

Family Faith and Circle of Grace

Kindergarten - Grade 2

What is 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.

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 describe the concept of a *Circle of Grace*.

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 their *Circle of Grace*.
4. Identify behaviors that do not belong in their *Circle of Grace*
5. Identify 3 trusted adults in addition to their parents who they talk to if they are uncomfortable with someone or thing in their *Circle of Grace*

Vocabulary (To assist with discussion and activities)

1. **Children of God:** All people are made and loved by God.
2. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
3. **Grace:** The gift of God's goodness and love to help me live as his child.
4. **Holy:** Special because of a connection with God.
5. **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.
6. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
7. **Symbol:** A picture or object that stands for something else.
8. **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.
9. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.
Safe Touch: Touch that respects others and me.

10. **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.
11. **Signal**: A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.
12. **Traffic Signal**: A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
13. **Trust**: Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
14. **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*.
15. **Unsafe**: Anything that causes harm to myself or others.
Unsafe touch: Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused

PART 1 – Required

Materials Needed

1. Symbols (examples: stop sign, Nike swoosh, slippery when wet sign, peace symbol, etc.)
2. Summary of Key Concepts of Circle of Grace (copy at the end of lesson)
3. *Circle of Grace* Logo color (copy at the end of this lesson)
4. *Circle of Grace* Logo Black and White (copy at the end of this lesson)
5. Whiteboard or chalkboard
6. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a “happy/sad face chart”
7. (Optional) *Circle of Grace* Song (in the Resource Section)

Getting Started

1. Show symbols one at a time to the children. Ask what each represents. Make the point that symbols are a way of telling us something or reminding us of something.
2. Write the term “Symbol” on the board. State the vocabulary definition of symbol: a picture or object that stands for something else.

Lesson Development

Discussion

1. Show children the *Circle of Grace* symbol. Ask children what they see in the 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*.
3. Review what each part represents:
 - a. Red Circle of Grace Words - Color of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Person - Child of God
 - c. Yellow Circle - Grace
 - d. Dove - Holy Spirit
 - e. Blue Background - The World in Which We Live

Activity - Circle of Grace Review the Circle of Grace movement they did with their family and the Summary of the Key Concepts of Circle of Grace. Catechist demonstrates it as a review for them. This link, <https://vimeo.com/207836764>, also demonstrates it.

Discussion

1. *Suggested opening:* Now, we will talk about why it is important that we know about our Circle of Grace.
2. *Ask the children:* Do you remember that Jesus told us how he would always love us and always be with us? If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. That place is our Circle of Grace. God is present in our Circle of Grace because he wants a close relationship with each of us. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within 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.

Happy and Sad Emoji Chart

1. Make a chart with two columns on the poster paper/flip chart paper. Label one with happy emoji (face) and one with sad emoji(face).
2. *Ask the children:* What are some nice things that other people do or say? What are some hurtful things that other people do or say? What are some nice things you do or say? What might be some hurtful things you 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 our Circle of Grace. 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.

PART 2- Choose either activity 1, 2, or 3

Before the activity, it is important to explain that God does not want or cause bad things to happen. There will be children who have already experienced unsafe or hurtful situations. It is important to reinforce that it is not their fault, and it is never too late to tell a trusted adult. We want our young people to understand that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.

Materials needed

Activity 1- Circle of Grace Cards (cards can be laminated), copy of the logo, and parent take home letter/activity for each child. (located at the end of the lesson)

Activity 2- A traffic signal, set of signal cards and a parent take home/letter for each child. (located at the end of the lesson)

Activity 3- “Five Safety Tips on Secrets” activity sheet and a parent take home letter for each child. (located at the end of the lesson).

Activity 1 – Circle of Grace Cards

Introduce new vocabulary, “Safe”, “Safe Touch”, Unsafe Touch”, “Feelings”, “Secret”, “Safe Secret”, “Unsafe Secret”, and “Trusted Adult”.

Safe: I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.

Safe Touch: Touch that respects others and me.

Unsafe touch: Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused

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.

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.

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*.

Remind them that there will be a discussion on trusted adults later in the lesson.

This vocabulary will help with the discussion at the end of the lesson.

- 1. Have the children sit together in small groups.*
- 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 outside 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 (begin 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).*
- 4. Discuss the activity with the children and why they decided where the cards belong (be sure to use the vocabulary in the discussion). Introduce the concept of how the Holy*

*Spirit will prompt us to know what belongs in our Circle of Grace and what does not.
(will be expanded upon in part 3.)*

Go to Part 3

Activity 2- Red Signal, Green Signal

The use of the word “signal” (instead of “light”) is intentional to point to the fact that a “signal” can be both internal and external. A traffic signal is an external reality. An uncomfortable feeling is an internal signal from the Holy Spirit to seek help from a parent or trusted adult.

Introduction and Discussion

1. 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. God has given each of us our own kind of signals to help keep us safe and protected. Sometimes these signals are called feelings. Our feelings are one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.
2. *Introduce new vocabulary, “Safe”, “Safe Touch”, “Unsafe touch”, “Feelings”, “Secret”, “Safe Secret”, “Unsafe Secret”, and “Trusted Adult”. Remind them that there will be a discussion on trusted adults later in the lesson.*
3. Let’s review how the three colors of a traffic signal can remind us of the signals God gives us to help keep us safe and protected.
4. **Green signal** - Means GO AHEAD. Some things are definitely safe. For example, telling the truth, being kind and respectful, helping others, caring about others, etc. 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?
5. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. *Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts of bullying. Ask the children to define it and what does it look like etc.* Some examples of bullying (being mean on purpose), are lying, hitting, fighting, etc. Can you help me think of other things that are never good to do or let someone do to you? When this happens, tell someone that you trust like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.

6. **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.

*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. This is because for children, it may be sometimes hard to distinguish between red and yellow situations; take the example of a stranger coming up to them and 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.***

In a moment, I'm going to read you some short situations. Please listen very closely to each situation. When I finish reading the situation, I am going to hold up a card with a signal color. Then, I will ask you if it is the right color card/signal for that story. Finally, I'll ask you about the feelings that go with that signal and situation.

Leader reads a situation from the list below and holds up one of the colored signal cards. Leader then asks the following questions:

- Is this the right-colored signal for this situation? Why or why not?
- How might you feel if you were in this situation? Why?
- What can these feelings tell you about whether or not a situation is safe?

*Read several situations aloud. **Make sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.** Situations with "secrets" are included and should be part of your selection.*

- a. GREEN SITUATIONS (*Select one or more*)
 - Your mom or dad kisses you goodnight when you go to bed. (*loved, comforted*).
 - You see your brother crying and you ask if you can give him a hug (*sad, caring*).
 - Your grandmother/grandfather wipes your tears when you fall down and hurt yourself (*loved, comforted, safe*).
 - Your dad is planning a surprise birthday party for your mom (*happiness, excitement, anticipation*).
- b. YELLOW/RED SITUATIONS (*Select two or more and remember to reinforce they are to always talk to a trusted adult.*)

- You are waiting for your parent to pick you up from school when an older kid asks you to come over to the playground because he wants to show you something cool on his phone. (*curious, confused*).
- Your big brother's friend wants you to wrestle with him. You don't want to because he is too rough, and it makes you feel uncomfortable (*worried, anxious*).
- You are at a family party. Someone asks you to sit on his/her lap, but you don't want to (*pressured, mad, and unsure*).
- An adult you know asks you to go with him without asking permission from your parents. He/she tells you that your parents won't care if you go with him/her, but "Don't tell your parents about our visit. They won't understand," (*unsure, funny feeling in your tummy or heart, curious*).
- You notice that your older sister is on the computer late at night when you get up to go to the bathroom. Your sister says not to tell anyone because both of you will get into trouble (*guilty, afraid of punishment*).
- Someone acts like your friend but then tries to get you to do something you don't want to do because you know it is wrong or because it makes you feel confused or funny. They say, "If you tell, I will tell everyone that this was your idea," (*confused, funny feeling, trapped*).

Go to Part 3

Activity -3 Red Signal Green Signal -Secrets

This Section is on 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.

Review with students the definition of "Safe", "Unsafe touch", "Feelings", "Safe Secret", "Unsafe Secret", and "Trusted Adult".

Sometimes secrets can 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 and 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?" If the answer is yes, it is important to talk to a trusted adult.

Have the children identify the following secrets as safe or unsafe:

- Your dad is planning a surprise birthday party for your mom.
- An adult you know asks you to go with him without asking permission from

your parents. He/she tells you that your parents won't care if you go with him/her, but "Don't tell your parents about our visit.

- Your parents are giving your sister a puppy for her Christmas and told you to keep it a secret.
- Someone acts like your friend but then tries to get you to do something you don't want to do because you know it is wrong or because it makes you feel confused or funny. They say, "If you tell, I will tell everyone that this was your idea,".

- 1- Have the children get into pairs and provide them with the Five Safety Tips on Secrets Worksheet (in back of the lesson)
- 2- Each pair will take turns reading the tips out loud to the other.
- 3- Each pair will draw a sign on the backside of the worksheet about the dangers of bad secrets.
- 4- The Safety on Secrets worksheet is sent home to the parents.

PART 3 -Required

Safety Plan

Materials needed:

Paper, markers/crayons

Summary of Key Concepts of Circle of Grace Handout for each child to take home (located at the end of the lesson).

"How to Ask for Help" Handout for each child to take home (located at the end of the lesson).

Parent take home letter and trusted adult activity sheet for each child (located at the end of the lesson)

Introduction

Review with the children the "Summary of Key Concepts of Circle of Grace" Handout before talking about Trusted Adults. Reinforce the prompting of the Holy Spirit to help make the right decision.

1. We have already mentioned the need to talk to a trusted adult when you are feeling unsafe, uncomfortable, or unsure about a situation or secret.
2. Now we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your *Circle of Grace* and does something that makes you feel unsafe, confused or uncomfortable.
3. *Write Trusted Adult on the board.*
4. Let's review what trusted adult means.
5. *Allow a few responses.*

6. 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*. We can trust them with your uncomfortable situations or secrets. 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.
7. How do you know you can trust someone?
8. *Allow a few responses.*
9. 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.

Identifying My Trusted Adults

Can anyone name a trusted adult you know, someone in addition to your mom or dad, whom you could go to for help?

1. *List children's responses on the board.*
2. Now that we have an idea of who some trusted adults are, we are each going to identify three of our very own trusted adults. In case one trusted adult is not available or does not understand your concerns you have two additional ones to go to when uncomfortable.
3. *Give each child the "Trusted Adult Activity Sheet" and crayons or markers. Give them time to identify and draw their three trusted adults.*
4. *Attach the Trusted Adult Activity Sheet to the take home letter for parents (see the end of the lesson.)*
5. *Instruct the children to have their parents sign the Trusted Adult Activity Sheet. Remind the children to give their parents the activity sheet that they can sign and return the next time they meet. 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 - How to Ask My Trusted Adult for Help

Pick a few of Red Signal or Yellow Signal situation/secrets below. Read them to the class and ask if they might need to talk to or ask a trusted adult for help. Write their suggestions on the board.

- Your big brother's friend wants you to wrestle with him. You don't want to because he is too rough, and it makes you feel uncomfortable
- You are waiting for your parent to pick you up from school when an older kid asks you to come over to the playground because he wants to show you something cool on his phone
- An adult you know asks you to go with him without asking permission from your parents. He/she tells you that your parents won't care if you go with him/her, but "Don't tell your parents about our visit. They won't understand,"
- You notice that your older sister is on the computer late at night when you get up to go to the bathroom. Your sister says not to tell anyone because both of you will get into trouble.

1. *Post the Skill Poster “How to Ask For Help”.* Review the skill steps below:
 - Look at the person.
 - Say, “I need to tell you something important.”
 - Clearly describe the problem.
 - Thank the person for helping you.
2. *Explain, “This is the skill of ‘How to Ask for Help’.* You can use it whenever you need to ask anyone for help. Today we are going to role-play how to use this skill when we need to talk to our parents or a trusted adult about uncomfortable situations or any other problem, trouble, or worry.”

Role-Play Introduction

According to research, we remember 5% of what we hear and 90% 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. *Explain:* Role-play is a way to practice something new.
2. *Pair the students and give each one a “How to Ask for Help” handout.*
3. *Instruct them to practice asking for help using the below skills:*
 - a. Look at the person. (Picture of an eye)
 - b. Say to the person “I need help. I do not feel safe.” (Picture of a child speaking/mouth)
 - c. Tell the person why you don’t feel safe (Picture of a question mark)
 - d. Tell the person, “Thank You.” (Words “Thank You”)
3. Bring the children back to a large group. Instruct children to bring “How to Ask for Help” handout home.

Wrapping Up

1. *Direct children’s attention to the “How to Ask for Help” Skill Handout.*
2. *Ask children to repeat after you the steps for “How to Ask for Help”.*
3. *Encourage children to pray for/or write a note of thanks to each of their trusted adults.*
4. *Remember to attach the activity worksheets to the Parent Home Take Home Letter.*

Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”



God gives each of us a Circle of Grace 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 experiencing 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 people in our lives to help us
- God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe.



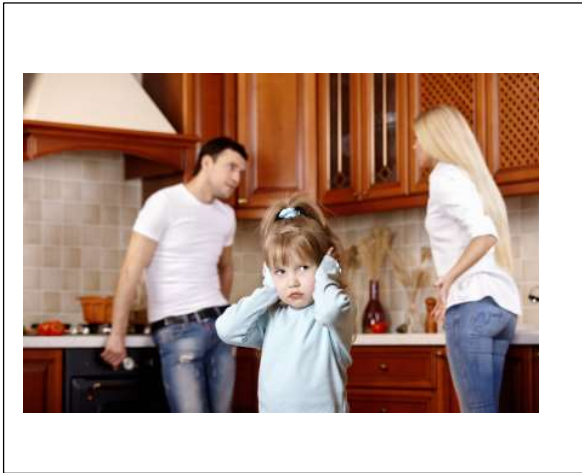
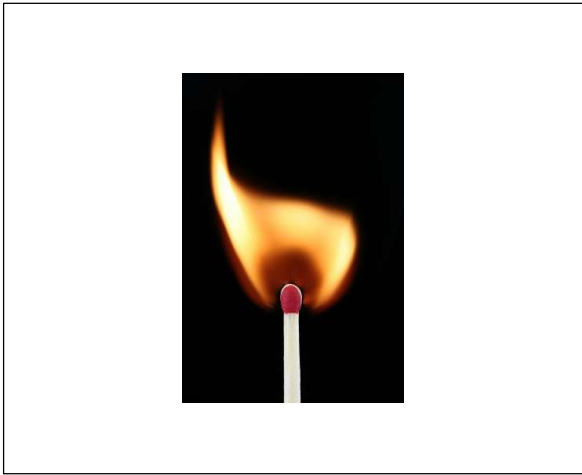


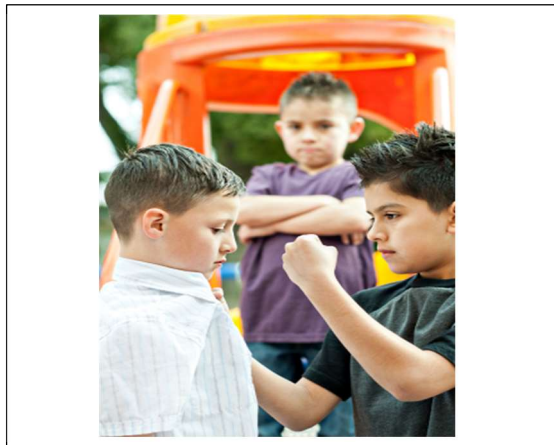
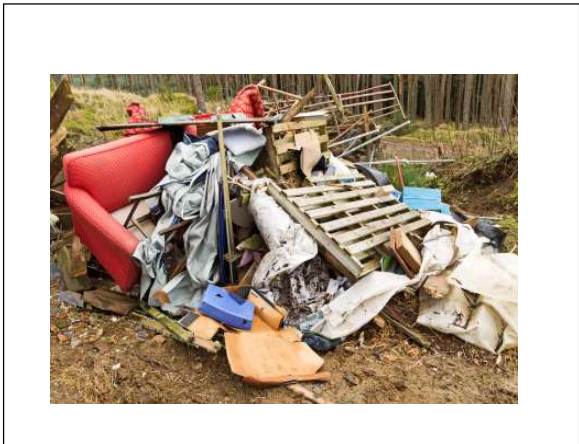
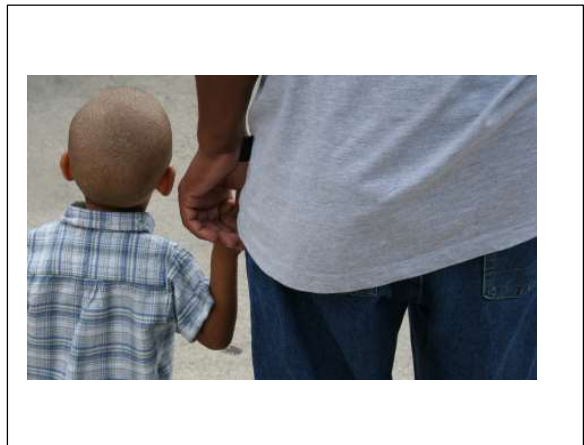
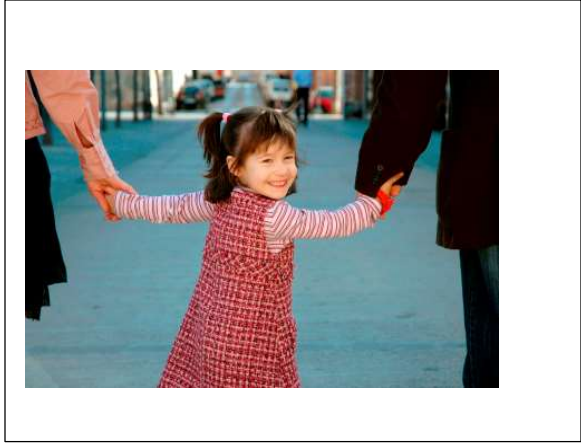
Circle of Grace Cards

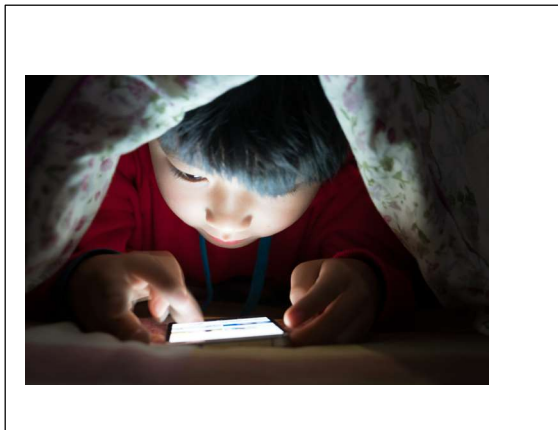
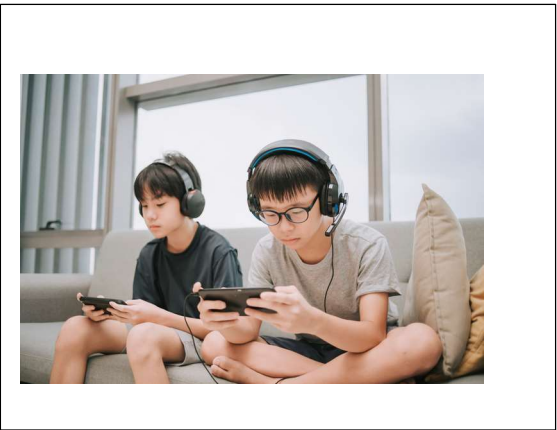
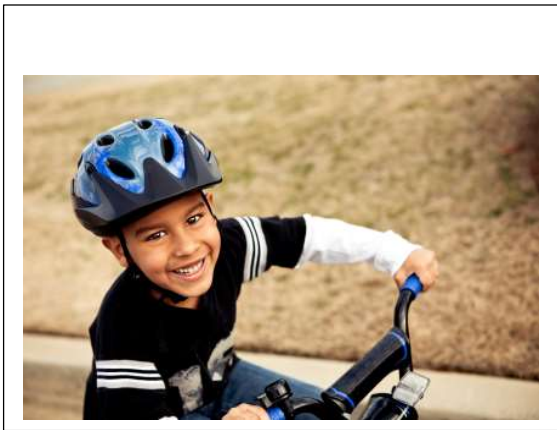
Circle of Grace Cards are pictures ready to be cut out for the activity. Provide enough sets of *Circle of Grace* cards for each small group. Laminating the cards will help preserve them for additional classes. Pictures have been provided.

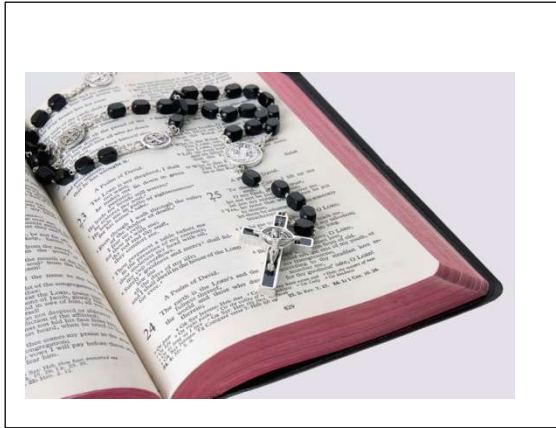
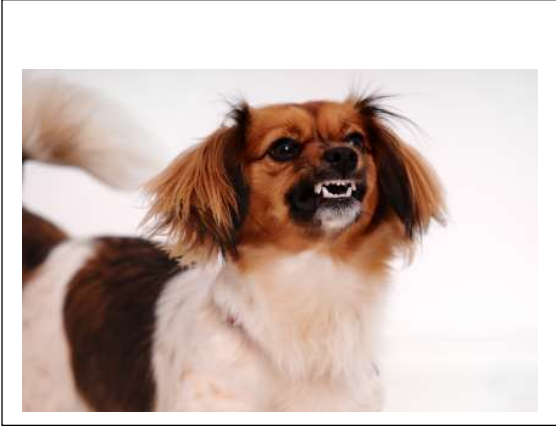
- Ball in the water
- Multigenerational family
- Family
- Hugs
- Computer
- Birthday cake
- Heart
- Cigarette
- Gun
- Matchstick
- Sisters fighting
- Parents arguing
- Clenched fist
- Girl holding hands
- Boy holding hands

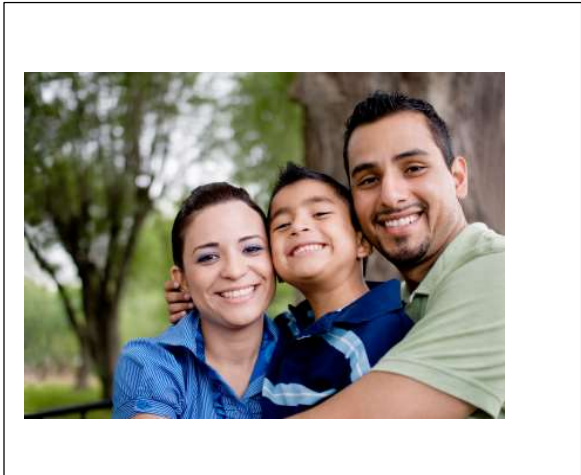
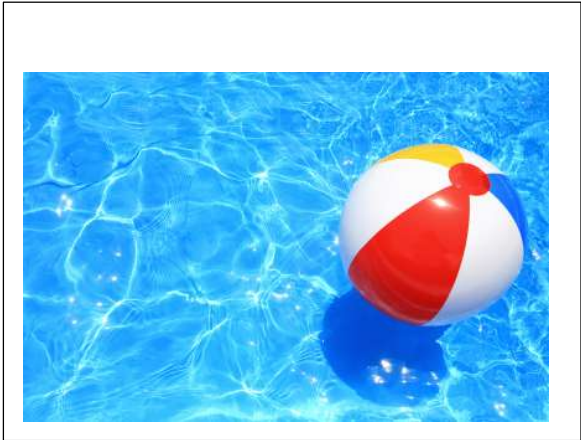
- Puppy and kitten
- Garbage
- Bully
- Bike helmet
- Drinks
- Prescription pills
- Family praying
- Car keys
- Phone
- Growling dog
- Youth gaming
- Bible
- Man with binoculars
- Flower
- Girl praying

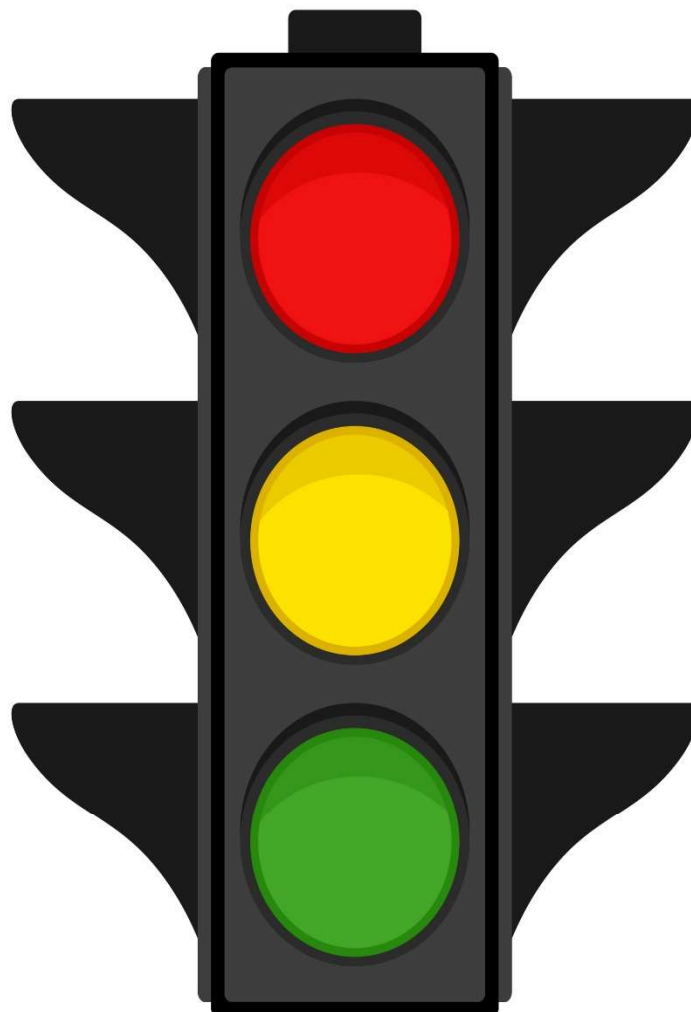


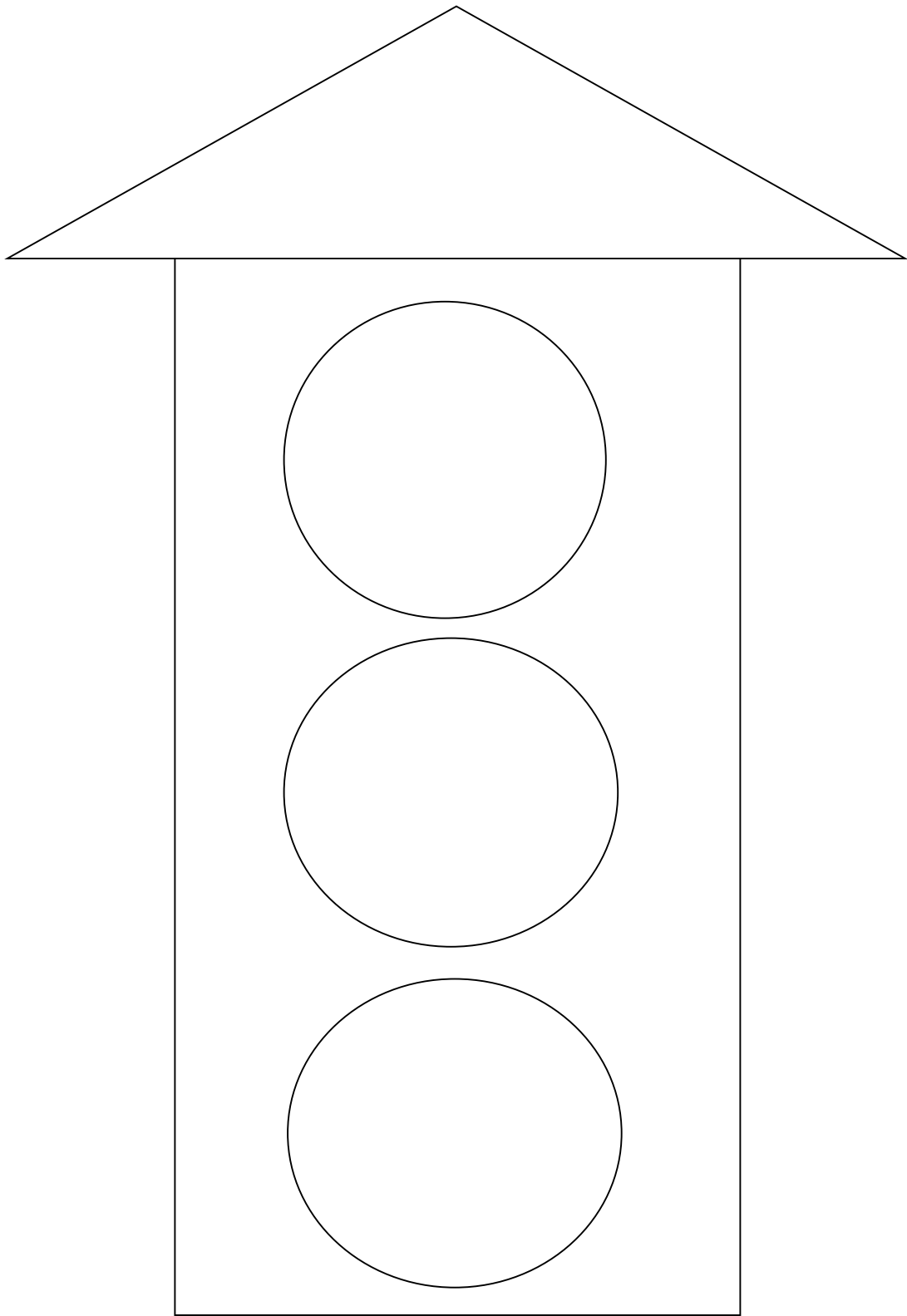






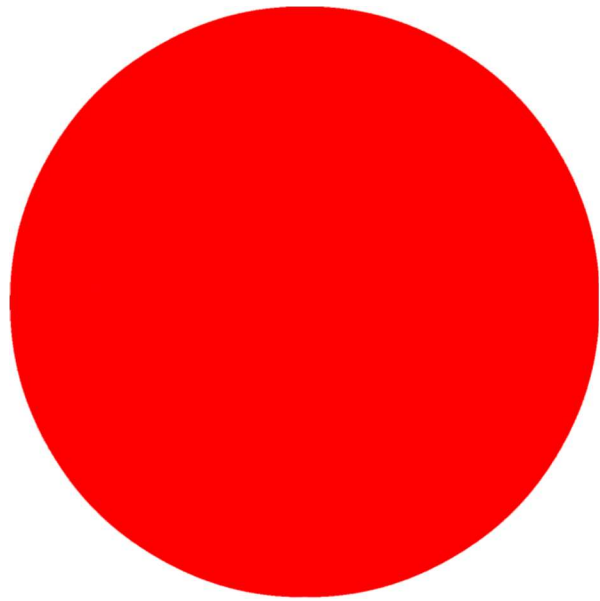
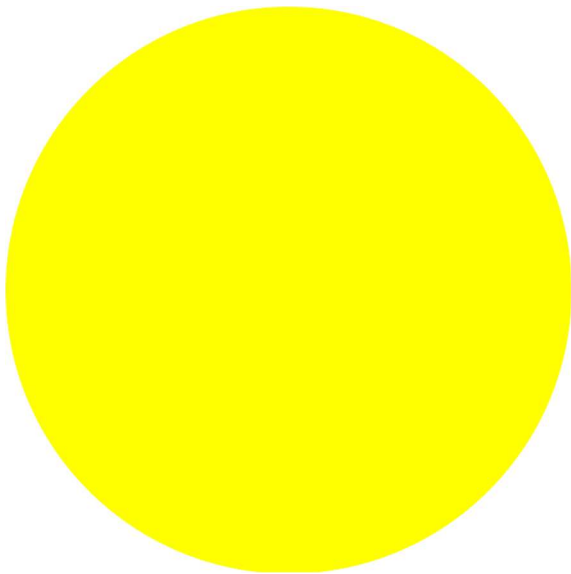
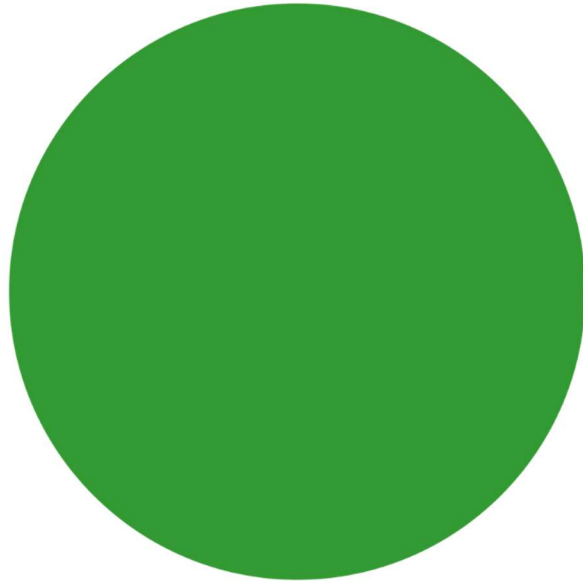






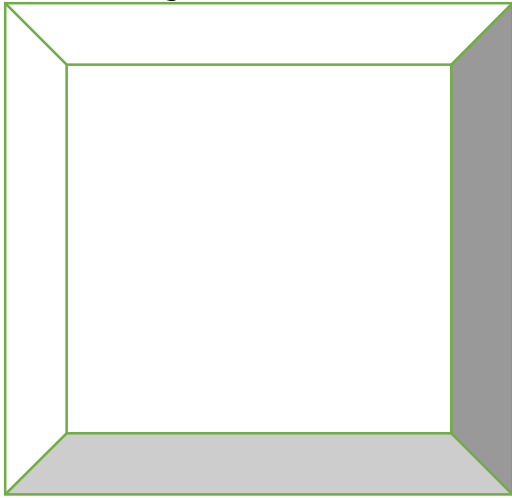
Red and Green Signal Activity

Template for a Set of Signal Cards

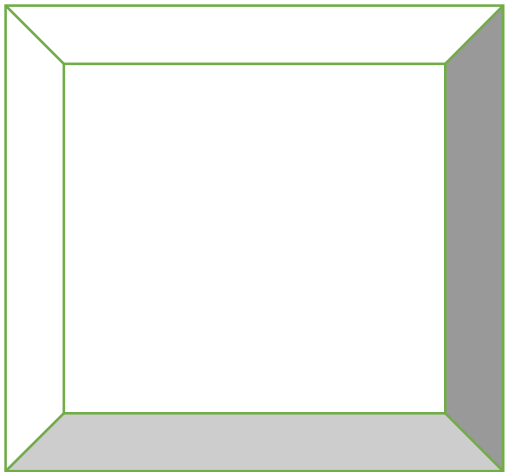


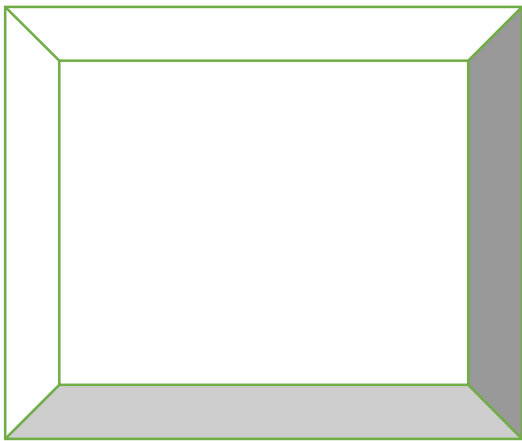
My Trusted Adult Activity Sheet

Draw 3 trusted adults



Trusted adults name & qualities.





*Parent Signature*_____

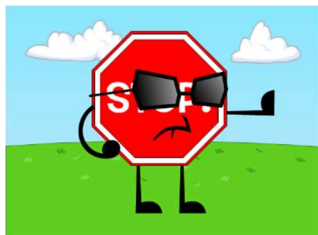
Five Safety Tips on Secrets Worksheet

Each pair will read the tips out loud to each other.

- 1- To be a good friend, I must share their secret with a trusted adult if it hurts others or themselves.
- 2- I will not get in trouble for telling a “unsafe secret” even if someone tells me differently.
- 3- It is never safe if someone tells you not to tell your parent/parents the secret.
- 4- I should always tell the secret if it makes me feel uncomfortable.
- 5- I should always tell the secret if I am unsure if it is safe.

Each student will draw on the backside of the worksheet a sign about the dangers of bad secrets.

Below are examples



HOW TO ASK FOR HELP



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"

Family, Faith and Circle of Grace

Kindergarten - Grade 2 Evaluation

Date _____

Parish/School _____ City _____

Leader _____ Number of children in class _____

Each grade's curriculum was designed to meet the overall program objectives.

Please check whether the objectives of the *Circle of Grace* Program were met.

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 and maintain appropriate boundaries.
4. YES _____ NO _____ Children can identify types of boundary violations.
5. YES _____ NO _____ Children can demonstrate how to take action if a boundary is threatened or violated.

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