

Goal of the Circle of Grace Program - Grades K-12

The goal of the Circle of Grace program is to educate and empower children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others.

Objectives of the Circle of Grace

Program - Grades K-12

- Children and young people will understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Children and young people will be able to describe the Circle of Grace which God gives each of us.
- Children and young people will be able to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries.
- Children and young people will be able to identify all types of boundary violations.
- Children and young people will demonstrate how to take action if any boundary is threatened or violated.

Feedback from user of the program:

"Circle of Grace is so timely. Thank you! Even if the church leadership did not require it, the culture that we live in does. It is a perfect way to show that living our faith is a real adventure in the world in which we find ourselves. Faith intersects with life in the development of this program."

Sr. Judanne Stratman, O.S.F.
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St. Mary's church West Point, NE.

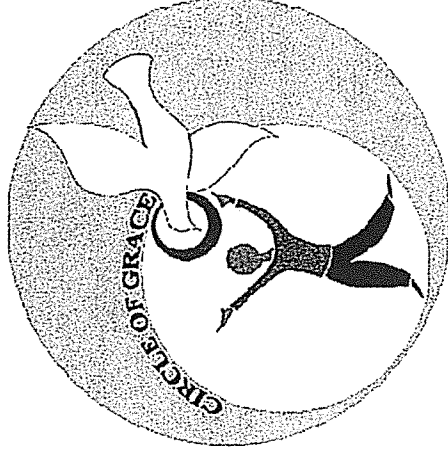
Outline of the Program

- Kindergarten - What is the Circle of Grace?
The Spotlight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets Safety Plan
- Grade 1 - What is the Circle of Grace?
The Spotlight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets Safety Plan
- Grade 2 - What is the Circle of Grace?
The Spotlight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets Safety Plan
- Grade 3 - What is the Circle of Grace?
Boundaries and our limits of our Circle of Grace Action Plan
- Grade 4 - Internet Safety
- Grade 5 - Understanding the Influence of the Media on our Circle of Grace
- Grade 6 - Circle of Grace: Pieces of the Puzzle
Safe Relationships: Putting the Puzzle Together
Boundaries: Every Piece has its Border
Safety PLAN: When Something Doesn't Fit
- Grade 7 - Saying "No" to Disrespect: Honoring Everyone's Circle of Grace
- Grade 8 - How to be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture
- Grade 9 - Communion of Saints
Mary and Joseph say "Yes"
When the Circle is Broken
Action PLAN
- Grade 10 - Recognizing and Responding to Boundary Violations
- Grade 11 - Boundaries and Emotional Grooming
- Grade 12 - Love and the Theology of the Body

For more information
please contact

The Archdiocese of Detroit
Office for Safe Environments
313-237-4815 ~ ProtectChildren@aod.org
or your parish office

Circle of Grace Safe Environment Training Program



Kindergarten
through
Grade 12

Created by

The Archdiocese of Omaha

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Archbishop of Omaha
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Circle of Grace is set apart from other programs by teaching:

- God's presence and assistance in difficult and confusing situations as an essential component in its K-12 curriculum.
- a philosophy that can be used at all times as a concept 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.
- beyond the "good touch-bad touch" models by addressing the whole person. Thus it is able to teach how boundary violations can occur through all of our senses.
- a holistic approach giving children and youth the skills to identify uncomfortable situations long before inappropriate touch occurs.
- children and young people to identify the "trusted adults" in their lives in addition to their parents.
- parents by informative letters, lesson handouts, and educational material.

What is the Circle of Grace?

Circle of Grace is the love and goodness of God that surrounds us and all others. It is the recognition that God is with us always and is there to help us in difficult situations. Through the Circle of Grace Program, adults assist children and youth to recognize God's love by understanding that each of us lives and moves within a Circle of Grace. Your Circle of Grace holds your very essence in body, mind, heart, soul, and sexuality. This is taught in a visual and real way by the following prayer. One can demonstrate this prayer and ponder it's profound simplicity.

Imagine:

Raising your hands above your head and then bringing your arms slowly down keeping them outstretched.
Extending your arms in front of you and then behind you embracing all of the space around you knowing that God is in this space with you.
Then slowly reach down to your feet.
This is your Circle of Grace.
You are in it.

Because this holistic concept includes all senses it allows children and young people to identify uncomfortable situations long before inappropriate touch may occur. The Circle of Grace program teaches children and young people to seek help from a trusted adult, reinforcing God's presence in their real life struggles.

Circle of Grace is one of the few programs that has:

- an *imprimatur* and a *nihil obstat* from an Archbishop.
- each lesson correlated with appropriate Catholic teaching.
- evaluation results that show effectiveness.
- pre- and post-assessments for designated grades.
- summary evaluations that capture required information needed for the national audit.
- philosophy and goals which are consistent throughout the K-12 curriculum.
- comprehensive and self-contained materials for each grade.
- the ability to customize the program with local contact information.
- an administrator's section with all the information needed for implementation.
- a training in-service for all who use the program.
- a significantly lower cost than other programs.



A morning prayer*

I begin this day with gratitude for the gift of life.
Asking for

God's strength to direct me.

God's power to sustain me.

God's wisdom to guide me.

God's vision to light my way.

I acknowledge my limitations before you, O God
and trust that

Your ear is listening to me,

Your hand is upholding me,

Your shield is protecting me from every evil

Now and Forever.

Amen.

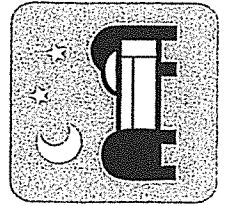
(adapted from St. Patrick's Breastplate prayer)

An Evening Prayer*

At the close of this day, Lord, we give you thanks
and praise for all good things.

We rest beneath the blanket of your love and
protection, trusting in your power and presence
with us. Grant us restful sleep and guard us from
every evil. We entrust ourselves to you Father,
Son and Holy Spirit God now and forever.
Amen.

*Composed by Mary Jo Pedersen



Additional Resources

Sharing the Faith With Your Child 0-6, Phyllis Chandler and
Joan Burney

Sharing the Faith With Your Child 7-4, Mary Jo Pedersen and
Joan Burney

*More Than Meets the Eye, Finding God in the Creases and
Folds of Family Life*, Pedersen-Wasikowski-Greisen

Raising Faith-Filled Kids, Tom McGrath

Making God Visible, Parenting Young Children, Kathleen
O'Connell Chesto

The Book of New Family Traditions, Meg Cox

Let's Say Grace: Mealtime Prayers, Robert Hamma

Prayers for Parents, Renee Bartowski

Faith and Fest in Family: Family Prayers and Activities, Family
Life Office

Reminders of God: Altars for Personal and Family Devotion,
Anne F. Grizzle

Office for Safe Environments

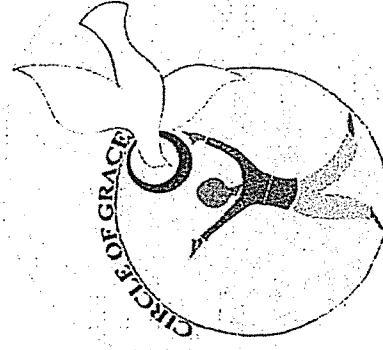
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**TEACHING
CHILDREN ABOUT
THE CIRCLE OF
GRACE AT HOME**



Your home is the first place your child will experience the security and protection of God's love for him. And YOU are the first persons to communicate this profound truth of God's circle of grace to your child.

From the moment of birth, a child can know deep down inside if he is loved and secure. Your child experiences a circle of grace from the gentle way his parents and caregivers hold him, how they respond to his needs when he cries and reassure him when he is afraid or in danger. God provides his love and care for your child through your nurturing care for him. At your child's baptism, you were given a candle and asked to be a "light" to your child...shining the light of Christ's love and presence on him. When you are a loving and responsible parent, your child learns about the circle of grace from you as you communicate God's love to him through your faithful care and protection.

Here are a few ideas to assist you in teaching your child that he is God's precious creation and that he is never outside the circle of His love and grace.

Creating Sacred Space in your Home: "Bidden or not bidden, God is present"

Place sacramentals in your home to remind yourself and your children that God is present all the time whether or not we are attentive to Him. Sacramentals (a cross or crucifix, pictures or statues of Mary, Jesus or the saints, a rosary, medal or scapular, or other religious art) are objects that remind us of our faith. Placing the scriptures in a prominent place with a candle nearby is a way of acknowledging God's presence in His holy word. Or create a home altar with a symbol of Christ, a candle and objects that remind you of God's gracious presence all around you in nature, in photos of loved ones, or in mementos of happy times together.

Praying Together Daily

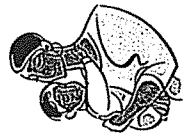
Gather whoever is at home at meal times or bed time and ask God's blessing on your family. Pray when someone is sick, sad or anxious. Pray when you have something to celebrate. Have a book of family prayers at home to help you remember to pray daily. In your prayer, acknowledge God's presence with you, ask for what you need and give thanks for your blessings. Prayer is a dialogue with God in which we are reassured by His power and presence in our lives.

Establishing Family Traditions and Rituals

Simple family traditions and rituals help children have a sense of security and belonging that enhances their understanding of the circle of grace. Traditions act like glue holding families together. Some traditions are seasonal (snow sledding, raking leaves, bike riding, or camping in the back yard). Others occur in the rhythms of everyday (signing each child with the sign of the cross on the forehead as they leave the house, good-night prayers or story reading, notes in sack lunches on special days or Friday night pizza and a movie). Families who wrap their lives in ritual and tradition teach children that God's grace surrounds them in the ordinary moments of their lives as well as at special times.

Teaching Your Child about the Circle of Grace that Surrounds Him/Her

Your words teach your child about God's protection and comfort. Use words to remind your child that God is with her, watching over her day and night. When she is afraid or anxious, remind her that she is never alone. Assure her that she is wonderfully



made by God...just as she is; short, tall, freckled or plain.

Your actions teach too. Show respect for your child by allowing him age-appropriate privacy, not teasing him about his body, setting rules about bullying and name-calling, setting boundaries at home so that mutual respect is learned and practiced everyday in ordinary ways.

Your attitudes will communicate to your child in profound ways. An attitude of openness and acceptance of your child's dreams and fears is important to establish the sense of trust she needs to tell you what she is feeling. She needs to know that she can tell you anything and that you will listen and accept her feelings without retribution.

Prayers for Parents

You are part of the circle of grace which surrounds your child. Your love for your child communicates God's love and care. These prayers may help you deepen your participation in God's ever-expanding circle of love for your child.

A Prayer of Confidence in God's Love*

"I am certain of this: neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nothing already in existence and nothing still to come, nor any power....will be able to come between us and the love of God, known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord". Romans: 8:37-39

Loving God whose circle of grace surrounds us now and into eternity, we thank and praise you for your steadfast love and protection. By the power of your Holy Spirit open our eyes to your presence each day as we feed and cloth, nurture and instruct our children in Your ways. We offer this prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.