

DESH APNAYEN NEWSLETTER

4th Issue, November 2015

From the Editor's desk

**गुरु गोविंद दोनों खडे काके लागु पाय ?
बलिहारी गुरुदेवकी गोविंद दियो मिलाय ॥**

Dear friends,

-Sant Kabir

Hello again!

I am sitting by my window as I write this, enjoying this (rare) cool afternoon breeze. I feel lucky to do the work I do and am grateful for the experiences and people that have led me here. The ones I thank the most, however, are my teachers.

Teachers create magical environments for students where learning, sharing and creativity all have space to flourish. Teachers satisfy curiosities, help us make sense of the world, nurture our imaginations build our intelligence.

We at Desh Apnayen furiously believe that teachers are influential architects of our society. Teachers will help us rebuild this country by creating generations of aware, responsible and action oriented citizens. We could not be more proud of all the teachers who have taken up our cause and made it their own. When we visit schools, hold training and support sessions with the teachers, the joy and excitement in their eyes for our school programme is our constant motivation.

Our blogs for November celebrated children. Their curiosities, their wisdom, their achievements. Our newsletter is dedicated to teachers. In this issue, we talk about realistic things teachers can do in the classroom to promote engaging citizenship education. We also list important questions that educators must ask themselves everyday in order to create lasting change and inspire young minds.

Teachers and students form a lattice of incredible beauty and strength. It is a relationship that has and can change nations. We at Desh Apnayen are here to instigate that change.

Come, light the spark with us!

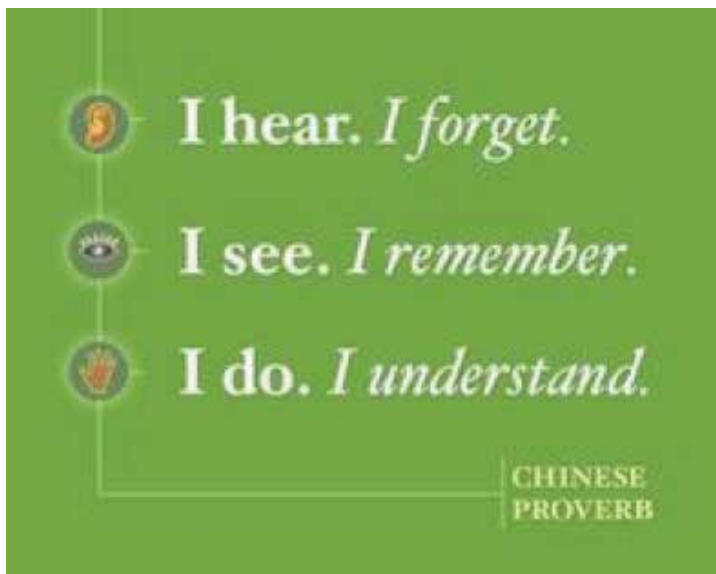
Aditi Mehta, Editor

Citizenship in the Classroom

All teachers are powerful and peaceful agents of change, striving day in and day out to create better leaders for our world. Citizenship education is an essential and non-negotiable part of this effort.

On her website, Leah Davies, an M. Ed scholar, says "Educators are obligated to teach students the history of our democracy on a level children can comprehend. Helping students explore citizenship and connecting it to their lives are the keys to true understanding. When children are exposed to storytelling, drama, and other activities in which they are actively involved, their retention is increased."

The arts are integral to learning and applying of all concepts, including those of citizenship. This is mainly because most artistic endeavors require some kind of performance or action. This well-known Chinese proverb holds true here:



These are some art and research based activities that you can do in your classroom that will enable children to respect the fundamental values of citizenship.

1. Ask the students to search for local citizens who generously contribute to the good of the community. Thank or honor them in some way.

2. Encourage students to participate in community service projects such as recycling, picking up litter, and volunteering for other worthwhile projects.

3. Ask the students to interview a person who

lived through the struggle for independence. Together make a list of questions they could ask such as:

- How do you feel about India today vs the India of 1947?
- Tell me about your life?
- What was a difficult time for you?
- What does being an Indian mean to you?

Have the children write about or draw what they discovered, report their findings and post the results on a bulletin board.

4. Have a shared story session on the following topics:

- Tell a story about a time you told the truth, even though that was a difficult thing to do.
- Tell a story about a time you felt happy or sad for somebody or something.
- Tell a story about someone you respect.
- Tell a story about a time you took responsibility for something you had done or said.
- Tell a story about being brave.

5. Hold 'what if' type case study discussions on themes to do with ethics.

Take this scenario for example:

Imagine you're playing basketball with a friend. Some kids come up and take your friend's basketball. Create more specific details about this kind of situation, and then describe what you would do. (Discuss and role-play based on the additional circumstances students describe in their writing. Note that sometimes a person needs courage to walk away from a situation.)

6. Have them read, analyze and debate newspaper articles on various topics concerning civic life.

7. With an adult's assistance have the students take photographs in their community for a book entitled "Our Freedoms," "Our Citizens" or another related topic.

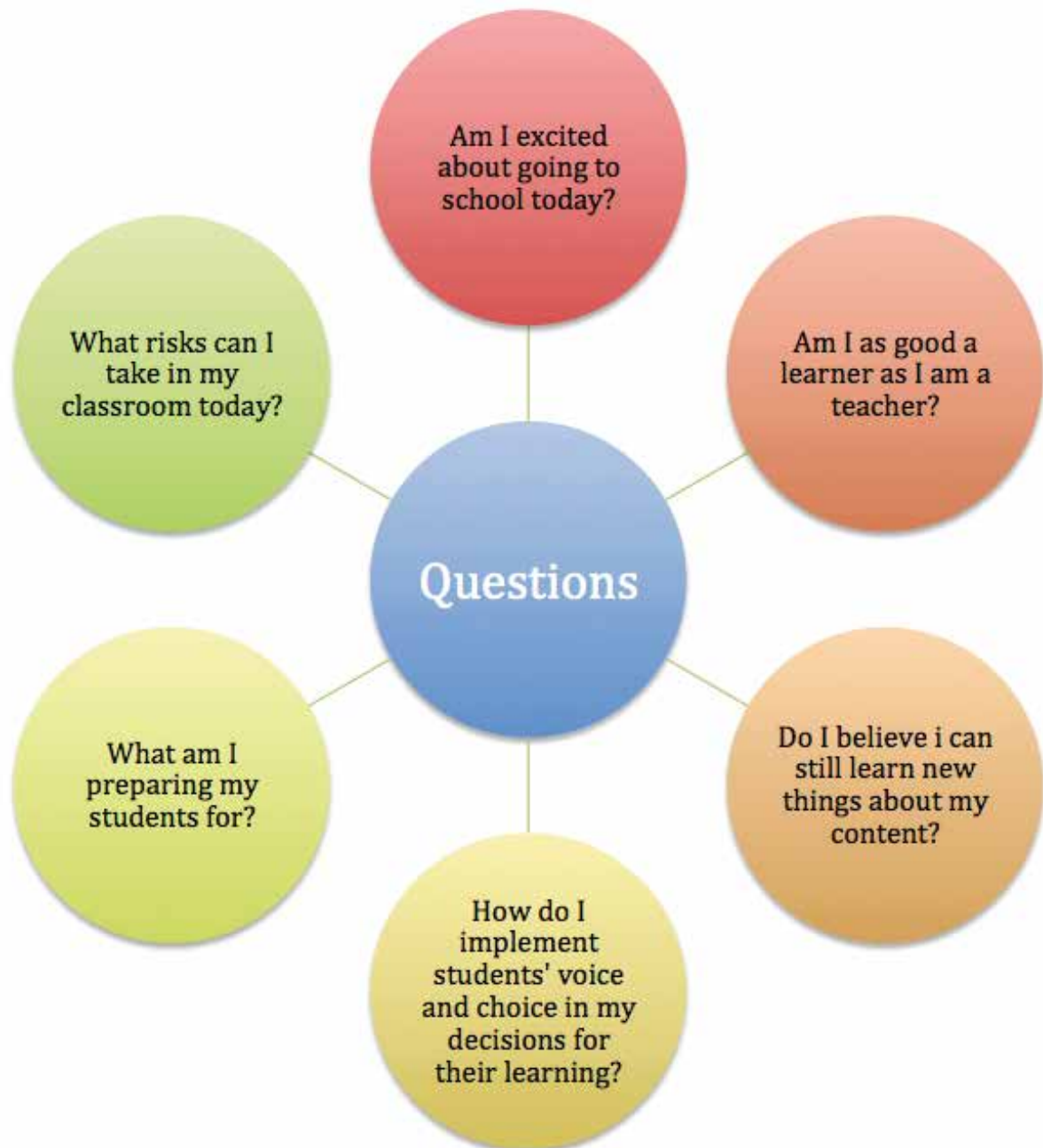
These kinds of activities work well for students of grades four to nine. We wish teachers all the best!

The Desh Apnayen team has created practical, engaging and effective curricula based civics content with many more case studies, activities and AV based presentations. To arrange a presentation and training session for your school, please email Komal Shah on komal@deshapnayen.org.

Sources for this article:
Conversation with the Desh Apnayen content experts
Education World
Leah Davies from kellybear.com



Reflection questions for educators



Ask yourself these questions every week, and mentally note your answers. Great questions make great leaders, and great leaders make great teachers.

Contributions from our partner schools

Model United Nations 2015 at JB Petit High School for Girls

Established by a dynamic Englishwoman in 1860, JB Petit is one of Mumbai's oldest schools for girls.

The school held their MUN programme earlier this month. The agenda of JBMUN was the Preservation of Socio-Cultural Practice of Religious and Ethnic Minorities.

The committee discussed causes and problems and came out with all the possible solutions. This was a successful 3-day program.

We congratulate the school on their active participation in Desh Apnayen's programme.



Pawar Public School is making roads safer

According to a Times of India article from earlier this year, over 16 people are killed every hour because of road accidents in India. The numbers of crashes and of people left injured were also the highest levels since the recording of such data started in India—at 4.5 lakh and 4.8 lakh respectively (to read the full article, click [here](#)).

To raise awareness for this massive problem, children and teachers of Pawar Public School in Chandivali, Mumbai stand outside the school's premises every day to encourage road safety measures. They make beautiful posters with creative slogans to grab the public's attention towards this urgent issue. This activity ensures that children take road safety seriously and shape their attitude and behaviour towards a safer community.

We congratulate Pawar Public School and are proud of our partner school.

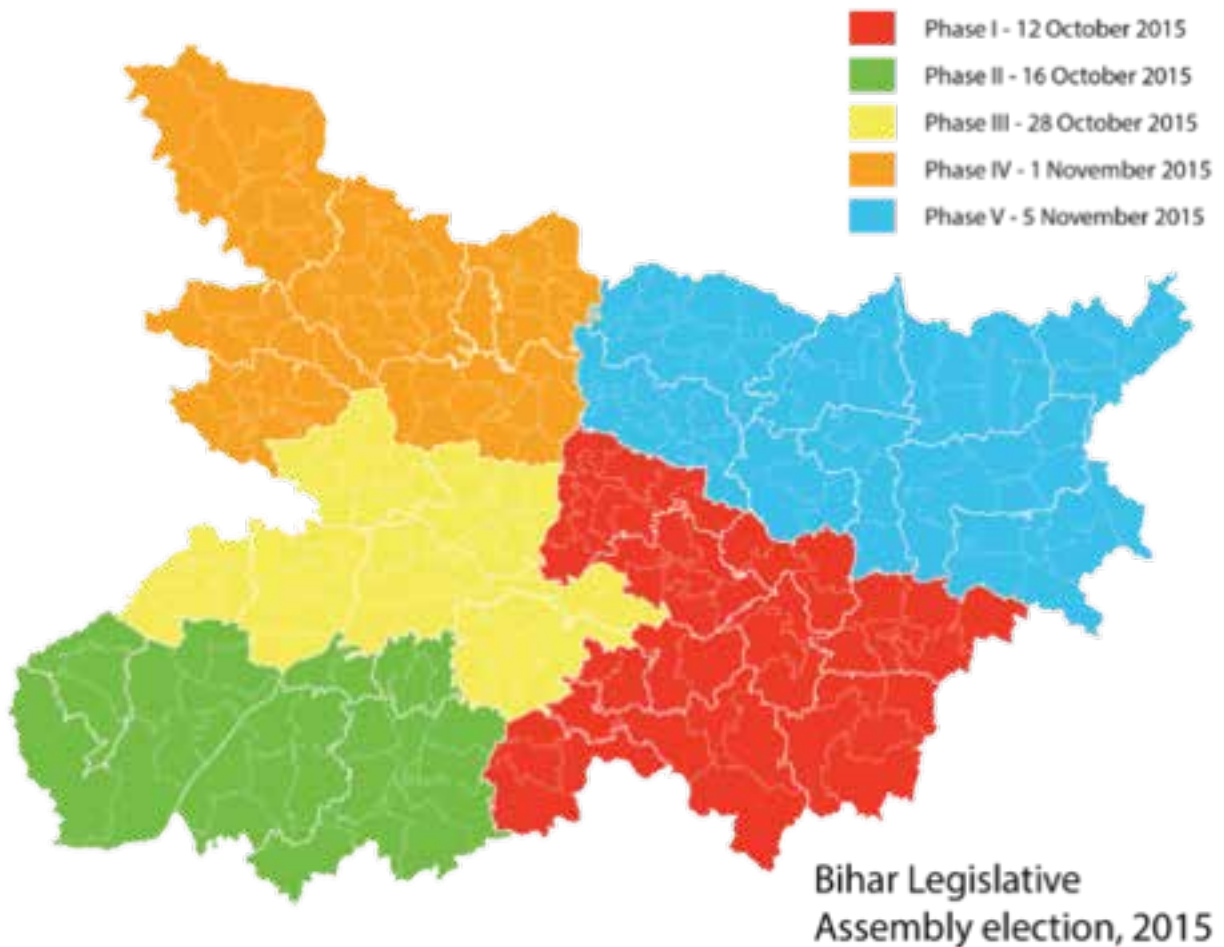
To contribute to this section, please email Komal Shah on
komal@deshapnayen.org.



Our monthly favourites

Event of the month

56.8% of the citizens of Bihar went to vote in five phases from 12th October to 5th November 2015 for the Legislative Assembly elections. This was the highest voter turnout in the state since 2000. Over 3.50 lac men and 3.11 lac women cast their vote in these five phases. The RJD (Rashtriya Janta Dal) emerged as a single largest party with 80 seats, followed by JD (U) with 71 seats and BJP with 53 seats. Nitish Kumar has become the state's Chief Minister yet again.



Fun and Games

Unscramble the names of these famous Indian teachers and find out more about their contribution to education.

S Nkrsnrahdnhia	
Wsaim Dankveivnaa	
Yartabahat	
Ychnkaaa	
Nabdinartahra Oertag	
JAP Bulad Malak	
Achraksanyra	

Answers for last month's Nobel Laureate quiz:

1. Rabindranath Tagore
2. Sir C V Raman
3. Hargobind Khorana
4. Mother Teresa and Kailash Satyarthi

To revisit the questions for last month's quiz, please click [here](#).