

Guidelines for SAI SPIRITUAL EDUCATION



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I. Organizational Structure of the Sai Spiritual Education Program of the USA

Bal Vikas (SSE) is the primary basis for the great movement to restore righteousness (dharma) in the world ... The ideal is to raise a generation of boys and girls who have a clean and clear conscience. The actual syllabus is not so important as the creation of an atmosphere wherein noble habits and ideals can grow and fructify.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Bal Vikas Teacher's Training Camp, 6-6-79

A. The Sai Spiritual Education (SSE) Program

The SSE Program is sustained by the cooperative efforts of the SSE teacher, the Center Education Coordinator, the Regional Education Coordinator, the National Education Coordinator, the Center and the parents.

B. The SSE Teacher

Remember you also have a teacher guiding you and overseeing your service, so you are pupils too; you will learn the lessons of equality, equanimity, and selfless love while acting as teachers.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Bal Vikas Teachers Training Camp 6-6-78

It is expected that each SSE Teacher agrees to:

1. Make a commitment to the ideals of Sri Sathya Sai Baba, and thus be exemplars.
2. Be properly trained as per the guidelines.
3. Prepare and present SSE lessons on a weekly basis.
4. Communicate with parents on a regular basis.
5. Work cooperatively with the Center Education Coordinator, sharing ideas, concerns and problems.

C. The Center Education Coordinator

A coordinator should first lead and work with humility. Then you will earn the right to tell others. Without doing anything yourself, you have no right to tell others.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Overseas Office Bearers Conference, November 20, 1992

1. Be actively involved in the SSE program within the Center.
2. Communicate to the Sathya Sai Center all activities of the SSE classes.
3. Encourage children whose parents attend the Sathya Sai Centers to become a SSE student.
4. Work cooperatively with SSE teachers, parents, center members and the Regional Education Coordinator.
5. Work cooperatively with the center officers in all areas of concern within the center.

D. The Regional Education Coordinator

You are just a coordinator for name's sake only. All are servants. You are a servant of a master, that's all. When the master servant leads, others follow.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Overseas Office Bearers Conference, November 20, 1992

1. Supports the region with SSE teacher training classes as needed.
2. Organizes a minimum of two enrichment workshops for SSE teachers each year.
3. Communicates national information on SSE to Center Education Coordinators, Center Presidents and the Regional President.
4. Works cooperatively with the regional officers in all areas of concern within the region.
5. Supports, guides and inspires all the Center SSE programs, including retreats/conferences, Sathya Sai Birthday celebrations and Children's Day (Easwarama Day).

E. The National Education Coordinator

Do not seek to exercise authority over others, seek rather to discover chances to be useful to them. When you neglect your duty, the positions of authority start causing headaches.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Overseas Office Bearers Conference, November 20, 1992

1. Communicates national news such as teacher trainings, workshops and new materials to the Regional Coordinators and the President of the Sathya Sai Baba Central Council.
2. Is responsible for collecting materials for the SSE curriculum.
3. Helps provide spiritual solutions to problems that might arise in any of the regional areas.
4. As a member of the Sathya Sai Council of America, attends all meetings, keeping the Council informed as to the progress of the SSE Program.
5. Provides support to all ten regions with teacher trainings, new materials, problem solving etc., as the needs arise.

F. The Center and Center President

This organization was started to enable man to lead an ideal life and bring about a transformation in society. There are two factors that can ruin an individual. The first is ego; the other jealousy. Jealousy is a pest and ego a harmful insect. Both can kill a plant. In the tree of human life, jealousy works from inside, and the human quality is hidden. Therefore, in our organization, we should be far away from ego and jealousy and cultivate a broad mind.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Overseas Office Bearers Conference, November 20, 1992

1. Works in a cooperative manner with the Center Education Coordinator.
2. Provides a meeting place for SSE classes when needed.
3. Support SSE classes by keeping the membership informed of classes, parent groups, meeting places, etc.
4. Invites SSE to participate in special programs of the center. Contributes toward SSE materials when needed.
5. Invites the Center Education Coordinator to present an SSE class to the membership occasionally.
6. Is advised to attend one teacher training to become familiar with the program.
7. Works cooperatively with the Center Education Coordinator in problem solving, should problems arise in the SSE program.



II. Sai Spiritual Education Program of the USA

Do not condemn yourselves as petty peddlers of knowledge. You are the makers of the future of humankind! You can make it bright and joyful or dreary and dreadful. You can weaken or strengthen the foundations of life. You are the ray of hope that illumines the dismal night enveloping all countries.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Bal Vikas Teachers Training, Prasanthi Nilayam, August 1983

A. Groups I, II, III and IV

1. Spiritual Objectives by Age Groups

In a very true sense all these Spiritual Objectives carry through from level to level and cannot be called separate. Each Spiritual Objective can be considered a building block for lifelong practice of Spiritual Principles. At the younger ages, the ideas are presented in a simpler form in ways appropriate to the age group. As a child matures the concepts are applied and practiced in increasing depth.

The enumeration of human values as five—Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Nonviolence—is not correct. They are all facets of the foundational humanness. They grow together, they are interdependent and they are not separable.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sanathana Sarathi, February 1985

2. The Group I (Ages 6, 7, 8; Grades 1, 2, 3)

You must examine every story or account that you place before the children from the point of view of individual faith and social harmony. Does this lead the child to a better, more harmonious and more God-oriented life? That is the question you should ask yourself.

Sathya Sai Speaks 9:1, 4
Rajahmundry, January 3, 1974

- a. Develop faith in God, and develop a relationship with God.
- b. Encourage respect for parents, teachers, elders and the environment.
- c. Foster self-esteem and self-discipline.
- d. Nurture truthfulness.
- e. Promote the practice of placing a ceiling on desires.
- f. Cultivate a spirit of loving service to self, family, school and others.

3. The Group II (Ages 9, 10, 11; Grades 4, 5, 6)

Select stories that can be related in some way to the children's background in life. Tell stories that will implant in the mind a genuine disgust for evil sights, evil entertainments, evil deeds and evil habits.

Sathya Sai Speaks 7:69
Dharmakshetra, January 3, 1971

- a. Demonstrate increasing integration of objectives from Group I.
- b. Foster the understanding of Divinity in all.
- c. Develop the faculty of discrimination.
- d. Promote the practice of placing a Ceiling on Desires.
- e. Impart noble ideals.
- f. Foster understanding of the Unity of Faiths.
- g. Encourage the practice of selfless service.

4. The Group III (Ages 12, 13, 14; Grades 7, 8, 9)

Be convinced that there is a God guiding and guarding us. Remember Him with gratitude. Pray to Him to render you pure. Love all, serve all. Keep good company. Visit places of worship and saintly people.

Sathya Sai Speaks 6:1
Guindy, Madras, January 1, 1967

- a. Demonstrate increasing integration of objectives from Group II.
- b. Develop awareness for the *Atmic* reality.
- c. Strengthen moral living.
- d. Emphasize selfless service.
- e. Promote the practice of having a Ceiling on Desires.
- f. Foster a sense of one's role in society.
- g. Facilitate learning to control negative emotions.
- h. Provide practice in applying Spiritual Principles to concerns and challenges faced in the wider community.
- i. Develop communication skills, in oral and written form, that reflect Spiritual Principles.
- j. Develop a spirit of mutual trust and love, especially with parents and peers.

5. The Group IV (Ages 15, 16, 17; Grades 10, 11, 12)

Students must mold themselves into images of their teachers. Teachers must live their message and students must imbibe it and become it. The Atma (Divine Self) is the truth of truths. When one achieves this awareness all knowledge is added unto a person.

Sathya Sai Speaks 9:36
Dharmakshetra, January 6, 1975

- a. Demonstrate increasing integration of objectives from Group III.
- b. Encourage self-motivation and regular routines in spiritual practice.
- c. Establish a sense of the interdependence of self and society; deepen an understanding of one's role in and responsibility to society.
- d. Increase ability to make dharmic choices when facing moral dilemmas.
- e. Demonstrate human values by meeting life challenges with love, confidence, and understanding of others.
- f. Establish habits of non-waste of resources and continue all disciplines of the Ceiling on Desires program, including:
 - Developing keen awareness of the effects one's choices of media, companions, and activities.
 - Deepening the practice of controlling negative emotions.
- g. Foster excellence in all endeavors without straying into egoistic competition.
- h. Apply all aspects of the curriculum, and develop awareness of self as exemplar, through leadership roles.
- i. Provide increasing emphasis on selfless, loving service through participating in local and regional service projects and activities. In addition, initiating service projects with age-group peers.

B. The Curriculum

The word Educare means 'to bring out that which is within'. Deep within every human being are the values---truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence. One cannot acquire them from outside; they have to be elicited from within. People, however, have forgotten human values, so they are unable to manifest them. Educare means to bring out the human values. To bring them out means to translate the human values into action

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Discourse, July 4, 2001

1. The objective of the lesson is to nourish the child's innate spirituality.
2. Lessons are to provide direct experiences of the spiritual principle being taught through group activities that integrate head, heart and hands.
3. Service activities and field trips are essential elements in experiential learning.
4. Supplements in specialized areas can include the following topics:
 - Unity of faiths
 - National and religious holidays
 - Stories and lesson plans from the childhood of Sri Sathya Sai Baba
 - Annotated bibliography of children's literature
 - Lessons using children's literature
 - Service activities and guidelines
 - Biographies

C. Format and Structure

1. Format
 - Om/prayer
 - Devotional singing
 - Repetition of God's Name/silent sitting/meditation
 - Story-telling/lesson
 - Group activity
 - Discussion
 - Project
 - Life application
2. SSE classes should reflect the American culture, all spiritual traditions and the unity of faiths.
3. Many religions are taught in the curriculum. Practices of any one specific religion are not appropriate on a weekly basis. Parents wishing to strengthen their children's faith in the family religion may find a suitable avenue for this in their community.
4. Silent sitting/meditation is to follow the prescribed teachings of Sri Sathya Sai Baba.
5. Parents are to sign a commitment as part of their registration form to oversee that their children attend classes punctually and regularly. Rewards and incentives should be offered for excellent attendance.
6. Boys and girls sit separately in all classes.
7. Where possible, Group III and Group IV classes should be separate for males and females.
8. Where possible, Group III and Group IV female classes should be taught by a woman and male classes by a man.
9. Classes should meet weekly for 1 hour or more, as needed.
10. There is no SSE class for children under the age of six. Children of five years old may be included in Group I if they are in the first grade and will turn six during the year.
11. Where there are many children below the age of six, a child care play group could be a service of the Sathya Sai Center for ages four and five, but these children should not be a part of programs presented by the SSE classes. This is more of a child-sitting service for parents with older children in the SSE classes.
12. Small Centers: Flexibility needs to be exercised for small Centers with few students and teachers. Decisions regarding exceptions to the guidelines, such as students' age, group placement and length or particular arrangement of the class, should be made jointly by the parent, teacher, Center Education Coordinator and the Regional Education Coordinator.



III. Parental Involvement and Parent Groups

Parents must feel that they are servants appointed by the Lord to tend the little souls that are born into their households; as the gardener tends the trees in the garden of the master.

Sathya Sai Speaks 1:70
Nellore, July 25, 1958

A. Purpose, Goals and Objectives

1. Provide a meaningful channel of communication and to encourage mutual support between parents and SSE teachers.
2. Enhance, reinforce, and integrate at home what the children are experiencing and learning in the SSE class.
3. Build a strong sense of family and community within the Sathya Sai Center, encouraging activities in which children, parents, and members may participate.
4. Assist parents to incorporate Sri Sathya Sai Baba's teachings into parenting practice.

B. Structure, Format and Procedure

1. A yearly orientation meeting and opportunity for parents to share concerns and ask questions should be held at the commencement of the program.
2. All parents are encouraged to participate in a parent group.
3. Center Education Coordinator assumes the responsibility to regularly assess the progress of the parent group and to organize, facilitate and disseminate information as to time, location, purpose, content and format of the group's meeting.
4. Parent groups should meet at least once a month to ensure a meaningful dialogue on topics that are mutually agreed upon.
5. A facilitator may be agreed upon, or that function may be rotated. An occasional workshop by a Sai devotee who has expertise in parenting may be provided.
6. Where possible, the parent group participates in the opening SSE devotional session and reunites with the teachers and children following classes. This provides time for an explanation of what has transpired and for clarification of application activity.
7. Since all Sai devotees are “parents” in the Sai Family and the Human Family, a meeting should be held at least twice a year at all Centers that have a SSE program to inform members, encourage participation, share ideas and experience a SSE lesson.
8. Information concerning Sai Center education activities, including parent group activities, should be reported to the Regional Education Coordinator on a continual basis.

C. Mutual Commitment and Responsibilities of SSE Teachers and Parents

Parents and teachers have a duty to see that children are brought up along right lines through love, precept and if necessary, corrective measures...It is because parents and teachers fail to enforce discipline that students behave in the most irresponsible ways and indulge in disorder and violence.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Sanathana Sarathi, March 1984, page 62

1. The teacher shall provide a spiritual and experiential educational program through which the child may develop their divine human nature, following the guidelines of the SSE program in cooperation with the Sathya Sai Center.
2. The parent agrees to reinforce the goals and objectives of the SSE program in the home, to see that the SSE student attends regularly and to participate as often as possible in regularly scheduled SSE activities.
3. The parent is invited to arrange with the SSE teacher occasional visits to the SSE Class.
4. Teachers meet with parents to discuss their child's progress.
5. Teachers should regularly inform parents about the goals and objectives for the class through lesson plans, written communications or any other means that is mutually acceptable to teacher and parent.



IV. Education, Training and Support for SSE Teachers

The teacher has the greatest role in molding the future of the country. Of all professions, teaching is the noblest, the most difficult, and the most important. The teacher should be an example to the pupils. If a teacher has a vice, thousands are polluted. If the teacher is dedicated and pure, thousands of children will be improved and the nation will gain from educated men and women of character.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Teacher Training Camp, Prasanthi Nilayam, August 1983

A. Training Guidelines for New Teachers: A total of four days training

1. The teacher training should be offered each year and should reflect the needs and format of all four group levels.
2. New teachers should attend a two-day teacher training on the basic principles of Sai Education. Where it is not possible to conduct the first basic training on two consecutive days, they may be divided into two separate days, but both should precede the two enrichment workshops.
3. New teachers should attend two subsequent “enrichment” workshops during the year. These workshops should focus on additional teaching techniques and materials to be used in the SSE Classes.
4. New teachers should observe and assist a veteran teacher with a class for at least four to six sessions before beginning to teach.
5. A new teacher should be assisted, when possible, by a veteran teacher as a mentor for the first year of teaching.
6. New teachers should periodically observe classes on each of the four group levels.
7. A certificate of completion should be issued by the Regional Education Coordinator indicating attendance at the teacher training and the two enrichment workshops.
8. Substitute teachers should complete the same course as the new teacher.

B. Training Guidelines for All Teachers

1. Teachers should attend the two “enrichment” trainings offered each year (these are the same additional days that new teachers attend).
2. Teachers should continue to observe classes at all four group levels.
3. Teachers should work collaboratively, as needed, with the Center Education Coordinator.

C. Supportive Activities and Resources

1. There should be monthly meetings to promote open communication between teachers and the Center Education Coordinator to share ideas, successes, concerns, plans, etc.
2. Resources available are publications such as the Sanathana Sarathi, Sathya Sai Newsletter USA, lesson plans, audio and videos.

D. Problem-solving Procedure

If two teachers quarrel or become unfriendly, both should be removed. No inquiry is necessary; we condemn both for having been involved. One poisonous insect can destroy an entire crop.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba
Teacher Training Camp, Prasanthi Nilayam, August 1983

Step 1:

The teacher discusses the problem with the individuals who are directly involved to find harmonious resolution.

Step 2:

The Center Education Coordinator is consulted, if necessary, and communication is continued until there is harmonious resolution.

Step 3:

The Center President may be requested to assist, etc.

Step 4:

The Regional Education Coordinator is consulted and brings the matter to the attention of the Regional President.

Step 5:

The National Education Coordinator is consulted and brings the matter to the attention of the National President.

