

Grade 5: Home Activities for Parents and Child: Understanding the Influence of the Media on our *Circle of Grace*



Dear Parent,

Thank you for using these activities to help teach your child about their *Circle of Grace* and how it can help us protect them. *Circle of Grace* teaches that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them and to understand that God is with them always, even when they are hurting or sad. We want them to be able to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*, and to recognize safe and unsafe touch/situations and how to talk to a trusted adult if they feel unsafe or are confused.

This year, we are asking you to help your child understand the “**Influence of the Media on our *Circle of Grace***”.

The goal of the lesson is to help the children recognize that different forms of media can have a positive or negative influence on the choices we make, by influencing our desire to obey the Ten Commandments and live our faith to its fullest.

You will be asked to choose several forms of media (TV show, Movie, Social Media, Video Game, etc.) to review with your child. Discuss the influence on their *Circle of Grace* of what they see, hear, or read.

If you have any questions, please contact your school or parish office.

Thank you for your support of the Circle of Grace program.

*It is essential and appreciated as we strive to provide
the safest possible environment for our children.*

We are going to talk about how all forms of media and mass communication influence us in our *Circle of Grace*. You may never have considered media as violating our *Circle of Grace*. It can when it has negative words, images, or content that never should be in our *Circle of Grace*. It is important to know that media does not necessarily relay information or images in a truthful, accurate or respectful manner. Many times, especially in advertising, it is meant to sway us to feel or act in a certain way.

Media gives us ways to communicate with many people. The internet, social media and cell phones are some examples.

Typical functions of media are to **educate, communicate, inform, entertain and advertise**. Help your child name what function(s) each type of medium they listed performs.

ACTIVITY: Positive and Negative Influences of Media

1. *With your child, come up with several types of media that we see or interact with in our daily lives.*
2. *From this list, each of you should rank the top three forms of media that influence you in a positive way and the top three that influence you in a negative way.*
3. *Discuss the positive and negative ways it can be used.*

Activity – Ten Commandments

God gave us the Ten Commandments to help us know what is right to do even when other influences try to confuse or manipulate us. Today you are going to decide if you think examples from various forms of media support the Ten Commandments or work against our desire to follow the Commandments.

Here are the Catholic Ten Commandments:

1. I am the LORD your God. You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
3. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.



1. *Take a sheet of paper and divide it in three sections. Write on one third of the paper "Media That Help Us to Obey the Ten Commandments", and on another third write "Media That Do Not Help Us to Obey the Ten Commandments" and on the final section write "Neutral to the Ten Commandments."*
2. *Come up with as many types of media as you can, and have your child list where they think it belongs in the spectrum of supporting or not supporting our desire to obey the Commandments. Some may be used in more than one way.*
3. *Now ask your child where they believe a particular form of medium is on the spectrum when it has a particular action in it. Some examples are below. With your child, please add more examples.*
 - a) *You are watching TV and someone is punching another person.*
 - b) *You read an article on-line where a firefighter saves a family from a house fire.*

Have children do this with all the major forms of media that they have listed.

Review

1. Media can give us both positive and negative information. God gave us the freedom to choose our own actions. How do we use the media in a way that helps us make good choices (e.g. choose media sources that support the Ten Commandments, the teachings of our Catholic faith, our parents, and trusted adults)?
2. What is the purpose of the messages that parents and trusted adults give us (e.g. to teach, protect, love)? What is the purpose of the influence our Catholic faith has on our lives (e.g. to teach, protect, love)? What is the purpose of the messages that are conveyed by the media (e.g. to sell things, influence your decisions, manipulate your opinions)?
3. What can we do if we are not sure if a type of medium is a positive or a negative influence? What do we do if we see or hear something that makes us uncomfortable, or if someone shows us something that makes us uncomfortable? We can always turn to a trusted adult to help us know if a type of medium is a good influence and to help us make decisions that keep us safe in our *Circle of Grace*.
4. *Ask the children to quietly reflect on all the ways that the media influence our thinking and behavior every day. Remind them that as Catholics, God has given us the Ten Commandments, the teachings of our Catholic faith, and our parents and trusted adults to help us make decisions and keep us safe in our Circle of Grace.*



Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”



God gives each of us a Circle of Grace (see below) where He is always “Present”:

Raise your hands above your head, then bring your outstretched arms slowly down.

*Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you embrace all of the space around you
slowly reach down to your feet.*

*Knowing that **God** is in this space with you. This is your **Circle of Grace**; you are in it.*

God is “Present” because He desires a relationship with us.

- God is with us when we are happy and sad. God does not cause bad things to happen to us. He loves us very much.
- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe).
- Having faith may not take away all of life’s struggles. It is because of these struggles, God promised to always “be present”; providing guidance and comfort in our time of need.

God helps us know what belongs in our Circle of Grace

- Our feelings help us know about ourselves and the world around us.
- God helps us know what belongs in our *Circle of Grace* by allowing us to experience peace, love or contentment when something or someone good comes into our *Circle of Grace*.

God helps us know what does not belong in our Circle of Grace

- God desires to help us when we are hurt, scared or confused (unsafe).
- The Holy Spirit prompts (alerts) us that something does not belong in our *Circle of Grace* by giving us “a funny or uncomfortable feeling” that something is not safe. This feeling is there because God wants us to be safe.

God helps us know when to ask for help from someone we trust.

- God gives us people in our lives to help us when we are troubled or struggling with a concern.
- God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns or “uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe and take the right action.