

Week 1

Hari Om Parents! Welcome to 1st Grade Balavihar, we had a great start to week 1. It was nice to see all of the new and excited faces ready to begin the year & we were really happy to see all of those familiar faces return!

Class started with a brief introduction of the kids and the teachers.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Ekadantam Mahakaayam" (page 27 in My Prayers book)

Story:

With Ganesh Chaturthi right around the corner, we heard a story about why Lord Ganesha has 1 broken tusk. The kids were enthusiastic & they wanted to tell us why Lord Ganesha has an elephant head!

Activities:

1. We played the Concentration Game. After the chanting of 3 "Om"s kids keep their eyes closed. They count the number of stones being dropped into a box during the quiet time. Later they give the count of the stones dropped. The game quiets the mind and improves concentration.
2. We colored a Lord Ganesh sheet & made sure all of us knew how to write "OM".
3. We sang the bhajan "Ganesha Saram" (page 31 in My Prayers book)

We will be teaching the kids **Bala Ramayanam** this year.

Our goal for this year is to narrate the story of Lord Rama & inspire the kids to be like Rama. We were able to complete chapter 1. We started off with describing the city of Ayodhya. Explaining how King Dasaratha kept his people & land happy. Leading to the meaning of Ayodhya, "where there is NO fight". We discussed who we go to when we have a problem. Then described how King Dasaratha went to his Guru, sage Vasistha to solve his problem. We stopped there, but a few kids were ready with the continuation:)

Required books for Grade 1

1. My Prayers Book
2. Bala Ramayana Coloring Book

We take pictures during class & share them with our class parents, so that you get a feel of what your little ones are up to. If anyone has an issue with that please let us know. If we are asked to share pictures publicly, we will come back to you for separate permissions.

Please go to the link below to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

See you all in the next class. Class starts promptly at 9:15A.M and ends by 10:40 A.M. Kids will then assemble at the prayer hall for Arthi and pledge. This would end by 11:00AM.

We require at least 1 parent inside the ashram during the full duration of the class. You are free to choose an Adult Study Group or sign up to Volunteer or Meditate/Read in the Temple.

Regards,
Keerthi Kobla and Rukmini Sriram

Week 2

Hari Om Parents,

We had a few new kids join our class today.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Ekadantam Mahakaayam" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)- **New**
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)- **New**

Activites:

1. We played the Concentration Game. After the chanting of 3 "Om"s kids keep their eyes closed. They count the number of stones being dropped into a box during the quiet time. Later they give the count of the stones dropped. The game quiets the mind and improves the concentration.
2. We did some yoga stretches
3. We played the 4 corners game using names that we learnt in class (Dasaratha, Kausalya, Sumitra & Kaikeyi) & another round of (Rama, Bharata, Lakshmana & Shatrughan)

We continued our Bala Ramayana story with the Yaga preparation, discussed about the fire ritual & how a yajna purusa emerged with a bowl of payasam. We then talked about why Sumitra had twins. Please ask the kids & see if they remember the story.

The story continued with the 4 babies being born & growing up. Rama was identified as everyone's favorite. Rama & Lakshmana became close just as Bharata & Shatrughna did with each other.

We then moved on to Vishwamitra's request. We asked the kids how their parents would feel if they were asked to leave to help fight a cause! They came up with different scenarios, leading to how King Dasaratha felt when Rama was summoned. Following Guru Vasistha's advice, the king allows Rama along with Laksmana to go with Visvamitra to protect them from demons.

The three of them crossed river Saryu & took a raft across the Ganges and came into the Dandaka forest. We described the nature of the scary place where Tataka resided in. On hearing Rama twang his bow, Tataka started throwing boulders on the puny man. Rama was able to take out all of her limbs with his bow & arrow, finally killing her. Sage Visvamitra embraced him & the devas rejoiced.

We discussed why Tataka & Marica were cursed by sage Agastya to lead ugly lives as demons. So we talked about not doing anything bad or wrong when we are angry. The consequences are deadly!

We will continue our story next week. Please practice the prayers that we teach the kids, at home. The Bala Ramayana Coloring Book should be available next week. Please have the kids bring that & the My Prayers book to class. Please ask the kids what they learnt in class.

Please go to the link below to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Week 3

Hari Om Parents,

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
3. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)

4. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book) - **New**
5. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book) - **New**

Activities:

1. The Concentration Game
2. Coloring Lesson 5 & Lesson 6 in our Bala Ramayana Coloring Book

Please have the kids color the 1st 4 lessons in their coloring books so they are back on track when they come next Sunday (There is no rush). The purpose of the coloring is to remind the kids of the stories that they have been hearing in class. Please do take some time & ask them about what they have learnt.

3. We have started our Geeta Chanting today. We introduced the 41st shloka of Chapter 18 in The Geeta. They are in our handbooks in both Sanskrit & English. Please help the kids practice the slokas that were taught in class. The kids will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition.

Please refer to the following website for the Gita.

gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation.

We continued our journey through Bala Ramayana, the trio finally arrived at the Siddhashrama. Visvamitra's ashram was located where Lord Narayana performed great tapas. That led to the story of Mahabali & why Vamana was born. We described how Mahabali never refused the request of anyone or anything & that Vamana came to humble Mahabali, requesting 3 paces of land, growing into Trivikrama, first pace covered the earth, the second one the heavens and for the third, out of humility Mahabali offered his head, making him immortal.

The story continued on to the 6 day yajna, that the rishis along with Sage Visvamitra were set to perform. The brothers were told to keep a keen watch out for the demons. The first 5 days went on without a hitch. Then on day 6, Rama & Laksmana had to deal with Marica & Subahu. There were signs of evil that began to swirl around the ashram. The flames in the firepit started to rise up as a warning sign. The sky started to darken and the demons were ready to fling unholy flesh & blood into the sacrificial fire. We explained that Rama tossed Marica into the sea, 100 yojanas away (was not killed as he still had a role to play). Subahu & the others were killed by Rama's Agneyastra.

The brothers along with Visvamitra continue on towards Mithila, curious to see the wonderful bow that king Janaka has. On the outskirts of Mithila, they stop at the

deserted asrama of Gautama rishi. We explained the curse that trapped Ahalya inside a rock, that was finally broken when Rama stepped on the stone.

Please have the kids bring their coloring book, my prayers book & hand book to class every week. We have crayons available in class to share, if the kids prefer to have some of their own, they are welcome to do so.

Please go to the link below to check out the pictures from this week's class

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Week 4

Hari Om Parents,

Shlokas:

“Om Saha navavatu” (page 8 in My Prayers book)

“Karegre vasate” (page 11 in My prayers book)

“Akanda-mandalakaram” (page 61 in My Prayers book)

“Ajnana-timirandhasya” (page 61 in My Prayers book)

“Samudra vasane devi” (page 11 in My Prayers book)

“Vakrathunda mahakaya” (page 27 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. The Concentration Game
2. We introduced the 42nd shloka of Chapter 18 in The Geeta. They are in our handbooks in both Sanskrit & English. Please help the kids practice the shlokas that were taught in class. The kids will be learning shlokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website for the Gita. gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation.
3. House Inaugural Assembly

Our story continued today with how King Janaka, the ruler of Mithila was ploughing the fields one day, heard crying & found a beautiful baby girl. He named her Sita. We explained the meaning of the shloka “Samudra vasane devi...”. Sita grew up into a beautiful young woman with all qualities of a perfect woman. She loved to play with Rudhra's bow. On seeing that, King Janaka was deeply concerned of how he would be able to find the perfect match for his daughter. Most of the kids knew the continuation of this part of the story!

The trio (Visvamithra, Rama & Lakshmana) continued into the city of Mithila that was decorated for all the festivities that were to follow once King Janaka found the apt suitor for his beloved daughter Sita. The huge hall was filled with people eager to make the

beautiful Sita their bride. A chariot on which Rudhra's bow was on required 500 men to pull to get the bow into the hall. After a multitude of suitors fail to complete the challenge, Sage Visvamitra prompts Rama to take his turn. He very easily lifts, stings & successfully breaks the bow & his success is heard everywhere! Rama & Sita exchange garlands. After that, messengers were sent to inform & invite King Dasaratha, who was overjoyed to Mithila. The wedding of Rama & Sita takes place after the arrival of Rama's family from Ayodhya.

We then continued the story of how King Janaka felt that his daughters & nieces were leaving, his heart & kingdom empty & how King Dasharatha was overjoyed! But his happiness was short lived as they encountered Sage Parasurama on their way back to Ayodhya. Rama takes care of it & relieves his father of his anxiety by completing the challenge of picking up & stringing the bow that Parashurama gives him. But Rama says he needs to fire the strung bow at something & he cannot kill a brahmana, so he shoots away all of the "Tapas" that the sage had accumulated. After this encounter, Parashurama is humbled & goes to the Himalayas. They newly weds arrived in Ayodhya & everyone were overjoyed! We stopped our story here.

We were unable to do any coloring this week as we had a shorter class. If time permits, please have the kids color till Rama & Sita's wedding.

CORD Walkathon

Register for CORD Walkathon which is on Oct 28th, Sunday 10:00 AM at Mercer County Park. East Picnic area. More details at

<http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/cord-walkathon>

Note that walkathon is followed by Field Day activities. Please make sure you register for the walkathon. Yes - Please bring in all your friends and family members. \$25/walker and the funds raised goes to CORD. Raffle prizes for the most number of pledges collected.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

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Regards,
Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 5

Hari Om Parents,

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
3. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
4. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book) - **New**
6. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
7. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. CORD introduction discussion.

- Register for CORD Walkathon which is on Oct 28th, Sunday 10:00 AM at Mercer County Park. East Picnic area. More details at <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/cord-walkathon> .
- Note that the walkathon is followed by Field Day activities. Please make sure you register for the walkathon to be able to participate. Please bring in all your friends and family members.
- \$25/walker and the funds raised goes to CORD.
- Raffle prizes for the most number of pledges collected

2. We practiced the 41st & the 42nd shloka of Chapter 18 in The Geeta. They are in our handbooks in both Sanskrit & English. Please help the kids practice the slokas that were taught in class. The kids will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website for the Gita. gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation.

3. We did jumping jacks while saying "Rama, Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Shatrughna" instead of counting from 1-5, for every set of repetition.

4. We played a game where we gave the kids different scenarios & then asked them how they would react. If they were calm, collected & happy with the outcome, regardless of the circumstances & outcome, they were like Rama & if they were offended, saddened or angry by the outcome, they were like Kaikeyi.

5. We recapped our Bala Ramayana story so far, for the benefit of those who missed a class or 2 in the past weeks & just to see how much the kids remembered. They all did really well! Please ask the kids what they learnt in class.

Our journey through Bala Ramayana continued with the newly weds & King Dasaratha's family returning to Ayodhya. Everyone were thrilled to have their princes back. Sita made an instant impression there & all the girls wanted to be just like her. Rama & his brothers assisted their father with matters of the State. King Dasaratha was could not be happier! 12 years passed & King Dasaratha, after consulting with Guru Vasishta

decided to coronate Rama as Yuvaraja the following day as it was the most auspicious day even though Bharata & Shatrughna were away in Kekeya. Rama takes the news of his coronation humbly. Kausalya & Sita are overjoyed. The news spreads like a wildfire & the kingdom of Ayodhya is overjoyed! Immediate preparations begin.

Kaikeyi was minding her own business, while Manthara (her hunch backed maid) was instantly conjuring up a plan to poison Kaikeyi's mind. The once loving & sweet queen that was initially overjoyed by the news of Rama's coronation, turns evil & decided to cash in her 2 boons that she had received for saving King Dasaratha's life long ago. The enraged Kaikeyi demands Dasharatha to coronate Bharatha as king of Ayodhya & to send Rama to the Dhantaka forest for 14 years of exile. She goes on to threaten the king that she would take poison & die, her death would be the king's fault if he denies her demand. The king is shocked, had to choose between his love for his son Rama & dharma! He was barely able to speak but faintly continues to say "Rama...Rama..."

Prince Rama is summoned & he arrives to see his father in this state of agony. Everything had changed in about 12 hours. Rama wanted to do anything for his father to make him feel better. Kaikeyi takes the lead & asks Rama to promise that he would do as she says. She prompts him to fulfill his father's dharma. Without any hesitation, Rama agrees to both conditions & immediately prepares to depart for the Dandaka forest.

Lakshmana was silently observing what was happening. As Rama headed out after taking the blessings of Kaikeyi & Dasaratha, Lakshmana was enraged & claims that the King has lost his mind! Rama announces his decision to the people of Ayodhya & continues to meet his mom. He gave up everything that said royalty & related the recent happenings. Immediately as a mother, she wanted to go with her child, but Rama tells her that her duty is to take care of King Dasaratha, & he would not do anything to oppose Dharma! Lakshmana & Sita are able to convince Rama that they would accompany him. Kaikeyi had bark garments ready for the 3 of them. Sumantara wanted to accompany the trio to the forest with the army, but Kaikeyi was immediately opposed to that thought as she did not want her son Bharata to come home to an empty kingdom. Rama did not want anything except what a hermit in the forest would have. Sage Vasishtha who was a very calm natured person, was enraged. Sumitra blessed Lakshmana & told him to treat Rama as his father, Sita as his mother & the forest as Ayodhya!

Sumantara had the chariot ready to depart. The people of Ayodhya followed their beloved trio as the horses galloped away, King Dasaratha, watched from his balcony as

the dust slowly faded. With a heavy heart, he continued to faintly chant his son Rama's name. The people followed the chariot to the banks of the river Tamasa, where they stopped for the night. Before dawn, Rama said, they should leave before everyone else woke up. They continued to the banks of river Ganga. Guha was the chief of a tribe in that area & loved Rama, embraced him, ordered a feast & asked him to spend the 14 years with his tribe. Rama denied his offerings, asked for a simple meal & early next morning, they took leave from a tearful Sumantara, boarded a raft to sail across the Ganges to the Dandaka forest.

We concluded today's class on a sad note. The kids were very silent! We told them to ponder the story so far. Please tell the kids that they can color till lesson 10. Remember to ask them the story!

Happy Navratri! We will not have class next week, but please do join us on Saturday Oct. 13th for Garba Night. For the following week, Oct. 21st, we have a special Saraswati Pooja that will be performed by all the balavihar kids.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 6

Hari Om Parents,

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
3. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
4. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
7. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We lined up to go to the assembly hall for Saraswathi puja. The priest chanted Saraswathi Ashtothram and the kids followed. All prayed to the Goddess of knowledge and Wisdom and ended with Aarti and Pledge.

2. Register for CORD Walkathon which is on Oct 28th, Sunday 10:00 AM at Mercer County Park. East Picnic area. More details at <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/cord-walkathon> .

Note that the walkathon is followed by Field Day activities. Please make sure you register for the walkathon to be able to participate. Please bring in all your friends and family members.

\$25/walker and the funds raised goes to CORD.

Raffle prizes for the most number of pledges collected

We continued with the story of Ramayana. We recalled the departing scene of Rama, Sita and Lakshmana from Ayodhya, escorted by Sumantra and how they arrived in the forest after crossing the river Ganga. From then on the story continued in detail. They reach the ashram of Sage Bharadwaj and rest for the night. Next morning Rama finds out from the Sage about Chitrakuta, an ideal place for them to spend their fourteen years. Following his directions they reach Chitrakuta and are happy to see the location, beautiful and serene with trees filled with flowers, chirping birds, and flowing rivers. Sita is pleased and Lakshmana gets busy building a kutiya for Rama and Sita. all three settle well in the forest. The scene switches to a sorrowful Ayodhya -- Sumantra arrives and visits King Dasaratha and Kausalya and conveys the message that Rama , Sita and Lakshmana have reached the forest. Hearing this their sorrow from separation of their beloved son Rama grows many fold and mother Kausalya accuses King Dasaratha for being responsible for all that happened. King Dasaratha narrates an incident that happened while he was a young prince and the consequence of which he is suffering from separation of his dear son Rama. The story of Shraavan whose parents are blind and who was shot mistakenly by Prince Dasaratha while hunting is narrated and the curse that befell the King which came true.

We stopped at this juncture. students were speechless listening to this story.

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 7

We had our Annual Fundraising Walkathon for **CORD** at Mercer County Park. It was a beautiful fall day, perfect for the walk & was followed by the first Field Day of the year.

Week 8

Hari Om Parents,

Wishing you all a very Happy, Bright, Beautiful & Festive Deepavali!

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book) - **New**

1st Grade Annadaanam:

Our balavihar/ashram has been doing annadaanam (food donation) from different grades each month. Grade 1 are is scheduled for this month. It is on November **17th, 2018**

Please see the link below for the items that can be donated, etc. Scroll down the sign-up genius list, and sign up for the items you would like to contribute. Please drop off the items well within the mentioned time. Kindly check the time and place to drop in the sign up sheet.

Parents and kids who are interested can go to the soup kitchen directly and serve as well, address is posted in the sign up sheet as well!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044fa4a72aa1fa7-balavihar1>

It is always appreciated and valued - upholding what our pledge says 'giving more than what we take...!' Thanks in advance for your generous donations.

Activities:

1. We introduced shlokas 43 & 44 of Chapter 18 in The Geeta. They are in our handbooks in both Sanskrit & English. Please help the kids practice the slokas that were taught in class. The kids will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be

their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation.

2. Most of our class are reciting shlokas 41 & 42 well. We will be having a test next class on 41 & 42, we will be giving small motivational prizes for those who are able to chant (we will give them some help if required). Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. I have recorded the class group chanting.
3. The kids colored Lessons 12 & 13 in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. As we have a few extra school days off this week, can you have the kids color the pages in the middle that they haven't completed. **Please stop on Lesson 13.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
4. We told the kids the significance of Deepavali & the reason why we celebrate the festival & narrated a few stories.

We continued our journey through Bala Ramayana with a quick recap of where we ended during our previous class. This week, we were back in Grief- stricken Ayodhya. We were in King Dasaratha's room, he was lying on his bed & was slowly narrating to his beloved queens, the curse of Sravana's parents & how it was coming true! He begged Kausalya & Sumitra for their forgiveness. His eyes were getting heavy, his hearing slowly declining, he was struggling to breath as he was crying out "Ha Rama! Ha Lakshmana! Ha Sita! Rama! Rama! His head drooped & the oil in his lamp ran out as he took his final breath.

Ayodhya at that point had just been hit with a double whammy of Rama's banishment & their king's passing. Sage Vasishta was the only voice of reason at that point. He tells the messengers to Kaikeya to bring back Bharata & Shatrughna without telling them about Ayodhya's condition. Bharata had been feeling bad omens & was not sure what to expect. As the brothers passed through Ayodhya, they were not greeted by anyone, everyone were sad & sort of angry too. The confused brothers arrive at the palace & Kaikeyi is the only one there to greet him. He immediately asks why his father is not there...as he always welcomes them back with a warm & loving embrace. He then becomes aware of the plot that Mantara had cooked up & how his mother became poisoned.

Bharata is **ENRAGED!** He does not believe his ears. He does not want the throne, he immediately went to beg for forgiveness from Kausalya & Sumithra. The funeral takes

place. Everyone's initial reaction on seeing Bharata is **rage**. But then they find out that he had nothing to do with his mother's evil acts. Bharata refuses to take the throne & insists on seeing Rama. Everyone wanted to do the same. So the whole of Ayodhya head to Chitrakuta like a large army. Bharata went in bark garments & denied any special treatment or food. Their journey continued for 2 days & they were nearing the banks of river Ganga. Guha could see an army from a distance & he immediately sets his tribe up for battle, but some of the elders advise him otherwise. Then on closer analysis, they realise that Bharata was not coming with any evil intention. Bharata was in an eager haste to see Rama so they departed early the next morning. As they neared Chitrakuta, Rishi Bharadvaja was observing the army approaching & had a similar initial reaction as the others. But soon he too realized that Bharata had nothing to do with his mother's plan & guided him to proceed in the direction of Chitrakuta. We paused our story here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 9

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)

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Parents and kids who are interested can go to the soup kitchen directly and serve as well, address is posted in the sign up sheet as well!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044fa4a72aa1fa7-balavihar1>

It is always appreciated and valued - upholding what our pledge says 'giving more than what we take...!' Thanks in advance for your generous donations.

Activities:

1. We introduced shloka 45 of Chapter 18 in The Geeta. They are in our handbooks in both Sanskrit & English. Please help the kids practice the slokas that were taught in class. The kids will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation.
2. Most of our class are reciting slokas 41 & 42 well. We tested the kids on slokas 41 & 42. A few of the kids did really well. Please stress on proper pronunciation at home & make sure that they are not rushing through the slokas. Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. I have recorded the class group chanting.
3. We did a Diwali craft with Diyas (lamps) where the kids shared what they did for Diwali.
4. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 15.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.

Our adventures through Bala Ramayana continued.

Lakshmana like all those prior to him, assumes that Bharata is coming with evil intentions of harming Rama. But was immediately calmed down by Rama & as the army

moved into closer proximity, they see Bharata & Shatrughan in bark garments. Bharata immediately falls at Rama's feet begging for forgiveness. Rama was very nonchalant, enquiring about the kingdom, the people & his father. Bharata responded by saying he did not accept to be king as only the first born was to take that role & as for their father, he conveyed the horrifying news of his demise! Rama is drowned by sorrow, swoons & faints. Sita & the brothers revive him & they perform the final rites & rituals.

Rama then explained to Bharata that everything - sadness, happiness - is the play of fate. Having taken human birth, we must bow our heads before the destiny marked for us and accept them as they are. Kingdom, wealth, name, fame - all these mean nothing. All these things shall pass. Why weep for them? He tells his beloved brother not to grieve. He then asks him if there is anyone on earth to whom sorrow, disease, and death have not visited?

Bharata then asks for Rama's sandals, takes them & places them on his head. He agrees to run the kingdom for 14 years till Rama returns to Ayodhya. He would live a simple life like the rest of the people & have Rama's sandals take the throne.

Rama realizes that even though Chitrakuta was a perfect location for their stay & Sita was very comfortable there, he decided to move further into the depths of the Dandaka forest to prevent the people from temptation of coming to meet the trio. As they continue their journey, they encounter several Rishis, get their blessings & are presented with powerful Astharas. On their way, they encounter various demons as well. A notable one was the huge rakshasa Viradha. He had the boon of no death. He scares Sita & puts her on his shoulder. Rama & Lakshmana are furious, then both of them take Sita's spot. The brothers chop off Viradha's arms & all other body parts till he thumps on to the ground & his neck find Rama's feet & he is finally liberated. The trio arrive at Sutikshana's ashram. They accept to make that their home & to protect the Rishis from demons.

10 years went by...the trio went from one ashram to another, slaying demons & collecting astharas. Sita didn't understand why Rama was doing this & involving himself in violence. Rama explained that it was Kshatriya Dharma to protect the Rishis. Rama had a great desire to see Sage Agastya. We told them the kids why Agastya was so powerful & the story about the Vindhya mountain range. Rama, Sita & Lakshmana continue their journey further south. Then we told them the story about the clever demon brothers Vatapi & Ilvala & about their cunning plan they used to kill multiple rishis. Agastha used his own clever plan to consume & digest Vatapi & used his own terrifying vision to burn Ilvala to ashes. The kids enjoyed that part very much. The trio

arrive at Agastya's ashram, he was overjoyed to see them. They took the sage's blessings. Rama was then gifted a bow that Vishvakarma had made for Vishnu and then made their way towards Panchvati. We paused here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 10

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
10. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book) - **New**

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting & Introduced sloka 46. Please practice the 6 slokas with your kids. The kids will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized themselves with the first 3 slokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. I have recorded the class group chanting.
2. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their

bath/shower. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.

3. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 17.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.

We did a quick quiz like recap to get back onto our journey through Bala Ramayana. With Sage Agastya's location recommendation in mind, the trio arrive at Panchavati. Upon arrival, they encounter Jatayu. He introduces himself as King Dasaratha's friend, relative of Garuda & his presence was to keep a watch out for Sita. They found a nice location near the Godavari river, for their home for the rest of their exile. Laksmana was excellent with his building skills that he had learnt from Sage Vasishta. In no time, he had a cute little hut built & the trio were discussing how Bharata & Shatrughan were living simple lives & all 4 brothers were eagerly awaiting their reunion.

As the season slowly changed to winter, a lady demon Surpanakha was a shapeshifter, (daughter of Vaisrava muni) was cursed to live this life of an ugly roaming demon due to her past bad deeds, showed up asking questions what the trio was doing in her neck of the woods! She instantly fell in love with Rama & asked him to marry her. Rama mockingly says he's married to Sita & that would not be possible & leads her to believe that Lakshmana is equally good looking & is not there with a wife. So settles & then asks Lakshmana to marry her. He then goes on to say that he's Rama's slave & it wouldn't be appealing to her to be a slave of a slave & convinces her to ask Rama to leave Sita for her. On hearing that she is really tempted & tells Rama the same & says she would eat Sita up! On hearing that, Rama dives to protect his wife & orders Lakshmana to control the situation. Lakshman immediately chops off Surpanakha's ears & nose! An earth shattering scream erupted from her mouth, she ran away & disappeared into the Dandaka forest.

Surpanakha with blood gushing from her ears & nose areas, approaches her rakshasa brothers Khara & Dusana, who were surrounded by a court full of demons. She makes a complaint against Rama & Lakshmana conveniently leaving out her fault in the incident! Khara immediately sent 14 of his most powerful demons to go slay Rama & Lakshmana. Surpanakha went along to witness the incident. On seeing them coming, Rama tells his brother to take Sita to the cave & keep guard. Rama took the 14 of them out in an instant. Surpanakha immediately reported the outcome. An army of 1,400 was then assembled & led by Khara, Dusana & Trisha. Similarly, Rama was able to wipe out

that Rakshasa army, except for Akampana who was the sole survivor. The Devas showers flowers from heaven on seeing Rama's grand success!

Akampana who was visibly trembling, rushes to Lanka to convey this devastating news to their leader Ravana! Akampana also states that he should do some smart planning by kidnapping the beautiful Sita, causing anxiety for Rama would be the only way to defeat Rama as he was way too powerful! The enraged Ravana approaches Marica for council on how to avenge his sister's humiliation. Marica who was performing penance at an ashram, advises that Rama will put an end to the Rakshasa race, so told Ravana to leave it alone! He agrees & forgets about Sita.

Surpanakha arrives the next day & is shocked & enraged that her brother has not done anything! She too triggers the thought of the beautiful Sita as being a perfect matrimonial match for her beloved brother Ravana. He then promises his sister that he will take revenge. Ravana then demands Marica to change his form into a Golden Deer to attract Sita's attention. Then to distract Rama & Lakshmana so that he could kidnap Sita. Marica reluctantly accepts his king's order, knowing well that this was the beginning of the end of the rakshasa race. We paused here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Happy Thanksgiving!

Regards,
Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 11

Hari Om Parents,

Welcome back after a long 2 week break. The following is what we did during this week's class.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)

8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothi kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
10. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Bhramaarpanam bhrama havih" (page 12 in My Prayers book) - **New**

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the slokas with your kids. They will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized themselves with the first 3 slokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. I have recorded the class group chanting.
4. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.
5. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 19.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
6. We had 2 high school seniors come in to teach with us. They used puppets to narrate the continuation of our journey.
7. We played 4 corners & a game of boundaries.
8. We ended with some coloring.
9. We had to cut the class short as there was a stage performance, that we all enjoyed.

After Anoushka & Shivani finished their narration of the Golden Deer portion & Ravana carrying Sita away portion of the story with puppets, we continued on to reiterate some key points. We told them that Ravana did not listen to Marica's stern advise against trying to offend Rama, due to his blind desire to capture Sita. We also talked about how Rama thought, if the deer was actually real, then he would capture it for Sita so that she can have it as a pet. If it ended up being a raksasa, then he would kill it. Either way, he thought that he had nothing to lose, even though Lakshmana did not approve of his

plan. After Marica called out for help in Rama's voice, Lakshmana was still very hesitant to leave Sita alone as he did not want to disobey his brother.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 12

In honor of Gurudev Jayanti, we watched the movie "On a Quest".

Week 13

Hari Om Parents,

Happy New Year & welcome back! It was nice to hear all the fun things that you all did during the winter break.

The following is what we did during Sunday's class.

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
10. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)

Activites:

1. We played the Concentration Game. After the chanting of 3 "Om's kids keep their eyes closed. They count the number of stones being dropped into a box during the quiet time. Later they give the count of the stones dropped. The game quiets the mind and improves the concentration. A few got the count correct & most were really close.
2. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthanah (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to

bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.

3. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 20.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.

4. Towards the end of class, we colored Lesson 20. We then played a short game of "Teacher Says" & did some yoga stretches.

Due to our long break, we did a quick quiz like recap to get back onto our journey through Bala Ramayana. Most of our class was able to remember the story so far! Our story setting this week began in the Dandaka Forest, where Ravana has kidnapped Sita & they are flying high through the angered sky. Ravana had a strong grip on Sita's hand, Sita was struggling to free herself with all her might & was screaming at the top of her lungs as Ravana's chariot was racing through the forest.

At that point, Jatayu was sleeping atop a tree & instantly awoke recognising that familiar voice of princess Sita! He immediately flew up in the air, introduced himself as the king of eagles & tried to reason with Ravana...King to King to prevent this adharma. When there was no way to sway Ravana's evil intentions, Jatayu began to fight with all his might. He killed the chariot's demon faced mules & Ravana's chariot smashed to the ground. He then attacked & injured Ravana. Sita was very fearful of Jatayu's well being, as she could see him getting weaker...she tells him to fly away & inform Rama & Lakshmana of what is happening.

Jatayu wanted to protect the princess & continued to fight as Ravana pulled out his sword & chopped off his wings! Sita immediately found the strength to yank herself loose & went to Jatayu's side. At this point, Ravana went & caught Sita by her hair & dragged her along with him, bringing infinite shame & disgrace to his royal family & all rakshasas. The duo continued to fly southward. As they did so, Sita decided to drop her jewels whenever she saw people from the sky, hoping that they will be clue for Rama, showing what direction she was being taken in.

Ravana & Sita finally reached Lanka & there he put evil Rakshasis incharge of Sita. They were told to make her forget Rama. But Sita refused to do so & was constantly meditating her husband's name. The enraged Ravana told her that she will get 1 year to

change her mind. If she did not, at that point he would instruct his raksashis to cut her up, cook her & server her as Ravana's breakfast! Ravana wanted to make sure that he & his kingdom were on high alert. He increased his army presence all around his island border. He also sent some of his raksasha's back to the Dandaka forest to keep an eye on Rama & Lakshmana, and find out what their plans are. We stopped our story here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 14

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
10. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the shlokas with your kids. They will be learning shlokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized themselves with the first 3 shlokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. We introduced shlokas 48 & 49 this week.
2. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 shlokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their

bath/shower. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.

3. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 22.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
4. We colored lessons 21 & 22.

Our journey continued. Our setting for this week's class was back in the Dhantaka forest. The brothers meet. Rama is extremely disappointed with Lakshmana for disobeying his stern instructions to take care of Sita & not to leave her side. Lakshmana had to defend his actions, as Sita was tricked by the demon's fake voice, even though Lakshmana was very sure that it was a rakshasa's trickery. Rama feared the worst possible scenario that his beloved Sita might've been eaten up by a demon. On reaching their ashrama, they did not see her. Grief stricken Rama, continued to accuse his brother of abandoning Sita! The surroundings were also gloomy, the birds were silent, the flowers were droopy and the animals had tears in their eyes. Rama went on to search under rocks, behind bushes & even asked the trees if they had seen his beloved Sita. Lakshmana tried his best to console his brother by reminding how he has overcome so much heartbreak so far & that they will definitely find Sita. After gaining his composure, the duo set out southwards.

As they continued on, they suddenly came across some flowers scattered on the ground. Rama immediately identified them as the ones he had picked for Sita that morning! They then saw small footprints & very large ones too. They also saw a jewel studded bow, a broken chariot, a crown & awful faced mules! They could visualize a struggle. As Rama turned around looking for more clues, he found some beads from Sita's necklace...his sorrow turned into blazing anger! He picked up his astaras & vowed world destruction! Lakshmana eventually calmed him down by saying that the ones responsible should pay for their actions, but the innocent shouldn't have to. On hearing those words of wisdom, the brothers saw a huge form close by. They saw Jatayu, with his wings & legs cut off from the battle. He kept himself alive to narrate the happenings to Rama. After doing so, he receives Rama's blessings & passed away. The brothers perform the final rites for the faithful king.

The brothers travel southward. They are suddenly captured by a monster Kabandha. It had one eye & a mouth with sharp teeth in the middle of its stomach, it had no head or legs. Rama & Lakshmana immediately took their swords out & chopped off the

monster's arms. The huge form landed with a thump. The monster then told them that he was a heavenly being, but was cursed by a rishi for scaring him & would be freed only by Rama. Having chopped off his arms & grabbing hands, his desires were removed liberating him. The brothers burned the body & from the flames came a heavenly body that told them to go to the banks of the river Pampa, find the vanara king Sugriva on Rsyamuka hill & he will help you find Sita. We paused our story here. Please ask the kids who Kabandha, what it means to be a Kabandha & if it is right to a like Kabandha.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 15

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
10. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" - **New**

Activities:

1. We played the Concentration Game. After the chanting of 3 "Om's kids keep their eyes closed. They count the number of stones being dropped into a metal box during the quiet time. Later they give the count of the stones dropped. The game quiets the mind and improves the concentration. A few got the count correct & most were really close.
2. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 shlokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.

3. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 24.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
4. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the slokas with your kids. They will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized themselves with the first 3 slokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. We introduced shloka 50 this week.
5. Towards the end of class, we colored Lesson 23 & 24. We then played a short game of "Teacher Says" & did some yoga stretches.

The brothers continue on towards River Pampa. They arrive at Sage Matanga's ashrama. There they meet an old tapaswini named Sabari. When it was time for her guru to depart for this world, she too wanted to die! But Sage Matanga had told her that her duties on earth are not complete & that she had to encounter Sri Rama prior to her departure. So she had been very patiently awaiting His arrival. On seeing the brothers, she shed tears of joy that literally washed Rama's feet! She had gathered some forest berries for them but wanted to make sure that they were sweet & not sour, so tasted each berry & sorted only the sweet ones on a plate & offered them to Rama. Lakshmana was not happy about this & was about to prevent her from serving them, when Rama said he would love to have them & accepted her plate that was an offering of supreme devotion! Sabari's time had come to an end. With Rama's permission, she lit a fire & stepped into it & ascended to heaven.

The duo walked on in search of Sugriva. As they were wandering through the beautiful forest, they couldn't help but think of how Sita would've absolutely adored the surroundings. From the top of the Rishyamukha mountain, the fugitive vanara king Sugriva and few of his faithful followers saw the brothers approaching. They immediately thought it was Bali sending someone to harm them. Minister Hanuman decided to disguise himself as a brahmin and went on to intercept the duo. He introduced himself and the trio felt an instant bond! Hanuman and Lakshmana exchanged both of their uncomfortable circumstances to each other and at that point, Hanuman changed into his original form, he then lifted the brothers onto his shoulders and carried them towards Sugriva.

When they finally met Sugriva, he related his own unfortunate situation that he was in because of his brother Bali. Bali was a strong, brave and powerful warrior. Everyone feared him. An awful rakshasa named Dundubhi wanted to duel someone so he challenged the sea-god, he denied the challenge and referred him to the Himalayas. The Himalayas didn't want to duel either and suggested that Bali would be a good competitor. So he went to Kishkindha to challenge Bali. Bali was ready for a duel, he fought, he won and during his victory lap, he tossed the rakshasa miles away and when doing so, drops of blood fell on Sage Mathanga's ashrama. The angered sage cursed Bali that he would meet his death if he ever set foot on that mountain again.

After a while another demon, Mayavi - Dundubhi's younger brother came along to try to avenge his brother's death. In the middle of the night, he came to Kishkindha and started to create havoc. Both Bali and Sugriva were ready for battle...but Bali told his brother to stay back and protect his kingdom. But Sugriva followed his brother to witness the duel. Mayavi headed towards a cave and Bali followed him in heated pursuit. After a while he heard a loud cry and then saw blood flowing out of the cave. He called out for his brother Bali...when he heard no response from him, he assumed the worst! Sugriva decided to take a huge boulder and block the cave's entrance in case Mayavi decided to come out and harm the rest of the vanaras. Sugriva had to go back to Kishkindha and tell his people the sad news. The people demanded Sugriva to become the new king and he hesitantly accepted. Several days passed and suddenly, Bali came back to his kingdom. He was enraged at what his brother had done! He banished him along with a few of his faithful followers, Bali took back his throne and he took Sugriva's wife too! As Rishyamukha mountain was the only place his brother feared, then Sugriva and his faithful decided to take asylum there.

We then discussed how 2 sets of brothers Rama & Bharatha, and Sugriva & Bali were in similar situations, but they both behaved very differently. The kids were able to draw the similarities and differences between them. Please do take some time and ask them what they thought. We paused our journey here.

Please go to the link below to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 16

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Bhramarpanam bhramahavihir"
10. "Subham karothi kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
12. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" (page 129 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the shlokas with your kids. They will be learning shlokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized themselves with the first 6 shlokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. We introduced shlokas 51 and 52 this week.
2. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 26.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
3. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 shlokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.
4. We did some jumping jacks & yoga stretches.

After a brief quiz like re-cap of our story so far, we returned to the Rishyamuka mountain. There Sugriva was telling Rama that the vanaras had seen a rakshasa speeding across the sky like a dark cloud grasping on to a crying lady. That lady had

tied up some of her jewels in a cloth & tossed them down to the vanaras who were picking berries. One glance at them & Rama instantly knew they were Sita's. Sugriva asked for Rama's help to fix his situation & promised Rama that he would help him find Sita right after.

Sugriva was concerned that Rama would not be able to defend himself against Bali & actually doubted his strength. Lakshmana was enraged by Sugriva's doubt, but Rama flicked his toe & tossed Dundubhi's skeleton far away. Sugriva still was not impressed. Then Rama aimed his arrow at a tree...he let go & that arrow pierced through 6 trees & returned back to Rama! Seeing that, Sugriva was convinced that Rama was a formidable match for his brother and prostrated before Him.

The banished crew along with Rama & Lakshmana head to Kishkindha & Sugriva shouts out for Bali & challenges him to a duel. Bali instantly accepts & comes out with immense determination. Rama & Lakshmana watch from a distance & can see Sugriva getting very tired & weak. Unfortunately, Rama was hesitant to take a shot with his bow & arrow as the vanara brothers looked very much alike. Sugriva had to retreat as he was unable to carry on any longer. Extremely disappointed with Rama, Sugriva demands why Rama did not do anything. Rama had to explain his dilemma & told Sugriva to wear a flower garland & to go back & challenge Bali again. Sugriva agrees & does so.

This time, before Bali headed out, his wife Tara was very concerned. She told Bali that Rama & Lakshmana were on Sugriva's side, & she said that she had heard that they were very powerful. Bali responded by saying that, he too had heard about them, but he also heard that they were very righteous men & were on the side of dharma. Then Tara offered prayers for her husband's safety. The brothers restarted their duel. Sugriva was getting weak & from behind a tree, Rama found the right instance & had a perfect shot, he aimed his arrow & pierced Bali in his chest. Bali immediately fell to the ground. The vanaras along with Rama & Lakshmana rushed to his side. Bali looked at Rama with sad & accusing eyes & demanded an explanation! Rama then lovingly explains to Bali that he had made a promise to Sugriva to set right the injustice towards him. Also he says that while hunting, one hides & shoots, that's not considered a crime. Complete understanding swept across Bali's face as he departed to the warrior's heaven.

All is right in Kishkindha...Sugriva is crowned king, Angada (Bali's son) is made Prince, normal life continues. The monsoon season brings heavy rains & flooding. Rama & Lakshmana spend their time inside a cave on the Rishayamuka mountain, worrying about how time is running out & that Sugriva has not kept up his end of the deal!

Sugriva continued to party on. As the season changed & the rains stopped, Rama was still waiting to hear from his friend, the newly crowned king. Lakshmana was enraged & wanted to go & find out what the delay was. Rama calmed his brother down & sent him to go find out what the delay was. In the meantime, Hanuman was also thinking the same! Though Sugriva was still partying, Hanuman being the voice of reason, comes out as the whole kingdom hears the twang of Lakshmana's bow. Sugriva snaps out of his party state of mind & humbly receives Lakshmana & announces that the vanara forces around the world would assemble within a day at Kishkindha. Sugriva accompanies Lakshmana to Rishyamuka to beg for Rama's pardon & he does so.

The search begins! The vanaras from all directions assembled & search parties were given a month's time to bring back information. Sugriva sent armies headed North, East & West. The team heading South consisted of Hanuman, Angadha, Jambavan & Nila. As everyone already had clues pointing South, Rama wanted Hanuman to be his personal messenger. He called him aside & took off his ring & gave it to Hanuman. He said that Sita would instantly recognise it & will know exactly who you are & who sent you. Hanuman bowed down to Rama & accepted the immense task. The teams from the other directions already were back reporting failure. The team heading South came across a cave & entered it. It was enchanted & was like a never ending maze of beautiful gold trees with rubies, diamonds & emeralds hanging from them, lovely waterfalls, lily ponds & plenty of food everywhere. It was paradise & a tapasvini called Svayamprabha lived there. Hanuman related the happenings leading them to their search. She told the vanaras to close their eyes & she would transport them out of the never ending maze.

When the vanaras opened their eyes, they were on the sea shore. They were all confused. Most of them wanted to just go back & enjoy the rest of their lives in the enchanted cave. Hanuman had to remind them about their mission. An old, handicapped & starving vulture named Sampati was eagerly watching the vanaras from a close by hill, planning how to score his next meal. When suddenly he heard the name Jatayu come up in conversation. His eyes lit up, but immediately saddened on hearing that he was killed by a rakshasa. Sampati called out to the vanaras asking what happened & they narrated the situation. Sampati told them how he was protecting his brother Jatayu from the sun when his wings got burnt off & he had landed here. He told them that he recently saw a demon fly across the ocean grasping on to a crying lady! The vanaras brought Sampati down from the hill, fed him & asked for more details. Then with his keen sight, he was able to see Lanka across the ocean, the rich royal kingdom, its beautiful gardens & under a tree surrounded by rakshasis, a lady was sadly sitting! As soon as Sampati related this to the vanaras, he could feel blood in his veins

moving towards his wing area & small wings started sprouting! He had received a boon that his wings would grow back when he helped Rama!

Sita was finally located, now the task was how they were going to get to her. The vanaras started estimating how far they could jump. No one was able to say that they could jump across the ocean. Then Jambavan looked at Hanuman & started praising the multitude of abilities that the son of Vayu had & made him realize that his very birth is for serving Ramchandraji & that Hanuman was their only hope to fulfill this mission. The hidden strength started to swell up inside of Hanuman & he started to glow & grow!!! He was ready to depart. We paused our journey here.

Please go to the link below to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 17

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Bhramarpanam bhramahavahir"
10. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
12. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" (page 129 in My Prayers book)

Bhajan:

1. "Athma Nivasi Ram" (page 149 in My Prayers book) - **New**

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the slokas with your kids. They will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Most kids have familiarized

themselves with the first 6 slokas! Please record videos & send your individual child chanting the shlokas to the Geeta Chanting Team cnjbalaviharhouses@gmail.com to earn house points. We introduced shloka 53 this week.

2. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 28.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
3. We have introduced most of the Dainikaparthana (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.
4. The new bhajan that we introduced this week will be part of our annual day stage performance. Please have the kids begin to familiarize themselves with it.
5. We did some stretching between our activities.

We began with a short quiz like recap of our story so far. It was nice to see that even a few kids who were absent for previous classes were able to answer the questions! We were on the shore & nothing but ocean was in front of the vanaras. Hanuman had just heard Jambavan tell him that his mere existence was to serve Ramchandraji! He is totally inspired & thinks that he would have to climb high enough & be able to put immense pressure down on the earth to give him enough force to take the leap. He picks the Mahendra hill. He pictures Lord Rama & feels him in his heart, his yoga centered mind is concentrating only on the task at hand & he finally offers prayers to Surya, Indra, Brahma & to his dad Vayu.

Hanuman turns & faces southward. He musters up even more strength & now even his surroundings can feel it too! The rocks, streams, trees, flowers & animals can all feel his strength as more blood rushed through Hanuman's veins. He was ready & his shadow looked like a humongous dark cloud over the ocean. As his flight began & continued, he met with a multitude of obstacles.

When he came across Mainaka the mountain, he gracefully declined the offer to take rest on the mountain & promised to visit another time as his task at hand was highly time sensitive! Mainaka agreed & he was allowed to pass. After a while, the hungry monster Surasa wanted Hanuman to enter her mouth. Hanuman was is very intelligent & decided to grow & increase his size. As he did so, Surasa too opened her mouth

wider, when it was 50 yojanas wide, Hanuman shrunk to a speck, went in & out of her mouth to fulfill her desire. She was actually the Naga maiden, she was only testing him. She gave him her blessings & on Hanuman flew. With great speed, Maruthi sped on, he encountered a hungry rakshasi & decided to speed through her mouth & made a hole through & out of her body, killing her without wasting time. He finally reached the shores of beautiful Lanka. He shrinks himself down to the size of a little monkey then moves to the top of a hill & surveys his surroundings.

Hanuman was absolutely mesmerized by the beauty, richness, massive architectural marvels, its moats & novel methods of protection forming a very well laid out city. He snapped out of his trance & immediately got back to the task at hand. It probably felt like getting to Lanka was the easy part...now his real search begins. He had no clue if or not Sita was alive & if she was, where she would be. Hanuman is known as "Buddhimatam Varishtham" - wise amongst the wisest. He instantly plans to enter the city after dark to be able to slip past guards. The soft moon light helped guide him. He encountered a fierce rakshasi. She immediately wanted to find out why a little monkey was snooping around. She shoved him away & Hanuman immediately gave her a suckerpunch & he plopped to the ground, stunned by the unexpected power, she remembered the prophecy! She was the Goddess Guardian of the city & immediately felt that the rakshasa race was coming to an end! She bowed to the little monkey and gave him entrance!

The little monkey continued his expedition prancing from place to place, palace to palace, courtyard to courtyard admiring the riches & splendor of Lanka, still unable to locate Sita. He finally entered Ravana's palace, he saw numerous queens, enjoying the luxury & their surroundings. Then he slowly peered through his bedroom. There stretched out in regal splendor on a solid gold bed, studded with gemstones was Ravana. He was surrounded by several wives, for a second Hanuman was actually looking for Sita & then instantly thought otherwise! She would never be there! He left the palace & feeling highly unsuccessful & dejected went out into the courtyard & sat there on the compound wall. A multitude of negative thoughts were running through his mind.

As Hanuman sat on the wall, he saw an Ashoka Vana in the courtyard. There were beautiful flowers & sweet fragrances from them filling the air. He thought to himself, this is the only place he hadn't searched & it seems to be more like an area that Sita could be. It was heavily guarded by rakshasis that were gruesome in all ways possible! He continued to glance around, the moon slowly crept out from behind the clouds & under an ashoka tree was an elegant lady, simply dressed, pale, eyes red & swollen from constant weeping, lips trembling & constantly chanting "Rama"! Eureka!!! The consort of

Ramchandraji has been located! Hanuman's heart skipped a beat & was mesmerized & overjoyed that he has good news for his Rama.

Hanuman was startled by the sudden sound of anklets, women laughing & those voices were subdued but they were getting closer. Out of the corner of his eye, he could see Ravana approaching. He immediately moved to a spot in the tree that had a lot of thick leaves. The majestic king was stunning from head to toe. He could see Sita growing paler, shivering & watched her turn her head away, as the procession of queens, women & Ravana got closer. He kindly tried to convince Sita to marry him by showing off & talking about all the riches that could be hers. He tried his best to talk down what Rama has, what he was putting her through, who he was at the moment & how he could not provide for her. Ravana had never begged anyone this way before.

Sita plucked a blade of grass & placed it between her & Ravana. She tried to reason with him by saying that it was adharma to have desire for another man's wife. She said she belongs to Rama & will never think of anyone else. If he continued on this disgraceful path, he would not be spared by the wrath of Rama. He may forgive you if you let her go now & forget this ridiculous desire of his. Ravana was furious & gave her 2 more months to change her mind, or be cut up & served as his breakfast!

After Ravana left, the rakshasis in the garden started worrying Sita for rejecting Ravana. Some of them were even eager to eat her up. She was frightened & began to weep, even then, she was constantly chanting Rama's name. Trijata was one of the women there, she was wise & demanded the rest of the rakshasis to leave Sita alone & beg for mercy & forgiveness as she has had dreams of Ravana's 10 heads rolling on the ground & Lanka destroyed by Rama who is an avatara of Lord Vishnu. Saying thus, she bowed before Sita.

Maruti was observing all that had occurred. He was debating on how he would approach Sita without startling her. He decided to stay a monkey. At this point, the rakshasis had enough excitement for one night & had dozed off. Sita suddenly felt an unexplainable inner strength. Hanuman began to sing Rama's praises & life story from his birth all the way up to his own journey across the ocean to Lanka. Sita was delighted! She looked up in the tree hoping to see a human figure with deep knowledge but instead saw a cute little monkey smiling down at her. She wasn't sure if it was her imagination or if she was actually looking at Rama's messenger. She had so many questions regarding Rama & Lakshmana's well being.

Sita wanted Rama to come to her rescue within 2 months, or she said that she'd jump into a fire. On hearing this, Hanuman instantly jumped out to console her, she was taken aback, frightened & doubted if he was some illusion created by Ravana. Hanuman immediately remembered the ring. She was instantly convinced. He asked her to get on his shoulders & he would take a leap back to Rama. He could see the doubt in her eyes, so Hanuman grew to the size of Trivikrama & then shrunk back to the small monkey. Even after that, she insisted that Rama should come with his weapons & fight for her honor & rescue her. Sita gave Maruti a jewel that she had received from her mom. Rama would definitely recognize it. She affectionately called Hanuman, "son", blessed him & requested him to depart immediately. We paused our story here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 18

Spirit Day! The kids participated in several team building activities representing Durga's Daredevils. They had a lot of fun. Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's Spirit Day.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Week 20

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Bhramarpanam bhramahavahir"
10. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
12. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" (page 129 in My Prayers book)
13. Bhajan - "Athma Nivasi Ram" (page 149 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We colored lessons 31 & 32 in our coloring books. If you have some extra time at home, please have the kids complete their coloring pages in their Bala Ramayana coloring books. Some kids have missed a class or 2, & we have had a few abbreviated sessions due to other activities & were unable to fit the coloring activity in. **Please stop on Lesson 32.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.
2. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the slokas with your kids. They will be learning slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. All slokas required for the competition have been introduced. Please register, practice & participate in the Geeta chanting competition. Registration closes soon. Go to <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/geeta-chanting/> to register if you have not done so already.

Hanuman has returned to Kishkindha & has reported that he has successfully found Sita to his Lord Rama. He had confronted Ravana & requested him to return Sita to her husband & to beg for forgiveness. When Ravana denied doing so & had Hanuman's tail set on fire, Hanuman burnt Lanka & then returned to his vanaras with the news. On hearing the news, Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva & his massive Vanara Army head to the tip of India.

The vanara army is close to the shoreline & they are planning their next move. As they are doing so, they spot 5 dark clouds in the sky, swiftly approaching their location. Their immediate thought was that rakshasas were heading over to fight them, so they got prepared. Vibhishana was not afraid of being attacked & spoke from the sky saying that he tried his best to advise his evil brother Ravana to change his mind & return Sita, but his efforts were futile. So he said that he & 4 of his like minded rakshasas are coming to seek asylum at Rama's feet. Sugriva was very suspicious & thought they were coming to spy on them, so he went to warn Rama. Rama in turn decided to seek advice from his army leaders, & they also sided with Sugriva & wanted to get ready to fight or at least test their real motive. Rama then turned to Hanuman for advice. Hanuman respectfully addressed Lord Rama, saying that he knew all the answers as he was the Lord himself. But putting his bhakthi & those thoughts aside, Hanuman gives his opinion that, Vibhishana & his men are arriving unarmed & thus we should trust them. Rama was happy & agreed. He then went on to say that it was against his Dharma to turn away anyone that comes to Him for shelter.

Sugriva was still suspicious. He went on to doubt Vibhishana & justifies it by saying that he had sided with Ravana for so long...Rama reminds Sugriva that not long ago, he too had sided with his own brother Bali! On hearing that he calms down & accepts his misthought. The talks of brothers reminds Rama & Lakshmana of their faithful & loving ones that they soon hope to reunite with. Soon Vibhishana arrives & takes blessings from Rama. Lakshmana & Angadha are asked to bring seawater for abhisheka & Rama crowns Vibhishana as King of Lanka.

The army was nowhere close to figuring out how to cross the ocean. So some of the elders advised Rama to undertake a fast to request the sea god for help. Three days passed & when there was still no response, Rama was furious & wanted his bow & arrows to make sure that everything in the ocean perished. As soon as the wrath of Rama was felt by the sea god, he rose up & prevented any more destruction. The sea god had to take a stand & tell Rama that he could not go against his nature & dry up for them to cross over. But he agreed that with Rama's name on anything that was tossed onto him, would float & he would hold each object together like glue! Nala was appointed as the chief engineer. The vanara army immediately began building the bridge with 100% enthusiasm, that kept growing as they kept building & marching towards Lanka as they chanted "Rama, Rama, Victory to Rama"!

As Rama along with the vanara army approach Lanka, Malyavaan, Ravana's wise grandfather tries in vain to convince his grandson to do the right thing & save his people. Ravana was blinded by his desire for Sita & would not listen to anyone. He strategically posted his army in all different directions & Ravana stayed at his Northern gate. The vanaras who had arrived observed the positioning from the Trikuta mountain. Rama was also observing the beauty of Lanka and became sad that he would end up destroying this beautiful kingdom! Rama also positioned his army & he positioned Lakshmana & himself at the North gate. The two armies were all set.

All of a sudden, Sugriva decided to fly out of his army & confront Ravana! They both equally matched wrestlers, but Ravana always had tricks up his sleeve. So Sugriva decided to retreat back to his army. The vanara king was questioned by Rama for his sudden disappearance. Rama after hearing about Sugriva's hasty actions explained that a king should never risk his life & cross enemy lines before battle commences! Suriva apologised & begged for forgiveness. Rama then

called on Angada to be his messenger & last resort prior to declaring war & death to Ravana & the rakshasa race. Ravana was enraged on seeing the messenger & would not listen to reason & called on all his rakshasas to attack Angada. The messenger escaped & Ravana went up to his observation tower to see Rama & the strength of his mighty army.

Ravana was filled with dark determination. His thoughts focused on his evil ways of trickery. He had reached a point of no return. He had to conjure a plan to persuade Sita to change her mind & have Rama leave heartbroken without a fight. He asked his sorcerer to make an exact replica of Rama's head. He then stormed into his Ashokavana & victoriously screamed at Sita showing the head, that he had defeated Rama & his army. He demanded Sita to be his queen. He placed the severed head before Sita. She believed it was her beloved husband & began lamenting uncontrollably. At that moment, the vanaras had begun their invasion & his army generals needed him immediately. As Ravana departed to answer his call, the fake head of Rama went up in smoke. That illusion was no more! Sita was bewildered. Saramaa, the good rakshasi then told her that it was Ravana's evil maya & due to Sita's pure soul, it sounded like the vanara army & Rama are finally here to rescue her. Sita felt hope again as simultaneously the rakshasa race was trembling with fear. We paused our story here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 21

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Bhramarpanam bhramahavihir"

10. "Subham karothi kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
12. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" (page 129 in My Prayers book)
13. Bhajan - "Athma Nivasi Ram" (page 149 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please continue to practice the slokas with your kids. They have been taught slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website gitachanting.net for the right pronunciation. Please register, practice & participate in the Geeta chanting competition. Registration closes soon. Go to <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/geeta-chanting/> to register if you have not done so already.
2. We have introduced the Dainikaparthanah (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.
3. We colored some of the lessons that kids had skipped when they were either absent or what we weren't able to get to due to abbreviated classes. If the kids have some extra time at home, they can catch up on some coloring. **Please stop on Lesson 32.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.

Our setting was in Lanka. Both sides are prepared for the war to commence. Rama signals the vanara army to attack. They are completely pumped up & energized chanting "Victory to Rama, Jai Sri Ram, Long Live Rama", they approach the city gates. Ravana & his rakshasa army are ready to attack with full force, charging out with their mighty weapons. As the vanaras arrived empty handed, they made use of rocks, boulders, mountains, trees, columns, pillars, etc. as weapons. The generals from both sides were equally matched. Angadha was assigned to take his stance against Indrajit, the mighty son of Ravana. Angadha killed Indrajit's charioteer & horses & smashed his chariot as well. Furious at the outcome, Indrajit used magic to make himself invisible. He decided to torment Rama & Lakshmana by shooting arrows at them from all different directions. After that he sent serpent arrows at the duo, that tied them up & made it impossible for them to move or talk!

Sugriva & the vanara army were grief stricken! They assumed the worst had happened & started to cry in defeat. Vibhishana was not convinced as he was still able to see

luster in the faces of the brothers. Indrajit thought that his hasty master plan had worked & went to rejoice with his father. Ravana was so pleased that he started to party himself & ordered his trusted rakshasi to accompany Sita on the flying Pushpa vagana to witness their victory & to now convince her to be his queen. Sita could not bear the sight & lamented uncontrollably. Trijata, the good rakshasi too thought like Vibhishana & tried to console Sita by saying that the duo don't seem to be dead.

At this point, the ocean waves rose to incredible heights & the winds started roaring! Garuda the king of the birds arrived amongst the vanaras & immediately the serpents disappeared in fear! Garuda softly brushed his wings along the brothers' faces & whispered to Rama that he was an old friend of his & that they would meet again after the war is over. The duo awoke with immense strength & immediately began planning their new war strategies. There was a roar of joy amongst the vanaras that reverberated across Lanka. Immediately Ravan climbed his tower to see what was going on & was astonished to see the brothers alive & well! Sita too could hear the joy & was immediately filled with a revived sense of hope.

Ravana decided to send his fierce warrior Dhumraaksha to defeat Hanuman on the western side. Unfortunately for the rakshasas, Hanuman was no match for them. With one swing of a humongous tree towards Dhumraaksha's head, he was slain. The extremely agitated rakshasa king then sent the huge & terrible looking Vajradamstra to the southern side to take on Angadha. Both generals & their armies fought with all their might but Angadha had the upper hand & defeated Vajradamstra. Ravana was furious & was getting increasingly afraid of the situation, but had no intention of giving up. He was very stubborn that he would never bow before Rama. Prahasta his commander-in-chief too had advised Ravana to return Sita to Rama. At this point, Akampana, who was unshakeable had also been defeated by Hanuman. With no other choice, Prahasta went to war against Nila & he too was no match for the vanaras! It was a gruesome scene, with death & disaster everywhere.

The enraged Ravana got himself prepared to head out for war. He looked majestic, radiant & terrifying with his 10 heads glowing, he led what was left of his rakshasa army out for war. Vibhishana, pointed out his brother to Rama as he rode in his chariot in their direction. Rama was awestruck by Ravana's presence & he viewed him with admiration, but had to quickly pocket that image as he was the cause of all of this destruction & life loss. Ravana strode in & swatted the fierce vanaras like they were mere flies. Nila was taken down in a single shot, Hanuman put up a brave fight then Lakshmana was wounded & fell unconscious. Hanuman swiftly escorted him off the battlefield.

Rama & Ravana are face to face for the first time. Rama wasted no time, he aimed his first arrow at Ravana's crown, took that out. Then his next arrow took out his chariot & his last arrow took out all of his weapons. Ravana stood there in astonishment stripped of all his powers & nearly destroyed. Rama looked at him kindly & requested his enemy to go home, take rest & return the next day! Rama had so much admiration for the fierce but evil warrior that stood before him.

Ravana had never tasted defeat before. He was totally dejected. But he knew that he had a secret weapon that he had not used so far...his brother Kumbhakarna! He decided to wake the sleeping giant who had been cursed to 6 months of sleep & 6 months of being awake during which he primarily consumed tons of food. Trying to wake up his brother during his sleep cycle was no easy feat. There were drummers, trumpet blowers & many more making as much noise as possible to wake him up. They even tried sending elephants to trample on top of him to make him budge. Then they tempted him with the aroma of his preferred foods. After a prolonged effort to awake Kumbhakarna, he finally wakes up. He gets dressed & rolls into his brother's assembly hall & his movements can be felt throughout Lanka. Ravana explained the grave situation that they were in & had NO support from his brother! Kumbhakarna called his brother out for his despicable act of kidnapping another man's wife! He also blamed all the people around him for praising Ravana & giving him false hope. But, he agreed to fight for his brother's honor & headed out decked in gems & the finest garments.

The vanaras were terrified by the sound of Kumbhakarna approaching. He looked like a giant mountain roaring towards the battlefield. He grabbed & consumed a multitude of vanaras. He smooshed several of them merely by accident too. Angadha, Sugriva & Nila were tossed around & knocked unconscious. The rakshasas were thrilled to see the vanara king down. Eventually Sugriva gained consciousness & attacked Kumbhakarna, using his long sharp nails to injure him enough to cause discomfort. Hanuman too played his role in slowing the tyrant down. When Lakshmana came forward, he avoided him & wanted to fight Rama...feeling that his end was close, deciding that he wanted to face Rama for that. Rama then pulled out his most powerful astaras, aimed & took Kumbhakarna down part by part. Finally his huge head fell & made an immensely load thud that reached Ravana's ears, throwing a devastating blow at Ravana. He fainted in disbelief. He lamented about not listening to reason & to his brother Vibhishana as well. Ravana's sons came to console him & they bravely set out to fight for their father's honor & to avenge the death of their uncle. Unfortunately they met the same end as their predecessors. Ravana was determined to go down fighting. We paused our story here.

Please go to the below link to check out the pictures from this week's class

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/jvGg1kn4XA2963pE8>

Regards,

Keerthi Kobla & Rukmini Sriram

Week 22

Hari Om Parents,

The following is what we did during Sunday's class:

Shlokas:

1. "Om Saha navavatu" (page 8 in My Prayers book)
2. "Vakrathunda Mahakaya" (page 27 in My Prayers book)
3. "Karegre vasate" (page 11 in My prayers book)
4. "Akanda-mandalakaram" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
5. "Ajnana-timirandhasya" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
6. "Gururbrahma" (page 61 in My Prayers book)
7. "Samudra vasane devi" (page 11 in My Prayers book)
8. "Saraswathi namasthubyam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
9. "Bhramarpanam bhramahavahir"
10. "Subham karothe kalyanam" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
11. "Karacharana krithamva" (page 12 in My Prayers book)
12. "Sri Rama Rama Ramethi" (page 129 in My Prayers book)
13. Bhajan - "Athma Nivasi Ram" (page 149 in My Prayers book)

Activities:

1. We played the Concentration Game. After the chanting of 3 "Om's kids keep their eyes closed. They count the number of stones being dropped into a metal box during the quiet time. Later they give the count of the stones dropped. The game quiets the mind and improves the concentration. A few got the count correct & most were really close.
2. We practiced our Geeta chanting. Please practice the slokas with your kids. They have been taught slokas 41-56 & that will be their requirement for the Geeta Chanting Competition. Please refer to the following website <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/geeta-chanting/> for the right pronunciation. Please register, practice & participate in the Geeta chanting competition. Registration closes soon. Go to <http://www.chinmayavrindavan.org/geeta-chanting/> to register if you have not done so already. The competition is on Saturday, we wish the kids the very best. We are sure that they will do well. Thank you parents for practicing at home & allowing your kids to participate in the competition.

3. We have introduced the Dainikaprarthanah (means Daily Prayers) & 3 slokas from the Gurustoram. Please have the kids make it a habit to chant the above shlokas every morning, (lighting the lamps / evening) after their bath/shower & before going to bed. This will help them learn, memorize as well as develop a lifelong habit of morning prayer & daily prayer.
4. We colored lessons 35 & 36. If the kids have some extra time at home, they can catch up on some coloring. **Please stop on Lesson 36.** Please reiterate that the kids are recalling the story as they are coloring.