

The Golden Rule Across the World's Religions

BY JOHN PLUMADORE AND SUSAN MUEHLHERR

SOME PEOPLE ARGUE THAT THE GOLDEN RULE IS THE MOST CONSISTENT, MORAL STANDARD THROUGHOUT HISTORY. Known also as the Ethic of Reciprocity, the Golden Rule is found in most religions and cultures. Its omnipresence throughout history gives it tremendous moral authority. Its appeal is augmented by the fact that its message is simple, universal and powerful.

Canada has become a multi-faith society and the Golden Rule philosophy speaks to the many religions that make up Scouting's membership.

Why Create a Golden Rule Workshop?

At a dramatic pace, more and more regions of the world are becoming environments of multi-culture and multi-faith.

This trend is having a profound effect upon public education, religious education, ethical education and education for social justice. Growing numbers of educators are discovering that religious and ethical education can no longer be conducted from the perspective of only one religion or culture. Indeed, religious educators of the future will call upon the wisdom and teachings of numerous religious and humanist traditions.

People are often surprised and pleased to discover versions of the Golden Rule in so many religions and secular philosophies. Because the Golden Rule crosses so many traditions and philosophies, it possesses tremendous moral authority and indicates a profound human unity. To help explore the Golden Rule, the Scarboro Mission

in Toronto, Ontario, developed a Golden Rule Workshop. Scouters are welcome to use the material contained within the workshop to facilitate discussion within their groups. Being a do-it-yourself workshop, it can be easily formatted to meet various age requirements. The Scarboro Mission offers other interesting multi-faith material on their web site too. Topics such as Guidelines for

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Scouting's Mission

The mission of Scouting is to contribute to the education of young people, through a value system based on the Scout Promise and Law, to help build a better world where people are self-fulfilled as individuals and play a constructive role in society.



Énoncé de Mission du scoutisme

Le scoutisme a pour mission – en partant de valeurs énoncées dans la promesse et la Loi scoutes – de contribuer à l'éducation des jeunes afin de participer à la construction d'un monde meilleur peuplé de personnes épanouies, prêtes à jouer un rôle constructif dans la société.

Designing a Multi-faith Prayer Service, Litany of Thanksgiving and help in arranging visits to other places of worship are just a few useful subjects. Go to www.scarboromissions.ca/Interfaith_dialogue for more information.

Sample Workshop Questions

During one part of the workshop, participants are invited to reflect silently and privately upon the 13 writings and then invited to do individual reflection in response to questions from the facilitator. To aid in developing these questions, the outline contains several samples, divided into three categories. Two samples from each category are provided below. More can be found in the workshop guidelines on the web.

Category A - The Message of the Golden Rule

- Are you aware of the title or message of a TV program, book or popular song which expresses the same idea as the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Can you see differences and similarities among the 13 Sacred Texts?

Category B – The Message of the Golden Rule for You

- Think of one occasion when you treated someone in the spirit of the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel?
- Which expression of the Golden Rule in the 13 Sacred Texts do you like best? Why?

Category C – The Golden Rule's Implication for Society

- What could things be like if everyone behaved according to the Golden Rule? Why is it that sometimes we don't behave according to the Golden Rule?
- Do you think that people generally live by the Golden Rule? Why? Why not? If not, what Rule do you think many people live by?

Animating the Golden Rule

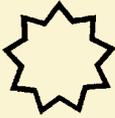
Such principles as the Golden Rule continue along the river of time only as long as new generations embrace them and make them their own. The Golden Rule movie is about such a generational embrace. A group of teenagers on a Golden Rule Retreat at Scarboro Missions are given the opportunity to express the Rule through their own creative lenses. The group is divided into smaller groups and each team is assigned one of the thirteen religions. Their team assignment is to take the Golden Rule within their assigned religion and prepare a theatrical skit, a musical demonstration, a poetic expression, a song or any creative process to demonstrate it.

The Golden Rule is portrayed and sung, guitars and bongos resound to the themes. And most of all, the entire group of teenagers rejoice in the ancient ethic, willingly embracing it as theirs, joyfully passing it to others.

Afterwards, students discuss what they learned from the experience about themselves and about each other. They share their newfound understanding about how they see the Golden Rule can change the world. This video shows a basic truth about the Golden Rule: its power lies in the doing – not in the knowing. To order, contact Paul McKenna at 1 800-260-4815 or email: interfaith@scarboromissions.ca X.

– When first published in November 2005, this article generated many positive emails. With the production of a video, we are pleased to update it and release it again, so others may read, learn and enjoy.

The Golden Rule Across the World's Religions Thirteen Sacred Texts

<p>Baha'i Faith Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself. Baha'u'llah, Gleanings</p>	
<p>Buddhism Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18</p>	
<p>Christianity In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. Jesus, Matthew 7:12</p>	
<p>Confucianism One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct ... loving-kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself. Confucius Analects 15.23</p>	
<p>Hinduism This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you. Mahabharata 5:1517</p>	
<p>Islam Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself. The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith</p>	
<p>Jainism One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated. Mahavira, Sutrakritanga</p>	
<p>Judaism What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and learn it. Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a</p>	
<p>Native Spirituality We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive. Chief Dan George</p>	
<p>Sikhism I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all. Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1299</p>	
<p>Taoism Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain and your neighbour's loss as your own loss. Lao Tzu, T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218</p>	
<p>Unitarianism We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Unitarian principle</p>	
<p>Zoroastrianism Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself. Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29</p>	

Acknowledgements: This original English version was prepared by Paul McKenna. Published by Scarboro Missions, Toronto Canada. Copyright © Scarboro Missions 2000. For a poster detailing the 13 Sacred Texts, e-mail sales@bbroughton.com.