

Teacher's Guide

to

His Divine Grace

A. C.

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Founder Acharya of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

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Introduction

In this course the students will learn some of the important facts of Prabhupada's life. They will learn to appreciate his position as founder-acharya of ISKCON and the contributions he has made to the world. They will begin with a general understanding of the importance of a spiritual master and disciplic succession.

The verse to be memorized in this session is Bhagavad Gita 4.34. The teacher will need to do some extra reading in this course to prepare for the lessons. For the most part, the appropriate books and page numbers are noted to make it a little easier.

A nice addition to have for this session is the children's booklet The Life Story of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It gives a nice overview of Prabhupada's life. The students could read different portions as they are covered in class.

If there are some Prabhupada disciples in your area who had his association, it would be wonderful for them to come and tell the class of their personal experiences.

If you wish to have a session project, here are some ideas:

1. Book reports can be given on certain chapters or entire books about Prabhupada. Prabhupada Lilamrta, Prabhupada Nectar, Transcendental Diary, The Final Pastimes of Srila Prabhupada and The Hare Krishna Explosion are among the books that could be used. See Worksheet 1 for a list of different ways to do a book report. Some class time could be allotted for silent reading.
2. Make a centennial vow for Srila Prabhupada for this session. Children can pledge to chant a certain number of rounds, distribute 1 book per day or week, read a certain amount, memorize one verse per week, or some other type of vow. Use or adapt Worksheet 2 for the students to record their progress. They can record in detail what they did (for example, which book they distributed, which verse they memorized, etc.) each week on the lines provided. Special awards and recognition should be given to the students who complete their vows (or at least come close).

3. A fancy picture frame can be made in which a picture of Prabhupada can be placed. Inexpensive frames can be purchased and decorated with silk flowers and antiqued with gold. Or the frame can be painted a solid color and then a design painted on with acrylic paint.

Lesson One **The Guru**

1. Introduce the subject of this session: Srila Prabhupada. Referring to the introduction in the student's booklets, tell of the value of studying the life of Srila Prabhupada.
2. Introduce the verse for the session -- B.G. 4.34.

*tad viddhi pranipatena
pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam
jnaninas tattva-darshinah*

Translation: Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.

This should be written in advance on a large chart paper or chalkboard that can be seen by all the students. Teach it the same way we learn a Bhagavatam verse -- first having students repeat each word, then each line, as you lead. Chant three or four times with them responding, then ask for volunteers to lead the chanting. As students lead, the rest of the class chants responsively. Students then repeat the English translation after you.

3. Ask the children for a definition of "guru." You should come up with something like "teacher," "spiritual guide," etc. Explain that a guru learns from his guru who learns from his guru and so on.

4. Have a paper chain (strips of paper stapled into circles and linked together) available for the students to see. Ask them what is holding the chain together. (The strips are linked to each other, holding it together.) Using this analogy of a chain, explain the meaning of disciplic succession, or *parampara*. You can show the chain linking up with a picture of Krishna and tell them that they can also be a link in the chain, if they follow the bona fide guru.

Referring to B.G. Chapter 4, verses 1, 2 and 3, show how Krishna set up this system of disciplic succession. Ask what happens if you cut one of

the paper links. Then cut one. This is what happens when the disciplic chain is broken -- the knowledge can't be passed on any farther. The people at the end of the chain are cut off from receiving it. This is why Krishna had to come and speak the science again to Arjuna.

4. Another way to demonstrate disciplic succession is to have on hand a very ripe fruit, like a mango, peach or banana. Have the children form a line around the room, beginning with you. Holding the fruit in your hand, ask what would be the best way for the fruit to get to the last person in line without getting bruised or damaged. Could you just throw it across the room to him? The best way is to carefully pass it from person to person until it reaches him safely. Then pass the fruit down. You could do it again, having one child drop the fruit. What happened? The chain was broken and the fruit suffered some damage. Spiritual knowledge must also be passed carefully from spiritual master to disciple.

5. Ask how the knowledge can get lost or changed. (Motivated gurus, someone not following his teacher and passing on his version, changing philosophy to make it more popular, etc.) Because of these reasons, we have many interpretations of scripture, many versions of Bhagavad Gita. Therefore, Prabhupada has written Bhagavad Gita, As It Is, without interpreting or changing Krishna's message.

6. Give the students a copy of Bhagavad Gita. Have them locate the Disciplic Succession page located directly before Chapter One. Explain how this page works and show them how our parampara goes all the way back to Krishna. Give them a little practice in learning how to use this page by asking a few questions, such as, "Who is the guru of Bhaktisiddhanta Swami?" "Who did Vyasa pass on the knowledge to?"

7. Make one copy of Worksheet 3. You can color it and laminate it if you wish. Show it to the students and ask what they think about it. Why are the children not likely to listen to their father? What would make his advice more potent?

Ask them about a fat doctor telling his patient that he must go on a diet. What would make the patient take the doctor's instructions more seriously?

From these examples they can see the importance of "practicing what you preach." Explain the meaning of "acharya" as "one who teaches by example." You can give the example of Haridas Thakur. Lord Chaitanya

praised him by saying, “There are those who speak nicely but do not behave properly and there are those who behave nicely but cannot speak so well. But you, my dear Haridas, both speak nicely and follow what you speak by acting properly.”

A good acharya will follow his acharya, and only repeat what he has been taught from scripture. He will not impose his own ideas.

8. Explain Prabhupada’s position as *founder-acharya*. Because of his development of ISKCON, following in the line of acharyas, he is given the special title of founder-acharya. His life was a perfect example of someone solely dedicated to his guru and Krishna, he teaches many people through his books, but he doesn’t say that the knowledge is coming from him.

Explain that in the coming weeks we will learn more of Prabhupada’s life, both in India and in America.

9. Have the students fill in the definitions for the words on Page 4 of their workbooks.

- Guru -- a spiritual teacher
- Parampara --disciplic succession
- Disciplic Succession -- the chain of guru and disciple going back to Krishna
- Acharya -- one who teaches by example
- Founder Acharya -- a teacher who establishes an organization;
Prabhupada is the Founder Acharya of ISKCON

10. If you are going to offer Extra Credit work for the session, you can explain it now.

Lesson Two

Prabhupada in India

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review the vocabulary words from last week.
3. The students' booklets will give an overview of the milestones in Prabhupada's life. In the teaching guides, we've recommended telling more stories, giving the students more details and a better picture of Prabhupada's life. In telling the additional stories, the students could read a bit from their booklets and then the teacher can add to portions as they are read. That will ensure that their booklets are being used, too.

The teacher should read Chapter 1, "Childhood," from Prabhupada Lilamrta, A Lifetime in Preparation. Stories of Prabhupada's family can be told as well as some of his pastimes. Recommended are his celebration of Ratha Yatra, his relationship with his father and his early Deity worship. You can tell the stories or read excerpts from the book.

The year of his appearance, 1896, can be filled in on the student's timeline.

4. Prabhupada's family life can be discussed briefly. His marriage to Radharani Dhatta in 1918, his disapproval of the arrangement and his father's wise advice can be talked about. (p. 32 of A Lifetime of Preparation).
5. Tell of Prabhupada's first meeting with Bhaktisiddhanta Maharaja in 1922 (p. 37 - 43). Be sure to tell of Bhaktisiddhanta's order to preach in English.
6. The students can add these dates to their timelines.
7. The first portion of the video, "Your Ever Well-Wisher," can be shown, stopping at the point where Prabhupada takes initiation. See how your group responds to the video. It may be more appropriate for the older ages. The younger children may have a harder time following it.

Lesson Three

Initiation and Sannyasa

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Briefly review last week's lesson bringing them up to the point where you will begin today.
3. Continue with the events of Srila Prabhupada's life. Some other significant events that should be mentioned are (pages noted are from A Lifetime in Preparation):
 - * His initiation in 1932 (p. 69 - 72)
 - * Beginning Back to Godhead magazine in 1944. You can show some examples of his early articles or early magazines from the book, Back to Godhead 1944-1960 The Pioneer Years.
 - * In 1953 he initiated his first disciple
 - * In 1954 he left his family (p. 162 - 163)
 - * In 1959 Prabhupada accepted sannyasa (p. 224 - 231)
 - * In 1962 the first volume of *Srimad Bhagavatam* was published.
 - * Prabhupada left for America aboard the Jaladuta in 1965 (p. 281 - 289)
4. While telling of the events of Prabhupada's life, be sure to include his work at translating and publishing books and his stay in Vrindavan. These dates can be added to the timelines.
5. Pass out copies of Worksheet 4. Students can make a list of things they would take with them if they were going to another country for several months. Tell them that, in this new country, they are not sure if there will be much vegetarian food available. How much money would they bring? Let a few students read their lists. Then tell what Prabhupada took with him: one suitcase, a bag of dry cereal, an umbrella and 200 sets of his *Srimad Bhagavatams*. He carried the equivalent of \$8.00 with him.
6. You can go into detail with the trip aboard the Jaladuta. Tell of the difficulties Prabhupada went through and read portions of his diary to them.

7. Students can add these dates to their timelines.
8. The next portion of “Your Ever Well-wisher” can be shown stopping at the point where Prabhupada comes to America.

Lesson Four

Prabhupada in the West

1. Chant the verse for the session.
 2. Review briefly last week's lesson bringing the children up to the point where you will begin this week.
 3. You can begin by telling of Prabhupada's arrival in the United States and his stay with the Agarwal family. Pictures from the second volume of the Lilamrta, Planting the Seed, can be shown. Some of the other events you may want to mention (pages noted are from Planting the Seed):
 - His early beginning in New York -- how he stayed with others, wrote, and finally found some interested people who helped him obtain his own place, how he began his preaching (pp. 21-40, 67-144)
 - The first initiation ceremony (pp. 176-185)
 - Deciding to name his society ISKCON and its purposes (pp. 129-135)Expanding his centers to San Francisco and Los Angeles (Only He Could Lead Them pp. 1-20 and In Every Town and Village pp. 7-8, 22-24)
- Mention can be made of Prabhupada's declining health so the students will realize the great sacrifice that Prabhupada made to preach.
4. You can show the next portion of "Your Ever Well-wisher," depicting Prabhupada's preaching in the West. You may want to skip portions to shorten it a bit. Some of the lecture excerpts may be hard for them to understand.
 5. Using a large world map mounted on the wall, the students can put stars on the cities in the United States where ISKCON temples have been started. A list from the BTG can be used.
 6. Students could also be shown a video of Prabhupada speaking -- either a lecture or interview. They listen and, every minute or so, you stop the tape and have them repeat what they heard. This is good practice in listening and also helps them get used to understanding Prabhupada with his accent.

7. Important events and dates that can be added to the students' timelines:
- * 1966 -- The first initiation ceremony in the U.S. and establishing ISKCON as a society
 - * 1967 -- Opening a temple in San Francisco

Lesson Five **Around the World**

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review enough to bring students up to the point you will begin with today.
3. Describe how Srila Prabhupada traveled around the world preaching, initiating devotees and opening temples. Read some excerpts from the Lilamrta about preaching in different countries. Stress that he always kept the printing and distributing of books as his primary goal. (Around the World, pp. 177-297)
4. Describe Prabhupada's return to India with his Western disciples. (In Every Town and Village, pp. 117-193)
5. Students can fill in the rest of the world map with stars placed on the cities having ISKCON temples.
6. Add the important events and dates to timelines.
Some you may want to include:
 - * 1970 Opened temple in London
 - * 1973 Purchased land in Bombay for temple
 - * 1975 Opened temple in Vrindavan
7. Another portion of the video, "Your Ever Well-wisher," can be shown, depicting Prabhupada's travels in India and around the world.

Lesson Six

The Final Lesson

1. Chant the verse for the session.
2. Review briefly, bringing student to the point where you will begin today.
3. Begin by telling of Prabhupada's weakening health in his final months. He was in Hrsikesa in May when his health suddenly became much worse and he requested to return to Vrindavan. He desired to go to London again for preaching but, while there only two weeks, his health took another turn for the worse. After a short stay in Bombay, he returned to Vrindavan. You can read excerpts from the Lilamrta about these days. The students should get some understanding of the emotions Prabhupada's disciples were feeling then. It must also be stressed that in spite of his intense suffering (not being able to eat or drink for months and being too weak to sit up) Prabhupada never stopped his service, never stopped preaching. (Uniting Two Worlds, pp. 389-421)
4. The Vedic custom of placing a saintly person in samadhi should be explained. Pictures of some samadhis can be shown (Samadhis of Vrindavan would be a good source for pictures). Show a picture of Prabhupada's samadhi in Vrindavan.
5. The final portion of the video, "Your Ever Well-wisher," can be shown as it lets us see Prabhupada in his last moments.
6. An explanation of vani and vapu should be given. It should be clear to them that the vani form of association is more important. A guru's instructions can remain within our hearts and be followed even without his physical presence. Tell them of the many disciples of Prabhupada who never had his association, many never having seen him, but still are dedicated to serving him through his instructions.
7. The year of Prabhupada's disappearance, 1977, should be added to their timelines.

8. Great spiritual teachers are honored on their appearance days each year. Explain the custom and significance of Vyasa Puja day. Tell the students that your class will be celebrating a special Vyasa Puja for Srila Prabhupada next week.

9. Give them a complete explanation of how the festival will be celebrated. On the chalkboard write the order of events that will happen in the Sunday School celebration. (For example: 1. Readings; 2. Arati; etc.) The students can write down the schedule in their booklets on Page 34.

If you want them to do something during the week, such as write an offering or bring a gift for Srila Prabhupada, they can record it under "My Duties."

10. A take-home test (Pages 15 and 16) can be given this week OR they can receive credit for the class by writing an offering which will be read next week. If you plan on giving the test in class next week, go over with the students what they will need to know. This isn't necessary if the students take the test home.

Lesson Seven

Celebrating Vyasa Puja

The following are some guidelines and ideas for a Sunday School celebration of Vyasa Puja. Each temple will have different facilities and resources, so adjust, expand, or simplify these ideas as you see fit. Combine all the age groups and let the children work together in different groups. Assign children to groups before class begins so time won't be wasted in choosing groups.

1. Preparation (allow 30-45 minutes)

Students can form groups to work on the following preparations:

- ◆ cut up flowers for puspanjali
- ◆ prepare an offering of fruits or other foodstuffs
- ◆ decorate an altar or table for Srila Prabhupada's picture or murti
- ◆ make garlands for the picture or murti
- ◆ prepare an arati tray

2. The actual festival (allow at least 1 hour)

- ◆ Any gifts that are brought can be placed by the picture or murti.
Students can start by reading their offerings to Srila Prabhupada.
- ◆ After several students have read, puspanjali can be performed (maybe a shortened version). The children should be encouraged to loudly repeat the words.
- ◆ After puspanjali, the offering of bhoga can be brought before Prabhupada and while that is being offered, arati and kirtan can take place. One child should perform arati and if you have a good kirtan leader, let one of the kids lead. Otherwise, have an adult lead so the children will participate nicely and get involved in the kirtan. Be sure that the students offer flowers during the arati, and if you can, have extra garlands made that representatives from each class can offer.
- ◆ After the kirtan, distribute the prasadam. If you are industrious, or better yet, if you have an older student who is, the written offerings could be made into a booklet and given to the children next week.

Name _____

Date _____

Final Quiz

Choose a word from the box to complete the sentences.

Janardhan	acharya	founder	disciple
1896	Ratha Yatra	Vyasa Puja	1932
guru	parampara	Bhaktisiddhanta	print books
preach	Bhaktivinoda	start festivals	1922
Abhay	Jaladuta	Bombay	Vrindavan

1. The chain of guru-disciple-guru-disciple is called _____.
2. Srila Prabhupada was born in _____.
3. Prabhupada was initiated in the year _____.
4. _____ Maharaja was Prabhupada's spiritual master.
5. Another word for student is _____.
6. Prabhupada traveled aboard the ship named the _____ to America.
7. An _____ teaches by example.
8. The celebration of the guru's appearance day is called _____.
9. Because Prabhupada began the organization called ISKCON he is known as its _____.
10. Prabhupada left the world in _____.

Write the answers to the following questions.

11. Name at least two things that you feel are special about Prabhupada.

12. What do you think is Prabhupada's greatest contribution to the world?
Why?

13. What was the name of the magazine that Prabhupada started?

14. Write the translation to the Bhagavad Gita verse 4.34 that you learned in this session.

Just try to learn

15. Why did Prabhupada want to take his Western disciples back to India?
