



School of the Nations Character Development Science Program

The HIDDEN GEMS science program aims to lay a solid foundation for the development of scientific capabilities as children mature. It offers a detailed, step-by-step explanation of core activities, which are designed to be enriched through your creative efforts. Based on the core program, you will be able to develop supplementary visual aids and additional activities that can address the specific needs and interests of the students.

This science program is composed of three units: *The Family*, *The Creation of God*, and *The Human Being*. Each unit is developed through three levels of difficulty corresponding to the age and maturity of the children: 3 year olds, 4 year olds and 5 year olds. For example, the concept of family, beginning with the 3 year olds, looks at the immediate members of the child's family and creates an awareness of the family as a unit held together by different relationships such as obedience, love, respect, courtesy, and cooperation. These relationships are introduced through practical activities according to the children's level of understanding.

In the following year (4 year olds, level 2) the concept of family is extended to include more members such as grandparents. The relationships are understood more fully. The concept of belonging is introduced. Children are then guided to begin to understand that the community (neighborhood) is composed of a number of different families.

The level 3 program, for the 5 year olds, extends all of these concepts to a more profound level. The children practice many skills that, while contributing to their physical development, allow them to contribute actively to the daily life of the family. These include cleaning, organizing toys, washing and drying dishes, and dressing themselves. The orientation given to these activities is especially important. These skills are not learned in isolation as has been done traditionally. The children learn that these skills will allow them to express their love and respect for their parents and siblings. They also learn that in this way they show respect for themselves. They begin to understand that each member of the family must contribute to the strengthening of the relationships that bind the family together.

A similar pattern of development is followed for the other two units, the Creation of God and the Human Being. The scientific concepts in this program are learned as specific skills and behaviors rather than as abstract ideals and concepts. They are learned through drama, role-play, outings, photos, stories, videos, songs, art, and memorization of simple quotes relevant to the subject. These activities stimulate the children's active investigation of the world around them and enable the children to practice some specific skills and to apply the understandings necessary for science.

Concurrent with the emphasis on the development of scientific capability is the emphasis on the development of character found throughout the program. The development of good character is the primary task of educators. Scientific knowledge without good character has little value and can in fact be harmful for the child and for society. For this reason, effort has been made to link the various scientific concepts to their moral and behavioral implications, so that the children will receive an appropriate education.