

## **Lesson 1 – Possess a Pure, Kindly and Radiant Heart**

### **OPENING**

**Teacher:** Instructs everyone to sit quietly, rest their arms in a position that they feel most comfortable and lower their faces to listen to the prayer. Explain when you pray, you have to show respect to God.

Recite opening prayer:

**"O God! Educate these children. These children are the plants of Thine orchard, the flowers of Thy meadow, the roses of Thy garden. Let Thy rain fall upon them; let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love. Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they may be trained, grow and develop, and appear in the utmost beauty. Thou art the Giver. Thou art the Compassionate."**

- Ask the children if any of them know a prayer by heart that they could recite for the class.

**Teacher:** This is a great opportunity to discuss God with the children. Start by asking questions:

- Who knows Who God is? God is our Creator and He made everyone and everything.
- Why do we pray to Him? We pray for many, many reasons, including prayers for help, guidance and health.
- What do you want to pray for? Your family, friends and help being a good person.

### **TODAY'S LESSON**

**Teacher:** Today's Lesson is "Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart."

Our hearts are like mirrors. When the mirror is clean, it reflects a clean and clear image. We should always keep our heart clean like a mirror. Hatred, envy and negative thoughts are like dust that stops the mirror from shining. When our hearts are pure, they shine brightly, they reflect the light of God and we become a cause of happiness to others.

**Activity:** Bring a hand mirror to class and let each child look at their reflection. Ask them if they saw their faces clearly. Explain that when you possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, you are being a good person and your heart is pure, kindly and radiant and shines with love.

Then smudge the mirror with something to dull it (lipstick, Vaseline, etc.). Pass the mirror around again so they can look at their smudged reflection. Explain that when the mirror is smudged by bad behavior, like your heart, it does not shine. We all must strive to keep our hearts Pure, Kindly and Radiant.

To help keep our hearts pure, let us memorize this quotation from Bahá'u'lláh. First read it to the class then follow up with dialogue to explain certain words noted below.

**"O SON OF SPIRIT! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting." - Bahá'u'lláh**

The children will find the quotation easier to memorize if they understand it. Spend time discussing the meaning of the words and phrases with them. It is helpful to have the quote written on a white board or cardboard to point out each word as you explain them.

### **Counsel**

1. One day Dylan and Amelia were coloring in some drawings. Dylan needed the yellow crayon, but Amelia did not want to give it to her. The teacher told Amelia that she should share. The teacher gave Amelia good counsel.
2. Tisha has to decide whether to spend her money on cookies or on a storybook. Her parents advise her to buy the storybook. Her parents give Tisha good counsel.

### **Possess**

1. Ellie likes to read prayers before going to sleep. She has a small prayer book to read from. Ellie possesses a small prayer book.
2. There was a flood and many people lost everything they possessed, but friends came to their aid and soon they had the things they needed again.

### **Pure heart**

1. Jake became angry and screamed at Susan. Susan was sad, but quickly forgave Jake. Susan possesses a pure heart.
2. Penny likes to share her cookies with all the children, even with Charley, who throws stones at her. Penny possesses a pure heart.

### **Kindly heart**

1. When people in need come to her house, Juanita always takes care of them. Juanita possesses a kindly heart.
2. Mr. Washington is very old. Jack helps him carry his fruit harvest to the market. Jack possesses a kindly heart.

### **Radiant heart**

1. When I feel sad, my mother always cheers me up and makes me happy. My mother possesses a radiant heart.
2. Trevon became ill and has to spend all his time in bed. He says many prayers, does not become sad, and continues to show forth happiness. Trevon possesses a radiant heart.

**Teacher:** Explain that this quote was by Bahá'u'lláh. Ask the children if they know who Baha'u'llah is. Briefly explain He is the Founder of the Baha'i Faith and we will learn more about Him later. Read the quote again asking the children to pay attention to the

new words they just learned.

**"O SON OF SPIRIT! My first counsel is this: Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart, that thine may be a sovereignty ancient, imperishable and everlasting." - Bahá'u'lláh**

**Activity:** You can then help them memorize the prayer. Give index cards with one or more words written on each card and ask them to work together to make the quote.

**Singing:** Most Bahá'í songs can be found on YouTube if you need help with background music and the tune. It is helpful to have the words written down for the teacher and for any children who can read. Also, putting the words on a small blackboard or large cardboard is very helpful. Children love to sing especially if they know the words. Sing the following song.

### My First Counsel

O Son of Spirit!  
O Son of Spirit!

My first counsel is this  
My first counsel is this

Possess a pure, kindly and radiant heart  
That thine may be a sovereignty  
Ancient, imperishable and everlasting  
Ancient, imperishable.

**Teacher:** Tell a story about possessing a pure, kindly and radiant heart. Briefly explain who 'Abdu'l-Bahá is and that you will learn about Him later.

'Abdu'l-Bahá could always tell what was in a person's heart, and He greatly loved people whose hearts were pure and radiant. There was a lady who had the honor of being the guest of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at dinner. As she sat listening to His words of wisdom, she looked at a glass of water in front of her and thought, "Oh! If only 'Abdu'l-Bahá would take my heart and empty it of every earthly desire and then refill it with Divine love and understanding, just as you would do with this glass of water.

This thought passed through her mind quickly, and she did not say anything about it, but soon something happened that made her realize 'Abdu'l-Bahá had known what she was thinking. While He was in the middle of His talk, He paused to call a servant and said a few words to him in Persian. The servant quietly came to the lady's place at the table, took her glass, emptied it, and put it back in front of her.

A little later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, while continuing to talk, picked up a pitcher of water from the table, and in a most natural way, slowly filled the lady's empty glass. No one noticed what happened, but the lady knew that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was answering her heart's desire. She was filled with joy. Now she knew that hearts were like open books to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who read them with great love and kindness.

**Activity:**

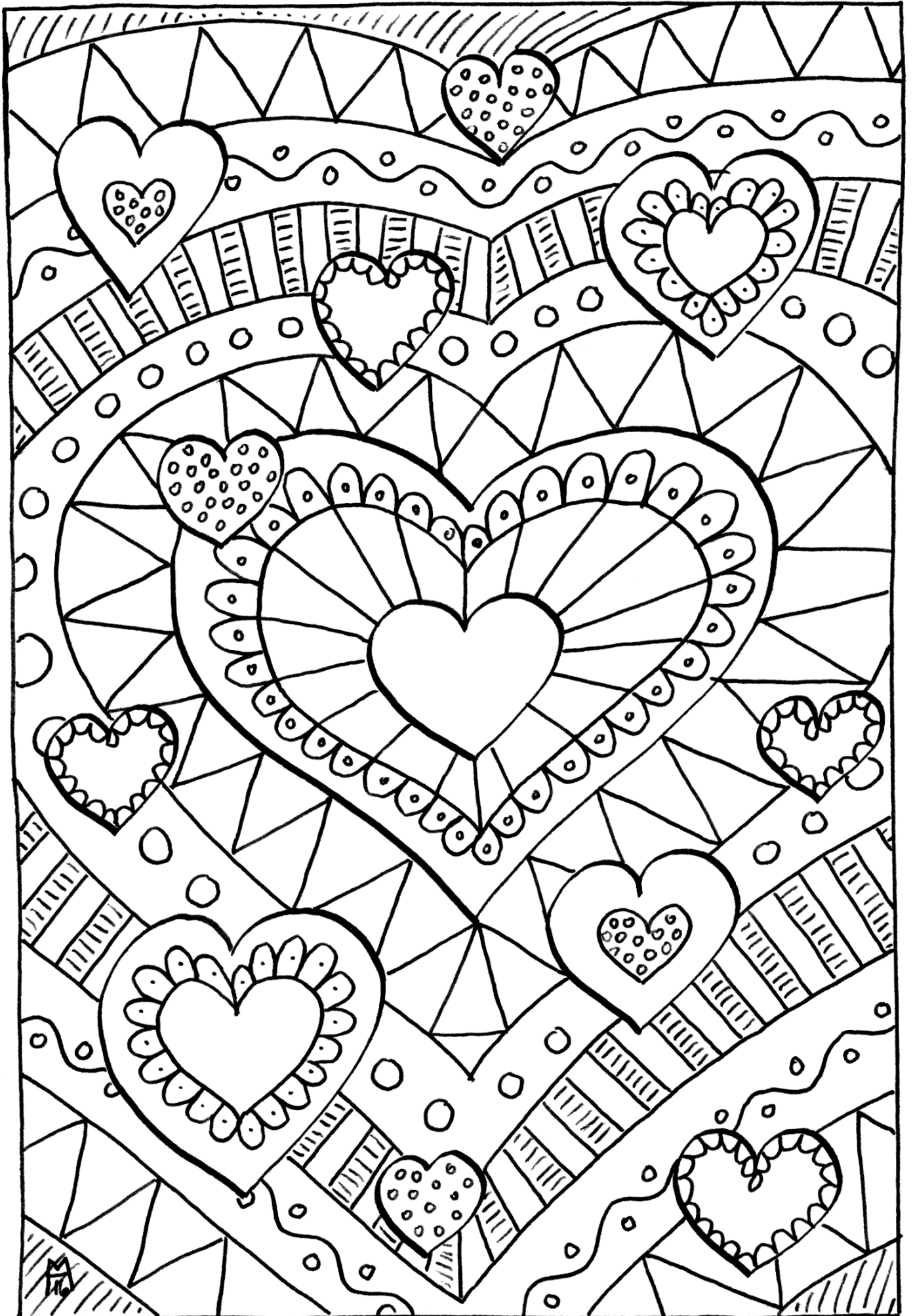
1. Have kids make a heart with air drying clay. Allow it to dry and they can paint it at the next class.
2. Color picture #1

**END CLASS:**

Remind Children that the class was about having a Pure, Kindly and Radiant Heart. Ask them for an example of a pure, kindly and radiant heart. It may be nice to ask them to try to show a pure, kindly and radiant heart and share it at the next class.

Someone says a closing prayer. Ask Children to settle down and bow their heads. Remind them that the quote talks about a Pure Heart:

**“He is God! O God my God! Bestow upon me a pure heart, like unto a pearl. -  
'Abdu'l-Bahá**



Possess a Pure, Kindly and Radiant Heart

## Resource Material for Lesson 1 – Possess a Pure, Kindly and Radiant Heart

When starting the class, it is helpful to create a folder to save your material by class. Also, a small white and blackboard (white board on one side and blackboard on the reverse) is very helpful. IKEA sells one for around \$20 with markers. This is very helpful during singing so they can read the words on the board.

### Activity 1:

#### **Mirror**

- Hand Mirror
- Something to smudge it (lipstick, Vaseline)
- Something to clean the mirror when done

### Activity 2

#### **Index Cards**

- Colorful index cards work better than plain white
- Magic marker to write on cards

### Activity 3

#### **Clay Heart**

- Dryable clay (review a youtube channel to figure out how to make the heart best for the children)
- Washable paint for painting the heart once it dries (at the next class)