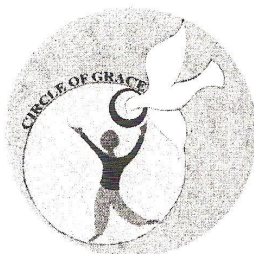


Summary of the Key Concepts of "Circle of Grace"



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.
Know 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 grownups about our worries, concerns or "funny/ uncomfortable feelings" so they can help us be safe and take the right action.

Lesson 1

What is a Circle of Grace?

Sometimes children reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the child, "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 child 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:

- We are all Children of God
- As Children of God, we are unique and loved by Him
- Jesus teaches us how to love and respect God and others and self
- We are all called to do good

Lesson Goal

Children will come to understand and describe the concept of a *Circle of Grace*.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Demonstrate their own *Circle of Grace*.
2. Describe what makes a person's *Circle of Grace* a holy space.
3. Identify the behaviors appropriate for the *Circle of Grace*.

Vocabulary

1. **Children of God**: All people are made and loved by God.
2. **Circle of Grace**: The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
3. **Grace**: The gift of God's goodness and love to help me live as his child.
4. **Holy**: Special because of a connection with God.
5. **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.
6. **Respect**: Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
7. **Symbol**: A picture or object that stands for something else.

Materials Needed

1. Symbols (examples included: stop sign, NIKE swoosh, slippery when wet sign, peace symbol,)

2. Several copies of *Circle of Grace* Logo (one copy for each group) (see the end of the Grade 2 Lessons)
3. Whiteboard or chalkboard
4. *Circle of Grace* cards (see the end of the Grade 2 Lessons)
5. (Optional) *Circle of Grace* Song (in the Administrator/Director section)

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and join in the Sign of the Cross. Then say together,

**Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen.**

Optional Prayer- The *Circle of Grace* Song (Located in the Administrator/Director Section)

Getting Started

1. Show symbols one at a time to the children. Ask what each represents. Invite children to name other symbols. Make the point that symbols are a way of telling us something or reminding us of something else.
2. Write the term "Symbol" on the board. State the vocabulary definition of symbol: a picture or object that stands for something else.

Lesson Development

Discussion (Extender provided at the end of the lesson)

1. Show children the *Circle of Grace* symbol. Ask children what they see in the symbol. Prompt if needed for the following parts to be identified and review what each part represents:
 - a. Red Circle of Grace Words - Color of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Person - Child of God
 - c. Yellow Circle - Grace
 - d. Dove - Holy Spirit
 - e. Blue Background - The World in Which We Live
2. Remind the children, "Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*."
3. Write terms "Grace", "Circle of Grace", and "Children of God" on the board and define them.

Activity - Circle of Grace I

1. Review our *Circle of Grace* movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.
2. Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
 - a. Raise your hands above your head
 - b. Bring your arms slowly down
 - c. Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you
 - d. Embrace all the space around you

- e. Then reach down to your feet
- f. Know that God is in this space with you
3. Tell the children, "This is the *Circle of Grace* in which you live."

Discussion

1. *Suggested opening:* Now, let's remember why it is important that we know about our *Circle of Grace*.
2. *Ask the children the following review questions:*
 - Does Jesus always love us? (Yes)
 - Is Jesus always with us? (Yes)
 - If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. What do we call that special, holy place? (Our *Circle of Grace* – prompt with *Circle of Grace* movement if needed).
 - God is present in our *Circle of Grace* because he wants a close relationship with each of us. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us
 - Remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace*, with God and surrounded by God's love. God wants us to be safe and behave with respect for ourselves and for others.
3. Write terms "Holy", "Holy Spirit", "Respect", and "Trust" on the board and define them.

Activity – Circle of Grace Cards (see the end of Grade 2 Lessons)

1. Have the children sit together in groups of 3 (or 4).
2. Give each group a set of cards and a copy of the *Circle of Grace* Logo.
3. Have children take turns drawing a card from the top of the pile and decide if this is something he or she would welcome in their *Circle of Grace* or something he or she would like to keep far outside his or her *Circle of Grace*. If the card shows something loving and kind they should put it in the *Circle of Grace* Logo (begin or continue a pile). If it shows something scary, mean, or unhealthy, he or she should put it outside the *Circle of Grace* Logo (begin or continue a pile). If the child is not sure, the child should put the card outside the pile until he or she asks for help from the leader (trusted adult).

Optional Lesson Extender

Draw or find appropriate additional pictures of how you want to be treated in your *Circle of Grace* or of words or actions that would be loving and kind.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, God,
for always being with me in my *Circle of Grace*.
Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps me know what is good.
Thank you for giving me people who care about me
and want me to be safe.
Amen.

(Optional) Tell the children you will close by singing a song called "This is Holy Ground" or "Prayer for Peace" or other appropriate song.



Circle of Grace Cards

Circle of Grace Cards are pictures ready to be cut out for the activity. Provide enough sets of *Circle of Grace* cards for each small group. Laminating the cards will help preserve them for additional classes. Pictures have been provided.

- Ball in the water
- Multigenerational family
- Family
- Hugs
- Computer
- Birthday cake
- Heart
- Cigarette
- Gun
- Matchstick
- Sisters fighting
- Parents arguing
- Clenched fist
- Girl holding hands
- Boy holding hands

- Puppy and kitten
- Garbage
- Bully
- Bike helmet
- Drinks
- Butterfly
- Family praying
- Car keys
- Phone
- Growling dog
- Rosary
- Bible
- Man with binoculars
- Flower
- Girl praying

