

St. Laurence Catholic Parish  
Kindergarten Faith Formation  
Week 13 Lesson Plan



## Unit 3 – How does Jesus Christ teach us to live a moral life?

**EQ #1: *Why does Jesus want me to love myself and others?***

### *Circle of Grace Part 1: What is a Circle of Grace?*

## CATECHIST PREPARATION

*To prepare for this week's lesson:*

- **Background/Lesson Goals:** *(Confession: There is A LOT of information here, Catechists, but please stay with me!) ☺*

We will continue our Morality Unit this week and next by discussing how Jesus teaches us to love and respect ourselves and others. Specifically, you will be presenting the children's annual *Safe Environment* curriculum, called *Circle of Grace*, mandated by the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston.

Each year, every learner (Grades K through 12) in the Archdiocese is expected to be presented with their appropriate grade-level material in this regard. This is one of the many responses to the comprehensive CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops ("USCCB") in June 2002. This initiative was launched in direct response to the Church's sexual abuse crisis in this country. These lessons are *not* optional.

As Cardinal DiNardo states, the *Circle of Grace* program,

*"... is centered on helping children and young people understand their own sacredness, the sacredness of others, and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. It also teaches a culture of respect and faith that goes beyond mere protection."*

As we should recall from the story of *Creation* in the *Book of Genesis* (see [Genesis 1: 25-28](#)), we believe that *all* human beings, as God's crown jewels of His Creation, are created in the likeness and image of God Himself ("imago dei"), meant for nothing more than to reflect His love and light into the world and to be in relationship with Him. In this, God also grants humanity responsibility for the good stewardship (or care) for *all* of Creation, including each other. From these realities flow our inviolable dignity as human

beings from the moment of conception until the time of our natural death. God alone is the author of all life which we are called to care for in all of its forms and conditions.

Our inherent human dignity affects how we are called to live out relationships with each other and also how we are to care for ourselves, i.e., with *respect*. God intends for *all* of our relationships to be experiences of divine love (remember the reflecting God's love purpose for our creation?). Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of not only our own value in the eyes of God, but also that of others. Remembering this helps us to LOVE *divinely* (as God does) and to see the world, and those who share it with us, as our Creator does.

All grade levels will be presented with their *Circle of Grace* (COG) lessons this week with you, the Catechist, leading your learners in recognizing how God (through the Holy Spirit) is *always* present with them in their *Circle of Grace*. God wants us to be healthy and safe from harm. The *Circle of Grace* curriculum begins at the Kindergarten level, which is deemed developmentally appropriate and the earliest that some of this content should be introduced to children. That said, however, it is *never too early* to discuss with your learners how they are a unique and unrepeatable part of God's own Creation, *known, loved into existence and precious in His eyes*. Our understanding of the depth of God's love for us and our inherent dignity as human beings is the foundation for all of the Church's [Theology of the Body](#) teachings which affect our self-worth and how we express love for ourselves and others in healthy ways.

The Kindergarten through Grade 3 COG lessons deal with empowering the children to identify unsafe or uncomfortable situations, determining who the trusted adults in their lives are, and teaching them how to ask for help from trusted adults when circumstances warrant. We should encourage our learners to rely upon the promptings of the Holy Spirit (i.e., that internal *gut* feeling that can serve to alert or alarm them when a situation is possibly dangerous or harmful) in order to guide them in this regard. The 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Grade COG lessons will focus on internet safety and how to properly navigate media usage by keeping harmful images and situations out of their *Circle of Grace*.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The *Circle of Grace* grade-level lessons have been provided by the Archdiocese and are intended to be *carefully* followed. This is not an opportunity to go off script, but rather follow the lessons and their content as provided. These lessons are meant to be presented to your learners by a mentor catechist in a specific order, as there are certain prompts and activities that need to be navigated through and important topics to be discussed in class. While discussion/interaction is invited and of course encouraged, it should be focused and fruitful to the lesson content without preventing all of the material from being presented.

**If you commit to reading through the lessons *beforehand* and preparing yourself for these lessons, you will be able to easily cover this important content with your learners.** While the Kinder through Grade 3 lessons intentionally are very similar in content with concepts building upon themselves each year, the Grades 4 and 5 lessons specifically target technology usage. In our present age with more online learning and extensive access to the internet for children of *all* ages, you may find some of the resources provided below (in the additional resources section) appropriate for an internet safety discussion with your learners as time permits.

Remember, if your learners have previously attended CCE classes on campus any time since January 2018 for Kindergarten or above, they are already familiar with some of the COG concepts. Be sure to tap into their recollections when presenting your lesson and give them an opportunity to share what they remember.

- In order to prepare your adult heart and mind to present this lesson to your learners begin by:

Watching the [CHARTER FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORS](#) video and reviewing both the [COG Quick Reference Guide for Facilitators/Catechists](#) and the [Circle of Grace Catechist Training Summary](#), even if you have implemented the *Circle of Grace* curriculum previously.

**If you have never implemented the *Circle of Grace* lessons in class before, please listen to the [COG Training audio](#).** Even if you have taught *Circle of Grace* before, a refresher may be worthwhile, time permitting. While dating back to our first implementation of this program in 2018, it will provide you with the basics of understanding regarding the *Circle of Grace* program and also inform you of our [Reporting Responsibilities](#) should something be revealed by a child in class. Certain sections of relevance on the audio recording can be located as follows:

- **Intro/Background:** From :25 to 9:15
- **Training Content:** From: 35:40 to 1:09
- **Final Overview/Summary:** From 1:35:10 to 1:39
- Review the appropriate grade-level learning targets from the *Catechetical Framework for Lifelong Faith Formation* (CFLFF) posted at the end of this lesson plan and on the Catechist website at <https://stlaurence.org/the-catechist> for [KINDERGARTEN](#). Keep these targets in mind as you prepare for and progress through the weekly lesson, making discussion points based upon these specific age-appropriate targets.
- Establish a comfortable learning space in your classroom for your session.
- Create a [Prayer Table](#) (or check out [How to Make a Prayer Table for Kids](#)) in a special corner of the classroom. Keep a Bible reverently displayed there to be used for readings in your lessons. When proclaiming *The Word* to children, it is more impactful to read directly from the Bible and not just from their workbooks. This gives them the sense that this is not just any book, but rather the Word of God.
- Reflect upon the Scriptural passage that today's lesson is based upon or extends. Incorporate your understanding of this passage into your teaching today with your learners.

[I CORINTHIANS 3: 16-17](#),  
[1 JOHN 4: 11-13](#), [Psalm 139: 1-16](#)

Supplies you may want to have on hand before beginning the Lesson:

- A *Catholic* family or children's Bible (go to [USCCB](#) for approved Bible translations); on campus, we use the [ST. MARY'S PRESS CHILDREN'S BIBLE](#), a classroom set of which is located in the "CCE" storage cabinet.
- An electronic device with reliable internet access (i.e., an in-class mounted TV or TV cart if a video will be watched as part of the lesson)

- Sticky notes
- Art or any unlined paper
- Crayons, markers and pencils as needed (located in the “CCE” storage and your class bin)
- Supplies mentioned in the appropriate grade-level *Circle of Grace* lesson(s) that you will be covering.

→ **NOTE THAT THE FAITH FORMATION STAFF will prepare the lesson supplements and activity items necessary to implement your kindergarten lesson. These will be provided in a separate basket placed inside your class bin. These items will include any printouts or support resources included at the end of the lesson plans, the manipulatives/handouts used in the lesson activities and the grade-level parent letters (to go home with your learners at the end of the lesson implementation).**

There may be some *additional* class supply items which you will need to pull from the workroom (i.e., butcher paper, construction paper, etc.) that the staff has not prepared for you. Please check your *Circle of Grace* supply basket and take whatever else you need from the supplies in the RE workroom.

Note that a hard copy of the kindergarten *Circle of Grace* lesson referred to in the EXPLAIN section of this weekly outline is contained in the *Circle of Grace* kindergarten folder placed in your class bin. Each class has been provided with one (1) copy of the underlying COG lesson for their grade. Secondary copies will only be provided upon individual request by the facilitators. The grade-level COG lessons can also be found electronically on the Catechist webpage at <https://stlaurence.org/the-catechist>.



## **BEGINNING THE LESSON with CIRCLE OF GRACE**

*Raise your hands above your head and 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 then 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.*

## **WHAT IS A CIRCLE OF GRACE?**

- Share todays Essential Question: *Why does Jesus want me to love myself and others?*
- Ask questions:
  - *We know that we are all children of God and that he made each of us in his image and likeness. Why did he make us to be like him?*
  - *How does God want us to live as his children?*
  - *What is respect? How do we respect ourselves and each other?*
  - *How do we know if an action is respectful?*
  - *What is our Circle of Grace?*
  - *Why is it important to know about our Circle of Grace?*

These lessons are meant to be presented to your learners by a catechist and are not lessons which should be turned over to the children to be completed by themselves, as there are certain prompts and activities that need to be navigated through and important topics to be discussed as a class.

- **CIRCLE OF GRACE LESSON PART 1: [WHAT IS A CIRCLE OF GRACE?](#)**  
(A hard copy can be found in the *Circle of Grace* folder in your class bin)

## **FURTHER ACTIVITIES**

- **Videos:**
  - Watch [GOD MADE ME](#) or [GOD'S STORY: GOD MADE PEOPLE](#), or
  - Sing either [GOD MADE YOU AND ME SING-A-LONG](#) or the [THANK YOU LORD FOR MAKING ME SONG](#) together
  - Practice the [COG MEDITATION](#) together
- **Crafts/Activities:**
  - Make the [GOD MADE ME UNIQUE SNOWFLAKE](#) or [I AM A CHILD OF GOD MIRROR](#) craft, or
  - Complete one of the [GOD MADE ME SPECIAL ACTIVITY SHEETS](#)
- **Feel free to choose your own activities that are relevant to today's lesson.**

*[Circle of Grace \(Above\):](#)* Repeat

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Gather together in your dedicated prayer space and ask the children to quiet their minds and hearts as you pray together. Begin with the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#) and recite a favorite prayer, choose one from the [COMMON PRAYERS BY GRADE](#), sing the [OUR FATHER](#) or ask the children to offer up their [INTERCESSORY INTENTIONS](#). Conclude by praying the [SIGN OF THE CROSS](#).



## **APPENDIX**

"In the story of *Creation* found in the *Book of Genesis* (see [Genesis 1: 25-28](#)) of the Bible, we learn that God created (and continues to create) *all* human beings – past, present and future. As God's creations, we are *connected to each other* as the *Children of God*. Every one of us has been especially *loved into existence by God Himself*. God wants nothing more from us than to love Him back and to be in a relationship with Him.

God creates each and every human being (even those we don't know or maybe are not fond of) as a *unique* and *unrepeatable* person. We are each special and *greatly valued* in God's eyes. There is only one of each of us - there will never be another you! (Think about all of those special gifts or traits that make you you!) As God's children, we are all created in God's image – that is, we are meant to be reflections of God's love in this world and shine His light onto others. He expects us to see and treat each other as He sees each of us – i.e., with dignity (value) that is deserving of love, kindness and respect!

We must remember that God is *always* present with us in our lives – i.e., when we are happy of course, but most especially when we are sad, scared or even confused. One way that we can find help from God is by remembering our *Circle of Grace*, which is *God's love and goodness that*

*always surrounds us and all others.* Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*. 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 desires to help us especially when we are hurt, scared or 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 can be an “ick” feeling in the pit of our stomachs that tells us something is not right. This feeling is there because God wants us to always be safe. When we are confronted with something or someone that makes us feel unsafe in our *Circle of Grace*, God wants us to speak up and talk to trusted grownups in our lives about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe from harm. Things that do not belong in our *Circle of Grace* can include actual people and things that we come into contact with, as well as situations that we encounter, or uncomfortable things that we hear or see or are exposed to. In all of these circumstances, Jesus, with the help of the Holy Spirit, guides us towards responses or actions that will keep us safe from harm and allow us to respect ourselves and/or others.

- **Picture Books:** (Copies of these titles are available from staff. Just ask to reserve one!)
  - *In the Image of God: A Story of Identity and Value*, by Joe Caruso (x1)
  - *God's Masterpiece: An Adventure in Discovering Your Worth* by Elisabeth Hasselbeck (x1)
  - *Paris Finds Her Purpose*, by Demi-Leigh Tebow (x1)
  - *Everyone Belongs* (USCCB); also narrated at [EVERYONE BELONGS](#) (5 copies)
  - *When God Made You* by Matthew Paul Turner (x1)
  - *I'm Not Just a Scribble* by Diane Alber (x1); also narrated at [NOT JUST A SCRIBBLE](#)
  - *Horton Hears a Who* by Dr. Seuss (x1); also narrated at [HORTON HEARS A WHO](#) (“a person's a person...no matter how small!”)
  - *You Are Special*, by Max Lucado (x1)
  - *Before I Was Me*, by Frank Fraser (x1)
  - *God Gave Us You* by, Lisa Tawn Bergren (x1)
  - *Green Street Park* (USCCB) and *Drop by Drop* (USCCB) (x1 each)
  - *Angel in the Waters*, by Regina Doman) (x1)



## LEARNING TARGETS FOR THIS LESSON

**Learners will understand that:**

### **Key Targets**

- God is love. (CCC#68; 214; 221; 231; 257; 315; 733; 2331)<sup>1</sup>
- God is good. (CCC#231; 339; 385; 2052)
- God wants all people to love and care for others. (CCC#459;1713; 1823; 1926; 1944)

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<sup>1</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church; paragraph number identification.

- God made each person special. (CCC#2319)
- God wants people to do things that are good and safe. (CCC#2254-55; 2290; 2389)
- God loves everyone in the world. (CCC#851; 1604)
- Loving others makes God and oneself happy. (CCC#1725; 1829)
- God teaches people to be good to others. (CCC#1823; 1970)
- A person's body is a gift from God. (CCC#364-65; 2319; 2393)
  - Jesus loves all people. (CCC#342; 561; 851)
  - Jesus teaches everyone to love and care for others. (CCC#459; 561; 1823; 2055; 2822; 2842)
- The Holy Spirit lives in every person. (CCC#733; 738; 747; 809)
- When people hurt others, they ask for forgiveness. (CCC#1451; 1490)
- People show God's love by treating others with kindness and respect. (CCC#912; 1807; 1944)
  - People are called to treat others as they would like to be treated. (CCC#459; 1823; 1944; 1970-1971; 2074; 2822; 2842)

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