Círcle of Grace

Safe environment Training N.O.T.I.C.E. ~ When Boundaries are Challenged

Grade 9 - 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 Curriculum different from other safety 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 Curriculum - Grades X-12

The goal of the *Circle of Grace* curriculum 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 Curriculum - Grades X-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, discern and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries.
- Children/Young People will be 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 9 Leader Guidelines

- A Leader is defined as clergy (priest or deacon), school administrator, director of religious education/formation, teacher, or catechist who has been trained to teach the Circle of Grace Curriculum.
- 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* because He desires an intimate relationship with His children.
- Pre and Post Assessments are for the leaders use only. It is to assist them in understanding what the students know and retain about the Circle of Grace Curriculum.
- The time frame may vary depending on size of class, age of young people, 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 young people in their understanding of the *Circle of Grace* Curriculum.. A master vocabulary list of the Circle of Grace is in the administrator section. The pertinent vocabulary is listed in each lesson.
- 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.
- The 9-12 curriculum is formatted to be used in two ways:
 - ✓ The traditional way: lessons taught to the identified grade. The lesson for grade 12 is only to be taught to seniors.
 - ✓ The second way: select any one of alternate lessons or retreat to teach the class or group. Leaders will need to keep a record of what lesson is taught each year.
- 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.
- Your School Administrator, Religious Education Director or Youth Minister Director will be sending out a letter to all parents regarding *Circle of Grace*. Parent information is included in the curriculum. Every parish/school is encouraged to provide parent education opportunities both to inform parents about the *Circle of Grace* curriculum 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
 curriculum and 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 several trusted adults, in addition to our parents, to talk to about our worries, concerns or "funny/ uncomfortable feelings" so they can help us be safe. If a parent or trusted adult is not available or unable to help us, God wants us to go to another trusted adult until we get the help needed to be safe.

N.O.T.I.C.E. ~ When Boundaries are Challenged

Sometimes young people 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 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.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- The relationship between the love of God, our love of self and our love of others
- The image of God is in ourselves and others.

Lesson Objectives

Young People will be able to:

- 1. Identify internal and external boundaries.
- 2. Recognize the key behaviors of an offender.
- 3. Understand that some offenders' behaviors are for the sole purpose of putting the youth in a vulnerable position in order to exploit/abuse them.
- 4. Identify how best to respond and seek help in unsafe situations.

Vocabulary (Review with students)

- **1.** <u>Compliment:</u> A polite expression of praise or admiration.
- 2. <u>Flattery</u>: excessive and insincere praise, given especially to further one's own interests.
- **3.** <u>Imbalance of Power/Influence:</u> An unequal distribution of control, power, and influence in a relationship.
- **4.** <u>Moral Responsibility:</u> As we grow into mature adults, we can become aware of safe boundaries to help protect ourselves from violations of God's plan for our physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual well-being.
- 5. <u>Offender:</u> Someone who exhibits behaviors for the sole purpose of putting another person in a vulnerable position to be exploited/abused.
- 6. <u>Victim:</u> A person who has suffered injury/harm (physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual) by forces beyond his or her control and not of his or her personal responsibility. We should never blame or accuse persons who are victims of abuse or have been manipulated or exploited in unequal relationships.

Materials Needed

- 1. Whiteboard, chalkboard, projector
- 2. Summary of Key Concepts of Circle of Grace Handout for each student (front of lesson)
- 3. Pre and Post Assessment for each student (end of lesson)
- 4. Activity materials: Sticky notes, or tape and index cards
- 5. N.O.T.I.C.E. Handout for each student (end of lesson)

Opening Prayer

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

God,

we ask for Your guidance and a little more:
 guidance in relationships,
 guidance in decisions,
 guidance in love,
 and guidance in worshiping You.
 Amen.

Getting Started:

Distribute and collect the pre-assessment. Allow students time to complete.

Review

Please distribute and review the key concepts of Circle of Grace Handout. It is important that that youth understand these concepts in order to build an understanding that God wants us to be safe. Boundaries help us make choices that keep us safe in our Circle of Grace.

Discussion

The reverence and respect we must have for all human life is based upon our creation in His divine image.

- 1. Human beings are the only creatures on earth that God willed for their own sake. Humans are unique because we are made in the divine image enabling us to share in God's own life.
- 2. "God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good." (Genesis 1:27, 31 from the New American Bible)
- 3. "Every human life, from the moment of conception until death, is sacred because the human person has been willed for its sake in the image and likeness of the living and holy God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2319)

4. All persons possess God-given dignity. Violating the emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual boundaries of another person causes great harm (trauma) that can cause them great pain throughout their life.

Continue:

- 6. Have the young people take a moment to think about someone they currently do not get along with or have not gotten along with in the past.
 - Now, remember that that person is also made in the image of God.
 - Pause for reflection...
 - Can you recognize a gift in them that you have not recognized before?
 - How has this changed your perspective regarding this person?

Discussion

With all adults, there is an imbalance of power or influence with children and teens. The adult may be a teacher, coach, youth minister, priest, scout leader, musician or even an older youth in your sport or activity. All of these have significant influence or power over you. It is good to recognize this and protect ourselves from getting in an unsafe situation. We can be friendly with those who have power or influence over us, but we can never be friends as equals. *Pause for reflection...*

- What does it mean to have a difference (or imbalance) of power or influence? Can you give an example? (*They make rules, they can talk about you with your parents, they can give you more playing time on the field*)
- Why is it even more important to be aware of people who have significant power or influence over you now that you are in 9th grade? You have less supervision by parents and other adults to help keep you safe, the older you get, the less difference there is in the age of you and younger adults so the difference in power may be less obvious.
- What does it mean to be friendly as opposed to being friends? *Friends have equal power and status, influence.* They are usually the same age and can also be called your 'peers'.
- Is there anyone over whom you have more power or influence? (*younger siblings, neighbor children, children who you babysit, teams or activities for children or pre-teens that you belong to or assist adult leaders*)

<u>Discussion</u>: N.O.T.I.C.E. when boundaries are challenged.

Today we are going to talk about boundaries in our Circle of Grace. When they are not honored/challenged, we may be unsafe.

For today's lesson we will define an offender as someone who exhibits behaviors for the sole purpose of putting youth in a vulnerable position to be abused or exploited. Remember offenders cannot be identified based on their race, sex, age or their relationship to the targeted person. It is possible, however, to identify offenders by their behaviors.

The Acronym N.O.T.I.C.E. has key behaviors to look for when boundaries are violated/challenged. Sometimes someone may be unaware that they crossed a boundary. In these situations, the person, when confronted about the behavior, usually acknowledges the mistake, and changes the behavior. However, offenders, when confronted, usually become defensive or deny the concern. The offender's behaviors may be at odds with rules or practices put in place to protect youth. They may use their power as someone who works youth not to bring them closer to God, but to abuse or exploit them.

Let's review:

- N Nontransparent (Secrets, secluded meetings, and conversations).
- O Over Involvement (Involvement in a youth's life not consistent with role or relationship).
- T Telltale behaviors (Excess physical or emotional interactions and resource (gifts, trips etc.).
- I Inappropriate behaviors (Interactions are not consistent with the relationship/role or not respectful of the difference in power or influence).
- C Chips away at safeguards (Challenges or pressures a youth to break rules).
- E Engages youth in inappropriate adult behaviors/conversations (Face to face or electronically).

<u>Opening Activity</u> - Divide the youth into several groups. Distribute the N.O.T.I.C.E. questionnaire. Assign each group a couple of sections of the handout. Give them time to answer the questions and come up with some additional situations. Bring the youth back to a large group. Discuss each part of the acronym in the large group.

Choose one of the two activities

Activity 1: Detecting Offender Traits

- Have the young people get into 3 or more small groups.
- *Give each group 2 to 3 N.O.T.I.C.E. behaviors.*
- Have each group identify characters that use these traits/behaviors from TV, movies, gaming, social media, books, etc.
- Come together as a large group.
- Have each group report on their list of traits/behaviors.
- Record the overall results on a board for the group to view.
- Discuss:
 - Was it hard to identify these traits/behaviors?
 - If so, "Why?
 - Are these traits/behaviors glamorized in the media?
 - If these characters were real persons would their traits/behavior be glamorous?
 - If no, why do we find this entertaining in the media?

OR

Activity 2: Name that Trait

- 1. Have the young people get into groups A, B and C.
 - **Group A** Place one N.O.T.I.C.E. trait/ behavior on the back of on each member (up to 6 people)
 - **Group B** Instruct each member of "Group B" to interact with members of group A. The interaction is to be consistent with the trait/behavior that is posted on the back of a "Group A" member.
 - **Group** C Observe the interaction between "Group A" and "Group B". Once a trait/behavior is correctly identified, "Group C" will identify how NOT to respond to that trait/behavior. "Group C" will write this on the board/flip chart.
- 2. Gather the class back together. Discuss what each of the behaviors for N.O.T.I.C.E. means and see what the groups came up with. Make sure that the questions on the N.O.T.I.C.E. handout are answered by the group as you go through each behavior.

Discuss:

- *Appropriate and inappropriate responses.*
- Appropriate Example: Seek help when you know a secret that could harm someone, seek help you were told NOT to tell your parents or other adults.
- Inappropriate Example: Never disclosing a secret that a friend is in a harmful relationship because you want to be loyal. Invite the youth to explain what makes this response inappropriate and what are potential negative consequences as a result of being "loyal".
- Feelings attached to these responses.
- Circumstances that may influence how we respond.

Final Activity

- Set aside the final minutes of the period for the youth to quietly think and pray about the following: Invite the young people to re-examine their answers to the N. O.T.I.C.E. questionnaire in light of what they have learned about offenders.
- Tell them to identify three things they will do to change/eliminate the unhealthy behaviors/characteristics in their relationships.
 - Ask them how to determine who could be a trusted adult. Have them each write at least three names for trusted adults they could go to if they feel they may be in an unsafe situation. Why can a peer not be your trusted adult?
 - Have them think of several situations in which they might feel unsafe, and several ways they could push 'pause' on the situation until they could get help from a trusted adult. (Some excuses teens give to get out of a situation where they feel unsafe: telling the other person they need to be home by a certain time, telling them

- their parents have the passwords to their accounts and see all of their texts and posts, telling the other person they feel sick and need to go home...)
- What are several ways they could seek help from a trusted adult when they find themselves in unsafe situations.

Distribute and collect the post-assessment. Allow students time to complete.

Closing Prayer

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

God help me slow down
and be present to Your everlasting love.
Help me have REAL conversations with You
that guide and heal my brokenness.
Cultivate in my heart Your truth
and help me respond to Your Grace.
Give me courage to reject the lie
that You are a "distant" God.
Bless me with the gift of discernment,
knowing Your compassion and love is not relative
but eternal.
Your greatest desire from me
is my sincere "yes".
Amen

Opening Prayer

God,

we ask for Your guidance and a
little more: guidance in
relationships,
guidance in
decisions, guidance
in love,
and guidance in worshiping You.
Amen.

Closing Prayer

God help me slow down
and be present to Your everlasting love.
Help me have REAL conversations
with You that guide and heal my
brokenness.
Cultivate in my heart Your
truth and help me respond
to Your Grace.
Give me courage to
reject the lie that You
are a "distant" God.
Bless me with the gift of discernment,
knowing Your compassion and love is not
relative but eternal. Your greatest desire from
me is my sincere "yes".

Amen

Pre-Assessment Grade 9

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition.

	Circ	cle of Grace Respect Trusted Adult Boundary
		1. An adult who helps me to stay safe in my Circle of
		Grace and to respect others within their <i>Circle of Grace</i> .
		2. The borders or limits we need to keep ourselves safe within our <i>Circle of Grace</i> .
		3. The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
		4. Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others.
Circle	the correct an	iswer.
True	False	5. Feelings are something I sense inside myself (angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, etc.) that give me information about myself or others.
True	False	6. Unsafe touch is disrespectful, hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.
True	False	7. A boundary violation is a break or infringement on the rights of another person.
Circle	the correct an	swer for the following situations.
Safe	Unsafe	8. You are in a swimming pool and an adult that you know approaches you and says you look "hot" in your swimsuit. At first you think it is funny. Even though you smile, you begin to feel uncomfortable. The adult continues to comment on your swimsuit.
Safe	Unsafe	9. One day you hear a funny noise in the house when you are alone. You text the neighbors who you and your parents have agreed are trusted adults and ask for their help. The neighbor says he and his wife will be over and tells you to text your parents and let them know what is going on.
Safe	Unsafe	10. An instructor at your school invites you and a friend to go to a movie on a Friday night. The instructor offers to take you and bring you home. He says he will pay for the movie and refreshments.

Pre-Assessment Grade 9 Key

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition.

Trusted Adult	0	-	Trusted Adult ps me to stay safe in their City	5		
Boundary	Grace and to respect others within their <i>Circle of Grace</i> . 2. The borders or limits we need to keep ourselves safe within our <i>Circle of Grace</i> .					
<u>Circle of Grace</u>	3. The love	3. The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.				
Respect	4. Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others.					
Circle the correct ar	nswer.					
True	O	O	, , ,	ry, sad, happy, afraid, Iformation about myself or		
True	6. Unsafe touch is disrespectful, hurts, scares or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.					
True	7. A boundary violation is a break or infringement on the rights of another person.					
Circle the correct ar	nswer for the followin	ng situations				
Unsafe	you look "hot" in	your swimsı	uit. At first you think	u know approaches you and says it is funny. Even though you ontinues to comment on your		
Safe	9. You are the first one in your family to get home after school. One day you hear a funny noise in the house when you are alone. You text the neighbors whom you and your parents have agreed are trusted adults and ask for their help. The neighbor says he and his wife will be over and tells you to text your parents and let them know what is going on.					
Unsafe		•	•	iend to go to a movie on a Friday ou home. He says he will pay for		

the movie and refreshments.

N.O.T.I.C.E. Handout

The acronym N.O.T.I.C.E. has key behaviors to look for when boundaries are violated/challenged. These behaviors never reflect the reverence and respect of being made in God's divine image. Below is a brief explanation/ example of each behavior. On the back of the handout answer the questions and list additional examples and situations.

N - Nontransparent (Secrets, secluded meetings and private conversations)

- What do you do if someone is asking you to keep your interactions or relationship a secret?
- What if an adult asks to meet with you alone in a room with the door closed?
- What would your parents or trusted adult say about a secret interaction/relationship?

O - Over involvement (Involvement in a youth's life not consistent with their role or relationship)

- What do you do when someone in authority treats you like a friend or in a way that makes you uncomfortable?
- Someone in their twenties shows romantic interest in you. You may have noticed that they have more power, status and resources than you. What do you do?
- What is meant by someone being overly involved in a youth's life?

T - Telltale behaviors (excessive physical, emotional interactions and resource (gifts, trips, etc.)

- What is the difference between a compliment and flattery?
- How do you know when physical contact is excessive?
- How do you know if something is freely given or if there are expectations attached?

I - Inappropriate behaviors (Interactions are not consistent with the relationship/role)

- What type of personal attention makes you uncomfortable?
- What do you think of an adult who dresses and acts like a teen?
- Can an authority (ex. teacher, coach, youth minister, priest) or another adult ever be your peer? If yes, why?
- What is the difference between being a 'friend' and being 'friendly'? Which is appropriate for a relationship between adults and teens? Why?

C - Chips away at safeguards (Challenges or pressures a youth to break rules)

- Why do your parents or trusted adults have rules in place?
- Is someone thinking about his/her needs or yours if they pressure you to break the rules?
- Why would someone want you to believe that he/she is the ONLY one who understands you?

E - Engages youth in inappropriate adult behaviors/conversations (Face to face or electronically)

- What do you say to someone who wants you to look at a pornographic website?
- What if you receive midnight texts from an adult leader (ex. coach, teacher)? Should you tell someone? If so, why? If not, why?
- What if a young adult invites you to a party? You get there and they offer you a beer. What do you do?

Post-Assessment

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition.

Circle of Grace	Trusted Adult	Imbalance of Power
1. An unequa	al distribution of control	, power, and influence
in a relatio	nship.	
2. The love ar	nd goodness of God that	always surrounds me and all others.
3. An adult w	ho helps me to stay safe	e in my Circle of Grace and to respect
others with	in their <i>Circle of Grace</i> .	

Circle the correct answer.

True	False	4. Feelings are something I sense inside myself (angry, sad, embarrassed,
		confused, etc.) that give me information about myself or others.
True	False	5. Boundaries can be physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual.
True	False	6. Anytime a person is in a relationship where the other does not respect
		your Circle of Grace is a time when hurt or damage may occur.
Safe	Unsafe	7. You are in a swimming pool and a senior that you know tries to
		playfully push you into the pool. At first you think it is fun. Then you
		begin to feel uncomfortable and ask him/her to stop. The senior just
		laughs and continues the behavior.
Safe	Unsafe	8. A person you know from the internet wants you to meet at the
		basketball game this weekend and told you not to tell. Although you are
		curious, you feel uncomfortable in keeping a secret from your parents.
Safe	Unsafe	9. An instructor at your school invites you and a friend to go to a movie
		on a Friday night. The instructor offers to take you and bring you home.
		He says he will pay for the movie and refreshments.

10. Define the difference between a compliment and flattery:

Post-Assessment - Key

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition:

Circle of Grace Trusted Adult Imbalance of Power Imbalance of Power 1. An unequal distribution of control, power, and influence

<u>Circle of</u> <u>Grace</u>

2. The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.

Trusted Adult

3. An adult who helps me to stay safe in my *Circle of Grace* and to

respect others within their Circle of Grace.

Circle the correct answer.

True 4. Feelings are something I sense inside myself (angry, sad, embarrassed,

confused, etc.) that give me information about myself or others.

True 5. Boundaries can be physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual.

True 6. Anytime a person is in a relationship where the other does not respect

your Circle of Grace is a time when hurt or damage may occur.

Unsafe 7. You are in a swimming pool and a senior that you know tries to

playfully push you into the pool. At first you think it is fun. Then you begin to feel uncomfortable and ask him/her to stop. The senior just

laughs and continues the behavior.

Unsafe 8. A person you know from the internet wants you to meet at the

basketball game this weekend and told you not to tell. Although you are curious, you feel uncomfortable in keeping a secret from your parents.

Unsafe 9. An instructor at your school invites you and a friend to go to a movie

on a Friday night. The instructor offers to take you and bring you home.

He says he will pay for the movie and refreshments.

10. Define the difference between a compliment and flattery:

Grade 9 Evaluation

<i>Date</i>					
Parísh/Scho	ool	Cíty			
Leader		Number of young people in class			
Each	grade's cu	urriculum was designed to meet the overall program objectives. whether the objectives of the <i>Circle of Grace</i> 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 <i>Circle of Grace</i> which God gives each of us.			
3. YES	NO	Young People will be able to define and understand the N.O.T.I.C.E. acronym.			
4. YES	NO	Young People will be able to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries.			
5. YES	NO	Young People can identify types of boundary violations.			
		Young People can demonstrate how to take action if a boundary is threatened or violated. Il and any resources that you would like to share with others (use back if			
necessary).					
Please list any s	suggestions	that would improve lessons (use back if necessary).			

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