

Circle of Grace

Safe Environment Training Grade 8 – Lesson Plan Philosophy

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 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.

Why is it important to help our young people understand the Circle of Grace?

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help young people understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others.

Adults, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where young people recognize when they are safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

How is the Circle of Grace Program different from other protection programs?

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen.¹ Many protection programs focus on “stranger danger,” however, up to ninety percent of the time the perpetrator is a relative, family friend or other person known to the child/young person. *Circle of Grace* goes beyond just protection by helping young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults.

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

¹ www.usccb.org, or <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

Grade 8 Leader Guidelines

- Every leader should read the Philosophy, Goals and Key Concepts to better understand and prepare to teach the *Circle of Grace*. The Key Concepts review the essence of the curriculum, that God is always present in our *Circle of Grace* and desires an intimate relationship with His children.
- The time frame for lessons may vary depending on size of class, age of young people, amount of discussion, etc.
- Vocabularies with definitions are intended for the instructor. The explanation of vocabulary should be integrated within the context of the lessons to assist the young people in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Program. The depth of the young people's understanding will depend upon their age and developmental stage. A master vocabulary list of the *Circle of Grace* Program is included in all lesson plans. The pertinent vocabulary is listed in each lesson.
- Ongoing reinforcement of the concepts is encouraged throughout the year. Hopefully, the language of *Circle of Grace* will become a part of a positive culture of respect, care, and faith that will help protect our young people and help them to know what to do when they feel unsafe.
- If possible it is always "best practice" to have two adults in the room during the lesson due to the sensitive nature of the material.
- Your Administrator, Religious Education Director, or Youth Minister Director will be sending out a letter to all parents regarding *Circle of Grace*. Lesson specific parent information should be handed out as directed. The Parent Packet is included in the Program. Every parish/school is encouraged to provide parent education opportunities both to inform parents about the *Circle of Grace* program and to foster greater communication in families.
- Evaluations for each grade are to be completed and returned to the School Administrator or the Director of Religious Education/Formation. The evaluations will be used to complete the Summary Evaluation that is used for ongoing improvement of the program and for the audit records.

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, concerns or uncomfortable feelings so they can help us be safe and take the right action.

Circle of Grace Vocabulary

Words introduced in Kindergarten

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.

Words Introduced in First Grade

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

Words Introduced in Second Grade

No new words.

Words Introduced in Third Grade

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.

Words Introduced in Fourth Grade

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.

Words Introduced in Fifth Grade

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.

Words Introduced in Sixth Grade

Admiration: A feeling of high regard or sense of awe.

Dream: A hope or aspiration which we imagine will become real.

Empathy: The ability to understand the feelings of another person.

Healthy: That which is sound and vigorous in mind, body, and spirit.

Relationship: A connection with God or others.

Response: Something said or done as a reaction or answer.

Talent: A special God-given ability or gift.

Value: A principle standard or quality considered desirable.

Violation: A break or infringement of another person's rights.

Words Introduced in Seventh Grade

Bullying: Any deliberate aggressive act, by a person or group, with the intent to inflict harm (physical or emotional) on another person.

Bystander: Someone who witnesses the bullying. They can have a negative or positive influence on the bullying behavior.

Cyber Bullying: The use of the internet, cell phones or other electronic devices to send or post texts or images intended to hurt or embarrass another person.

Disrespect: Treating with rudeness, insult, or lack of respect.

Words Introduced in Eighth Grade

Conscience: The gift from God that helps us to know the difference between right and wrong.

Modesty: The virtue that respects, honors, and protects privacy: the quality of avoiding extremes of emotion, action, dress, and language. Modesty respects my boundaries and the boundaries of others.

Morality: The way we put our beliefs into action for good.

Sexuality: Everything that makes us female or male. This includes feelings, attitudes, values, relationships, and ideas.

Words Introduced in Ninth Grade

Exploit: To take unfair advantage of someone/some situation in order to get some benefit.

Forced Isolation: When someone forces/pressures another to be separated from others in order to gain control.

Secrecy: The condition of being hidden or concealed. The habit or practice of keeping secrets or maintaining privacy or concealment.

Sexting: Sexually explicit images or text messages sent by way of a phone. There may be legal consequences if one or both persons involved are minors.

Unequal Power: When one person has more power in a relationship. This can be in the area of age, size, position, resources, status or knowledge.

Words Introduced in Tenth Grade

Boundary: A border or limit that helps keep us safe and separate from another person or entity. Boundaries help define relationships. They are either concrete (physical/visual/audio) or abstract (emotions/beliefs/internal guidelines/rules).

Circle of Virtue: Our response to the invitation of God's grace by cultivating goodness and virtue in our lives.

Words Introduced in Eleventh Grade

Freely Chosen Violations: Every person is responsible for those violations they freely choose and know are wrong. We should never blame or accuse persons who are victims of abuse and manipulated or exploited in unequal relationships.

Moral Responsibility: As we grow into mature adults, we must take greater responsibility for protecting ourselves and others from violations of God's plan for our spiritual, sexual, and moral lives.

Offender: Someone who exhibits behaviors for the sole purpose of putting another person in a vulnerable position to be exploited/abused.

Survivor: A person who not only lives through but thrives despite abuse, affliction, or adversity.

Victim: A person who has suffered injury/harm (physical or emotional) by forces beyond his or her control and not of his or her personal responsibility.

Words Introduced in Twelfth Grade

No new words.

Lesson

How to Be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture

Sometimes young people reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the classroom. If this happens, tell the young person, "Thank you for sharing that, _____. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.)." When this happens, be sure you talk to the young person at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- Belief in the works and presence of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Christian faith requires a relationship with God and others
- We are called to model our faith in our words and actions
- We are called to make moral decisions consistent with Catholic teaching
- Vocations are God's call to all
- We are all Children of God because of God's creation and covenants
- Individual and cultural differences are gifts from God that should be respected
- Responsible relationships are based on love, honesty, and respect
- Skills such as listening, self-disclosure and compromise are necessary for faith filled communications with others

Lesson Goal

Students will identify values that reflect moral decisions.

Lesson Objectives

Young People will be able to:

1. Recognize that Catholic Christians have specific moral values
2. Identify those values and how they fit into their *Circle of Grace*
3. Understand those values and how they may oppose cultural values
4. Recognize that our understanding of values assists us in keeping appropriate boundaries in our *Circle of Grace*
5. Know how to seek help when something unsafe threatens their *Circle of Grace*

Vocabulary

1. **Value:** A principle, standard, or quality considered desirable.
2. **Morality:** The way we put our beliefs into action for good.
3. **Conscience:** The gift from God that helps us to know the difference between right and wrong.
4. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
5. **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*.
6. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what is best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
7. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
8. **Sexuality:** Everything that makes us female or male. This includes feelings, attitudes, values, relationships, and ideas.
9. **Modesty:** The virtue that respects, honors, and protects privacy: the quality of avoiding extremes of emotion, action, dress, and language. Modesty respects my boundaries and the boundaries of others.

Materials Needed

1. A Bible for reference if needed
2. A Catechism of the Catholic Church for reference if needed
3. Vocabulary Worksheet for each young person (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson).
4. A Ten Commandments Worksheet for each young person (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson).
5. Parent Take Home Letter and the "Take Home - Ten Commandments" Worksheet.
6. A blank sheet of paper for each young person.
7. White board or chalk board.
8. Copies of the Opening and Closing Prayer (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson.)

Opening Prayer

Call the youth to quiet down and recognize the Lord's presence in their midst.

The prayer can be read to the young people or they can be given a copy of the prayer to say together (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson).

**My God,
love my inmost heart.
Love the person inside me that fears the world,
not the facade I portray to the world.
This image is not my inmost heart,
it only masks the person You made me to be.
This person is trapped in me, afraid to break free,
in fear of the world and what people say.
Lord, help the person You made me to be
break through the act I show the world.
What I believe is so important to me,
though the world may not see that, it is true.
Help me to show the world my beliefs.
I realize now that if I shut out the inmost heart,
my true real self will be trapped forever.
Your divine power is with me always, God.
You know my inmost heart.
I speak to You as the person You made me to be.
Speaking to You frees my inmost heart.
Amen.**

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 young people who have already experienced unsafe or hurtful situations. We want our young people to understand that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.

Review

Summarize Circle of Grace:

1. We have learned about *Circle of Grace* before. Our *Circle of Grace* is the love and goodness of God that always surrounds us.
2. God is with us and within us in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps us to remember that we belong to God. We are always in a special, holy place.
3. If we can remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace*, with God and surrounded by his love, we will remember to behave with respect for ourselves and others.

Discuss how their understanding of the Circle of Grace has changed or remained the same.

4. There may be some things you liked in your *Circle of Grace* when you were younger but do not like now. *Example: endearing family nicknames.*
5. We are always changing, but God's love is constant and forever present.

Vocabulary Large Group Activity

Present the definition of Circle of Grace. Ask the group what would our culture say about this concept?

Next, pass out the Vocabulary Worksheet. Complete the worksheet with the group. Example: We value life, what does the culture value? I.e. money, pleasure, etc. Write answers on the board.

Lesson Development

Introduction

- *Discuss and define "Catholic Values" and list them on the board.*
- *Use the Ten Commandments Worksheet as a guideline (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson).*

What are some ways we learn about the values of today's "Popular Culture"?

Make a list on the board, e.g. news, TV, internet, movies, friends.

Today we are going to compare and contrast our Catholic values with what popular culture tells us is important. For example, our Catholic faith teaches us to put God first and worship only Him. On the other hand, popular culture often teaches us to put ourselves first, not God. The Ten Commandment Worksheet will help you begin to compare and contrast.

1. ***Divide students into small groups.*** *Hand out the Ten Commandments Worksheet to each group.*
2. *When the worksheet is completed, give each student a blank sheet of paper and have them make a personal list of what they value, both concrete and abstract (e.g. friends, family, faith, music, and independence.)*
3. ***Bring students back to the large group.*** *Have them share what they wrote on their worksheet.*
4. *Talk specifically about Catholic moral values and how they compare to popular culture's values.*
5. *Discuss how both sets of values relate to the sacredness of the Circle of Grace.*
6. *Direct the young people to look at their personal list of values. Where do these values fit into the Circle of Grace?*
7. *Discuss how some things might fit into both sets of values. For example, you have a friend who drinks. You value the friendship, but must set boundaries as to how you spend time together. Always talk to a trusted adult.*
8. *Provide the student with the Parent Take Home Letter and Ten Commandments Worksheet. Instruct the students to complete the worksheet with their parents and have their parents sign off on it. Students are to turn in the signed worksheet.*

Discussion - Being Morally Responsible

1. Who or what helps you to make the right choices or decisions based on Catholic values? According to the Ten Commandments, what behaviors are right and what behaviors are wrong? What choices should you make based on the discussion about the Ten Commandments?
2. Why is it sometimes hard to follow your Catholic values over cultural values?
3. What are some ways we can resist the pressure to choose popular cultural values over what our Catholic values? (*List on the board.*)
4. Review *PLAAN* (see the end of grade 8 Lesson).

Closing Prayer

Call the youth to quiet down and recognize the Lord's presence in their midst. The prayer can be read to the young people or they can be given a copy of the prayer to say together (see the end of Grade 8 Lesson).

**With each new day that dawns I am growing up, Lord.
It's not too soon to be thinking of the person I want to become.
It's very hard, I think,
to make the choices You desire
which are always best for me,
even though today's culture would have me think otherwise.
I pray that You will help me and guide me.
Let me share, each day,
my talents where they are needed,
and, when You prompt me with Your Holy Spirit,
let me have the courage to be generous and open
to do what You want.
Amen.**

Opening Prayer

My God,
love my inmost heart.
Love the person inside me that fears the world,
not the facade I portray to the world.
This image is not my inmost heart,
it only masks the person You made me to be.
This person is trapped in me, afraid to break free,
in fear of the world and what people say.
Lord, help the person You made me to be
break through the act I show the world.
What I believe is so important to me,
though the world may not see that, it is true.
Help me to show the world my beliefs.
I realize now that if I shut out the inmost heart,
my true real self will be trapped forever.
Your divine power is with me always, God.
You know my inmost heart.
I speak to You as the person You made me to be.
Speaking to You frees my inmost heart.
Amen.

Vocabulary Worksheet

List a value in popular culture that may be in conflict with each vocabulary word.

FAITH'S PERSPECTIVE

CULTURE'S PERSPECTIVE

<p>1. Value - A principle, standard, or quality considered desirable.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>As Catholics we value "life".</i></p>	
<p>2. Conscience - The gift from God that helps us to know the difference between right and wrong.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>A conscience helps us stay close to God.</i></p>	
<p>3. Sexuality - Everything that makes us female or male. This includes feelings, attitudes, values, relationships, and ideas.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Our sexuality is never separate from who we are as children of God</i></p>	
<p>4. Modesty - The virtue that respects, honors, and protects privacy; the quality of avoiding extremes of emotion, action, dress, and language.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Appearance and actions are consistent with who we really are</i></p>	
<p>5. Morality - The way we put our beliefs into action for good.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Our faith is evident by our actions</i></p>	
<p>6. Trust - Counting on someone to help us to stay safe within our <i>Circle of Grace</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Our trust is in the Lord</i></p>	
<p>7. Respect - Being kind to others and doing what is best for ourselves and others because we honor all people as Children of God.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The Golden Rule</i></p>	

Ten Commandments Worksheet

List a value in popular culture that may be in conflict with each commandment.

OUR FAITH'S 10 COMMANDMENTS	POPULAR CULTURE'S TOP COMMANDMENTS
1. I am the LORD your God: You shall not have strange gods before me. <i>-Put God first, worship only HIM</i>	
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. <i>-Use God's name with respect</i>	
3. Remember to keep the Lord's Day Holy. <i>-Mass on Sunday and Holy Days</i>	
4. Honor your father and mother. <i>-Respect your parents</i>	
5. You shall not kill. <i>-Do not hurt others physically or emotionally</i>	
6. You shall not commit adultery. <i>-Be faithful in marriage; respect the dignity of the body</i>	
7. You shall not steal. <i>-Respect other's belongings</i>	
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <i>-Do not lie, gossip or spread rumors</i>	
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. <i>-All are called to respect the relationship between a husband and a wife</i>	
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. <i>-Do not be envious of what others possess</i>	

Parent Take Home Activity

Grade 8: How to be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture

Dear Parent,

We presented the *Circle of Grace* Lesson "How To Be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture" to your child.

The goal of the lesson was to help the children recognize how popular culture can influence our *Circle of Grace*. Popular culture can have a positive or negative influence in our desire to obey the Ten Commandments and live our faith to its fullest.

Please complete and sign the worksheet with your child. The worksheet needs to be returned at your child's next session.

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.

“TAKE HOME” Ten Commandments Worksheet

Parents are to do this take home activity with their child. List a value in popular culture that may be in conflict with each commandment. When completed, please sign and return to the parish/ school.

Parent signature: _____

OUR FAITH’S 10 COMMANDMENTS

POPULAR CULTURE’S TOP COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the LORD your God: You shall not have strange gods before me. <i>-Put God first, worship only HIM</i>	
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. <i>-Use God's name with respect</i>	
3. Remember to keep the Lord’s Day holy. <i>-Mass on Sunday and Holy Days</i>	
4. Honor your father and mother. <i>-Respect your parents</i>	
5. You shall not kill. <i>-Do not hurt others, physically or emotionally</i>	
6. You shall not commit adultery. <i>-Be faithful in marriage; respect the dignity of the body</i>	
7. You shall not steal. <i>-Respect other’s belongings</i>	
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <i>-Do not lie, gossip or spread rumors</i>	
9. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. <i>-All are called to respect the relationship between a husband and a wife</i>	
10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods. <i>-Do not be envious of what others possess</i>	

'PLAAN' Summary

1. Write on the board:

- P - Protect
- L - Listen
- A - Ask
- A - Act
- N - Notify

2. Review

- The first letter **"P"** stands for **Protect with Respect**.
 - How do you think respect can help us protect our *Circle of Grace*?
 - *Answers should include:*
 - *respecting ourselves as a child of God*
 - *respecting others because they are also Children of God*
 - *keeping unsafe words, touches, and images out of our Circle of Grace*
 - The letter **"P"** is about knowing that each of us has a *Circle of Grace* and respecting it.
- The letter **"L"** stands for **Listen**.
 - In every situation we need to remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us stay safe.
 - The Holy Spirit gives us feelings or instincts, and we need to listen to them.
 - The letter **"L"** connects us with the Communion of Saints and the qualities we have been given as expressions of God's love.
- The letter **"A"** stands for **Ask**.
 - When you have an uncomfortable feeling, you are recognizing the Holy Spirit helping you know that something is not right.
 - The letter **"A"** asks: "Does this say, 'Yes,' to what God has called me to be? Does this belong in my *Circle of Grace*?"
 - There are some questions that the letter **"A"** reminds us to ask ourselves whenever we are in a situation that makes us feel uncomfortable or that just doesn't feel quite right. The questions are also good ones to ask every so often even when we don't get a gut feeling. Sometimes asking the questions helps us to hear the Holy Spirit when we did not remember that we needed to listen.
 - *Read each question allowing a few moments for quiet reflection between each.*
 1. How long have you known this person?
 2. Is your knowledge of this person face-to-face?
 3. How much do you know about this person?

4. How have you verified what this person has told you about themselves?
5. What do your feelings (instincts) tell you about this person or situation?
6. How many things do you have in common with this person?
7. Is the relationship respectful of your boundaries and the other person's?
8. Are you able to say, "No," to this person?
9. Does this person's age or status influence your behavior in the relationship?
10. Does this person ever ask you to keep secrets?

➤ The next letter "A" stands for **Act**.

- To protect your *Circle of Grace* you need to tell trusted adults you need help.
- There are other things you can do to protect your *Circle of Grace* when your parents or trusted adults may not be around. Some of them are:
 1. Don't reveal personal information on the internet. This includes full names, school, grade, address, phone, sports teams, church groups, etc. Perpetrators try to identify young people by learning about their activities and schedule patterns. Be particularly cautious of social networking websites such as myspace.com and personal blogs.
 2. Stay away or get away from situations that make you feel uncomfortable.
 3. Tactics may include saying, "No," walking away, calling a parent.
 4. Understand that comments about another persons' physical attributes, race, religion, economic status, etc., that de-value or criticize are never appropriate.
 5. Avoid unsafe situations, which involve alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
 6. Be cautious about situations in which one is left alone with an adult.

➤ The last letter "N" stands for **Notify**.

- Notify your parents or another trusted adult whenever someone or has violated your boundaries, such as manipulating to control you or not respecting your *Circle of Grace* or someone else's *Circle of Grace*.
- Think of three people besides your parents whom you can trust, whom you feel will listen and would offer help. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Do these people respect your *Circle of Grace*?
 - Do they respect their own *Circle of Grace*?
 - Do they respect the *Circle of Grace* of other people that you know?

Trusted adults want what is best for you. They want your *Circle of Grace* to be respected. Discuss with your parents the three other persons whom you feel are trusted adults. Then let the trusted adults know you have chosen them. Share with them what *Circle of Grace* means to you. Today is a good day to start those conversations.

Closing Prayer

With each new day that dawns I am growing up, Lord.
It's not too soon to be thinking of the person I want to become.

It's very hard, I think,
to make the choices You desire
which are always best for me,
even though today's culture would have me think otherwise.

I pray that You will help me and guide me.
Let me share, each day,
my talents where they are needed,
and, when You prompt me with Your Holy Spirit,
let me have the courage to be generous and open
to do what You want.

Amen.

Grade 8 Evaluation

Date _____

Parish/School _____ City _____

Leader _____ Number of young people in class _____

Each grade's curriculum was designed to meet the overall program objectives.
Please check whether the objectives of the *Circle of Grace* Program were met.

1. YES ____ NO ____ Young People understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. YES ____ NO ____ Young People will be able to describe the *Circle of Grace* which God gives each of us.
3. YES ____ NO ____ Young People will be able to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries.
4. YES ____ NO ____ Young People can identify types of boundary violations.
5. YES ____ NO ____ Young People can demonstrate how to take action if a boundary is threatened or violated.

Please list what worked well and any resources that you would like to share with others (use back if necessary).

Please list any suggestions that would improve lessons (use back if necessary).

Return to your School Administrator, Director of Religious Education, or Director of Youth Ministry.