

Virtue Workshop

Children, Youth and Adults Learning Together

Printable resources are included

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Foundation of Self-Esteem

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.

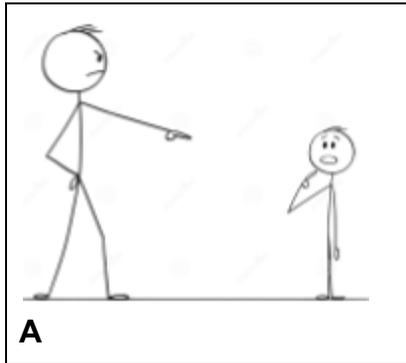
Activities for children are approximately twenty minutes to an hour in length.

Adult Activity 1

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

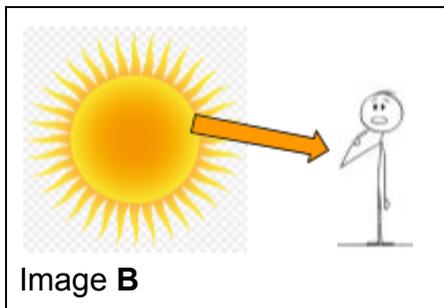
Materials in Resource Section

Facilitator shares Image A with participants:



Facilitator says: From the very beginning of our lives, people, even well-meaning friends and family, will say and do things that will damage our self-esteem. We can be conditioned to believe that we are someone who has been created empty, possessing nothing of value. We grow up believing that we are and will always be less than everyone else. We will try to fill the emptiness within with harmful thoughts, substances and activities.

Facilitator shares Image B with participants:



Facilitator says: In the *Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*, we are explicitly told that we have been endowed with an assortment of astounding gifts from God. These gifts are given to all, irrespective of race, nationality or religion. Knowing this truth, allows the individual to understand the oneness of mankind.

Facilitator shares Image C with participants:

“Noble have I created thee...” Hidden Word -Arabic #22.

“Within thee have I placed the essence of My light”.

Hidden Word -Arabic #12

**“Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being ...
out of the clay of love I moulded thee ...”**

Hidden Word -Arabic #13

**“Thou art My light and My light shall never be
extinguished...Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth
not...Thou art My robe and My robe shall never be
outworn...”** Hidden Word -Arabic # 14

“I have breathed within thee a breath of My own Spirit.”

Hidden Word -Arabic # 19

**“therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine
image”** Hidden Word - Arabic #3

**“Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy
spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My
manifestation.”** Hidden Word - Arabic # 59

- Bahá'í Reference Library: *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*

C

Facilitator asks participants in turn: to read the phrases on the list (**Image C**)

Participants respond by reading phrases

Facilitator says: It should be impossible to look at ourselves the same way after being told by a Prophet of God that we are “noble”, filled with the “essence of “My light” “My knowledge” and “My love”.

The key word in this collection of *Hidden Words* is: “**My**” -- meaning **God**.

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

What we are made of came from God. This is the foundation of our true self-esteem. This is who we are.

The source of our self-esteem is God. The source is not ourselves. The source of our self-esteem are the unique virtues that God has given each of us. This means that the gifts that I have are different from the gifts that God has given anyone else. Our God-given self-esteem can never be destroyed. However, our self-esteem can be obscured by our behavior choices.

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

The oneness of mankind means that God has His attributes inside everyone on the planet. He has placed His light, His knowledge, His love, His nobility, inside of all of us. If we disrespect ourselves and obscure our self-esteem or do the same to someone else, we have disrespected the attributes of God and God Himself.

Facilitator says: God continually tries to build up our self-esteem. Let’s close with what Bahá’u’lláh thinks about us:

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

Ye are the stars of the heaven of understanding, the breeze that stirreth at the break of day, the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men, the letters inscribed upon His sacred scroll.

- Bahá’í Reference Library: *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*: XCVI

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

SERVANT OF GOD – NESTING DOLLS ACTIVITY

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

Materials and set up in Resource Section

Facilitator: place nesting doll set (closed) and identity cards on table

Image **D** for facilitator reference or share with participants:



Facilitator says: How is everyone in the world alike? How are we all the same?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: In what ways are we all different?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: We all have many layers of identity, such as our country of birth and gender. These are our outer identities. We also have inner identities, such as our religious beliefs and our unique virtues. Our innermost identity is that of knowing we are each a servant of God. For our activity, we have selected a particular set and order of outer and inner identities. Different cultures, even within one country, depending on their own value system, may order these identities differently.

We are going to separate and organize these nesting dolls in order of size. The larger dolls represent our common outer identities. The smaller dolls represent our own increasingly special identities.

Facilitator selects a participant to stand beside the table and says: Open the largest nesting doll and set it on the table.

Participant responds

Facilitator says: Please locate the identity card #1, the outermost identity and then read the card and place it in front of the largest nesting doll.

Participant responds

Facilitator says: We now have our outermost identity revealed. Let's continue.

Facilitator asks 9 other participants in turn to repeat the process of opening increasingly smaller nesting dolls, setting them on a table in order and labeling them with corresponding numbered identity cards.

***Note to Facilitator:** Finally, a line of 10 nesting dolls with labels, ranging largest to smallest, will be completed.

Facilitator says: What things do we know that we have in common with other people here in our group? In what ways are we alike?

Participants respond

In what ways are we each different from each other?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: What have we learned about ourselves? What about us is temporary? What about us lasts forever?

Participants respond - Allow 2-3 minutes

Facilitator share image E with participants:

I AM A PERSON	MY JOB (SCHOOL OR WORK)
I AM MALE/FEMALE (BOY/GIRL)	MY NAME
MY SKIN COLOR	MY RELIGION
MY COUNTRY OF BIRTH	MY VIRTUES (GOOD QUALITIES)
THE CITY I LIVE IN	I AM A SPECIAL SERVANT OF GOD

E

Facilitator says: We are each now going to take 5 minutes to do this process on our own. We are going to rank the identities according to our own personal value system. What we choose as our number 1 will remain the outermost common identity and what we choose for number 10 will remain the innermost unique identity.

We can choose these 10 identities we have already worked with or we can choose some or all of our own, that that we value instead.

On a piece of paper, please list your chosen identities from 1 to 10.

Facilitator or participant distribute a piece of paper and pen/pencil to each participant

Participants respond - Allow 5 minutes

Facilitator says: Now we will turn to a person nearby and share with each other, our reasons for our own rankings.

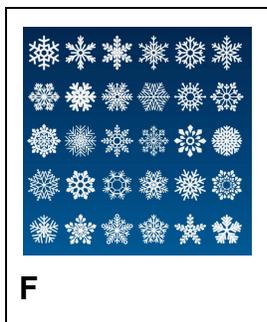
Participants respond - Allow 5 minutes

Facilitator says: We all have some things about us that we have in common with everyone in the world.

We also may have some things in common with a group of people in the world. For example, we may be one of all the women or one of all the men in the world. Our nationality may be the same. We all live on the same planet, Earth.

We also have many things about us that are unique.

Facilitator shares Image F with participants:



Facilitator says: Are there any two snowflakes that are identical?

Participants respond - no

Facilitator shares Image G with participants:



Facilitator says: Do any two people in the world have the exact same fingerprint?

Participants respond - no

Facilitator closing comments: Just as each snowflake and each fingerprint are unique, so we are unique. The most special and important part of us is not something we can see with our physical eyes. It is not something we can see on the outside. What is most special in each of us is what is inside of our hearts. What is most special in each of us is the way that we choose to give and receive love, kindness, forgiveness, and all our other good qualities with our family and friends and coworkers.

No one else on the earth can ever express their good qualities in the exact same way that we can. Everyone is different. Everyone is unique. Everyone is a special servant of God. We all show love. But not exactly like our neighbor, our husband or wife, our brother or sister, our coworkers or our parents.

How we serve each other and all of mankind is our spiritual fingerprint. It is the imprint we each leave on the world.

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

SERVANT OF GOD – NESTING DOLLS ACTIVITY

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

Materials and set up in Resource Section

Facilitator: place nesting doll set (closed) and identity cards on table
Image **D** for facilitator reference or share with participants



Facilitator says: In some ways we are all alike. Can we think of ways in which everyone in the world is alike -- Some things we all have in common?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: Yes, one way that we are all alike is that we are all people. What are some things that all people need to do?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: In what ways are we all different from each other?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: We are going to separate and organize these nesting dolls in order of size from the largest to the smallest one. The larger dolls are examples of what we have

in common -- how we are all similar. The smaller ones are examples of how we are different -- how we are unique and special.

Facilitator selects a participant to stand beside the table in front of the group and says: Open the largest nesting doll and set it on the table in front of participants.

Participant responds

Facilitator gives this participant: the identity card labeled #1 "I am a person".

Facilitator says: Please read the label and place it in front of the largest nesting doll.

Participant responds

Facilitator says: We now have our identity of being a person. We have this in common with everyone in the world -- we are all people.

Let's continue to set up the rest of the dolls in a line from largest to smallest.

Facilitator asks 9 other participants in turn to repeat the process of opening increasingly smaller nesting dolls, verbally labeling them with identities and placing them on table.

***Note to Facilitator:** Finally, a line of nesting dolls with labels, ranging largest to smallest, will be completed.

Facilitator says: We have seen that we all have some things about us that we have in common with everyone in the world.

We also may have some things in common with a group of people in the world. For example, we may be one of all the girls or one of all the boys in the world.

We may be part of all the people who were born in one country.

What things do we know that we have in common with other people here in our group?
In what ways are we alike?

Participants respond

In what ways are we each different from each other?

Participants respond

Facilitator shares Image H with participants:



Facilitator says: The most special and important part of us is not something we can hold in our hands for a short period of time, like a snowball. It is something that we can hold onto forever, like the hands of our parents.

The most special thing about each of us, is the way that we choose to give and receive love, kindness, forgiveness and all our other good qualities with our family and friends. No one else on the earth can ever share their good qualities in the exact same way that we can. Everyone is different. Everyone is unique. Every one of us is a special servant of God. We all show love. But how we show love is not exactly like anyone else.

Do we show love exactly like our neighbors show love?

Participants respond - no

Do we show love exactly like the other kids in our school?

Participants respond - no

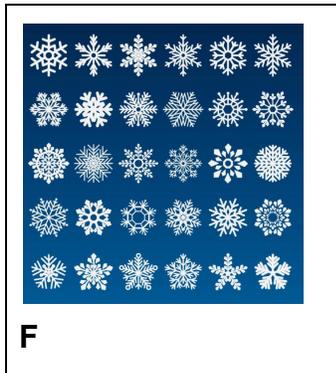
Do we show love exactly like our parents show love?

Participants respond - no

Do we show love exactly like our brother or sister?

Participants respond - no

Facilitator shares Image **F** with participants:



Facilitator says: Are there any two snowflakes that are identical?

Participants respond - no

Facilitator shares Image **G** with participants:



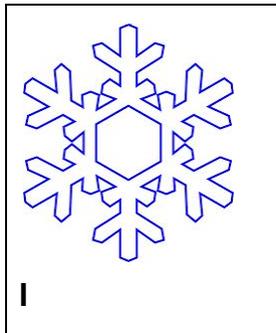
Facilitator says: Do any two people in the world have the exact same fingerprint?

Participants respond - no

Facilitator says: God took special care about how He made each of us. He wanted to make us different than anyone else who has ever lived before. He made us each a special servant of God. He made us each unique like a snowflake or a fingerprint. God did not make any two people exactly the same.

Facilitator says: We are going to make two souvenirs of our activity to take home.

Facilitator shares Image I with participants:



Facilitator says: We have seen that there are no two snowflakes in the world that are exactly alike. We are going to make snowflake pictures to remind us that no two people are exactly the same. We are going to color a picture of a snowflake in our own special way. We can use any colors we want to. We can draw a picture of ourselves in the center if we want. We can draw just our face or draw our whole body. Or we can just color the center in. Each of our snowflake pictures will be unique. None will be the same as anyone else's.

Participants complete activity

Facilitator says: Now let's all share with the group what our own snowflakes look like.

Participants respond

Now we are going to make our second souvenir to take home with us.

Facilitator shares Image J with participants:



Facilitator says: Each person will be given a card with a picture of the front of a nesting doll on it. There is a paper label on the back of each card. We will each place a finger

on the ink pad. Then we will make our fingerprint on the paper label on the back of the nesting doll picture. This will be our symbol to take away with us that we are each a unique, special servant of God.

Participants complete activity

Facilitator: and/or older participants may help younger ones complete the activity. Use wet paper towels to clean ink off participants' fingers.

Note to Facilitator: Expanded activities:

1. Depending on the age of participants, each participant may be given the same set of labeled cards, but this time, unnumbered, and directed to arrange them from outer common identities to innermost identity according to his or her own personal value system.
2. Participants may be directed to form pairs and share with each other their reasons for their own rankings.

Children's Activity # 2

Facilitator says: We are going to be creating something with triangles. First will need to make our own special triangle. We will do this by putting our fingerprint on the tip of the narrow part. We can use any finger we want. Once we have added our fingerprint, we will put our triangles in front of us and let the ink dry.

Facilitator assists participants by holding an ink pad and then providing a wet paper towel for cleaning ink off finger.

Facilitator says: While we are letting our fingerprints dry, we are going to do an activity in which we share information about ourselves. First we will make a group list of some of our favorite things and some of the things we like to do. Things on this list will be things that we will have in common with many people
What are some of these things?

Facilitator may prompt participants by suggesting categories.

Facilitator or participant writes list on left side of poster board or whiteboard as participants respond

- hobbies
- sports
- musical instruments, dance
- favorite foods
- favorite colors
- etc.

Facilitator says: We have created a list of mostly outer activities. Now we create a second list next to the first one. On this list we will include some more inner positive characteristics about ourselves. We can include some of our special spiritual qualities -- adjectives that describe us -- "I am very _____". We can include special acts of service-- what we like to do to help our friends and family and other people. This inner part of the triangle will represent our more unique individual selves.

Facilitator or participant writes list on left side of poster board or whiteboard as participants respond

Facilitator says: Now we are going to add this information to our triangles. On the outermost part of our triangle, we will add information like our hobbies, favorite colors, sports, food, etc.

In the inner part of the triangle we will add our information about our spiritual qualities, acts of service, etc. You may add drawings too if you like. We will work quietly on our own and share with the group later.

Participants respond - Allow approximately 10 - 15 minutes

Facilitator says: Who would like to share what they have with the group? Start with the outer level of more general information, things that many people would have in common and then share the inner level of more personal information that describes the unique you.

Participants respond

Facilitator says: We have shared some things we have in common with many people in the world and some things that are more just about us as individual people. Thinking about this, at what level can we make really deep and lasting friendships? At which level does God want us to make friends with other people? Why do you think that is?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: That's right. It is at the inner level where we are attracted to the spiritual qualities of others. God wants us to see past the basic physical level of making friendships just because we both like to eat pizza or like to play the guitar. He wants us to see His spiritual qualities reflected in other people around us. We would seek to make friends with people because we like their spiritual qualities and because by spending time with each other, we can learn more about and grow closer to God.

Who has any more ideas about this to share?

Participants respond

Facilitator closing comments: We will connect our triangles together to make circles -- like slices of pizza.(depending on the number of participants, blank triangles may be added to form whole pizzas).

We will see that our fingerprints will all meet at the center. What do we think this is a symbol of?

Participants respond

Facilitator says: That is right. The tip where all the fingerprints meet is the point of our individual uniqueness and where the deepest friendships are possible. It is where we experience and appreciate the uniqueness of others.

Participants attach the triangles to make whole circles.

Resources:

Adult Activity #1

Materials:

Images A,B,C

Adult Activity #2

Materials:

Table

Set of nesting dolls (10 dolls)

Identity labels for nesting dolls (numbered)

Identity labels for nesting dolls (unnumbered)

Blank identity labels

Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

Images D,E,F,

Set Up: place nesting doll set (closed) on table

Children's Activity # 1

Materials:

Table

Set of nesting dolls (10 dolls)

Non-toxic washable Ink pad

Wet paper towels

Identity labels for nesting dolls (numbered)

Identity labels for nesting dolls (unnumbered)

Images D,E,F,G,H,I,J

Snowflake image printed on thick paper or glued onto cardboard - 1 for each participant

Small image of nesting doll: printed on thick paper or glued onto cardboard - 1 for each

participant - Attach blank label to back of each image of nesting doll (see Image J).

Set Up: place nesting doll set (closed) on table

Alternately: If nesting dolls are not available, cardstock cylinders, graduated in size, may be made and used:



Children's Activity # 2

Materials:

White board or poster board

Markers

Triangles (shaped like pizza slices) cut out of cardstock or cardboard - enough for one per participant. Six triangles will be needed to form each complete circle. Be sure to cut enough triangles to make all whole circles, even if there are some blank triangles, beyond the number of participants.

Colorful markers, pens, etc.

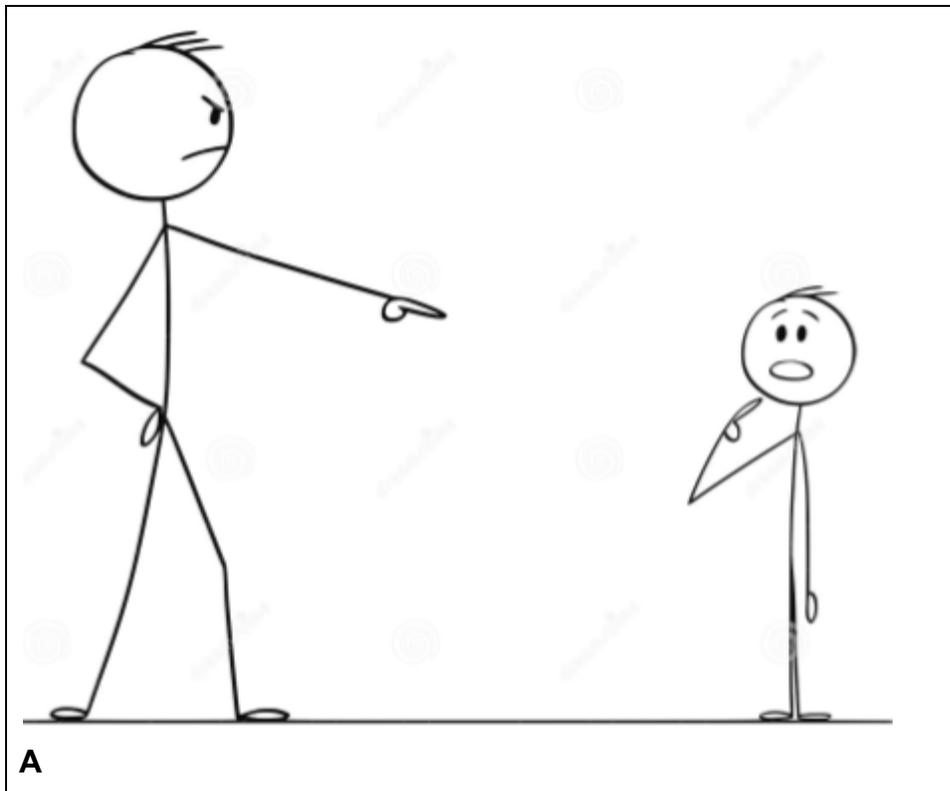
Non-toxic washable ink pad

Wet paper towels

Tape

May also have carpenter's tape to adhere completed circles to a wall.

Images:



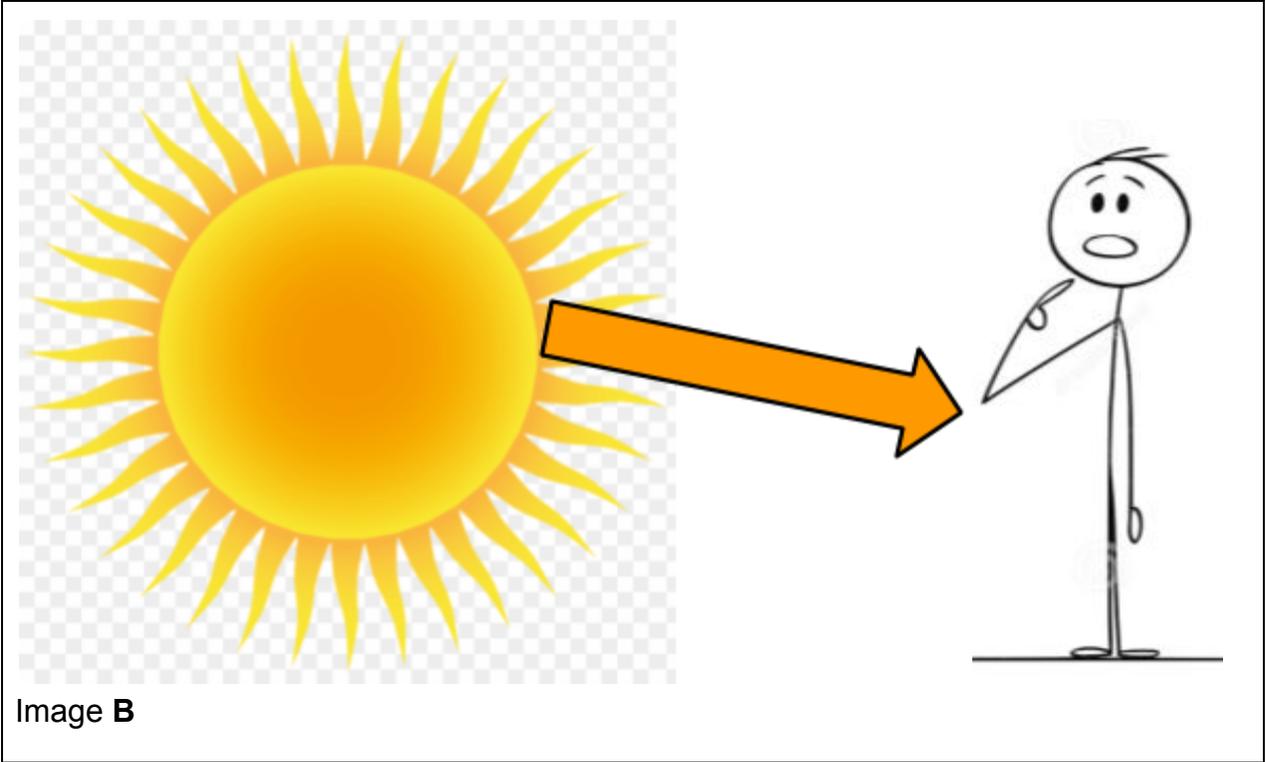


Image B

“Noble have I created thee...” Hidden Word -Arabic #22.

“Within thee have I placed the essence of My light”.

Hidden Word -Arabic #12

**“Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being ...
out of the clay of love I moulded thee ...”**

Hidden Word -Arabic #13

**“Thou art My light and My light shall never be
extinguished...Thou art My glory and My glory fadeth
not...Thou art My robe and My robe shall never be
outworn...”** Hidden Word -Arabic # 14

“I have breathed within thee a breath of My own Spirit.”

Hidden Word -Arabic # 19

**“therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine
image”** Hidden Word - Arabic #3

**“Thy heart is My home; sanctify it for My descent. Thy
spirit is My place of revelation; cleanse it for My
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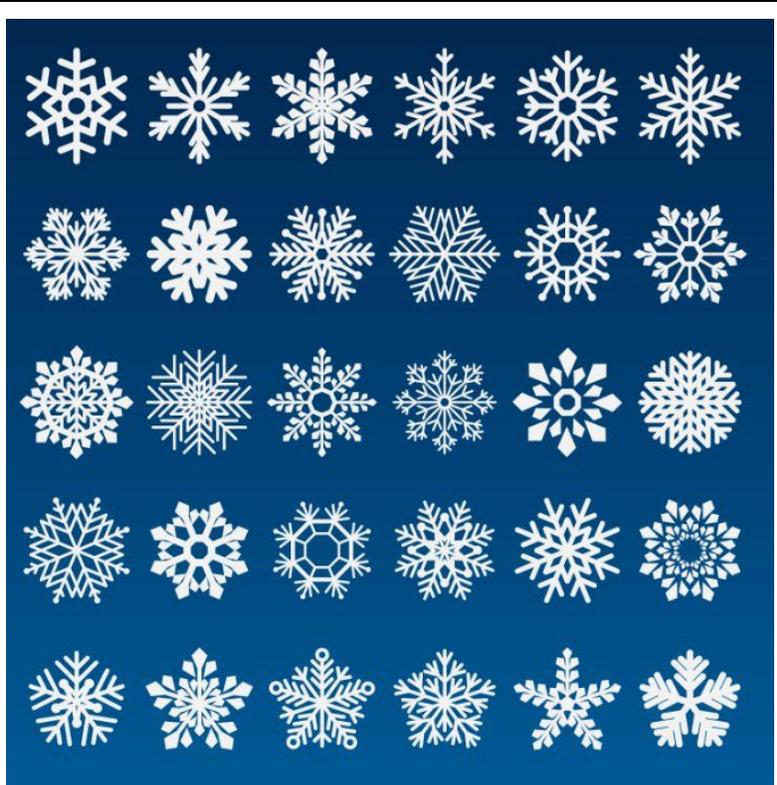
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C



D

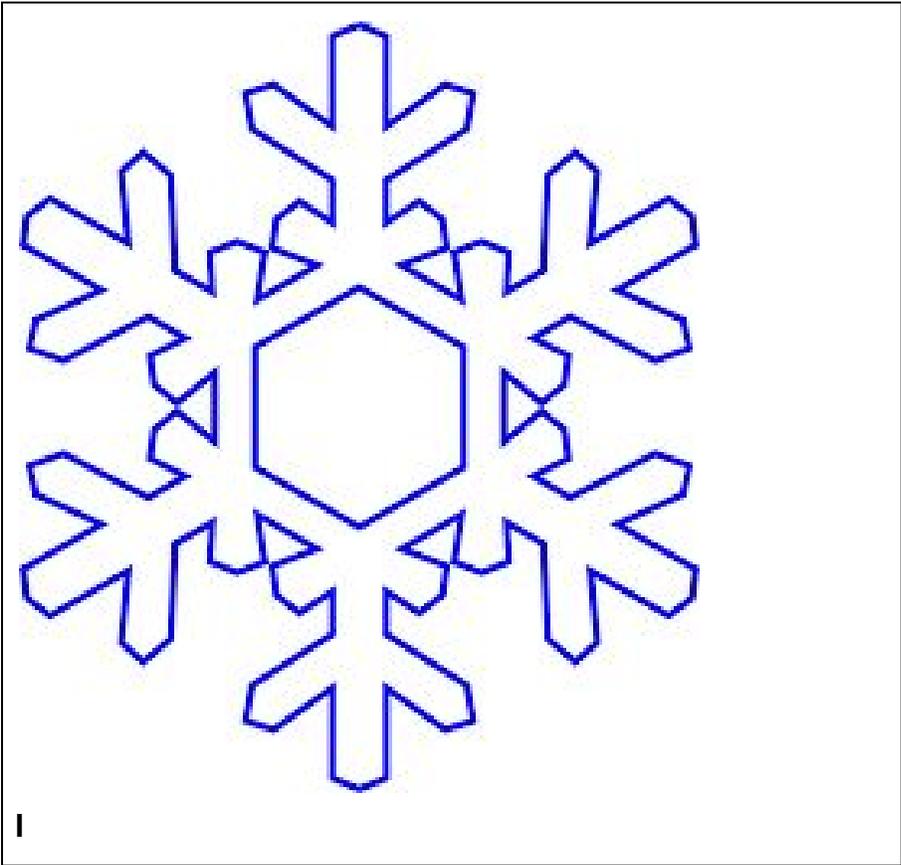
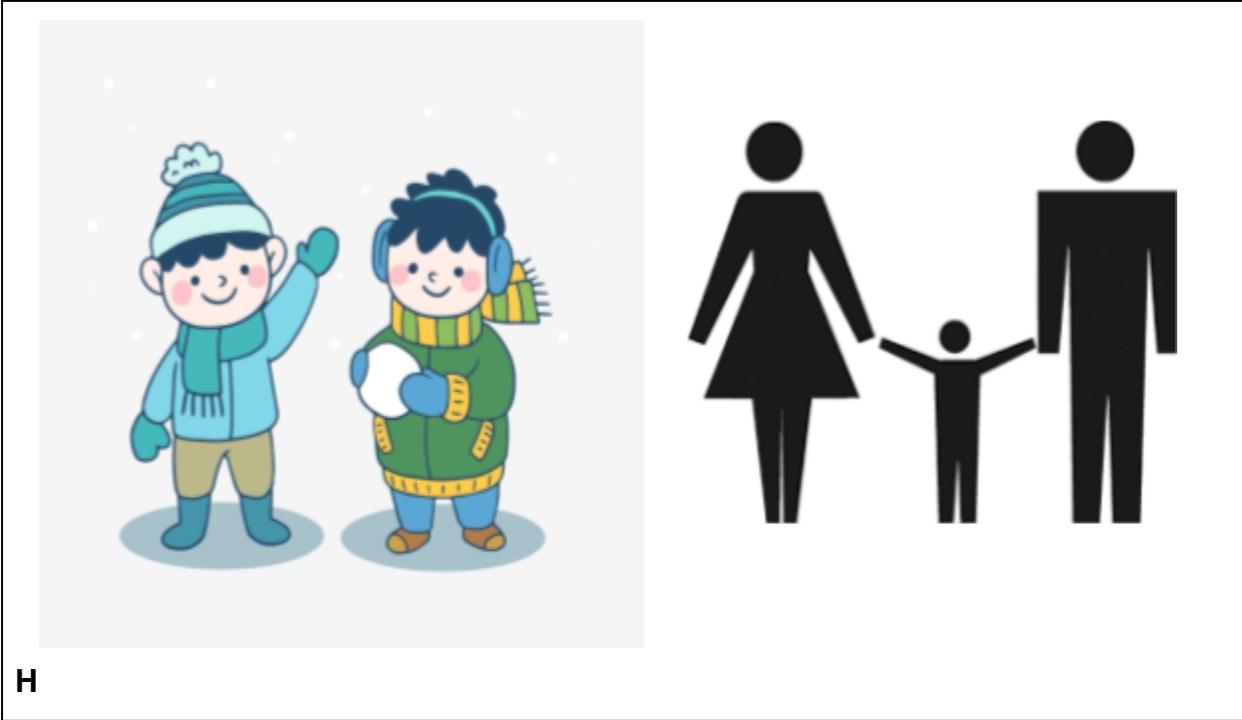
I AM A PERSON	MY JOB (SCHOOL OR WORK)
I AM MALE/FEMALE (BOY/GIRL)	MY NAME
MY SKIN COLOR	MY RELIGION
MY COUNTRY OF BIRTH	MY VIRTUES (GOOD QUALITIES)
THE CITY I LIVE IN E	I AM A SPECIAL SERVANT OF GOD

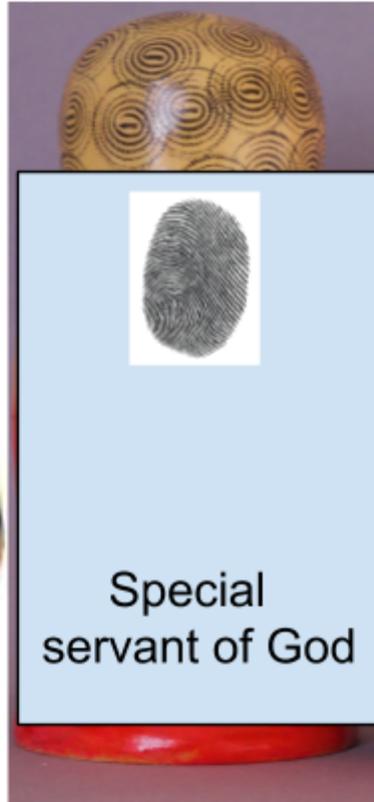


F



G





J

Labels for nesting dolls with assigned numbers - to be cut apart

#1 I AM A PERSON	#6 MY JOB (SCHOOL OR WORK)
#2 I AM MALE/FEMALE (BOY/GIRL)	#7 MY NAME
#3 MY SKIN COLOR	#8 MY RELIGION
#4 MY COUNTRY OF BIRTH	#9 MY VIRTUES (GOOD QUALITIES)
#5 THE CITY I LIVE IN	#10 I AM A SPECIAL SERVANT OF GOD

Labels without assigned numbers

I AM A PERSON	MY JOB (SCHOOL OR WORK)
I AM MALE/FEMALE (BOY/GIRL)	MY NAME
MY SKIN COLOR	MY RELIGION
MY COUNTRY OF BIRTH	MY VIRTUES (GOOD QUALITIES)
THE CITY I LIVE IN	I AM A SPECIAL SERVANT OF GOD

Blank labels
