

Scripts for Rotary information “minutes” to be presented at club meetings during the month of October, 2005

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND ETHICS LITERACY

*Here is what we recommend that your club do:*

- 1. At each weekly meeting of the club devote a couple of minutes to a Rotary Information Talk on one aspect of the October literacy theme of the month.*
- 2. Cover the four topics highlighted in the scripts below. Use the scripts if you wish. Or develop your own improved version. There is plenty of room for improvement.*
- 3. Consider asking members of your vocational service committee to make the presentations. After all, October is VOCATIONAL SERVICE MONTH and our theme- character and ethics- is at the heart of Rotary’s vocational service mission, image and actions.*

**THE SCRIPTS FOLLOW.**

### **First Week’s Topic: Character Development and the Object of Rotary**

1. The development of citizens of good character is one of society’s greatest challenges. Failure results in criminals, terrorists, corrupt government officials, unethical business leaders, irresponsible parents, and far too many lawsuits.
2. Society depends on families, schools and churches to get the job done.
3. Of the many ways in which Rotarians can assist in this effort, none is more valuable than spreading the message of the Object of Rotary.
4. The Object is both a mission statement for Rotarians and a description of good character that is consistent with all of the world’s religions.
5. The Object of Rotary contains two special components that are frequently overlooked by other statements of ideal character. The two are: (1) the emphasis on dignifying one’s occupation as an opportunity to serve society and (2) the emphasis on promoting international understanding, good will and peace as another hallmark of good character. How different our world would be if everyone’s self image contained those two ideals.
6. Rotary’s two mottos are directly related to the vision of the Object of Rotary.
7. The primary motto –SERVICE ABOVE SELF – tells us WHAT to do in all kinds of situations.
8. The secondary motto – THEY PROFIT MOST WHO SERVE THE BEST – tells us WHY one should adopt the Object of Rotary as the foundation of one’s character.

9. Once we realize that the Object of Rotary is a character ideal, it becomes clear that clubs can promote character literacy by creating awareness of the Object.
10. And so the question for members of this club is, “ Are we doing enough to create awareness of the Object of Rotary and the two related mottos – in our club, in our community, in our vocations, and in our international contacts?”
11. If you have an idea of how we might do a better job, share it with the club.

### **Second Week’s Topic: Ethics and The Four-Way Test**

1. Last week we highlighted Rotary’s role in promoting character development literacy.
2. This week we turn to Rotary’s opportunity to be of service in promoting ethics literacy.
3. Good character certainly raises a person’s ethical batting average. But ethical challenges are unrelenting in all walks of life and almost everyone experiences ethical letdowns from time to time.
4. John Maxwell explains how this happens in his recent book *Ethics 101*. From time to time basically good persons will give in to unethical behavior because of such situational factors as job pressures, greed, newly acquired positions of power, pride or misplaced priorities.
5. What individuals need when confronting daily ethical challenges is a simple set of guidelines that can be applied on the spot.
6. All of the world’s religions have developed such ethical guidelines to help individuals do better. Some version of The Golden Rule is found in all of the world’s major religions.
7. But The Golden Rule is quite general and most people can use additional guidelines.
8. Rotary’s Four-Way Test is such a guideline --- one that has proven useful in all countries where Rotary is present.
9. And awareness of the usefulness of the Four-Way Test poses this question to our club ----- Are we doing enough to promote ethics literacy by creating awareness of The Four-Way Test? In our club? In our community? In our vocations?
10. If you have an idea which might help our club do a better job, share it with the club.

### **Third Week's Topic: Ethics and the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions.**

1. Last week we reminded ourselves of our responsibility to create awareness and use of The Four-Way Test.
2. This week's topic is another official Rotary statement on ethics – the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions – Copies are available at each table in this room.
3. The Declaration is a fairly new official document. During the 1987-88 Rotary year President Charles Keller appointed a Vocational Service Committee for the first time in fifty years. Bill Sergeant chaired that committee. The committee decided that it would be useful to produce a Rotary ethics statement to supplement the Four-Way Test. So the group drafted a Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions. That document was adopted by the 1989 Council on Legislation.
4. We don't have time to read all eight parts of the Declaration. So I'm going to ask each of you to take one of the copies on your table and find time to thoughtfully read through the Declaration at a time of your choosing.
5. We do have time to raise the obvious question ----- Is our club doing enough to create awareness of the Declaration of Rotarians in Businesses and Professions? In the club? In our vocations? In the community?
6. If you have an idea which might help our club do a better job, share it with the club.

### **Fourth Week's Topic: Rotary's Role as Part of the Community's Character Development and Ethics Literacy Team,**

1. For the past three weeks we have been highlighting Rotary's special competence with respect to literacy in the realms of character development and ethics. We've seen that Rotary really does have something special to contribute. And we've raised the question of whether or not our club is contributing as much as we should.
2. Whatever we do, Rotary will only be part of a larger effort made by parents, churches, schools, youth organizations such as scouting, and other entities.
3. Therefore, we need to know what these other players are doing and how Rotary clubs can work with them.
4. Ideally there would exist a community-wide organization which enabled all of us involved in ethics and character literacy to communicate with one another.
5. Unfortunately such an organization does not exist in our community. So we have to rely on individual club members to identify opportunities to partner with other character building organizations.
6. Do you know of such an opportunity? If so, share that knowledge with the club.
7. Better yet, volunteer to organize a club project to seize that opportunity.