

Group 4 Teacher Guidelines on Themes 2015



First Year :

1. Swami's Teen Years

The guru has to study the early life of Swami and be very knowledgeable about it. Books like Sathyam Shivam Sundaram, HIStory, Thapovanam, etc would give you a fair insight into His early years. Although we encourage the children to read these books, the guru must have a deep understanding of these so that he/she is able to bring out appropriate inspiring examples of Swami's life during the course of lessons. It is important that we have knowledge of the life of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba so that we understand the nature of who this avathar is and what He had come for.

By covering the early life of Swami, particularly the His teenage years, we give the students an opportunity to reflect and compare against their own lives. This will help set higher ideals for them and realize that spirituality does indeed start at an early age. It aims to create a better awareness and bring out deeper levels of thinking within the students.

2. The 9 Point Code of Conduct

The 9 Point Code of Conduct is a wonderful transformation tool that gives us an opportunity to measure up to see how we fair with regards to what is expected of us. From all of Swami's teachings and guidelines, these 9 points are summarized to quality us to be "true members of the organisation" as explained in the preamble.

If applied correctly, it is a tool that guides our journey from the aspect of "I, to We and finally to He".

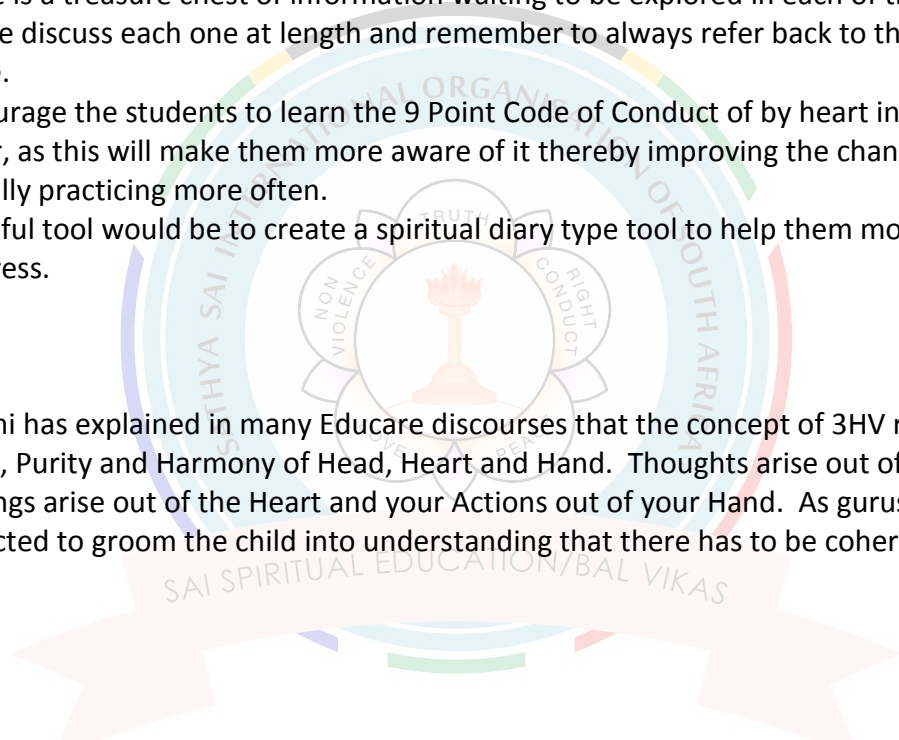
There is a treasure chest of information waiting to be explored in each of the 9 points so please discuss each one at length and remember to always refer back to them as a guide.

Encourage the students to learn the 9 Point Code of Conduct of by heart in the correct order, as this will make them more aware of it thereby improving the chances of them actually practicing more often.

A useful tool would be to create a spiritual diary type tool to help them monitor their progress.

3. 3HV

Swami has explained in many Educare discourses that the concept of 3HV refers to the Unity, Purity and Harmony of Head, Heart and Hand. Thoughts arise out of the Head, Feelings arise out of the Heart and your Actions out of your Hand. As gurus, we are expected to groom the child into understanding that there has to be coherent harmony



between our thoughts, feelings and action. This is an over arching theme throughout all 3 years and appropriate examples should come out during lessons – including the many examples from Swami’s life.

Remember, there could be Unity and Harmony but there also has to be Purity which is extremely important.

Eg, a wicked person may dislike somebody and could plan on inflicting pain on them, in that case, his thoughts, feels and action can have unity and harmony – but their No Purity. This aspect needs to be clearly explained to the students for them to understand the essence of this theme and the need to establish, Unity, Purity and Harmony of Thoughts, Feelings and Action.

This can be brought out by examples, discussions, questions on stories, etc.

4. Developing Study Skills

Understanding that the main focus for most children in Group 4 is to pass their exams well. Depending on the age of the child, their stress is usually around the course subjects that they need to choose, their matric year or entrance acceptance into university, college, etc

Under this theme/topic, we aim to guide the student through this (usually stressful) phase of their life by teaching them how to manage the stress via systematic planning and time management techniques. You are welcome to bring in external field experts to assist in this area if necessary.

Also Note : when handling this topic, remember to integrate it with spiritual practices (practical spirituality) – by bringing in the importance of diet, meditation, practice of silence, physical exercise, etc as tools to aid the study process.

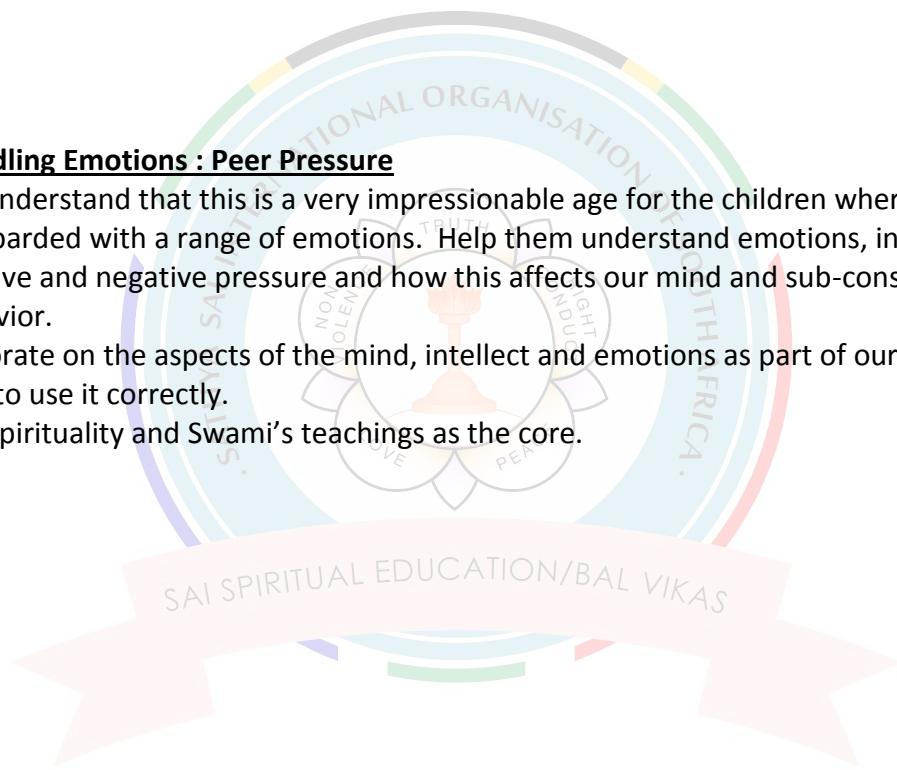
Swami has shared many detailed techniques with his students which were covered in many discourses and the books entitled My Dear Students – be sure to use these as references.

5. Handling Emotions : Peer Pressure

We understand that this is a very impressionable age for the children where they are bombarded with a range of emotions. Help them understand emotions, including positive and negative pressure and how this affects our mind and sub-conscious behavior.

Elaborate on the aspects of the mind, intellect and emotions as part of our make-up and how to use it correctly.

Use spirituality and Swami’s teachings as the core.



6. Health

Health is an important theme that will cross against many discussions through Group 4. It is important for the children to understand the physical and spiritual benefits of optimizing their health. This exciting and colourful topic can only come to life once the teacher explores all options in order to set the foundation/understanding in the students's mind.

Bring samples of food into the class, use scientific facts and figures to explain effects, use videos, pictures, etc to drive home your point.

Caution - There is a lot of literature available on this subject, however, be sure to specifically use Swami's messages and discourses as the base. Example, some dieticians talk of the benefits of diary products, particularly cheese and milk – however Swami advises that we should avoid cheese and reduce milk – Gurus need to be aware of this in order to avoid sending mixed/confusing messages to the children.

Make your classes fun by bringing in exercise into the class. You are also welcome to bring in a dieticians, fitness trainers, or other experts in the health field.

7. Environment / Society

It is acknowledged that we live in a “fast paced” world that is driven by media and marketing which trains us to only be satisfied with a product until the new version comes out. This medium trains us to feed our desires as opposed to control them. Use examples from our environment, media and society to stimulate discussions on the effect of this “throw away” society that we are fast becoming. Identify and discuss healthy ways in which we can step out of this cycle or avoid being caught up in this world of consumerism.

8. Leadership

Leadership builds character. During this year, focus on Swami as a leader. Explore the qualities of a good leader and discuss the reasons for Swami doing some of the things He did, eg lead from the front. Cover discourses and examples where Swami teaches us to work within our means and abilities. A good example that comes to mind is an instance where all of the adults were engaged in a huge service activity and the little balvikas children were just sitting around as they were too little to engage in that activity, when Swami saw this, He used it as an opportunity to teach them service and asked them to at least serve water to those adults who are engaged in the service activity.

A good leader is one who is selfless in nature – always looking for the benefit of the greater majority. Discuss the aspect of : To Be, To See, To Do and then Tell.

Spend this year discussing the qualities of a Good Leader and ways of developing those qualities. A recommended book to read is The MahaVakiya of Leadership and Man Management.

Second Year:

1. Swami as a Role Model

This is a continuation of the discussions from first year – however with more detail and life examples. You are free to discuss world role models in general however be sure to list all attributes of Swami as the perfect role model under any situation. The guru needs to have a sound knowledge of the life of Swami in order to bring out examples from His life.

Discuss the qualities and actions of Swami.

2. Loving Relationships

Swami speaks about love in almost all of his discourses – so love is the basis of everything. This can be integrated with points 7 & 8 of the 9 Point Code of Conduct – where it urges you to speak loving and not ill of others – these foster Loving Relationships.

More importantly, we need to bring out the necessity of maintaining loving relationships with our parents and elders. Swami often stresses the point of us never being able to repay the debt we owe to our parents. It is imperative that children learn this from a young age. During the course of discussions, if you establish that there may be strained relationships between students in your class and parents – offer suggestions to help the situations. Be sure to follow up on these one-on-one out of the class.

We can stimulate discussion via the medium of role play or watching selected video clips and discussing thereafter. Swami has been a role model for us in this area too so do not be shy to take examples from His life story - not just about His parents and grandfather but other elders (eg Subahma) as well.

Be sure to monitor the students' progress in this area – even after you have completed your lesson.

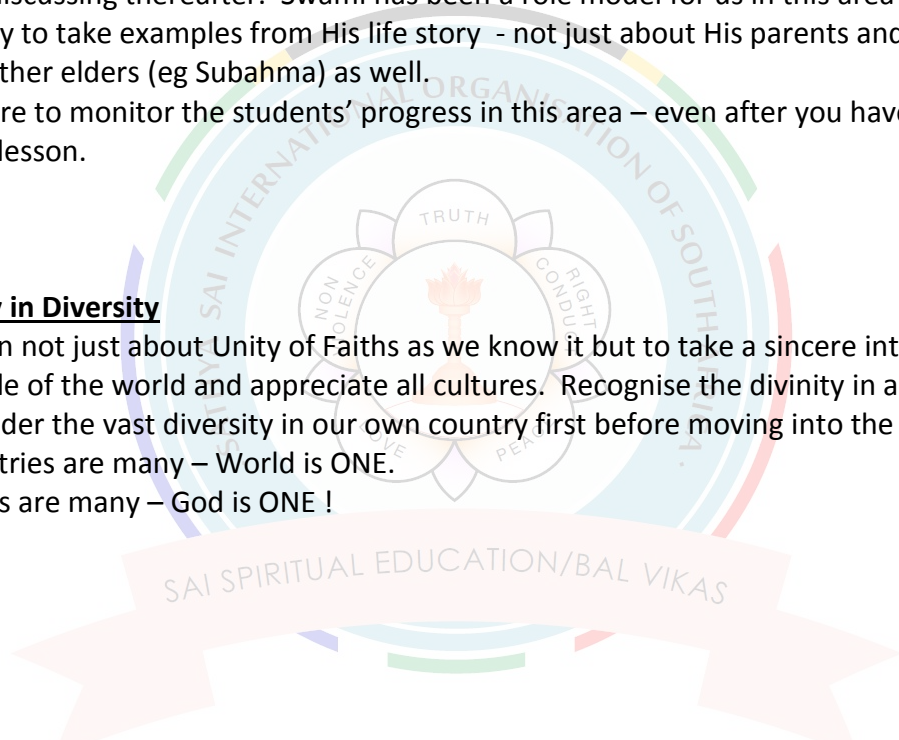
3. Unity in Diversity

This is not just about Unity of Faiths as we know it but to take a sincere interest in all people of the world and appreciate all cultures. Recognise the divinity in all.

Consider the vast diversity in our own country first before moving into the world.

Countries are many – World is ONE.

Forms are many – God is ONE !



4. Ceiling on Desires

Refer back to the 9 Point Code of Conduct discussion that you had in First Year. Understand that Swami has not given us the Ceiling on Desires Programme to help us save or generate money. This is a specific tool to help us on our journey of realizing God.

Remember : Man – Desires = God

The purpose of the SSE programme is to help the child realize that they are God and the COD Programme is a wonderful tool to guide you there.

In doing so, the teacher can also discuss the aspect of how desires grow on the mind and how having control of our senses will help us limit our desires.

This topic can easily be integrated with themes you discussed last year, including : Environment/Society/Branding/Marketing/Consumerism.

5. Balance in Nature

Discuss the need to maintain balance in nature and the elements – use scientific facts and figures. Show our inter-dependence on the 5 elements. Talk about the divinity latent within the elements, therefore abuse to the elements amounts to abuse towards God – teach the child to understand this.

Discuss the environmental problems we are facing in the world and identify practical ideas that we can adopt in our lives (homes / school / community) to help reduce our carbon footprint.

Remember to discuss the spiritual component to this.

This is a good topic to serve a project to be handled individually or in groups where they identify possible environmental issues and research possible/practical ways of remedying it.

6. Handling Emotions

Further from our discussions in First Year, we need to delve deeper into the issues surrounding our children and the control of their emotions. Identify the areas that cause the stress and discuss practical ways of handling them. Understand that you get Good and Bad pressure and discuss how you identify between the two.

Keep in mind what Swami says about the company you keep – and how this contributes. Also understand that they are at an age group where their hormones are developing and they are finding their own identity. Help them understand the value of thinking first (integration of 3HV) and not acting on impulse.

When placed in difficult situations, remind them to tap into Swami’s energy by asking “What would Swami be happy with ?”

7. Health

Continuing from your health related discussions in First Year and the importance of maintaining a healthy body and healthy mind in order to achieve success in life. This year, we are going to go further by talking about Habits, Addictions and Recreational Activity.

Discuss the beneficial activities that would aid our pursuit of achieving a healthy body and mind. Talk about the long term harmful effects of alcohol and drugs in particular – lessons could be enhanced by providing factual material on the subject, discussing real life case studies of people in their age groups who took to drugs and how it ruined their life – show videos, etc.

Always provide healthy alternatives or suggestions of keeping away from these bad habits. Discuss the negative effect it has on the mind – including the addictions to food, cellphones, television, etc.

Discuss choosing the correct type of Recreational Activity and how this could help stimulate, develop and balance both the left and right hemispheres of the brain.

8. Environment / Society

We are an integral part of society and the environment that we live in – home, school, neighbourhood. Discuss how Society and the Environment shapes and moulds our character and who we are or become.

Discuss good and bad company and how it affects us today and the future. Stimulate discussions on how to identify Good and Bad company and ways of avoiding or keeping away from bad company.

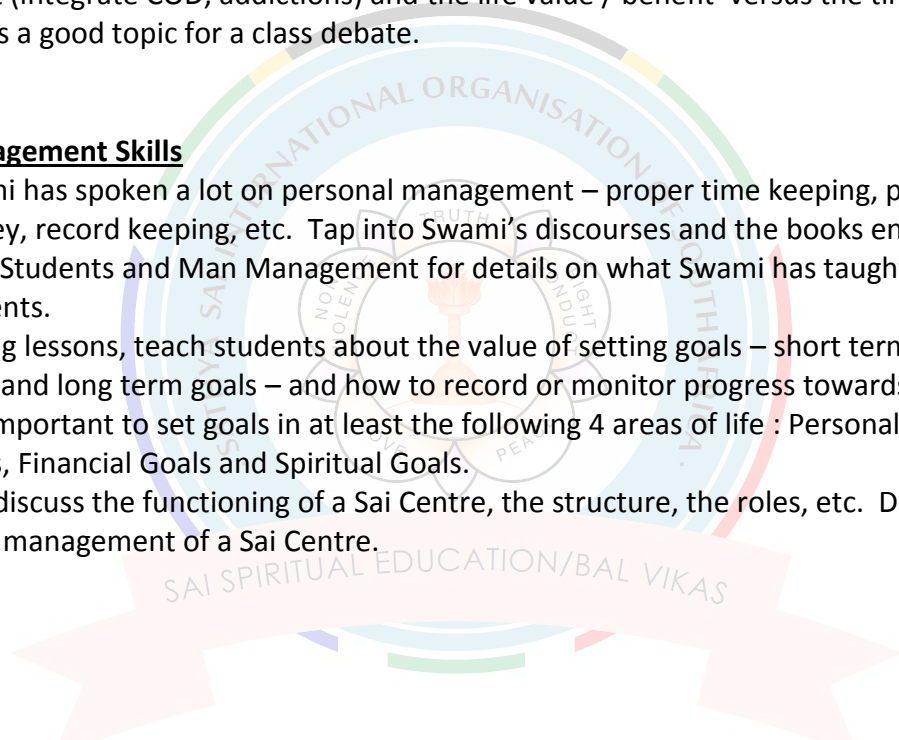
Discuss their involvement or participation in Online Chat Groups, Whatsapp, BBM, and other social media. Accept that these could be beneficial if used correctly. Discuss time spent (integrate COD, addictions) and the life value / benefit versus the time spent. This is a good topic for a class debate.

9. Management Skills

Swami has spoken a lot on personal management – proper time keeping, proper use of money, record keeping, etc. Tap into Swami's discourses and the books entitled My Dear Students and Man Management for details on what Swami has taught to His students.

During lessons, teach students about the value of setting goals – short term, medium term and long term goals – and how to record or monitor progress towards the goals. It is important to set goals in at least the following 4 areas of life : Personal Goals, Health Goals, Financial Goals and Spiritual Goals.

Also discuss the functioning of a Sai Centre, the structure, the roles, etc. Discuss the basic management of a Sai Centre.



Discuss the Home environment and discuss the running or management of a house – expenses cannot exceed income (integrate with budgeting from COD lesson). Children should not be too demanding with regards to things they need their parents to buy for them – in terms of branded clothing, latest cellphones, etc, etc. Discuss the roles and duties of all members of the household.

10. People Skills

One of the character traits of a good leader is one who has excellent People Skills. Discuss ways of effective communication, including body language, dress, speaking and listening.

An effective way is to highlight a few good leaders, in picture or preferable videos of them giving a speech and discuss each of the areas to take note of in their personal presentation and speech itself. By looking at a picture, you would be able to take notice of their dressing, posture, etc. and the video will show their presentation styles, tones of voice, eye contact, facial expression, etc. Establishing good people skills is a mark of a good leader so the teacher should always look for opportunities to bring this out in their students.

Third Year

1. Swami's Activities for the Welfare of Humanity

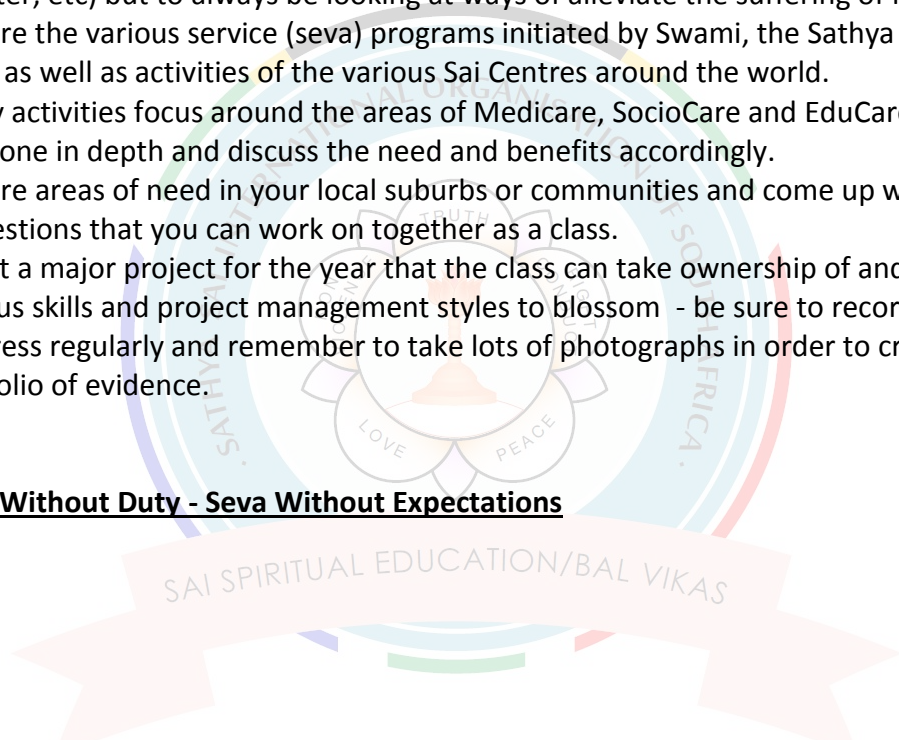
This theme introduces the students to a deeper sense of engaging in service activities for the welfare of humanity at large. Not just in a time of urgent need (as in natural disaster, etc) but to always be looking at ways of alleviate the suffering of fellow man. Explore the various service (seva) programs initiated by Swami, the Sathya Sai Central Trust as well as activities of the various Sai Centres around the world.

Many activities focus around the areas of Medicare, SocioCare and EduCare – explore each one in depth and discuss the need and benefits accordingly.

Explore areas of need in your local suburbs or communities and come up with suggestions that you can work on together as a class.

Adopt a major project for the year that the class can take ownership of and allow their various skills and project management styles to blossom - be sure to record the progress regularly and remember to take lots of photographs in order to create a portfolio of evidence.

2. Love Without Duty - Seva Without Expectations



Is a topic / theme introduced to bring out the selfless nature in the student. Linked to the topic above, explore what Swami received in return for all the seva programs that He started.

Discuss the aspect of Oneness and help students recognize the same divinity in all – See God in All. Love All – Serve All.

Experiment / Homework / Practical – get all students to go about their day-today activity, seeing God in all – they need to imagine that each person they are detailing with is Swami Himself.

They need to record (for discussion at the next class) each situation and how they reacted (as opposed to how they would normally react) – be sure to look out for the responses from the other person based on their reactions. There would certainly be differences and this exercise make students recognize the mindset and value of seeing God in All.

What would you do or say differently if that was Swami you were dealing with (they need to see and picture Swami).

3. Unity of Faith

It is only by understanding the fundamentals of the different religions that we would be able to respect each religion. Engage in activities and class projects that would encourage students to research and learn more about each religion. The outcomes can displayed as individual projects or as a class exhibition depicting the various religions and their similarities.

Also explore international role models (past and living) from the various religions who exemplify Swami's message. Discuss the activities or messages that they live.

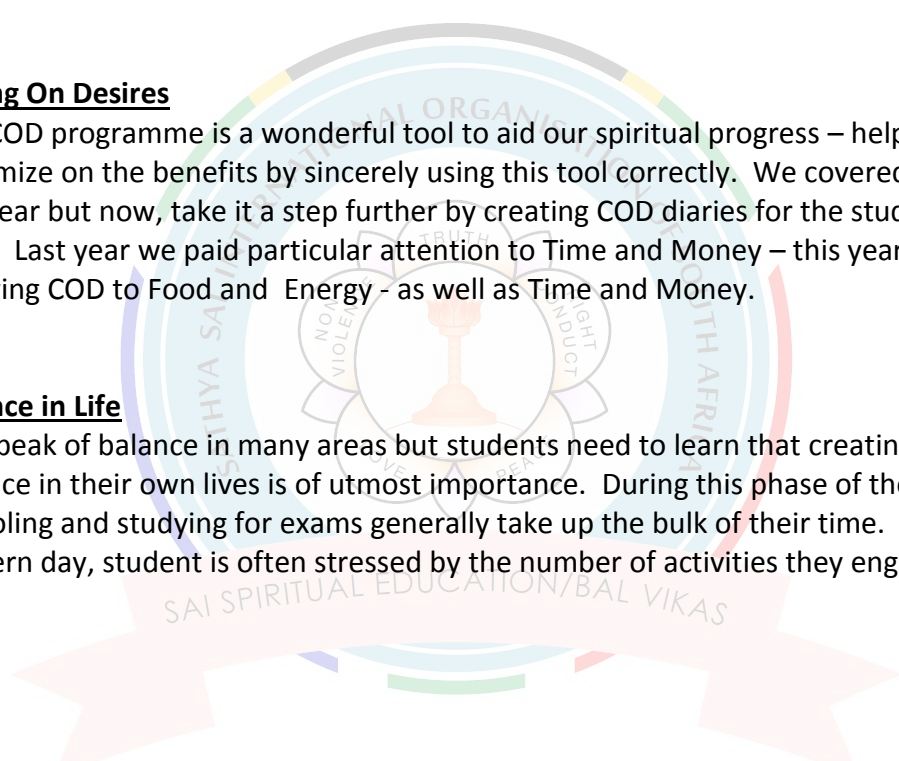
This helps students to identify with world characters who are making a difference to the lives of others.

4. Ceiling On Desires

The COD programme is a wonderful tool to aid our spiritual progress – help students maximize on the benefits by sincerely using this tool correctly. We covered this topic last year but now, take it a step further by creating COD diaries for the students to fill in daily. Last year we paid particular attention to Time and Money – this year go further by applying COD to Food and Energy - as well as Time and Money.

5. Balance in Life

We speak of balance in many areas but students need to learn that creating a healthy balance in their own lives is of utmost importance. During this phase of their lives, schooling and studying for exams generally take up the bulk of their time. However, the modern day, student is often stressed by the number of activities they engage in



namely, school, extra tuition, dance or similar classes, friends, socializing, family time, home chores/obligations, media, etc, etc

Students need to learn the skill of balancing life now, before heading into the university phase of life. Start discussions by getting them to clean their cupboards/wardrobes, their bags, their room, in order to be more organized. Thereafter, focus can be placed on time management by creating diaries/timetables. Spiritually, daily prayer, mediation and silent sitting must be a compulsory daily activity – in order to have focus and clarity of mind.

Using a pie chart, get each student list the activities that they are involved in that takes up time and help them prioritize correctly. Remembering time for family and GOD.

6. Handling Emotions to increase Self Esteem

We discussed Handling Emotions last year but this year, we are focusing on building Self Esteem and Self Confidence. We explore areas concerning self-pity, bullies, worry, etc and discuss ways of teaching students how to identify these weak character traits and ways of breaking out of it.

Create case study scenarios and allow students to describe how they would react if it were them. Allow students to give possible examples that they or their peers experience.

7. Meditation from a Health Point of View

Children in this age group are usually inclined to wanting instant results in order for them to give you their full attention - or they wish to see or hear sound factual backing of the explanation.

There is much factual evidence to show the many benefits of meditation from a health – body and mind point of view. Show and discuss these in class as well as videos. The focus of your meditation practice should be Light Meditation as this is the form of meditation that Sai Baba has recommended for us.

All students should know this and be in the regular habit of practicing it – ensure that it is tracked and progress noted in your book regularly following up if they are doing it.

8. Environment / Society

Last year we dealt with the impact that the environment / society has on the students. This year, focus on how the student can contribute to society. Within his / her means, identify things that they can do. Acknowledge their characters and value systems that have been growing over the last few years and how this impacts the principles that they now live by – even if this means living “against the grain” of the norm – do they have enough self confidence to live this way. Discuss.

9. Management Skills

This is a constant thread that has been running through the last few years in order to help the students recognize the need for self-management before being able to manage (guide) other people or processes. There are many areas to be discussed in order to achieve self-mastery, students need to be aware of this. Discuss how much more control do they have of their lives. How much more selfless have they become, are their egos still being inflated or dejected. How much more of their duties or dharmas are they fulfilling ?

10. Leadership : Self Development

This is a constant thread that is running through all of the years. Mastery of the self in terms of attitude to self and others. Create tests or tools to help them mark progress or differences in their characters from last year to this year as a true measure of their growth. They should be able to create a portfolio of evidence of themselves – this should help them become aware of areas still to be developed and areas where they have accomplished success.

