

Interfaith leaflet 2010

Restorative Justice Week 2010;  
“Reflexions Past, Present and Future”

November 14th to 21st, 2010.

Restorative Justice Week creates an opportunity to share ideas between equals and to collaborate together to promote justice. This year, the theme is “Reflexions Past, Present and Future”

❖ Past

*“{...} Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock. Help me seek pure thoughts and act with the intention of helping others {...}”*  
– *Great Spirit Prayer , Native Spirituality*

Discussing about our past experiences is an important way to help each other grow. It allows us to learn from our mistakes and develop a better understanding of others and ourselves. Sometimes, people compare religions, faiths, traditions by pointing out their differences. However, when it comes to understanding one another it is our common beliefs and experiences of the Sacred that can allow us to establish better relationships between us, and shared understandings about justice.

*“Judaism, Islam and Christianity all believe that human beings are the highest creatures on earth. God created us full of mystery, which means we have potential for continuous growth.”<sup>1</sup>*

We have the capacity to help each other grow and share knowledge and wisdom; this learning will allow us to build tolerance, understanding and better relations, so future generations will embrace inclusion, compassion and justice more fully.

*“When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” - An old Buddhist proverb*

❖ Present

We have the time to ask one another important questions:

“Where are we now with respect to justice in our communities?”

What resources are available to our community?

Who are the people in need of these resources?

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Mojzes & Leonard Swidler. (2002). *Common elements of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, Journal of Ecumenical Studies.

Are we truly responding to their needs in ways that are effective, compassionate, and prudent?"

Talking about existing services and organizations helps us improve outcomes or create better ways to respond to those in need. Now is the time to stop, listen, and learn from victims of crime to know how to respond to their physical, emotional, and pastoral needs and most importantly, to acknowledge and understand their experiences. This can help us understand our own experiences of victimisation and harm-doing.

When we share about and understand different approaches to justice, and careful interventions, we can establish safe and effective ways of meeting victims' needs, and preventing future offences, resulting in safer and more satisfying communities.

This year is about acknowledging and celebrating the impacts and achievements of restorative justice in the past and considering where we are today. Of course, we also want to reflect on where we are striving to go in the future.

*Hinduism teaches to be selfless by thinking of others<sup>2</sup>. It is a principle that can be found in most religions. A principle that can have the power to change the way we treat those around us.*

#### ❖ Future

Where do we imagine ourselves as communities of faith responding to justice issues five or ten years from now? The wisdom of various traditions can be fruitful and helpful in establishing a solid foundation for shared justice interventions. Our communities can support one another to become communities of compassion and of action. We hope we will not let another 5 or 10 years pass us by before we reach out to our brothers and sisters who are silently yearning for help!

Can we, during this year of reflection, appreciate the value of our faith traditions and to apply their principles to mobilise our faith communities to meet victims' needs for care, concern, and safety?

By respecting and learning from one another's faiths and traditions, ideas can materialize into action. By taking the time to truly know others and gain greater appreciation and understanding, we can learn to enrich the way we respond to those in need.

Community participation is key in repairing broken relationships between individuals. Its role in supporting those involved is crucial in obtaining true justice.

*"Judaism stresses personal responsibility in contributing to the health of our communities, in producing a society wherein everyone treats others with respect; where good will and acts of kindness spread easily in all directions."*

– Jack Botwinik – from "Healing Oneself and Creating Community"

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<sup>2</sup> <http://vedicpooja.blogspot.com/>

Prepared for Restorative Justice Week 2010 by members of the Church Council on Justice and Corrections (CCJC) in collaboration with Correctional Service Canada (CSC).

Share your understanding of justice through your faith perspective or tradition and how you see it can teach us to respond to human needs by emailing CCJC at [mcarrara@ccjc.ca](mailto:mcarrara@ccjc.ca) or CSC at [ChaplaincyG@csc-scc.gc.ca](mailto:ChaplaincyG@csc-scc.gc.ca)

For further information on “Reflexions, past, present, future” restorative justice materials and resources, go to [www.ccjc.ca/restorative\\_justice.html](http://www.ccjc.ca/restorative_justice.html) or [www.csc-scc.gc.ca](http://www.csc-scc.gc.ca)