

Retreat 2025 Workshop Topics, Descriptions, and Bios of Facilitators

WS1 – Green is the new Orange: Taking care of Swami’s robe **Saturday - 2:45 pm to 4:00 pm: Arts & Crafts**

Swami has said, “Nature is the vesture of God.” When we look outside at the trees, the flowers, the mountains, are we able to feel the same love that we experience when we look at our beloved Bhagawan in his vibrant orange robe? In this workshop, we will conduct various reflection exercises to explore how it feels to love our Mother Earth, who is nothing more or less than a reflection of our dearest Mother Sai.

Facilitators: Sonali Razdan, Pradeep Indrakanti and Chitra Kumar

Sonali Razdan is blessed to have attended Sai Center since the age of 6 and developed a passion for Mother Earth and the environment during her early years. She is an active young adult in Regions 1 and 2 and has served as the Envirocare Coordinator as well as the international lead for the Serve the Planet Subcommittee. Over the years, she has helped lead several environmental initiatives, including helping to pass a petition declaring a Climate Emergency in her town in Massachusetts.

Pradeep Indrakanti is a member of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Pittsburgh and a former Envirocare coordinator for Region 2. He has been actively involved in local environmental cleanup and service initiatives. Passionate about gardening and sustainability, Pradeep embraces the principles of reduce, reuse, and recycle in both his personal life and professional work. As an energy engineer, he focuses on innovative technologies to remove and reuse carbon dioxide, striving to align his efforts with Swami’s teachings on Nature and environmental stewardship.

Chitra Kumar has been involved in the Sai organization for more than three decades. She matriculated from the Sai Spiritual Education program of South Bend, Indiana, and later was an active Young Adult in both Boston and Washington, DC, where she served as a YA representative and SSE guru. Professionally, Chitra has dedicated more than 20 years to advancing environmental protection policies and programs at the national level in federal government and nonprofits. With Swami’s grace she has been serving as SSSIO USA National Envirocare Coordinator. Chitra lives in Arlington, Virginia with her husband and two sons, who attend the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Fairfax SSE groups 1 and 3.

WS2 – Purity: Pathway to Divinity **Saturday - 2:45 pm to 4:00 pm: Devotional Hall**

Purity: Pathway to God explores the profound connection between living a pure life and experiencing the divine. Honestly, what does it truly mean to be pure? And is purity something we attain or continually pursue? Through engaging discussion and thoughtful reflection, we will examine whether purity is a realistic goal for human beings and how it might serve as a spiritual pathway. Inspired by our beloved and loving Swami and his emphasis on the importance of purity as a path to divinity, this discussion invites you to consider whether purity is not just a virtue, but a vital foundational step towards God-realization.

Facilitators: Chetan Sukuru and Ravi Datla

Chetan Sukuru is currently a member of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Chelmsford in Region 1. As a 3rd generation (aspiring) devotee of Swami, he grew up participating in various Sai service and devotional activities in Jamshedpur, India. He feels blessed to keep learning and rediscovering the beauty of Swami’s teachings through our Sai brothers and sisters.

Ravi Datla came to Swami's fold in the 90's. He owes this life-transforming event to Swami's grace and his parents' blessings. He attends the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Chelmsford with his wife and two daughters, where he served as Devotional Coordinator, Vice-President, and President. He is currently serving as a member of the Board of Directors of SSSO of Northeast, Inc.

WS3 – Consult with Sai Baba: Scientific Insights Behind Spiritual Eating
Sunday - 11:00 am to 12:15 pm: Arts & Crafts

This workshop draws inspiration from Swami's teachings on the optimal diet and incorporates the latest scientific guidelines. Together, we will explore our personal goals to improve our eating habits and review current guidelines for daily fiber, protein, fat, carbohydrates, and hydration. Our aim is to collaboratively discover ways to optimize our nutrition and fuel our bodies and minds the best. Have you heard about green juice? Here is your chance to learn more and hopefully try it yourself!

Facilitators: Nina Prabhu and Anu Soundar

Nina Prabhu is a board-certified lifestyle medicine and internal medicine physician who completed medical school in Texas and a residency in internal medicine in New York. She is passionate about educating patients regarding the benefits of evidence-based lifestyle changes to prevent and treat numerous chronic diseases. She is grateful to her husband for introducing her to Swami's medical camps, to their family for their support, and to the retreat planning committee for giving her the opportunity to lead a workshop on this important topic of nutrition.

Anu Soundar has been in Swami's fold right from birth, as both her paternal/maternal grandparents were staunch Swami devotees. Anu started to sing bhajans at local Samithis at the age of 2 and has continued her love for singing bhajans to date. She has been associated with SSE from the time her children officially started in Group 1. She has served as an SSE Coordinator at the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Chelmsford and has helped with many programs at the National level, including the annual women's mini retreat and other SSE programs. She is fun-loving, outgoing, and spends quality time at home with her husband, 2 teenagers, and her elderly parents. By profession, she is working as a Product Manager at a Software Technology firm. Her favorite hobby is to explore new recipes in cooking and make healthy choices for her family!

WS4 – Sai Center, an Ideal Place for Sadhana in Centering us to SAI
Sunday - 11:00 am to 12:15 pm: Devotion Hall

This workshop is a humble attempt to remind us of the center as the wonderful gift of Swami that helps us in our sadhana (spiritual growth) as well as an opportunity to serve Him. In this interactive workshop, we will highlight and discuss various dimensions of the Sai Center and why it is an ideal place for Sadhana. For example, we will highlight the significance and benefits of collective sadhana, which a Sai Center is an excellent platform for. We will also highlight the SAI (service, adoration, and illumination) aspects of the Sai Center. As we celebrate Swami's Centennial year of avatarhood, we believe that it will help us reaffirm our understanding of this amazing gift of Swami in the last glorious hundred years, and importantly, as we look ahead in our journey to SAI.

Facilitators: Amrit Thapa and Anupam Choubey

Amrit Thapa received his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Economics from Sri Sathya Institute of Higher Learning (SSSIHL), India, and a Ph.D. in Economics and Education from Columbia University. At SSSIHL, Amrit was blessed with the Gold Medal for MA-Economics, as Institute Vice-captain for the 2005 Annual Sports and Cultural meet, and opportunities to speak at the Divine Presence in Sai Kulwant. Amrit is immensely grateful to be an active member of Sathya Sai Service Organizations. He has served as national Youth Vice-coordinator, Sathya Sai Organization, Nepal, and Young Adult Representative, Sathya Sai Organization, Mid-Atlantic Region, USA, and president of Sathya Sai Center of Cherry Hill. Currently, he is serving as the vice-president and SSE teacher of the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Cherry Hill, NJ. Professionally, Amrit is a Senior Lecturer at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania.

Anupam Choubey resides in Boston, Massachusetts, with his loving wife, Ajita Mathur, and two wonderful children: a seven-year-old boy named Amogh Choubey and an eleven-year-old girl named Aadya Choubey. He was introduced to the Sai fold by his wife, who was born into a Sai family. Over the past fifteen years, he has been deeply connected to the Sai family in the Boston and California areas. He holds a Ph.D. degree in mechanical engineering and currently works at Draper Laboratory, where he develops hardware technologies to meet the nation's defense needs. In the past few years, he has been serving as the Devotion Coordinator for the Sri Sathya Sai Center of Boston. His interests include spending time with his family, listening to music, and participating in various sports.

Retreat 2025 Young Adult Workshop Topics & Descriptions

Overarching prayer:

*Satsangatve nissangatvam nissangatve nirmohatvam,
nirmohatve niscalatattvam niscalatattve jivanmuktih*

Translation: Through good company arises non-attachment (moving beyond community); from non-attachment comes freedom from delusion; when there is freedom from delusion, the mind becomes steady and unwavering, from a steady mind comes liberation.

By means of the community, you can reach a state beyond the community.

WS1 – Finding the SAI in me (Inner Divinity: Your Personal Spiritual Journey)

Saturday - 2:45 pm to 4:00 pm: YA Hall

In this first workshop in a three-part series, Young Adults (YAs) cultivate an individual practice that allows each of us to intentionally connect to our inner divinity. Through learning and introspection, we will be sharing and discussing our individual spiritual journey and practices. This interactive workshop will consider the ingredients of their spiritual practice, reflect on their current relationship with Swami, and discuss how to build and strengthen that connection.

WS2 – Finding the SAI in others (Courageous Conversations: Finding Connection Across Generations)

Sunday - 11:00 am to 12:15 pm: YA Hall

In a world that has become more divisive than ever, having meaningful conversations with individuals who have different lived experiences and differing opinions has become more and more difficult. In this second workshop in the series, we will explore how to approach these conversations with humility to truly listen to another person's perspective, respect their opinions, while kindly sharing our own perspective.

WS3 – Finding the SAI in community (Building Community: Service and Collective Purpose)

Sunday - 3:00 pm to 4:15 pm: YA Hall

In this final workshop of the series, we will reflect on what it means to be a part of a community. We will discuss the various roles one can have in creating social change within any community. The workshop will examine how to show up within our community and how to improve the communities we are a part of.

Retreat 2025 SSE Speaker Sessions

SSE – Speaker Sessions | Sunday - 8:45 am to 10:00 am

Group 1 and 2: Speaker Session with Srikanth Vaidyanathan

Group 3 and 4: Speaker Session with Sis. Aparna Murali

SSE – Speaker Sessions | Sunday – 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Group 1 and 2: Speaker Session with Sis. Aparna Murali

The primary objective of the SSE program is to awaken the latent divine qualities within each child. This is done gradually, through an emphasis on the cardinal human values of Truth, Right Action, Love, Peace and Nonviolence. Teaching in SSE Classroom focuses on educare - knowledge revealed from within, as described by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. One of the most important factors in the process is the teacher him or herself: the SSE teacher must be a living example of the values and virtues being taught. With Swami's grace, our SSE children have an opportunity to hear about SWAMI and His teachings from two of HIS very own Balvikas Alums. Both Aparna and Srikanth are living examples of the values and virtues taught in SSE.

Facilitators: Aparna Murali and Srikanth Vaidyanathan

Aparna Murali is deeply grateful for the grace of being born into a family devoted to Bhagawan since the early 1960s. A Balvikas alumna, she completed her undergraduate studies with honors in B.Sc. (Zoology) at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur Campus. She went on to pursue a graduate degree in Psychology and Genetic Counseling. Aparna currently serves as a Reproductive Genetics Counselor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at UCLA. Stories from Balvikas—especially those of Dhruva and Sabari—nurtured within her a deep yearning, instilling the belief that to love God is the purpose of life.

Srikanth Vaidyanathan was born into a family that has been in Swami's fold since the early sixties. He grew up in Chennai, where he attended the Balvikas (SSE) program. In 1986, he joined the primary school in Prashanti Nilayam for his sixth grade and went on to complete his high school there. He did his undergraduate studies in Brindavan and completed his M.Sc. (Physics) in 1998 from Prashanti Nilayam. Swami provided him with many opportunities to speak in His Divine presence, be part of the Prashanti Mandir Bhajan group, and participate in Convocation dramas. He has a Masters in Electrical Engineering from the University of California at Davis. He is an active participant in Sai activities in Boston and alumni activities around United States. He currently serves as the National Devotional Coordinator for SSSIO-USA.