

# SOUL FOOD

Children – Tender Plants of Life



November 2015

# Children – Tender Plants of Life

This program honors the role of human potential and self development and the need to ensure we promote this in our children – the future.

**November 2015**

## Program

 ***Bahá'í Children's Class***

01. *Prayer*

02. *Kahlil Gilbran*

03. *Bahá'í Prayer*

04. *Bahá'í Writings*

05. *Anon*

06. *John Fuller*

 ***Nepali Dance***

07. *Richard Paul Evans*

08. *Acts of Kindness*

09. *Bahá'í Writings*

10. *Rachel Carson*

11. *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*

 ***Violin***

***Piano***

12. *Burr-Nong*

13. *Jeanette Winterson*

14. *William Blake*

15. *Raffi Cavoukian*

 ***Rhythmic gymnastic club routine***

16. *Shelley*

17. *Children's Letters to God*

18. *Christian Writings*

19. *Sheikh Uthameen*

20. *Bahá'í Writings*

 ***Violin***  
***Piano***

***Love with little hands, comes and touches you  
with a thousand memories and asks you  
beautiful, unanswerable questions.  
Carl Sandburg***



***O God Guide Me  
Bahá'í Children's Class***

01. O My Lord! O my Lord!  
I am a child of tender years. Nourish me from the breast of Thy mercy, train me in the bosom of Thy love, educate me in the school of Thy guidance and develop me under the shadow of Thy bounty. Deliver me from darkness, make me a brilliant light; free me from unhappiness, make me a flower of the rose garden; suffer me to become a servant of Thy threshold and confer upon me the disposition and nature of the righteous; make me a cause of bounty to the human world, and crown my head with the diadem of eternal life.

Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Seer, the Hearer.  
- 'Abdu'l-Bahá

***The potential possibilities of any child are the most intriguing  
and stimulating in all creation.  
Ray L. Wilbur***

02. Your children are not your children, they are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you, and though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts.  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls, for their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.  
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you. For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.  
You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and he bends You with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.  
Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness; for even as he loves the arrow that flies, so He loves the bow that is stable.  
~ Kahlil Gibran

***A baby is God's opinion that the world should go on.***  
***Carl Sandburg***

03. O God guide me protect me, make of me a shining lamp and brilliant star.  
Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful .  
~Bahá'í Prayer

04. Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green; they will grow up in whatever way ye train them.....  
Give them the advantage of every useful kind of knowledge. Let them share in every new and rare and wondrous craft and art. Bring them up to work and strive, and accustom them to hardship. Teach them to dedicate their lives to matters of great import, and inspire them to undertake studies that will benefit mankind.  
~ 'Abdu'l-Bahá

***Every child is potentially the light of the world.***  
***Bahá'í Writings***

05. A child learns what she lives  
If a child lives with criticism, she learns to condemn.  
If a child lives with hostility, she learns to fight.  
If a child lives with ridicule, she learns to be shy.  
If a child lives with shame, she learns to feel guilt.  
If a child lives with tolerance, she learns to be patient.  
If a child lives with encouragement, she learns confidence.  
If a child lives with fairness, she learns justice.  
If a child lives with security, she learns to have faith.  
If a child lives with approval, she learns to like herself.  
If a child lives with acceptance and friendship, she learns to find love in the world.  
~ Anon

o6.

### **Lullaby**

Sleep little baby, clean as a nut,  
Your fingers uncurl and your eyes are shut.  
Your life was ours, which is with you.  
Go on your journey. We go too.

The bat is flying round the house  
Like an umbrella turned into a mouse.  
The moon is astonished and so are the sheep:  
Their bells have come to send you to sleep.  
Oh be our rest, our hopeful start.

Turn your head to my beating heart.  
Sleep little baby, clean as a nut,  
Your fingers uncurl and your eyes are shut.

~John Fuller

### ***Nepali Dance*** ***Ashmita Khadal***

o7. Dance. Dance for the joy and breath of childhood.  
Dance for all children, including that child who is  
still somewhere entombed beneath the responsibility  
and scepticism of adulthood.  
Embrace the moment before it escapes from our grasp.  
For the only promise of childhood, of any childhood,  
is that it will someday end. And in the end, we must  
ask ourselves what we have given our children to take  
its place. And is it enough?  
~Richard Paul Evans, The Christmas Box Miracle

***A child's prayer to God***  
***Dear GOD,***  
***I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you***  
***made on Tuesday. That was cool!***  
***Eugene***

o8. **Acts of Kindness**

Four years ago an inspirational infant teacher at Starr Elementary School in Fresno, California, was concerned that in addition to academic achievement, emphasis needed to be placed on the social and emotional development of children by teaching them how to be kind to each other and other people.

In her Grade 1 class the teacher, Marceen Forsakien, initiated the Kind Kids Club. In order to belong to this Club, the infants were asked to perform ten random acts of kindness. One child reported that among other acts he "gave his sister a hug, asked a friend George to play, cleaned the garage, read a story and sang to his sister, opened a door for his teacher and made his bed."

The children then made capes on which they printed the message "Be kind and share" for the Kindergarten class. The principal of the school, dressed in a red cape as "Captain Kindness" was given the capes to deliver to the Kindergarten students while the Kind Kids observed with excitement the joy their creations brought to the smaller ones.

They then launched Operation Sidewalk Art: using chalk, they wrote messages about spreading kindness on the pavement for their friends to see. In addition, they made bookmarks with messages such as "be kind and pass it on" which they hid randomly in books in their library.

Marceen Forsakien said that it was a magical experience to watch the joy on the children's faces as they gave with no expectation of reward. The pledge made by the children was:

I pledge myself on any day  
To try to be kind in every way  
To every person big or small  
I will give help if they fall.

In 2014 The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation awarded this infant class first prize in the Random Acts of Kindness Award for inspiring their whole school with the message of kindness.

***When I approach a child he inspires in me two sentiments –  
tenderness for what he is and respect for what he may become.***

***Louis Pasteur***

09. The art of music is divine and effective. It is the food of the soul and spirit. Through the power and charm of music the spirit of man is uplifted. It has wonderful sway and effect in the hearts of children, for their hearts are pure and melodies have great influence in them. The latent talents with which the hearts of these children are endowed will find expression through the medium of music. Therefore, you must exert yourselves to make them proficient; teach them to sing with excellence and effect. It is incumbent upon each child to know something of music, for without knowledge of this art the melodies of instrument and voice cannot be rightly enjoyed. Likewise, it is necessary that the schools teach it in order that the souls and hearts of the pupils may become vivified and exhilarated and their lives be brightened with enjoyment.  
~Abdu'l-Bahá



10. If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over the christening of all children I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life, as an unfailing antidote against the boredom and disenchantments of later years, the sterile preoccupation with things artificial, the alienation from the sources of our strength.  
~ Rachel Carson, *The Sense of Wonder*

***Children are the hands by which we take hold of heaven.***  
***Henry Ward Beecher***

11. O child! O new-born denizen  
Of life's great city! on thy head  
The glory of the morn is shed,  
Like a celestial benison!  
Here at the portal thou dost stand,  
And with thy little hand  
Thou openest the mysterious gate
- By what astrology of fear or hope  
Dare I to cast thy horoscope!  
Like the new moon thy life appears;  
A little strip of silver light,  
And widening outward into night  
The shadowy disk of future years;  
And yet upon its outer rim,  
A luminous circle, faint and dim,  
And scarcely visible to us here,  
Rounds and completes the perfect sphere;  
A prophecy and intimation,  
A pale and feeble adumbration,  
Of the great world of light, that lies  
Behind all human destinies.  
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

***Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see.***

***John W. Whitehead***



***Allegro - Mozart***  
***Maxwell Parr- violin***  
***Erica Davidson - piano***

12. **Burr-Nong (Bora-Ring)**

The time of learning in the aboriginal world never stops. It goes on and on. As soon as the children are able to sit up, they are taught to observe the reptiles, animals and birds and to draw them in the sand. In this way they learn to recognise every creature of the bush. And they learn, too, how to imitate their calls and cries.

The most exciting period of learning comes when the children are about twelve years old. At this time they learn the lessons from within the Burr-Nong ring. It is a period of testing, and they go on with it until they have passed every test - when they are between sixteen and eighteen. After they have passed out of the Burr-Nong, they are called men and women of the tribe.

During the Burr-Nong training the boys are handed over to the men of the tribe, and the girls to the women. They are taught the tribal secrets, and the art of manhood and womanhood. No woman may witness the Burr-Nong ceremony of the boys, and no man can see the Burr-Nong ceremony of the girls.

No one in the tribe is given complete power over the others in life. The welfare of the tribe is in the hands of the Council of Wise Men - The tribal elders.

13. What it means to be human is to bring up your children in safety, educate them, keep them healthy, teach them how to care for themselves and others, allow them to develop in their own way among adults who are sane and responsible, who know the value of the world and not its economic potential. It means art, it means time, it means all the invisibles never counted by the G.D.P. and the census figures.  
It means knowing that life has an inside as well as an outside.  
And I think it means love.  
~Jeanette Winterson, *The Stone Gods*

***Before I got married I had six theories about raising children;  
now, I have six children and no theories.  
John Wilmot***

14. **The Angel That Presided O'er My Birth**  
The Angel that presided o'er my birth  
Said, 'Little creature, form'd of Joy and Mirth,  
'Go love without the help of any Thing on Earth.'  
~William Blake

15. We find these joys to be self evident: That all children are created whole, endowed with innate intelligence, with dignity and wonder, worthy of respect. The embodiment of life, liberty and happiness, children are original blessings, here to learn their own song. Every girl and boy is entitled to love, to dream and belong to a loving "village." And to pursue a life of purpose.

We affirm our duty to nourish and nurture the young, to honour their caring ideals as the heart of being human. To recognize the early years as the foundation of life, and to cherish the contribution of young children to human evolution.

We commit ourselves to peaceful ways and vow to keep from harm or neglect these, our most vulnerable citizens. As guardians of their prosperity we honour the bountiful Earth whose diversity sustains us. Thus we pledge our love for generations to come.

~ Raffi Cavoukian

***We must teach our children to dream with their eyes open.***

***Harry Edwards***



Rhythmic gymnastic club routine  
Emily Roberts

16. Know you what it is to be a child?  
It is something very different from the man of today.  
It is to have a spirit yet streaming from the waters of baptism; it is to believe in love, to believe in loveliness, to believe in belief; it is to be so little that elves can reach to whisper in your ear; it is to turn pumpkins into coaches, and mice into horses, lowness into loftiness, and nothing into everything, for each child has a fairy godmother in its soul.

~Shelley. In the Dublin Review July 1908

17. **Children's Letters to God**

Dear GOD,

Did you mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident?

~Norma

Dear GOD,

Did you really mean "do unto others as they do unto you"? Because if you did, then I'm going to fix my brother.

~Darla

Dear GOD,

Thank you for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy.

~Joyce

Dear GOD,

You don't have to worry about me. I always look both ways.

~Dean

Dear GOD,

I bet it is very hard for You to love all of everybody in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I can never do it.

~Nan

Dear GOD,

I do not think anybody could be a better God. Well, I just want You to know but I am not just saying that because You are God already.

~Charles

***The child must know that he is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world there will not be another child like him.***

***Pablo Casals***

18. Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

~Christian Writings

***Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant:  
Even so are the young children.***

***Christian Writings***

19. Children are a trust given to parents by God and are to be well fed, well groomed, properly dressed for seasons and appearance. Children are entitled to education, religious learning and spiritual guidance. Their hearts must be filled with faith and their minds entertained with proper guidance, knowledge and wisdom.

~Sheikh Uthaimen

***While we try to teach our children all about life,  
children teach us what life is all about.***

***Angela Schwindt***

20. The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favour of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory. If a child be trained from his infancy, he will, through the loving care of the Holy Gardener, drink in the crystal waters of the spirit and of knowledge, like a young tree amid the rilling brooks. And certainly he will gather to himself the bright rays of the Sun of Truth, and through its light and heat will grow ever fresh and fair in the garden of life. Therefore must the mentor be a doctor as well: that is, he must, in instructing the child, remedy its faults; must give him learning, and at the same time rear him to have a spiritual nature. Let the teacher be a doctor to the character of the child, thus will he heal the spiritual ailments of the children of men.
- If, in this momentous task, a mighty effort be exerted, the world of humanity will shine out with other adornings, and shed the fairest light. Then will this darksome place grow luminous, and this abode of earth turn into heaven. . . .
- For the inner reality of man is a demarcation line between the shadow and the light, a place where the two seas meet; it is the lowest point on the arc of descent, and therefore it is capable of gaining all the grades above. With education it can achieve all excellence; devoid of education it will stay on, at the lowest point of imperfection.
- Every child is potentially the light of the world - and at the same time its darkness; wherefore must the question of education be accounted as of primary importance. From his infancy, the child must be nursed at the breast of God's love, and nurtured in the embrace of His knowledge, that he may radiate light, grow in spirituality, be filled with wisdom and learning, and take on the characteristics of the angelic host.
- ~'Abdu'l-Baha from the Bahá'í Writings

*Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value.  
Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures,  
and enable mankind to benefit therefrom.  
Baha'u'llah*



*Jealousy - Gade  
Inessa Corney -violin  
Erica Davidson -piano*

*\**

*Please join us for refreshments*



## **Soul Food**

*Soul Food* is an open community event hosted on the first Sunday of each month and whose purpose is to inspire us to transform our lives, our neighbourhoods and our communities with actions that promote the unity and betterment of society. Set in the tranquil setting of the Baha'i Centre of Learning, it provides an occasion to be inspired and reflect on uplifting themes with our neighbours. Our programs feature live music, audio-visual pieces and readings from various authors, sources and Faiths - indigenous, ancient and modern- from all over the world.

*Soul Food* was initiated by the Bahá'í community in Adelaide and now occurs in places around Australia and as far afield as Botswana, Africa. It is also proudly supported by the Victorian Multicultural Commission. Original programs are available for free download from [www.soulfood.com.au/tas/](http://www.soulfood.com.au/tas/)

## **Children's classes in the Neighbourhood**

Regular children's classes are held in communities around Tasmania and provide moral, spiritual and virtues-based training essential in nurturing the inner capacities of children. The classes aim to build a strong moral framework which will assist children to achieve excellence in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life. For inquiries or more information please call Solmaz's mobile 0423656669.

**"Children are even as a branch that is fresh and green;  
they will grow up in whatever way you train them.**

**Take the utmost care to give them high ideals and goals,  
so that once they come of age, they will cast their beams like  
brilliant candles on the world..."**

**-- from the Writings of the Bahá'í Faith**

## Junior Youth Groups

Developed for youth between the ages of 12 and 15, these programs are designed to empower and equip young people with the knowledge and concepts that will encourage the expression of their personal potential, and develop the skills and attitudes necessary to become agents of change - for themselves and their communities. Through engagement in service initiatives, artistic and extracurricular activities they foster a sense of world citizenship and a lifelong commitment to serve humanity.

The junior youth spiritual empowerment program is open to young people aged between 11 and 14, and assists them to navigate through a crucial stage in their lives.

Those in their early adolescent years possess altruism, a sense of justice, eagerness to learn about the universe, and a desire to contribute to the construction of a better world.

The program helps them form a strong moral identity and empowers them to contribute to the well-being of their communities and the world at large.

By developing their spiritual qualities (virtues), their intellectual capabilities and their capacities for service to society, the participants come to see that they can become agents of positive change in the world.

The program adopts a participatory mode of learning where the facilitator and participants learn from each other.

Groups of participants engage in activities such as artistic expression, discussion, drama, cooperative games, study of literature, story telling and acts of community service.

The junior youth program explores themes from a Baha'i perspective, but is not a formal religious education program. It is open to all, subject to parental approval. Junior youth groups meet on a regular basis and there is no written homework.

All program facilitators are certified under the Baha'i Child Protection Policy, which includes a mandatory police check. Parents are welcome to meet with the facilitators to learn about the program.

For enquiries or more information please call James Pepperell ☎️ 0404352042 or email him [james.pepperell@gmail.com](mailto:james.pepperell@gmail.com)

## Study Circles

The Bahá'í Community offers a series of life-changing circles of study. These small informal groups of like-minded individuals are an opportunity to explore and learn collaboratively about meaningful topics such as the individual's inner reality and their capacity to integrate their spiritual and personal transformation with that of their communities towards the betterment of humankind.

The first series is titled *Reflections on the Life of the Spirit* and is a 3 unit exploration on the following themes: Understanding the Bahá'í Writings, Prayer & Meditation, and Life & Death. If you enjoy Soul Food then a study circle may appeal to you.

For inquiries or more information please email Shirin Fernandez at <[shirin@iinet.net.au](mailto:shirin@iinet.net.au)>

*join us*

for the next program:

***"Reflections"***

Sunday the 6<sup>th</sup> December, 3pm

**Please Note: There will be no Soul Food in January 2016.**

**We invite you to join us as we celebrate**

**WORLD RELIGION DAY**

**Jan 24<sup>th</sup> 3pm at the Bahá'í Centre of Learning for Tasmania (here).**

**The next Soul Food program will be Sunday February 7<sup>th</sup> 2016**

Another exciting program held every Tuesday afternoon 12.30pm – 1.30pm in the Boardroom upstairs is a short Devotional designed to lift up our spirits and so is called:

“Lunchtime Lift”

We would love to share this with you.

(This will not operate during the month of January)

## **The Bahá'í Faith**

You can find out more about the Baha'ís and their world embracing vision at [www.bahai.org.au](http://www.bahai.org.au) or feel free to call 03 6234 7654 for more information.

All Soul Food programs are available for free download from  
[\*\*www.soulfood.com.au/tas\*\*](http://www.soulfood.com.au/tas)