

Circle of Grace
Safe Environment Training
Kindergarten-Second Grade Lesson Plan

Circle of Grace Vocabulary K-2

Children of God: All people are made and loved by God.

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

Feelings: Something I sense inside myself (e.g. angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, peaceful, etc.) which gives me information about others or myself.

Grace: The gift of God’s goodness and love to help me live as his child.

Holy: Special because of a connection with God.

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.

Respect: Being kind to others and doing what’s best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.

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

Safe Touch: Touch that respects others and me.

Secret: A secret is something I know but do not tell.

Safe Secret: A secret is safe when it does not hurt others or me.

Unsafe Secret: A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell.

Signal: A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.

Stoplight: A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.

Trust: Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.

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*.

Unsafe: Anything that causes harm to myself or others.

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

Symbol: A picture or object that stands for something else.

What is a Circle of Grace?

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. Demonstrate his/her own *Circle of Grace*.
2. Describe what makes a person's *Circle of Grace* a holy space.
3. Identify the behaviors appropriate for the *Circle of Grace*.

Materials Needed

1. *Circle of Grace* Logo (see the end of Lesson Plans)
2. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a "happy/sad face chart"

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

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. We are always in a special, holy place because God loves us and wants to be our friend. That place is our *Circle of Grace*. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us. *This discussion of God/Jesus as our friend helps explain that God desires a close relationship with each of us.*
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 with the respect for ourselves and for others that is called for when we are in a holy place

The Stoplight

Feelings, Touch, and Secrets

Lesson Goal

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

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. 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. Learn how to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*.
3. Be able to recognize safe and unsafe situations in a person's *Circle of Grace*.
4. Distinguish between safe and unsafe secrets in a person's *Circle of Grace*.

Materials Needed

1. Large picture of a stoplight with all three colors visible - red, yellow, and green (see the end of Lesson Plans)
2. One set of red, yellow, and green circle cards for the Leader, the backside of each colored card should be white and the front side red, yellow, or green. You could put the circle cards on a popsicle stick so they look more like the signal in a stoplight.
3. Feeling Faces Chart (see the end of Lesson Plans)
4. Completed Happy Face and Sad Face chart from "What is Circle of Grace" lesson.

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.

Discussion

1. *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 and protected. God has given each of us our own kind of signal to keep us safe and protected. 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 to allow in your *Circle of Grace*. Sometimes, though, you need others who respect your *Circle of Grace* to help you know what is safe and what is not.

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.*) 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.

3. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. *Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts of bullying. Ask the children to define it and what it looks like etc.* Some examples are bullying (being mean to someone on purpose), 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.

<<<Begin In-class Activity>>>

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. **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. *The Leader has a set of red, green, and yellow circle cards.*
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. situation.

I will hold up a signal and you tell me if I am right or wrong.

- ⊙ 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.*

After reading the situation, give the children a moment before asking them if the circle card you are holding up is right or wrong. 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.)

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*).
- ⊙ You tell the leader when you accidentally break something in your classroom (*embarrassed, sorry, guilty, happy that you told*).

☉ You let your teacher know that you saw some classmates being really mean to your friend. You told them to stop being mean and they laughed (mad, happy that you told.)

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

☉ You are walking home from school and someone you don't know well offers to give you a ride home. The person said she received a "text" from your mom to pick you up (*cautious, scared*).

☉ Your big brother's friend wants you to watch something on the computer with him. Your family rule is that you can only use the computer with your mom or dad (*worried, afraid of getting into trouble*).

☉ You push someone out of line so you can be first (*mad, selfish*).

☉ You are playing at the neighborhood park. 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.*).

☉ A neighborhood friend has started to be mean to you. You don't know why your friend is acting this way (*sad, anxious, worried*).

☉ Your friend wants you to ride your bike down the street even though your mom/ dad told you that you must stay in the driveway (*confused, pressured*).

<<<End In-class Activity>>>

This Next Section is on Secrets.

Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be the key in them seeking help.

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?'"

Activity

Red Light Green Light - Secrets

1) Make a good secret and bad secret chart with two columns. This can be done on poster paper/flip chart paper (good secret 😊 and bad secret 😞).

2) Can you name some good secrets? Who is involved in the secret? Is there a time that it is finally told?

3) Can you name a bad secret? Who is involved in the secret? Can the secret hurt you or someone else?

4) Ask: “Do you think the people in the below photos are sharing good or bad secrets?” (You may also bring in additional photos to help illustrate the children’s understanding of secrets).



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

⊙ Please listen very carefully.

After reading the situation give the children a moment before asking them if the circle card you are holding up is right or wrong

⊙ 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 friend throws a ball and it accidentally breaks the neighbor’s window. The friend asks you not to tell (*guilty, afraid of punishment*).

- ⊙ An adult or older kid asks you to go with him without asking permission from your parents. He tells you that your parents won't care if you go with him and says "Don't tell your parents about our visit. They won't understand," (*unsure, funny feeling in your tummy or heart, curious*).
 - ⊙ Someone touches you in a way that you don't think is safe or it feels uncomfortable - even if the person says it is safe and says, "This special time is between you and me," (*funny feeling in your tummy, confused, etc.*).
 - ⊙ Someone tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell the secret to your mom and/or dad (leader, or other) (*afraid of punishment*).
 - ⊙ Someone tells you he/she will give you a "special gift" if you do not tell you mom or dad about your special time with him/her (*confused, excitement about a gift*).
5. *After each situation is read, ask a few volunteers to explain why they chose the color card they did. Also, allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected to each situation.*
6. *If children are unsure, wrong, or you are seeing more than one color card held up for a given situation, stop and ask the following questions:*
- ⊙ What do you think your mom or dad, leader, or pastor would say about this situation?
 - ⊙ Would they think it is a red, green, or yellow signal? Why?
 - ⊙ How do we know if something is a red, green, or yellow signal situation?

Safety Plan

Lesson Goal

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

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

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

Materials Needed

1. Whiteboard or chalkboard
2. Create one large Skill Poster of “How to Ask for Help” with following steps (see the end of the Lessons for a sample):
 - a. Look at the person.
 - b. Say, “I need to tell you something important.”
 - c. Clearly describe the problem.
 - d. Thank the person for helping you.

Lesson Development

Introduction

1. Today we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your *Circle of Grace* without your permission or does something that makes you feel unsafe.
2. Let’s review the vocabulary words that we’ve learned in the past few 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. You are encouraged to bring in photos or magazine clippings of typical trusted adults. These can be of parents, teachers, doctors or clergy. It is important NOT to show the photo until it is mentioned by the children.

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.

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:

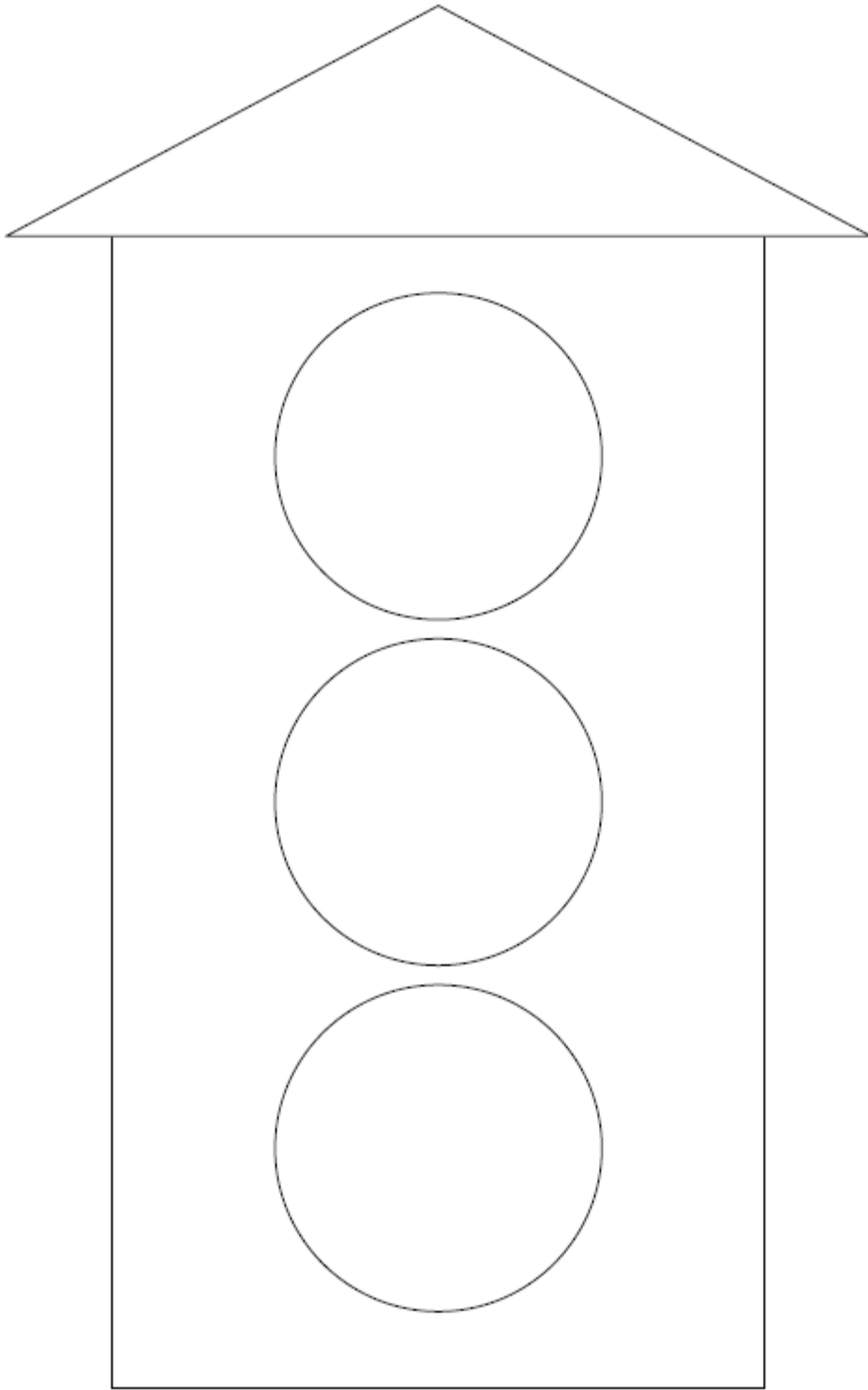
- a. Look at the person (*Picture of eyes*)
- b. Tell the person, "I need help. I do not feel safe." (*Picture of a child speaking/mouth –see the end of the lessons.*)
- c. Tell the person what is wrong, why you don't feel safe. (*Picture of the question mark "?" see the end of the lessons*)
- d. Tell 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.

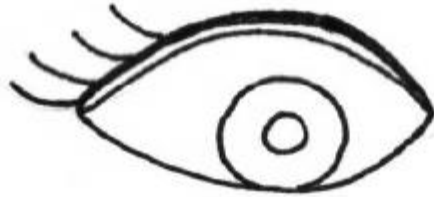
Closing Prayer

**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.**





How to Ask for Help



Thank You



The Stoplight: Home Activity Sheet for Parents

The goal of the Circle of Grace’s “The Stoplight Lesson - 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. We also used the stoplight analogy to discuss secrets. Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be key to them seeking help. 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.

-Lana Jezierski

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Children Faith Formation Coordinator