

The spiritual teachings a teachers guide

Spiritual and Social Teachings.

The Baha'i Faith teaches that there are two sides to religious belief. One is the spiritual side that applies to how the individual relates to God, prayer, life after death, and the soul.

On the other side are the social teachings that relate to the organisation of communities, education, wealth and poverty and many more.



Slide 1

Straight forward information.

The Spiritual Teachings of the Baha'i Faith

Since the dawn of history people have attempted to make sense of the world around them. There is also evidence to support the idea that they searched after a spiritual world that lay beyond this physical one.

For thousands of years people have been worshipping some form of God or Gods. The history of religious worship predates what we now call the World religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism and the Baha'i Faith.



Slide 2

Discussion ;

How do you make sense of the world?

The forms of worship have been as varied as there have been people, some have been slightly similar, others very different all have been an expression of humankind's attempt to understand the spiritual side of their nature, and to recognise a God.



Slide 3

Straightforward information.

Discussion; Do you believe in God?

Give reasons for your answer.

A look at God.

In the Western religions God is seen as the highest reality and the creator of all that exists, a God who acts within history.

A close look at the book of Genesis in the Bible shows evidence that may support a belief in an active creator God.

He is also seen as a God who can intervene and act within peoples lives.

The story of the escape from Egypt by the Hebrews gives an excellent example of how God appears to intervene in the affairs of people.

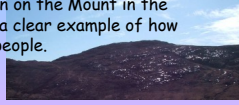


Slide 4

Look at Genesis and the escape from Egypt by the Hebrews and how God appears to help the Hebrews.

He is also seen as a God who sends prophets to bring his teachings to humanity.

A close look at the Sermon on the Mount in the New Testament presents a clear example of how Jesus gives teachings to people.



Another very clear example shows how the words of Allah were given to the Prophet Muhammad and then presented in the Quran for the people to read.



Slide 5

Look at the Sermon on the Mount and how Jesus talks to the people. What is he trying to teach them?

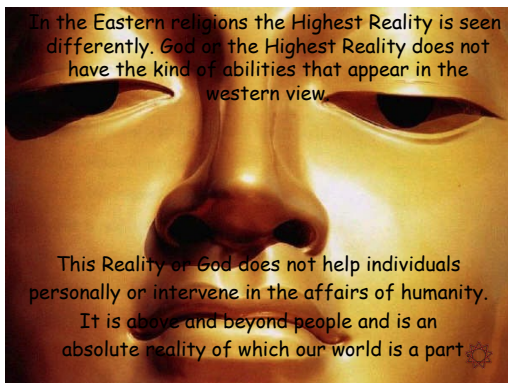
A look at how the Quran was revealed to Muhammad.

Slide 6

Straight forward information.

Also worth looking at the Buddhist concept of no God.

In the Eastern religions the Highest Reality is seen differently. God or the Highest Reality does not have the kind of abilities that appear in the western view.



This Reality or God does not help individuals personally or intervene in the affairs of humanity.

It is above and beyond people and is an absolute reality of which our world is a part.



The Baha'i view on God

Bahá'u'lláh states that absolute knowledge of God is impossible. The human mind can only imagine what it is able to understand, he says;

"So perfect and comprehensive is His creation that no mind or heart, however keen or pure, can grasp the nature of the most insignificant of His creatures; much less fathom the mystery of Him Who is the Day Star of Truth, Who is the invisible and unknowable essence"

Any individual trying to describe God is limited by their own knowledge.



Slide 7

Discussion;

Look at the quote.

What does limited by 'their own knowledge mean?'

In Western religions there is the concept of a Creator God who is responsible for the creation of the universe.

This painting of God was created by an artist called William Blake. God is often described as He, this is because of the biblical idea that man was made in God's image, people have often thought of God as a man.



Long before Biblical times ancient people gave human attributes to the Gods. The Gods or God were seen as the creators of things, but does it help us to describe God?



Slide 8

Discussion;

Does a description of something prove what it is? E.g. God made man in his own image, therefore God must look like a man?

The next 2 slides further develop this idea.

It is obvious that if something has been created it should have a creator. However does that help us to know or describe the creator.



Look at the picture opposite does it help us to describe its creator?



Slide 9

Discussion;

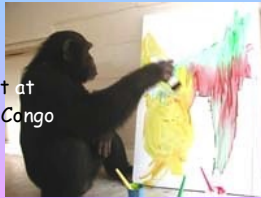
Second paragraph.

Prompts, for students,

can use colour,

Modern artist, angry?

Who or what painted the picture?



Here is the artist at work his name is Congo

Before you saw this picture you could only imagine who the artist was. What you thought, was limited by your imagination.



Slide 10

Straight forward information.

The Baha'i Faith teaches that to understand God we need to go through his prophets as they are able to manifest, or to make clear and obvious to the eyes or minds of people what God wants them to know. Baha'is refer to these prophets as Manifestations of God.

Baha'u'llah explains;

"God hath ordained the knowledge of these sanctified Beings [manifestations] to be identical with the knowledge of His own Self....Whoso hath hearkeneth to their call, hath hearkened to the voice of God"



Slide 11

Straight forward information.

You really cannot imagine more than you know. Anything you imagine could be a combination of all the things you know but you cannot go beyond this.

The Baha'i Faith teaches that people are unable to have any direct knowledge or understanding of God, the manifestations reflect God in a way that people can understand.



Slide 12

Straight forward information.

The trees in the water reflect the real trees

The Manifestations of God as Educators.

Everybody needs training and education. Baha'is believe that the spiritual educators of humanity are the prophets or manifestations of God. These educators established religions that have the ability to do two things, first to help individuals become more spiritual and secondly to promote and carry forward an ever advancing civilization.



Slide 13

Can any body think of any great religious teachers who might be described as manifestations?

e.g Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammad etc...

Life after death

In the Baha'i writings it is made clear that there is a soul connected to every person. When a person dies the soul does not die.

Baha'u'llah said;

"Know thou of a truth that the soul, after its separation from the body, will continue to progress until it attaineth the presence of God"



Slide 14

Straight forward information.

The next world?

Baha'is believe that we have no real idea of what the next life or world is like.



Think of it this way, can a baby while it's still inside its mother have any idea what this world is like?



The baby is contained in its own world and can never fully understand what life is like beyond the womb.



The Baha'i Faith teaches that it is difficult to understand the reality of a world beyond this one.



Slide 15

Discussion; Does this idea make sense? Can you imagine trying to tell a baby in the womb about something as simple as a pencil?


Slide 16

Straight forward information.


Rather than trying to understand the next world the Baha'i Faith explains that we should be concerned with what we can achieve or gain in this world.

For the soul or spirit to be fulfilled in the next world, Baha'is believe that people should acquire divine qualities or virtues.



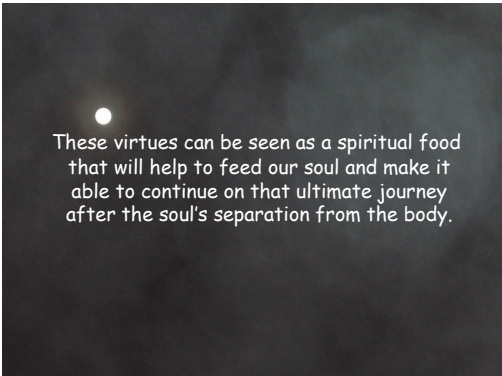


People should be encouraged to collect and develop these divine qualities or virtues during this life. These virtues are things like being kind, honest and helpful in all aspects of your life.



Slide 17

Can you think of more virtues that would be worth collecting?





These virtues can be seen as a spiritual food that will help to feed our soul and make it able to continue on that ultimate journey after the soul's separation from the body.

Slide 18

Straightforward information.
[Just as the baby in the womb needs food]

Prayer and Meditation


Throughout history people have always searched after some kind of spiritual or mystical fulfilment. The human spirit or soul can be uplifted by music, poetry, prayer or even a beautiful view. If physical sustenance was all that people needed, prayer and meditation would not be necessary.

Slide 19

What music makes you feel good?
Do you have a favourite view?
Do you like a poem?
What is it that makes you like any of these things is it just the words or what you see, or is it how it makes you feel?
What is that feeling?

Just as the physical body needs sustenance, Baha'u'llah teaches that prayer and meditation is like food for the spirit or soul.



Slide 20

Straight forward information.

I bear witness, O my God, that thou hast created me to know thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

This is an obligatory prayer. Baha'is are encouraged to pray at least once a day. When they do this they should turn and face the holiest spot in the Baha'i World, the resting place of Baha'u'llah.



Slide 21

Straight forward information.
Have a look at the language.

To encourage prayer Baha'u'llah says;

"Intone, O My Servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of their melody may enkindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of men."

Included in the Baha'i writings, are prayers for children, for help, healing and many more.



Slide 22

Straight forward in formation.
Have a look at the language.

Some Baha'i Prayers.

For help;

Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding.

Bab

For children;

O God, guide me, protect me, make of me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the mighty and the Powerful.

Abdu'l-Baha



Slide 23

Straight forward information.

For healing;

Thy name is my healing, O my God, and remembrance of Thee is my remedy. Nearness to Thee is my hope, and love for Thee is my companion. Thy mercy to me is my healing and my succour in both this world and the world to come. Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

Baha'u'llah

Slide 24

Straightforward information

A Baha'i prayer.

Blessed is the spot and the house,
and the place, and the city,
and the heart, and the mountain,
and the refuge,
and the cave,
and the valley,
and the land,
and the sea,
and the island,
and the meadow where mention
of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.



Have a look at the language

Meditation

Baha'u'llah encouraged meditation; he promoted the idea that people should reflect at the end of the day on their thoughts and actions.

No specific format for meditating, such as sitting cross-legged or special breathing techniques were suggested. The individual is free to choose their own form of meditation.



Slide 26

Straight forward information.

Discussion on meditation try it in class. If you think deeply you simple figure things out.

Slide 27

After reading this you will realise that everybody meditates.

Slide 25

Students should be encouraged to make poster or power point reflecting or illustrating this prayer.