

# **A Rule Made of Gold**

## **A Golden Rule Curriculum Unit**

**By Gregory McKenna**

### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- 1) Introduction**
- 2) Who is the audience for this curriculum?**
- 3) Learning objectives**
- 4) How to use this curriculum unit**
- 5) Journaling: Let's write about it!**
- 6) Curriculum Section One: Rules that I live by!**

Overview

Lesson One	Rules in my peer group
Lesson Two	Rules at home
Lesson Three	Rules in society
Lesson Four	Making our own rules
Lesson Five	Lord of the Flies
Lesson Six	Rules in sports
Lesson Seven	Why rules?

- 7) Curriculum Section Two: Rules that courageous people live by**

Overview

Lesson One	Courageous people that I admire
Lesson Two	Rules that some famous people live by
Lesson Three	Following in big footsteps
Lesson Four	Dramatizing my rules for living

- 8) Curriculum Section Three: Going for the Gold!**

Overview	
Lesson One	Introducing the Golden Rule
Lesson Two	Visualizing the Golden Rule
Lesson Three	Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule
Lesson Four	Golden Rule art exercise

**9) Curriculum Section Four: Becoming a global citizen**

Overview	
Lesson One	Exploring the circle
Lesson Two	The circles in our lives

**10) Appendices**

**11) Helpful resources**

**12) Useful Golden Rule websites**

**13) About the author and the reviewers**

**14) Dedication**

**15) Permission to reproduce this document**

**1) Introduction**

This curriculum unit was inspired by the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster which features texts of the Golden Rule as found in 13 of the world’s religions.

By way of these lessons, young people will be invited to reflect on the role which rules, values and moral principles play in their lives – at home, at school, in sports and in the local community.

Often, young people feel that they live in a world where rules are thrust upon them, making it difficult for them to live their lives. In these lessons, the students will come to understand that they, too, create rules and guidelines for living to which they adhere on a daily basis. In fact, in Curriculum

Section One, they will participate in a decision-making experience in which they determine the rules and guidelines for living in a given community context.

In this curriculum, the students will explore the concept of the circle and the place of circles in their lives. The students will discover that qualities associated with the circle such as unity, equality, community, reciprocity, and interconnectedness can have significance in terms of the students' relationships from the local to the global level.

The students will also be introduced to a universal, moral principle known as *the Golden Rule*. And they will consider how the Golden Rule, *the ethic of reciprocity*, can be applied in their lives – at home, at school, in the local community and in the global community (i.e. as global citizens.)

It is my hope that this unit will help to develop in your students a greater appreciation for ethical living.

We welcome your feedback on this unit. If you have any suggestions as to how this document might be improved, please forward them to the Scarborough Missions Interfaith Department in Toronto, Canada by telephone: 416-261-7135, ext. 296 or by e-mail: [interfaith@scarboromissions.ca](mailto:interfaith@scarboromissions.ca)

***Gregory McKenna***

## **2) Who is the audience for this curriculum?**

This curriculum unit is geared to an international audience and can be used in public schools, private schools and religious schools as well as with youth organizations. I have been teaching in the public school system for more than 30 years in Ontario, Canada. I designed this unit with a public school audience in mind.

But given the obvious connection between the content of this unit and the field of religion, these lessons can easily be adapted for use in religious schools. This curriculum will also be useful in youth education programs in synagogues, mosques, temples, meditation centers, churches, gurdwaras, and spiritual fellowships.

Around the world, there is a rapidly-growing interfaith youth movement. Some lessons from this unit can be adapted for use in interfaith youth gatherings.

Another audience I see for this curriculum unit are youth organizations that do not identify themselves as explicitly “religious” or “spiritual.”

This unit is geared to students at the Grade 7 (age 13) to Grade 12 (age 18) levels. Some of the language used in discussion questions and journaling questions in this document will have to be adapted for use in lower grades.

### **3) Learning objectives**

In this unit:

- Students will reflect on their own values and “rules for living”. They will also reflect on the role of values and rules at school, at home, among their peers, in sports activities and in the larger community.
- Students will understand that “rules”, values and moral principles grow out of a need to develop responsible and cooperative relationships within any given community, culture, or society.
- Students will understand that “rules” are necessary to the functioning of a given community, that is to say, necessary for the achievement of the common good and of freedom for all.
- Students will understand that not all the rules in their lives are created by others but that they, as young people, also create rules to which they adhere on a daily basis.
- Students will participate in a decision-making experience in which they determine the rules or guidelines for living in a given community context.
- Students will reflect on the concept of the circle and the place of circles in their lives.

- Students will understand that qualities associated with the circle such as unity, equality, community, interconnectedness, and reciprocity can have significance in terms of the students' relationships from the local to the global level.
- Students will study the biographies of historical persons – ordinary and extraordinary individuals – who were courageous in terms of adhering to their values, principles and “rules for living”. Students will examine their own values and principles in light of the lifestyles of these historical figures.
- Students will understand that throughout history, there have been some common principles and moral values shared by the many diverse peoples, ethnic groups, cultures, religions and philosophies of the world.
- Students will learn that one of the most historically prevalent of these shared values is a universal, moral principle known as *the Golden Rule* (known also as *the ethic of reciprocity*).
- Students will be exposed to a visual depiction of this ethic of reciprocity in the form of the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster which features the Golden Rule as expressed in 13 religions.
- Students will examine their own values, principles and “rules for living” in light of the written, visual, and symbolic content of the Golden Rule Poster.
- Students will reflect on their application of the Golden Rule at home, at school, among their peers, and in the larger community.
- Students will reflect on how they can live the Golden Rule as *global citizens*, as members of an international community.

#### **4) How to use this curriculum unit**

- In terms of lesson content, this unit is subdivided into four sections, each of which contains a number of lessons. The unit also contains introductory information as well as a number of useful appendices and a resources section.

- The teacher may want to use the entire unit or only selected lessons. The teacher should also feel free to adapt or supplement the lessons as he/she sees fit.
- Throughout this curriculum unit, the terms, “rules”, “rules for living”, “guidelines for living”, “values” and “moral principles”, are used in a somewhat interchangeable and unitive fashion. This is done in an effort to deal with the issues of ethics and ethical living. I would encourage the teacher to use this language for four reasons:
  - 1) “Rules” are a big part of young people’s lives
  - 2) It is important to reflect on the connection between “rules” and “values”
  - 3) “Rules” have a lot to do with the issue of the co-existence of human beings in any given community
  - 4) The “rules” language will make it easier for the students to grasp the concept of the Golden Rule.
- The teacher is advised to peruse this entire document, including the appendices, before beginning instruction.
- To get a better understanding of the concept of the Golden Rule, the teacher is advised to read the following four articles. Three of these are posted on the Scarboro Missions website and one is found in the Appendices section of this curriculum:

**Understanding the Golden Rule**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/understanding\\_golden\\_rule.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/understanding_golden_rule.php)

**Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/discovering\\_the\\_gold.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/discovering_the_gold.php)

**The Golden Rule and the emerging global ethic**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/global\\_ethic.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/global_ethic.php)

## **The Golden Rule and the global human family**

See Appendix 1

- The teacher will need to obtain one or more copies of the large Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster (22 x 29 inches) for use in this unit. Instead of one large poster, the teacher may want to provide each student with a copy of the small poster (8 x 10 inches). This poster has tremendous teaching capacity, given its visual qualities, written content, and symbolic power. To view and order the poster, see:

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/poster\\_order.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/poster_order.php)

- In this curriculum unit, a number of learning strategies are utilized: teacher instruction, private reflection, journal reflection, group reflection, role-play, art, music, dance, story, collage and drama. At the beginning of the unit, the teacher may want to alert students to the use of these various strategies.

- Throughout this unit, the students' reflections will be recorded on chart paper. *The teacher should retain these documents for use in subsequent lessons in the unit.* "Chart paper" is a term used in North America to describe a large sheet of paper that is approximately 20 x 30 inches and is used in classrooms or educational environments.

- The texts of the Golden Rule in 13 religions are available in seven languages on the Scarboro Missions website. These languages are English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German and Hebrew. To view these texts, see: [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/sacred\\_texts.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/sacred_texts.php) What this means, for example, is that if the teacher is fluent in English and Portuguese, he/she could use these lesson plans with a Portuguese-speaking class. There is no Portuguese-language Golden Rule poster available at this time but still the teacher could use the English-language poster, because in this unit the poster is used mostly for its symbolic and visual content and not for its written content. Also, the teacher may choose to assign the students to design a Portuguese-language poster.

- A Spanish-language Golden Rule poster is available (22 x 29 inches). To order, see: [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/poster\\_order.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/poster_order.php)

- The teacher should be aware that there are more than 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. In fact, researchers have discovered hundreds of Golden Rules – from ancient and modern sources, as well as from religious and non-religious sources. The reason for using only 13 here is because this unit utilizes the Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster which features 13 expressions. The teacher may want to expose students to additional versions of the Golden Rule from other sources, including secular or non-religious sources. Additional versions of the Golden Rule can be found by an Internet search under the category of “Golden Rule”. There are many websites that contain long lists of Golden Rules.
- The teacher should be aware that it will take a good deal of time to complete all the components of all the lessons in this unit.
- These lesson plans touch on a number of disciplines taught in schools: drama, philosophy, character education, civics, culture, art, ethics, world religions, peer group cooperation, and problem-solving.
- This unit is ideal as a resource for anti-bullying and character education programs in schools and in the community.
- This unit is not meant to be a world religions curriculum but parts of the unit can be used in a world religions course. In fact, the Golden Rule concept and the Golden Rule Poster are used in many world religions programs. For those teachers who would like to supplement this unit with introductory material about the world’s religions, there are lots of resources available – print, audio-visual and interactive – from a number of sources including the Internet. Short statements on the Golden Rule from the perspective of a number of faith traditions are available on the Scarboro Missions website. See [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/interfaith\\_commentaries.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/interfaith_commentaries.php)

## **5) Journaling: let’s write about it!**

The teacher may want to encourage the students to journal their reflections. Students are free to use a poetic or prosaic form. To facilitate this journaling process, the teacher may want to provide each student with a small journal.

The journaling can be done after each lesson or during a silent reading period in class. The teacher may wish to provide the students with a specific question, quotation, or statement to stimulate their reflection. Sample journal questions for the lessons in each of the four curriculum sections are provided in the Appendices section.

This journal activity provides expression for those students who may be reluctant to contribute to the class discussions. It is important that the teacher read, review, and comment on the students' journal reflections on a daily basis. It has been my experience that students do more journaling if the teacher comments on their writing.

The teacher may ask some students to read their journal to the class. It is important that this be an optional exercise for the student. Some students are more comfortable contributing something orally if they can read it, particularly if the instructor has suggested that the reflection is well-written. Some students prefer to have their journal read aloud by the teacher or a fellow student. The oral presentations may also serve to stimulate further discussion.

## **6) Curriculum Section One: Rules that I live by!**

### Overview

Lesson One	Rules in my peer group
Lesson Two	Rules at home
Lesson Three	Rules in society
Lesson Four	Making our own rules
Lesson Five	Lord of the Flies
Lesson Six	Rules in sports
Lesson Seven	Why rules?

### **Overview**

In this section, students are invited to reflect on the place that rules, “rules for living” or guidelines for living play in their lives, and specifically in four areas: peer group, home life, community/societal life and sports activity. In

Lesson Four, the students will participate in a decision-making experience in which they determine the rules in a given community.

These reflections will help the students understand the role and importance of rules in society. The students will be asked to brainstorm as to the place that rules or guidelines for living, play in their lives. Prior to the lessons, the teacher may want to ask each of the students to write about their ideas on these subjects.

There are seven lessons in this first section. The teacher may decide that it is not necessary to teach all seven lessons before proceeding to Curriculum Unit Two.

### ***Lesson One: Rules in my peer group***

**Time required:** 40 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper and marker pens

#### **Teacher instructions:**

The teacher introduces this lesson and the first section of the unit by exploring with the students the concepts of values, rules and “rules for living.” The students are informed that they will have the opportunity to reflect on values and rules in four dimensions of their lives: peer group, home life, sports and society.

The students are asked to name any rules or guidelines for living that are observed or followed in their peer groups. The teacher may want to give the students a little time to write these rules in their notebooks. Or, prior to the class, the teacher may invite the students to reflect and write on this subject.

The teacher should be aware that among the students, there will be some variance in terms of these rules and guidelines. If some students are unclear about or uncomfortable with the whole issue of “rules” in their peer group, the teacher may need to stimulate discussion on this subject and provide a few examples.

As the students share their “rules” or their thoughts on the issue of rules, the teacher or a student records these reflections in a “brainstorm” fashion on chart paper, under the heading “Peer Group Rules/Guidelines.”

Some sample rules or comments which may emerge from the brainstorm:

- Never snitch on a friend
- Always stand up for a friend
- It is really important for me to take care of my friends
- It makes me feel good to know that my friends will stand up for me
- I should treat everybody in the best way that I can
- Live life to the fullest – have fun wherever or whenever you can
- I only follow rules that I like
- I hate rules
- We don’t need rules
- Take care of yourself first
- I want to make my own rules
- Don’t trust parents, teachers, police (i.e. authority figures)
- Maybe we need some rules if we want to get along
- I am “Number One”; I take care of myself first
- I don’t need to follow any rules in my life
- I just want to have fun
- Respect parents and family
- Always do the right thing
- “I” come first
- Trust no one
- I don’t need rules in my life
- Be a good friend
- There are too many rules in my life
- I’ll treat other people the way they treat me
- I believe in treating people nicely
- Who needs rules?
- I’ve never thought of rules as having anything to do with how I get along with my friends
- I think we should try to help not just our friends, but other people as well
- I have to take care of myself first, because if I don’t take care of myself, nobody else will

When the list of rules and reflections is completed, the teacher or one of the students read aloud some of the rules that have been listed on chart paper. Then, the teacher invites the students to discuss the content of the entire list. Here are some trigger questions that the teacher may wish to use to stimulate discussion:

- How many of these rules apply to you and your peer group? Explain.
- How many of these rules apply to you personally? Explain.
- Are there some rules here that concern or upset you? Explain.
- Are there some rules here that might help you get along with your friends or other members of your peer group? Explain.
- Do you feel you need rules or guidelines for living in order to get along with your friends and other members of your peer group? Explain.
- Do you need rules in order to live your life? Explain.
- What is the most important rule for living *your* life? Explain.
- If there were no rules or guidelines as to how you and your peers should treat one another, what would happen? Explain.
- Are there some rules listed here that you would find difficult to follow in your own life? Explain.
- Are there some rules here that you do not like? Explain.
- Do you know someone who feels that rules are not important in his or her life? Explain.
- If there were no rules in society, what would happen? Explain.
- Do you as an individual have some rules that guide your life which are different from those of your peer group? Explain.

- What is a rule?

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

***Lesson Two: Rules at home***

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, art utensils, art paper

**Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the teacher invites the students to reflect on the rules that they are expected to observe at home. The students are invited to name any of the rules or guidelines for living that their parents have established in their homes or rules in the home that have been co-operatively established by parents and children.

**Caution:** The teacher needs to conduct the discussion in such a way as not to trigger conflict between home and school environments. Given the broad range of cultures, ethnicities, customs, mores, and religious beliefs within the student population in some schools, there can be a discrepancy between values taught in the home and values communicated in the school.

The teacher is encouraged to set the tone by encouraging students to be tolerant and to reserve judgment about the cultural, ethical, and religious beliefs and practices of other students.

The rules brainstormed by the students can be listed on chart paper under the title of "Rules at Home". Some examples which may emerge:

- No T.V. after 10 p.m. on a school night
- Weekend curfew
- No going out on a school night
- Household chores completed before "free time"

- Bedtime curfew
- Restrictions on friends that I can have
- Restrictions on my allowance
- Restrictions on clothing
- Restrictions on computer use, and restrictions on access to content on the Internet

When the list is completed, the teacher continues to stimulate discussion about the list and its content.

### **Art activity**

Each student is invited to create a poster that depicts him or her putting into practice rules that have been established in the home. Each student is provided with a sheet of paper (suggested size: 18 x 24 inches.) The student draws a large circle on the paper and then divides it into four equal sections (as in dividing a pie in four sections.)

In each section of the circle, the student draws a sketch of him/herself putting into practice an important rule in his/her household. Under each sketch, the student writes the wording of the rule which is depicted in that particular section. Accordingly, each student is responsible for drawing sketches of four rules that are being implemented.

Sample rules:

- Some of my allowance must be given to charity (in this scenario, the student could sketch him/herself making a financial donation to a local food bank.)
- You must keep your bedroom clean and organized (the student could accompany this rule with a sketch of him/herself cleaning his/her bedroom.)
- Each person in the household must take a turn walking the dog.
- Each person in the household must take turns washing and drying the dishes.

- Bedtime at 10 p.m., with lights out at 10:15 p.m.
- At family meetings, everyone must attend and everyone is given an opportunity to speak.

When the artwork is completed, some students volunteer to display and explain their sketches. The teacher encourages discussion.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

*Lesson Three: Rules in society*

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, art utensils, art paper

**Teacher instructions:**

The teacher invites the students to name and comment on rules found within society, particularly rules that affect the lives of the students. These rules are recorded on chart paper under the title, "Rules in Society." The term, "Society", here refers to one or more of the following: school, local community, local municipality, county, state, province or nation.

Some rules which may emerge in the brainstorm process:

- Bike helmet regulations
- Drinking and driving regulations
- Age restrictions on driving an automobile
- Age restrictions on voting in elections
- Age restrictions on smoking and drinking
- Regulations about physical contact on school property
- Age restrictions at movie theatres
- School policy on bullying
- Traffic light and stop-sign regulations
- Rules on being quiet in libraries

- Height restrictions in amusement parks
- Restrictions on access to content on the Internet

When the list is completed, the teacher stimulates discussion about the list and its content.

### **Art activity**

The students are divided into groups of three. Each group develops an art creation that demonstrates the value of a given rule in society, for example, a school policy of anti-bullying or bike helmet regulations in the local municipality. The art creation can take a variety of forms including poetry, drawing, skit, song, dance and musical rap.

Each group performs or displays their art creation which, with the support of the teacher, will provoke discussion within the larger class.

### **Homework assignment**

The students are assigned to choose an article from a local or regional newspaper (or from an Internet news source) that involves a conflict between two or more people or two or more groups. After having studied the article, the students are required to write a one-page reflection that addresses the following questions:

- Where does the story take place?
- Who are the parties involved?
- What issue or issues are at play in this situation? Explain.
- At the heart of this conflict, has there been a violation of society's rules? Explain.
- Would this conflict have occurred if one, both or all parties involved had followed society's rules? Explain.

The students should be prepared to present or discuss the content of their paper in a subsequent class.

### **Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

### ***Lesson Four: Making our own rules***

**Time required:** 70 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens

#### **Teacher instructions:**

The purpose of this lesson is to provide the students with a decision-making experience in which they determine the rules or guidelines for living in a given community.

The class is divided into groups composed of three to four students. Each group is provided with chart paper and marker pens. The teacher then describes or outlines the following scenario: 40 teenagers are stranded on a deserted island far from civilization. Both genders are present and there are no adults.

The young people have no means to readily escape and it is unlikely that they will be rescued for a long time. They have ample food which grows naturally on the island. They also have the means to make fire.

The task of each of the various student groups is to develop a list of five to six rules to which this stranded group of young people on the island must adhere. The students also compose a list of consequences that are applied to those who choose not to adhere to the established rules. Some students may feel that there should be no consequences for non-adherence to the rules. Some students may feel there is no need for rules at all.

The students record the list of rules and consequences on chart paper. The rules can be listed in order of importance, as determined by the student group. Following this activity, each group presents their set of rules and consequences to the class using chart paper.

Following discussion on this matter, the teacher further stimulates the discussion by asking each group to address one of the following questions (or other questions which the teacher composes):

- What did you as individuals or as a group feel/think about this decision-making experience? (The goal here is to have the students talk about their experience.)
- Was it difficult or easy for your group to agree on a set of rules or guidelines? Explain.
- Was it difficult or easy for your group to agree on a list of consequences? Explain.

The teacher continues to stimulate discussion following each group report.

Following the group reports, the teacher facilitates a class discussion using one or more of the following questions:

- What are some of the things that struck you as you listened to the various group presentations? Explain.
- As you listened to the various group presentations and looked at the lists on the chart paper, did you see any common themes? Did you notice that some rules showed up more than once? Or many times?
- As you listened to the various group presentations, did you notice that there are *one or more rules* that seem to emerge again and again? Explain.
- As you observed the lists of consequences for those who break the rules, what did you think or feel? Explain. Do you feel there should be consequences for those who break the rules? Explain.
- If this experience of being stranded on an island actually happened to you, how would you have coped with it? Do you think you would have become a follower or a leader? Explain.
- Can you predict what would happen if our class, as it is right now, was stranded on an island? Explain.

- If our class was stranded on an island, do you think that we as a group should have leaders? If you feel we should have leaders, what kinds of qualities should we look for in these leaders?

After the reporting and discussion have been completed, the teacher asks the class to respond to one or more of the following questions or to questions composed by the teacher:

- What is a rule?
- Why do we have rules?
- Why do we need rules?
- Do we need rules?
- Now that you have thought about this experience of being stranded on an island, does this help you to understand society better? Does it help you to understand why we have rules and laws in society? Explain.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

***Lesson Five: Lord of the Flies***

**Time required:** 120 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper and marker pens, film rendition of William Golding's novel, *Lord of the Flies*.

**Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the students view and discuss selected scenes from the film, *Lord of the Flies*. The teacher should preview the film because *this movie contains a good deal of coarse language*.

This film rendition of William Golding's classic novel tells the story of 25 school boys stranded on an island where they are left to make their own rules. The film will provoke lots of discussion among the students on many issues including the issue of "rules". This lesson is also an excellent follow-up to the previous lesson (Lesson 4.)

Some questions to trigger discussion:

- How did you feel as you watched this film? Explain.
- Did you notice any system of rules on the island? What were some of the specific rules you noticed?
- At what point in the movie is the whole idea of rules introduced by some of the boys? Explain.
- How were rules created and what was their purpose?
- Did the system of rules break down? If so, why?
- How does the way in which the boys made rules in the film compare to how your group made rules in the previous lesson (Lesson 4)?
- Do we need rules in society? Explain.
- What is a rule?

In the film, the boys are eventually rescued. The teacher may want to help the students reflect on a scenario in which the young people are not rescued. Accordingly, the young people would be required to establish community rules and guidelines for long-term survival.

The teacher may wish to record discussion themes on chart paper.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

***Lesson Six: Rules in sports***

**Time required:** 50 minutes

**Materials required:** none

## **Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the teacher invites the students to reflect on the purpose of rules in sports. Sports activities are vital in the lives of many young people. Most sports have numerous rules.

In terms of the field of sports, there are numerous resources available. There are, for example, newspaper and Internet articles on sports figures who have been suspended for breaking the “rules.” There are also biographies of great sports figures who have excelled in their sport without breaking the “rules,” for example, former Canadian hockey star, Wayne Gretzky.

Below are some trigger questions to promote reflection and discussion on this subject. Prior to the class, the teacher may want to expose the students to one or more of these questions or to questions composed by the teacher. This could be a journaling exercise or a homework assignment.

- Why do you think there are so many rules in sports? Explain.
- What sport do you participate in and what rule within that sport do you find to be very important? What would happen in that sport if it did not have that rule and other rules? Explain.
- Do you see a connection between rules in sports and rules in society? Explain.
- In sports, there are consequences for breaking the rules. Do you see a connection between penalties in sports and consequences for breaking rules in society? Explain.
- What would happen if sports had no rules? Explain.
- Would sports still be fun for you if they had no rules? Explain.
- How do you feel when you are playing a sport, and other students break rules in that sport and get away with it? Give examples from your experience.

- What would happen if society had no rules? Explain.
- What is a rule?

The teacher encourages discussion.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

*Lesson Seven: Why rules?*

**Time required:** 50 minutes

**Materials required:** none

**Teacher instructions:**

The purpose of this lesson is to enable the students to appropriate and integrate their learnings from the previous lessons. The teacher facilitates a general discussion among the students on the subject of rules. The teacher may use some of the discussion questions listed below or any related questions that the teacher develops.

Prior to the class, the teacher exposes the students to the questions and gives a homework assignment in preparation for the class. The teacher may approach this in one of two ways:

- 1) Have the students reflect on one or more of the questions. The students will then be assessed according to oral observation and their ability to respond in class; or
- 2) Have the students write a short paper addressing one or more of the questions. Some of these papers may be shared in class.

Suggested questions for homework assignment and discussion:

- What is a rule? What is the purpose of a rule?

- Why does our society have rules?
- Why do we need rules? Do we need rules?
- Could you imagine a society without rules? Explain. Do you think a society could function without rules? Explain.
- What would school be like if our school had no rules? What would our home life be like if our parents had no rules that they ask us to follow? What would life in our larger society be like if there were no rules?
- Are there some rules in your peer group, your school, your home, or in the larger community that you do not agree with? If so, what are they and why do you disagree with them?
- Are there some rules in your peer group, your school, your home or in the larger community that you agree with? If so, what are they and why do you agree with them?
- Are there some rules that are non-existent in your peer group, school, home or community that you would like to see introduced? Explain.
- Why do some groups of people have different sets of rules from other groups of people? For example, why do some countries, cultures or communities have a very different set of rules for what they deem to be acceptable behavior in the community? (Teacher may wish to provide a couple of examples.) The teacher encourages discussion.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 2**.

## **7) Curriculum Section Two: Rules that courageous people live by**

Overview	
Lesson One	Courageous people that I admire
Lesson Two	Rules that some famous people live by
Lesson Three	Following in big footsteps
Lesson Four	Dramatizing my rules for living

## Overview:

In this section, the students will study the lives of individuals – ordinary and extraordinary persons – who have demonstrated courage in terms of adhering to their values, moral principles, and “rules for living”. The students will examine their own values and rules for living in light of the lifestyles of these courageous individuals.

Some of the people studied will be individuals that the students know personally; some will be famous historical persons, many of whom have endured adversity, obstacles, conflict, challenges, and even persecution as a consequence of their commitment to the service of humanity.

### *Lesson One: Courageous people I admire*

**Time required:** 55 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper and marker pens

#### **Teacher instructions:**

The teacher begins by reviewing what has been covered in the previous section. The teacher may want to post the chart paper lists that were generated in Curriculum Section One.

Prior to this lesson, the students are assigned, as a homework exercise, to think about one individual whom he/she admires, that is, *a person who has demonstrated a strong commitment in terms of service to humanity by adhering to his/her principles, values and rules for living*. This person can be a close acquaintance, a family member, a well-known citizen of one’s country or community, or a historical figure.

As homework and in preparation for the lesson, the students are asked to record in a journal the various qualities of the person whom he/she admires, qualities such as patience, friendliness, politeness, courage, generosity, integrity, sensitivity, compassion, and service to humanity.

In the lesson itself, each student gives the name of his/her chosen individual and shares two to five qualities of that person. Student responses can be recorded on chart paper so that the recorded human qualities, values and virtues can be compared and reflected on. After each student shares, the teacher poses a question or questions to the individual student. Sample trigger questions are listed below:

- You have just mentioned the name and some personal values of an individual who is strongly committed to following her/his own values and rules for living. Tell us more about this person.
- Explain how this individual puts into practice his/her values and principles. (If this is an historical person, the tense and wording of this question will have to be adjusted.)
- How, in your opinion, do other people react to this individual? Is he/she well-liked and respected? Does he/she endure any challenges or opposition for adhering to his/her values or rules for living? (If this is a historical person, the tense of this question will have to be adjusted.)
- Has this person had any influence on your life? If yes, what has it been?
- Would you like to become more like this person? Explain.
- Why did you pick this person?

The teacher encourages feedback and discussion among the students. This feedback/discussion can occur after each presentation.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 4**.

***Lesson Two: Rules that some famous people live by***

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** none

**Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the students are assigned to research and write about the life of a famous or well-known person (living or deceased) who demonstrates or has demonstrated *a remarkable commitment to the service of humanity as an expression of his/her values, moral principles, and "rules for living"*.

It is left to the discretion of the teacher as to whether this writing exercise is done during class or as a homework assignment. The teacher may wish to model the exercise for the students by researching and presenting to the students the life of one courageous person and the values that guided and inspired him/her. The teacher can write this short paper using the guidelines for the students outlined later in this lesson.

As an aid to the teacher, a short biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is included in the Appendices section of this curriculum unit. See **Appendix 3**.

This biography contains a reflection on the values and ideals that guided Dr. King amidst the numerous obstacles that he faced. The teacher may want to share this biography with the students as a model for their written assignments.

Biographies (print and DVD) of famous people can be found on the Internet and in public and school libraries.

The length of this short paper is left to the discretion of the teacher. Some of these papers can be presented orally in class in a subsequent lesson. As an alternative to a written format, the teacher may invite some students to present their research in other forms such as poetry, song or art.

Jose Antonio Abreu Babasaheb Ambedkar George Washington Carver Leonard Cheshire Cesar Chavez Tommy Douglas Frederick Douglass W.E.B. Dubois Abdul Sattar Edhi Hugh Evans (Australia) Diane Fossey Terry Fox Anne Frank Mahatma Gandhi Jane Goodall John Howard Griffin Mussie Hailu Rick Hansen Dorothy Height Abraham Joshua Heschel Helen Keller	Craig Kielburger Martin Luther King Jr. The Dalai Lama Wangari Maathai Nelson Mandela Rigoberta Menchu Greg Mortenson Florence Nightengale Rosa Parks Jackie Robinson Eleanor Roosevelt Oscar Schindler Albert Schweitzer Helen Suzman Mother Teresa Sojourner Truth Harriet Tubman Desmond Tutu Jean Vanier Booker T. Washington Raoul Wallenberg Mohammad Yunus
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The students choose the person they want to research and have their choice approved by the teacher. The teacher has the option of providing a list of famous, historical people from which the students can choose. As an aid to the teacher, a list of some such personalities is available below. Information about each of these individuals can be found on the Internet.

In their research and writing, the students will be responsible for outlining or highlighting the following:

- A brief biography of the individual

- The values, principles, and “rules for living” that guides/guided the life of this individual
- The manner in which this individual put/s his/her values and principles into action
- Any obstacles, challenges, or persecution that he/she endures/endured as a result of adhering to such principles and values
- Benefits received by other human beings, by other species or by the environment as a result of this person’s adherence to her/his values and principles

### **Teachers in religious schools**

Religious history contains an abundance of prophets, saints, teachers, heroes, gurus, sages, and spiritual masters. For this biographical exercise, teachers are encouraged to draw also from the heritage of great spiritual figures in their own spiritual traditions and in other spiritual traditions.

### **Journal activity – let’s write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students’ written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 4**.

### ***Lesson Three: Following in big footsteps***

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper and marker pens

### **Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the students interface their personal “rules for living” with those of famous historical personages. It is important that the teacher use the language of “rules for living” in this lesson in order to connect the students to the content of both past and future lessons.

Some of the research projects on famous people that were done or assigned in the previous lesson (Lesson Two) are now delivered orally by the

students. Chart paper can be used to record values, principles and “rules for living” that guided the lives of these individuals so that these values can be compared and contrasted.

The oral presentations are followed by a discussion. The students are invited to think back to the previous section of the unit where they were asked to reflect on the “rules” or values that guide their lives. Chart paper records from that section can be posted.

The following questions may aid the teacher in stimulating discussion:

- Do you feel that your values or rules for living are much different from the individual you studied or the other individuals you heard about in the presentations by your fellow students? If yes, explain. If no, explain.
- Can you summarize in one word, phrase or sentence, the values and principles of the person you studied?
- As you listened to the reports about other famous people, did you notice values or rules for living that showed up more than once, or, perhaps many times? What are these? (These values can be recorded on chart paper.)
- In their efforts to be true to their own values, principles and rules for living, these individuals often took great risks. Some risked their lives. Some were even killed for their commitment. Why do you think that these people exemplified such great courage and were willing to take such great risks? In other words, how did these individuals find the courage to do things that other people find so hard to do? Or find impossible to do?
- Are there times when you find it hard to follow your own personal rules and values? Explain.
- Has anyone ever praised you for, or complimented you on, your values and your ability to live them out? Explain.

- Can you think of one or two occasions when someone challenged you to change your principles or values? Explain.
- Have you ever lost a friend because you stuck to your principles? As a result of sticking to your own principles, have you ever lost something that is important to you, for example, an opportunity to do something you really wanted to do? If yes, explain.
- What would the world be like if there were more people like the person you studied? Explain.
- Has this person that you studied had any influence on your life? If yes, what has it been? Explain.
- Would you like to become more like this person? Explain.
- Why did you pick this person?
- By sticking to their values and rules for living, did this person change society? Explain.
- By studying one individual and listening to the reports about others, has this caused you to think about your own rules, values, and guidelines for living? Explain.

**Journal activity – let’s write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students’ written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 4**.

***Lesson Four: Dramatizing my rules for living***

**Time required:** 75 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper and marker pens

**Teacher instructions:**

As a follow-up to the discussion and writing activities in the previous lessons in this section of the curriculum, the students are divided into small groups. A group size of three or four is ideal. Each group plans and acts out a skit, scenario or situation in which an individual is challenged in terms of adhering to his/her values, principles or “rules for living”.

The students should be advised that the scenarios performed by the groups should not contain harsh language, excessive negativity or rough, physical contact. The students are advised not to use the names of real individuals in the context of these scenarios. Efforts should be made to bring each scenario to a positive resolution if any conflict is involved.

Some of the scenarios can be outlined on the blackboard or on chart paper. The teacher may also wish to make the scenarios available to the students as a handout prior to class.

Below are some suggested ideas for developing scenarios. The teacher or the students may wish to develop other scenarios. The skits/scenarios can touch on ethical issues such as smoking, bullying, shoplifting, bike helmet regulations and the posting of graffiti on buildings:

- An individual and his/her best friend find themselves in complete disagreement about the correct approach to a moral issue in society. Example: *you and your best friend are having a discussion about smoking. Both of you agree that smoking is dangerous to one's health. In your local community, it is illegal for a person under 18 years of age to purchase cigarettes. You believe that the legal age should be raised to 20. Your friend disagrees because he/she believes that by the age of 18, young people should have the right to make decisions about their own life and health.*
- An individual stands up for his/her values, but in following his/her principles, he/she goes against the peer pressure or wishes of others. Example: *you and a group of your friends are walking home from school. One friend suggests that the group post graffiti on the rear wall of a local store. You believe that this is not the right thing to do. You explain your position and challenge the group not to proceed with this act.*

- An individual does not stand up for her/his principles, for a number of reasons, including acceptance from peers. Example: *you and a group of your friends are walking home from school. One friend suggests that the group post graffiti on the rear wall of a local store. The group agrees to this proposal and you decide to join them in this act. Later, you regret your decision and speak to the group about your concerns.*
- A real-life experience in which an individual stands up for his/her principles and goes against the peer pressure or wishes of others.
- An individual stands up for his/her values in a situation where he/she is faced with great opposition. After the experience, the individual shares the story of that experience with his/her friends who support and congratulate the individual for sticking to his/her principles.
- An individual is planning to get involved in a situation that his/her peers believe to be morally unacceptable. The peer group convinces the individual to change his/her mind about this activity.

When completed, the skits/scenarios are presented to the class. The teacher uses the content of the presentations to provoke further discussion on the place of values, principles, and “rules for living” in individual and community life.

**Journal activity: Let’s write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students’ written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 4**.

**8) Curriculum Section Three: Going for the gold!**

Overview

Lesson One	Introducing the Golden Rule
Lesson Two	Visualizing the Golden Rule
Lesson Three	Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule
Lesson Four	Golden Rule art exercise

## Overview

In this section, the students will learn that throughout history, there have been some common principles and moral values shared by the diverse peoples, ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and philosophies of the world. The students will be introduced to one of the most prevalent and consistent of these shared historical values – a universal, moral principle known as *the Golden Rule* (known also as *the ethic of reciprocity*.)

The students will be exposed to a visual representation of the ethic of reciprocity in the form of the Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster which features written versions of the Golden Rule from 13 of the world's religions. The students will reflect on the Golden Rule and its application to their lives, particularly in light of the previous lessons in which they examined values, moral principles, and “rules for living” in terms of their relationship to their peers, their home situation, and the larger community. The students will also reflect on the symbolic and visual features of the poster.

This section of the unit deals with 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Please note that there are many more than 13. In fact, researchers have discovered hundreds of “Golden Rules”, from ancient and modern sources, as well as from religious and non-religious sources. The reason for the use of only 13 here is because this unit utilizes the Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster which features 13 expressions.

Teachers may want to expose students to additional versions of the Golden Rule from other sources, including secular or non-religious sources. Additional versions of the Golden Rule can be found by an Internet search under the category of “Golden Rule”. There are many websites that contain long lists of Golden Rules.

Prior to teaching this Section, the teacher may find it helpful to read and reflect on some of the five articles that are linked below. The first three are posted on the Scarboro Missions website and the final two are found in the Appendices section of this document.

## Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/discovering\\_the\\_gold.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/discovering_the_gold.php)

### **Understanding the Golden Rule**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/understanding\\_golden\\_rule.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/understanding_golden_rule.php)

### **The Golden Rule and the emerging global ethic**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/global\\_ethic.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/global_ethic.php)

### **The Golden Rule and the global human family**

See Appendix 1

### **Visual impressions of the Golden Rule Poster**

See Appendix 5

### ***Lesson one: Introducing the Golden Rule***

#### **Time required: 50 minutes**

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, 13 Golden Rule cards (3 inches x 3 inches, prepared in advance by the teacher), Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster (large and/or small size)

#### **Teacher instructions:**

In the classroom, at least one copy of the large Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster should be posted so as to be visible to all students. Alternatively, each student can be provided with the smaller version.

The students are invited to view and reflect upon the poster. The purpose here is to prepare the students for later lessons in the curriculum in which they will explore the symbolic and visual content of the poster in greater detail.

The students are asked to share their spontaneous, first impressions of the poster. If the large poster is used, not all students will be able to read the writings on the poster, given their physical location in the class. The teacher may want to invite the students to approach the poster for a better view. Later in this lesson, the 13 Golden Rule texts will be studied and read aloud.

Once the students' first impressions of the poster have been shared, the teacher introduces the students to basic information about the Golden Rule. In this regard, the suggested text below may be helpful. The teacher may want to read this statement to the students or offer it as a handout which the students can read. Another option is to make it available to the students prior to the class:

*In previous lessons we spent lots of time talking about values and rules for living. We talked about rules among our peers as well as rules at home, at school, in sports and in society. We also looked at some of the values and rules for living that guided courageous people throughout history. And we compared our own values and personal rules to those of these historical figures.*

*Now, we are going to learn about a "rule for living" that can be found throughout history. It is called "the Golden Rule." It is sometimes referred to as "the ethic of reciprocity." The Golden Rule has a very simple message – a very simple rule for living. The Golden Rule is expressed in many different ways. One of the more common of these ways is: "Treat other people in the same way that you would like to be treated." Another way in which the Golden Rule is expressed is: "Do not treat others in ways that you would find hurtful."*

*Some consider the Golden Rule to be the most consistent, most prevalent, and most universal moral teaching in history; it is found in many cultures, ethnic groups, religions, ethical systems, philosophies, and indigenous (Native) traditions.*

*In this lesson we will be looking at only 13 of these Golden Rules but we could find many, many more if we did some research.*

Prior to class, the teacher prepares 13 cards (3 inches by 3 inches). The teacher inscribes each of the 13 cards with a different expression of the Golden Rule, as found on the Golden Rule Poster. The texts for these 13 Golden Rules can be found in seven languages on the Scarborough Missions website, at [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/sacred\\_texts.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/sacred_texts.php)

The cards are distributed throughout the class. Accordingly, each card will be shared by a group composed of two or three students. The students in each group take a moment to silently read their particular Golden Rule

statement. Each small group discusses its Golden Rule statement. Within each group, the students may consider the following question:

*What goes through your mind as you read and think about this Golden Rule?*

In preparation for the public reading of the 13 writings, each student group delegates a reader. The teacher determines the order of the readings. In a consecutive fashion, the 13 delegated students read aloud their Golden Rules. The teacher urges the readers to pronounce their Golden Rules clearly and slowly.

Once the 13 writings have been read, the class is asked to think about the writings that they have just heard, and to be prepared to contribute their thoughts to a class discussion. They may also want to share any new reflections that they may have on the poster. The students' comments that arise from this brainstorming process can be recorded on chart paper.

To stimulate the students' thinking, the teacher poses one or more of the following questions:

- What did you think/feel as you silently read the Golden Rule that was assigned to your group?
- Can you summarize in one word, phrase or sentence the message of the Golden Rule statement that was assigned to your small group?
- What did you think/feel as you listened to the other 12 Golden Rules being read aloud?
- As you listened to these Golden Rules, did you think about how we human beings treat one another or about how we humans should treat one another? Explain.
- Do you see any similarities among the 13 Golden Rules? Explain. Do you see any differences among the 13? Explain.
- Do you feel that your values or your personal rules for living are much different from those found in these Golden Rules? Explain.

- What would the world be like if all the people on this planet lived their lives according to the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Why do you think people find it so difficult to live their lives according to the Golden Rule?
- Which of the 13 Golden Rules do you like the best? Explain.
- Is the idea of the Golden Rule new to you? Have you ever heard of it at home or at school?

### **Homework assignment # 1**

The students are assigned to choose an article from a local or regional newspaper (or from an Internet news source) that involves a conflict between two or more people or two or more groups. After having studied the article, the students are required to write a reflection that addresses the following questions:

- Where does this story take place?
- Who are the parties involved?
- What issue or issues are at play in this situation?
- At the heart of this conflict, has there been a violation of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Would this conflict have occurred if one, both or all parties involved had followed the message of the Golden Rule? Explain.

The students should be prepared to present or discuss the content of their paper in class.

### **Homework assignment # 2**

Students are assigned to write a reflection addressing one or more of the following questions:

- Think of one occasion when someone treated you in the spirit of the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? How do you understand the behavior of the other

person involved in this incident? What did you learn from this experience?

- 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? How do you understand the other person's reaction to your behavior in that situation? What did you learn from this experience?
- Think of one occasion when someone treated you in a manner that violated the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? How do you understand the behavior of the other person involved in that incident? What did you learn from this experience?
- Think of one occasion when you treated someone in a manner that violated the Golden Rule. When was that? Who was involved? What was that like for you? How did you feel? How do you understand the other person's reaction to your behavior in that situation? What did you learn from this experience?

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 6**.

***Lesson Two: Visualizing the Golden Rule***

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster (large and/or small size)

**Teacher instructions:**

In preparation for this lesson in which the students explore the visual and symbolic features of the Golden Rule Poster, the teacher is advised to read the short article, **Visual impressions of the Golden Rule Poster** – see Appendix 5.

This article contains comments by various individuals about the design of the poster.

The teacher reviews the previous lesson and the focus on the Golden Rule poster. The teacher reminds the students that in previous lessons they were invited to reflect on the place that rules, values, and guidelines for living play in their lives. And specifically in four areas of their lives: peer group, home, sports and society.

Next, the teacher invites the students to reflect on one of the following questions or on a related question composed by the teacher:

- What would the world be like if you and everyone on the planet lived according to the Golden Rule?
- If you were to live by the Golden Rule each and every day, what would be different in your life?
  - 1) In your personal life?
  - 2) In your relationships with your friends and fellow students?
  - 3) In your family life?
  - 4) In your life in the larger society?

Following the discussion, the teacher invites the students to study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours and other features. The students are invited to reflect on the various elements and dimensions of the poster and how they relate to one another.

Having received feedback from the students, the teacher may wish to further stimulate their thinking by posing some of the following questions:

- Are any of these Golden Rules familiar to you?
- Are any of the 13 symbols familiar to you?
- Would anyone like to comment on the colors used on the poster? Why do you think these colors were chosen?

- How do the various colors on the poster make you feel?
- Where do you see lines (rays) on the poster? What purpose do these lines serve in terms of the overall design of the poster?
- To you, what does it mean that the words, “The Golden Rule”, are superimposed on a globe at the center of the poster?
- There are lines or rays going out from the centre. These could also be seen as going inward from the periphery. What does this mean to you?
- Could the circle at the center of the poster be seen as the sun with rays going outward? Explain.
- Do you see a connection between the visual qualities of the poster and the meaning and message of the 13 Golden Rules? Explain

After this discussion, the teacher may wish to terminate the class or continue with the following exercise.

The students have now become more familiar with the design of the poster and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Next, the teacher advises the students to continue to gaze upon the poster, while the various Golden Rules are read consecutively by 13 students in a slow and clear manner. As a way of focusing the students, the teacher may want to read aloud the following text prior to the reading of the 13 Golden Rules:

*In a moment, we are going to have a chance to again listen to the words of the 13 Golden Rules. We would ask each reader to read very slowly and very clearly so that we can really hear what is being said. We are also asking the readers to make sure that they pause briefly before they do their reading.*

*As you are listening to the readings, we invite you to look at the poster. Allow yourself to be absorbed by it. As you gaze on the poster, are there any images or pictures that come to your mind? If so, what are they? Describe them.*

At this point, the teacher encourages discussion and feedback from the students, which is recorded on chart paper.

Next, the teacher may want to stimulate the students' thinking with more questions and thoughts about the poster. The teacher may want to draw the students' attention to features of the poster that they have not yet discussed or perceived.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 6**.

***Lesson Three: Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule***

**Time required:** discretion of teacher

**Materials required:** discretion of teacher

**Teacher instructions:**

This lesson focuses on the article, **Discovering “the gold” in the Golden Rule**, which is found on the Scarborough Missions website. Here is the link: [http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/discovering\\_the\\_gold.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/discovering_the_gold.php)

The thrust of this lesson is left completely to the discretion of the teacher. The teacher, having read the article, may wish to share its content with the students and provoke discussion. The teacher may wish to prepare a list of discussion questions in advance.

The teacher may wish to make the article an in-class reading or homework assignment for the students who would then write their reflections about it. These reflections can be shared and discussed in class.

Other options for this lesson include artwork, poetry, music or skits focused on themes such as “gold and the Golden Rule” or “mining the gold in the Golden Rule.”

Here follows a summary of the article mentioned above:

*Gold has a symbolic value and a psychological appeal that stretches across the cultures of history. Gold is a metaphor common to many of the world's languages. As a metaphor, it points to what is superlative in all things*

*human. Indeed, gold symbolizes what is purest, most excellent, most noble, most enduring, most sought after, most ideal and most valued in terms of human aspirations, behavior and relationships.*

*Until very recently, gold was considered to be the most valuable of metals. This explains why the metaphorical use of "gold" has become so deeply embedded in human language. From an economic perspective, gold is no longer the most valuable metal, yet it retains its power as a metaphor for what is most valued in human experience.*

*It is therefore no surprise that the Golden Rule contains a "gold" metaphor – after all, some consider the Golden Rule to be the most universal of moral principles.*

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 6**.

***Lesson Four: Golden Rule art exercise***

**Time required:** 70 minutes

**Materials required:** art utensils, art paper, Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster (large and/or small size)

**Teacher instructions:**

The teacher invites the students to take turns reading aloud each of the 13 Golden Rules (from the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster) in a slow, clear and consecutive fashion, allowing for a pause between each reading. The teacher then encourages discussion among the students in terms of what they have just heard.

The teacher invites the students to view the Golden Rule Poster (22 x 29 inches). As an alternative to viewing the large poster, the instructor may make the smaller version of the Poster (8 x 10 inches) available to each student. The teacher next initiates a discussion about the visual nature of the poster by focusing on some of the following features: circles, colors, lines, overall design, the centrality of the globe.

The teacher invites the students to reflect on and share about any connection they see between the message of the 13 Golden Rules and the design of the poster.

Next, the teacher invites the students to *imagine what the world would be like if every person on the planet lived his/her life according to the Golden Rule*. The teacher writes the words of this “imagining” directive (featured here in italicized lettering) on the blackboard or chart paper. The students may wish to close their eyes during this visioning experience. The length of this experience is left to the discretion of the teacher.

After this experience, those students, who so wish, are invited to verbally share their vision of a Golden Rule world, their vision of the global human family grounded in the Golden Rule.

Next, the teacher invites the students to actualize what they have just visioned or imagined by creating a work of art that depicts a world in which every person lives according to the Golden Rule.

The students may use whatever shapes, colors and lines they wish. They may choose from a variety of mediums and materials, for example, pen, pencil, crayon, chalk, oil, acrylic, fabric, paint, or collage. If appropriate or possible, computer graphics may also be used. The size of the art paper is left to the discretion of the teacher.

If the teacher has taught this lesson before, he/she may want to share a few samples of the artwork done in previous classes. This may help some students get started. As a further encouragement, the teacher may ask some students to discuss what ideas they have in mind for their artistic creation.

The teacher may find it helpful to have some students create individual pieces of art and to have others work in groups of three or four to create a communal piece of art. Group work will require a larger sheet of paper, for example, chart paper. The students can choose to inscribe one or more of the 13 Golden Rule writings somewhere on their artwork, but this is merely an option.

Once ample time has been allowed to complete the task, individuals and groups present their art creation to the entire class. The presenters might

consider one or more of the following questions to help them explain their artwork:

- Why did you choose the colors you used?
- If you focused on one particular Golden Rule, why did you choose it?
- What is depicted in your artwork and what inspired you to focus your art around this idea?
- If you worked with partners on this task, share some of the group's discussion concerning its vision of a world according to the Golden Rule. How did your group decide to make the design that you made?
- How does your art creation answer the question: "What would the world be like if every person lived according to the Golden Rule?"

Following the presentations, the teacher encourages the students to share their thoughts and feelings about the art experience. Next, the students are invited to comment on the various works of art that are now displayed throughout the classroom. Discussion could focus on the differences and commonalities among the art creations.

The teacher initiates a class discussion by asking students to revisit the question: *what would the world be like if everyone lived according to the Golden Rule?*

The posters that have been created can remain displayed for a few weeks. They can also be displayed in the school lobby, school library, community library or local community centre.

The teacher or school may wish to sponsor a class-wide, school-wide, board-wide or even community-wide art contest using the above lesson plan as a basis.

### **Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 6**.

## 9) Curriculum Section Four: Becoming a global citizen

Overview

Lesson One

Exploring the circle

Lesson Two

The circles in our lives

### Overview

In this section, the students are invited to reflect on the meaning and symbolism of the circle as well as the meaning and symbolism of the many circles found on the Golden Rule Poster. Against the backdrop of the poster and its many circles and partial circles, the students will reflect on the deeper meaning of the Golden Rule, and its significance for their lives, as individuals and as global citizens.

### Suggested seating arrangement:

The students sit in one circle or in a pattern of two concentric circles. In this formation, the teacher can decide whether he/she wants students seated on the floor or at their desks. There should be space available to enable the students to move to different locations in the circle during the lesson. There should also be an allowance of space for the teacher to enter and exit the circle.

In preparation for this curriculum section, the teacher is advised to read or peruse the following four articles, two of which are found on the Scarborough Missions website and two of which are found in the Appendices section of this curriculum unit:

**Understanding the circle:** This short article provides basic information about the circle. For this section, the teacher may want to make the article available as a handout for the students. Click here for the article:

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/meditation\\_exercises.php#appendix2](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/meditation_exercises.php#appendix2)

## **The Golden Rule and the emerging global ethic**

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/global\\_ethic.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/global_ethic.php)

## **The Golden Rule and the global human family**

See Appendix 1

## **Visual impressions of the Golden Rule Poster**

See Appendix 5

### ***Lesson One: Exploring the Circle***

**Time required:** 45 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster (large and/or small size)

#### **Teacher instructions:**

The teacher invites each student to draw a circle on a piece of paper and to take a moment to gaze upon the circle that he/she has created. For purposes of illustration, the teacher may also want to draw a large circle on the blackboard or chart paper.

Next, the teacher facilitates a brainstorm/discussion session on the topic of the circle. The students are invited to share their thoughts about the circle which are then recorded on chart paper. Here are some questions to help stimulate the students' thinking:

- Have you ever thought about circles before? Explain.
- Do you like circles? Explain.
- Circles have been found in virtually every culture across history. What do you think that means?
- We are seated in a circle today. How does that feel to you? How is that different from sitting in other seating arrangements?

- You have just drawn a circle. Have you learned anything about circles by drawing one and looking at it for a moment? Explain.
- As you look at the circle that you have drawn, describe three qualities or characteristics of that circle.
- If you had to describe a circle in just one word, what would that one word be?
- When you look at a circle, what do you see?
- Think about your daily life for a moment. Can you think of places in your life where you can find circles? Make a list of such places (for example, your watch, the sun.) If you discover that there are lots of places in your life where you can find circles, ask yourself: “Why are there so many circles in nature and in other parts of my life?”

Here are some ideas, thoughts or reflections that may be generated by the students:

- When I sit in the circle, I can see everybody face-to-face. It’s like we’re all equal. Nobody is superior to anybody else.
- I like sitting in the circle. It’s fun.
- A circle has no top or bottom, that is, a circle, when viewed on a horizontal plane, has no physical hierarchy.
- All wheels are circles. Wheels on bicycles have spokes. Each spoke of a wheel has a purpose.
- A circle has no beginning or end.
- In the circle, everything is connected to everything else. Therefore, everything in the circle is one. One might say, “In the circle, everything is connected and everything is one.”

- Some places in my daily life where I see circles: my watch, the sun, the moon, the planets, tires, plates, cups, compact discs, DVDs, racetracks, coins, ripples in the water.
- There are many circles in nature, for example, the sun, the moon, and birds' nests; in the cycle of the seasons, everything ends up where it started.
- All points in a circle are equidistant from the centre.
- When a wheel, which is a circle, is spun, all points travel on the same path.
- In the circle, everybody is equal.
- The circle is a symbol of unity.
- In the circle, “what goes around, comes around” because everything in the circle is connected to everything else in the circle.
- Any point on the circumference of the circle is both the beginning and the end of the circle. The circle starts and ends at any point in the circle.
- There is no point on the circle that is more important than any other point. In the circle, everything is connected to everything else. The circle can thus be a symbol of equality, unity, community, mutuality, reciprocity and interconnectedness.

Feedback from the students is recorded on chart paper. This will provoke further discussion. The teacher then touches on themes and concepts related to the circle that have not been touched on in the student feedback or class discussion.

The teacher now directs the attention of the students back to the Golden Rule poster. Having had occasion to reflect on the meaning and symbolism of the circle, the students are invited to again study the poster, with a particular focus on the role and meaning of circles in the design of the poster.

Having received feedback from the students in this regard, the teacher shares any information about the circle design of the poster that did not emerge in the student feedback. As an aid to the teacher, here are some statements about the poster made by three students:

*“There are quite a number of circles on the poster. In fact, the poster contains a circle of circles.”*

*“At the centre of the poster, there resides a circle, the Earth. On this circle, the words, “The Golden Rule”, are superimposed. What a message about the global human family!”*

*“Each of the 13 symbols of the world’s religions is encased in a circle. Note also that many of the various symbols representing the 13 spiritual traditions contain circles, semi-circles or partial circles. In fact, some of the symbols are themselves circles.”*

**Journal activity: Let’s write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students’ written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 7**.

***Lesson Two: The circles in our lives***

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Materials required:** chart paper, marker pens, art utensils, art paper, Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster (large and/or small size)

**Teacher instructions:**

In this lesson, the students continue to reflect on the meaning of circles in their lives and on the students’ relationship with the Earth, as well as with other human beings in our global village.

The teacher begins by reviewing the previous lessons and refocusing on the Golden Rule Poster. The teacher may wish to stimulate discussion about the students’ reflections in the previous lesson (Lesson One) that were recorded on chart paper. The teacher then poses more questions to the students for feedback and discussion. Here are some suggested trigger questions:

- How do the circles and the pattern of circles on the Golden Rule Poster speak to you about the deeper meaning of the Golden Rule:
  - 1) In your personal life?
  - 2) In your friendships?
  - 3) In your life as a student?
  - 4) In your home life?
  - 5) In your relationship to the local community?
  - 6) In your relationship to the international community?
  - 7) In your relationship to the physical environment?
  
- Today, we are seated in a circle. Can you make any connections between the following four points?
  - 1) The fact that we are seated in a circle
  - 2) What you have learned about circles
  - 3) The role and meaning of circles in the design of the Golden Rule Poster
  - 4) The deeper meaning of the Golden Rule for your personal life and for your relationships with other human beings and with the physical environment.

*(This question would, of course, be relevant only to classes who are using a circular seating arrangement.)*
  
- Is the Golden Rule just a guideline for how one person should treat another person? Or, can the golden rule be a guideline for how one group of people treats another group of people? For example, how one family can treat other families? How one culture can treat other cultures? How one ethnic group can treat other ethnic groups? How one nation can treat other nations? Explain. Do you think that the circle is a symbol of equality, unity, reciprocity and interconnectedness? If yes, do you believe that these symbolic qualities of the circle are important in terms of how the Golden Rule can or should be applied between and among groups? Explain.
  
- Dr. Harry Gensler is a professor of philosophy and ethics in the United States. He is also an expert on the Golden Rule. Here are his thoughts on President John F. Kennedy's suggestions for applying the

Golden Rule: *“President Kennedy in 1963 appealed to the golden rule in an anti-segregation speech at the time of the first black enrollment at the University of Alabama. He asked whites to consider what it would be like to be treated as second-class citizens because of skin color. Whites were to imagine themselves being black – and being told that they couldn't vote, or go to the best public schools, or eat at most public restaurants, or sit in the front of the bus. Would whites be content to be treated that way? He was sure that they wouldn't – and yet this is how they treated others. He said the ‘heart of the question is ... whether we are going to treat our fellow Americans as we want to be treated.’ ”* What is your reaction to President Kennedy’s approach to the Golden Rule? Explain. If you agree that the circle is a symbol of equality, unity, reciprocity and interconnectedness, do you see some qualities of the circle in President Kennedy’s suggestions as to how we should treat one another? Explain.

- Do you ever think of yourself as a “global citizen” – as a person who is more than just a citizen of a rural area, a town, a city or a country, but rather as a person who belongs to the international community of people, a person who belongs to one, single, interacting, global human family? If you see yourself as an international citizen, how does the Golden Rule Poster – its design, its circles and its 13 “rules” – speak to you as a global citizen?
- Were you born in another country? Or, have you lived in or visited another country (or countries)? If your answer to one or both of these questions is “yes”, have these experiences caused you to see yourself as a “global citizen” – as a person who is more than just a citizen of a rural area, a town, a city or a country, but rather as a person who belongs to the international community of people, a person who belongs to one, single, interacting, global, human family? If you see yourself as an international citizen, how does the Golden Rule Poster – its design, its circles and its 13 “rules” – speak to you as a global citizen?
- *“We should act toward other nations as we wish them to act toward us.”* These words were spoken by Millard Fillmore (1800-1874), the thirteenth president of the United States. Do you see this statement by President Fillmore as another way of expressing the Golden Rule? Explain. Do you believe that it is possible for one nation to treat other

nations as it would like to be treated? Explain. If you agree that the circle is a symbol of equality, unity, reciprocity and interconnectedness, do you see some qualities of the circle in President Fillmore's suggestion as to how the Golden Rule can or should be applied between and among nations? Explain.

- Mussie Hailu, who lives in Ethiopia, Africa, is committed to taking the message of the Golden Rule to the four corners of the earth. Mr. Hailu travels to many parts of the world to help people understand how the Golden Rule contributes to peace, social justice and a healthy environment. He has established April 5 as International Golden Rule Day. Do you have any ideas about what people around the world could do to celebrate this annual Golden Rule Day? Explain. Do you see a connection between an International Golden Rule Day and the design of the Golden Rule Poster? Explain.
- When you look at the Golden Rule Poster, can you think of some ways that we as individuals in our local community can encourage other people around the world to practice the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Throughout these lessons,
  - 1) What have you learned about rules?
  - 2) What have you learned about circles?
  - 3) What have you learned about the Golden Rule?
  - 4) What have you learned about the design of the Golden Rule Poster, including the fact that the whole world – in the form of a globe – sits in the centre of the poster with the words “The Golden Rule” imposed on it? What does it mean to you that the globe is a circle, surrounded by a circle of circles, and 13 different statements of the Golden Rule?
- What would the world be like if all the people on our planet lived their lives according to the Golden Rule? Does the Golden Rule Poster – its overall design, its circles and its 13 “rules” – symbolize, for you, a world in which the Golden Rule “rules”? Explain.

## **Art activity**

The teacher makes the Black Elk statement and its introduction (see box below) available to the students by way of the blackboard or chart paper or as a handout. This statement could also be given to the students as a handout prior to the class.

The circle is a central symbol in the Native American way of life. The circle pervades most aspects of Native thought and life, because it represents a vital connection between the individual, the community, and the entire physical environment. This vitality is captured rather well by the following statement from Black Elk (1863-1950), a Sioux/Lakota elder (of the Plains Indians of North America):

*“The universe is circles within circles, and everything is one circle, and all the circles are connected to each other. Each family is a circle, and those family circles connect together and make a community, and the community makes its circle where it lives on the Earth. It [the community] cares for that part [of the Earth] but cares for it as a circle – which is to say in a co-operative and egalitarian way, where everybody is cared for, and everybody is respected.”*

After the students have read Black Elk’s words, and after a class discussion about his statement, each student is provided with a blank piece of paper (suggested size: 18 x 24 inches.)

Working with a guiding question such as “Is your life a circle?” or “Are there circles in your life?”, the students are invited to depict the place of circles in their lives. In their artwork, the students are encouraged to include various facets of their lives, including, for example, home, friends, sports, school, hobbies, nature and the larger community, including the international community.

When the artwork is completed, some students are asked to display and explain their art. This is followed by discussion.

## **Homework assignment**

The students are assigned to research an organization or project that promotes an awareness of and a commitment to global citizenship. The

teacher can decide whether the students will present the results of their research in the form of a reflection paper or an in-class presentation.

In their research, the students are invited to explore how the chosen organization or project embodies an international application of the Golden Rule. The students may also want to investigate if and how the work of the organization or project reflects the symbolic, written and visual features of the Golden Rule Poster.

For the consideration of the teacher, here follows a list of suggested organizations and projects that have a global focus and touch on various themes including social justice, multiculturalism, youth, equity, diversity, global citizenship, peace-making, humanitarian service, cross-cultural relations, ecological sustainability, and disaster relief:

<p>           Charter for Compassion            Clowns Without Borders            Doctors Without Borders            Engineers Without Borders            Free the Children            From Me to We            Gesundheit Institute            Global Ethic Foundation            Global Poverty Project            (Australia)            Global Youth Network            Habitat for Humanity            Interfaith Youth Core            Kids4Peace            Kiva            Peaceful Schools International         </p>	<p>           Physicians for Peace            Red Cross            Taking it Global            Teachers Without Borders            UN Millenium Development            Goals            UNESCO            United Nations            United Network of Young            Peacebuilders (UNOY)            United Religions Initiative            War Child            World Organization of the Scout            Movement            World Spirit Youth Council            Worldwatch Institute            World Wildlife Foundation         </p>
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All of the above projects and organizations have websites.

**Journal activity: Let's write about it!**

For journal questions to stimulate the students' written reflections after or during class, see **Appendix 7**.

## 10) Appendices

**Appendix 1:** The Golden Rule and the global human family

**Appendix 2:** Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section One

**Appendix 3:** Biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

**Appendix 4:** Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Two

**Appendix 5:** Visual impressions of the Golden Rule Poster

**Appendix 6:** Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Three

**Appendix 7:** Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Four

### **Appendix 1 The Golden Rule and the global human family**

*"We should act toward other nations as we wish them to act toward us."*

**Millard Fillmore** (1800-1874), thirteenth President of the United States

The Golden Rule, known also as *the ethic of reciprocity*, is arguably the most consistent, most prevalent, and most universal ethical principle in history. It is found worldwide throughout cultures, ethnic groups, religions, secular philosophies, and indigenous traditions. Many people regard it as the most concise and general principle of ethics. The impact of the Golden Rule is largely attributable to its three cardinal qualities – simplicity, universality and power.

Gold itself has symbolic value and a psychological appeal that spans the cultures of 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 much of the world. It is therefore no surprise that the Golden Rule contains a "gold" metaphor, since, as a principle, it is prized in so many 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 like to be treated, when deciding how to treat others. However, our changing world invites us to broaden this rule to include groups of people and society as a whole.

Many regions of the world are quickly becoming more multicultural, with people of many cultures, ethnic groups and religions working to find ways to live together in harmony. The Golden Rule, with its roots in a wide range of the world's philosophies, religions and cultures, is well-suited to be a 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 an 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 among so many of the world's cultures, races, and religions, it has tremendous capacity for promoting social justice, equality, non-violence, unity, diversity, global citizenship, multicultural and multifaith cooperation, the teaching of compassion and ethics, and more.

Today we are living in a global village. What this means is that in addition to belonging to our particular ethnic groups, cultures, religions, and nations, we are also global citizens, members of an international community. Being a global citizen brings both privileges and responsibilities. The Golden Rule is one of the best guides we have for enabling all the people of the world to live together in peace.

*Compiled by Paul McKenna*

## **Appendix 2 Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section One**

- “Rules are made to be broken!” Do you think that this statement is true? Explain.
- In the society in which you live, what rules or laws that have been made – by any level of government or by any institution – are unacceptable to you? Explain why you feel this way.

- In the society in which you live, can you think of any rules or laws that are very effective and that help or protect people? Explain.
- If someone breaks a rule or a law in society, what should be the consequences for that person? Give an example of a law or rule and an appropriate consequence for breaking that law or rule.
- In the society in which you live, do you see the need for a particular law or rule that does not presently exist? If so, write a description of that new rule or law and why it is necessary.
- Do you as an individual have some rules that guide your life which are different from those of your peer group? Explain.
- Do you see any connection between rules in sports and rules in society? Explain.
- What would your local community be like if it had no rules? Explain.
- What is the most important rule for living *your* life? Explain.
- What is a rule?

### **Appendix 3 Biography of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

*Everybody is great because everybody can serve.* **Martin Luther King Jr.**

Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was born on January 15, 1929, in Atlanta, Georgia in the United States of America. His father and grandfather were Christian ministers in the Baptist Church. His mother was a teacher who taught Martin how to read before he went to school. Martin had an older sister, Christine, and a younger brother, Alfred.

Young Martin was an excellent student in school. He skipped grades in both elementary and high school. He enjoyed singing, cycling, football, baseball and reading. When he was only fifteen years old, he began university studies

at Morehouse College in Atlanta, and when he was only nineteen he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

After three years of study at Crozier Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, he was awarded a Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 1951. In 1953, while he was studying for his doctoral degree in Boston, King married Coretta Scott. They would have two sons and two daughters. Dr. King was ordained a Baptist minister, and in 1954 he moved to Montgomery, Alabama, to work as a church minister.

As an African-American, King experienced racism early in life. Growing up, he suffered the pain of segregation. Blacks were systematically deprived of many basic rights, including voting rights. They were forbidden to share most public places with whites, including washrooms, stores, restaurants and schools. As an adult, Dr. King decided to do something to make the world a better and fairer place.

In the 1950's, King helped generate a movement for civil rights and racial equality. He participated in the Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott, and he led many other peaceful demonstrations that protested the unfair treatment of African-Americans. In 1957, he was elected president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization formed to provide leadership for the growing civil rights movement.

Dr. King challenged economic injustice because he realized that racial equality could never be achieved without economic justice. Influenced strongly by Mahatma Gandhi, he came to believe that war and violence could never bring about justice and peace. This is why he opposed war and the use of violence for solving problems. He firmly opposed the American war in Vietnam and insisted that all protests for justice be conducted non-violently so that no one would be physically hurt. This commitment was recognized in 1964 when King became the youngest person in history to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Martin Luther King Jr. faced numerous obstacles. His work was strongly opposed by racist organizations, and he had to contend with state laws that upheld racism, and were reinforced by armed local police. He faced threats of assassination and was subjected to physical and verbal abuse. He was arrested more than 20 times and jailed a number of times. His home was bombed.

Some black leaders criticized his approach for being too moderate because they wanted change to come about more quickly.

But tens of thousands were drawn to his work. Dr. King had the support of most blacks and a growing number of whites from around the nation. His courageous leadership and perseverance in the face of hostile opposition, combined with his insistence on non-violent methods brought about sweeping changes, including the following:

- Numerous laws were changed to outlaw racist practices and guarantee the rights of blacks
- African-Americans developed a new sense of pride, dignity and self-worth
- White people were challenged to come to a deeper understanding of the founding ideals of America. King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered at the March for Freedom in Washington, DC, on August 28, 1963, called for the best in every American. This speech has inspired millions.

This gifted speaker, who moved so many people to take action for justice, was assassinated on April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Full racial equality has yet to be achieved in the United States. But those engaged in the struggle against racism continue to look to King's ideals and methods for inspiration and hope. Dr. King taught that we are all global citizens. It is fitting, therefore, that since his death he has become a symbol for people everywhere in the world who are struggling for equality, dignity and freedom.

In 1986, the American Congress established *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* as an annual national holiday.

How was one man able to exert such a profound and positive impact on history? Clearly Dr. King had established for himself a code of ethics, a set of "rules for living" that were rooted in virtue. But, more than this, he was able in the face of enormous obstacles, to summon the courage and

perseverance to adhere to his values of equality, justice, and non-violence. In his own words, “We ain’t going to let nobody turn us around!”

*Compiled by Terry Weller*

#### **Appendix 4 Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Two**

- As a student, you have had an opportunity to experience many different teachers. Think back over your school days. Have you ever had a teacher who had a unique style of classroom management that you appreciated? What was unique about that teacher’s classroom rules and the way in which he/she implemented those rules?
- Have you ever had a teacher who enforced a rule system in his/her classroom that you found difficult to abide by? Explain.
- Write about someone in your life – apart from the individuals you reflected on in Lessons Two and Three – who is a person who seems to have a very clear set of values or rules for living and who disciplines himself/herself to follow them. Do you admire this person? Explain.
- Think about your own personal life. Are there values or rules for living that you have put in place to guide yourself, but which you sometimes have difficulty following? Explain?
- To some degree, we all have a system of rules for ourselves. Do you discipline yourself if you do not meet the expectations that you have set for yourself? Explain.
- Have you ever endured teasing for adhering to a value, principle or personal rule that is important to you? Describe that experience and how you felt about it.
- Was there ever an occasion or time when you endured teasing for adhering to your personal rules for living and then felt good about standing up for what you believed? Explain. Would you act in the same way if it happened to you again? Explain.

- Have you ever teased someone in a hurtful way for adhering to her or his values and then you regretted it? Describe your feelings about this incident. What did you learn from this experience?
- Do you as an individual have some values or rules that guide your life which are different from those of your peer group? Explain.
- Throughout history, there are many people who have made a decision to die for what they believed in. How do you feel about such a commitment? Explain.
- What is a rule?

## **Appendix 5 Visual impressions of the Golden Rule Poster**

Here follows some comments made by various people about the design of the Golden Rule Poster. These comments may be useful to teachers in terms of helping the students to discover the symbolic and visual significance of the poster:

*“I find the poster to be very powerful – but it’s not an overwhelming or imposed type of power. That’s because the colors on the poster are soft and pastel. For me, these soft colors represent the gentle and compassionate treatment that the peoples of the world should demonstrate to one another.”*

*“When I first saw the poster, I stopped in my tracks. I was amazed at how quickly it touched me. The message of this poster is incredibly powerful in its simplicity. The poster manages to unite every corner of the planet with one essential statement.”*

*“The poster has lots of circles. Not only that...on the poster there is a circle of circles. The circle is a universal symbol.”*

*“For me, the lines on the poster say a lot. I see the lines that go out from the globe at the center as rays of light that go out from the world, to the entire universe, connecting the earth to the universe. Conversely, I can look at these lines as rays of light that come from the outside – warming and connecting all members of the global community. I see the longitude and latitude lines on the globe as performing the role of connecting countries to*

*other countries, and to other continents in a single global community, that of necessity needs to cooperate with international rules, e.g. the Geneva Conventions, the International Criminal Court, resolutions of the United Nations.”*

*“At the centre of the poster, there resides a circle, the Earth. On this circle, the words, “The Golden Rule”, are superimposed. What a message about the global human family!”*

*“Each of the 13 symbols of the world’s religions is encased in a circle. And together the 13 symbols form a circle of circles. Note also that many of the various symbols representing the 13 spiritual traditions contain circles, semi-circles or partial circles. In fact, some of the symbols are themselves circles.”*

*“The first time I saw the poster, it caught me out of the corner of my eye. Then I went and looked at it and was transfixed by it. I stood there looking at it for several minutes. My feeling is that the poster pulls you in gently, and then it pitches something back to you. And what it pitches back to you is our unity, our oneness... the fact that we are all one.”*

**Note to teacher:**

Something to keep in mind: the poster does not, of course, contain Golden Rule statements from all the world’s cultural, philosophical, spiritual, and indigenous traditions. This is a physical impossibility, given the thousands of such traditions that exist. But the poster does have an inclusive quality in a symbolic way. The poster is a symbol, in that it points the viewer to something bigger than itself, something beyond itself. The poster points the viewer to a more inclusive vision of things, and thus has the capacity to create a consciousness in the viewer that is broader, more pluralistic, more open and more global.

**Appendix 6 Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Three**

- If you were to create a Golden Rule Poster for yourself – a poster with many Golden Rules and a poster that reflected what kind of person you are or would like to be – what would be the top three rules that you would put on your poster? Feel free to create your own Golden Rules.

- Can you think of an unpleasant experience in your life history that would not have occurred if someone had applied the Golden Rule in his or her life? Explain.
- Can you think of an unfortunate or tragic event in your community or on the world scene that would not have happened if an individual or individuals had applied the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Can you think of an occasion in your life when you, or someone you know, applied the Golden Rule and the results made you happy? Explain.
- Can you think of an occasion in your life when you tried to apply or even enforce the Golden Rule, but the situation did not improve? How did you feel? Explain.
- Oftentimes, things that are scarce become very valuable. On our planet, gold is a scarce commodity, which, in turn, makes it even more valuable. Do you personally feel that our world, as you know it today, could benefit from the use of more rules that are made of “gold”? Explain.
- You will notice the word “Golden” in the term “the Golden Rule.” Why do you think that the person who created this term decided to call this rule “Golden”? In other words – for you – what is “the gold” in the Golden Rule?
- List and describe some ways to bring the Golden Rule into your daily life.
- Some of these Golden Rules have been practiced on our planet for thousands of years. Why do you think people still see the Golden Rule as valuable today?
- Which of the various Golden Rules do you like the best? Explain.
- How could you change the world by applying the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Do you sometimes find it difficult to practice the Golden Rule? Explain.

- Do you know anyone who practices the Golden Rule on a regular basis? Explain.
- Can you think of ways that we as individuals in our local community can encourage other people on the planet to practice the Golden Rule? Explain.
- What would the world be like if all the people on our planet lived their lives according to the Golden Rule? Explain.
- What is a rule?

### **Appendix 7 Suggested journal questions for Curriculum Section Four**

- We have been studying circles. Can you name two things you have learned in studying circles? Explain.
- Do you see a connection between circles and rules? Explain.
- In what ways is your life a little like a circle? Are you happy about the circles in your life? Are there any things that you do not like about the circles in your life? Explain.
- If living one's life according to the concept of a circle is a good thing, can you think of any difficulties involved in maintaining this way of living? Explain.
- The sun and moon are circular in shape. Like the sun, are you a giver of life, light, and warmth to others? Or, like the moon, are you a reflector of light? Does your set of personal "rules" give life to others, just as Planet Earth gives life to its many human and non-human occupants? Does your set of personal "rules" help or aid others? Does your set of "rules" make you a giver or a taker? Explain.
- Oftentimes, things that are scarce become very valuable. On our planet, gold is a scarce commodity, which in turn makes it even more valuable. Do you personally feel that our world, as you experience it today, could benefit from the use of more rules that are made of "gold"? Explain.

- Can you see a connection between the design of the Golden Rule Poster and your understanding of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- Can you think of some ways that we as individuals in our local community can encourage other people around the world to practice the Golden Rule?
- Is it realistic to expect the Golden Rule to inspire cultures, ethnic groups, nations, and religions to interact in a more respectful way? Explain.
- Is the Golden Rule just a guideline about how one person should treat another person? Or can the Golden Rule be a guideline for how one group of people treats another group of people? For example, how one family can treat other families? How one culture can treat other cultures? How one ethnic group can treat other ethnic groups? How one nation can treat other nations? Explain.
- What would the world be like if all the people on our planet lived their lives according to the Golden Rule?
- What is a rule?
- What is a circle?

## **11) Helpful resources**

### **a) More discussion and journal questions**

The following three links on the Scarborough Missions website contain numerous trigger questions that will be helpful in promoting discussion and journaling in this curriculum unit:

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/workshop\\_guidelines.php#golden\\_message](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/workshop_guidelines.php#golden_message)

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/workshop\\_guidelines.php#golden\\_message\\_you](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/workshop_guidelines.php#golden_message_you)

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/workshop\\_guidelines.php#golden\\_rule\\_society](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/workshop_guidelines.php#golden_rule_society)

**b) Golden Rule movie: *Animating the Golden Rule...An Introduction***

This newly-released DVD features students in several Toronto high schools embodying Golden Rule values by way of skits, artwork, music, movement and rap. The film eloquently demonstrates how character education can be engendered in young people using play, creativity and the arts. The movie is ideal as a complementary resource to this curriculum unit.

Running time: 23 minutes plus valuable DVD extras. Also included is an in-depth Guidebook for Educators. The movie features the option of French subtitles as well as English subtitles for the hearing impaired.

Ideal for teachers, classrooms, and youth groups. To view a four-minute segment of the Golden Rule movie, click this link:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewp4k4-X\\_E8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewp4k4-X_E8) For more information or to order movie, visit [www.thegoldenrulemovie.com](http://www.thegoldenrulemovie.com)

**c) Golden Rule interactive flash presentation**

This very useful teaching resource is available free on the Scarboro Missions website at

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/interactive\\_flash.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/interactive_flash.php)

**d) Golden Rule workshops for youth**

Sponsored by Scarboro Missions, these workshops provide an environment in which young people embody Golden Rule values using skits, artwork, music, movement and rap. The pedagogical goal is to engender character education in young people through play, creativity and the arts. For more information, contact Kathy Murtha at tel., 416-261-7135 ext. 215; e-mail, [kmurtha@scarboromissions.ca](mailto:kmurtha@scarboromissions.ca)

**e) Golden Rule Institute**

Sponsored by Scarboro Missions, the Golden Rule Institute trains teachers, youth workers, and youth leaders to conduct Golden Rule workshops, seminars, and reflection days for young people. For more information, contact Kathy Murtha at tel., 416-261-7135 ext. 215; e-mail, [kmurtha@scarboromissions.ca](mailto:kmurtha@scarboromissions.ca)

**f) April 5 – International Golden Rule Day**

Classrooms, schools, school boards, school districts, local communities and other organizations can celebrate International Golden Rule Day by sponsoring events and projects. To learn more about Golden Rule Day, contact Mussie Hailu at [mussiepeace@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mussiepeace@yahoo.co.uk)

**g) *The Golden Rule* (book title)**

This comprehensive book (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) by American professor, Jeffrey Wattles, provides an excellent and well-researched introduction to the concept of the Golden Rule.

**h) A Chronological History of the Golden Rule**

This chronological history of the Golden Rule is authored by Dr. Harry Gensler S.J., one of the top Golden Rule scholars in the world. This amazing 30-page document chronicles the history of the Golden Rule from ancient to modern times. Essentially, the paper charts the ethical history of humanity through the lens of the Golden Rule. This chronology is an ideal teaching tool with the capacity to reach a multitude of diverse audiences. It also has interfaith content.

<http://www.harryhiker.com/chronology.htm>

**i) Video clip featuring children and the Golden Rule**

In this excellent video, children from many religions recite the Golden Rule from each of their faith traditions. The video would be interesting for students to view in Curriculum Section Three. Here is the link:<http://www.azifm.org/golden-rule/children-talk-about-the-golden-rule>

**j) Commentaries on the Golden Rule**

This compilation features commentaries on the Golden Rule from a number of well-known scientists, philosophers, politicians, writers, business people, religious leaders, companies and organizations. Here is the link:

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/commentaries.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/commentaries.php)

**k) Teachingvalues.com**

This site is one of the most extensive sources on the Internet for parents, teachers or anyone involved in character education for children. The site uses a storytelling method to enable children to learn and understand character-building principles and values. [www.teachingvalues.com](http://www.teachingvalues.com)

**l) Green Rule Poster and study guide**

The Green Rule Poster features ecological teachings from sacred texts in 14 religious traditions. The 14 statements are presented against the visual backdrop of “the tree of life” and a variety of leaves from around the world. The poster is complemented by a very useful 20-page study guide. For more information or to order these products, click here:

[http://www.greeningsacredspaces.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=4](http://www.greeningsacredspaces.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=3&Itemid=4)

**12) Useful Golden Rule websites**

<http://www.jcu.edu/philosophy/gensler/goldrule.htm>

[http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden\\_rule/index.php](http://www.scarboromissions.ca/Golden_rule/index.php)

[http://www.interfaitharizona.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=10](http://www.interfaitharizona.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=7&Itemid=10)

[www.thegoldenrulemovie.com](http://www.thegoldenrulemovie.com)

[www.goldenruleproject.org](http://www.goldenruleproject.org)

[www.goldenruleradical.org](http://www.goldenruleradical.org)

<http://www.personal.kent.edu/~jwattles/goldrule.htm>

[www.goldenruleactivist.com](http://www.goldenruleactivist.com)

[www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org)

## **13) About the author and the reviewers**

### **The author**

**Gregory McKenna** has been teaching in the public school system in Ontario, Canada for more than 30 years. His pastimes include singing, gardening and playing hockey. Gregory lives near Beeton, Ontario, Canada with his wife, Cathy, and their sons, Eddie and Neil.

### **Reviewers**

Sal Badali

Ivan Dowling

Kathy Gillis

Paul McKenna

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Frank O'Neill

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Roslyn Rus

Sr. Lucy Thorson NDS

Rev. David Warren SFM

Sharon Willan

All of the above reviewers are educators who reside in Ontario, Canada, with the exception of Kathy Gillis who lives in Nova Scotia, Canada.

**Scarboro Missions is grateful for the skilful efforts of all the individuals involved in this project.**

## **14) Dedication**

I wish to dedicate this curriculum unit to the memory of my parents, **Frances Agatha Seager** and **Robert Joseph McKenna**. These courageous and creative individuals were the first to teach me the Golden Rule.

*Gregory McKenna*

## **15) Permission to reprint this document**

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