

Circle of Grace Training

Archdiocese of Washington

Objectives:

1. Explain the philosophy of the *Circle of Grace* program.
2. Identify the key concepts, objectives, and guidelines, of the *Circle of Grace* program.
3. Construct two 45 – 60 minute *Circle of Grace* lessons.

Circle of Grace: Meditation

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.



Circle of Grace

- *Circle of Grace* is a safe environment program that complies with the U.S. Bishop's *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*.
- It was developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha and has been approved for use in the Archdiocese of Washington.

Circle of Grace: Philosophy

1. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created “male and female in God’s image” and that God saw this as “very good.”
2. What is the Circle of Grace?

It is the love and goodness of God that surrounds us and all others.

Circle of Grace: Philosophy

3. Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?

Understanding their Circle of Grace can help children to protect the special person they are and to be respectful to others.

4. How is the *Circle of Grace* program different from other protection programs?

Circle of Grace goes beyond just protection by helping children understand the sacredness of who they are.

Circle of Grace: Key Concepts

- *Circle of Grace* is taught in the context of a relationship.
- God gives each of us a Circle of Grace where He is always “Present”.
- God is “Present” because He desires a relationship with us.
- God helps us to know who and what does and does **not** belong in our Circle of Grace.
- God helps us know when to ask for help from someone we trust.

Circle of Grace: Objectives

1. Children/young people will understand they are created by God and live in the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. Children/young people will be able to describe the Circle of Grace which God gives each of us.

Circle of Grace: Objectives

3. Children/young people will be able to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries.
4. Children/young people will be able to identify all types of boundary violations.
5. Children/young people will demonstrate how to take action if any boundary is threatened or violated.

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

- Circle of Grace Curriculum has both **comprehensive** and **focus** grades.
- The comprehensive grades have **multiple** lessons.
- The focus grades have a lesson on **one specific subject**.
- Lessons can be presented in their entirety or **modified** for a 45 -60 minutes class.
- All *Circle of Grace* **objectives** should be addressed even if only one lesson is given.

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

Comprehensive Grades

Kindergarten

- Lesson 1: What is the Circle of Grace?
- Lesson 2: The Stoplight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets
- Lesson 3: Safety Plan

Grade 1

- Lesson 1: What is the Circle of Grace?
- Lesson 2: The Stoplight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets
- Lesson 3: Safety Plan

Grade 2

- Lesson 1: What is the Circle of Grace?
- Lesson 2: The Stoplight: Feelings, Touch and Secrets
- Lesson 3: Safety Plan

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

Comprehensive Grades - continued

Grade 3

- Lesson 1: What is the Circle of Grace?
- Lesson 2: Boundaries and Limits of Our Circle of Grace
- Lesson 3: Action Plan

Grade 6

- Lesson 1: Circle of Grace: Pieces of the Puzzle
- Lesson 2: Safe Relationships: Putting the Puzzle Together
- Lesson 3: Boundaries: Every Piece Has Its Border
- Lesson 4: Safety PLAAN: When Something Doesn't Fit

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

Focus Grades

Grade 4

- Lesson - Internet Safety

Grade 5

- Lesson - Understanding the Influence of the Media on our Circle of Grace

Grade 7

- Lesson - Saying No to Disrespect: Honoring Everyone's Circle of Grace

Grade 8

- Lesson - How to be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

- Leader's instructions for each lesson are italicized.
- Non-italicized text needs to be presented by the leader to the children or young people.
- Each lesson is correlated with Catholic teachings.
- The Office for Catechesis has provided correlations with the *Forming Disciples for the New Evangelization* Religion Curriculum.

Circle of Grace: Guidelines

- The key to teaching *Circle of Grace* is **truly believing**, as the meditation expresses, that God is really present!
- Leaders need to model a “**trusted adult**” by integrating the philosophy of *Circle of Grace* into their lives.
- This will greatly assist children and youth to **embrace** the knowledge of God’s **real presence** in their lives.

Safe Environment Reporting

1. A Safe Environment report, signed by Fr. Meyers, must be completed and submitted to the Archdiocese of Washington Office for Catechesis.
 - a. *Circle of Grace* evaluation forms are not required to be sent to the Office for Catechesis or maintained by your parish program.
 - b. Correspondence with parents is encouraged though not required (*Circle of Grace* parent letter and parent pages).
2. Catechists and aides must report suspected abuse in accordance with the Archdiocese of Washington *Child Protection Policy*, 5.1- 5.7.
<http://www.adw.org/childprotection/>