

Circle of Grace

Safe Environment Training
Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery
Grade 9-12 Alternate Lesson

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 young people 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 young people 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 young people 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 young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where young people 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 young people 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>

Leader Guidelines

- A **Leader** is defined as clergy (priest or deacon) school administrator, director of religious education/formation, teacher, or catechist 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 young people, amount of discussion, etc.
- Vocabularies with definitions are intended for the leader. The explanation of vocabulary should be integrated within the context of the lessons to assist the young people in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Curriculum. A master vocabulary list is in the administration/director section. The pertinent vocabulary is listed in each lesson.
- Leader's instructions for each lesson are italicized. Non-italicized text needs to be presented by the leader to the students.
- 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 9-12 curriculum is formatted to be used in two ways:
 - ✓ The traditional way: lessons to the identified grade.
The lesson for grade 12 is only to be taught to seniors.
 - ✓ The second way: select any one of the alternate lessons or retreat to teach the class or group. Leaders will need to keep a record of what lesson is taught each year.
- 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 young people and help them to know what to do when they feel unsafe.
- Your School Administrator, Religious Education Director, or Youth Minister Director will be sending out a letter to all parents regarding *Circle of Grace*.
- 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.*

Knowing 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.

Human Trafficking: Modern Day Slavery

Sometimes young people 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 young person, "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 young person 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:

- Church teachings revealed in the Creed apply in our daily lives
- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- Personal covenant with God
- Live responsibly as fully initiated members of the Church
- Discipleship is our call to holiness
- The relationship between the love of God, our love of self and our love of others
- The image of God is in ourselves and others

Lesson Objective

Young People will be able to:

1. Identify and understand human trafficking
2. Recognize the warning signs that someone may be a trafficking victim, or ways youth may be coerced into human trafficking
3. Recognize that all persons are made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore are entitled to the dignity of the human person
4. Understand the connection between human trafficking and our *Circle of Grace*
5. Know how to respond when one is confronted with inappropriate interactions or violations.

Materials Needed

1. Summary of the Key Concepts of *Circle of Grace* handout for each student (front of lesson)
2. "Human Trafficking: Fact or Fiction" quiz for each student (end of lesson)
3. Leader Answer Guide to "Human Trafficking: Fact or Fiction" (end of the lesson)
4. "Bouquets for St. Josephine Bakhita" Handout (end of lesson)
5. Whiteboard or chalkboard
6. Art supplies (paper, markers, scissors, glue; paper plate optional)

Opening Prayer:

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

**God,
We ask for Your guidance and a little more:
guidance in relationships,
guidance in decisions,
guidance in love,
and guidance in worshiping You.
Amen.**

Getting Started

While we may want to believe that human trafficking is not that common, today we are going to open our eyes to the truth: Not only does human trafficking exist, it's happening in our own backyards and all over the world. Before we delve into discussion, let's find out how much we know about this important topic so far!

Opening Activity: Human Trafficking: Fact or Fiction? Quiz

Option 1 - Pass out the quiz to each student. Have the youth do the quiz individually and then go to the large group discussion section.

Option 2 - Pass out the quiz to each student. Divide the class into several groups. Have the groups discuss the questions on the quiz then go to the large group discussion section.

Large Group Discussion:

How would you define human trafficking? *Allow for a few responses then provide them with the definition.* Before today, what images would come to mind when you would think of human trafficking? Have any of these images come from television shows, movies, streaming apps etc.?

Allow for a few responses. Write them on the board.

Let's visit the questions on the quiz.

The answer guide to the quiz is at the end of the lesson. Discuss each question. Prompt the youth to identify the correct answer and key concepts related to each question. After the discussion, proceed to the review.

Review *(Distribute and review the Summary of the Key Concepts Circle of Grace handout. Have the students identify how each concept relates to their lives.)*

It is important that young people understand the relationship between the Circle of Virtue and the *Circle of Grace*. The *Circle of Grace* is always present and never leaves us. Our Circle of Virtue is our positive response to our *Circle of Grace* and can change due to our free will.

Circle of Grace: The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and others.

Circle of Virtue: Our response to the invitation of God's grace by cultivating goodness and virtue in our lives.

Vocabulary *Review the following vocabulary.*

1. **Exploit:** To take unfair advantage of someone/some situation in order to get some benefit.
2. **Freely Chosen Violations:** Every person is responsible for those violations they freely choose and know are wrong. We should never blame or accuse persons who are victims of abuse and manipulated or exploited in unequal relationships.
3. **Moral Responsibility:** As we grow into mature adults, we must take greater responsibility for protecting ourselves and others from violations of God's plan for our spiritual, sexual, and moral lives.
4. **Offender:** Someone who exhibits behaviors for the sole purpose of putting another person in a vulnerable position to be exploited/abused.
5. **Survivor:** A person who not only lives through but thrives despite abuse, affliction, or adversity.
6. **Victim:** A person who has suffered injury/harm (physical or emotional) by forces beyond his or her control and not of his or her personal responsibility.

New

1. **Human Trafficking:** Slavery in the form of *forced labor* or *sex trafficking* in which the victim is under 18 years of age, or is compelled by force, fraud or coercion, respectively, to provide labor or services, or to engage in a commercial sex act (in person or virtual). There is no requirement that the victim be transported or travel across a *national* border.
2. **Coercion:** Threatening physical or non-physical (psychological or financial) harm against someone in order to manipulate them into doing something they do not want or would not normally do.

Introduction

Each and every one of us, from the time of conception, are precious and made in the image and likeness of God. We are each entitled to human dignity. Whenever persons are pressured into doing something against his/her will or is being used for another person's own pleasure and/or profit, their value as a human person is not being respected. In the case of human trafficking, victims have been exploited and forced or lured into labor or sex trafficking. This of course violates physical, sexual, mental, and spiritual boundaries.

But even from the ugliness of human trafficking, God can make something beautiful and will continue to call all to greatness. In our next activity, we'll learn about St. Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of traffic victims, and how her faith grew strong as she reflected on her time in slavery.

Activity –Bouquets for St. Josephine Bakhita

1. *Distribute the St. Josephine Bakhita Handout to each student.*
2. *Divide the class into four groups.*
3. *Make sure each group has the paper, paper plate, scissors, and glue needed for this project.*
4. *Bring the groups back together and have them present their bouquet. Have the youth share their prayer. Consider displaying it in the classroom.*

Final Discussion -

We have now learned about human trafficking, as well as warning signs that may indicate someone could be a victim. What are some ways a young person can seek help if he/she is pressured into labor or sex trafficking? What are steps that we can take if we suspect someone is a victim of human trafficking?

Give the youth a chance to respond to the questions. Write the responses on the board. Prompt the following responses.

- Listen to your gut, it is the Holy Spirit prompting you that something is wrong. Learn to recognize the settings and interactions that can get you into uncomfortable situations.
- When someone pressures you, try to take yourself out of the situation.

Example: Prepare a response to get out of difficult situations. Discuss possible responses with your parent or trusted adult.

- You can free yourself from unhealthy relationships by seeking help from a trusted adult.
- Tell someone who can help you. Talk to someone you trust – parent, professional, counselor, or other trusted adults.

Closing Prayer:

**God help me slow down
and be present to Your everlasting love.
Help me have REAL conversations with You
that guide and heal my brokenness.
Cultivate in my heart Your truth
and help me respond to Your Grace.
Give me courage to reject the lie
that You are a “distant” God.
Bless me with the gift of discernment,
knowing Your compassion and love is not relative
but eternal.
Your greatest desire from me
is my sincere “yes”.**

Amen

Opening Prayer

God,
We ask for Your guidance and a little more:
guidance in relationships,
guidance in decisions,
guidance in love,
and guidance in worshiping You.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

God help me slow down
and be present to Your everlasting love.
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Bless me with the gift of discernment,
knowing Your compassion and love is not relative
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Your greatest desire from me
is my sincere "yes".

Amen

Human Trafficking: Fact or Fiction?

Complete the following questions. Be prepared to discuss them in the large group.

1. Slavery no longer exists in the world today.
True False
2. Signs that someone may be a victim of trafficking includes being nervous, depressed, paranoid, and unwilling to make eye contact. This person may also be fearful of law enforcement or of those in positions of authority.
True False
3. According to the Department of Defense, 2023 statistics on worldwide human trafficking include: \$99 billion is estimated to be made annually through sex trafficking.
1 million people throughout the world are victims of forced sexual exploitation.

True False
4. According to The International Labor Organization, women and girls account for 4.9 million of those in forced commercial sexual exploitation.

True False
5. The International Labor Organization also states that there are an estimated **14.2 million people trapped in forced** labor across the globe.
True False
6. In your own words, what does it mean if someone is coerced into something?
7. Because human trafficking is such a lucrative business (brings in a lot of money), the men, women, and children involved are extremely well taken care of.
True False
8. Victims are often lured into trafficking with promises of money, great jobs, adventure, protection, or even "love."
True False
9. Being coerced into labor or sex trafficking is a violation of that person's physical, emotional, spiritual, and often times sexual boundaries.
True False
10. What does the phrase "We use objects, not people" mean to you?

Human Trafficking: Fact or Fiction?

Leader Answer Guide. Be prepared to discuss them in the large group.

1. Slavery no longer exists in the world today.
False. As we'll discuss, human trafficking is the modern-day slavery.
2. Signs that someone may be a victim of trafficking includes being nervous, depressed, paranoid, and unwilling to make eye contact. This person may also be fearful of law enforcement or of those in positions of authority. *True. Victims are also often unable to answer questions about themselves such as where they live or at what location they are at. When giving their story, details may be inconsistent.*
3. According to the Department of Defense, 2023 statistics on worldwide human trafficking include: \$99 billion is estimated to be made annually through sex trafficking.
1 million people throughout the world are victims of forced sexual exploitation. *False. 4.5 million people throughout the world are victims of forced sexual exploitation.*
4. According to The International Labor Organization, women and girls account for 4.9 million of those in forced commercial sexual exploitation.
True.
5. The International Labor Organization also states that there are an estimated **14.2 million people trapped in forced** labor across the globe. *False. According to The International Labor Organization, 27.6 million victims are forced into working in industries including agriculture, construction, domestic work, and manufacturing.*
6. In your own words, what does it mean if someone is coerced into something? *Threatening physical or non-physical harm (psychologically or financially) against someone in order manipulate them into doing something they do not want to or would not normally do.*
7. Because human trafficking is such a lucrative business (brings in a lot of money), the men, women, and children involved are extremely well taken care of. *False. Often times victims of trafficking are extremely malnourished, show signs of physical, mental, and/or sexual abuse, do not have access to health care, have very few possessions, and access to little to no money.*
8. Victims are often lured into trafficking with empty promises of money, great jobs, travel and adventure, protection, or even "love." They are also lied to about the true conditions or details of the work. *True. Trafficking victims are often lied to and then controlled through violence, threats, and fear. Often times, their photo ids, license, passports, money, etc. are also taken from them, making escape more difficult.*
9. Being coerced into labor or sex trafficking is a violation of that person's physical, emotional, spiritual, and often times sexual boundaries. *True*
10. What does the phrase "We use objects, not people" mean? *Being that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, we should not use or take advantage of others for our own needs and desires. We use things, or objects...not people!*



“Bouquets for St. Josephine Bakhita”

St. Josephine Bakhita is the patron saint of human traffic victims. Kidnapped and sold into slavery as a young girl, St. Josephine went on to be traded to different masters more than a dozen times in as many years. She spent so much time in captivity she forgot her own name! During her time as a slave, she was often treated cruelly and even tortured. Eventually, St. Josephine found herself given to an Italian family. That family placed her in the custody of the Canossian Sisters in Venice. It was through the Sisters that St. Josephine learned of Jesus Christ, and even began discerning a call to religious life. After a court battle, St. Josephine was granted her freedom from slavery. She not only became Catholic, but followed God’s call and became a Sister, as well. Even though she had suffered greatly while being wrongly enslaved, St. Josephine ended up leading a joyful life serving others and recognized how God used this time as a slave to deepen her faith and brought her to Jesus!

“Bouquets for St. Josephine Bakhita”

- Cut or tear large scraps of paper. You will need at least twelve.
- On each scrap, write an example of a negative impact of human trafficking, and which boundary (physical, sexual, mental, or spiritual) it impacts. (Ex: *Victims are not seen as people and are used for others’ personal pleasure or profit; this violates a spiritual boundary.*)
- Take each scrap and roll or shape it into the form of a rosebud...don’t worry, it doesn’t have to be perfect, or even pretty!
- Glue or tape your “rosebuds” together to make a bouquet. You may also glue them to a large paper circle or paper plate, if that would be easier.

~Prayers for Victims of Human Trafficking~

“If I were to meet the slave traders who kidnapped me and tortured me, I would kneel and kiss their hands, for if that did not happen, I would not be a Christian and Religious today.”

–St. Josephine Bakhita

Write your thoughts about St. Josephine’s quote on the backside of this handout. Is this something hard to understand? What allowed her to forgive her captors? Who are we called to forgive?

Now that you’ve made something beautiful from your time spent identifying and reflecting on the ways that victims of trafficking may be hurt physically, sexually, mentally, and spiritually and how St Josephine accepted her cross with faith, write a prayer for all those affected by trafficking. Be sure to ask St. Josephine Bakhita for her intercession!

Evaluation

Date _____

Parish/School _____ City _____

Leader _____ Number of young people 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 _____ Young People understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. YES _____ NO _____ Young People will be able to describe the *Circle of Grace*.
3. YES _____ NO _____ Young People will be able to describe Circle of Virtue.
4. YES _____ NO _____ Young People are able to identify and understand what human trafficking is.
5. YES _____ NO _____ Young People are able to recognize warning signs that someone may be a trafficking victim, or ways youth may be coerced into human trafficking.
6. YES _____ NO _____ Young People are able to recognize that all persons are made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore entitled to the dignity of the human person
7. YES _____ NO _____ Young People will know what action to take when pressured or when experiencing other boundary violations.

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

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

Return to your School Administrator, Director of Religious Education, or Director of Youth Ministry.