



GOLDEN RULE PROJECT

Communication Chaos



Line of Inquiry: What does it feel like when people are not practicing The Golden Rule? How do we communicate when others don't want to listen? How do we use The Golden Rule to communicate in chaotic situations?

Age Range: 4th-12th grade (Elementary-Adult)

Group Size: 20+

Activity Time: 20-45 minutes (with reflection time)

Set-Up Time: 1 minute

Materials: 20-40 feet tape or Golden Rule Ribbon (depending on group size) chalk can also be used if playing outdoors on blacktop, a timer/stopwatch/ or clock. A poster of the variations of The Golden Rule is helpful to have in sight (goldenruleproject.org/poster).

Activity Objective: To stop the opposing team from delivering their message.

Utah Core Standards: Language Arts: Speaking and Listening: For Grades K-12 these lessons support Utah Core Standards 1-4. In Kindergarten and 1st grade, Standards 5 and 6 are also supported.

Language Arts: Writing: For Grades K-5 the reflection topics of these lessons can be used to support Utah Core Standards 1-4,7&10 (excluding Standard 1 in Kindergarten and Standards 4 &10 which begin in 3rd Grade). For Grades 6th -12th the reflection portion of these lessons can be used to support Utah Core Standards 1,2,4&10.

These are great topics for group discussions to practice Utah Core Standards in Speaking and Listening. You can also use some of these topics as writing prompts to support Utah Core Standards in Writing; younger grades can be encouraged to draw pictures to express ideas

Social Studies: (Citizenship) Demonstrate positive relationships through play and friendship, demonstrate respect for each individual and appropriate social skills necessary for working in a group, modeling appropriate group behavior and expressing feelings in appropriate ways.

Skills Developed: Listening, Speaking, Processing, Problem Solving, Creativity, Planning, Fun.



Story Card: Darwin, [from the story card collection](#). Quote: “In the long history of humankind (and animalkind too), those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed.” –Charles Darwin The quote as well as the entire story card (pages 6 - 7) can be included during this lesson.

Directions for Set Up:

1. Write a few (3-5) messages down in advance, each on a separate piece of paper. Do not let your students see the messages. Suggestions for messages:
 - “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less.”(C.S. Lewis)
 - “All we are saying is give peace a chance.” (John Lennon)
 - Walk a mile in another man’s shoes before you pass judgement.
 - The quieter you become, the more you hear.
 - (Other quotes or Golden Rule phrases work great for this activity. For more Golden Rule formulations visit: goldenruleproject.org/formulations)
2. Use tape, ribbon, or chalk (if playing outdoors) to make two parallel lines, each 10 feet long (or more depending on your groups size) and at least 25 feet apart (or more for groups larger than 50-100).
3. Separate your large group into 3 parts as equally as possible. To create a sense of “team” and collaboration, consider giving each group a few moments to come up with their own team names. For describing purposes, for now we will call them Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3. Next, assign roles to each group: Group 1 = The Message Speakers/Broadcasters, Group 2 = The Message Listeners/ Receivers, while Group 3 will take on the responsibility of being the “Chaos Creators” or “Message Blockers”.

Deliver the Challenge:

1. Each group must stand in their own area. Assign each group an area so that the “Message Speakers” and the “Message Receivers” are on opposite lines (furthest apart) with the Message Blockers in the area between the two lines. For example:

Group 1
“Message Speakers”

Group 3
“Message Blockers”

Group 2
“Message Receivers”

2. Read the Storyline: “I am about to give Group 1 (The Speakers) a very important, secret message. It is their mission to successfully transmit that message to Group 2 (The Receivers) in 1 minute or less. It is Group 2’s mission to successfully receive the message and be able to repeat it back exactly at the end of the 1 minute. Group 3 (The Blockers) it is your mission is to stop the message from being sent to Group 2 (The Receivers). If at the end of 1 minute, Group 2 (The Receivers) is not able to repeat the exact message that was given to Group 1(The Speakers), you have succeeded. You must follow all the rules during this challenge.”

Present the Rules:

1. Each group member must stay in the area that was assigned to them.
2. Writing is not allowed. You can only use your voice to communicate, or block communication.
3. Everyone must keep their feet on the ground (no jumping or climbing on objects or others).
4. When the minute is over, everyone must be silent and Group 2 (The Receivers) will be asked to repeat the message they heard.

Safety Lesson: As long as everyone follows the rules, there should be no safety concerns.

Notes:

1. Once you have explained the rules and everyone is clear on how to play the game, give Group 1 their secret message and allow them 1 minute to plan before starting the timer and beginning the round. At the end of 1 minute, end the round and determine which group was successful.
2. Shouting is likely to occur. This activity can get very loud as students get more and more excited. It is recommended that you play outside or in a gym/large area away from other classes you don’t want to disturb.
3. Because this activity is meant to be chaotic, you will want to establish a signal to get everyone’s attention and bring them to silence at the end of each round. Younger groups may need to practice listening for the signal and becoming silent before you begin the actual game. For example, you might say “TIME!” or blow a whistle, or ring a bell when the minute is up. Be sure everyone understands in advance what the signal is to avoid confusion.
4. After the first round, have groups switch places and start again so that each group has the opportunity to experience each role. Consequently, you will need to plan for at least three rounds so that every group gets to practice being “The Message Speakers,” “The Message Receivers,” and “The Message Blockers.”

5. Do not be surprised to see “Message Blockers” waving their arms or making strange noises. You might also notice that successful “Message Speakers” tend to plan well and yell their message all together as one booming group.

Reflection Topics:

These are great topics for group discussions to practice Utah Core Standards in Speaking and Listening. You can also use some of these ideas as writing prompts to support Utah Core Standards in Writing; younger grades can be encouraged to draw pictures to express ideas.

1. What did it feel like when you were trying to communicate and others were getting in your way? Does this ever happen in real life? Who can think of some examples? What things did you try that helped you succeed despite the attempts of others to block your message? Can you use those same ideas in real life? How? Do you think the “message blockers” were practicing The Golden Rule in this activity? In what ways were they practicing? How were they not applying The Golden Rule? What happens when some people are practicing The Golden Rule and others are not? Can we still be successful? How?
2. What did it feel like trying to stop someone from sending a message? Do we ever do this in real life on accident or on purpose? How? Why do you think people might do this in real life? What happens when others stop you from communicating? What can you do? Can stopping a message ever be a good thing? Why/Why not?
3. How did it feel trying to receive a message in the middle of so much chaos? Who can think of some examples of a time when you were not able to understand something because of others or because of too much noise? What things did you try in this activity that helped you to understand despite all the noise? Can you use the same ideas in other situations?

Adaptations: Younger students will likely need shorter, or more simple messages to Speak and Receive. To make this challenge harder, try giving longer quotes/messages for the Speakers to send and Listeners to receive.

Additional Reflections:

Here are some extended reflections that relate directly to the assembly “Attention, Magic, and The Golden Rule.” If your class has had the opportunity to view the performance, the following discussion will help students make deeper connections with their recent viewing experience. These are great topics for group discussions to practice Utah Core Standards in Speaking and Listening. You can also use some of these topics as writing prompts to support Utah Core Standards in Writing; younger grades can be encouraged to draw pictures to express ideas.

1. Who do you think the “bullies” were in this activity? Have you ever heard the expression, “don’t burst my bubble?” What do you think that means? What does it feel like when someone “bursts your bubble or “pops your balloon?” Were the bullies able to “pop your balloon” in this challenge? Why/Why not? What did you notice about the balloon that

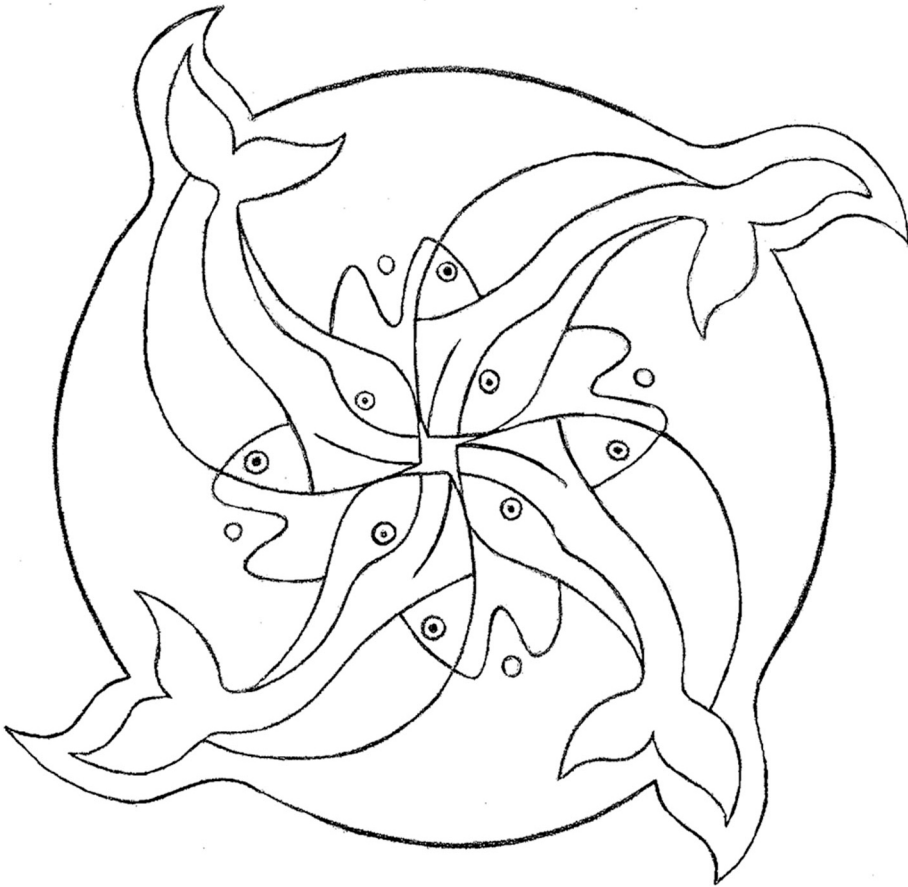
Steffan pops in the magic show? Why did it pop? When he applied The Golden Rule and tried to pop the balloon, what happened? (In the magic show, Steffan uses an eighteen inch steel needle to pop a balloon and then penetrates through another without popping it. The students see what bullies do when the balloon bursts, and then they see what can happen when we apply the universal principle of the Golden Rule). Do you think this is true? How did we use the Golden Rule to be successful in this challenge?

2. Did people get excited in this activity when trying to share their message? Were people having fun? Were the “bullies” able to “steal” that fun or excitement? Why/Why not? How important do you think it is to have fun and excitement in your life? Can others ever steal that? What happens if you let them? What can you do to “keep your bubble full of fun and excitement”? Who can think of some examples?

Suggestion: These topics can be discussed or can be used as writing prompts in a language arts class/social studies lesson and can extend into current world affairs as an exploration. For an extended lesson, ask older students to find a current news article of a conflict between people/nations/environment. Ask them to write a continuation to that article by imagining that both parties had to apply The Golden Rule to solve their problem. How was the situation resolved? Students can present to the class their news article and their creative response using The Golden Rule to find resolution and balance.

Acknowledgements: We have found this lesson described in Duct Tape Teambuilding by Tom Heck, 2009 who gives credit to Earl Davis of Moonshadow Learning Services for teaching him this game. www.moonshadow.net

For more activities and lessons utilizing the Golden Rule, see GoldenRuleProject.org.



“In the long history of humankind
(and animal kind too) those who learned to collaborate
and improvise most effectively have prevailed.”

Charles Darwin

Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) was an English naturalist and geologist best known for his contributions to evolutionary theory. When Charles was a boy he loved nature. He loved exploring the country side around his house and often went for long walks.

He was also a big collector, stuffing his pockets with creepy crawlies, stones and bits of plants. When Charles got older, his interest of nature and species didn't stop. He proposed that all species of life have descended over time from common ancestors and established natural selection (the thought that different individuals might survive better than others because they are a little bit bigger or better at something) as the basic mechanism of evolution. Natural selection has since become the unifying theory of the life sciences to explain the diversity of life. Charles Darwin, because of his work, has been described as one of the most influential figures in human history.