



Little Shlokas for Every Day

A shloka is a short Sanskrit verse. Tying one to a daily moment, like waking up or eating, is the easiest way for children to learn it, because the moment itself becomes the reminder.

Waking up: Karagre Vasate

कराग्रे वसते लक्ष्मीः करमध्ये सरस्वती ।
करमूले तु गोविन्दः प्रभाते करदर्शनम् ॥

Say it: Ka-raa-gray Va-sa-tay Laksh-mee-hee, Ka-ra-madh-yay Sa-ras-va-tee,
Ka-ra-moo-lay Too Go-vin-da-ha, Pra-bhaa-tay Ka-ra-dar-sha-nam

What it means: "Lakshmi Maa lives at my fingertips, Saraswati in the middle of my hand, and Govinda (Krishna) at its base. So every morning, I look at my hands."

When: As soon as your child wakes, before getting out of bed.

Make it fun: Hold your palms open like a book and "read" them. Point to fingertips, palm and wrist as you name each one. It reminds children their hands can do good work all day.

Before study or homework: Saraswati Namastubhyam

सरस्वति नमस्तुभ्यं वरदे कामरूपिणि ।
विद्यारम्भं करिष्यामि सिद्धिर्भवतु मे सदा ॥

Say it: Sa-ras-va-ti Na-mas-tub-hyam, Va-ra-day Kaa-ma-roo-pi-ni,
Vid-yaa-ram-bham Ka-rish-yaa-mi, Sid-dhir Bha-va-tu May Sa-daa

What it means: "Saraswati Maa, I bow to you. I am about to start learning. Please help me always do well."

When: Before reading, homework, music practice or a school day.

Make it fun: Hold a pencil or book in your hands while you say it, then open the book with a flourish on the last word.



Before starting anything: Vakratunda Mahakaya

वक्रतुण्ड महाकाय सूर्यकोटि समप्रभ ।

निर्विघ्नं कुरु मे देव सर्वकार्येषु सर्वदा ॥

Say it: Vak-ra-tun-da Ma-haa-kaa-ya, Soor-ya-ko-ti Sa-ma-pra-bha, Nir-vigh-nam
Ku-ru May Day-va, Sar-va-kaar-yay-shu Sar-va-daa

What it means: "Ganesha, with the curved trunk and big body, shining like a million suns: please clear the way in everything I do, always."

When: Starting a new activity, a journey, a birthday party or a festival.

Make it fun: Curl one arm like Ganesha's trunk. Every time you say a word with "v", swing it. Count the swings!

Before meals: Brahmarpanam

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविर्ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।

ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्मसमाधिना ॥

Say it: Brah-maar-pa-nam Brah-ma Ha-vir, Brah-maag-nau Brah-ma-naa Hu-tam,
Brah-mai-va Tay-na Gan-tav-yam, Brah-ma-kar-ma Sa-maa-dhi-naa

What it means: From the Bhagavad Gita (4.24). For children: "This food, the cooking and the one who eats it are all part of God. Thank you for this meal."

When: Before eating, with hands folded. Lovely for family dinners.

Make it fun: Take turns to be the "leader" who starts it. Younger ones can just say the first word and the family finishes it.

Bedtime: Asato Ma

असतो मा सद्गमय ।

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।

मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॥

Say it: A-sa-to Maa Sad-ga-ma-ya, Ta-ma-so Maa Jyo-tir-ga-ma-ya, Mrit-yor Maa
Am-ri-tam Ga-ma-ya

What it means: "Lead me from what is not true to what is true. Lead me from darkness to light. Lead me from fear to forever."

When: Lights out. It is a peaceful way to end the day.

Make it fun: Switch off the big light on "tamaso" and switch on a little night light on "jyotir": darkness to light!



Building the routine

Do not try all five at once. Start with the waking-up shloka for two weeks, then add the mealtime one. Put a small picture card for each shloka where it happens: one by the bed, one by the dining table, one on the study desk.

Pronunciation is written the way it sounds in English. A little wobble is perfectly fine: the love and the habit matter far more than perfect sounds.