


ABOUT THE GOLDEN RULE

Guidebook



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The Golden Rule and the Global Human Family

“We should act toward other nations as we wish them to act toward us.”

Millard Fillmore (1800-74), 13th president of the United States

The Golden Rule (also known as the Ethic of Reciprocity) is arguably the most consistent, prevalent and universal ethical principle in history. It is found worldwide throughout cultures, religions, secular philosophies and indigenous traditions. Many people regard it as the most concise and general principle of ethics.

Gold itself has symbolic value and a psychological appeal that spans cultures throughout history. As a metaphor, it points to what is most pure, noble, enduring and ideal in human experience. Gold was long considered the most valuable of metals throughout the world. It is therefore no surprise that the Golden Rule contains a "gold" metaphor since, as a principle, it is prized in almost all societies.

The principle of the Golden Rule has been valued by human societies for thousands of years. Why does it deserve renewed attention today? And what special significance does the Golden Rule have for this generation of young people?

The Golden Rule is often thought of as a rule for individuals: a person must consider how he or she would wish to be treated when deciding how to treat others. However, our changing world invites us to broaden this rule to groups of people and society as a whole.

Many regions of the world, including our own country, are quickly becoming more multicultural, with people of many cultures and religions working to find ways to live together in harmony. The Golden Rule, with roots in a wide range of the world's religions and cultures, is well-suited to be the standard to which different cultures can appeal in resolving conflicts. As the world becomes more of a single interacting global community, the need for such a common standard is becoming more urgent. The Golden Rule can be the ethical cornerstone as the human family works together to build a peaceful, just and sustainable global society.

Because the Golden Rule is a point of agreement and a common denominator among so many of the world's cultures, races, and religions, it has tremendous capacity for promoting social justice, nonviolence, unity, the teaching of compassion and ethics, multicultural and multifaith cooperation- and more.

Today we are living in a global village. Accordingly, we are all global citizens in addition to belonging to our particular groups, races, cultures, religions and nations. Being a global citizen brings both privileges and responsibilities. The Golden Rule may be the best guide we have for bringing all the world's people to live together in peace.

Paul McKenna/ Scarborough Missions
Creator of the Golden Rule poster

The Golden Rule Across the World's Religions

Thirteen Sacred Texts

Bahá'í 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.

Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings



Buddhism

Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.

The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18



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



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



Hinduism

This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.

Mahabharata 5:1517



Jainism

One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.

Mahavira, Sutrakritanga 1.11.33



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



Native Spirituality

We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.

Chief Dan George



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



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



Unitarianism

We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Unitarian principle



Zoroastrianism

Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.

Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GOLDEN RULE

The “Golden Rule” lays out an ethical behavior of reciprocity and can be found across cultures throughout history. The role of the Golden Rule in establishing common ground across civilizations and religions is particularly crucial in the post-9/11 era. It was within this context that Paul McKenna at Scarboro Missions realized the necessity of emphasizing the similarities of core beliefs of different religions. Rather than focusing on the differences between beliefs, *About The Golden Rule* film and poster provide teachers and students with the opportunity to link distinct religious beliefs.

In a similar manner as *About The Golden Rule*, the Global Ethic Foundation used the unifying values of the Golden Rule as the basis of their declaration for increased inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding and communication. The resulting “Towards a Global Ethic: An Initial Declaration” identifies four essential affirmations as shared principles essential to a global ethic:

- Commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life
- Commitment to a culture of solidarity and a just economic order
- Commitment to a culture of tolerance and a life of truthfulness
- Commitment to a culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women

The poster design accompanying *About The Golden Rule* reflects the value of interdependence of religions and cultures practicing the Golden Rule. By eliminating the lines dividing continents into nations, the poster highlights the connections between nations and continents. Its circular nature, a symbol common in many religions and cultures, recalls the notion of reciprocity inherent within the Golden Rule and the unending bonds formed as a result of living the Golden Rule. Each religion contributes equally to the circle and is connected to each of the other religions.

About The Golden Rule film and poster offer opportunities to teach world religions, world civilizations, philosophy, ethics, and the development of modern political and social ideas. The concepts expressed within *About The Golden Rule* are central to curriculum in history, social science, and English for students from elementary to high school. *About The Golden Rule* can be used by teachers in preparation for teaching world religions and ethics lessons, and the following suggested exercises and discussion questions can be used in English and Language Arts courses to develop critical thought, analysis, and the preparation for oral presentations.

Additional Resources:

Print:

- Cooper, Ilene and Gabi Swiatkowska. *The Golden Rule*. New York: Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2007.
- Darling, Sandra. *Golden Rule*. Laughing Elephant, 2006.
- Gensler, Harry. *Ethics - A Contemporary Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Gensler, Harry. *Formal Ethics*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Neusner, Jacob and Bruce Chilton. *The Golden Rule: The Ethics of Reciprocity in World Religions*. New York: Continuum, 2008.
- Rost, H.T.D. *The Golden Rule a Universal Ethic*. Oxford: George Ronald, 1986.
- Terry, Q. C. *Golden Rules and Silver Rules of Humanity: Universal Wisdom of Civilization: an Integration of Moral Precepts from Philosophy, Religion, Science*. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2004.
- Wattles, Jeffrey. *The Golden Rule*. New York : Oxford University Press, 1996.

Online:

- The Golden Rule Project - <http://www.goldenruleproject.org/>
- Scarboro Missions, The Golden Rule – http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/index.php
- Charter for Compassion – <http://charterforcompassion.org/>

ABOUT THE GOLDEN RULE ANIMATING THE GOLDEN RULE

Scarboro Missions presents a film by **Tina Petrova** Produced and Directed by **Tina Petrova** Executive producer **Scarboro Missions**
Editor **Renata Simkus** Director of Photography **John Hodgson** Post Production Facility
Candlemaker Communications
With original music from **Alex Moszczyński, Annie Flaherty**
Featuring **Paul McKenna, Kathy Murtha, Kate Marshall-Flaherty**
And students of **Cardinal Carter Academy of the Arts, Dante Alighieri Academy ,
Father Henry Carr**

About Golden Rule Teachers Manual
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