



BALAVIKAS OF FAIRFAX PRESENTS YOUTH DAY COMPETITIONS 2024



Competitions For Pre-elementary To High School Students.
Rules and Topics can be found at www.balavikas.org

Saturday, July 20th, 2024
Check-In: 9:30 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
(Competitions start immediately afterwards)

at
Durga Temple

8400 Durga Place
Fairfax Station, VA 22039-3079

All are welcome to participate. There is no cost for participation.
All participants will be recognized with certificates. Winners will be awarded Trophies.

Swami Brahmarupananda of Vedanta Center will bless the children.

Registration Information:

Competitor Registration <http://www.balavikas.org/youthregform.asp>
Judges/Volunteers Registration <http://www.balavikas.org/jvregform.asp>
Registration closes July 19th, 2024 at 11:59 PM
****Onsite registration NOT available****

Snacks/Lunch will be available for purchase. Cash is preferred. Venmo and Paypal are available.

CATEGORIES

(Grades for upcoming school year)

Pre-Elementary (Grade 1 and below): *Coloring, Religious Chanting, Story Telling*

Elementary I (Grades 2-3): *Coloring, Religious Chanting, Story Telling, Recitation*

Elementary II (Grades 4-5): *Coloring, Religious Chanting, Story Telling, Recitation*

Intermediate (Grades 6-8): *Religious Chanting, Recitation, Speech, Essay*

High School (Grades 9-12): *Religious Chanting, Recitation, Speech, Essay*

Competition Directors: Rakendu Malladi & Shanthi Ashok

For more information, please contact **Vaidy Baskaran (703-655-6568)** or send e-mail to yd@balavikas.org

PLEASE VISIT <http://www.balavikas.org> FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.
PLEASE FEEL FREE TO FORWARD THIS TO OTHERS WHO MAY BE INTERESTED.

High School:

Essay: "The mind is everything. What you think you become." - Gautama Buddha. Reflecting on this statement, how does the power of thoughts influence your daily life?

Speech: How do great and enduring epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata contain great stories with moral and ethical lessons? How are they relevant to modern youth?

Intermediate:

Essay: Swami Vivekananda once said, "The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them." Reflect on how the practice of Seva (selfless service) is important to Hinduism and can lead to personal growth and happiness.

Speech: Explain the concept of dharma in Hinduism and its relevance to modern society. How can embracing the principles of dharma contribute to building a more just, equitable, and compassionate society?

If interested in entering Recitation, please download the relevant piece from our website:
www.balavikas.org.

RULES

1. Please bring your own pencils, crayons, and paper. To be consistent, **only crayons** will be allowed for coloring competition.
2. Drawing for the coloring competition will be given on the day of the competition, and a **60-minute time period** will be allotted for coloring.
3. Essays for these assigned topics can be prepared and researched ahead of time, however on the day of the competition, **no notes or references can be used**. Essays must be written in the **60 minute time period** allotted.
4. Speeches must be between 3-5 minutes with a 30-second grace period.
5. Every religious chant (regardless of language or religion) **must be explained in English**. These chants must be **between 2 - 3 minutes with a 30-second grace period**.
6. Stories with a clear moral and ethical message (irrespective of religious origin) will be accepted. Stories **must be told in English** and must be **between 2-3 minutes with a 30-second grace period**.
7. Your grade is the one you will be entering in the upcoming school year (2024-2025).

PLEASE NOTE

**All competitors will be recognized with Certificates.
Winners in each category will receive trophies.**

Balavikas Youth Competition

High School

Recitation

Three Visions for India

I have three visions for India. In 3000 years of our history, people from all over the world have come and invaded us, captured our lands, conquered our minds. From Alexander onwards. The Greeks, the Portuguese, the British, the French, the Dutch, all of them came and looted us, took over what was ours. Yet we have not done this to any other nation. We have not conquered anyone. We have not grabbed their land, their culture, their history, tried to enforce our way of life on them. Why? Because we respect the freedom of others.

That is why my first vision is that of Freedom. I believe that India got its first vision of this in 1857, when we started the war of independence. It is this freedom that we must protect and nurture and build on. If we are not free, no one will respect us.

My second vision for India is development. For fifty years we have been a developing nation. It is time we see ourselves as a developed nation. We are among top 5 nations of the world in terms of GDP. Our poverty levels are falling, our achievements are being globally recognized today. Yet we lack the self-confidence to see ourselves as a developed nation, self-reliant and self-assured. Is this right?

I have a third vision. That India must stand up to the world. Because I believe that unless India stands up to the world, no one will respect us. Only strength respects strength. We must be strong not only as a military power but also as an economic power. Both must go hand-in-hand.

Why is the media here so negative? Why are we in India so embarrassed to recognize our own strengths, our achievements? We are such a great nation. We have so many amazing success stories but we refuse to acknowledge them. Why? We are the second largest producer of wheat in the world. We are the second largest producers in rice. We are the first in milk production. We are number one in remote sensing satellites. There are millions of such achievements but our media is only obsessed with the bad news and failures and disasters. In India we only read about death, sickness, terrorism, crime. Why are we so negative? Another question: Why are we, as a nation so obsessed with foreign things? We want foreign TVs, we want foreign shirts. We want foreign technology. Why this obsession with everything imported. Do we not realize that self-respect comes with self-reliance?

I was in Hyderabad giving a lecture when a 14 year old girl asked me for my autograph. I asked her what her goal in life is. She replied: "I want to live in a developed India." For her, you and I will have to build this developed India.

-Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam

Balavikas Youth Competition

Intermediate

Recitation

I am proud of the history of my faith in my own land: of the travels of Adi Shankara, who journeyed from the southernmost tip of the country to Kashmir in the north, Gujarat in the west and Odisha in the east, debating spiritual scholars everywhere, preaching his beliefs, establishing his mutths. I am reaffirmed in this atavistic allegiance by the Harvard scholar Diana Eckwriting of the 'sacred geography' of India, 'knit together by countless tracks of pilgrimage'.

The great philosopher-president of India, Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, wrote of Hindus as 'a distinct cultural unit, with a common history, a common literature, and a common civilization'. In reiterating my allegiance to Hinduism, I am consciously laying claim to this geography and history, its literature and civilization, identifying myself as an heir (one among a billion heirs) to a venerable tradition that stretches back into time immemorial.

Above all, as a Hindu, I belong to the only major religion in the world that does not claim to be the only true religion. I find it immensely congenial to be able to face my fellow human beings of other faiths without being burdened by the conviction that I am embarked upon a 'true path' that they have missed. This dogma lies at the core of the 'Semitic faiths', Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father [God], but by me' (John 14:6), says the Bible; 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is His Prophet', declares the Quran, denying unbelievers all possibility of redemption, let alone of salvation or paradise. Hinduism asserts that all ways of belief are equally valid, and Hindus readily venerate the saints, and the sacred objects, of other faiths. I am proud that I can honor the sanctity of other faiths without feeling I am betraying my own

After all, as the philosopher Raimon Panikkar put it so brilliantly in his *The Vedic Experience*, 'It is precisely faith that makes thinking possible, for faith offers the unthought ground out of which thinking can emerge. It is faith that makes moral and other decisions possible, opening to us the horizon against which our actions become meaningful.' As a Hindu I seek meaning in my actions within the context of my religious beliefs

-Shashi Tharoor

Balavikas Youth Competition

Elementary II

Recitation

Why we disagree

I will tell you a little story. You have heard the eloquent speaker who has just finished say, "Let us cease from abusing each other," and he was very sorry that there should be always so much variance.

But I think I should tell you a story which would illustrate the cause of this variance. A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there then to tell us whether the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake, we must take it for granted that it had its eyes, and that it every day cleansed the water of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it with an energy that would do credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat. Well, one day another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well.

"Where are you from?"

"I am from the sea."

"The sea! How big is that? Is it as big as my well?" and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

"My friend," said the frog of the sea, "how do you compare the sea with your little well?"

Then the frog took another leap and asked, "Is your sea so big?"

"What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with your well!"

"Well, then," said the frog of the well, "nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a liar, so turn him out."

That has been the difficulty all the while.

I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.

-Swami Vivekananda

World Parliament of Religion Speech in Chicago

15 September 1893

Balavikas Youth Competition

Elementary I

Recitation

Equality of Religions

If we Hindus and Mussalmans mean to achieve a heart unity, without the slightest mental reservation on the part of either, we must first unite in the effort to be free from the shackles of this empire. If Pakistan after all is to be a portion of India, what objection can there be for Mussalmans against joining this struggle for India's freedom? The Hindus and Mussalmans must, therefore, unite in the first instance on the issue of fighting for freedom.

-Mahatma Gandhi
Quit India Speech