

# Golden Rule Meditation Exercises

We have committed the golden rule to memory;  
let us now commit it to life

*Edwin Markham, American poet (1852-1940)*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

In most faith traditions, it is common for the adherents to use the sacred writings of their tradition for purposes of meditation and reflection as well as for community or congregational prayer.

As the international interfaith movement grows, it is becoming more common to use sacred texts from several religious traditions in both individual and communal prayer. Multi-faith prayer services are one context that frequently features sacred writings from many religions.

### **A Rule Made of Gold**

This document contains a number of meditation and reflection exercises using various sacred texts. These sacred writings are actually 13 expressions of the Golden Rule as found in a number of faith traditions. To view or download these 13 sacred texts, [click here](#).

This listing of texts was originally compiled for inclusion in the Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. Using scripture and symbol, this poster features the Golden Rule in 13 religions. The poster has visual and symbolic power that is useful for both individual and group reflection.

The Golden Rule Poster is used as a tool for reflection in all the exercises in Section #3 of this document. All other meditation exercises do not require the use of the poster.

To view or order the Golden Rule Poster, [click here](#).

The simplicity, power and universality of the Golden Rule make it an excellent subject for meditation and reflection. Known also as the *Ethic of Reciprocity*, the Golden Rule emphasizes values of mutuality, reciprocity and interdependence. Many regard it as the most concise and general principle of ethics.

The Golden Rule is arguably the most consistent and most prevalent ethical teaching in history. It is found in numerous cultures, religions, ethical systems, secular

philosophies, indigenous (Native) traditions, and even in the mathematical sciences (e.g. the golden mean). And because the Golden Rule crosses so many traditions and philosophies, it possesses tremendous moral authority and reveals a profound unity underlying the diversity of human experience.

Given its omnipresence across history, the Golden Rule could be described as a *universal ethic*. In these Golden Rule meditation exercises, participants will thus be reflecting from the perspective of a universal wisdom.

For more information about the Golden Rule, see the [Golden Rule Across the World's Religions section](#) of the Scarborough Missions website.

### **A contemplative approach to the Golden Rule**

In a noisy, frenetic and fast-paced society, there is little time for quiet, solitude or reflection. As a result, our lives are often lived superficially and we lack adequate occasions for in-depth reflection. For these reasons, the methodology of this document encourages a meditative and contemplative approach to the Golden Rule.

### **Adaptable to various audiences**

Among the world's religions there exists a broad range of approaches to ethics, meditation and spirituality. Accordingly, the authors of this document invite various faith groups to adapt or change these meditation exercises as they deem appropriate. Members of faith traditions other than those represented by the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule in this document should feel free to include an expression of the Golden Rule from their tradition as part of their reflection and meditation. These meditation exercises can be used with single-faith and multi-faith audiences as well as with those who do not identify themselves with any particular faith tradition. A survey of history indicates that there are numerous secular expressions of the Golden Rule; one or more of these can be used in this meditation experience.

### **Reflection with young people**

The exercises presented in this document have been developed for use with adults. But some of these can be adapted for teen and pre-teen audiences. Meditation #2.3 and all the meditations in Section 3 are particularly adaptable for youth.

### **Multilingual expressions of the Golden Rule**

## **Zoroastrianism**

**Do not do unto others  
whatever is injurious  
to yourself**

Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29



On the Scarboro Missions website, the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule are available in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. To view or download these various translations, [click here](#). At this time, the meditation exercises are available only in English. But any individual who is fluent in English and one of these languages will be able to use these exercises to facilitate a group reflection with the respective language group.

Some of these meditation exercises use the Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster as a visual aid for reflection purposes. At this time, the poster is printed only in English; but other language groups can use this poster because any meditation can be greatly enhanced by the poster's physical, visual and symbolic properties.

### **Individual and group reflection**

All of these meditation methods, with the exception of Meditation # 2.13, are designed for individual use. But each meditation method contains instructions for a facilitator who wishes to adapt it for a group experience. See [Appendix 3: Application to a Group Experience](#).

### **Time duration of meditation and reflection periods**

Individuals are encouraged to determine their own time schedule for these meditations. Experience has demonstrated that a range of 15 to 30 minutes works well for most people. But some individuals prefer a longer period. Facilitators of the group reflections are encouraged to design their own schedules and timelines.

### **Journaling**

Journaling is encouraged in these meditations. Some individuals may prefer to record their reflections during the meditation exercise and some afterward. Individuals who are not comfortable recording their thoughts, learnings and insights on paper are encouraged to employ alternative media such as art, collage and tape-recording.

### **Do-it-yourself Golden Rule workshop outline**

In addition to these meditation exercises, Scarboro Missions has produced [Guidelines for a Golden Rule Workshop](#) that enables individuals or organizations to create and facilitate group discussions on the Golden Rule. The workshop is outlined in 13 detailed steps and provides the facilitator with lots of options and themes.

### **We want your feedback**

We invite feedback from those who use these meditations. We are particularly interested in any changes or improvements to this document that you might suggest. Contact Paul McKenna at [interfaith@scarboromissions.ca](mailto:interfaith@scarboromissions.ca) or telephone 416-261-7135 ext. 296

## MEDITATION EXERCISES FEATURING GOLDEN RULE TEXTS

1. Individual meditation
2. Written meditation
3. Artistic meditation
4. A meditation on Shinto wisdom
5. A meditation on compassion and healing
6. A meditation on Gandhian wisdom
7. A meditation on the Hindu *Namaste* greeting
8. A meditation on the teaching of Black Elk (Native American elder)
9. A meditation on the teaching of Thich Nhat Hanh (Buddhist monk)
10. A meditation on the teaching of Mother Teresa
11. A meditation on interfaith dialogue
12. A meditation on the "gold" in the Golden Rule
13. Group meditation

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### 2.1 Individual meditation

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

#### Steps:

- A. Prepare yourself**  
Prepare yourself for meditation by any means you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**
  - B. The Golden Rule**  
In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.
- 1. What strikes you?**  
Be sensitive to any words, phrases or particular expressions of the Golden Rule that speak to you. When you feel drawn to a particular word, phrase or expression, stop! Ponder that word, phrase or expression. Say it aloud or

### Sikhism

**I am a stranger to  
no one; and no one  
is a stranger to me.  
Indeed, I am a  
friend to all**

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1299



silently to yourself several times. Savour the way it sounds or feels in your mouth as you speak it.

2. **Dialogue with self**

Ask yourself, "What feelings does this word or phrase arouse in me?" "What – *inside me* – is this word or phrase speaking to?" "What does it say to me?"

3. **Re-read**

When you have a sense that you are finished with this particular word, phrase or expression, continue reading and re-reading the 13 versions of the Golden Rule until another word, phrase or expression strikes you or speaks to you. Work with it in the same way as suggested in Steps #3 and #4. Continue with this method of reading and re-reading in a meditative fashion until you sense you are finished for the time being.

4. **Record your thoughts**

It is helpful to write in your journal during or after a period of meditation or reflection. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- In this meditation, what did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

5. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

## 2.2 Written meditation

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

A. **Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

## B. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

## C. In your own words

Write a brief general statement that captures what you hear being expressed in these 13 sacred writings (e.g. "To me, these writings are saying that...").

### 1. Re-read

Read the various versions of the Golden Rule again.

### 2. Write down what strikes you

As you reflect on the various expressions of the Golden Rule, what strikes you? What pleasant or unpleasant thoughts, feelings, memories, images or questions come to mind? Listen to your inner reactions (positive or negative) and write them down uncensored. Don't worry about grammar, spelling or sentence structure.

### 3. Making connections

Reflect on what you have written. What connections can you make? What do your spontaneous reactions say to you? What new insights come to you? Write a short paragraph about the main insights you have received in this exercise thus far.

### 4. Going deeper

Review everything you have written. Jot down any additional feelings and insights that come to you as you ponder what you have written. Ask yourself, "How will I be different now that I have reflected in this way?" "Do I feel moved to start doing something or to stop doing something or to continue doing something as a result of this period of reflection?"

### 5. Application to a group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see [Appendix 3: Application to a group experience](#).

## Judaism

**What is hateful to you,  
do not do to your  
neighbour. This is the  
whole Torah; all the rest  
is commentary**

*Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a*



## 2.3 Artistic meditation – A meditation using art and imagery

**Materials required:** Sketching paper, crayons, colored pencils and other artistic aids appropriate to the exercise (e.g. clay); a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule - to access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

**Note:** You may want to employ other art forms to do this meditation, e.g. dance, physical movement, poetry-writing, story-writing or musical composition. Given the nature of some of these art forms, it may be necessary to adjust some of the following instructions accordingly.

## Steps:

### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**

### B. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 1. Select an image

As you read, be aware of any image or images that come to mind. Select an image that best expresses your understanding, your sense, your perception or your experience of the Golden Rule.

#### 2. Create an image

Draw, paint or otherwise create (in clay, collage, dance, music or other medium) your chosen image of the Golden Rule. Feel free to have fun with this exercise – let yourself go! Do things you have not done before! **Please note:** This exercise is not about artistic talent. It is simply about accessing and expressing your non-verbal, inner reactions to the Golden Rule. A simple stick figure is as adequate as a sophisticated work of art. Resist the temptation to judge your work from an artistic perspective.

3. **Your reactions**  
Having completed your artwork, reflect on what it was like for you to create this non-verbal expression of the Golden Rule. Was it easy? Was it difficult? What feelings were evoked in you? What feelings are present with you now? What did you learn about yourself in this exercise? Did you gain any new insights about the Golden Rule? Jot down your reflections in your journal or on a separate piece of paper.

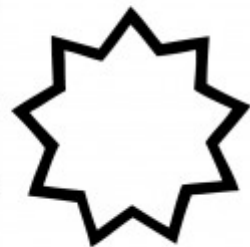
#### 4. Going deeper

Spend some time gazing at or reflecting on the artwork that you have created. Be present to it. Consider it in all its details. Allow this piece of art to make its way into your heart. Let it impact you. Let it speak to you. Let it do something to you. Jot down in your journal or on a piece of paper what it is that your artwork does or says to you. Again, refrain from judging your work from an artistic perspective. Allow yourself to savour this creative experience.

## Baha'i Faith

Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself

Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings*





## **Application to a group experience:**

The above meditation is designed for individual use but can easily be adapted for a group experience. This meditation is particularly adaptable for use with young people (for example, in a classroom, retreat or youth education setting). Here are some guidelines for any facilitator who wants to organize a group meditation:

- a. Individuals work separately and in silence, making their way through the above six steps under the guidance of the facilitator.
- b. After completing Step #6, individuals work in pairs or groups of three sharing the images (or artistic expressions) they have created and the insights they have gained during this exercise. Participants are encouraged to share as much as they feel comfortable sharing.
- c. Participants can also share their written reflections with one another, although the right to privacy in this regard must be emphasized and respected.
- d. Next, some of these images and insights can be shared and discussed in a plenary session that includes all participants. The plenary session could take the form of a Golden Rule art gallery in which the various images are exhibited and explained. Or a Golden Rule recital featuring, for example, musical and dance performances. Or a story-telling session.
- e. The facilitator is responsible for providing required materials and for creating and managing the schedule of this group meditation. The facilitator is free to make adaptations to the activity schedule suggested here.

## **2.4 A meditation on Shinto wisdom**

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### **Steps:**

#### **A. Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**

#### **B. The Golden Rule**

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

## Confucianism

One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself

*Confucius, Analects 15.23*



- 1. A Shinto wisdom statement**  
**"The heart of the person before you is a mirror; see there your own form."** Shintoism is the indigenous religion of Japan. Spend time reflecting on this Shinto wisdom statement. Take as much time as you need.
- 2. Interacting wisdom statements**  
You have had some time to reflect on this Shinto wisdom statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:
  - Does the Shinto wisdom statement give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how does it add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 statements of the Golden Rule give added meaning to the Shinto statement? Explain.
  - Which of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule relate most directly to the Shinto statement? Explain.
  - Are there ways in which the Shinto statement does not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- 3. In your own words**  
In your own words, re-write the Shinto wisdom statement, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.
- 4. Going deeper**  
Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:
  - What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
  - At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
  - What questions or issues have been raised for me?
  - What new insights have I gained in this process?
  - What did I learn about myself?
  - As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?
- 5. Record your thoughts**  
In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.
- 6. A group experience**  
For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## 2.5 Meditation on compassion and healing

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

#### 1. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### 2. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 3. Compassion and healing" It is compassion that heals us. Compassion – the sense of shared humanity, the sense of our kinship with each other – this is what heals. This is what heals the desperation that we feel, the darkness that we feel."

Spend time reflecting on this statement by Pema Chodron in which she makes a connection between compassion and healing. Pema Chodron is a Buddhist nun and teacher who lives in Nova Scotia, Canada. In her teaching she often focuses on the practice of compassion, a key tenet of Buddhism.

Take as much time as you need to reflect on Chodron's statement.

#### 4. Interacting wisdom statements

You have had some time to reflect on both Chodron's statement on compassion and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- Does Pema Chodron's statement give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how does it add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 statements of the Golden Rule give added meaning to Chodron's statement on compassion? Explain.
  - Which of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Chodron's statement? Explain.
  - Are there ways in which Chodron's statement does not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- #### 5. In your own words
- In your own words, re-write Pema Chodron's statement on compassion and

## Jainism

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

Mahavira, *Sutrakritanga*



healing, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.

#### 6. **Going deeper**

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About compassion and healing? About the world we live in?

#### 7. **Record your thoughts**

In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.

#### 8. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

## 2.6 A meditation on Gandhian wisdom

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

#### A. **Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### B. **The Golden Rule**

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

## Taoism

**Regard your  
neighbor's gain  
as your own gain,  
and your neighbor's  
loss as your own loss**

*Lao Tzu, T'ai Shang Kan Ying  
P'ien, 213-218*



- 1. The words of Gandhi "You must be the change you want to see in the world."** Spend some time reflecting on these words of Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948). This statement from the great Hindu saint and apostle of non-violence is typical of Gandhi who challenged people to move from talk to action, to find the courage to improve their society by becoming the best person they can be. Feel free to take as much time as you need to reflect on these words of Gandhi.
- 2. Interacting wisdom statements**

You have had some time to reflect on both the Gandhian wisdom statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

  - Do Gandhi's words give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to Gandhi's statement? Explain.
  - Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Gandhi's words? Explain.
  - Are there ways in which Gandhi's statement does not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- 3. In your own words**

In your own words, re-write the Gandhian statement, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.
- 4. Going deeper**

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

  - What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
  - At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
  - What questions or issues have been raised for me?
  - What new insights have I gained in this process?
  - What did I learn about myself?
  - As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in? About changing the world we live in?
- 5. Record your thoughts**

In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.

## 6. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

## 2.7 A meditation on the Hindu *Namaste* greeting

**Materials required:** A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

#### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### B. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

1. **Hindu *Namaste* greeting "I honor and respect the divinity within you  
I honor the place within you  
In which the entire universe resides  
I honor the place within you of love, of light, of peace  
I honor the place within you where  
When you are in that place within you  
And I am in that place within me**

**There is only one of us"**. Spend some time reflecting on this statement, which is one of a number of ways of expressing the Hindu *Namaste* greeting. It is common for Hindus to greet one another with the *Namaste* gesture. Bringing the palms of the hands together in a prayer position in front of the chest, they bow to one another while saying the word "*Namaste*". The bowing of the head is a gracious form of extending friendship in love and humility. The bow also symbolizes the negation or reduction of one's ego in the presence of another. By way of this *Namaste* greeting, Hindus recognize the presence of the divine in one another and in all of creation. Spend as much time as you need reflecting on these words associated with the Hindu greeting.

## Hinduism

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

Mahabharata 5:1517



## 2. Interacting wisdom statements

You have had some time to reflect on both the words of the Hindu greeting and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- a. Do the words of the Hindu *Namaste* greeting give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to the Hindu greeting? Explain.
- b. Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to the words of the *Namaste* greeting? Explain.
- c. Are there ways in which the words of the Hindu greeting do not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.

## 3. In your own words

In your own words, re-write the words of the *Namaste* greeting, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.

## 4. Going deeper

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

## 5. Record your thoughts

In your journal, record any thoughts, comments or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.

## 6. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## 2.8 A meditation on the teaching of Black Elk

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

**Steps:**

**A. Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**

**B. The Golden Rule**

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

**1. Black Elk's teaching" All things are our relatives; what we do to everything, we do to ourselves. All is really One."**

Spend some time reflecting on these words of Black Elk (1863-1950). An Oglala Sioux (Lakota), Black Elk was a visionary and shamanic healer in the Native American tradition. Many of his teachings and visions are captured in *Black Elk Speaks*, a book of his teachings which offers an eloquent and profound vision of the unity of all creation. Spend as much time as you need reflecting on these words of Black Elk.

**2. Interacting wisdom statements**

You have had some time to reflect on both Black Elk's statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- a. Do these words of Black Elk give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to Black Elk's words? Explain.
- b. Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Black Elk's teaching? Explain.
- c. Are there ways in which the words of Black Elk do not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.

**3. In your own words**

In your own words, re-write this statement by Black Elk, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.

**4. Going deeper**

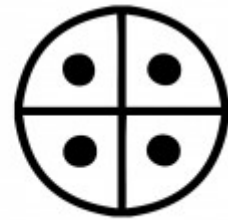
Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation thus far. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- o What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- o At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- o What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- o What new insights have I gained in this process?
- o What did I learn about myself?

## Native Spirituality

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

Chief Dan George





- As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?
5. **Record your thoughts**  
In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.
6. **A group experience**  
For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## 2.9 A meditation on Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

- A. **Prepare yourself**  
Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**
- B. **The Golden Rule**  
In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.
1. **Reflecting on "separateness" and "interconnectedness"** "We are here to awaken from the illusion of our separateness..." Spend some time reflecting on these words of Thich Nhat Hanh. Thich Nhat Hanh is a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and a renowned teacher, writer and peace activist. His efforts in resisting the Vietnam War inspired Martin Luther King Jr. to nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize. He has championed a movement called "engaged Buddhism" which seeks to integrate traditional meditative practices with social justice activity. The Buddha taught that all things

## Buddhism

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

*The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18*



are interdependent. Accordingly, the Buddhist path involves an awakening to a consciousness of this interconnectedness. From a Buddhist perspective, this involves an awakening from the illusion that we, as individuals, are independent and separate from other facets of reality (including other beings). Take as much time as you need to reflect on this statement by Thich Nhat Hanh.

**2. Interacting wisdom statements**

You have had some time to reflect on both Thich Nhat Hanh's statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- a. Do these words of Thich Nhat Hanh give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to this Buddhist monk's words? Explain.
- b. Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Thich Nhat Hanh's words? Explain.
- c. Are there ways in which these words of Thich Nhat Hanh do not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.

**3. In your own words**

In your own words, re-write Thich Nhat Hahn's statement, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.

**4. Going deeper**

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

**5. Record your thoughts**

In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.

**6. A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

## **2.10 A meditation on the teaching of Mother Teresa**

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

## Steps:

- A. **Prepare yourself**  
Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**
  - B. **The Golden Rule**  
In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.
1. **The wisdom of Mother Teresa**  
**"If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other."** Spend some time reflecting on these words of Mother Teresa (1910-1997). This Roman Catholic nun attained international recognition for her work among the poor and dying of India. Known as "the saint of the gutters," she taught and practiced an ethic of radical service to the poorest members of society. Spend as much time as you need reflecting on these words of Mother Teresa.
  2. **Interacting wisdom statements**  
You have had some time to reflect on both Mother Teresa's statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:
    - a. Do these words of Mother Teresa give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to Mother Teresa's words? Explain.
    - b. Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Mother Teresa's statement? Explain.
    - c. Are there ways in which the words of Mother Teresa do not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.
  3. **In your own words**  
In your own words, re-write this statement by Mother Teresa, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.
  4. **Going deeper**  
Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation thus far. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

## Christianity

**In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets**

*Jesus, Matthew 7:12*



- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
  - At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
  - What questions or issues have been raised for me?
  - What new insights have I gained in this process?
  - What did I learn about myself?
  - As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
  - What did I learn about the world we live in? About caring for the poorest people in our world? About bringing peace to our world?
5. **Record your thoughts**  
In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.
6. **A group experience**  
For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

## 2.11 A meditation on interfaith dialogue

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

- A. **Prepare yourself**  
Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.
- B. **The Golden Rule**  
In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

## Islam

1. **Interfaith dialogue** "It seems to me that the world's religions are like siblings separated at birth. We've grown up in different neighbourhoods, different households, with different songs, stories, traditions and customs. But now we've been reunited, and, having found each other after so many years apart, we look

**Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself**

The Prophet Muhammad, *Hadith*



**into each other's faces and can see the family resemblance. We're back together again, and it's very good."** Spend some time reflecting on these words of Richard Watts, an interfaith activist and Presbyterian minister living in the United States. This eloquent statement captures the sentiments of many people involved in the international interfaith movement. Our shrinking global village is becoming a multi-religious society. Today we are witnessing levels of conversation and cooperation among the world faiths that are strikingly new to history. In fact, the world's religions are now cooperating on every conceivable issue. Take as much time as you need to reflect on these words of Richard Watts.

2. **Interacting wisdom statements**

You have had some time to reflect on Richard Watts' statement and the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection consider one or more of the following questions:

- a. Do these words of Richard Watts give added meaning to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? If so, how do they add meaning? Conversely, do the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule give added meaning to Watts' words? Explain.
- b. Which of the 13 statements of the Golden Rule relate most directly to Richard Watts' statement? Explain.
- c. Are there ways in which Watts' words do not relate to the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule? Explain.

3. **In your own words**

In your own words, re-write this statement by Richard Watts, incorporating any new insights that you have garnered from your reflection thus far.

4. **Going deeper**

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?

- What did I learn about myself?
  - As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in? About interfaith dialogue?
5. **Record your thoughts**  
In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.
6. **A group experience**  
For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## 2.12 A meditation on the "gold" in the Golden Rule

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

1. **Prepare yourself**  
Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**
2. **The Golden Rule**  
In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.
3. **Is there gold in those words?**  
Spend some time reading and reflecting on the article entitled "[Discovering the 'gold' in the Golden Rule](#)". This article focuses on the symbolic power of gold and its universal appeal across history. In many languages, gold functions as a metaphor for what is most valued in human experience. As a medium of exchange, gold has often functioned as a universal standard. Interestingly enough, gold has also managed to symbolize a universal ethical standard (e.g. the Golden Rule).

## Secularism

Take as much time as you need to reflect on this article.

#### 4. **Digging deeper for gold**

You have had some time to reflect on the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule and the article on gold. How do these two interact for you? To aid your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- a. Does the article on gold give you a deeper understanding of the Golden Rule? Explain.
- b. Which of the 13 versions of the Golden Rule relate most directly to the content of the article on gold. Explain.
- c. Can you make a connection between the "value" found in the Golden Rule and the symbolic "value" of gold as expressed in the article? Explain.
- d. Are there ways in which the article on gold does not relate to the 13 Golden Rule statements? Explain.
- e. How do you understand the "gold" in the Golden Rule?

#### 5. **In your own words**

Given your reflections thus far, how do you now interpret the meaning of the "gold" in the Golden Rule? Compose a brief summary statement that captures this meaning for you.

#### 6. **Going deeper**

Read the written reflections you have made throughout this meditation. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation exercise?
- At what points during this period of reflection was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained in this process?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspects of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About gold and its symbolic meaning?
- What did I learn about the world we live in?

#### 7. **Record your thoughts**

In your journal, record any thoughts, reflections or insights garnered in Step #6 and in the entire process.

#### 8. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

**Always act so as to elicit  
the best in others, and  
thereby yourself.**

Ethical Culture Movement (Humanist)



## 2.13 Group meditation

**Materials required:** a listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

1. **A circle of silence**

All participants are seated in a circle (if possible). The process begins with two to five minutes of silence, each person preparing her/his heart to be open and receptive.

2. **The Golden Rule**

In a slow and reflective fashion, the facilitator reads aloud all 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Participants are invited to listen attentively and silently, being sensitive to any word or phrase that speaks to them.

3. **Reflective listening**

In a slow and reflective fashion, the facilitator reads aloud the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule a second time. Participants again listen reflectively for a word or phrase that strikes them. After this second reading, the facilitator invites those individuals who wish to say aloud the word or phrase from the 13 writings that most speaks to them. The other participants simply listen while the word/phrase is spoken.

4. **More reflective listening**

Slowly and reflectively, the facilitator reads aloud the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule a third time. Next, the facilitator invites a comment from those who in Step #3 shared a word/phrase. These individuals are invited to share as to why this particular word or phrase is significant for them. During this sharing, the other participants listen respectfully without crosstalk, discussion or feedback.

5. **Closing ritual**

The session closes with a two-minute period of silence. The facilitator then invites the participants to offer one another some sign of friendship, e.g. a handshake, hug, bow or whatever gesture is appropriate.

## Unitarianism

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

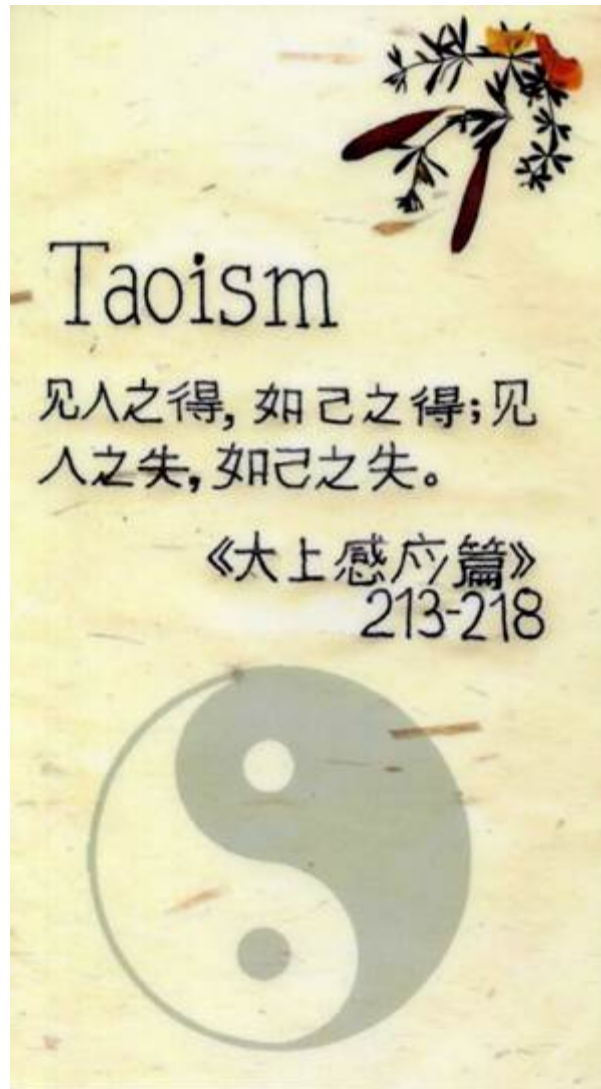
Unitarian principle





## **Meditation exercises featuring the Golden Rule Poster**

1. Introduction to meditations
  2. Connecting word and image
  3. The Golden Rule – A universal principle
  4. The Golden Rule and you
  5. Unity amidst diversity
  6. One family, one world
  7. Exploring the circle
  8. Becoming a global citizen
  9. Interfaith dialogue – A golden conversation
-



Taoist Golden Rule in Chinese language. English translation: “Regard your neighbour’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbour’s loss as your own loss.”

### **3.1 Introduction to meditations**

This section features a number of meditation exercises; each of these focuses on the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster which is rich in visual and symbolic meaning. The purpose of these meditations is to reflect on the meaning of the Golden Rule against the backdrop of the physical, symbolic and visual properties of the poster.

The Golden Rule Poster does not, of course, contain all the world's spiritual, cultural and religious traditions (which is a mathematical impossibility given the countless number of such traditions in our world). Accordingly, the poster is indicative but it is not meant to be exhaustive. It does have an inclusive quality but in a symbolic way. The poster is a symbol in that it points the viewer to something bigger than itself, something beyond itself and to a more inclusive vision of the world.

Similarly, the poster does not contain all of the innumerable versions of the Golden Rule, including secular versions. But it does remind the viewer of the universality of the Golden Rule. In this way, the poster has a capacity to create a consciousness in the viewer that is broader, more pluralistic and more open.

The various meditation exercises featured below are designed for individual use but can be adapted for a group experience. For instructions on how to adapt these meditations for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

As an aid to those who want to facilitate this meditation in a group setting, see **Appendix 1: Comments about the Golden Rule Poster**; this appendix contains comments about the design of the poster by individuals who viewed the poster for the first time. Some of these comments refer to the poster as a symbol for global human community.

#### **NOTE TO TEACHERS AND YOUTH EDUCATORS:**

**Some of the content of the following meditation exercises can easily be adapted to a classroom or youth education program.**

#### **Materials required for meditations in this section:**

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.
- For meditation exercise #3.6: "**One family, one world**", pen/pencil and paper are required.

### **3.2 Connecting word and image**

#### **Materials required**

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

#### **Steps:**

##### **A. Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

## Zoroastrianism

### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

### 2. A golden image

Spend some time gazing at the Golden Rule Poster. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours.

Consider how these various elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image.

### 3. Connecting word and image

Spend some time reflecting on the following question: "In what ways does the poster express in image or symbol what the 13 sacred writings express in words or ideas?"

### 4. Record your thoughts

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you during this meditation exercise. Jot these down in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

### 5. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

**Do not do unto others  
whatever is injurious  
to yourself**

Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29



## 3.3 The Golden Rule: A universal principle?

### Materials required

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

## Steps:

### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection.**

#### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 2. Re-read

Re-read the 13 writings noting similarities and differences in the content and meaning of the various expressions. Do you see one universal principle or theme underlying the 13 writings? If so, what is it? Jot it down on paper. Perhaps you see more than one universal theme or principle.

#### 3. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours. Consider how these various elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image.

#### 4. A universal principle?

If in Step #3 you identified one underlying theme running through the 13 writings, do you see the poster as a symbolic expression of this one universal principle? Explain.

#### 5. Record your thoughts

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you throughout this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

#### 6. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a Group Experience.**

## Sikhism

**I am a stranger to  
no one; and no one  
is a stranger to me.  
Indeed, I am a  
friend to all**

Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1299



## 3.4 The Golden Rule and you

### Materials required

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

### Steps:

#### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### 1. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours. Consider how these various elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster.

#### 2. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 3. Making connections

Turn again to the poster. As you continue to gaze reflectively upon its various visual qualities, what feelings are evoked in you? What images are evoked for you? What do these feelings or images say to you about yourself? About the Golden Rule? About the world we live in?

#### 4. Record your thoughts

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you throughout this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?

## Judaism

**What is hateful to you,  
do not do to your  
neighbour. This is the  
whole Torah; all the rest  
is commentary**

*Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a*



- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
  - As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
  - What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
5. **A group experience**  
For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

### 3.5 Unity amidst diversity

#### Materials required

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

#### Steps:

##### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

##### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

##### 2. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours.

Consider how these various elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster.

##### 3. Making connections

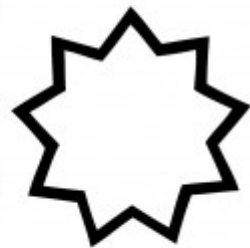
There are those who claim that the Golden Rule assumes and teaches the following principles:

- the unity and interconnectedness of all persons
- universality and wholeness
- unity amidst diversity

#### Baha'i Faith

**Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself**

*Baha'u'llah, Gleanings*



As you continue to study the poster and meditate on the 13 writings, reflect on the following questions:

- Do you see a relationship between any or all of the 13 writings and any or all of the three principles listed above? Explain.
- Do you see any connection between the physical features of the poster and the principles listed above? Explain.

Jot down your thoughts.

#### 4. **Record your thoughts**

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you during this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule? About the world we live in? About universal principles?

#### 5. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

### 3.6 One family, one world

#### Materials required

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.
- Pen/pencil and paper.

#### Steps:

##### A. **Prepare yourself**

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.



## B. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 versions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with the writings.

### Confucianism

#### 1. **One family in an interdependent and harmonious universe**

Some people claim that a key underlying assumption of the Golden Rule is the unity and interconnectedness of all persons. Accordingly, spend some time imagining what it would be like for the human race to be "one family in an interdependent and harmonious universe." Don't worry about being practical. Be as creative and imaginative as you wish. Jot down your thoughts in your journal.

**One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself**

*Confucius, Analects 15.23*



#### 2. **Draw a picture**

Draw an image or a picture of the human race as "one family in an interdependent and harmonious universe." Use whatever shapes, colours and lines you wish. Feel free to have fun with this exercise – let yourself go! Do things you have not done before!**Please note:** Don't worry about being an artist. This exercise is not about artistic talent. It is simply about accessing and expressing your non-verbal inner creativity. A simple stick figure is as adequate as a sophisticated work of art. Resist the temptation to judge your work from an artistic perspective.

#### 3. **Your reactions**

Having created your image, reflect on what it was like for you to create this piece of art. Was it easy? Was it difficult? What feelings were evoked in you? What feelings are present with you now? What did you learn about yourself in this exercise? Jot down your thoughts.

#### 4. **Going deeper**

Spend some time gazing directly at the image you have created. Be present to it. Consider it in all its details. Allow this image to make its way into your heart. Let it impact you. Let it speak to you. Let it do something to you. Jot down in your journal what it is that your image does or says to you. Again, refrain from judging your work from an artistic perspective.

#### 5. **Making connections**

- Spend time gazing upon the Golden Rule Poster. Allow it to speak to you. Study its various visual elements – its overall design, its shapes, colours, lines. Consider how these various elements relate to one another.
- Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image. Note, for example, that the lines of latitude and longitude on the globe

connect the various continents to one another in a single global human community. Observe, on the other hand, that there are no lines dividing the various continents into nations. Note also that the symbols of the various religions are gathered in a circle of circles – the circle is the most universal of religious symbols and represents unity and interconnectedness – in the circle, "everything is connected and everything is one".

- Ask yourself, "In what ways does your own artistic creation give further depth and meaning to the Golden Rule Poster?" "In what ways does the Golden Rule Poster give more depth and meaning to your art creation?" "In what ways do the poster and your own artistic creation deepen your understanding of the Golden Rule?" Jot down your thoughts.

### 1. Record your thoughts

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you throughout this meditation exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider on or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself? About my artistic expression?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
- What did I learn about the world we live in?
- What did I learn about myself as a member of the global human family?

### 2. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## Jainism

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

Mahavira, *Sutrakritanga*



## 3.7 Exploring the circle

## Materials required

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).
- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

## Steps:

### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 versions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 2. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours. Consider how these elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image.

#### 3. Circles

Note that there are 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. Note also that the various symbols representing the 13 spiritual traditions are contained in circles. In fact, some of the symbols are themselves circles or contain partial circles. Observe also that the poster could be conceived as a wheel with numerous spokes going out from the central hub which is the globe (and which has the words "The Golden Rule" superimposed on it).

#### 4. Read and reflect

Spend a few minutes reading and reflecting upon the article ["Understanding the Circle"](#) found in Appendix 2 of this document. The circle is one of the most prevalent symbols in history and is found in every religion and culture. The circle has multiple levels of meaning; it is first of all a symbol of unity and interconnectedness – in the circle "everything is connected and everything is one." This article

## Taoism

Regard your  
neighbor's gain  
as your own gain,  
and your neighbor's  
loss as your own loss

*Lao Tzu, T'ai Shang Kan Ying  
P'ien, 213-218*



examines many of the numerous levels of meaning associated with the circle. Take as much time as you need reflecting on this article.

#### 5. **Making connections**

Having reflected on the meaning of the circle, turn again to the poster and spend time gazing at it. Take note again of the many circles on the poster. How do the circles and the pattern of circles on the poster speak to you about the deeper meaning of the Golden Rule? Jot down your thoughts.

#### 1. **Record your thoughts**

Spend some time gathering any insights, learnings or reflections that came to you during this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this meditation?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself? About the circle?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
- What did I learn about the world we live in?

#### 2. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**. For the plenary session of this experience, the facilitator is encouraged to have the participants sit in a circle.

### 3.8 **Becoming a global citizen**

#### **Materials required**

- Scarboro Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).

## Hinduism

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

Mahabharata 5:1517



- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

## Steps:

### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 versions of the Golden Rule. Take as much as you need with these writings.

#### 2. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the Golden Rule Poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements

of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours. Consider how these various elements relate to one another. Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image, particularly from the perspective of international community and global citizenship.

#### 3. A global human community

On the poster, note that:

- the globe – the earth – our world – resides at the very centre.
- the words, "The Golden Rule", are superimposed on the globe.
- lines (or rays) flow out from the globe to the outer edges of the poster and beyond (or, from another perspective, the lines flow from the outer edges inwards toward the globe).
- on the globe at the centre, the lines of longitude and latitude connect the various continents to one another in one single global human community.
- there are no lines dividing the various continents into nations.
- the poster can be conceived as a wheel with numerous spokes going out from the central hub which is the globe.
- the symbols of the various religions are gathered in a circle of circles – the circle is the most universal of religious symbols and represents unity and interconnectedness – in the circle, "everything is connected and everything is one".

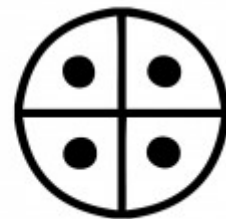
#### 4. Read and reflect

Spend a few minutes reading and reflecting on the article entitled ["The](#)

## Native Spirituality

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

Chief Dan George



[Golden Rule and the Global Ethic](#)" The Global Ethic is an international effort to develop a set of universal moral principles that calls upon the wisdom of the world's many cultures, religions and secular philosophies. Because the Golden Rule is found in so many religions and cultures, it is a key moral ingredient in the development of a Global Ethic. Take as much time as you need reflecting on this article.

## Buddhism

### 1. Making connections

Turn again to the Golden Rule poster. As you continue to gaze upon the poster image, what connections can you make between the Global Ethic, the Golden Rule and the design of the poster? Does the poster inspire or challenge you to become a truly global citizen? Jot down your thoughts.

### 2. Record your thoughts

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you during this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this reflection?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
- What did I learn about the world we live in? About the Global Ethic? About global citizenship?

### 3. A group experience

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**.

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

*The Buddha, Udana-Varga 5.18*



## 3.9 Interfaith dialogue – A golden conversation

### Materials required

- Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster. To view or order poster, [click here](#).

- A listing of the 13 expressions of the Golden Rule. To access this listing, [click here](#). To avoid printing all five available languages, select only the language you need.

## Steps:

### A. Prepare yourself

Prepare yourself for meditation by any means that you find to be effective. You may want to consider **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**.

#### 1. The Golden Rule

In a slow and reflective fashion, read the 13 versions of the Golden Rule. Take as much time as you need with these writings.

#### 2. A golden image

Spend time gazing upon the Golden Rule Poster as an image. Allow it to speak to you. Study the visual elements of the poster – its overall design, its various shapes, lines, colours. Consider how these various elements relate to one another.

#### 3. Interfaith cooperation

Reflect on the symbolic meaning of the poster image, particularly from the perspective of the growing levels of interfaith cooperation around the world. As a result of broad-based immigration patterns, more and more regions of the world are becoming environments of multi-culture and multi-faith; our shrinking global village is becoming a multi-religious society in which we are witnessing the emergence of a global interfaith consciousness. Research demonstrates that the religions of the world are now cooperating on every conceivable issue. *Keep in mind also that an expression of the Golden Rule can be found in virtually all of the world's religions. Indeed, the Golden Rule is considered to be a key point of agreement – and thus a key focus of dialogue – among the world's many faiths.* To you, does the poster convey a message of global interfaith cooperation? Explain.

#### 4. A global community

On the poster, note that:

- the globe – the earth – our world – resides at the very centre.
- the words, "The Golden Rule", are superimposed on the globe.
- lines (or rays) flow out from the globe to the outer edges of the poster and beyond (or, from another perspective, the lines flow from the outer edges inwards toward the globe).

## Christianity

**In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets**

*Jesus, Matthew 7:12*



- on the globe at the centre, the lines of longitude and latitude connect the various continents to one another in one single global human community.
- there are no lines dividing the various continents into nations.
- the poster can be conceived as a wheel with numerous spokes going out from the central hub, which is the globe.
- the symbols of the various religions are gathered in a circle of circles – the circle is the most universal of religious symbols and represents unity and interconnectedness – in the circle, "everything is connected and everything is one."

### 1. **Making connections**

As you continue to gaze upon the poster image, what connections can you make between the Golden Rule, the design of the poster and the growing international phenomenon of interfaith dialogue? Does the poster inspire or challenge you to become more committed to interfaith dialogue? Jot down your thoughts.

### 2. **Record your thoughts**

Spend some time gathering any insights or reflections that came to you during this exercise. Jot down your thoughts in a journal or on paper. To deepen your reflection, consider one or more of the following questions:

- What was it like for me to do this reflection?
- At what points during this meditation was I moved? Inspired? Challenged?
- What questions or issues have been raised for me?
- What new insights have I gained?
- What did I learn about myself?
- As a result of this meditation, what aspect of my life might I consider changing?
- As a result of this meditation, I feel moved to.....
- What did I learn about the Golden Rule?
- What did I learn about the world we live in?
- What did I learn about the possibilities for interfaith dialogue in my community and around the world?

### 3. **A group experience**

For instructions on how to adapt this meditation for a group experience, see **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience.**

## Islam

**Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself**

The Prophet Muhammad, *Hadith*





## Appendices

- Appendix 1: Comments about the Golden Rule Poster
  - Appendix 2: Understanding the circle
  - Appendix 3: Application to a group experience
  - Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection
- 

### Appendix 1: Comments about the Golden Rule Poster

Many people who view the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster are struck by its theme of unity and more specifically the theme of unity within the international human community. Here follows some written comments from people about the design of the poster. These comments may be very useful to any facilitator who wants to adapt some of the meditation exercises for a group reflection experience:

- "The poster has lots of circles. Not only that – on the poster there is a circle of circles. The circle is a universal symbol."
- "I find the poster to be very powerful – but it's not an overwhelming or imposed type of power. I think that's because the colours on the poster are soft and pastel. For me these soft colours represent the gentle and compassionate treatment that the peoples of the world should demonstrate to one another."
- "For me the lines on the poster say a lot. I see the lines that go out from the globe at the centre 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/latitude lines on the globe as performing the role of connecting the various continents to other continents in a single global community. Accordingly, all countries in the world must of necessity cooperate with international rules – e.g. the Geneva conventions, the International Court, resolutions of the United Nations."
- "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."
- "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."
- "Early this morning, I passed through the airport here in Munich, Germany. When I saw your beautiful poster, I was so deeply touched in my soul that I immediately looked up your homepage on the Internet."

## Appendix 2: Understanding the circle

The circle is the most universal of religious symbols. In fact, it is found in virtually every religion and culture across history. The world's religious traditions have long incorporated the circle into their symbolism, art, architecture and ceremonies. The circle is a very effective medium for promoting spiritual reflection, meditative insight and creative expression.

We encounter this geometric form in so many aspects of our daily lives. Seasons and calendars are rooted in the motions of two lighted circles in the heavens – the sun and the moon. On earth, at least in flat places, the horizon is experienced as a circle.

The circle has multiple levels of meaning. It is first of all a symbol of unity and interconnectedness – in the circle "everything is connected and everything is one."

Because all points in the circle are equidistant from the centre of the circle and because there is no point on the circle that is more important than any other point, the circle has no hierarchy and is thus a symbol of equality.

In the circle, "what goes around comes around." Because everything in the circle is connected to everything else in the circle in a pattern of unity, the circle is also a symbol for reciprocity, mutuality and interdependence.

Human beings have long recognized the circle as a powerful, healing agent and have gathered in circles for prayer, worship, ritual and celebration. The noted Swiss psychologist, Carl Jung, referred to the circle as an "archetype of wholeness." In the English language, the words "wholeness", "holiness", "healing" and "health" have the same etymological root (which means "complete" or "whole"). The circle thus functions as a symbol for wholeness, holiness and health.

The circle is also a symbol for time, eternity, balance, community, consecrated space and the cycle of birth and death.

The wheel is a common symbol in religious and cultural traditions – the wheel of time, the wheel of fate, and so on. The wheel of dharma in Buddhism is the eightfold path symbolized by an eight-spoke wheel, a prevalent symbol of the Buddhist tradition.

"Mandala" is a Sanskrit word meaning "circle". In the Hindu and Buddhist traditions, mandalas are circles symbolically designed to represent the cosmic order. Mandalas

### Secularism

**Always act so as to elicit  
the best in others, and  
thereby yourself.**

Ethical Culture Movement (Humanist)



belong to most spiritual and symbolic traditions as universal images of the human longing to achieve order within diversity and integration within creation. The rose windows of the Gothic cathedrals, the Celtic stone circles, the yin-yang symbol, the Navajo sand paintings, the Philippine Christmas Star, labyrinths, mazes, circle dances, wreaths, halos, and dream catchers are all mandalas that help individuals define themselves within a wider world of meaning and value.

The mandala also fits the human experience of the natural world. The bloom of a flower, the circle of the horizon, the dome of the sky, the zodiacal circle, and the cycle of the seasons have long inspired humans to reflect upon their place in the story of the universe.

The ancient Greek philosopher, Empedocles (490-430 BCE), wrote: "The nature of God is a circle of which the center is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere".

### **The circle in indigenous cultures**

The circle is a vital and central symbol in indigenous cultures around the world. It pervades most aspects of Native American thought and life because it represents a vital connection between the individual and creation. In indigenous cultures, the circle also represents unity, strength, protection, infinity, spirituality and the sacred. This explains why, among Native Peoples, the circle is so prevalent in spiritual practice, art, architecture, ceremony and social interaction.

Black Elk (1863-1950), a Native American elder (Oglala Sioux), was a visionary and a shamanic healer. His teachings offer an eloquent and profound vision of the unity of all creation. Here are two statements that he has made about the circle:

"Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle.  
The sky is round, and I have heard that the earth is round – and so are all the stars.  
The wind in its greatest power whirls.  
Birds build their nests in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours.  
The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle.  
The moon does the same and both are round.  
Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing  
and always come back again to where they were.  
The life of a person is a circle from childhood to childhood.  
And so it is in everything where power moves."

\*\*\*\*\*

"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 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."

Native American peoples conduct many of their activities in a circle. They remind us that in the sacred circle, everyone is equal. Further to this, Native spirituality teaches that when we sit together in a circle as equals, we have occasion to learn the way of humility. Many of the world's religious traditions see the achievement of humility as a central goal of the spiritual journey.

### **Authority resides in the circle**

In modern times, there is a profound renaissance of interest in the circle. And this includes efforts to implement the circle as a method of social organization in numerous realms – e.g. healing, teaching, meditation/worship, dialogue, restorative justice, group reflection, group process, listening, the conduct of meetings and the sentencing of criminal offenders.

Accordingly, authority resides in the circle – many people are finding the circle to be a welcome alternative to hierarchical, pyramidal or patriarchal models of authority.

*Compiled by Paul McKenna and J.W. Windland.*

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## **Appendix 3: Application to a group experience**

With the exception of Meditation #2.13, the various meditation options in this document are designed for individual use. But these reflections can also be adapted for a group experience. Here are some guidelines for any facilitator who wants to organize a group reflection:

1. Under the guidance of the facilitator, individuals work privately and in silence, making their way through the various steps of the given meditation. These steps are already outlined in each of the meditation exercises in this document.
2. After completing the last step in the individual meditation process, participants work in pairs or groups of three, sharing their experience of and learnings from this exercise. Participants are encouraged to share as much as they feel comfortable sharing.

### **Unitarianism**

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

Unitarian principle



3. Participants can also share their written reflections with one another, although the right to privacy in this regard must be emphasized and respected.
4. Next, some of these learnings can be shared and discussed in a plenary session that includes all participants. During the plenary process, it may be helpful to record the learnings on chart paper and note emerging themes.
5. The facilitator is responsible for providing the required materials and for creating and managing the schedule. The facilitator is free to make adaptations to the activity schedule suggested here.

## **Appendix 4: Tips for preparing for meditation and reflection**

The following tips may help you prepare for the various meditation exercises outlined in this document:

- Choose an appropriate time for your meditation/reflection—a time when you will not be disturbed by other persons, the phone, the TV, and so on.
- Unplug your house phone and turn off your cell phone 10 minutes before your meditation. Do not reactivate your phones until a period of 10 minutes has elapsed after the meditation/reflection.
- It is likely that your meditation will be enhanced if, just prior to your meditation/reflection, you avoid distracting activities e.g. watching television.
- For your meditation, find a suitable place in your home or a favourite locale in nature.
- Take time to slow down your mind, your emotions and your body. You may want to do some deep breathing exercises, yoga or another form of physical movement. Or you may want to simply sit in stillness.
- Realize that harmony of body and spirit is important. Adopt a body stance that is peaceful, balanced, relaxed and alert. Try to keep your back as straight as possible
- You may want to light a candle and close the curtains in order to create a meditative atmosphere.
- Open your heart and mind. As a final preparatory gesture, you may want to centre yourself by:
  - maintaining silence
  - repeating a mantra
  - asking for spiritual help
  - making a prayer of offering or dedication
  - using any appropriate preparatory practice in your faith tradition
  - using any preparatory practice that works for you

## About the authors

### Five writers collaborated in the compilation of these meditation exercises:

**Paul McKenna**, MA, teaches, writes and consults in the fields of world religions and interfaith dialogue. Paul collaborated with a number of people in creating the Scarborough Missions Golden Rule Poster. Currently he functions as the Interfaith Coordinator for Scarborough Missions.

**Leslie Gabriel Mezei** is an interfaith minister who regularly conducts *The Universal Worship Service*. A peace promoter and a multi-faith educator, Leslie has made a major contribution to interfaith networking in the Greater Toronto Area.

**Charles Purdy** has committed his life to community service, peace-making and global justice. For the past eight years he has been involved with the work of Non-governmental Organizations at the United Nations. Currently he is involved in an effort to restore peace to Sri Lanka.

**Kathy VanLoon** is a graphic artist and the editor of *Scarboro Missions* magazine. Kathy collaborated with a number of artists in designing the Golden Rule Poster.

**David Warren SFM**, is a priest member of Scarborough Missions. David worked for a number of years in the Philippines. In recent years he has done academic studies in Islam, the Arabic language and inter-religious dialogue. He is committed to building bridges between Christians and Muslims.

*The quality of this document is also the result of consultation with a number of individuals, each of whom is committed to inter-racial, intercultural and inter-religious cooperation. These persons are:*

Chris Atkinson  
Carole Bayley  
Terry Gallagher SFM  
Helene Ijaz  
Susan Keays  
Patricia O'Connor  
Mary Olenick  
Barbara McDowall  
Greg McKenna  
Tony Muhitch  
Kathy Murtha  
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DeeAnn Sagar

Roy Sakaguchi  
Michael Way Skinner  
John Sullivan  
Michael Traher SFM  
Sharon Willan  
J.W. Windland

The methodology of this document has also been influenced by the work of **Rev. John English, SJ** (1924-2004) of Canada. English is recognized for his ability to adapt spiritual methodologies for group process.

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

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