

# *Circle of Grace*

Safe Environment Training  
*Third-Fifth Grade Lesson Plan*

## *Circle of Grace Vocabulary 3-5*

**Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God which always surrounds me and all others.

**Boundary:** The borders or limits we need to keep ourselves safe within our *Circle of Grace*.

**Treasured:** We are so unique and precious that we could not be replaced in God's eyes.

**Violate:** To break a law, promise, or boundary.

### **Social Media/Networking**

**Blog:** An online journal. Personal stories or thoughts can be posted as in a personal journal. This is a public journal that anyone can access.

**Chat Room:** The name given to a place or page in a website or online service where people can chat with each other by typing messages which are displayed almost instantly on the screens of others who are in the chat room.

**Instant Messaging (IM):** Technology similar to that of chat rooms which notifies a user when a person is online allowing them to converse by exchanging text messages.

**Location Application:** An application used in phones to find a location of a popular spot (restaurant, park etc.). People use the application to check in and it broadcasts the location to all of their friends.

**Micro Blogging:** This service allows users to give updates about what they are doing in less than 140 characters

**Social Networking Service and Websites:** These services and websites are used to communicate with (a person) or search for information about (a person).

**Video Sharing Service:** This service allows users to watch videos posted by others and to upload videos of their own.

### **Other Terms**

**Cyber Bullying:** Use of the internet, cell phone or other electronic device to send or post texts or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

**E-mail:** Electronic mail. Sending/ receiving a type written message from one screen to another.

**Flaming:** Sending a deliberately confrontational message to others on the internet.

**Inappropriate Material:** Pictures or words on the internet that makes one feel uncomfortable, scared, or that intentionally degrades a human person.

**Netiquette:** Courteous, honest, and polite behavior practiced on the internet.

**Personal Contact Information:** Information that allows an individual to be contacted or located in the physical world, i.e. a telephone number or an address.

**Phishing:** An identity theft scam in which criminals send out spam that imitates the look and language of legitimate correspondence from e-commerce sites. The fake messages generally link to websites that are similarly faked to look like the sites of respected companies. On the sites, users are directed to enter their personal information for authentication or confirmation purposes. The information, when submitted, goes to the thieves not to the “spoofed” company.

**Pop Up:** A term for unsolicited advertising that appears as its own browser window.

**Predator:** Someone who uses the internet to obtain personal information about others with the intent to do harm.

**Smart Phone:** Is a mobile phone that offers advanced features like the internet, a camera and applications such as games and special interest information.

**Texting:** Sending a short text (typed) message between cell phones or other handheld devices.

**Webcam:** A front facing video camera that attaches to a computer or is built into a laptop.

**Media:** Mass communication formats (music, TV, magazines, movies, videos, internet, computer games, books, advertisements, news, newspapers, radio, etc.) which provide education, information, entertainment, and advertising.

**Inappropriate Media:** Images or words, spoken or written, that makes one feel uncomfortable, scared, or that intentionally degrade a human person.

## *What is a Circle of Grace?*

### **This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:**

- ⊙ Jesus is the Son of God
- ⊙ God takes care of us and is always with us
- ⊙ God created all human beings in His image and He saw this as very Good
- ⊙ God calls us to a loving relationship with Himself and with others
- ⊙ The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Blessed Trinity. He can be understood as the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the Father
- ⊙ The Holy Spirit helps us to live as Jesus did, making good choices
- ⊙ God's creation is to be respected and as Christians we accept responsibility to care for it
- ⊙ Jesus' life is a model for our own
- ⊙ God calls us to be responsible for our actions
- ⊙ Understand the importance of serving others as Jesus did
- ⊙ God teaches us to lead a healthy life and to make good choices

### **Lesson Goal**

Children will come to understand the concept of a *Circle of Grace*.

### **Lesson Objectives**

#### **Children will be able to:**

1. Understand and explain that as Children of God we are treasured and filled with grace. God's presence is within us and around us creating our own *Circle of Grace*.
2. Demonstrate their own *Circle of Grace*.
3. Identify what behaviors are appropriate within a *Circle of Grace* showing that they treasure themselves and others as Children of God.

### **Materials Needed**

1. Photos or props of precious things that are cared for and protected
2. Whiteboard or chalkboard
4. One copy of the color *Circle of Grace* Logo (see the end of the Lesson Plans)

### **Opening Prayer**

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

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

## 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 rare collector's item like a gold coin or an autographed baseball that might be kept in a glass case under lock and key
- o A vintage automobile that is kept in a heated garage and only driven on days when the weather is good
- o The Declaration of Independence which is kept in a climate controlled case under bulletproof glass
- o A special set of china dishes that are a family heirloom
- o Ask the children for other examples, write them on the board or poster paper.

***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 a precious item is the special measures taken to protect and care for...*

o A Consecrated Host, The Blessed Sacrament

☉ 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.

☉ 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.

☉ *Ask students for examples of special behaviors we use in church to show respect.*

- ☉ Folding hands
- ☉ Kneeling
- ☉ Bowing heads
- ☉ Genuflecting
- ☉ Reverent silence

## Discussion

Most of the time when we think of people who need special care we think of the following.

- o Unborn or Newborn Baby
- o The Elderly
- o People with special needs

**It is important to remember that all of us are deserving of this special care and respect.**

Why should we consider ourselves as a precious and special gift deserving of a special care and respect? *Allow a few responses.*

*Emphasize the following points:*

- ⊙ We are made by God. We are all Children of God.
- ⊙ We are all made by God and in His own image and likeness which means that we are made for the purpose of loving God, ourselves, and others and doing good.
- ⊙ God promised that as His children we will always be in His presence and surrounded by His love (*Circle of Grace*). He promised this because He wants a close relationship with each of us.
  - Even when we are not in our family home, we are each still a member of our family (belonging) and the love of our family goes with us.
  - We belong to the family of God, so even when we are not in the church building, we are always Children of God.
  - God’s loving presence goes with us wherever we go.
  - This constant loving presence of God is called “grace”. It is as though we carry our own little church with us wherever we go.

**Explanation of the symbol - Circle of Grace**

1. *Show the color Circle of Grace Logo. Ask the children what the various parts of the logo represent and guide them toward the conclusion that:*

- ⊙ The dove represents God with us in the Person of the Holy Spirit.
- ⊙ The figure represents a Child of God.
- ⊙ The yellow circle represents Grace: the goodness and love of God that is always in us and is surrounding us.
- ⊙ The blue represents the world in which we live.

*(Connect the earlier discussion of how we surround those things and people we find precious with extra care much like the “Circle of Grace”. See above discussion.)*

2. *Ask the children to stand with enough space between them that they can extend their arms without touching their neighbors. Tell them to reach with both hands as high over their heads as they can and then bring their arms down in a big arc until they circle around their feet. As they stand back up again, have them turn in a circle as they bring their arms up, to show that their Circle of Grace is really a sphere that surrounds them on all sides.*

3. *Explain that all persons, every Child of God, lives and breathes in their own circle of God’s love and goodness, their own Circle of Grace.*

4. *Because we are all Children of God, and because God has promised to always love us and remain with us, our Circle of Grace is a holy place. Like all holy places, there are ideas, words, objects, and behaviors that belong in our Circle of Grace and others that do not belong there.*

## *Boundaries and Limits of Our Circle of Grace*

### **Lesson Goal**

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

### **Lesson Objectives**

**Children will be able to:**

1. Recognize when a boundary (*Circle of Grace*) may be threatened or violated.
2. 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.

### **Materials Needed**

1. Copy of the color *Circle of Grace* Logo for leader to display (see the end of these Lesson plans)
2. Whiteboard or chalkboard

### **Discussion**

- ⊗ Today, we are going to continue talking about words and actions that belong and don't belong in our *Circle of Grace*.
- ⊗ The Holy Spirit loves us and wants us to be safe.
- ⊗ Our parents and leaders also want us to be safe and teach us to maintain healthy boundaries.
- ⊗ Sometimes a person gives us lots of good signals that make us seem like we can trust them, but we may still have an uncomfortable feeling that something may be wrong.
- ⊗ **We should pay attention to this warning feeling.** It may be a signal from the Holy Spirit to help keep you safe.
- ⊗ Most of the time you know what is safe and good to allow into your *Circle of Grace*.
- ⊗ When a person ignores boundaries, someone's rights can be violated and they may be harmed physically or emotionally.
- ⊗ The person who violates the boundary may face consequence or punishment.
- ⊗ **When you are unsure or have confusing feelings, you need to ask a trusted adult to help you.**

### **A Boundary Can Be Physical, Symbolic, or Internal**

We will now talk about the boundaries that are the borders or limits we need to protect ourselves within our *Circle of Grace*. (As you go through the examples below, it is important to relate them to the children's safety.)

Write "Physical", "Symbolic", and "Internal" on the board. During the discussion, write which items belong under each boundary heading.

**Physical: An actual barrier that blocks or restricts something.**

- ⊙ Fence (*defines property*)
- ⊙ Bathroom/bedroom door (*can be shut and locked to respect privacy*)
- ⊙ Clothes (*protect our bodies from elements and covers private areas*)
- ⊙ School Building (*secures learning environment, doors, alarms, school office*)
- ⊙ Home (*keep family secure: alarm system, protection from the weather*)
- ⊙ Seat Belt (*protects our body if there is an accident*)

**Symbolic: A limit you can see that does not physically restrict you. You can choose to respect or ignore this limit.**

- ⊙ Playing Field (*visual lines to help play fairly*)
- ⊙ “Do Not Enter” Sign (*privacy or potential danger alert*)
- ⊙ A Crosswalk (*a guide as to where to safely walk*)
- ⊙ PG 13 movie rating (*an alert regarding mature content*)
- ⊙ Video game with a parental warning on the label (*a warning of mature and violent content*)
- ⊙ “No Trespassing” Sign (*alerts you to stop and keep out of another’s property*)
- ⊙ “Keep Off the Grass” Sign (*alerts you to keep off another’s property*)
- ⊙ “Keep Kids Alive! Drive 25!” (*encourages drivers to drive slowly around children*)

**Internal: An understanding of a rule or limit that you carry in your head. Most of these are learned through experience or taught by those who care for us. The Holy Spirit nudges us to remember our internal limits in order to help us be safe.**

- ⊙ Acceptable volume on a radio or CD player (*respects others sensitivity to noise*)
- ⊙ Space between you and an unknown or known person (*this space could vary depending on culture, family, and current relationship*)
- ⊙ You stop eating when you are full (*an internal sensation that no more food is needed*)
- ⊙ Not playing in the street (*internal limit regarding danger taught by those who care for us*)
- ⊙ Knowing not to participate in an activity your parents would not approve (*internal limit based on prior parental guidance*)
- ⊙ Appropriate behavior in church and school (*internal limit based on prior adult guidance*)

## *Action Plan*

### **Lesson Goal**

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

### **Lesson Objectives**

**Children will be able to:**

1. Understand that God wants them to do what they can to take care of themselves.
2. Name three trusted adults (in addition to their parents) whom they could seek out for help.
3. Demonstrate the three-step action plan.
  - a. Say, “No!”
  - b. Get Away!
  - c. Tell A Trusted Adult.

### **Getting Started**

*Open the discussion with the following statements:*

- ☉ God does not want or cause bad things to happen.
- ☉ God is with you and wants the best for you, even when you are hurting or sad.

*Open the discussion with the following statements:*

- ☉ Now that we have talked about what does and does not belong in our *Circle of Grace*, let’s talk about what to do if you need to take steps to protect yourself. We will call this your action plan.
- ☉ There are situations when it is very clear that someone is trying to enter your *Circle of Grace* and would be harmful to you. Can you think of some examples?
- ☉ Maybe you have heard about some situations that have happened to other kids or have seen something on the news. It is important in these situations to have an action plan for how to stay safe. This action plan can also work with people in our lives that are doing something in our *Circle of Grace* that we do not like or make us uncomfortable. An example would be an older sibling teasing a younger brother /sister.

*Below are the three steps necessary for a safe action plan:*

#### **1. Say, “No!”**

- ☉ Let the other person, someone you know or a stranger, know in a clear and strong way that you do not want whatever it is they are doing or saying.
- ☉ Words like, “**Go away!**” or “**Stop that! I don’t like it!**” are often enough to get the person to leave you alone, especially if you say it loud enough so others can hear. Most people,

this includes people we know like classmates or family, do not want to attract attention when they are doing something wrong.

☉ If you are in a mall or other public place and someone you do not know or trust is trying to get you to go with them, say loudly, **“Leave me alone!” “You are not my dad/mom!”** This will draw other people’s attention and the person will probably leave you alone.

## **2. Get Away!**

☉ Do what you need to get away from the person. Walk, run, scream, or even kick to stop the other person. Again, most people who try to hurt children will stop if the child resists strongly or if the person is afraid someone will notice.

☉ Don’t worry about being embarrassed. It is much better than being hurt.

☉ Most situations that you want to get away from may not have immediate danger.

Such as: your friend asks you to come over after school. He indicated there are several friends coming over to play on the computer. He states parents are not home and will never find out. In this situation, you need to say something that will get you out of the situation. Discuss what to say in uncomfortable situations with your parents or trusted adults.

## **3. Tell A Trusted Adult!**

☉ Go immediately to an adult that you trust, tell them what has happened, and ask them for their help.

☉ If the first adult you tell doesn’t believe you or understand, be very insistent! If that still does not convince them, tell another adult until you find one who will help you.

☉ **Never let yourself go on being hurt or feeling confused just because the first person you tell does not help you.** If you are clear about what has happened, tell the truth, there are lots of people who are ready to help.

It is a good idea to have a list of three adults, in addition to your parents, that you know you can trust and ask for their help.

☉ Talk this over with your parents and make your list together. Be sure that you are comfortable and feel safe with the three identified adults.

☉ In some situations, it may not be as clear to you whether someone is really a threat to your *Circle of Grace* or not. The person may seem really nice but is acting in a way that makes you uncomfortable. This is the time to talk to a trusted adult.

☉ One warning signal would be if a person asks you to keep a secret from your parents or family. Sometimes we just get an uneasy feeling when something happens, and we are not really sure why.

☉ **It is important NOT to ignore these feelings/signals.** They can be one way the Holy Spirit is letting us know we need to take care of ourselves within our *Circle of Grace*.

☉ **These are times when it is important to go to one of the trusted adults on your list and ask for advice or help.**

© If a person is pressuring you or asking you not to tell anyone about what they are doing (or asking you to do), it is always important to say, “No,” until you can talk to a trusted adult. They can help you decide if the situation is safe and healthy for you. A true trusted adult would always want to help keep you safe from harm.

## *Internet Smart = Safety*

### **Lesson Goal**

Children will come to understand the concept of a *Circle of Grace* in relation to use of the internet on computers, phones etc.

### **Lesson Objectives**

#### **Children will be able to:**

1. Understand the difference between a safe secret and an unsafe secret.
2. Recognize and define vocabulary that relate to the internet.
3. List positive uses of the internet.
4. Review and describe their *Circle of Grace*.
5. Identify the different technology devices that offer internet availability.
6. Identify behaviors that would be appropriate in relation to a child's *Circle of Grace* when using the internet.
7. Identify boundaries when using the internet.
8. Formulate an action plan for safe use/safe exit of the internet.

### **Materials Needed:**

1. Two Internet Smart Worksheets for each child (see end of Lesson Plans)
2. Chart paper or marking board for listing uses of the internet
3. Parent Information Sheet

### **Activity**

*The topic of this lesson is the use of the internet. Have children make a list of positive and negative uses of the internet. Think about the analogy of how the use of a hammer can be used to build things( positive) or destroy things (negative). This may be a good analogy for the children. For example positive and negative aspects of the internet are listed below:*

<b>POSITIVE</b>	<b>NEGATIVE</b>
Communication	Damage someone's reputation
Information	Steal someone's identity
Entertainment	View inappropriate sites

### **Discussion – Children’s Rules and Guidelines for Internet Safety**

*Present and discuss the following (copy of these rules and guidelines are at the end of the lesson for the children to take home to their parents):*

**BE SMART:** (*Never forget your internet safety rules with any electronic device or in any location!!*)

- ⊗ Never give out personal information such as your address, telephone number, parents’ names and phone numbers, or where you go to school or grade level.
- ⊗ Never assume someone is who they say they are. They are not “friends” if you have never met them in person.
- ⊗ Treat everyone that you encounter online as a stranger using the same rules for dealing with strangers online as you would for strangers you see on the street.
- ⊗ Never agree to meet someone that introduced themselves on the internet without a parent’s or trusted adult’s approval.
- ⊗ Never send a picture or anything else to someone who requests it.
- ⊗ If you come across information on the internet that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult immediately.
- ⊗ Never respond to any messages or send any messages that are mean, threatening, or make anyone feel uncomfortable. Go tell a trusted adult immediately.
- ⊗ Follow the rules established by your parents for computer, phone and internet usage.
- ⊗ Never download or install software or do anything that could jeopardize a family’s privacy. If it happens by accident, go tell a trusted adult immediately.
- ⊗ Keep your internet password secret and change it regularly.

### **Discussion – Identify and maintain appropriate internet boundaries**

*List examples and discuss how one would know if there is a violation of boundaries. Leader, make sure the following points are covered. The goal is to start to develop an internal sense of conscience about appropriate Internet boundaries.*

*Some suggested points to review:*

- ⊗ If you feel unsure or unsafe, you are probably not “safe” in what you are doing.
- ⊗ It is important that you are comfortable with a trusted adult seeing what you are writing on the computer.
- ⊗ It is important that you are comfortable with a trusted adult seeing what you are looking at on the computer.
- ⊗ Could you say face to face to a person what you wrote about the person on the internet?
- ⊗ Sending messages that intentionally harm or embarrass another person is not respecting their *Circle of Grace* and is considered cyberbullying.
- ⊗ Sometimes we are tempted to lie on the internet; doing so may increase our tendency to lie and is disrespectful of our *Circle of Grace*.

Ⓢ Your *Circle of Grace* boundaries should not be crossed when you use the internet. This is to keep you safe and respect others' *Circle of Grace*.

**<<<Begin In-class Activity>>>**

**Activity-** Internet Smart Worksheet

1. *Hand out the Internet Smart Worksheet to the children (see the end of the Lesson Plans.)*

2. *Have the children complete it in class and be ready to discuss. Tell them this worksheet will not be collected.*

3. *The leader reviews each scenerio with the class and ask the following questions:*

Ⓢ How hard was it to know how you would act in each scenerio?

Ⓢ Do you think some of the scenerios seem to make you choose between your friends and doing the right thing?

Ⓢ Can you give me some other difficult situations?

4. *Distribute the Parent Information Sheet (that has a copy of the Internet Smart Worksheet) for the children to take home. Tell the children to go through the Internet Smart Worksheet with their parents.*

**<<<End In-class Activity>>>**



## How Internet *Smart* Are You? Worksheet

It is important to be *Internet Smart* when you are on line. Your parents and trusted adults can give you guidelines on how to use the internet/technology safely. Remember if you are uncomfortable with what you are doing or viewing in your *Circle of Grace*, it is probably NOT safe.

Put “T” for true, and “F” for false or “U” for unsure next to the below statements. Your answer should reflect how you would respond to the situation. It is smart to be truthful. So put “U” if you do not know what you would do or say. This way your parents or trusted adults can help you figure out the best response for that situation.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Your friend has been texting someone she met on the internet. She said her internet friend is 13 years old. Now the internet friend wants her to share her address. She does not know what to do since she has not told her parents about the texting. You tell her the smart thing to do is not to tell her parents because then they will take her phone away. You tell her maybe you could meet her internet friend somewhere instead of giving out her address.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You are on the internet and you see a “Pop Up” that has inappropriate images and words that make you uncomfortable. You leave the computer and go find your parent or trusted adult.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You see one of the older kids at school taking photos of your classmates coming out of gym class. You know no one is allowed to take pictures with a phone during school without permission. It makes you uncomfortable but you do not want the older kid to be mad at you so you do not tell anyone including your teacher or parents.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You were sent several e-mails/texts saying hurtful things about one of your classmates. You notice that he has been out sick the last couple of days. You are worried about him so you talk to your parents or trusted adult about your concern.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your friend tells you that if you don’t want your parents to see what you are doing on the computer, just minimize the screen when they enter the room. Although you are nervous about disagreeing with your friend, you tell him/her that you do not want to view images or seek information that would not be ok with your parents or trusted adults. Their trust in you is important.
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*Parent Information Sheet*  
Children's Rules and Guidelines for Internet Safety

- ⊙ Never give out personal information such as your address, telephone number, parents' names and phone numbers, or where you go to school or grade level.
- ⊙ Never assume someone is who they say they are. They are not "friends" if you have never met them in person.
- ⊙ Treat everyone that you encounter online as a stranger, using the same rules for dealing with strangers online as you would for strangers you see on the street.
- ⊙ Never agree to meet someone that introduced themselves on the internet without a parent's or trusted adult's approval.
- ⊙ Never send a picture or anything else to someone who requests it.
- ⊙ If you comes across information on the internet that makes you feel uncomfortable, tell a trusted adult immediately.
- ⊙ Never respond to any messages or send any messages that are mean, threatening, or make anyone feel uncomfortable. Go tell a trusted adult immediately.
- ⊙ Follow the rules established by your parents for computer, phone and internet usage.
- ⊙ Never download or install software or do anything that could jeopardize a family's privacy. If you do this accidentally, go tell a trusted adult immediately
- ⊙ Keep your internet password secret and change it regularly.

**Scenario A:** You are unsure or feel unsafe while viewing something or interacting with someone while using the computer or other technical device (ie: phone, tablet etc)

**Action Plan**

1. Find a trusted adult and show them what you are concerned about.  
Do not exit the site.
2. Review how you got to this point on the computer.
3. Have an adult help you exit the site.

**Scenario B:** You are unsure or feel unsafe when you are asked by someone to view something on the computer/technical device (ie: phone, tablet, etc) which makes you uncomfortable.

**Action Plan**

1. Walk away from the computer.
  2. Tell a trusted adult.
-