



Program Overview

Administrator/Director Information Section	Program Summary Evaluation Tips on how to handle Sensitive Situations Parent Program Letter and Resource Information Child Abuse/Neglect Information
Each Grade's Section Includes	Thorough Leader Guidelines and Instructions Clearly stated Philosophy, Goals, and Objectives Handouts needed for Prayers, Lessons, and Activities Extensive Vocabulary List
Kindergarten through Grade 2	What is the Circle of Grace? The Stoplight: Feelings, Touch, and Secrets, Safety Plan (First and Second Grade build on the Kindergarten material reinforcing the above important concepts.)
Grade 3	What is the Circle of Grace Boundaries and the Limits of our Circle of Grace Action Plan
Grade 4	Internet Safety and our Circle of Grace
Grade 5	Understanding the Influence of the Media on our Circle of Grace
Grade 6	Circle of Grace: Pieces of the Puzzle Safe Relationships: Putting the Puzzle Together Boundaries: Every Piece Has it's Border Safety PLAAN: When Something does not Fit
Grade 7	Saying No to Disrespect: Honoring Everyone's Circle of Grace
Grade 8	How to be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture
Grade 9	" A Cloud of Witnesses" Mary and Joseph who said Yes to God What to do when Your Circle is Broken, Action PLAAN
Grade 10	Recognizing and Responding to Boundary Violations
Grade 11	Boundaries and Emotional Grooming
Grade 12	Real Love vs. Counterfeit Love

Sample Discussions and Activities from the Circle of Grace Curriculum

Kindergarten through grade 2 lessons introduce and reinforce the material with varied activities which are developmentally appropriate. The curriculum was reviewed by a school psychologist who agreed that these crucial years needed comprehensive lessons with some repetition. All three grades have the Stoplight analogy to help them identify green, yellow and red situations, feelings attached to these situations and when to talk to a trusted adult.

This **Second Grade** discussion and activity helps children identify what belongs in and outside their Circle of Grace:

Discussion

1. Now, let's remember why it is important that we know about our Circle of Grace.
2. *Ask the children the following review questions:*
 - Does Jesus always love us? *(Yes)*
 - Is Jesus always with us? *(Yes)*
 - If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. What do we call that special, holy place? *(Our Circle of Grace – prompt with Circle of Grace movement if needed).*
 - This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us.
 - If we can remember that we are in a Circle of Grace, with God and surrounded by God's love, what will that help us remember to do? *(Respect ourselves and others)*
3. *Write terms "Holy", "Holy Spirit", "Respect", and "Trust" on the board and define them.*

Activity – Circle of Grace Cards

These cards can be made of cardstock with pictures or simple drawings of the following or similar objects: rosary, heart, cigarette, gun, people fighting, people screaming at each other, clenched fist, little boy and mom holding hands, puppy dog growling and showing his teeth, beautiful flower, trash, open hand reaching.

(Provide enough sets of Circle of Grace Cards for each small group. Sample pictures are located at the end of the lessons.)

1. *Have the children sit together in groups of 3 (or 4).*
2. *Give each group a set of cards and a copy of the Circle of Grace logo.*
3. *Have children take turns drawing a card from the top of the pile and decide if this is something he or she would welcome in their Circle of Grace or something he or she would like to keep far out side his or her Circle of Grace. If the card shows something loving and kind they should put it in the Circle of Grace Logo (begin or continue a pile). If it shows something scary, mean, or unhealthy, he or she should put it outside the Circle of Grace logo (begins or continue a pile). If the child is not sure, the child should put the card outside the pile until he or she asks for help from the leader (Trusted Adult).*

In **Third Grade** children learn about being treasured by God, boundaries, and how to seek help from a trusted adult. Below is one of the discussions and activities which focuses on helping children understand that as Children of God we are treasured and filled with grace.

Lesson Development

Today we are going to discuss how God treasures all of us by giving each of us a Circle of Grace.

- Show students pictures or examples of precious items that, because they are so special, receive extra care.

Possibilities might include:

- The American Flag
- A special set of china dishes that are a family heirloom
- Ask the children for other examples

Make a point that everything that is considered extra special, rare, or valuable is given extra care and protection.

- The final and MOST IMPORTANT example of care given to precious items are the special measures taken to protect and care for...

- The Bible:
 - We handle Sacred Scripture with the ultimate reverence and respect.
 - We even build a special building, the Church, where the Holy Scripture is taught and contemplated. There are many special behaviors for when we celebrate and pray in Church.
 - Ask students for examples of special behaviors we use in church to show respect.
 - Folding hands
 - Bowing Heads
 - Kneeling
 - Reverent silence

Activity – Precious Gift-Wrapped Box

(Use a box with a lid that you can wrap. Inside the box is a mirror of some sort so that the students will see their reflection when they look inside the box.)

- Show the children a gift-wrapped box. Tell them: “It contains something very precious, something that both you and God treasure very highly. This is so special, unique, and valuable that it should be handled with the highest level of care and respect. Each of us should do everything in our power to keep it safe.”
 - You are invited to come up one at a time and look into the box, to see this precious gift.
 - Once you have seen the contents of the box, don’t tell anyone else what you have seen. The beauty of the gift is that everyone will see something very different.
 - While they are waiting to take their turn to view the special gift, have the children make a list of their ten most precious possessions.

Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grades cover boundaries, relationships, respect, bullying, and how to be morally responsible in today’s culture. The PLAAN concept is introduced in these grades.

PLAAN SUMMARY

1. Write on the board:

P – Protect

L – Listen

A – Ask

A – Act

N – Notify

2. Review

- The first letter “**P**” stands for **Protect with Respect**.

- How do you think respect can help us protect our Circle of Grace?
 - *Answers should include:*
 - *respecting ourselves as a child of God respecting others because they are also Children of God keeping unsafe words, touches, and images out of our Circle of Grace*
- The letter “**P**” is about knowing that each of us has a Circle of Grace and respecting it.
- *The letter “L” stands for Listen.*
 - In every situation we need to remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us stay safe.
 - The Holy Spirit gives us feelings or instincts, and we need to listen to them.
 - The letter “L” connects us with the Communion of Saints and the qualities we have been given as expressions of God’s love.
- *The letter “A” stands for Ask.*
 - When you have an uncomfortable feeling, you are recognizing the Holy Spirit helping you know that something is not right.
 - The letter “A” asks: “Does this say, “Yes,” to what God has called me to be? Does this belong in my Circle of Grace?”
 - There are some questions that the letter “A” reminds us to ask ourselves whenever we are in a situation that makes us feel uncomfortable or that just doesn’t feel quite right. The questions are also good ones to ask every so often even when we don’t get a gut feeling. Sometimes asking the questions helps us to hear the Holy Spirit when we did not remember that we needed to listen.
 - *Read each question allowing a few moments for quiet reflection*
 1. How long have you known this person?
 2. Is your knowledge of this person face-to-face? . . .
 3. . . .Is the relationship respectful of your boundaries and the other person’s?
 4. Are you able to say, “No,” to this person?
 5. Does this person’s age or status influence your behavior in the relationship? . .
- *The next letter “A” stands for Act.*
 - To protect your Circle of Grace you need to tell trusted adults you need help.
 - There are other things you can do to protect your Circle of Grace when your parents or trusted adults may not be around. Some of them are:
 1. Don’t reveal personal information on the Internet. This includes full names, school, grade, address, phone, sports teams, church groups, etc. Perpetrators try to identify young people by learning about their activities and schedule patterns. Be particularly cautious of social networking websites such as myspace.com and personal blogs.
 2. Stay away or get away from situations that make you feel uncomfortable. . .
 3. Be cautious about situations in which one is left alone with an adult.
- *The last letter “N” stands for Notify.*
 - Notify your parents or another trusted adult whenever someone or has violated your boundaries, such as manipulating to control you or not respecting your Circle of Grace or someone else’s Circle of Grace.
 - Think of three people besides your parents whom you can trust, whom you feel will listen and would offer help. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Do these people respect your Circle of Grace?

- Do they respect their own Circle of Grace?
- Do they respect the Circle of Grace of other people that you know?

Trusted adults want what is best for you. They want your Circle of Grace to be respected. Discuss with your parents the three other persons whom you feel are trusted adults. Then let the trusted adults know you have chosen them. Share with them what Circle of Grace means to you. Today is a good day to start those conversations.

Ninth, Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth grades includes topics such as relating to the cloud of witnesses; media and cultural influences on how youth view their sexuality; relationships; boundaries; grooming tactics; love and theology of the body. The Circle of Virtue is introduced as one's response to the invitation of God's grace by cultivating goodness and virtue in one's life. Scenarios are used to help young people to apply the information to potentially real situations. Here are a few of the scenarios:

1. One of your coaches thinks you can make the select team if you work a little harder on some skills. The coach offers to stay late and work one on one with you to help improve skills after everyone else has gone home. *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- An adult arranges to be with a young person alone.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

2. Your best friend confides that she tried some beer at a party she attended last week. She says it made her laugh and made her sick. She says it was not a great experience but she asks you to keep it secret from your parents and hers. *Pause.*

This situation is not safe. What is unsafe here?

- A young person is asked to keep a secret from an adult.
- The friend is put at risk for future problems.
- The person who provided the alcohol is protected.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas*)

These scenarios are followed with a discussion of safe and unsafe relationships:

Ask the following questions:

- Do you remember the last Circle of Grace lesson in which we provided you scenarios about unsafe behavior? Today we are going to talk about a practical plan for times when you might find yourself in those types of situations.
- *Distribute copies of How Safe Are Your Relationships? (Handout at the end of the lessons).*

Sample of the handout:

Do your friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, or family members...

_____ *Embarrass you by calling you names/put downs?*

_____ *Look or act in ways that scare you?*

_____ *Like to control your friends and whom you hang out with?*

_____ *Pressure you into doing something that makes you feel uneasy. . .*

- *Give youth 2-3 minutes to complete.*
- *Ask youth to hold on to their copies until the end of the lesson.*
- We are going to consider current events in your lives and schools in which youth have been in unsafe situations and relationships.

Review the following points:

- All unsafe relationships have the potential to become dangerous. Anytime a person is in a relationship where the other does not respect your Circle of Grace, it is a time when hurt and damage may occur. Unsafe relationships are particularly hurtful and dangerous when there is abuse. Often, young people who are in unsafe situations/relationships don't tell their parents because they don't think they can handle it. Unsafe situations usually happen when there are no witnesses so young people are afraid that they will not be believed even if they do tell someone.

Young people who are in unsafe situations, who believe they have experienced boundary violations or who are confused about a relationship should always tell a trusted adult

**For more information contact the Archdiocese of Omaha,
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