

# Circle of Grace

## Safe Environment Training Grade 1 - 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 children 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 children 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 children 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 children understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children 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.<sup>1</sup> 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 children 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org), or <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

## *Grade 1 Leader Guidelines*

- A **Leader** is defined as clergy, administrator, director of religious education/formation, teacher, or catechist who has been trained to teach the *Circle of Grace* Program.
- 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 may vary depending on size of class, age of children, amount of discussion, etc.
- Vocabularies with definitions are intended for the leader. The explanation of vocabulary should be integrated within the context of the lessons to assist the children in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Program. The depth of the children'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.
- The Red Light, Green Light Activity may be adapted to a Happy, Neutral, and Sad Face Activity if the leader believes the children have not been exposed to a stoplight.
- 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.
- There should be no more than two to three weeks between the last two lessons. 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 children and help them to know what to do when they feel unsafe.
- Your Administrator, or Religious Education 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.*

*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..

# 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 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 his/her 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.
8. **Trust**: Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.

## Materials Needed

1. Symbols (examples: stop sign, Nike swoosh, slippery when wet sign, peace symbol, etc.)
2. *Circle of Grace* Logo color (see the end of the Grade 1 Lessons)
3. *Circle of Grace* Logo Black and White (see the end of the Grade 1 Lessons)
4. Whiteboard or chalkboard
5. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a “happy/sad face chart”

## 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.**

## Getting Started

1. *Show symbols one at a time to the children. Ask what each represents. Make the point that symbols are a way of telling us something or reminding us of something.*
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

1. *Show children the Circle of Grace symbol. Ask children what they see in the symbol.*
2. *This is a symbol for our Circle of Grace. It reminds us that God loves us and His love is always around us. Everyone has a Circle of Grace.*
3. *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

### **Activity - Circle of Grace**

1. *Review the 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. *Reach with both arms as high as you can over your head.*
  - b. *Circle your arms down on each side and bend down until you reach all the way under your feet.*
  - c. *As you stand back up again, turn all the way around once as you raise your arms back over your head.*
3. *Tell the children: This is the Circle of Grace that you live in.*

### **Discussion**

1. *Suggested opening: Now, we will talk about why it is important that we know about our Circle of Grace.*
2. *Ask the children: Do you remember that Jesus told us how he would always love us and always be with us? If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. That place is our Circle of Grace. 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.*
3. *When we remember that we are in a Circle of Grace, with God and surrounded by God's love, we will also remember to behave with the respect for ourselves and for others that is called for when we are in a holy place.*

### **Activity - Happy and Sad Face Chart**

1. *Make a chart with two columns on the poster paper/flip chart paper. Label one with happy face and one with sad face.*
2. *Ask the children: What are some nice things that other people do or say? What are some hurtful things that other people do or say? What are some nice things you do or say? What might be some hurtful things you do or say?*
3. *Allow a few responses. List on the board in the appropriate column.*
4. *Point out that words and behaviors listed in the happy face column are those that respect our Circle of Grace. The words and behaviors in the sad face column are those that do not belong in anyone's Circle of Grace.*
5. *Keep happy and sad face chart posted for future reference.*

### **Optional Lesson Extender**

1. *Role-play how you want to be treated by others in your Circle of Grace.*
2. *Role-play how you should treat others in their Circle of Grace.*

## **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.*

# Lesson 2: The Stoplight

## Feelings, Touch and Secrets

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 be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations.

### Lesson Objectives

#### Children will be able to:

1. Understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them and that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.
2. Learn how to recognize when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*.
3. Be able to recognize safe and unsafe situations in a person's *Circle of Grace*.
4. Distinguish between safe and unsafe secrets in a person's *Circle of Grace*.

### Vocabulary

1. **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.
2. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God's love.
3. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.
4. **Safe Touch:** Touch that respects others and me.
5. **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.

6. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.
7. **Stoplight:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
8. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
9. **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*.
10. **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.

## Materials Needed

1. Large picture of a stoplight with all three colors visible - red, yellow, and green (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)
2. Option 1: one set of red, yellow, and green circle cards per child, the backside of each colored card should be white and the front side red, yellow, or green. Put the circle cards on a Popsicle stick so they look more like the signal in a stoplight.  
Option 2: one set for the Leader.
3. Feeling Faces Chart is optional to assist with the stoplight activity (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)
4. Completed Happy Face and Sad Face chart from Lesson 1
5. Home Activity Sheet for Parents: The Stoplight (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)

## 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.**

## Getting Started

### Review

1. *Ask children to stand and demonstrate their Circle of Grace as learned in previous lesson.*
2. *Point to Happy Face and Sad Face chart from Lesson 1. Ask children the following:*
  - a. *What did we write on this chart? (Answer: words and actions we like and don't like from others.)*
  - b. *What were some of the words and actions you liked? Why?*
  - c. *What were some you did not like? Why?*

*Suggested comment:* Today we are going to continue talking about words and actions that we like and don't like in our *Circle of Grace*. We will use the stoplight to identify what doesn't belong in our *Circle of Grace*.

### **Discussion**

1. *Show a large picture of a stoplight (sample at the end of the lessons)*
2. *Review the meaning of a stoplight by asking:*
  - a. *Why do we have stoplights? Pause for answers.* The reason we have stoplights is to protect people and keep them safe.
  - b. *What does each color of the stoplight mean? (Add STOP, BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.)*

## **Lesson Development**

### **Introduction**

The use of the word "signal" (instead of "light") is intentional in order to point to the fact that a "signal" can be both internal and external. A "stoplight", however, is only an external reality.

Most of the time you know what is safe and good to allow in your *Circle of Grace*. Sometimes, though, you need others who respect your *Circle of Grace* to help you know what is safe and what is not, people like our parents or teachers. God has given each of us our own kind of signal to keep us safe and protected. Sometimes these signals are called feelings. Our feelings are one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.

### **Discussion**

1. *Continue by saying:* Let's review how the three colors of a stoplight can remind us of the signals God gives us to help keep us safe and protected.
2. **Green signal** - Means GO AHEAD. Some things are definitely safe. Some examples are telling the truth, being kind and respectful, helping others, and caring about others. You are also safe when others respect your body and feelings. Could you name some other things that would always be safe to do or let someone else do with you? (*Leader points out that everything written on the happy face column of the poster would be a green signal word or action.*)
3. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. *Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts of bullying. Ask the children to define it and what does it look like etc* Some examples of bullying (being mean to someone on purpose), are lying, hitting, fighting, etc. Can you help me think of other things that are never good to do or let someone do to you? (*Leader points out that everything written on the sad face column of the poster would be a red signal word or action.*) When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.
4. **Yellow Signal** - Means BE CAREFUL. Sometimes you can't tell if a situation is safe or unsafe. You might feel confused or unsure about it. These are like a yellow signal. It

may seem like just a funny feeling in your heart or tummy. When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.

## Activity - Part 1

### Red Light Green Light

The purpose of this activity is to help children learn how to identify dangerous and unsafe situations, feelings, and touch, but not to scare or shame them. Make sure to give clear and concise reasons why a situation falls into the green or yellow/red signal category. For children, it may sometimes be hard to distinguish between red and yellow situations. Take the example of a stranger coming up to them asking for help. The children may be thinking it is “good” to help someone” but “bad” to talk to strangers. They cannot discern which one to take priority. The children need to be aware of their internal process of conflicting feelings which they might be experiencing. Children will learn that when possible they should always talk to a trusted adult before acting in a red or yellow situation. **Remind children that there are always adults available to listen and talk. Children only need to ask a trusted adult for the time to talk.**

1. *Option 1: Give each child a set of red, green, and yellow circle cards.*  
*Option 2: Leader is the only one who has a set of red, green, and yellow circle cards. .*
2. *Suggested instructions:*
  - In a moment, I’m going to describe some situations.
  - Please listen very carefully.
  - At the end of each, I’m going to ask you if you think the situation calls for a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal. I’ll then ask you each to hold up the color card that you think best fits the situation.
  - Then we’ll talk about each situation.
3. *Read each situation aloud. **Make sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.***
4. *After reading a situation, give children a moment to think and then ask them to hold up a red, green, or yellow card. Some situations, though clearly red to adults, may be unclear (yellow) from a child’s perspective. This activity will help children identify their own confusing feelings and to understand that they should talk to a trusted adult. Allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected with these situations.*
  - a. GREEN SITUATIONS
    - Your mom or dad gives you a hug when you are sad (*loved, comforted*).

- You are at the doctor and your mom is with you. The doctor checks your body to make sure it is healthy (*safe, secure, embarrassed*).
  - You see your friend crying and you ask if you can give her/him a hug (*sad, caring*).
  - Your grandmother/grandfather wipes your tears when you fall down and hurt yourself (*loved, comforted, safe*).
  - You tell the leader when you accidentally break something in your classroom (*embarrassed, sorry, guilty, happy that you told*).
  - You decide not to laugh when a classmate falls down and cries even though your friends are laughing (*sad, happy that you did not make fun of them*).
- b. YELLOW/RED SITUATIONS (Always talk to a trusted adult.)
- You are playing outside your house when a group of older kids come by and ask your name. They say they will give you a computer game if you go with them (*cautious, scared*).
  - Your big brother's friend wants you to play a video game your mom or dad told you not to play (*worried, afraid of getting into trouble, excited to play the game*).
  - You push someone out of line so you can be first (*mad, selfish*).
  - You are at a friend's birthday party when your friend says "let's all go downstairs so we can play on the computer without my mom or dad around". (*pressured, curious, worried*)
  - You are at a family party. Someone asks you to sit on his/her lap, but you don't want to (*pressured, mad, unsure*).
  - Your friend's big brother/sister wants you to do something you don't want to do because it makes you uncomfortable (*pressured, confused*).

## **Activity - Part 2**

### **Red Light Green Light - Secrets**

***This Section is on Secrets.***

*Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be key to them seeking help.*

*This activity can be a good start to helping them understand the concept of secrets.*

- 1) *Make a good secret and bad secret chart with two columns. This can be done on poster paper/flip chart paper (good secret ☺ and bad secret ☹).*
- 2) Can you name some good secrets? Who is involved in the secret? Is there a time that it is finally told?

- 3) Can you name a bad secret? Who is involved in the secret? Can the secret hurt you or someone else? Ask them if they think the people in the below photos are sharing good or bad secrets? (You may also bring in additional photos to help illustrate the children's understanding of secrets).



- 4) Show them the feeling chart located at the back of the lessons. Ask them to identify how they would feel if they saw someone whispering secrets like the photos?

### Discussion

*Continue by saying:* "Sometimes secrets can even give us a funny feeling in our heart or tummy. A safe secret is one that does not hurt others or me. A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell. A good way to decide if a secret is safe or unsafe is to ask ourselves, 'Can this secret hurt me or someone else?'"

- Listen carefully; I am going to read some more situations that have a secret.
- Option 1: At the end of each, I'm going to ask you if you think the situation calls for a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal. I'll then ask you each to hold up the color card that you think best fits the situation.
- Option 2: After reading the situation give the children a moment before asking them if the circle card you are holding up is right or wrong.
- Then we'll talk about each situation.

*Situations: (Be sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.)*

#### GREEN

- Your friend tells you, "I think Joey is cute," and tells you to keep it a secret (*special, trusted*).
- Your dad is planning a surprise birthday party for your mom (*happiness, excitement, anticipation*).
- Your parents plan to get a puppy but don't tell you until they bring it home (*surprised, loved*).

YELLOW/RED (Always talk to a trusted adult.)

- Your friend's brother takes a picture of you with his cell phone. He asks you not to tell and say that you will get into trouble. (*guilty, afraid of punishment*).
  - An adult, who you know well, 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, but he says "Don't tell your parents about our visit. They won't understand," (*unsure, funny feeling in your tummy or heart, curious*).
  - Someone touches you in a way that you don't think is safe - even if the person says it is safe and says, "This special time is between you and me," (*funny feeling in your tummy, confused, etc.*).
  - Your friend tells you, "I stole a video game from my older brother that we can play downstairs. Don't tell anyone because it is an adult game". (*confused, worried, maybe excited*).
  - Someone acts like your friend but then tries to get you to do something you don't want to do because you know it is wrong or because it makes you feel confused or funny. They say, "If you tell, I will tell everyone that this was your idea," (*confused, funny feeling, trapped*).
  - Your teenage neighbor tells you that you will get into trouble if you tell your mom and/or dad what he showed you on the computer (*afraid of punishment*).
5. *After each situation is read, ask a few volunteers to explain why they chose the color card they did. Also, allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected to each situation.*
6. *If children are unsure, wrong, or you are seeing more than one color card held up for a given situation, stop and ask the following questions:*
- What do you think your mom or dad, leader, or pastor would say about this situation?
  - Would they think it is a red, green, or yellow signal? Why?

## Wrapping Up

1. *Review these definitions of feelings with the children.*
  - a. They are not right or wrong, good or bad.
  - b. They may be God's signals about what is going on in our lives.
2. *We have talked about these situations as green, red, and yellow to help children know how to respond and how to recognize their feelings as a way of deeper listening.*
3. *In Lesson 3, they will learn that sometimes they need to talk to trusted adults to help them understand the meaning of these signals.*

## 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.*

# Lesson 3

## Safety Plan

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 demonstrate how to take action if boundaries are threatened or violated.

### Lesson Objectives

#### Children will be able to:

1. Understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them and that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.
2. Understand that God wants them to do what they can to take care of themselves.
3. Name three trusted adults (in addition to their parents) whom they could seek out for help.
4. Learn and role-play the skill of "How to Ask for Help".

### Vocabulary

1. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
2. **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*.

### Materials Needed

1. Whiteboard or chalkboard
2. Construction or coloring paper for each child
3. Markers or crayons for each child

4. Create one large Skill Poster of “How to Ask for Help” with following steps (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons):
  - a. Look at the person.
  - b. Say, “I need to tell you something important.”
  - c. Clearly describe the problem.
  - d. Thank the person for helping you.
5. Trusted Adult Parent Activity Sheet (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)

## Opening Prayer

*Leader calls the group 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.**

## Getting Started

### Review Vocabulary

1. **Children of God:** All people. We are all made by and loved by God.
2. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
3. **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.
4. **Grace:** The gift of God’s goodness and love to help me live as his child.
5. **Holy:** Special because of a connection with God.
6. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God’s love.
7. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what’s best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
8. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and others.
9. **Safe Touch:** Touch that respects me and others.
10. **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.
11. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.
12. **Stoplight:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.

13. **Symbol:** A picture or object that stands for something else.
14. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
15. **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*.
16. **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.

## **Review**

1. *Show children the Circle of Grace Symbol.*
2. *Tell the children:* This is a symbol for our *Circle of Grace*. It reminds us that God loves us and His love is always around us. Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*.
3. *Show a large picture of a stoplight.*
4. *Review the meaning or purpose of a stoplight by asking:*
  - a. Why do we have stoplights? The reason we have stoplights is to protect people and keep them safe. Sometimes people say or do things that make us feel funny in our heart or tummy. That funny feeling tells us that we need to get help from a trusted adult. The Holy Spirit is guiding us to help keep us safe.
  - b. What does each color of the stoplight mean? (*Add STOP, BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.*)

## **Lesson Development**

### **Introduction**

1. Today we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your *Circle of Grace* without your permission or does something that makes you feel unsafe.
2. *Write "Trusted Adult" on the board.*
3. We just reviewed all the new vocabulary words that we've learned in the past few lessons. Today, our focus is on a term that we already know - "Trusted Adult".
4. Let's review what "Trusted Adult" means.
5. *Allow a few responses.*
6. 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*. Examples of trusted adults, other than your parents, could be a teacher, a neighbor, an aunt, or uncle, your grandparent, church leader, or a family friend.
7. How do you know you can trust someone?
8. *Allow a few responses.*
9. 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.

*An adaptation using a hand puppet to interact with the leader and children during the Activity, Skill Introduction, and Role-Play Introduction is provided at the end of the Grade 1 Lessons.*

### **Activity - Identifying My Trusted Adults**

1. Can anyone name a person who loves you and helps you to stay safe? *Encourage the children to name adults in addition to their mom and dad. You are encouraged to bring in photos or magazine clippings of typical trusted adults. These can be of parents, teachers, doctors or clergy. It is important NOT to show the photo until it is mentioned by the children.*
2. *List children's responses on the board.*
3. These are people whom you can ask to help you if you are unsafe or confused. We call these people trusted adults.
4. *Give each child a piece of paper and crayons or markers.*
5. *Instruct the children to think of one or two trusted adults besides mom or dad whom they could ask for help.*
6. Tell a person next to you the names of the trusted adults that you picked.
7. Draw a picture of each of your trusted adults. *Remind children that mom and dad may be trusted adults even if they are not in the picture.*
8. *Attach the drawing to the Home Activity Sheet for parents for lesson 4. (See the end of Grade 1 Lessons.)*
9. *Instruct the children to have their parents sign the Home Activity Sheet.*
10. *Remind the children to bring the home activity sheet back to the classroom next week. This is to ensure the parents know who their child picked as a trusted adult. Sometimes children may pick someone who is not available or inappropriate.*

### **Skill Introduction**

#### **How to Ask My Trusted Adult for Help**

*Ask the class to brainstorm a list of Red Signal or Yellow Signal times when they might need to talk to or ask a trusted adult for help. Write their suggestions on the board.*

1. *Post the adapted skill poster "How to Ask for Help". (See the end of the Grade 1 Lessons.)*
  - a. *Picture an eye*
  - b. *Picture of a child speaking/mouth*
  - c. *Picture of "?"*
  - d. *The words "Thank You"*
2. *Skill steps are:*
  - a. *Look at the person. (Picture of an eye)*
  - b. *Say to the person "I need help. I do not feel safe." (Picture of a child speaking/mouth)*
  - c. *Tell the person what is wrong, why you don't feel safe. (Picture of "?")*
  - d. *Tell the person, "Thank You." (Words "Thank You")*

3. This is how we ask for help. You can use these steps whenever you need to ask anyone for help. Today we are going to practice how to ask for help from your parents or a trusted adult.

## Role-Play Introduction

According to research we remember 5% of what we hear and 90% of what we do. Allowing children to role-play greatly increases their chances of remembering what to do when a real problem arises. It is very common for children to use play to help them understand confusing situations

1. *Explain:* Role-play is a way to practice something new.
2. *Select one of the situations from Skill Introduction that the children think they might need to talk to or ask for help for a trusted adult.*
3. Today we are going to practice asking for help when... (situation). (*Example:* Today we are going to practice asking for help when someone wants me to get in their car and I don't think my mom and dad want me to.)
4. *Ask the children to brainstorm ideas of how they would tell a trusted adult they felt unsafe. Encourage the children to clearly describe why they feel unsafe. Examples: "My mom told me to wait for her." "We might not go straight to my house." "I don't know him." "I feel anxious around them."*
5. *Have the children practice with the leader role-playing the trusted adult. This role-play activity may be done individually or as a large group.*
  - a. *Children look at the leader.*
  - b. *Children say aloud: "I need your help. I don't feel safe."*
  - c. *Children say aloud: "Please help me because...(Example: Please help me because I don't think my mom or dad want me to go with her. I don't know her.)"*
  - d. *Children say aloud: "Thank You."*

## Wrapping Up

1. *Direct children's attention back to the "How to Ask for Help" Skill Poster.*
2. *Ask children to repeat the steps for "How to Ask for Help".*
3. *Encourage children to pray for and/or write a note of thanks to each of their trusted adults.*

## 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.**

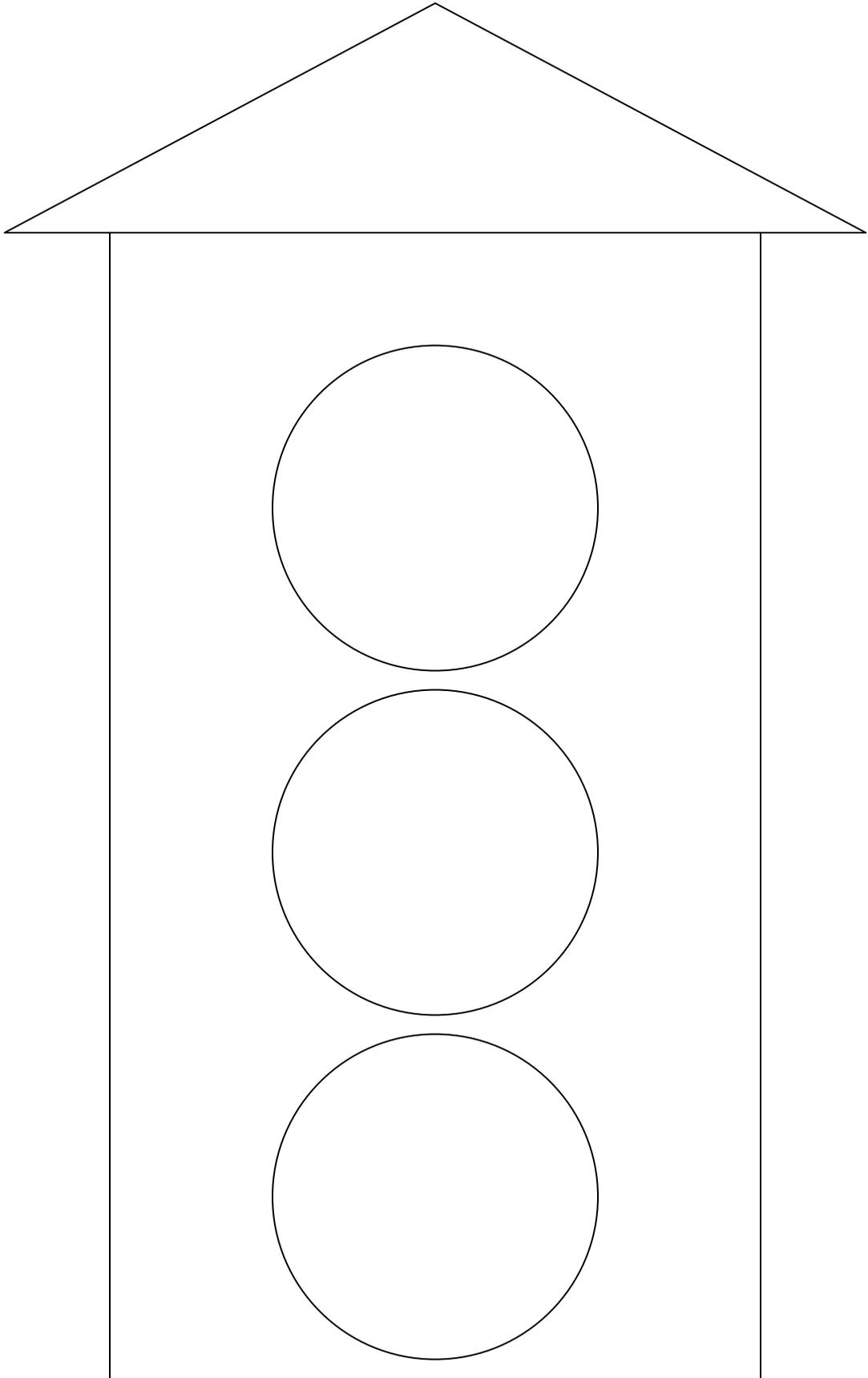
*(Optional) Tell the children you will close by singing a song called “This is Holy Ground” or “Prayer for Peace” or other appropriate song.*

## Hand Puppet Adaptation

1. *Use a hand puppet to interact with the leader and children during the lesson activity, skill introduction, and role-play introduction.*
2. *Activity Adaptation: The leader asks children to name a person who loves them and helps them to stay safe. The leader prompts the children by having the hand puppet respond appropriately. The leader affirms the hand puppet’s responses.*
3. *Skill Introduction Adaptation: The leader reviews the adapted skill poster “How to Ask for Help” with the hand puppet. The hand puppet models the skill steps for the children and asks the children to practice the steps with it.*
4. *Role-Play Adaptation: Using one of the situations provided, the hand puppet role-plays the appropriate skills to use when asking for help. Children may also give their suggestions to the hand puppet as to how the hand puppet should ask for help. The leader may also have the children use the hand puppet to role-play the appropriate skills.*







# Feeling Faces Chart



**Embarrassed**



**Frustrated**



**Happy**



**Lonely**



**Loved**



**Mad**



**Sad**



**Nervous**



**Proud**



**Relaxed**



**Scared**



**Stressed**

# Feeling Faces Chart/No Labels





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## Lesson 2

# The Stoplight: Home Activity Sheet for Parents

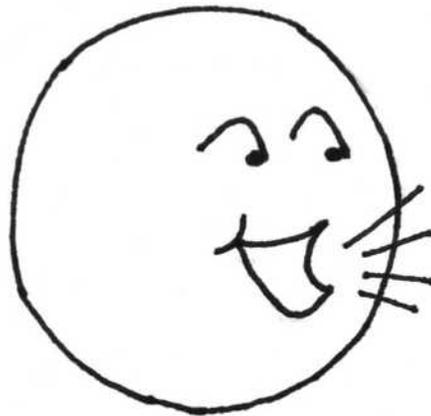
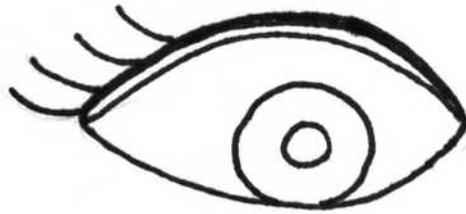
The goal of Lesson 2: The Stoplight - Feelings, Touch, and Secrets is to help children identify safe and unsafe situations/secrets. The children are now better able to understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them, to understand that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad. They will be able to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace* and to recognize safe and unsafe touch in a person's *Circle of Grace*.

In this lesson, we use the analogy of a stoplight to connect a green signal with safe situations, a red signal with unsafe situations, and a yellow signal with situations in which a child might feel confused or unsure. The stoplight analogy was used to discuss secrets. Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be key in them seeking help. Sometimes it is hard for a child to distinguish between the yellow and red situations. When that happens, children need to talk to someone they trust like their parents, leader, or other trusted adult. Learning to be more aware of these signals helps children recognize them as one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.

It is important for you as parents and guardians to reinforce this lesson at home with your child. You are encouraged to talk with your child about real situations in his or her everyday life and invite your child to identify whether the situations are green (GO AHEAD, this is safe), red (STOP, this is unsafe, always talk to a trusted adult before acting), or yellow (BE CAREFUL, always talk to a trusted adult before acting).

Your support of the *Circle of Grace* Program is essential and very much appreciated as we strive to provide the safest possible environment for our children.

# How to Ask for Help



**Thank You**

## **Lesson 3**

### **The Trusted Adult: Home Activity Sheet for Parents**

The goal of Lesson 3: In this lesson, we ask children to name and draw a picture of trusted adults (in addition to their parents). Please ask your child to show you this drawing. If your child names someone you find inappropriate, please help him/her to identify someone else.

Please contact these individuals to let them know you and your child have identified them as trusted adults. This can be done in person, by phone, or a letter. (Letter-writing is a fun activity you can do with your child.) Being identified as a trusted adult will most likely make them feel honored as well as alert them to your safety plan for your child.

Please have your child return the drawing with your signature as a confirmation for us that you received this information and discussed it with your child. Please call the parish office if you have questions.

**Thank you for your cooperation!**

## Lesson Extenders

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

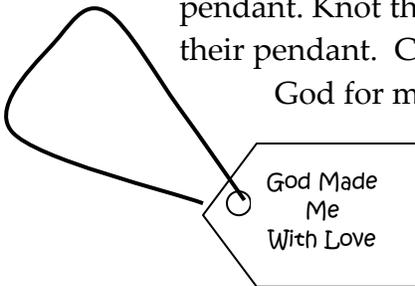
“God Made Me” Necklace *adapted* The Big Book of Christian Crafts by Kathy Ross

Cut a 4 by 6 inch piece of heavy paper (poster board, oaktag, cardboard) for each child. Cut off two corners at one end and round all corners to create a pendant.

Using markers, write “God Made Me with Love” on one side of the pendant.

Have each child write his/her name on the other side of the pendant. Thread a 2 foot piece of cording or ribbon through a hole punched at the tapered end of the

pendant. Knot the cord to form a necklace. Invite children to decorate their pendant. Close the activity by having the children pray, “Thank you God for making me.”



Hollingsworth, Mary. Tall Body, Short Body, Everybody's Somebody

We are all different. God made and loves us all.

### **Lesson 3:** Safety Plan

Cary, Phoega. “Our Heroes” [from The Children's Book of Heroes edited by William J. Bennett]

God gives strength and courage to do the right thing, to say no.

# Grade 1 Evaluation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parish/School \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Leader \_\_\_\_\_ Number of children 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 \_\_\_\_ Children understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ Children will be able to describe the *Circle of Grace* which God gives each of us.
3. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ Children will be able to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries.
4. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ Children can identify types of boundary violations.
5. YES \_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_ Children 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 (use back if necessary).*

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

**Return to your School Administrator or Director of Religious Education.**