

Circle of Grace

Safe Environment Training

Preschool - 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 Program different from other protection 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 Program - Grades K-12

The goal of the *Circle of Grace* program 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 Program - 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 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>

Preschool Leader Guidelines

- 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* and desires an intimate relationship with His children.
- The time frame may vary depending on size of class, age of children, 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 children in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Program. The depth of the children's understanding will depend upon their age and developmental stage.
- The Red Light, Green Light, Activity may be adapted to a Happy, Neutral, and Sad Face Activity if the leader believes the children have not been exposed to a stoplight.
- 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.
- There should be no more than two to three weeks between the last two lessons. 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 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 Packet is included in the Program. Every parish/school is encouraged to provide parent-education opportunities both to inform parents about the *Circle of Grace* program 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 program 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 people in our lives to help us when we are troubled or struggling with a concern.
- God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns or funny/uncomfortable feelings so they can help us be safe and take the right action.

Lesson 1

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.

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*.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Begin to demonstrate his/her own *Circle of Grace*.
2. Begin to describe what makes a person's *Circle of Grace* a holy space.
3. Begin to identify the behaviors appropriate for the *Circle of Grace*.

Vocabulary (*This is the K through 2 vocabulary list adapted for the preschool class.*)

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. (Circle – something that goes around)
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. (We are holy, connected to God by his love for us.)
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. (The Holy Spirit is not scary.)
6. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God. (Someone who is there for you when you are sad or hurt.)
7. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.

Materials Needed

1. *Circle of Grace* Logo (see the end of Preschool Lessons)
2. Whiteboard or chalkboard
3. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a “happy/sad face chart”
4. *Circle of Grace* Logo coloring page/black and white version (see the end of Preschool Lessons)
5. (Optional) Happy Face coloring page (see the end of Preschool Lessons)
6. Markers or crayons (optional)
7. Happy Face Stickers

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. Then say together,

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

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. Where is our *Circle of Grace* and where are other people’s Circles of Grace?
2. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.
3. Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
 - a. Reach with both arms as high as you can over your head.
 - b. Circle your arms down on each side and bend down until you reach all the way under your feet.
 - c. As you stand back up again, turn all the way around once as you raise your arms back over your head.
4. This is the *Circle of Grace* that you live in.
5. Repeat steps a, b, and c to reinforce physical dimensions of *Circle of Grace*.

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. How do we know someone loves us? (Some examples: they help us, they make us cookies, and they give us hugs.) We are always in a special, holy place because God loves us. That place is our *Circle of Grace*. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us. (Review that the Holy Spirit is not scary.)
3. If we can remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace*, with God and surrounded by God's love, we will remember to behave by caring and respecting ourselves and others.

Optional Activities - Color page

1. *Color the Circle of Grace coloring page - black and white version. Leader may choose to use color pages from each Optional Activity to form a Circle of Grace Color Book for the children.*
2. *Have children draw their own Circle of Grace.*

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? (Things that hurt your feelings or make you feel bad.)*
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 belong in 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.*

Optional Activity - Color page

Color the Happy Face coloring page. Leader may choose to use color pages from each Optional Activity to form a Circle of Grace Color Book for the children.

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.*
2. *Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:*
 - a. *Reach with both arms as high as you can over your head.*
 - b. *Circle your arms down on each side and bend down until you reach all the way under your feet.*
 - c. *As you stand back up again, turn all the way around once as you raise your arms back over your head.*
3. *This is the Circle of Grace that you live in.*
4. *Pass out the Happy Face stickers.*

Closing Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. 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.**

Lesson 2: The Stoplight

Feelings, Touch, and Secrets

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 be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Begin to 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.
2. Begin to learn how to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*.
3. Begin to be able to recognize safe and unsafe situations in a person's *Circle of Grace*.
4. Begin to distinguish between safe and unsafe secrets in a person's *Circle of Grace*.

Vocabulary (This is the K through 2 vocabulary list adapted for the preschool class.)

1. **Feelings**: Something I sense inside myself (e.g. angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, calm, etc.) that gives me information about others or myself.
2. **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. (The Holy Spirit is not scary.)
3. **Safe**: I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.
4. **Safe Touch**: Touch that respects others and me. (A touch that does not hurt or feel funny.)
5. **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 or someone tells me not to tell my mom or dad.

6. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be inside or outside my body. (Makes my tummy hurt, makes me cry.)
7. **Stoplight:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
8. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*. (Someone who is there for you when you are sad or hurt.)
9. **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*. (Like your mom, dad, teacher, or grandparents.)
10. **Unsafe:** Anything that causes harm to myself or others.
11. **Unsafe touch:** Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.

Materials Needed

1. Large picture of a stoplight with all three colors visible - red, yellow, and green (see the end of the Preschool Lessons)
2. One set of red, yellow, and green circle cards per child, the backside of each colored card should be white and the front side red, yellow, or green
3. Feeling Faces Chart (see the end of the Preschool Lessons)
4. Completed Happy Face and Sad Face chart from Lesson 1
5. Pictures of activities to show the children that correlate with the situations (clip art or magazines)
6. Color Pages (optional)
7. Markers or crayons (optional)
8. The Stoplight Home Activity Sheet for Parents (see the end of the Preschool Lessons)

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. Then say together,

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

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. We want our children to understand that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.

Review

1. Ask children to stand and demonstrate their Circle of Grace as learned in previous lesson. (Leader may need to model the movement.)
2. Point to Happy Face and Sad Face chart from Lesson 1. Ask children the following:
 - a. What did we write on this chart? (Answer: words and actions we like and don't like from others.)
 - b. What were some of the words and actions you liked? Why?
 - c. What were some you did not like? Why?

Today 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 know what doesn't belong in our Circle of Grace.

Discussion

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

Lesson Development

Introduction

The use of the word "signal" (instead of "light") is intentional in order to point to the fact that a "signal" can be both internal and external. A "stop light", however, is only an external reality.

Towns and cities have stoplights which are signals to keep people safe. God has given each of us our own kind of signal to keep us safe. 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 in your Circle of Grace. Sometimes, though, you need others 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 stoplight: 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.* Examples include: holding your parents hand while crossing the street, listening to the directions at preschool.)
3. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. Some examples are being mean or bullying, 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 face 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.

Activity - Red Light, Green Light

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. Give each child a set of red, green, and yellow cards. (*It is important that they know their colors.*)
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'll then ask you each to hold up the color card that you think best fits the situation.
 - 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.*
 4. *After reading a situation, give children a moment to think and then ask them to hold up a red, green, or yellow card. 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. You may want to include pictures of the situations below.)*
 - a. GREEN SITUATIONS
 - 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*).
 - b. YELLOW/RED SITUATIONS (Always talk to a trusted adult.)
 - You push someone out of line so you can be first (*mad, selfish*).
 - You are playing at the neighborhood park with your mom. 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 older relative wants to kiss or hug you, but you don't like it because he or she smells funny (*confused, impolite, "icky", etc.*).

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?'"

I am going to read some more situations that have a secret.

- Please listen very carefully.
- At the end of each, I'm going to ask you if you think the situation calls for a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal. I'll then ask you each to hold up the color card that you think best fits the situation.
- Then we'll talk about each situation.

GREEN

- Your dad is planning a surprise birthday party for your mom (*happiness, excitement, anticipation*).
- Your parents plan to get a puppy but don't tell you until they bring it home (*surprised, loved*).

RED/YELLOW (Always talk to a trusted adult.)

- Your brother throws a ball and it accidentally breaks a window. He asks you not to tell (*guilty, afraid of punishment*).
- Someone is "not nice in your *Circle of Grace*", they say that you will get into trouble if you tell your mom or your dad.

5. *If children are unsure, wrong, or you are seeing more than one color card held up for a given situation review the definitions for red, yellow and green situations. You may also ask the following questions:*

- What would your mom or dad want you to do in these situations?
- What can your mom or dad do to help you?

Wrapping Up

1. *Send Home Activity Sheet for Parents.*
2. *Review these definitions of feelings with the children. Give examples of feelings.*
 - 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. *We have talked about these situations as green, red, and yellow to help children know how to respond and how to recognize their feelings.*
4. *In Lesson 3, they will learn that sometimes they need to talk to trusted adults to help them understand the meaning of these signals.*

Optional Activity – Color page

Color the Stoplight Color Page.

Leader may choose to use color pages from each Optional Activity to form a Circle of Grace Color Book for the children.

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.*
2. *Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:*
 - a. *Reach with both arms as high as you can over your head.*
 - b. *Circle your arms down on each side and bend down until you reach all the way under your feet.*
 - c. *As you stand back up again, turn all the way around once as you raise your arms back over your head.*
3. *Tell the children, "This is the Circle of Grace that you live in."*

Closing Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. 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.**

Lesson 3

Safety Plan

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 demonstrate how to take action if boundaries are threatened or violated.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Begin to 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.
2. Begin to understand that God wants them to do what they can to take care of themselves.
3. Begin to name three trusted adults (in addition to their parents) whom they could seek out for help.
4. Begin to learn and role-play the skill of “How to Ask for Help”.

Vocabulary *(This is the K through 2 vocabulary list adapted for the preschool class.)*

1. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*. (Someone who is there for you when you are sad or hurt.)
2. **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*. (Like your mom, dad, teacher, or grandparents.)

Materials Needed

1. Whiteboard or chalkboard
2. Construction or coloring paper for each child
3. Markers or crayons for each child

4. Create one large Skill Poster of “How to Ask for Help” with following steps (see the end of the Preschool Lessons for a sample):
 - a. Look at the person.
 - b. Speak in “BIG” voice so that they can hear you. (model this for the class.)
 - c. Say, “I need to tell you something important.”
 - d. Clearly describe the problem.
 - e. Thank the person for helping you.
5. Color Pages (optional)
6. The Trusted Adult: Home Activity Sheet for Parents (see the end of Preschool Lessons)

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. Then say together,

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

Summary of Vocabulary (to assist leader in reinforcing introductory concepts)

1. **Children of God:** All people. We are all made by and loved by God.
2. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others. (Circle – something that goes around.)
3. **Feelings:** Something I sense inside myself (e.g. angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, calm, etc.) that gives me information about others or myself.
4. **Grace:** The gift of God’s goodness and love to help me live as his child.
5. **Holy:** Special because of a connection with God who loves me always. (We are holy, connected to God by his love for us.)
6. **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. (The Holy Spirit is not scary.)
7. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what’s best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
8. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and others.
9. **Safe Touch:** Touch that respects me and others. (A touch that does not hurt or feel funny.)
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 or someone tells me not to tell my mom or dad.
11. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be inside or outside my body. (Makes my tummy hurt or makes me cry.)

12. **Stoplight:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
13. **Symbol:** A picture or object that stands for something else.
14. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*. (Someone who is there for you when you are sad or hurt.)
15. **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*. (Like my mom, dad, teacher, or grandparents.)
16. **Unsafe:** Anything that causes harm to myself or others.
17. **Unsafe touch:** Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.

Getting Started

Review

1. Show children the *Circle of Grace Symbol*.
2. Tell the children, "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. Show a large picture of a stoplight (see the end of *Preschool Lessons*).
4. Review the meaning or purpose of a stoplight by asking:
 - Why do we have stoplights?
 - What does each color of the stoplight mean?
(STOP, BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.)
5. The reason we have stoplights is to keep people safe. Sometimes people say or do things that make us feel funny in our heart or tummy. That funny feeling tells us that we need to get help from a trusted adult. The Holy Spirit is guiding us to help keep us safe.

Lesson Development

Introduction

1. Today we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your *Circle of Grace* and does something that makes you feel unsafe.
2. Briefly review the key concepts from the last 2 lessons.
3. Write "Trusted Adult" on the board.
4. Today, our focus is on a term that you have heard before - "Trusted Adult".
5. Let's discuss what we mean by a "Trusted Adult".
6. Allow a few responses.
7. 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."
8. How do you know you can trust someone?
9. Allow a few responses.

10. 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.

Activity - Identifying My Trusted Adults

1. 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.
2. *List children's responses on the board.*
3. These are people whom you can ask to help you if you are unsafe or confused. We call these people trusted adults.
4. *Give each child a piece of paper and crayons or markers.*
5. *Instruct the children to think of one or two trusted adults besides mom or dad whom they could ask for help.*
6. Tell a person next to you the names of the trusted adults that you picked.
7. *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.*
8. *Attach the drawing to the Home Activity sheet for parents for lesson 3 (see the end of the Preschool Lessons).*
9. *Instruct the children to have their parents sign the Home Activity Sheet.*
10. *Remind the children to bring the Home Activity Sheet back to the classroom for the next class.*

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." (*Picture of a child speaking/mouth – see the end of the lessons.*)
 - c. Tell the person what is wrong, why you don't feel safe. (*Picture of the question mark "?" see the end of the lessons*)
 - 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. 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.

Optional Activity - Color page

Color the How to Ask for Help color page. Leader may choose to use color pages from each Optional Activity to form a Circle of Grace Color Book for the children.

Role-Play Introduction

Remember, 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.

1. Explain, "Role-play is a way to practice something new like when you play house or other pretend games."
2. Select one of the situations from Skill Introduction that the children think they might need to talk to or ask for help from a trusted adult. Explain that, "Today we are going to practice asking for help when (situation)." (Example: "Today we are going to practice asking for help when someone wants me to go next door to their house and I don't think my mom and dad want me to.")
3. Ask the children to brainstorm ideas of how they would tell a trusted adult they felt unsafe. Encourage the children to clearly describe why they feel unsafe. Examples: "My mom told me to stay in the yard." "She can't see me if I am out of the yard." "I don't know him."
4. Have the children practice with the leader role-playing the trusted adult. This role-play activity may be done individually or as a large group.
 - a. Children look at the leader.
 - b. Children say aloud, using their BIG voice, "I need your help. I don't feel safe."
 - c. Children say aloud, "Please help me because... (Example: "Please help me because I don't think my mom or dad want me to go with her. I don't know her.")
 - d. Children say aloud, "Thank You."

Wrapping Up

1. Direct children's attention back to the "How to Ask for Help" Skill Poster.
2. Ask children to repeat after you the steps for "How to Ask for Help."
3. Encourage children to pray for, write a note, and/or a drawing of thanks to each of their trusted adults.
4. Review the Circle of Grace movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.
5. Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
 - a. Reach with both arms as high as you can over your head.
 - b. Circle your arms down on each side and bend down until you reach all the way under your feet.

- c. As you stand back up again, turn all the way around once as you raise your arms back over your head.
6. *Tell the children, "This is the Circle of Grace that you live in."*

Closing Prayer

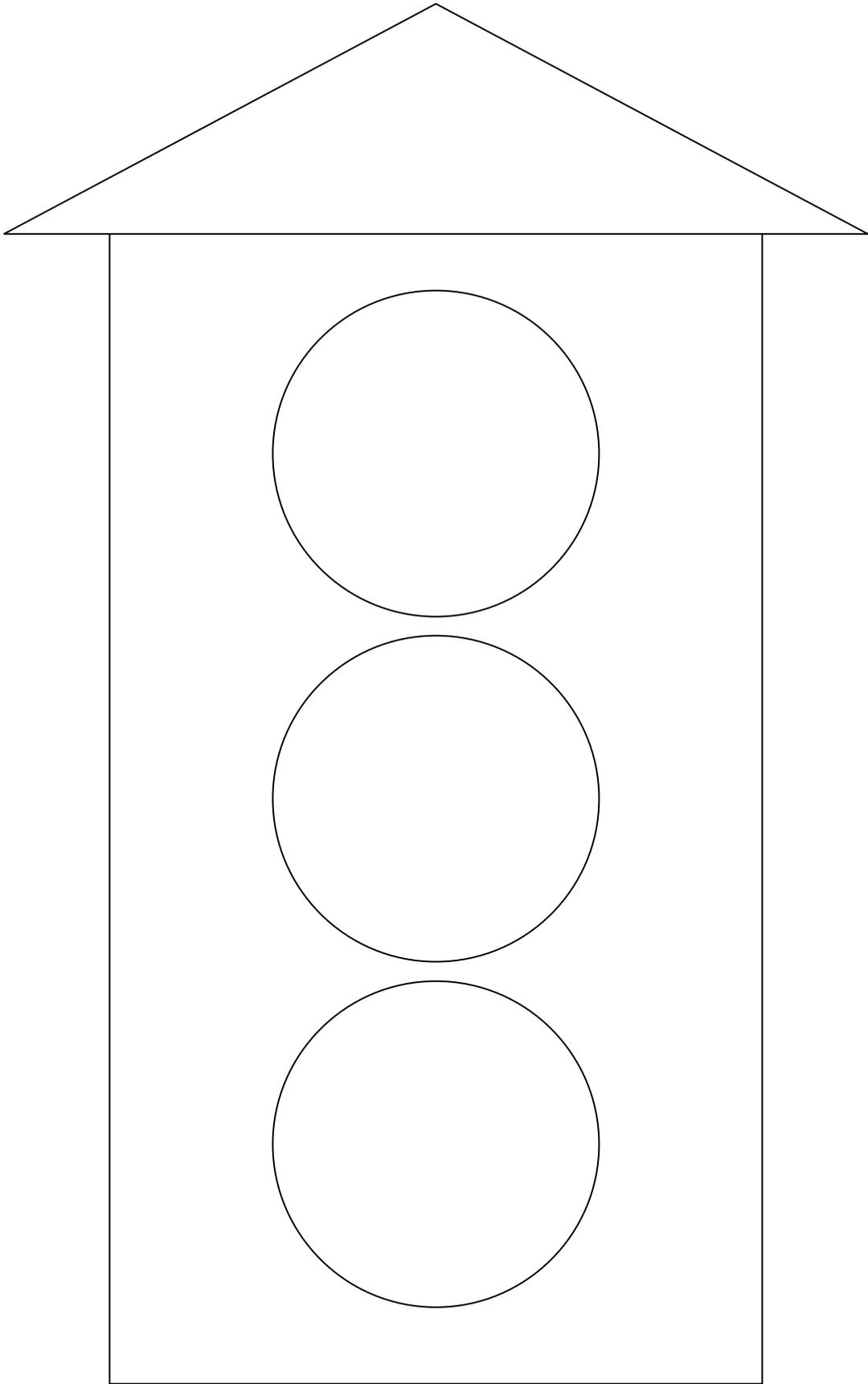
Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down. The leader does the Sign of the Cross modeling it for the children. Then say together,

**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.**

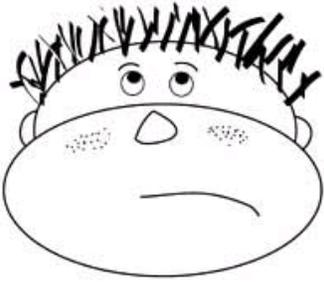








Feeling Faces Chart



Embarrassed



Frustrated



Happy



Lonely



Loved



Mad



Sad



Nervous



Proud



Relaxed

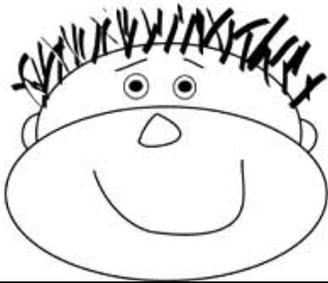


Scared



Stressed

Feeling Faces Chart/No Labels





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We welcome your feedback on this *Training Module*. Please go to the CSEFEL Web site (<http://csefel.uiuc.edu>) or call us at (217) 333-4123 to offer suggestions.

Lesson 2

The Stoplight: Home Activity Sheet for Parents

The goal of Lesson 2: The Stoplight - Feelings, Touch, and Secrets is to help children identify safe and unsafe situations/secrets. The children are now better able to understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them, to understand that God is with them and for 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 in a person's *Circle of Grace*.

In this lesson, we use the analogy of a stoplight 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.

It is important for you as parents and guardians to reinforce this lesson 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).

Your support of the *Circle of Grace* Program is essential and very much appreciated as we strive to provide the safest possible environment for our children.

Lesson 3

The Trusted Adult: Home Activity Sheet for Parents

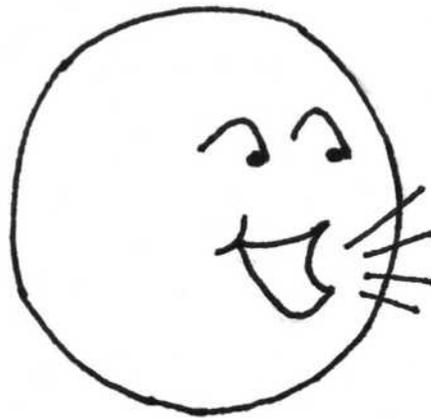
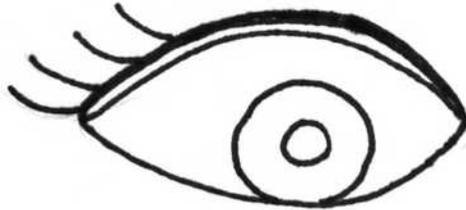
The goal of Lesson 3: In this lesson, we ask children to name and draw a picture of trusted adults (in addition to their parents). Please ask your child to show you this drawing. If your child names someone you find inappropriate, please help him/her to identify someone else.

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 your cooperation!

How to Ask for Help



Thank You

Preschool 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 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 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.