

Bahá'í scheme for Unity and Equality

Theme	Unity and Equality														
<i>Key Questions</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Where do Bahá'ís worship?</p> <p>What does equality look like in the Bahá'í community?</p>														
<i>Covering concepts</i>	<p><i>Identity and Belonging:</i> Where do Bahá'ís meet? What is in a House of Worship (Temple)</p> <p><i>Practices and Ways of Life:</i> Are there priests or leaders in the Bahá'í Faith?</p> <p><i>Forms of Expression:</i> What role do individual Bahá'ís play in the Nineteen Day Feast?</p>														
<i>Skills and Attitudes to develop</i>	<table border="1" data-bbox="405 842 1474 1245"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="405 842 619 904"><i>Empathy</i></th> <th data-bbox="619 842 831 904"><i>Investigation</i></th> <th data-bbox="831 842 1043 904"><i>Application</i></th> <th data-bbox="1043 842 1256 904"><i>Expression</i></th> <th data-bbox="1256 842 1474 904"><i>Others</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="405 904 619 1245"><i>the ability to ponder on the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others</i></td> <td data-bbox="619 904 831 1245"><i>Knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information</i></td> <td data-bbox="831 904 1043 1245"><i>making the association between religions and individual, community national and international life</i></td> <td data-bbox="1043 904 1256 1245"><i>The ability to explain concepts and practices</i></td> <td data-bbox="1256 904 1474 1245"><i>DT skills Role Play</i></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Investigation</i>	<i>Application</i>	<i>Expression</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>the ability to ponder on the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others</i>	<i>Knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information</i>	<i>making the association between religions and individual, community national and international life</i>	<i>The ability to explain concepts and practices</i>	<i>DT skills Role Play</i>				
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Teaching and learning activities



Teaching and learning activities to enable pupils to explore the question and achieve the outcomes:

Beginnings:

Show slide show 'Bahá'í Temples around the world'

Are they all alike? Can you see any similarities?

Discuss what you have seen. Do they look like the places of worship of any other religion?

(NB: There are currently only 8 Bahá'í "Houses of Worship" or Temples across the world – at least one in each continent. Bahá'ís meet in each others' homes, or in Bahá'í Centres when they do not live near a House of Worship. Bahá'í Centres are often houses adapted to have large meeting rooms, a kitchen and maybe an office for the local administrative body known as the Spiritual Assembly)

All Bahá'í Houses of Worship have 9 sides, 9 entrances and 9 paths, signifying that all paths can lead to God. These Temples are open to anyone, of any religion or belief. Though the main part of the Temple is used for worship, there are other rooms for meetings and celebrations. In the future, they will have hospitals, schools and facilities for the elderly and the wider community built around them.

There are no sermons or talks given – only reading from Scriptures, both from the Bahá'í Writings and the Holy writings of all religions - and singing. Musical instruments are not used in this setting, but all of the Temples have their own choir.

Inside, the Temples are built with three levels, a high dome, a middle tier and the ground level where people gather. There is a parallel with the three levels of God the Creator, His Messengers and mankind.

Activity:

Design and build a model Bahá'í House of Worship.

- ◆ Consider the levels, the 9 sides and entrances, and the openness to all people.
 - ◆ Will you include symbols?
 - ◆ Think about the gardens - will you pools? Will the gardens use local plants?
 - ◆ Where would you build your House of Worship?
 - ◆ Consider the use of materials - how can you make it beautiful but not 'showy'?
 - ◆ Extension: Which community facilities would you include and why?
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Discuss:

There are no sermons in the Houses of Worship – readings can be read by anyone, in any language. The concept of **equality** is key in the Bahá'í Faith. There are no priests or leaders in worship – the community elect an **'Assembly'** each year to guide the affairs of the local Bahá'ís, but individually, no one is more 'important' than another, and everyone is valued for their own talents, skills and insights. The concept of **'unity in diversity'** is very important in the Bahá'í Faith.

The Nineteen Day Feast:

On the first day of each Bahá'í month, once every nineteen days, a 'Nineteen Day Feast' is held where the local Bahá'ís meet together. This Feast has three parts: the Spiritual, Administrative (business) and Social parts. First, prayers and readings are said, then any news is shared and other matters are discussed. Every Bahá'í has the right to speak in discussions – including children and visitors. Finally, in the Social part there may be refreshments or a simple meal, people can talk together and there is often singing and entertainment. The purpose of the Feast is to bring the community together, and the Bahá'ís take turns to host the Feast in their homes or in a Bahá'í Centre if there is one nearby. The Host chooses the prayers and readings, and usually provides the food, but other people will often bring refreshments with them to share as well. If people who are not Bahá'ís attend, a 'Unity Feast' is held, where the discussion may be more general and appropriate to visitors.

Activity:

See [page D1](#) of the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop's 'Photocopiable Worksheets', for a freely-photocopiable activity (<http://tinyurl.com/hqgzbb>).

Activity:

Plan and hold a Unity Feast in the class. Remember the 3 parts of the Feast: Spiritual, Administrative and Social.

Choose (or elect) a host who will select a few readings and / or prayers from religious or inspirational texts. There are Bahá'í prayers set to music on YouTube. Here is one example, but there are many more: <https://youtu.be/fbM1LbQELGE>

The Host asks volunteers to offer to read these texts aloud for the gathering.

The discussion part could be about an issue relating to the school, for example. (A 'circle time'-type discussion would fit well here)

The Social part can be simply bread and water – but children may want to bring a small contribution of biscuits, fruit or snacks if school policy allows this. This is also a time to chat and relax and maybe listen to music. At the end, the Host thanks everyone for coming to the Feast.

Discuss:

- ◆ Is the 'Feast' just for the body? How is the spirit nourished, too?
- ◆ Even if only bread and water are served, it is still a Feast. How can this be true?
- ◆ Would a poorer person be allowed to host the Feast?

Evaluate:

Did everyone feel able to take part? Did they feel welcome and valuable? What would they do differently to ensure that everyone was included?