

Circle of Grace

Safe Environment Training

Everyone Has a Circle of Grace

Kindergarten - Lesson Plan

Philosophy

What is a Circle of Grace?

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created “male and female in God’s image” and that God saw this as “very good.” In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God.

Adults assist children to recognize God’s love by helping them to understand that each of us lives and moves in a *Circle of Grace*. You can imagine your own *Circle of Grace* by putting your arms above your head then circle down in front of your body including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality.

Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others.

Adults, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

How is the Circle of Grace Curriculum different from other safety programs?

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen.¹ Many protection programs focus on “stranger danger,” however, up to ninety percent of the time the perpetrator is a relative, family friend or other person known to the child/young person. *Circle of Grace* goes beyond just protection by helping children understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults.

Goal of the Circle of Grace Curriculum - Grades K-12

The goal of the *Circle of Grace* curriculum is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

Objectives of the Circle of Grace Curriculum - Grades K-12

- Children/Young People will understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Children/Young People will be able to describe the *Circle of Grace* which God gives each of us.
- Children/Young People will be able to identify, discern and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries.
- Children/Young People will be able to identify all types of boundary violations.
- Children/Young People will demonstrate how to take action if any boundary is threatened or violated.

¹ www.usccb.org, or <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

Kindergarten Leader Guidelines

- A **Leader** is defined as clergy (priest or deacon) school administrator, director of religious education/formation, teacher, catechist, or youth minister who has been trained to teach the *Circle of Grace* Curriculum.
- Every leader should read the Philosophy, Goals and Key Concepts to better understand and prepare to teach the *Circle of Grace*. The Key Concepts review the essence of the curriculum, that God is always present in our *Circle of Grace* because He desires an intimate relationship with His children.
- The time frame may vary depending on size of class, age of children, amount of discussion, etc.
- Young children learn by repetition. Because of this, preschool through grade 2 lessons build on each other and have a lot of similarities.
- Vocabularies with definitions are intended for the leader. The explanation of vocabulary should be integrated within the context of the lessons to assist the children in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Curriculum. The depth of the children's understanding will depend upon their age and developmental stage. A master vocabulary list of the *Circle of Grace* curriculum is in the administrator/director section. The pertinent vocabulary is listed in the lesson.
- Leader's instructions for each lesson are italicized. Non-italicized text needs to be presented by the leader to the students.
- The Red Signal, Green Signal, Activity may be adapted to a Happy, Neutral, and Sad Face Activity if the leader believes the children have not been exposed to a traffic signal.
- If possible, it is always "best practice" to have two adults in the room during the lesson due to the sensitive nature of the material.
- The lesson should be taught in one session. If that is not possible, it needs to be taught by the following day/week. Ongoing reinforcement of the concepts is encouraged throughout the year. Hopefully, the language of *Circle of Grace* will become a part of a positive culture of respect, care, and faith that will help protect our children and help them to know what to do when they feel unsafe.
- Your School Administrator or Religious Education Director will be sending a letter to all parents regarding *Circle of Grace*. Lesson specific parent information should be handed out as directed. The Parent information is included in the curriculum. Every parish/school is encouraged to provide parent-education opportunities both to inform parents about the *Circle of Grace* Curriculum and to foster greater communication in families.
- Evaluations for each grade are to be completed and returned to the School Administrator or the Director of Religious Education/Formation. The evaluations will be used to complete the Summary Evaluation that is used for ongoing improvement of the curriculum and for the audit records.

Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”



God gives each of us a Circle of Grace (see below) where He is always Present:

Raise your hands above your head, then bring your outstretched arms slowly down.

*Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you embrace all of the space around you
slowly reach down to your feet.*

*Know that **God** is in this space with you. This is your **Circle of Grace**; you are in it.*

God is Present because He desires a relationship with us

- God is with us when we are happy and sad. God does not cause bad things to happen to us. He loves us very much.
- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe).
- Having faith may not take away all of life’s struggles. It is because of these struggles, God promised to always be present; providing guidance and comfort in our time of need.

God helps us know what belongs in our Circle of Grace

- Our feelings help us know about ourselves and the world around us.
- God helps us know what belongs in our *Circle of Grace* by allowing us to experience peace, love or contentment when something or someone good comes into our *Circle of Grace*.

God helps us know what does not belong in our Circle of Grace

- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe).
- The Holy Spirit prompts (alerts) us that something does not belong in our *Circle of Grace* by giving us “a funny or uncomfortable feeling” that something is not safe. This feeling is there because God wants us to be safe.

God helps us know when to ask for help from someone we trust

- God gives us several trusted adults, in addition to our parents, to talk to about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe. If a parent or trusted adult is not available or unable to help us, God wants us to go to another trusted adult until we get the help needed to be safe.

Everyone has a Circle of Grace

Sometimes children reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the child, “Thank you for sharing that, _____. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.).” When this happens, be sure you talk to the child at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- We are all Children of God
- As Children of God, we are unique and loved by Him
- Jesus teaches us how to love and respect God and others and self
- We are all called to do good

Lesson Goal

Children will come to understand and/or describe the concept of a *Circle of Grace*.

Children will be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations.

Children will demonstrate how to take action if they feel unsafe or unsure something or someone is safe.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Demonstrate his/her own *Circle of Grace*.
 2. Describe what makes a person’s *Circle of Grace* a holy space.
 3. Identify the behaviors appropriate for the *Circle of Grace*.
 4. Understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them and that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.
 5. Learn how to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*.
 6. Be able to recognize safe and unsafe situations/ secrets in a person’s *Circle of Grace*.
 7. Name one or two trusted adults (in addition to their parents) whom they can seek out for help.
 8. Practice asking for help.
1. *Grace*.

Materials Needed

Part 1

1. *Circle of Grace* Logo (end of lesson)
2. Summary of Key Concepts of *Circle of Grace* (front of lesson)
3. (Optional) *Circle of Grace* Song (in the Administrator/Director section)

4. Whiteboard or chalkboard
5. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a “happy/sad face chart”
6. *Circle of Grace* Logo coloring page/black and white version (end of lesson)
7. (Optional) Happy Face coloring page (end of lesson)
8. Markers or crayons (optional)
9. Circle of Grace Meditation Link: <https://vimeo.com/207836764>

Part 2

1. Large picture of a traffic signal with all three colors visible - red, yellow, and green (end of lesson)
2. One set of red, yellow, and green circle cards for the leader, the backside of each colored card should be white and the front side red, yellow, or green. You could put the circle cards on a popsicle stick so they look more like the signal in a traffic signal (template in back of lesson)
3. The “Good Secret / Bad Secret” handout (end of lesson)
4. Construction or color paper for each child
5. Create one large Skill Poster of “How to Ask for Help” (see the end of lesson)
6. Letter for Parents (see the end of lesson)
 - Attach a copy of the Good Secret/Bad Secret and How to Ask for Help handouts to the parent letter

Part 1: What is a Circle of Grace?

Vocabulary (*Below is a guide for the leader. Children are not expected to memorize them*)

7. **Children of God:** All people are made and loved by God.
8. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
9. **Grace:** The gift of God’s goodness and love to help me live as his child.
10. **Holy:** Special because of a connection with God.
11. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God’s love.
12. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what’s best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
13. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and join in the Sign of the Cross. Then say together,

Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen.

Optional Prayer- The Circle of Grace Song (Located in the Administrator/Director Section)

Lesson Development

Getting Started

1. Today we are going to learn about God's love for us. (*Show children the Circle of Grace Symbol.*)
2. This is a symbol for our *Circle of Grace*. It reminds us that God loves us and His love is always around us. Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*.

Activity - Circle of Grace

1. **Show video of Circle of Grace Meditation Link** :<https://vimeo.com/207836764>
2. Where is our *Circle of Grace* and where are other people's Circles of Grace?
3. *Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.*
4. *Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:*
 - a. Raise your hands above your head
 - b. Bring your arms slowly down
 - c. Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you
 - d. Embrace all the space around you
 - e. Then reach down to your feet
 - f. Know that God is in this space with you
5. This is the *Circle of Grace* in which you live.
6. *Repeat steps to reinforce physical dimensions of Circle of Grace.*

Review the below *Summary of Key Concepts of Circle of Grace* with the children:

God is Present because He desires a relationship with us

- God is with us when we are happy and sad. God does not cause bad things to happen to us. He loves us very much.
- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared, or confused (unsafe).
- Having faith may not take away all of life's struggles. It is because of these struggles, God promised to always be present; providing guidance and comfort in our time of need.

God helps us know what belongs in our Circle of Grace

- Our feelings help us know about ourselves and the world around us.
- God helps us know what belongs in our *Circle of Grace* by allowing us to experience peace, love or contentment when something or someone good comes into our *Circle of Grace*.

God helps us know what does not belong in our Circle of Grace

- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe).

- The Holy Spirit prompts (alerts) us that something does not belong in our *Circle of Grace* by giving us “a funny or uncomfortable feeling” that something is not safe. This feeling is there because God wants us to be safe.

God helps us know when to ask for help from someone we trust

- God gives us several trusted adults, in addition to our parents, to talk to about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe. If a parent or trusted adult is not available or unable to help us, God wants us to go to another trusted adult until we get the help needed to be safe.

Discussion

1. Now, we will talk about why it is important that we know about our *Circle of Grace*.
2. Jesus told us that he would always love us and always be with us. We are always in a special, holy place because God loves us and wants to be our friend. That place is our *Circle of Grace*. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us. *This discussion of God/Jesus as our friend helps explain that God desires a close relationship with each of us.*
3. Remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace* with God and surrounded by God’s love. God wants us to be safe and to behave with respect for ourselves and for others.

Activity - Happy and Sad Face Chart

1. *Make a chart with two columns on the poster paper/flip chart paper. Label one with a happy face and one with a sad face.*
2. *What are some nice things that people do or say? What are some hurtful things that people do or say?*
3. *Allow a few responses. List on the board in the appropriate column.*
4. *Point out that words and behaviors listed in the happy face column are those that respect everyone’s Circle of Grace and others. The words and behaviors in the sad face column are those that do not belong in anyone’s Circle of Grace.*
5. *Keep happy and sad face chart posted for future reference.*

Review

1. *Review the Circle of Grace Movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.*
Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
 - a) *Raise your hands above your head*
 - b) *Bring your arms slowly down*
 - c) *Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you*
 - d) *Embrace all the space around you*
 - e) *Then reach down to your feet*
 - f) *Know that God is in this space with you*

g) *Tell the children, “This is the Circle of Grace in which you live.”*

Part 2

The Traffic Signal and a Safety Plan

Vocabulary (*Below is a guide for the leader. Children are not expected to memorize them*)

1. **Bullying-** Repeatedly being mean to someone on purpose
2. **Feelings:** Something I sense inside myself (e.g., angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, peaceful, etc.) that gives me information about others or myself.
3. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God's love.
4. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.
5. **Safe Touch:** Touch that respects self and others.
6. **Secret:** A secret is something I know but do not tell.
Safe secret: A secret is safe when it does not hurt other or me and will eventually be revealed.
Unsafe secret: A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell. A secret is always unsafe if someone states you are not to tell your parents or trusted adults.
7. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.
8. **Traffic Signal:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
9. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
10. **Trusted Adult:** A grown-up who helps me to stay safe in my *Circle of Grace* and to respect others within their *Circle of Grace*.
11. **Unsafe:** Anything that causes harm to me or others.
12. **Unsafe touch:** Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.

Getting Started

It is important to begin the lesson by explaining that God does not want or cause bad things to happen. There will be children in every group who may have already experienced unsafe or hurtful situations. It is important to reinforce it is not their fault. We want our children to understand that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.

Now we are going to continue talking about words and actions that we like and don't like in our *Circle of Grace*. We will also learn a new way to identify what doesn't belong in our *Circle of Grace*.

Discussion

1. Show a large picture of a traffic signal.
2. Discuss the meaning or purpose of a traffic signal by asking:
 - a. Why do we have traffic signals? *Pause for answers.*
The reason we have traffic signals is to protect people and keep them safe.
 - b. What does each color of the traffic signal mean?
(STOP, BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.)

Lesson Development

Introduction

Towns and cities have traffic signals which keep people safe and protected. God has given each of us our own kind of signal to keep us safe and protected. Sometimes these signals come from other people like our parents or teachers. Sometimes these signals are called feelings and are one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us. Most of the time you know what is safe and good to allow in your *Circle of Grace*. Sometimes, though, you need others who respect your *Circle of Grace* to help you know what is safe and what is not.

Discussion

1. Let's think of the signals God gives us to help keep us safe and protected like the three colors of a traffic signal: green, red, and yellow.
2. **Green signal** - Means GO AHEAD. Some things are definitely safe. Some examples are telling the truth, being kind and respectful, helping others, and caring about others. You are also safe when others respect your body and feelings. Could you name some other things that would always be safe to do or let someone else do with you? (*Leader points out that everything written on the happy face column of the poster would be a green signal word or action.*)
3. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. *Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts. Ask the children to define it and what it looks like etc.* Some examples are bullying (being mean to someone on purpose), lying, hitting, fighting, etc. Can you help me think of other things that are never good to do or let someone do to you? (*Leader points out that everything written on the sad emoji column of the poster would be a red signal word or action.*) When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.
4. **Yellow Signal** - Means BE CAREFUL. Sometimes you can't tell if a situation is safe or unsafe. You might feel confused or unsure about it. These are like a yellow signal. It may seem like just a funny feeling in your heart or tummy. When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.
5. Define trusted adult and remind them there will be a discussion later in the lesson.

Activity - Red Signal, Green Signal

*The purpose of this activity is to help children learn how to identify dangerous and unsafe situations, feelings, and touch, but not to scare or shame them. Make sure to give clear and concise reasons why a situation falls into the green or yellow/red signal category. For children, it may sometimes be hard to distinguish between red and yellow situations. Take the example of a stranger coming up to them asking for help. The children may be thinking it is “good” to help someone but “bad” to talk to strangers. They cannot discern which one takes priority. The children need to be aware of their internal process of conflicting feelings, which they might be experiencing. Children will learn that when possible they should always talk to a trusted adult before acting in a Red or Yellow Situation. **Remind children that there are always adults available to listen and talk. Children only need to ask a trusted adult for the time to talk.***

1. *The Leader needs a set of red, green, and yellow circle /traffic signal cards.*
2. *Suggested instructions:*
 - In a moment, I’m going to describe some situations.
 - Please listen very carefully.
 - At the end of each, I’m going to ask you if you think the situation describes a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal. I will hold up a signal and you tell me if I am right or wrong.
 - Then we’ll talk about each situation.
3. *Read each situation aloud. **Make sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.***

After reading the situation, give the children a moment before asking them if the circle card you are holding up is right or wrong. Some situations, though clearly red to adults, may be unclear (yellow) from a child’s perspective. This activity will help children identify their own confusing feelings about these situations and to understand that they should talk to a trusted adult. Allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected with these situations. (Refer to Feeling Faces chart as needed at the end of lesson plan.)

- a. **GREEN SITUATIONS (Select two or more)**
 - Your mom or dad gives you a hug when you are sad (*loved, comforted*).
 - You are at the doctor and your mom is with you. The doctor checks your body to make sure it is healthy (*safe, secure, embarrassed*).
 - Your grandmother/grandfather wipes your tears when you fall down and hurt yourself (*loved, comforted, safe*).
 - You tell the leader when you accidentally break something in your classroom (*embarrassed, sorry, guilty, happy that you told*).

- You let your teacher know that you saw some classmates being really mean to your friend. You told them to stop being mean and they laughed (mad, happy that you told.)

b. YELLOW/RED SITUATIONS (*Select three or more and reinforce that they are always to talk to a trusted adult.*)

- You are walking home from school and someone you don't know well offers to give you a ride home. The person said she received a "text" from your mom to pick you up (*cautious, scared*).
- Your big brother's friend wants you to see something on his cell phone using the internet. Your family rule is that you can only use the internet with your mom or dad (*worried, afraid of getting into trouble*).
- Someone gives you a special gift and tells you not to tell your mom or dad.
- You are playing at the neighborhood park. A man/woman who has said, "Hi," to you a few times comes up and asks if you can help find his/her lost puppy (*sad, anxious*).
- Your friend's big brother/sister wants you to do something you don't want to do (*pressured, confused*).
- An adult or older kid asks you to go with him to the park. He says that your parents won't care and won't understand about our special time together. (*confused, curious*)
- A neighborhood friend has started to be mean to you. You don't know why your friend is acting this way (*sad, anxious, worried*).
- Your friend wants you to ride your bike down the street even though your mom/ dad told you that you must stay in the driveway (*confused, pressured*).

This Next Section is on Secrets.

Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be the key to them seeking help.

Continue by saying: "Sometimes secrets can even give us a funny feeling in our heart or tummy. A safe secret is one that does not hurt others or me. A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell. A good way to decide if a secret is safe or unsafe is to ask ourselves, "Can this secret hurt me or someone else?"

Activity

Red Signal Green Signal - Secrets

- 1) *Make a safe secret and unsafe secret chart with two columns. This can be done on poster paper/flip chart paper (safe secret ☺ and unsafe secret ☹).*
- 2) Can you name some safe secrets? Who is involved in the secret? Is there a time that it is finally told?
- 3) Can you name an unsafe secret? Who is involved in the secret? Can the secret hurt you or someone else? Are you told **not** to tell the secret to your parent/trusted adult?
- 4) Distribute Safe Secret/Unsafe Secret Handout: "Do you think the people in the handout are sharing safe or unsafe secrets?" Read and discuss examples. Send handout home. (You may also bring in additional photos to help illustrate the children's understanding of secrets).

Safety Plan

Introduction

1. We have already mentioned the need to talk to a "trusted adult" when you are feeling unsafe, uncomfortable or unsure.
2. Let's discuss what we mean by a "Trusted Adult". Write term on board.
3. *Allow a few responses.*
4. *Shape their responses: "A Trusted Adult is a grown-up who helps you to stay safe in your Circle of Grace and to respect others within their Circle of Grace. Examples of Trusted Adults, other than your parents, could be a teacher, a neighbor, an aunt or uncle, your grandparent, a church leader, or a family friend."*
5. How do you know you can trust someone?
6. *Allow a few responses*
7. You know someone is trustworthy when they help you to be safe, when they tell the truth, and when they are there for you in good times and bad.
8. Can anyone name a person who loves you and helps you to stay safe?
*Encourage the children to name adults in addition to their mom and dad.
List children's responses on the board.*
9. These are people who you can ask to help you if you are unsafe or confused. We call these people Trusted Adults.

Activity - Identifying My Trusted Adults

1. *Give each child a piece of paper and crayons or markers.*
2. *Instruct the children to think of one or two Trusted Adults besides mom or dad who they could ask for help.*
3. *Tell a person next to you the names of the Trusted Adults that you picked.*
4. *Have the children draw a picture of each of their Trusted Adults. Remind children that mom and dad may be trusted adults even if they are not in the picture.*
5. *Attach the drawing to the Home Activity Sheet for parents (see the end of the Kindergarten Lessons).*
6. *Instruct the children to have their parents sign the Home Activity Sheet.*
7. *Remind the children to bring the Home Activity Sheet back to the classroom for the next class. This is to ensure the parents know who their child picked as a trusted adult. Sometimes children may pick someone who is not available or inappropriate.*

Skill Introduction

1. *Ask the children to think of times when they might need to talk to or ask a trusted adult for help. List these on the board.*
2. *Post the adapted skill poster "How to Ask for Help".*
 - a. *Picture of eyes*
 - b. *Picture of a child speaking/mouth*
 - c. *Picture of "?"*
 - d. *The words "Thank You."*
3. *Adapted skill steps are:*
 - a. *Look at the person (Picture of eyes)*
 - b. *Tell the person, "I need help. I do not feel safe or am uncomfortable" (Picture of a child speaking/mouth)*
 - c. *Tell the person what is wrong, why you don't feel safe. (Picture of the question mark "?")*
 - d. *Tell the person "Thank You". (Picture of the words "Thank You" at the end of the lessons.)*
4. *This is how we ask for help when we feel unsafe or unsure if something or someone is unsafe. You can use these steps whenever you need to ask anyone for help. Today we are going to practice how to ask for help from your parents or a trusted adult.*

Practice makes Perfect

According to research we remember less of what we hear and more of what we do. Allowing children to role-play greatly increases their chances of remembering what to do when a real problem arises. It is very common for children to use play to help them understand confusing situations.

1. *Have the children as a group practice the following:*
 - a. Children look at the leader.
 - b. Children say aloud, "I need your help. I don't feel safe."
 - c. Children say aloud, "Please help me".
 - d. Children say aloud, "Thank You."
2. *Remember to attach the "Good Secret/Bad Secrets, "How to Ask for Help "and Trusted Adult Drawing Handouts to the Parent Letter and Activity.*

Wrapping Up

1. *Encourage children to pray for and/or write a note of thanks to each of their trusted adults.*
2. *Review the definitions of feelings with the children.*
 - a- *They are not right or wrong, good, or bad.*
 - b- *They may be God's signals about what is going on in our lives*
3. *Review the Circle of Grace movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.*

Closing Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and join in the Sign of the Cross. Then say together,

**Thank you, God,
for always being with me in my *Circle of Grace*.
Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps me know what is good.
Thank you for giving me people who care about me
and want me to be safe.
Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, God,
for always being with me in my *Circle of Grace*.
Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps me know what is good.
Thank you for giving me people who care about me
and want me to be safe.
Amen.

SAFE SECRET/UNSAFE SECRET HANDOUT

Safe secret: A secret is safe when it does not hurt others, me and will eventually be revealed.

Unsafe secret: A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell. A secret is always unsafe if someone states you are not to tell your parents or trusted adults.



- Are secrets meant to be told?
- Is the puppy sharing a safe or unsafe secret?



- What type of secret is this?
- Why is the girl sad?
- Is it safe if someone tells you not to tell the secret to anyone including your parents?

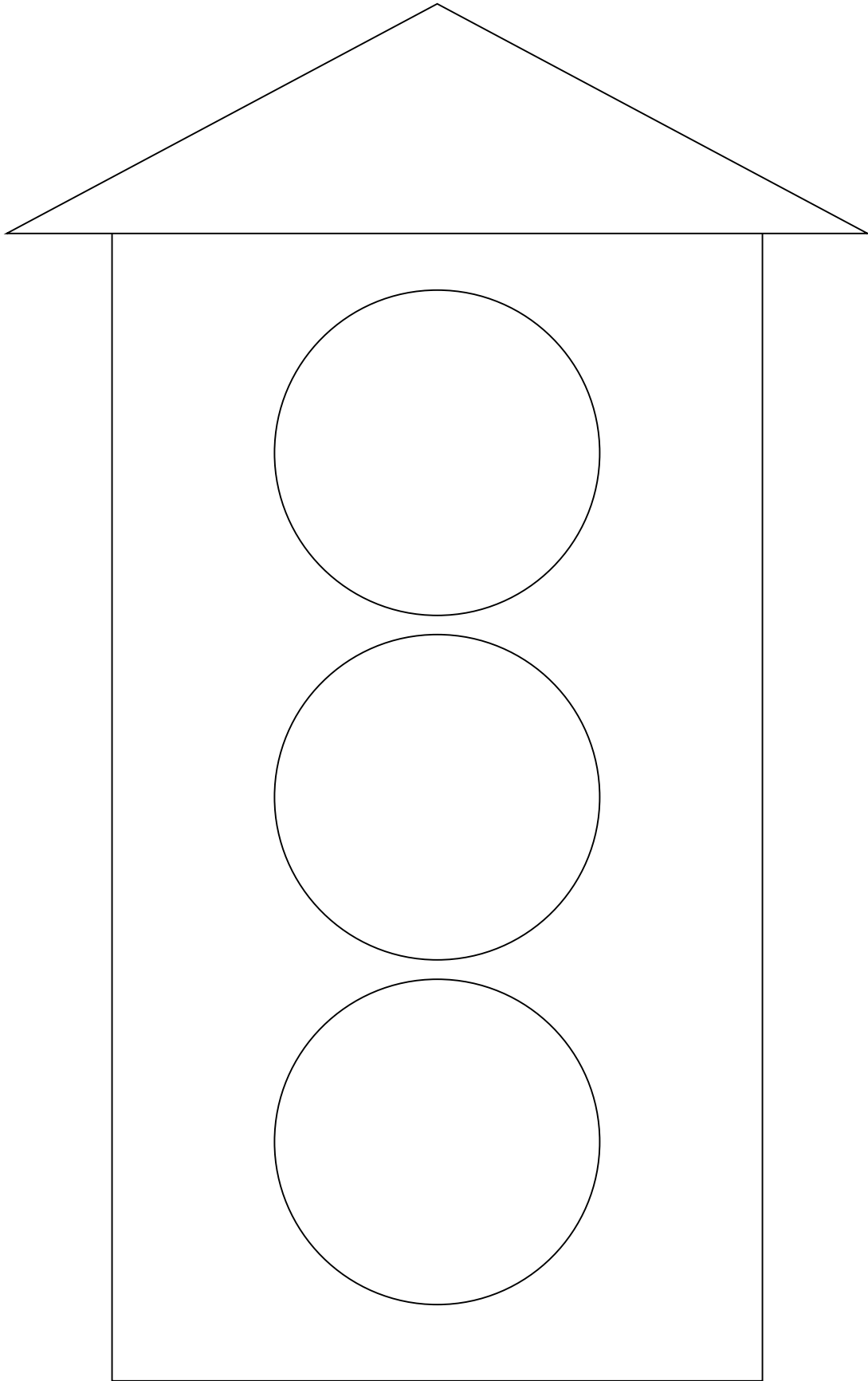


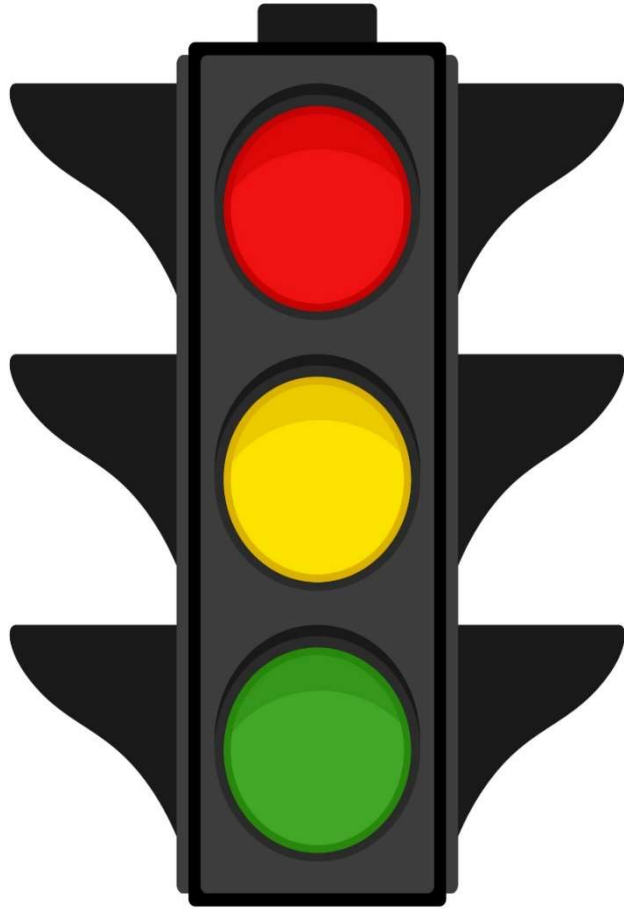
- Name some safe secrets
- Have your parents help you name some unsafe secrets
- Now is a good time to talk to your parents about any secrets you have been keeping





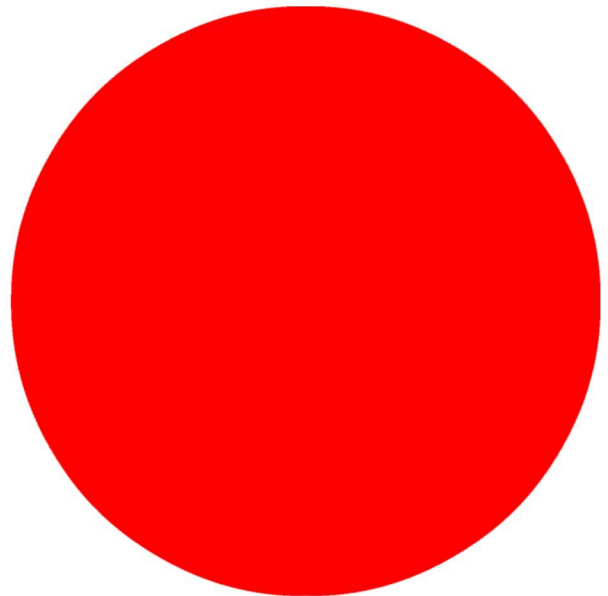
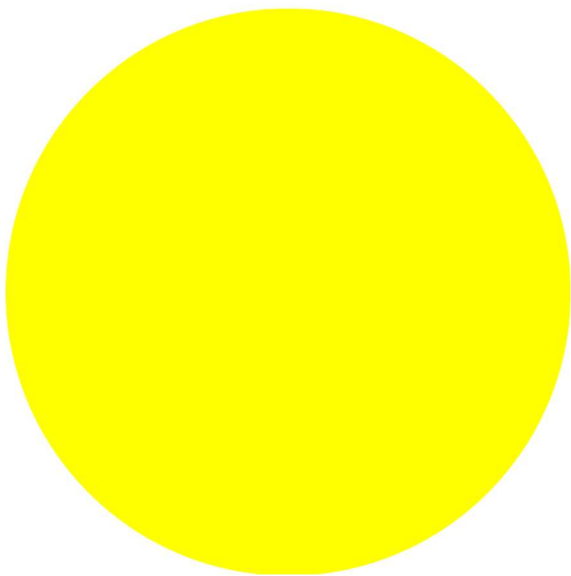
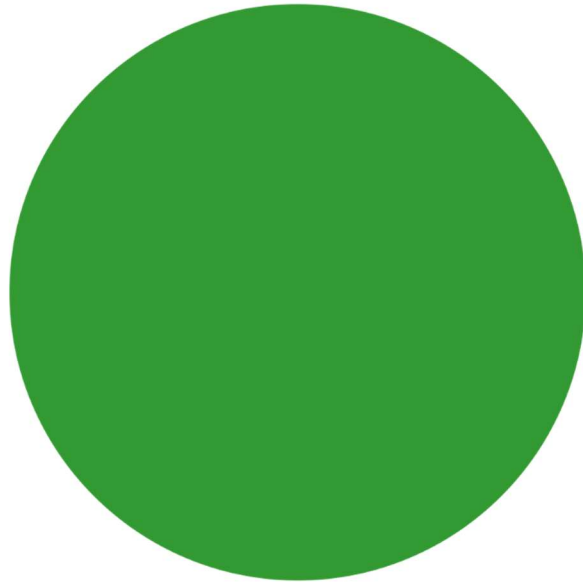




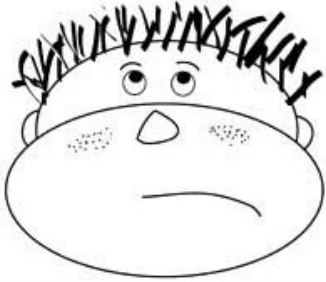


Red and Green Signal Activity

Template for a Set of Signal Cards



Feeling Faces Chart



Embarrassed



Frustrated



Happy



Lonely



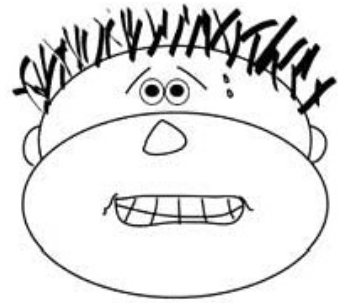
Loved



Mad



Sad



Nervous



Proud



Relaxed



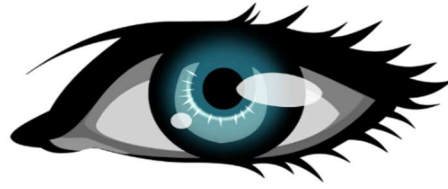
Scared



Stressed

HOW TO ASK FOR HELP

When you feel unsafe or unsure if something or someone is unsafe.



LOOK AT THE PERSON



SAY TO THE PERSON "I NEED HELP. I DO NOT FEEL SAFE."



TELL THE PERSON WHY YOU DO NOT FEEL SAFE



TELL THE PERSON "THANK YOU"

Circle of Grace
Parent Letter and Activity
Everyone has a Circle of Grace
Kindergarten Lesson

Dear Parent,

Circle of Grace is faith-based safety curriculum used by your arch/diocese.

Today, your child reviewed the Circle of Grace concept, traffic signal and safety plan. These concepts and activities helped your child identify safe and unsafe situations/secrets and to know how to talk to a trusted adult, in addition to you. The children are taught that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them, to understand that God is with them even when they are hurting or sad. They are able to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*, and to recognize safe and unsafe touch/situations and how to talk to a trusted adult if they feel unsafe or unsure if something or someone is unsafe.

We use the analogy of a traffic signal to connect a green signal with safe situations, a red signal with unsafe situations, and a yellow signal with situations in which a child might feel confused or unsure. Sometimes it is hard for a child to distinguish between the yellow and red situations. When that happens, children need to talk to someone they trust like their parents, leader, or other trusted adult. Learning to be more aware of these signals helps children recognize them as one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.

We also talk about secrets. Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from talking about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be key to them seeking help.

Secret: A secret is something I know but do not tell.

Safe secret: A secret is safe when it does not hurt others or me.

Unsafe secret: A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell

It is important for you as parents and guardians to reinforce these concepts at home with your child. You are encouraged to talk with your child about real situations in his or her everyday life and invite your child to identify whether the situations are green (GO AHEAD, this is safe), red (STOP, this is unsafe always talk to a trusted adult before acting), or yellow (BE CAREFUL, always talk to a trusted adult before acting). There is a take home “secrets” and “how to ask for help” handout for you to review with your child.

The last part that was presented included asking children to name and draw a picture of trusted adults (in addition to their parents). Please ask your child to show you this drawing. If your child names someone you find inappropriate, please help him/her to identify someone else.

Please contact these individuals to let them know you and your child have identified them as trusted adults. This can be done in person, by phone, or a letter. (Letter-writing is a fun activity you can do with your child.) Being identified as a trusted adult will most likely make them feel honored as well as alert them to your safety plan for your child.

Please have your child return the drawing with your signature as a confirmation for us that you received this information and discussed it with your child. Please call the parish, school, or religious education office if you have questions.

Thank you for allowing us to partner in providing a Safe Environment for your child!

Kindergarten Evaluation

Date _____

Parish/School _____ *City* _____

Leader _____ *Number of children in class* _____

1. YES ____ NO ____ Children understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. YES ____ NO ____ Children will be able to describe the *Circle of Grace* which God gives each of us.
3. YES ____ NO ____ Children will be able to identify things that belong in their Circle of Grace.
4. YES ____ NO ____ Children can identify things that do not belong in their Circle of Grace.
5. YES ____ NO ____ Children can demonstrate how to take action if they feel unsafe or unsure if something or someone is unsafe.

Please list what worked well any resources that you would like to share (use back if necessary).

Please list any suggestions that would improve lessons (use back if necessary).

Return to your School Administrator or Director of Religious Education.