ARCHDIOCESE OF SANTA FE

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Guidelines for Implementation 2020-2021

From the Office of the Safe Environment Coordinator Archdiocese of Santa Fe 4000 St. Joseph Place NW Albuquerque, NM 87120 831-8144

To receive this information in electronic form, please email your request to Annette Klimka at aklimka@archdiosf.org
PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH
In compliance with Archdiocesan Policy and USCCB Directives

Guidelines for 2020-2021 Implementation in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe

Each Catholic School, Parish Religious Education and Youth Program for children ages 5 through 18 will follow these guidelines for implementation of the Protection of Children and Youth program. The School Principal, Catechetical Leader and/or Youth Ministry Leader will oversee the following:

1. **Training for Adults:**
   - Ensure that every adult both paid and volunteer has attended the Virtus Training for Adults: Creating a Safe Environment for Our Children and completed a background check.
   + A list is sent to each parish every year with names of those from your parish who have already participated in the Virtus Training for Adults: Creating a Safe Environment for Our Children, in past years. On the list, the column “Training” is the one that indicates the date the training was received. Also, the list has a column for the date the background was completed.
   - Provide Teacher training for catechists, teachers, and youth ministers **who will be presenting** Circle of Grace Program.

2. **Youth Protection Training:** Ensure that all adults both paid and volunteer who will be teaching religious education classes to children and youth in any parish or school activity have completed the required training. This training ensures the diocese that all adults have been given information on what materials and resources to use to teach the self protection classes.

3. **Children and Youth Sessions:** Schedule the Circle of Grace sessions for teaching children and youth how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger. A session is mandatory to each group of children and youth each year.
   - The Circle of Grace program is the only program that will be used and must be presented every year. The classes need to be presented at the beginning of the religious ed year, complete the report form and **Please return forms to Annette Klimka as early as possible.**

4. **Approved Resources:** the Archdiocese of Santa Fe uses the Circle of Grace Program

5. **Parents:** Inform parents of the date when the sessions will be offered for children and youth, and give them the opportunity to preview the material that will be used.
   - Parents always have the option not to send their children to that class without being penalized.
   - If parents choose not to let a child attend the session, please collect a signed form or note indicating that they do not want their child to participate. These forms must be kept and sent to the Catholic Center along with the Teaching Report 2020-2021 form.
   - In the event parents do not want their children to attend the session and do not turn in a note to that effect, **please keep a list of those children and send it to the Catholic Center along with the Teaching Report 2020-2021 form.**
   - A sample letter to parents is on a following page. The letter also includes a note for parents to **return who do not want their children to participate.**

6. **Teaching Report 2020-2021 Form:** Complete the “Circle of Grace Teaching Report 2020-2021” form when the sessions with children/youth are completed.
   - All of the information on the form must be completed for each grade/group of children and youth.
Return the completed form to the Safe Environment Coordinator at the Catholic Center as soon as possible
Forms may be mailed or hand-delivered to Annette Klimka or Rose Garcia at the Catholic Center or emailed to aklimka@archdiosf.org

SUMMARY:

Send the following **as soon as classes are completed** to:
Annette Klimka  
Victim Assistance and Safe Environment Coordinator  
4000 St. Joseph Place NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87120

- Any Parent refusal forms or notes from parents indicating that they did not want their child to participate in the sessions.
- The Teaching Report 2020-2021 Form with all the information completed.
- Pastor of the parish and school must sign and date the form.
PROVIDING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
Archdiocese of Santa Fe Requirements

In the effort to provide a safe environment for all children and young people in our care, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe policy requires the following:

1. **PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN, VIRTUS TRAINING FOR ADULTS** explains signs and symptoms of child abuse, how to respond to a disclosure of child abuse, sexual abuse and ways of detecting it, responding to it and preventing it; describes standards of conduct and New Mexico law and Archdiocesan policies and procedures for reporting suspected abuse.

**Who must attend this workshop?**
According to Archdiocesan policy, the Virtus Training is required for all employees and volunteers.

Workshops are scheduled by the Safe Environment Coordinator’s office. The schedule is published in the People of God newspaper and on www.archdiosf.org.

2. **BACKGROUND CHECKS** are completed by the Safe Environment Office to insure that all those who may have contact with children or youth at the parish or school have had no criminal complaints filed against them alleging sexual abuse or harassment.

**Who must submit information for a background check?**
*All employees and volunteers are required* to submit their personal information needed for a background check. If the Safe Environment Office needs additional information about an employee or volunteer for the background check, they will contact the parish and request the information. Please cooperate and provide the needed information. For more information, contact Annette Klimka at 831-8144.
CIRCLE OF GRACE REPORT FORM
2020-2021

Date ___________ School / Parish ______________________ City ___________

Circle One
Director of Religious Ed.  Director Youth Ministry  Catechetical Leader  School Administrator

Data: Please enter the number of children/youth who completed the program for each grade.
K _______ 1st _______ 2nd _______ 3rd _______ 4th _______ 5th _______ 6th _______

7th _______ 8th _______ 9th _______ 10th _______ 11th _______ 12th _______

Number of children/youth who did not participate in program per parents’ request ______

Attach a copy of the written documentation of the parents’ request.

➢ A student does not have to complete all the sessions to be counted as completing the program

DRES/CL

Name: __________________________________________________________

Date: __________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________  _______________________
Pastor’s Signature  Date

Protection of Children and Youth
Letter to Parents

Please adapt this letter as needed for the local situation. Print on Parish or School letterhead and distribute to all parents before presenting the program on Protection of Children and Youth to the children or young people.

Date

Dear Parents,

We are writing to inform you about a special class we will be teaching as part of your child’s regular religious education in the upcoming weeks. This class aims to teach children how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger.

In the Church’s desire to help you keep your children safe, the Archdiocese requires that all children and young people participating in religious education in any parish or Catholic school in the Archdiocese, receive instruction in protecting themselves and communicating potential danger to a parent or other responsible adult.

The document titled Promise to Protect, Pledge to Heal, Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People, written by the Catholic Bishops of the United States, contains the following instruction: Dioceses will establish safe environment programs that will “provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children.” The Archdiocese of Santa Fe, in order to comply with this instruction, has mandated that programs to educate children on how to be safe, protect themselves, and communicate any potential danger, be offered annually to children of all grades in Catholic schools and parish religious education and youth programs.

This instruction will take place during the regular religious education class time during the week of ______________. The materials that will be used for this instruction will be available for you to see in the parish or school office. (or There will be an opportunity for parents to view the materials that will be used for this instruction at a parent meeting on ______________. This meeting will also include some ideas for parents to help them keep their children safe and talk effectively with them about abuse.)

If, for any reason, you do not want your child/children to participate in this class, please sign the form below and return it to the Office. We will honor your request.

If you have questions or any other concerns, please contact ___________________________ at this number ___________________________ during regular office hours.

Sincerely,

________________________

________________________

My child ___________________________ may NOT participate in the session for learning how to stay safe and protect himself/herself from potential abuse.

Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Protection of Children and Youth
EJEMPLO
Carta para los Padres de Familia

Por favor adapte esta carta a las necesidades de la situación local. Imprima en papel con la insignia de la Parroquia o Escuela y distribuya a los padres de familia antes de presentar el programa de Protección para los Niños y Jóvenes a los niños o a los jóvenes.

Fecha

Estimados Padres de Familia:

Le escribimos para informarle acerca de una clase especial que se enseñará como parte de la educación religiosa regular de su hijo/a durante las próximas semanas. Esta clase pretende enseñar a los niños y jóvenes a estar seguros, a protegerse a sí mismos y a comunicar cualquier peligro potencial.

En el deseo de la Iglesia de mantener a sus hijos a salvo, la Arquidiócesis requiere que todos los niños y jóvenes que participen en la educación religiosa en cualquier parroquia o escuela Católica en la Arquidiócesis, reciban instrucción sobre cómo protegerse a sí mismos y comunicar cualquier peligro potencial a sus padres o a otro adulto responsable.

La Arquidiócesis de Santa Fe, para poder cumplir con el documento, Promesa de Proteger, Garantía de Soñar, Estatutos para la Protección de Niños y Jóvenes escrito por los Obispos Católicos Americanos, ha ordenado que se lleven a cabo programas anuales para niños en todos los grados de las escuelas Católicas, en los programas parroquiales de educación religiosa y en los programas para jóvenes, para educarlos sobre cómo estar a salvo, protegerse a sí mismos y sobre cómo comunicar cualquier peligro potencial.

Esta instrucción se llevará a cabo durante las clases regulares de educación religiosa durante la semana de_____________, Los materiales que se utilizarán para esta instrucción estarán disponibles para que ustedes puedan revisarlos en la parroquia o en la oficina. (o Habrá una oportunidad para que los padres revisen los materiales que se utilizarán para esta instrucción durante una reunión en _______________)

Si ustedes no quieren que sus hijos participen en esta instrucción, favor de llenar la forma debajo de esta carta y regresárla a la oficina.

Si ustedes tienen alguna pregunta o inquietud, por favor póngase en contacto con_______________ al número de teléfono _________________ durante las horas regulares de oficina.

Sinceramente,

__________________________

*****************************************************************************

NO doy permiso de que mi hijo/hija _____________________________ participe en la clase sobre cómo protegerse a sí mismo y comunicar cualquier peligro potencial a un adulto responsable.

__________________________  ____________________________
Firma del Padres de Familia o Guardiana Legal  Fecha

Protection of Children and Youth
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
BEST PRACTICES TO CONTINUE PARISH BASED RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
FOR THE 2020-2021 CATECHETICAL YEAR

The below are recommendations for safely resuming both distanced and, when the time comes, in-person formation classes. These recommendations are based on the following guiding principles:

Out of fraternal love, we keep the Safety, Wellbeing, and Health of our catechists, children, families, and entire parish community at the forefront in resuming the catechetical ministry.

Socially distanced (at home) Faith Formation

- The Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has advised Parish Catechetical Leaders to have a contingency plan for distanced, at-home, or web-based Religious Education (Faith Formation, Catechism classes) through, at least, the Advent-Christmas Seasons.
- If possible, set up on-line registration have registration mailed in to parish or dropped off
- Safely compile ‘at home’ packets for parents/children (See Attachment A)
- Check in regularly by phone, video chat, email, Flock Note, etc. with parents/guardians/grandparents to see how they are doing (not just with classes but as a family trying to stay safe and well), if they need help or prayers, if they have questions, etc.
- Creatively involve the entire family in the lessons and interactive activities that provide depth and fun
- Recommend websites, videos, etc. for parents to add greater formation opportunities (MRC website: https://archdiocesesantafegiving.org/ministry-resource-center-mrc)
- Seek permission to use any Copyrighted material before making copies

Virtual Faith Formation

- The Office of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe has advised Parish Catechetical Leaders to have a contingency plan for distanced, at-home, or web-based Religious Education (Faith Formation, Catechism classes) through, at least, the Advent-Christmas Seasons.
- If possible, set up on-line registration have registration mailed in to parish or dropped off
- Obtain parent/legal guardian permission for student to use web conference/internet based platform (safe environment protocols) which includes recognition that classes will be recorded and stored for a time (See Attachment B)
- Obtain parent/legal guardian permission for parish to post photos or screen-shots on parish website, official Facebook, Instagram etc. (See Attachments C.1 & C.2)
- Have two (2) safe environment certified adult catechists or youth ministers present for on-line or phone conference classes at all times
- Ensure adult catechists stay connected/on-line (“in the room”) until every child logs off the platform so children are not left on the platform unsupervised.
- Know the protocols for the platform being used to keep participants safe and protect them from on-line predators
- Be aware of family limitations to technology and scheduling conflicts based on school requirements or parent work requirements and be flexible when mandating attendance
  o Provide alternatives for those without Wi-Fi access, those who have data limits on smart phones or have limited shared devices.
• Check in regularly via phone, video chat, email, Flock Note, etc. with parents/guardians/grandparents to see how they are doing, if they need help or prayers, if they have questions, etc.
• Provide a Code of Conduct for those participating in virtual classes (See Sample Permission regarding appropriate behavior and dress, participants remain in common area of home where parents can monitor).
  o Code of conduct would apply to parents, grandparents, godparents who join in the class discussions
• Address bad behavior of the child with child and parents as soon as possible (a parent or guardian should be in the vicinity of the area the child is connected to the class)
• Learn what resources Catholic publishers offer for on-line learning.
  o Most have on-line components that complement text books for faith formation as well as worksheets, etc. (See Attached Supplemental Resource list)
  o Religious Education publishers offer webinars on “how to” use their on-line services and any associated costs
• Ensure that any video or other links provided are authentic Catholic teaching
  o Check with your pastor or the Archdiocesan Pastoral Ministries Offices if you do not know.

In-person (classroom) Faith Formation:

• Know the parish facility’s capacity and number of children in each room and how many children and catechists make up the percentage allowed by approved guidelines (i.e. 25% - 50%)
• Train catechists and volunteers with regard to safety and health protocols regarding distancing, cleaning, disinfecting, etc.
  o Catholic Mutual offers advice on their website for this
  o Symptoms of COVID-19 and what to watch for in themselves and children
• Schedule cleaning and disinfecting of spaces used
  o Know whose responsibility it will be to ensure cleaning/disinfecting happens
    ▪ Parishes may have janitorial staff taking care of the church; but, they may not be responsible for other parts of the parish plant (i.e. classrooms)
  o Ensure there are sufficient supplies and materials needed (disinfectant, gloves, masks, etc.)
    ▪ Be aware that parishes with large groups of children and multiple other formation ministries who share a common space may find this task more complicated and may require greater effort in planning.
    ▪ Identify frequently touched areas (door handles, tables, desks, chairs, light switches, copy machines, etc.)
• Limit non-essential visitors
• Set up rooms with a minimum of 6’ distance of individual space for catechists, children/youth
  o Children youth should all be facing the same direction (i.e. desks, tables & chairs, mats, etc.)
  o Use a larger facility if the classroom space is too small to distance (i.e. parish hall, church, gym, etc.) for formation classes
• Provide CDC approved hand sanitizer for every classroom
• Stagger arrival/dismissal times, bathroom visits, etc. to avoid congregation of groups
• Avoid instances where masks would have to be removed such as meals, snacks, etc.
• Provide or recommend children bring bottled water rather than using water fountains or sinks
  o Water should be consumed outside of classroom
• Ensure each individual (catechists, children, youth, guests) wears a mask (3-ply) while at parish facilities.
  o Those who are medically excused from wearing a mask should have accommodations made for them to use distanced learning options from home.
• Consider use of a COVID-19 screening questionnaire (See Attachment D) and/or take temperatures (100.4° +) for catechetical staff, children, visitors (i.e. parents needing to pick up a child or be in a classroom for special needs children)
• Encourage those who are ill to stay home
• Ensure that books and other materials are not shared by children.
  o Each child should take possession of and be responsible for bringing books or materials to class each session.
  o If possible, text books or workbooks, folders, etc. may be stored at the parish facility if each child has a specific location where their materials may be kept separately (cubby, desk, etc.) and only the individual child accesses the materials.
• Explore new ways of group tasks, projects, community service, retreats that would not require gathering in groups or sharing supplies (See Attachment E)
• Avoid any activities that include contact between participants (i.e. games, holding hands, etc.)
• Provide alternatives to in-person catechesis for parents who are concerned about their child attending class.
  o Let empathy and compassion be your guide for parents concerned about the health and safety of their child, family, etc.
  o No “mandatory’ in-person classes, community service, projects, etc.
Safer practice for creating ‘at home’ Religious Education/Faith Formation packets:

- Stay home if sick or not feeling well.
- Maintain social distance of a minimum of 6’ from others
- Wear a mask or face covering (3-ply).
- Disinfect office equipment (i.e. copy machine, keyboard, mouse, etc.) before/after each individual use.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds before and after using office equipment and after touching other frequently used items (i.e. doorknobs to common rooms, cellphones, etc.)
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds a sneeze, blowing nose, cough etc.
- Wash your hands prior to assembling packets or anytime you change tasks then return to assembling packets.
  - Or - Wear gloves to assemble children’s / family packets.
- Do not touch your face as you are assembling packets
- Have as few people as possible touching papers as packets are assembled.
- Place packets in an envelope or bag (some way to contain all materials).
- Provide a contact sheet with phone number, email address, etc. should parents have questions regarding the materials.
- Complete assembly of packets at least 5 days prior to mailing or distributing to prevent inadvertent transmission of COVID-19 which can live up to 5 days on paper.
- Mail packets to families or have contactless pick-up of materials. (Spread packets out with enough room so that parents do not have to touch anyone else’s packet to find their child/family’s).

If handing out packets (i.e. drive by):
- Complete assembly of packets at least 5 days prior to mailing or distributing to prevent inadvertent transmission of COVID-19 which can live up to 5 days on paper.
- Have only the number of people necessary to get the task done effectively
- Staff/volunteers are to wear a mask/face covering and disposable gloves.
- Have each staff/volunteer member remain with the packets that are to be handed out and not move between other bundles (i.e. A-C, D-F, G-I, etc.).
- Maintain social distance with those picking up packets (hand off packet without visiting)

Pray that all families who receive the packets for faith formation are kept safe and that the Holy Spirit guide them in their efforts to continue learning about the Faith.
SAMPLE

VIRTUAL PLATFORM PERMISSION SLIP
Virtual Catechesis and Youth Ministry

_____________________________ Parish, __________________________, New Mexico

Catechist’s/Youth Minister’s Name: __________________________________________

Catechist’s/Youth Minister’s Phone Number: ________________________________

Catechist’s/Youth Minister’s Email Address: _________________________________

On-line events and session regarding catechesis will be held in lieu of our regularly scheduled
catechetical in-person sessions. The program(s) will use software, tools and applications
provided by third-parties that participants, parents/legal guardians, volunteers and/or staff will
access via the internet and use for purposes of communication and programming and potential
content creation. These platforms may include but are not limited to: Zoom, Google Classroom,
GoToMeeting, Skype Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

We will be hosting different on-line events/sessions to continue to connect with, minister to, and
share the faith with the children and youth of our parish.

This Form provides your consent and release for your child to participate in the program(s) and
utilize these online applications for distance-based, virtual program purposes. Please be aware
that each application collects different information about its users and has its own privacy terms
and conditions to which members must adhere and which our parish or the archdiocese cannot
control or assume responsibility. Please review these carefully before registering your child. Our
commitment to keeping the children and youth we serve safe is always our number one priority.
To that end, we will actively monitor and may record participant activity.

The Following is the Code of Conduct we are asking all youth participating to follow:

1. Parental Permission
2. Appropriate Dress
3. Log/call in to the online platform from shared living spaces where others can monitor that
   the online call is going on
4. Youth are to abide by appropriate language in both chat and online related platforms

Permission to Participate:
I grant for my child to participate in these catechetical and youth ministry events that will be
carried out through on-line platforms during 2020. All on-line communications, class times,
chats, etc. will be monitored by at least 2 safe environment certified adult: catechists/youth
ministers at all times.

I have read this Consent and Release Form and have had the opportunity to consider its terms
and understand them.

I further hereby hold harmless, release and forever discharge the Parish of ________________
and the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and its employees, agents, licensees and legal
representatives from, and shall indemnify them against, all claims, demands, and causes of action which I, my heirs, representatives, executors, administrators or any other person(s) acting on my behalf or on behalf of my estate have or may have by reason of my Child's participation in the program(s) and through my authorization, consent and release herein. I have read this Consent and Release Form, I fully understand it, and I voluntarily agree to be bound by its terms. I represent and certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the minor.

I Agree Yes ☐ No ☐

Parent/Legal Guardian Name: __________________________________________

Email: ______________________________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________

City: _____________________________ State: NEW MEXICO

Below, please find your AUTHORIZATION, CONSENT AND RELEASE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA OR OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION INVOLVING MINORS FORM.

I, ____________________________, am the parent or legal guardian of ________________________.

Please approve this permission slip by either emailing your official permission to the Catechist or Youth Minister stated above by either text or email. The Church, Catechist, Director of Religious Education, and/or Youth Minister will keep record of those texts/emails for any future reference.
August 2020

Dear Parents,

One of the important duties in these uncertain times is our obligation to protect our children and youth and keep them safe.

The Archdiocese of Santa Fe requires all children and youth from Kindergarten through 12th grade, who attend a Catholic School, Religious Education or Youth Ministry program, to be taught Circle of Grace lessons each year. Because of the unexpected disruption of classes and parish life recently, your child/ren or teens may not receive these important lessons this academic year.

We are asking you, as the primary and most important catechists of your children, to help us provide for the safety of our children by discussing the attached “Circle of Grace Discussion and Activity” packet with your family. There are questions and activities for Kind. - grade 2, grades 3-5, grades 6-8 and high school students.

Please read over this packet and use the questions and activities as a springboard for discussion with your children about how they are made in the image and likeness of God, that God wants them to be safe even more than we can imagine, and that God puts people in their lives (parents and trusted adults like teachers, grandparents, etc.) to help them be safe and help them if something bad does occur.

A little about the Circle of Grace curriculum:
Circle of Grace educates and empowers children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others, while being taught in the framework of our Catholic faith.

Circle of Grace lessons bring God and our Catholic beliefs into the center of child protection by teaching:

- God’s presence and assistance in difficult and confusing situations as an essential component in the Pre-K– gr. 12 curriculum.
- a philosophy that can be used at all times that reinforces God’s real presence in our lives, respect for self and others, and skills for good decision making.
- the sacredness of each person and how relationships are called to be experiences of divine love.

Circle of Grace contributes to the protection of our young children and affirms them as beloved children of God. Please help us by discussing these very important lessons with your children and family.

If you have any questions or would like some additional age/grade-specific activities for your children, please don’t hesitate to ask. My number is your contact information

God bless you and your family,

___________________________________________
Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”

*Circle of Grace Concept (see below) is a way to describe God’s constant “Presence”*

*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 when we are troubled or struggling with a concern
  - God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns and “uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe and take the right action.
Discussions and Activities  
from the Circle of Grace Curriculum

Kindergarten through grade 2 lessons introduce and reinforce the material with varied activities. All three grades have the Stoplight analogy to help them identify green, yellow and red situations, feelings attached to these situations and when to talk to a trusted adult.

Below are discussion points and activity helps children identify what belongs in and outside their Circle of Grace:

Discussion

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

Activity – Circle of Grace Cards

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

1. Have child/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 (begins or continue a pile). If the child is not sure, the child should put the card outside the pile until he or she asks for help from the leader (Trusted Adult). See the end of the packet for the Circle of Grace Logo.

Closing Activity

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

For grades 3-5 is the below activity. Children learn about being treasured by God, boundaries, and how to seek help from a trusted adult. Below is discussion development and activity which focuses on helping children understand that as Children of God we are treasured and filled with grace.

Lesson Development

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

➢ Show students pictures or examples of precious items that, because they are so special, receive extra care. Possibilities might include:
   o The American Flag
   o A special set of china dishes that are a family heirloom
   o Ask the children for other examples

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

➢ The final and MOST IMPORTANT example of care given to precious items are the special measures taken to protect and care for...
• A Consecrated Host, The Blessed Sacrament
  o Not only do we keep it in a special vessel and in a special locked box but also when we handle it we do so
    with the ultimate reverence and respect.
  o We even build a special building, the church, where it is housed, and there are many special behaviors for
    when we are in the presence of Christ in The Blessed Sacrament.
  o Ask students for examples of special behaviors we use in church to show respect.
    - Folding hands
    - Genuflecting
    - Reverent silence

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

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

Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth grades cover boundaries, relationships, respect, bullying, and how to be
morally responsible in today’s culture. The PLAAN concept is introduced in these grades. Please
discuss potential situations that you would want your child to remember PLAAN.

PLAAN SUMMARY
1. Write on the board:
   P – Protect
   L – Listen
   A – Ask
   A – Act
   N – Notify
2. Review
➢ The first letter “P” stands for Protect with Respect.
  • How do you think respect can help us protect our Circle of Grace?
    o Answers should include:
      ▪ respecting ourselves as a child of God respecting others because they are also Children of God keeping
        unsafe words, touches, and images out of our Circle of Grace
  • The letter “P” is about knowing that each of us has a Circle of Grace and respecting it.
➢ The letter “L” stands for Listen.
  • In every situation we need to remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us stay safe.
  • The Holy Spirit gives us feelings or instincts, and we need to listen to them.
  • The letter “L” connects us with the Communion of Saints and the qualities we have been given as
    expressions of God’s love.
The letter “A” stands for Ask.
  • When you have an uncomfortable feeling, you are recognizing the Holy Spirit helping you know that something is not right.
  • The letter “A” asks: “Does this say, “Yes,” to what God has called me to be? Does this belong in my Circle of Grace?”
  • There are some questions that the letter “A” reminds us to ask ourselves whenever we are in a situation that makes us feel uncomfortable or that just doesn’t feel quite right. The questions are also good ones to ask every so often even when we don’t get a gut feeling. Sometimes asking the questions helps us to hear the Holy Spirit when we did not remember that we needed to listen.
  • Read each question allowing a few moments for quiet reflection
    1. How long have you known this person?
    2. Is your knowledge of this person face-to-face? 
    3. . . . Is the relationship respectful of your boundaries and the other person’s?
    4. Are you able to say, “No,” to this person?
    5. Does this person’s age or status influence your behavior in the relationship? 

The next letter “A” stands for Act.
  • To protect your Circle of Grace you need to tell trusted adults you need help.
  • There are other things you can do to protect your Circle of Grace when your parents or trusted adults may not be around. Some of them are:
    1. Don’t reveal personal information on the Internet. This includes full names, school, grade, address, phone, sports teams, church groups, etc. Perpetrators try to identify young people by learning about their activities and schedule patterns. Be particularly cautious of social networking websites such as myspace.com and personal blogs.
    2. Stay away or get away from situations that make you feel uncomfortable. 
    3. . . . Be cautious about situations in which one is left alone with an adult.

The last letter “N” stands for Notify.
  • Notify your parents or another trusted adult whenever someone or has violated your boundaries, such as manipulating to control you or not respecting your Circle of Grace or someone else’s Circle of Grace.
  • Think of three people besides your parents whom you can trust, whom you feel will listen and would offer help. Ask yourself these questions:
    • Do these people respect your Circle of Grace?
    • Do they respect their own Circle of Grace?
    • Do they respect the Circle of Grace of other people that you know?

Closing Activity

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

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

Please discuss a few of the scenarios with your teen:

1. One of your coaches thinks you can make the select team if you work a little harder on some skills. The coach offers to stay late and work one on one with you to help improve skills after everyone else has gone home. Pause. This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?
  • An adult arranges to be with a young person alone.
What would need to change to make this situation safe? (Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe
circumstances listed above.)

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

This situation is not safe. What is unsafe here?

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

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

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

**Ask the following questions:**

- Do you remember the last Circle of Grace lesson in which we provided you scenarios about unsafe behavior? Today we are going to talk about a practical plan for times when you might find yourself in those types of situations. Please see the below discussion questions to review with your child:

  - Do your friends, boyfriends/girlfriends, or family members...
  - _____ Embarrass you by calling you names/put downs?
  - _____ Look or act in ways that scare you?
  - _____ Like to control your friends and whom you hang out with?
  - _____ Pressure you into doing something that makes you feel uneasy... 

Discuss other events in your lives and schools in which youth have been in unsafe situations and relationships.

**Review the following points:**

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

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