

Sai Spiritual Education

National Online SSE Program

USA

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Om Sri Sairam

The online SSE program was piloted in the SSE school year 2011-2012 with students who do not have access to a local SSE program. Since then the program has been expanded to allow students from any part of the USA to register for each subsequent year.

Please see the following documents for details about the program:

1. National Online SSE Program - [Memorandum from Berniece Mead](#)
2. National Online SSE Program - [Application form for new students](#)

Students applying to the program include those from the following types:

- a. Families with SSE age children who do not have access to a nearby Sai center.
- b. Children who do not have a program for their age group offered at the Sai center they attend.
- c. Children who have a conflict with the program at their Sai center and have an understanding between their coordinator and the coordinator of the Online program.
- d. Coordinators who would like to offer a part of their SSE program online. In this case we have to work with the Regional, and National coordinators to define the process for enrollment and work out the details of the program.

New students are enrolled on a quarterly basis starting from Sept. Thus, we accept new students at the beginning of Sept, Dec, and March for each school year. The minimum commitment is one trimester and students have to be enrolled for the period of 3 months at least with regular attendance. Students may choose to skip a trimester at any time and return back to the program in a subsequent trimester.

There are no classes during summer (June, July, August). Either during the summer or during winter break we will organize a face to face camp for the students to meet and have satsang together.

3. SSE Program -- [Parents' Pledge](#)

Main contact : National Online SSE Coordinator:

Faranak Khandadia.

Email: fckhandadia@hotmail.com

There are several email mailing lists used for the program including the following:

- a. Student's mailing list - onlinestudents@googlegroups.com
- b. Parents mailing list - onlineparents@googlegroups.com
- c. Teachers mailing list - onlineteachers@googlegroup.com
- d. Mentors mailing list - onlinementors@googlegroup.com
- e. Overall mailing list - onlineall@googlegroups.com

Program Coordinator

The coordinator is responsible for the overall program design, resource development, training, admissions, and quality assurance. The coordinator works with the following people:

1. National SSE Coordinator to approve the program, its continued development, and changes needed to ensure program effectiveness.
2. Program team to develop and manage the resources.
3. Parents who are interested in joining the program with their children.
4. Teachers assigned to teach the various groups as well as special classes.
5. Mentors in developing and encouraging projects.
6. Regional and center SSE coordinators to reach out to students who are in need of the program.

Srinivas Raghavan is **National SSE Coordinator** (saispiritualeducation.us@gmail.com) reachable by phone at +1-858-863-6108.

Faranak Khandadia is the **National Online SSE program Coordinator** and can be reached at 904-610-2221 or via email at fckhandadia@hotmail.com

Classes

The online program is for students in SSE Groups I, II, III, and IV which are equivalent grades of 1st - 12th in the K-12 educational system as commonly practiced in the USA.

SSE Group	School Grades (1-12)
Group I	1st, 2nd, 3rd
Group II	4th, 5th, 6th
Group III	7th, 8th, 9th
Group IV	10th, 11th, 12th

Special Needs	1st-12th
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Classes are on Saturdays and Sundays and meet approximately 9-10 times per trimester which is ~3 times per month. This allows for special holidays and holy-days in the calendar year. Classes are for 1 hour and held online using either **www.gotomeeting.com** or **Google+ hangouts** which offer interactive and live video conference capability. Students (or parents) need to have a gmail account set up for Google+. The class hangout is usually titled "Online SSE Class".

Lessons are based on the 5 values (Truth, Right Action, Peace, Love, Non-Violence) and the 5 teaching techniques. We use online collaborative tools (e.g., Google Docs, Doodle, SlideShare, YouTube, Vimeo, and many more) to enhance our class and activities.

Parent Group

Twice in each trimester we have the parent group meeting for 2 hours. The goal of this meeting is to share lessons learnt from the practice of Swami's teachings. It also serves as a discussion forum for Sai parenting so parents can learn from each other and from Swami's teachings about questions that commonly arise in raising the children with values. It is highly recommended that parents attend these meetings.

Parents are requested to join our whatsapp study groups. Parents will need to download the whatsapp app for this activity. Through this group, teachers and parents constantly interact and discuss Swami's teachings with an emphasis on practicing them in day-to-day living so that the children can emulate them.

Teachers

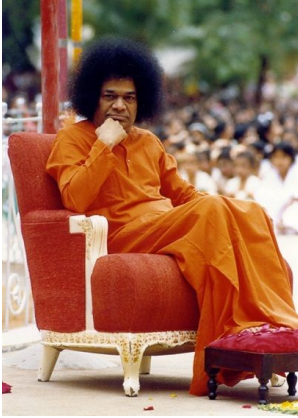
SSE teachers must have completed the teacher training and certification program offered in the USA and have experience teaching or assisting with an SSE program. Teachers will work with the National Online SSE coordinator to prepare and review suitable lesson plans appropriate to the student group. **Teachers will receive additional training and certification by the program coordinator to ensure they are fully equipped to work with the National Online SSE class.**

Teachers are the source of inspiration for the children and the families in the program. Hence they must embody the very values and principles they teach. Teachers select values they have practiced consistently before teaching a lesson on it. This ensures the teacher has experienced and understands the nuances of practice prior to teaching. Thus the program itself is designed to be an enriching experience for the teachers and students.

It is interesting to note that the entire program is virtual and does not require physical

co-location. Thus, students and teachers all come together online.

Practice Areas



“Swami stands for practical science, not platform speeches. You need not do a lot, but at least practice one teaching. When you practice even one sincerely, you will be redeemed.”

-- Sai Baba (July 27, 2002)

Swami emphasizes the value of practicing His teachings. The Online SSE program places a strong emphasis on teaching the children how to practice by providing guidance, structure, and mentorship as they get started on this path of spiritual discipline. The goal is to help students integrate Swami into every aspect of their daily lives and thereby creating a rich, engaging, and practical relationship with Him.

Students and their families spend most of their time in the following contexts which we have created as practice areas to work on integrating Swami into their lives:

1. **Sai at Home**

Students, especially in their early years spend a considerable amount of their time at home with their parents, siblings, and others. Some families who have a long relationship with Swami and His teachings already integrate Swami at home primarily through worship or devotional activities.

In this practice area students learn about the following:

- a. What makes a good home?
- b. Swami’s teachings about how we should live at home?
- c. Swami’s personal example of his time at home when He was young?
- d. How to integrate Swami and practice His teachings at home?

2. **Sai at School**

Students in the online SSE program are already attending school (grade 1 - 12) and spend a considerable amount of time at their school location, with school teachers, friends, and related activities including homework.

In this practice area students learn about the following:

- a. Who is a good student?
- b. How to be an exemplary student?
- c. Stories of Swami's days as a school student
- d. Stories & lessons from Swami's students in the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning from primary school to postgraduate studies.
- e. How to integrate Swami and practice His teachings in the context of school.

3. **Sai in the Community**

Swami has said the first letter in the word SAI stands for "Service" to the community. Students in the SSE program have a role to play in the community as they interact with their neighbors, friends, and others. They have many opportunities to exemplify and practice Swami's teachings in the context of their community.

In this practice area students learn about the following:

- a. How to set an example in the community?
- b. Swami's personal example of service to the society
- c. Stories and lessons from Swami's students' service in the areas of providing free education (Sathya Sai Vidya Vahini), medical (Sathya Sai hospitals & mobile care), and water (Sathya Sai water project) as well as the Grama Seva initiatives.
- d. How to integrate Swami and practice His teachings in the community context?

4. **Sai in the Center**

The students spend some time at the Sathya Sai Baba center and other spiritual/religious centers (e.g., Temple, Gurudwara, Synagogue, Church, Mosque, etc). Swami has emphasized the unity of all faith and religion of love. Thus, it is important for the students to learn and practice His message in the context of the center.

In this practice area students learn about the following:

- a. Swami's message of the unity of all faiths and the common thread in the teachings of the various religions
- b. Stories and examples from Swami's life where He has talked about the celebrated the festivals from all faiths
- c. Learn about the universal message and power of love
- d. How to integrate and practice His teachings in the context of the center?

5. **Personal Sai**

Students spend time alone and during these times they depend on their inner strength. Developing an inner connection and relationship with Swami is essential to develop their self-confidence. Since the foundation of character is self-confidence, it is important for the students to learn and practice His message in this personal context.

In this practice area students learn about the following:

- a. Pathways to approach and relate to the Divine (I am in the Light, Light is in me, I

am the Light)

- b. Stories and examples from Swami's life about developing an inner connection and relationship with Him
- c. Stories and examples from Swami's students about their relationship and connection with Swami
- d. How to build awareness, communicate, foster, and develop a continued inner connection with Swami?

6. **Sai at Work**

In some cases the older students spend some time in a work context. However, this context is highly relevant to the parents as they spend a considerable amount of their time at work. It is important to learn Swami's message about the workplace and the way we should conduct ourselves in it.

In this practice area students/parents learn about the following:

- a. Swami's guidance as regards to selecting and working in the workplace (e.g., work is worship, duty is God)
- b. Examples and lessons to be learnt from Swami's personal work ethic and style of conducting business
- c. Examples and stories shared by His devotees and other parents about understanding the work/life balance
- d. How to understand and practice His message at work?

Lessons

Our program has lessons of the following kinds in each of the focus areas I.e., Sai at Home, School, Community, Spiritual Center, and Personal Sai :

1. Awareness lessons – e.g., about Swami or Jesus as spoken by Swami (see the video uploaded titled [Jesus on Vimeo](#)).
2. Instructional lessons – these are "how to" e.g., preparing for examinations as per Swami's guidance.
3. Inspirational Lessons – the teacher takes a topic/value and shares their own personal experience about practicing the value and also the experience of famous people who have done the same. It can also be studying the lessons we can learn from the lives of great people who have lived a life of character and achievement.

The goal of the lessons is to move the children from

Information → Awareness → and through Inspiration → Experience → Sharing

Offline Student Forums

Online SSE groups 2, 3, and 4, students are offered an opportunity to work together offline on many interesting subjects of contemporary relevance. These are trimester-based short projects. Offline forums are moderated by a student leader and a teacher mentor. Certificates of completion are awarded to students who successfully complete the project for the trimester.

Service

Service is one of the major emphasis of our National Online SSE program. Our teachers suggest many areas of service where the children can participate. Service activities are monitored by parents. This is one of the commitments we expect from our students and parents. Swami's life message has always been: Service to man is service to God.

Active Learning - Projects

In order to help with the practice we have projects in our classes. In this way we will get theory and practical instruction for the children.

Students can participate in projects which are at three levels.

Level 1 (Beginner) - Typically this involves learning and practicing by yourself alone.

Level 2 (Intermediate) - In addition to practicing it yourself it must be relevant and agreeable to be practiced by a small group (e.g., family)

Level 3 (Advanced) - The project will be applicable and relevant to the entire community (e.g., Sai center or society)

Some of the projects we have done in the past are as follows:

1. Trees of Love (www.treesoflove.org)
2. Write your own prayer which you would be comfortable saying every day. A second level up of this project is to write a prayer that you and your family would be comfortable saying every day.
3. Design your own personal "Swami Space" where you would feel comfortable speaking and sharing with Him. A second level up of this project is to design it such that you and your family would be comfortable with it.
4. Human Eye 2.0 — In this project you have been asked to submit a proposal to God for re-designing the Human Eye in the 2.0 version of Human Being where you can eliminate the defects and ensure that the Human Eye only sees good! In this way the next gen human would be at a greater advantage. This project makes you think about the qualities of the human eye, explore what "seeing good" means, and how one can only see good and then redesign the human eye system.
5. Take a collection of Swami's photos and annotate it in the following way: If you were in Swami's shoes looking out through His eyes what would you be thinking or saying in that scene? Each picture should be notated with a short statement at the bottom of what you

believe Swami would be saying in your own words. The more we think and act like Swami the more we become like Him.

The goal of the project is to make it practical to learn through application of the principles.

Communication

At the end of each project it is important for the children to present their project so they learn to communicate their inner experience and present their true identity.

The goal is to take the students through all the steps given below:

1. Instruction --> Inspiration --> Practice (Lesson)
2. Practice --> Experience --> Sharing (Project)
3. Communicating in a formal way the impact of the experience on their own life and the lives of others who they touched (Communication)

Class Schedule for 2016-2017

Grp	Class Time (EST)	Teachers
I	Sunday 3pm -4:00 pm	Faranak Khandadia, Ira Sudan
II	Sunday 1:30pm - 2:30pm	Priya Mehta, Archana Patel
III	Saturday (Girls) 1:45pm-2:45pm	Geeta Reid, Haripriya Rao
III	Sunday (Boys) 12:00pm-1:00pm	Isaac Nevas, Satyam Mehta
IV	Sunday(Girls) 4:30pm-5:30pm	Veena Mehta, Ranjani Iyer
IV	Sunday (Boys) 6:00pm-7:30pm	Srinivas Raghavan, Hari Sudan
	Special Needs	Laxmi Vyakaran

The master schedule for 2016-2017 can be accessed [here](#).

Resources & References

1. Swami's historic [letter to His brother](#) Seshama Raju
2. Stories on [Namasmarana](#) from Chinna Katha
3. Message of the Lord [Episode 1](#) from Radio Sai
4. Message of the Lord on Radio Sai ([Archive](#))
5. [Glory of His Divinity](#) from Radio Sai
6. Sathya Sai Speaks : [Role of Avatars, SSS v23:26](#)
7. [Search engine](#) for Sathya Sai Baba discourses
8. [Trees of Love](#) online website
9. Sathya Sai Baba [school of Toronto](#), Canada