



03/14/2015

Sathya Sai Baba Centers of Northern California & Nevada

RESPONSIBILITIES



CENTER MANUAL ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES FAQs INTRODUCTORY DOCUMENT

Abridged Information for Devotion wing

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WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CENTER DEVOTION COORDINATOR?



RESPONSIBILITIES OF CENTER DC

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- The Devotion Coordinator has overall responsibility for the various elements of the Center's devotion program, including the following (various aspects may be delegated to others):
 - Maintaining Center premises and an altar that is simple, universal, and in accordance with guidelines
 - Coordinating devotion meetings, study circles, and practice of devotional singing
 - Establishing and maintaining a program of newcomer welcome and orientation
 - Maintaining a library of literature, audiotapes, CDs, and DVDs - in some regions, this task may be the responsibility of the Education Coordinator.
- The Center (Devotion Coordinator and President) may appoint a person to coordinate all aspects of devotion meetings. It may also be appropriate to appoint a Devotional Singing Coordinator, to handle all aspects of devotional singing, including practices.





RESPONSIBILITIES OF CENTER DC

1. Altar
2. Devotion program
3. Devotion singing practice
4. Study circle
5. Newcomer welcome and orientation
6. Library

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WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF A
DEVOTION MEETING EVERY WEEK?



COMPONENTS OF A DEVOTION PROGRAM

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Typically, a Center should have a weekly devotion meeting that includes devotional singing, prayer, and meditation (or silent sitting). The Center should also have a weekly study circle, which may be combined with the devotion meeting - the combined meeting could last for 1.5 to 2 hours.

Weekly Devotion Program

1. Devotional singing
2. Prayer
3. Meditation (or silent sitting)
4. Study circle





WHAT DOES THE MANUAL SAY ABOUT THE ALTAR AND THE CENTER PREMISES?

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ALTAR & CENTER PREMISES

- The Center premises should be neutral to all religions and religious traditions.
- Quotations from Sathya Sai Baba may be placed on the walls, together with universal quotations from the major World Religions.
- Sai Baba has said that no picture is necessary, but if you must have one, have one of Him.
- Keep the altar simple-some flowers, the *sarva dharma* symbol, perhaps a picture of Sathya Sai Baba. There should be plenty of chairs so that those who do not want to sit on the floor can be accommodated.
- No Center program should include rituals or practices that relate to one faith or religion in particular.

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WHAT DOES THE ORGANIZATION SAY
ABOUT VEDA CHANTING AS PART OF
THE DEVOTION PROGRAM?



VEDA CHANTING IN CENTERS?

- Over focus on the use of Sanskrit does not consider the fact that Sathya Sai Baba's message is universal and is to be shared with all, regardless of one's religious orientation. Accordingly, it is strongly recommended that the Center's devotional program be conducted in a manner that persons from all the different faith backgrounds can easily understand and relate to. The focus must be on unity, with appropriate consideration given to cultural relevance.
- Sing songs that reflect the local culture (e.g. sing in the local language), and encourage singing songs from different religions.





WHAT DOES THE MANUAL SAY ABOUT
DEVOTIONAL SINGING PRACTICE/
LESSONS?



DEVOTIONAL SINGING PRACTICE/LESSONS

- A devotional-singing coordinator, appointed by the Devotion Coordinator and President, is in charge of all aspects of devotional singing, including selection of songs, selection of singers and musicians, and arranging devotional singing lessons. This responsibility could be rotated among several people.
- Devotional singing lessons may be held on a regular basis (e.g. monthly), depending on the need. Anyone may attend. The lessons could focus on whatever is needed —singing in tune, learning about rhythm, learning new songs, training in singing with a microphone, instruments etc.

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ACCORDING TO SWAMI, WHAT IS THE
OBJECTIVE OF STUDY CIRCLES?



SWAMI ON STUDY CIRCLE

“Knowledge about what this author says or that sage teaches is not what your study circle must aim to acquire. Not information but transformation, not instruction but construction should be the aim. Theoretical knowledge is a burden unless it is practiced, when it can be lightened into wisdom and assimilated into daily life.”

-Baba

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STUDY CIRCLE

- Sathya Sai Baba tells us that spiritual growth is best achieved through an integrated practice of devotion, study, and service. He says that the proper study is: reading, reflection, and regular application in daily life.
- The study circle is the main group activity in the Sathya Sai Center.
- The Center should aim for weekly study circles, of 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- So that everyone can make substantial contributions, it is best to limit the size of the study circle group to 15 - add more study circle groups if necessary. Details in manual.





WHAT DOES THE MANUAL SAY ABOUT THE CENTER LIBRARY?

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LIBRARY

- Centers are to have libraries available for their center members.
- The maintenance of the library is the responsibility of the Devotion Coordinator.

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WHAT SHOULD THE CENTER LIBRARY HAVE?

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- The library should contain at least one copy of material published or sold by the Organization.
- The Center should subscribe to newsletters of the region, country, or zone.
- A variety of free literature on Sathya Sai Baba and the Center's programs.
- The Center is encouraged to have a selection of books, audio tapes, CDs, DVDs, and photos available for sale or loan. Items are restricted to those sold by the Publications Division of the Sri Sathya Sai Sadhana Trust, the International Sathya Sai Organization, or an Institute for Sathya Sai Education.
- The library may include important texts of the major religions.
- Items must be made available at the lowest possible price, and sales should not overshadow or dilute the spiritual atmosphere of the Center.





WHAT DOES THE MANUAL SAY ABOUT WELCOMING NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS?

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WELCOMING NEWCOMERS AND VISITORS

- Visitors to the Center should get an impression of universality and a loving environment. The meeting place, the meeting itself, and the way the person is welcomed should help reinforce that impression.
- Have certain people assigned the task of welcoming visitors, perhaps a Welcoming Committee. Members chosen for this task should be open minded; have a broad vision of religious and spiritual subjects; have relevant knowledge of Sathya Sai Baba's message, teachings, and works; have good knowledge of the workings of the Organization; and have a welcoming, positive demeanor.
- *All* members of the Center should be aware of visitors and help them —where to sit, how to find devotional songs in the songbook, the nature of a study circle, etc.— or answer any question they may have.

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NEWCOMER WELCOME AND ORIENTATION

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- The Center or the presiding body should have a Newcomers Booklet, and it should be available to hand out to visitors, along with other appropriate booklets, pamphlets, and videos.
- Depending on the number of visitors, the Center may establish a weekly, biweekly, or monthly visitors session, perhaps ½ hour before or after a devotion meeting, in which the fundamental principles of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings can be discussed and also the purpose and structure of the Organization.
- Members should avoid proselytizing, asking a visitor to become a member, flaunting personal re-warding experiences, and showing off bookish knowledge and learning.

