

Amma Center of Chicago

Here is a list of frequently asked questions about Amma and the public programs:

Program details:

1. What is "Darshan" (Is it the same as receiving a Hug)?

The Sanskrit term ***darshan*** means, "vision", and it is used to describe the meeting with a holy person, especially a Self Realized master. Amma's darshan is unique. As the embodiment of supreme motherhood, she welcomes every person who comes to her, listens to his or her problems, offers advice and guidance, and brings reassurance to a troubled heart.

2. Is this program open to public?

Yes. No appointments or reservations are necessary.

3. Are there any charges to get Amma's blessing?

No, all public programs are free and open to the public.

4. What happens during the program?

Morning programs begin with a short meditation. After the meditation, Amma starts blessing the attendees, individually or as a family. A token is required to meet Amma (see question #10).

The evening program on July 5th begins with devotional singing led by Amma. This is followed by blessings for those who did not get blessings during the morning program.

The evening program on July 6th starts at 7:00 PM with a ceremony led by Amma, to bring peace and harmony in the world. This is followed by Devi Bhava blessings. People may attend as many programs as they wish, and people who come to the morning programs are encouraged to come back in the evening for Amma's talk, and singing. Darshans however are limited to once per day.

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5. What is "Devi Bhava"?

Devi Bhava: is a traditional worship of eternal feminine. As a concluding ceremony, Amma tends to reveal more of this principle in her outward mood.

6. Does the program revolve around a particular religion?

Amma's organizations and her teachings are based on service and love to all beings and our environment. These ideas can be found in all mainstream religions.

7. Can I photograph or record anything inside the program hall?

Photography or recording of any kind is strictly prohibited in the program hall.

8. Who can I ask for when I get to the program site?

There will be a "Chicago Welcome desk", located just outside the hall. It is staffed with local volunteers to answer your questions. Also, there are volunteers wearing colored scarves and "May I Help You?" badges who are ready to answer your questions and concerns.

9. How can I volunteer for help?

Please stop by the Chicago Welcome desk to volunteer during program hours.

Meeting Amma:

10. How can I receive a hug from Amma?

Once you arrive at the hall, you can join the token line. Tokens are issued to each attendee at the entrance to the program hall. There is no charge for a token. Everyone who wishes to meet Amma, including elders and tiny babies, needs to have a token.

11. Can I get tokens in advance?

No. Tokens are usually issued beginning approximately 1 hour before the start of each program.

12. Ok. I have a token. Now what do I do?

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You should exercise great care not to misplace the token. If lost—it is often not possible to get another one, and no one may enter the line to get Amma's blessings without presenting a token. Once inside the program hall, you will see a number range display. Please watch that display. When the display shows your number, you can enter a short line to meet Amma.

13. How many hugs can I receive during the program?

Each attendee can meet Amma once per day. However, during Devi Bhava, all attendees with a token, can meet Amma even if you have received Her blessing that morning.

14. Can I meet Amma privately?

Amma meets all Her devotees in the program hall.

15. Can I ask Amma a question?

Yes. Amma usually takes questions during the morning darshan time. People who wish to do this should arrive by 9:30 am and proceed to the front left of the hall and ask for the question line coordinator. Depending on the number of people who wish to ask questions, spaces are filled quickly. You can ask Amma spiritual or practical questions.

16. Can I bring my (elderly relative, someone in a wheelchair, very young child) for

Amma's blessing?

Yes. Please see our hall seating volunteers who will connect you with our **"Assisted Darshan seating"** volunteers.

17. I purchased some things from the book shop. Can I get the items blessed by Amma?

Yes. Take them with you when you go to get Amma's Darshan (to meet Amma).

18. Can I get a "Mantra" from Amma.

Yes. Mantras are given during Devi Bhava which is the evening program on July 6th, 2008 in Chicago. Volunteers will show you a short write up explaining about mantra practice, and then you can ask Amma for a Mantra when you go for Devi Bhava Darshan.

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19. Can I remain in the program hall after I receive my hug?

Yes. You can stay in the program hall and enjoy the atmosphere as long as you like. Many people also browse the bookstore or visit the many tables to learn about Amma's humanitarian activities

20. What is the recommended dress code to meet Amma?

Modest clothing is preferred.

21. Why do I have to remove my shoes or sandals before entering the program hall?

It is not mandatory, but it is the custom and tradition. We remove shoes as a sign of respect for Amma and what she represents.

Food & Lodging

22. Is food available during the program?

Yes. Amma's volunteers prepare and sell simple vegetarian meals and snacks on-site for a nominal fee all of which goes directly to support her many charitable activities.

23. Can I bring food cooked at home as 'prasad' and serve it to attendees free of charge?

Due to liability concerns by the hotel, home-cooked food is strictly prohibited.

24. Is any 'lodging help' provided for program attendees?

Please check the website [www.ammachicago.org] for information on area hotels. Lodging arrangements are made "on your own".

Some more useful links...

<http://www.amma.org/tours/index.html>

<http://www.amma.org/amma/meeting-amma.html>