

Circle of Grace Elementary Level Summary

What is a Circle of Grace?

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created “male and female in God’s image” and that God saw this as “very good.” In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God. Adults assist children and young people to recognize God’s love by helping them to understand that each of us lives and moves in a Circle of Grace.

You can imagine your own Circle of Grace by putting your arms above your head then circle down in front of your body including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality.

Circle of Grace Meditation

God gives us each a Circle of Grace where He is always present. In the Circle of Grace Meditation, children outline their Circle of Grace while an adult says these words:

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 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.

This video demonstrates the Circle of Grace Meditation: <https://vimeo.com/207836764>

Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”

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.
- God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns or “funny/uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe.

Circle of Grace Vocabulary Activity

Review these vocabulary words with your children:

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.

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

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

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.

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.

Cut apart the picture cards on the next pages. Place the Circle of Grace logo between you and your child.

Draw a card from the pile and decide if this is something you would welcome in your Circle of Grace or something you would like to keep far outside your Circle of Grace. If the card shows something loving and kind, put it in the Circle of Grace Logo. If it shows something scary, mean, or unhealthy, put it outside the Circle of Grace Logo. Discuss why you decided where the cards belong. Tell children that the Holy Spirit will prompt us to know what belongs in our Circle of Grace and what does not.













Safety Plan Activity

Remind children that the prompting of the Holy Spirit will help them to help make the right decisions.

Now we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your Circle of Grace and does something that makes you feel unsafe, confused or uncomfortable. Remember that 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. This is someone to talk to when you are feeling unsafe, uncomfortable, or unsure about a situation or secret. You can trust them with your uncomfortable situations or secrets. 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.

How do you know you can trust someone? 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.

Let's identify our trusted adults. Who is a trusted adult you know, someone in addition to your mom or dad, whom you could go to for help? Identify three of your very own trusted adults. In case one trusted adult is not available or does not understand your concerns, you have two additional ones to go to when you're uncomfortable. Write them on your "Trusted Adult Activity Sheet."

Read each of these scenarios and decide if the person needs to talk to or ask a trusted adult for help.

- Your big brother's friend wants you to wrestle with him. You don't want to because he is too rough, and it makes you feel uncomfortable.
- You are waiting for your parent to pick you up from school when an older kid asks you to come over to the playground because he wants to show you something cool on his phone.
- An adult you know asks you to go with him without asking permission from your parents. He/she tells you that your parents won't care if you go with him/her, but "Don't tell your parents about our visit. They won't understand."
- You notice that your older sister is on the computer late at night when you get up to go to the bathroom. Your sister says not to tell anyone because both of you will get into trouble.

Now let's practice how to ask our trusted adult for help. Here are the steps:

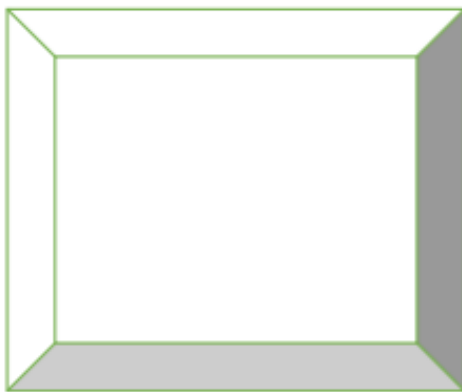
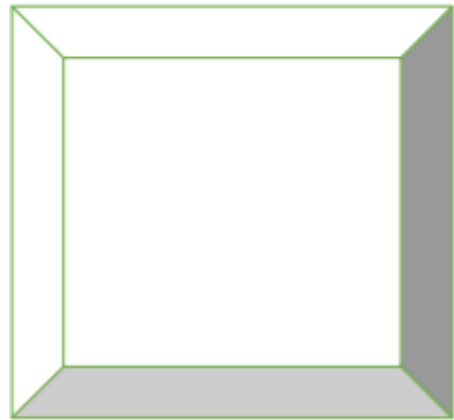
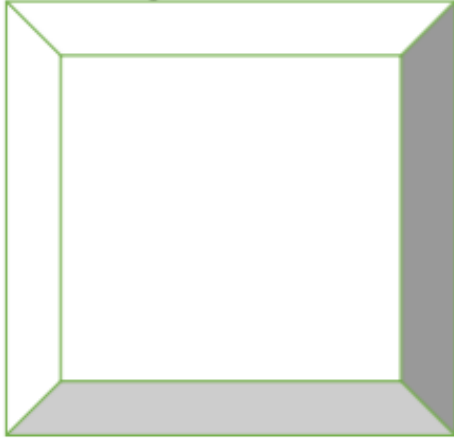
- Look at the person.
- Say, "I need to tell you something important."
- Clearly describe the problem.

- Thank the person for helping you.

This is the skill of 'How to Ask for Help'. You can use it whenever you need to ask anyone for help. Role-play how to use this skill when we need to talk to our parents or a trusted adult about uncomfortable situations or any other problem, trouble, or worry. Act out a few of the scenarios above.

My Trusted Adult Activity Sheet

Draw 3 trusted adults



Trusted adults name & qualities.

*Parent Signature*_____