

ECK Letter of Light Workshop:

Exploring the Gift of Your Spiritual Experiences

FACILITATORS:				
TIME: 60-90 minutes		WHERE:		
Appro	WILL ATTEND: opriate for ECK youth ages 8-17 st wording to suit ages of youth)			
SUPP	LIES NEEDED:			
	Past issue(s) of Letter of Light / if available (Note: RESA may request copies from Youth & Family Services at ESC) Pens Lined paper Spiritual Experiences checklist The Spiritual Laws of Life book		Optional art supplies: Examples of past Letter of Light Word Searches Word search grid template Examples of comic strips from past Letter of Light issues Comic strip template Sketch paper	
	The Spiritual Laws of Life book Youth Ask A Modern Prophet book Yellow index cards/paper for Questions for the Master Youth Contribution Permission Form		Sketch paper Pencils Quality fine-tip colored felt markers or colored pencils	

Spiritual purpose of event:

- To shine a light on the spiritual experiences ECK youth are having and help them recognize or become more aware of the MAHANTA's presence in their lives.
- To give youth an opportunity to exercise their creativity and share their experiences through submissions to *Letter of Light*.

Spiritual benefits:

- Youth get to document their spiritual experiences with the MAHANTA and the Light and Sound of God, to remember them in the future.
- Youth will have fun using their divine creativity.
- Their contributions to *Letter of Light* help ECKANKAR create a dynamic, fun publication that inspires ECK youth around the world!

 $\underline{\text{NOTE}}$: As youth are dropped off for the workshop, request that parents complete a *Letter of Light* Youth Contribution Permission Form.

Step-by-step action plan:

Facilitator Name	Description	Time
Ivalite	Welcome & Introductions	(5 min)
	 Welcome attendees. Introduce facilitators and workshop theme. Ask who has read <i>Letter of Light</i> and invite a youth to share what it is. Build on what they say to cover the following basics: 	2 min
	Letter of Light is a publication created by, for, and about the youth in ECKANKAR. It's a place for you to share your divine creativity and your spiritual experiences with the ECK teachings, the MAHANTA, and the Light and Sound of God. (Hold up and/or pass around a past issue for youth to see).	
	You can create and submit articles, poems, artwork, word puzzles, comic strips, and even ECK book reviews. Something <i>you</i> share could touch and inspire other ECK youth on the other side of the world!	
	There is also special column by Sri Harold, where he answers questions from youth around the world.	3 min
	• Give a brief overview of the workshop:	
	First you'll get a chance to explore some of the special spiritual experiences you've had in ECK, then you can decide what you might like to share and go through the steps to create a great article to submit to the <i>Letter of Light</i> .	
	Next, you'll move to another table/station to create something that can accompany your story or which highlights a spiritual principle or aspect of the ECK teachings. Creations might include: • an art piece to go with your article • a poem • a comic strip • a word search puzzle	
	(NOTE: Have a separate table set up with all of the art supplies and another table for the creation of word puzzles, comic strips, and poems).	
	Finally, you'll have an opportunity to write a question to the Master to submit to the <i>Letter of Light</i> . This is a special gift from the Master to the youth of ECK.	

Discovering and Sharing Your Story	(15 min)
• ECK is a path of personal spiritual experience and the MAHANTA is our guide on this adventure. As we go through the experiences of our life, we learn important spiritual lessons.	2 min
Sri Harold has said:	
"This is the golden contract: that every encounter, without exception, is there to move Soul along spiritually on Its way back home to God. That's every encounter, every event, without exception." —Sri Harold Klemp, ECK Essentials, p. 8	
• What is a contract? (<i>Let youth answer then acknowledge and build on their answers</i>). Right! A contract is basically an agreement. So the golden contract is our agreement as Soul that every experience we have is a part of our spiritual journey. And each experience is a potential story we can share to assist and inspire others.	
• To help you discover what experience you might like to write about, here are a few questions to consider. You can check off the types of experiences you've had on your checklist. (<i>Give each attendee a "Have You Had a Spiritual Experience?" checklist</i>).	5 min
Questions: (Ask for a show of hands or a response and listen enthusiastically to the youth's answers).	
Have you had a dream that helped you in your life?	
Have you had a past life dream or memory?	
Have you ever had a Soul Travel Experience?	
 Have you had an experience with the Light or the Sound? Seen the Blue Light of the MAHANTA? Heard an inner sound that uplifted you? 	
 Have you heard the MAHANTA speak to you or received inner guidance, perhaps through A dream? Waking dreams? Golden-tongued wisdom? (Define terms if necessary). 	
Have you had an experience with an ECK Master, or do you feel a special connection with one of the Masters?	
Have you had an experience from doing a Spiritual Exercise?	3

Has the HU helped you in your life? You can share how!

Have you experienced the MAHANTA's protection? If so, that could be an exciting story.

Has the ECK helped you overcome a fear? You could write about what happened.

Have you had an experience of learning a Spiritual Law?

- Law of Karma
- Law of Gratitude
- Law of Love
- Or any other Spiritual Law?

Has the MAHANTA given you an experience that helped you find spiritual balance in your life? Examples:

- Balancing school work and time to do your spiritual exercises.
- For teens: Balance in use of social media.

If you haven't had any of the experiences listed, you could write a poem or a short book review about your favorite ECK book (sharing the book's title, a favorite quote, what you loved about it, and how it helped you).

Also, if there is a particular type of experience you'd like to have, during your daily spiritual exercises you can ask the Master to help you have that type of experience.

* * *

• With those questions and the golden contract in mind, let's sing *HU* and ask the MAHANTA to light up one of the experiences you've had, that you might want to write about.

2 min

- Lead HU Song.
- <u>Share with neighbor</u>: Invite youth to turn to the person next to them and briefly share any spiritual experience they'd like to, what spiritual lesson they learned from it, and how it helped them.

6 min

The story you just shared with your friend is a perfect starting place and can be the story you write.

Writing Your Story	(25 min)
<u>Ten Minute Writing Exercise:</u> In the next ten minutes, write down the story of your experience. Remember, a good story has a beginning, middle, and end.	10 min
 Write without stopping. Tell what happened, when, with whom, and how. Don't worry about spelling or punctuation right now. Just share your story as if you were telling a friend, as you just did, or as if you are sharing it with the MAHANTA. 	
Congratulations! Your first draft is done!	
Now let's explore a few points that can help you make your story shine even more. We're going to highlight the spiritual principle of your article and look for the ECK features in your story.	
 ECK Feature: This is what makes your story an ECK story. What part of the ECK teachings helped you in your experience? (Let youth call out ideas). Examples: Doing a spiritual exercise Asking the Master for help Working with your dreams Singing HU Working with an ECK Master Seeing the Light or hearing the Sound Working with a past life memory Soul Travel experience Reading an ECK book that helped you 	5 min
Take a moment to go back and add those features into your story if they are not already there. (Help youth do this, if needed).	
 2. Spiritual Principle: What spiritual principle did you learn about in your experience? What was the spiritual lesson you learned? Share examples: Changing your attitude about something (Law of Attitudes) Learning more about gratitude (Law of Gratitude) Experiencing the power of HU (Law of HU) Dealing well with change (Law of Change) Learning balance in your life (Law of Balance) Experiencing the MAHANTA's protection (Law of Protection) Bringing more harmony and love into a friendship or into your family (Law of Love) 	5 min

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Each of these principles reflects a spiritual principle or one of the Spiritual Laws of Life. Help the youth identify the spiritual principle behind their experiences and build it into their stories if it's not already there. (Youth can refer to the book, The Spiritual Laws of Life by Sri Harold Klemp, as needed.) 3. Benefit: What did you learn from the experience? How did learning the spiritual principle or law help you? What change did it bring into your life? Look over and make sure you have included this benefit in your story (usually at the end, though sometimes it can work at the beginning). As attendees complete their stories: • Make sure their full name, age, and state/province/country is legible. • Then have them choose which table they'd like to explore next (see below).	5 min
Creativity Tables (OPTIONAL SECTION – You can omit or adapt as needed)	(35 min)
Invite youth to the tables. Have a facilitator at each table who can encourage the youth's creativity and assist them in visually demonstrating their spiritual principle. Table 1: Art Youth can make a drawing or painting that goes with their story and reflects the spiritual principle in their story. Table 2: Word puzzles, Poems and Comic Strips. Poems: Have pen and paper available for anyone who would like to write a poem about the spiritual principle they identified in their story. (They can also go to Table # 1 to create an art piece to accompany their poem.) Word Puzzles: Show youth examples of Word Searches from past Letter of Light issues. Youth can either use the grid template provided to create a Word Search puzzle or create a different template shape for their puzzle. Remind them to list all of the words to be found, below their puzzle. Also have them write a short introduction about the spiritual principle or theme of their word search. Let them know that they can also go online at home and create ECK crossword puzzles to submit to Letter of Light.	30 min

 Show youth examples of comic strips from past <i>Letter of Light</i> issues. Give them a comic strip template and invite them to create a short comic strip (2-4 boxes) that reflects an aspect of the ECK teachings. Assist the youth in exploring possible aspects of the ECK teachings to illustrate in their comic strip, i.e. karma, reincarnation, dreams, the ECK Masters. Remind them that the comic needs a positive punchline and tone. Let youth know when there are five minutes remaining before the final section of the workshop, so they have time to complete whatever they are making. If time allows, invite the youth to share whatever they've created. 	
F. Overtiens for the Marten	5 min
5. Questions for the Master	(7 min)
{Bring youth back into the large group for this final section.}	2 min
The most special gift we have in ECKANKAR is that we have a living spiritual guide and teacher, the MAHANTA, the Living ECK Master, who can help us find answers to all of our spiritual questions. A lot of times the answer may come from the Master inwardly. Sometimes, he will also answer youth's questions in the Letter of Light. {Show the book Youth Ask A Modern Prophet about Life, Love, and God.} This book is a collection of Sri Harold's answers to youth's questions that were published in the Letter of Light over a period of 20 years. Whenever you have a question you'd like to ask the Master, you can look in this book to see if he has already answered it. You can also submit your questions to Letter of Light. Right now, we're going to give you a few minutes to write down a question you'd like to ask Sri Harold, perhaps about your life or the ECK teachings, or anything else you'd like to ask the MAHANTA. (Hand out a yellow index card to each attendee). • Let youth know they can request that their question be printed anonymously if it is published. (We still need their name, though, in order to obtain their parent's permission). So, if Sri Harold was sitting right here in the room with you (as he is inwardly because the Inner Master is always with us), what question would you ask him about your spiritual life? What do you want to know more about?	5 min

T A	 Let's sing HU a few times and contemplate on what question you'd like to ask. Then, when you know your question, you can write it down on your yellow card. As youth write down their questions, share the following: Your question will always be answered, whether it is answered inwardly or in written form, in a dream, or in some other way. So stay alert for the answer the Master gives you. Make sure youth write their full name, age, and state/province/country on their question.} Release forms: If Releases were not already signed by parents, have everyone fill out a release form which their parents can complete. 	
6. S	Share and Clean Up	(3 min)
S e T	Whenever you'd like to, you can always submit your experiences and your art to the <i>Letter of Light</i> . So, when you go home, we invite you to start looking for the ECK in your daily experiences, at school, with your friends, and at home with your family. The MAHANTA's love and help is always available and, with a little practice through the Spiritual Exercises of ECK, you can discover how God is speaking to you every day!	1 min
	 Thank everyone for participating! Collect all articles, art, poems, comic strips, and word puzzles, to be put with appropriate Release forms. <i>Make sure youth's names are legible</i>. Final clean-up. 	2 min
	TOTAL TIME:	90 mins

After the workshop, please pair each submission with the corresponding release form signed by the parent and send all submissions to:

Letter of Light PO Box 2000 Chanhassen, MN 55317-2000 U.S.A.

Thank you!