responds {typical response: It is the wrong side and it is boring to put together.}

Facilitator shares image A of unicolor puzzle with participants



Facilitator says: Now each team should turn over all their puzzle pieces to the back side.

We are going to first complete the back side of the puzzle.

We will notice that the puzzle pieces are mostly exactly the same except for the flat sided pieces around the sides of the puzzle. They will all fit together with a little extra wiggling of the pieces.

We will see how long it takes until all the puzzles are completed.

Begin: Put together the back side of the puzzles.

Allow 3-4 minutes for completion of puzzles.

Facilitator says: Great work teams!

Now we will very carefully turn over our puzzles onto floor leaving puzzle put together so we can see the picture side.

Participants turn over puzzles

Facilitator says:

Look at your puzzles. What is wrong?

Participants respond {likely response: Nothing matches. It doesn't make sense}

Facilitator says:

Right - nothing matches. That's right - the back side of the puzzle it doesn't tell a story or create a picture. We might not even recognize what the picture is supposed to be. But we didn't have to work that hard.

We didn't need to think too much about how we were putting together the back side of the puzzle. we realized that most of the pieces were the same and fit together in every way. Now we will take apart the puzzle carefully and put it together again on the picture side.

Allow 3-4 minutes for completion of puzzles.

Facilitator says: What do we see now?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: The puzzles are complete! We had to think harder to find all the spots where the puzzle pieces connect.

That is like our friendships.

We don't just want to connect in one way. One thing we are both interested in--- we both like soccer or we both like pizza. We just don't want to connect with people who are our own age and look like us.

We will have friendships that we have to think harder about to make them work. Just like we may have to think more and work harder to put together the picture side of the puzzle.

There are so many ways we connect with our friends. We have to always keep looking for new ways to connect. For example We all like to go to school. We all love our families. We all love and serve God.

We can have a complete friendship like we have a complete puzzle if respect our friends.

Of course we won't connect in every single way. One friend may like to go fishing and one may not have any interest in fishing.

Is it okay if we don't all like exactly the same foods or listen to the same music or wear the same clothes?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: We have to respect our friends' interests and what they like to do.

Can we hurt our friends if we make fun of how they are different from us?

Participants respond.

Facilitator says: What if we say to them that we think their favorite book is terrible or if we say what they bring for lunch looks yucky?

Participants respond

Facilitator shares image D with participants



Facilitator says: It's okay to connect with friends that are a lot like you -- That you have a lot in common with. Maybe they even look like you.
But why is it harder to put together a puzzle like this one?

Participants respond {likely response is that there are only two colors in puzzle}

Facilitator shares image E with participants



Facilitator says: And it is also okay and exciting to connect with new friends who are very different from you.
Why is it easier to put together a puzzle like this one?

Participants respond

Facilitator: demonstrates putting together 2-3 puzzle pieces to show where the diversity of colors connect.

Facilitator says:

The different colored pieces give us clues in putting together a puzzle.

The differences in people give us clues on how to connect with them. For example: we can see how our love of music connects with another person's love of music. Or how what we like to eat connects with another person's favorite foods.

The differences in people is called diversity.

Diversity helps us create friendships and keep them going strong. Sometimes we are scared of other people when they are different from us. We are scared until we find out what we both have in common. When we are brave and talk to different people and make new friends, we find out that we both like some of the same clothes, sports, foods, games... Of course, what other people like to do is not going to be exactly what we like to do. We learn to join in what our friends like to do and they learn to join in what we like to do. This is Diversity.

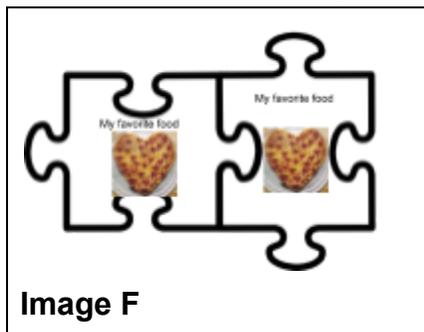
Facilitator asks: How many of us like to eat pizza?

Participants - most will respond that they like pizza

Facilitator asks: How many people like sausage pizza?

Participants - less will respond in favor of sausage pizza

Facilitator shares image F with participants



Facilitator closing remarks:

We learn that we have a lot in common, but not everything in common. We both love pizza. My friend and I could both go to a restaurant and order pizza. We share one pizza. I get peppers on my half and my friend gets olives on their half. I have never had peppers on a pizza before. I try a piece of his pizza and he tries a piece of mine. We have both learned a new way of enjoying pizza. This is diversity. Diversity means sharing what is different in each other. We connect like puzzle pieces. We make strong friendships. We can learn new and interesting ways of doing things from different friends. We can learn new games, new kinds of food; even new languages.

Each friend can teach me different ways to love God -- new ways I have never seen before. That is why each friend is so important and valuable to me. Each friend teaches me something I can't learn from anyone else. I learn new ways to connect with each friend. We can be friends for life - forever.

Our eyes may be the same, but what we see is different. There are so many ways we can each see the beauty in everyone and in everything. No matter how different we all are we can always find ways to connect with each other and with God if we try hard enough.

Resources:

Adult Activity 1

Materials:

One 12-16 piece multicolored puzzle

Images **A-B**

Adult Activity 2

Materials:

Simple 12-16 piece colorful puzzles - If possible, enough puzzles for each group of two - three participants. It is essential that all pieces of each individual puzzle, except for the edge pieces, be identical in shape

Images **C-F**

Children's Activity

Materials:

Simple 12-16 piece colorful puzzles - If possible, enough puzzles for each group of two - three participants

It is essential that all pieces of each individual puzzle, except for the edge pieces, be identical in shape

Images **A,D,E,F**

Images:



Image A



Image B

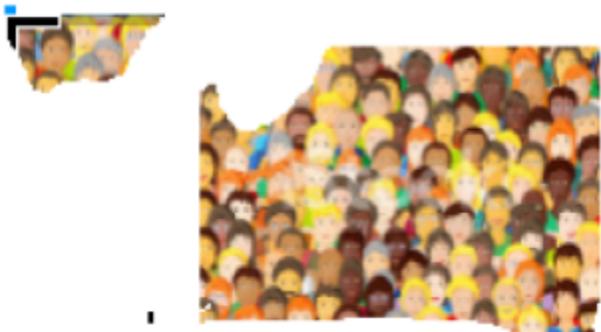


Image C



Image D



Image E

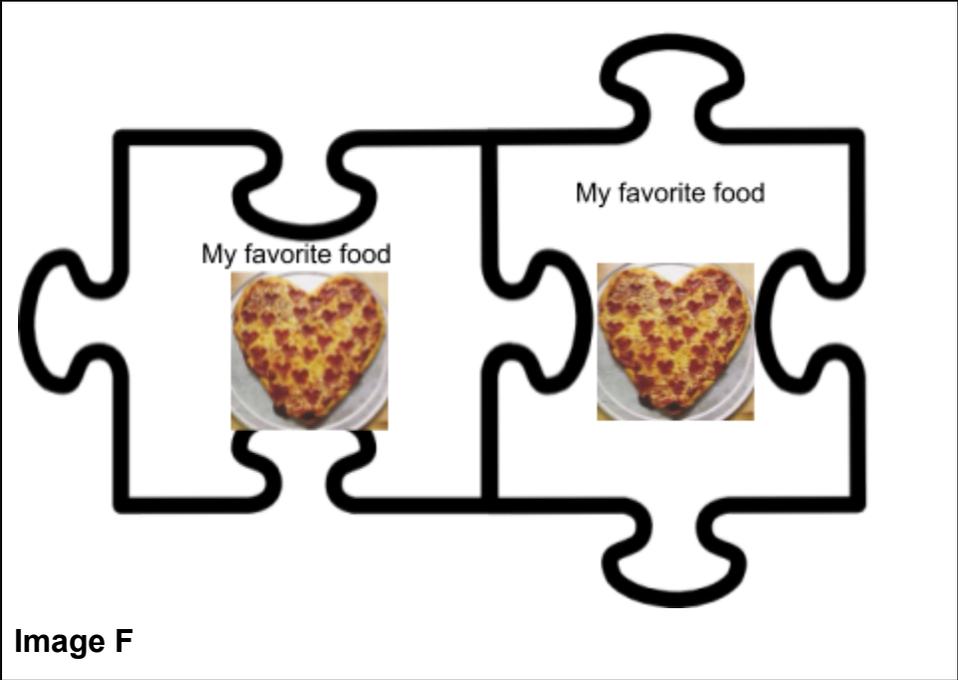


Image F