

Nurturing Young Minds: Arshavidyalaya's Holistic Approach to Sanatana Dharma Education

Arshavidyalaya, Coimbatore, a bastion of traditional wisdom and spiritual learning, is actively engaged in spreading the vision of Vedanta and the values of Sanatana Dharma through a series of classes and a variety of other activities.

With Poojya Swamiji's blessings and directive, significant focus has been on children. A flagship program of Arshavidyalaya is the *Samskrtena Samskrita* (SSAS) initiative, a visionary program tailored specifically for children. Drawing from the rich tapestry of Sanatana Dharma, SSAS aims to instil a deep understanding of and reverence for ancient teachings, while nurturing excellence in each child's chosen field. Spanning a structured, comprehensive five-year curriculum, the program commences with the sacred practice of learning to chant the Bhagavad Gita with devotion and correct pronunciation.

Despite the digital landscape dominating modern education, Arshavidyalaya remains steadfast in its commitment to providing students with immersive learning experiences. While online classes serve as the primary mode of instruction, the institution recognizes the importance of personal interaction in holistic development. To this end, a series of contact programs has been devised to foster meaningful connections between students, teachers, and practitioners of ancient wisdom.

These contact programs encompass a diverse range of activities, including,

- ◆ daily Ganesha *puja* sessions,
- ◆ face-to-face classes during school holidays,
- ◆ weekend *gurukulams*, (an innovative concept developed at Arshavidyalaya)
- ◆ visits to spiritual interest, including temples, *ashrams* and other places,
- ◆ spiritual retreats and,
- ◆ day-camps during school vacations,
- ◆ Annual residential camps in the elevating ambience of other ashrams.

Each activity is carefully designed to provide students with firsthand exposure to the rich cultural heritage of Sanatana Dharma and its values & practices, fostering a sense of pride and belonging.

Children had the unique opportunity of engaging in daily puja rituals, chanting of various slokas and mantra (including *Rudram*) at the temple, chanting of Bhagavad Gita at Pujya

Swamij's *Adhistānam* as well as in the temple at Gita Bhavan. The crowning moment of the camp was the collective chanting of the Gita in the presence of Swami Sakshatkrtananda Saraswati and other *mahans* present there.

Those who demonstrated mastery by memorizing individual chapters of the Gita and chanting them flawlessly were honoured with certificates by Swami Shashatkrtananda (Managing Trustee and Chief Acharya), a testament to their dedication and spiritual fervour. The children were also invited to chant chapter 15 of the Bhagavad Gita before lunch every day, a tradition that is followed in every Arshavidya institution. Camp participants also got to see and participate in *Sadhu Bhandara, biksha* (lunch) offered to a large number of sadhus and receive their blessings.

Arshavidyalaya's initiatives transcend mere education; they serve as a gateway to personal transformation and spiritual awakening. By actively participating in these programs, children not only acquire a holistic education but also develop a profound understanding of Sanatana Dharma and its timeless relevance in today's world.

A new batch (Learn to Chant 2024) will start on Monday, May 27, 2024. Arshavidyalaya extends a warm invitation to all those seeking to embark on this transformative journey. Together, let us nurture the seeds of wisdom and compassion in the hearts of our children, shaping a future guided by the timeless principles of Sanatana Dharma.

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