

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 teaching 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.

During this past Scouting year, Central Ontario Councils held a Golden Rule Workshop for Scouters at all levels, facilitated by Roslyn Rus of Scarborough Missions, Toronto, Ontario. The experience was so profound that the Council decided to repeat the workshop in the 2005-2006 Scouting year.

Canada has become a very multi-faith society and the Golden Rule philosophy speaks to the many religions that make up Scouting's membership. Provided below is a description of the Golden Rule and sample questions taken from the workshop. Please note

complete guidelines for the workshop are available on the web for all to experience. Thanks to the Scarborough Mission for allowing us to reprint part of their Guidelines for their Golden Rule Workshop in this article.

People are often surprised and pleased to discover versions of the Golden Rule in so many religions and secular philosophies.

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 edu-

cation 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. In this workshop, you work with 13 Expressions of the Golden Rule (see sidebar). Note, however, that researchers have discovered versions in numerous other religious traditions. Because the Golden Rule crosses so many traditions and philosophies, it possesses tremendous moral authority and indicates a profound human unity.

Workshop Preparation

This is a do-it-yourself workshop. Both older youth and adults would benefit from this course and it is suitable for either a single-faith or a multi-faith audience. Any group interested in sponsoring this workshop would benefit by forming a planning group first. After reviewing the detailed range of choices and options outlined in the guidelines, the planning group may want to change, adapt or shorten the proposed



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

La mission du scoutisme consiste à contribuer au développement des jeunes afin de leur permettre d'atteindre leur plein potentiel physique, intellectuel, social et spirituel en tant qu'individus, citoyens et membres de la collectivité sur les plans local, national et international par l'application de nos principes et pratiques.



program. To aid in planning, the guidelines contain suggested time frames for various sections of the program.

Sample 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?














Other Helpful Hints

The workshop guidelines provide a great outline and easy format to follow. Go to www.scarboromissions.ca/Interfaith_dialogue/guidelines_main.php for more information.

We hope that you have a great experience like the Scouters in Central Ontario Council by using and living the Golden Rule philosophy in your Group/Area/Council. X

- John Plumadore is the Community Development Director - Diversity working out of the Central Ontario Administrative office.

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. <i>Baha'u'llah, Gleanings</i></p>	
<p>Buddhism Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. <i>The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18</i></p>	
<p>Christianity In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. <i>Jesus, Matthew 7:12</i></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. <i>Confucius, Analects 15.23</i></p>	
<p>Hinduism This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you. <i>Mahabharata 5:1517</i></p>	
<p>Islam Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself. <i>The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith</i></p>	
<p>Jainism One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated. <i>Mahavira, Sutrakritanga</i></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. <i>Hillel, Talmud, Shabbath 31a</i></p>	
<p>Native Spirituality We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive. <i>Chief Dan George</i></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. <i>Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1299</i></p>	
<p>Taoism Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain and your neighbour's loss as your own loss. <i>Lao Tzu, T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218</i></p>	
<p>Unitarianism We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. <i>Unitarian principle</i></p>	
<p>Zoroastrianism Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself. <i>Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29</i></p>	

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