

Circle of Grace

Safe Environment Training 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 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.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 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 be able to 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

- 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 for lessons 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* Program. The depth of the young people'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.
- 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 the 9-11 sections or alternate lessons to teach the class or group. Remember that all four lessons in grade 9 equal a section and must be taught together. One may consider presenting the 9th grade lessons as a retreat. Leaders will need to keep a record of what lesson is taught each year.
- 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 young people and help them to know what to do when they feel unsafe.
- There is a pre and post assessment for this grade. This tool will assist in evaluating the young people's understanding and assimilation of the concepts. The results are to be recorded on the grade evaluation and are not to be shared with the young people.
- Your Administrator, Religious Education Director, or Youth Minister 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.*

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 people in our lives to help us when we are troubled or struggling with a concern.
- God wants us to talk to trusted adults about our worries, concerns or 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

Communion of Saints

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. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- Belief in the Creed
- Church teachings revealed in the Creed applies in our daily lives
- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- Personal covenant with God
- Belief in the Communion of Saints
- Live responsibly as fully initiated members of the Church
- Discipleship is our call to holiness
- 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 Goal

Young people will be better able to recognize their own *Circle of Grace* in the context of the Communion of Saints.

Lesson Objectives

Young people will be able to:

1. Recognize their participation in the Communion of Saints
2. Identify aspects of their personal giftedness and gifts of others
3. Understand the relationship between their *Circle of Grace* and the Communion of Saints

Materials Needed

1. Pre-assessment for each young person (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
2. Whiteboard or chalkboard
3. Markers (several for each small group and for logo activity)
4. Biography Handouts one set for each young person (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)

5. Blank logo , one for each young person (see the end of the Grade 9 Lessons)
6. *Circle of Grace* Logo Color (for display)
7. *Circle of Grace* Reference Guide and Reflection Questions, one for each young person (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
8. Copy of Opening and Closing Prayer (see end of Grade 9 Lessons)
9. Youth Ministry activity materials
 - a. *Circle of Grace*: The Communion of Saints journal page one set for each young person (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
 - b. Bibles

Opening Prayer

1. *Invite young people into their preferred prayer posture.*
2. Now it is time to quiet ourselves and call to mind the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us. *Pause.*

Please join with me as we pray:

**Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.**

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

**O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light
of the Holy Spirit,**

**grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise,
and ever to rejoice in His consolation.**

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Getting Started

Distribute the pre-assessment from each young person. Allow them time to complete then collect them. This will be used for the evaluation at the end of the Grade 9 Lessons.

1. Today we are going to talk about the Communion of Saints, what that is and how we are a part of it.
2. In the Apostles' Creed, we state the beliefs of our Catholic Faith. One of these beliefs is the Communion of Saints. The Catechism of the Catholic Church helps us understand that we belong to the Communion of Saints. As stated in Section II of the Catechism, "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; the Communion of Saints is the Church." (CCC 946, 962)

3. As Catholics we believe that the Church is the Body of Christ, all the faithful joined together through Jesus Christ.
4. Another explanation of the Communion of Saints is this: "All those persons who respect one another, care for one another, pray for one another, carry each other's burdens, celebrate each other's joys, and in the end - help all of us be caught up in the one and first Grace – that is God." (Rev. Owen Korte, St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Fremont, Nebraska, 28 March 2006)

Lesson Development

Introduction

1. *Draw a large circle on the board describing it as the one and first grace: God's love. Label the circle, "The universal Circle of Grace".*
2. *Ask the young people to name some Saints. Allow for a few responses.*
3. *Saints were ordinary people with ordinary lives. They faced the same kinds of struggles you and I face. What was noteworthy, special, and maybe even extraordinary is that they made the choice to live out God's will in their lives.*
4. *Invite the young people to brainstorm their ideas to the following questions: "What qualities did these people/Saints have? What does it mean to be holy?"*
5. *Write responses in the large circle on the board.*

Choose one of the two activities listed below:

Activity 1 - Discussion of the qualities of Saints

1. *Divide the young people into small groups (6-7 persons) and rearrange seating accordingly. Provide the handout of Blessed Pope John Paul II and Catherine Doherty. Allow time to read the handout.*
2. *There are Saints who are formally recognized by the Catholic Church as having lived holy lives according to God's will. We have named a few of them. These are the capital "S" Saints. Many of you have identified one of these Saints as a Confirmation name, church buildings are named after them, and we recognize them on feast days throughout the year.*
3. *There are others who do not have the designation "Saint" yet seem to have the qualities of a Saint, such as Catherine Doherty.*
4. *Each group has been given a brief biography of either Blessed Pope John Paul II or Catherine Doherty. After reading through the biography or from what you know about this person, talk about any qualities these small "s" saints have that are also qualities of capital "S" Saints.*

5. *Allow time for small group discussion.*
 6. *Summarize by saying: The Communion of Saints are all the faithful of Christ, the capital “S” Saints and the small “s” saints, the saints we know and the ones we don’t know. We are connected to one another because we exist in communion with God – the universal Communion of Saints. That which joins us together is the ultimate *Circle of Grace* – God’s love.*
 7. *Proceed to the Large Group activity*
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Activity 2 - Discussion of the qualities of Saints

1. *Divide the young people into small groups (6-7 persons) and rearrange seating accordingly. Provide the handout of St. Maximillian Kolbe and Blessed Mother Teresa. Allow time for them to read the handouts.*
2. *Ask young people to imagine the holiest person they have met. Perhaps a parent, a friend, a priest, a grandparent, an aunt or uncle, or some other person that they have known. Allow time for a brief discussion.*
3. *Invite young people to share the qualities of holiness that they see in that person. Post responses on a dry erase board, poster board, or butcher paper.*
4. *We are all called to strive for holiness. It simply means taking time to learn about God’s love and will, and then doing it to the best of our ability. One of our Faith’s holy people, Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta, once said, “God doesn’t call us to be successful. He calls us to be faithful.” That means that even though we won’t always be perfect, we should still always strive for becoming more and more faithful. It doesn’t matter how successful we are! God’s love still surrounds us and can never be taken away! Refer to the handouts of St. Maxmillian Kolbe, and Blessed Mother Teresa.*
5. *Invite a young person to read Romans 8:35-39.*
6. *So you see, not even death can remove us from the *Circle of Grace* that God pours out on us. Let’s talk a bit about death. November is the time that the Church remembers those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of our faith.*
7. *Pass out the journal page, *Circle of Grace: Communion of Saints*. Invite young people to spend a few moments in reflection. (See the end of the Grade 9 lessons).*
8. *In our celebration of All Saints and All Souls Days, we recognize that like God’s love, those who have died are always with us. Nothing can separate us from that love. Sainly people recognized this and literally spent their lives differently because of it.*
9. *Proceed to the following Large Group Activity.*

Large Group Activity-

It is important to review the following key points before distributing the Circle of Grace Logo. A Circle of Grace Reference Guide and Reflection Questions and the logo are included at the end of this lesson.

- *Circle of Grace* is a phrase that we will use to represent what we know about ourselves and God's presence within and among us.
- Jesus wanted his disciples to know they would not be alone.
- That is what "*Circle of Grace*" is about - that the Holy Spirit is always with us, and we are surrounded by God's love.
- If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. This place is called our *Circle of Grace*.
- *Refer to Circle of Grace Reference Guide at the end of this lesson.*

1. We will be designing our own symbol for our *Circle of Grace*. Show the color logo and display it for all to reference. Identify and review each part: Yellow Circle - Grace; Blue Background - the world; Dove - Holy Spirit; Person - Child of God (each of us); and *Circle of Grace* words in red - color of Holy Spirit.
2. Distribute a copy of the blank logo and *Circle of Grace Reference Guide* to each young person (see end of the Grade 9 lessons).
3. Instruct each young person to design their own symbols within the logo that reflect the *Circle of Grace* concept. Offer markers etc. for the students to use. Allow at least 10 - 15 minutes.
4. Of the qualities discussed in your small groups or written on the board, which qualities do you possess? Write those qualities inside your logo on your handout.
5. What qualities do you have that are not listed on the board? Add those, too.
6. You have each created your own personal logo, a representation of your *Circle of Grace*. Your *Circle of Grace* is the love and goodness of God that is always within you and surrounding you.

Discussion

1. If I were to look at each of your personal logos, I would guess that no two would be alike. The different qualities that you put in your *Circle of Grace* represent the uniqueness of each person's gifts.
2. *Optional: In small groups, have each young person prayerfully share one quality from their personal logo.*
3. As we look back at the large circle on the board, we are reminded that not only are we unique images of God's love, but also that we share in a common creation. We "live, move and have our being" in the Holy Spirit. How we live in relationship not only with ourselves and with God, but also with others impacts our *Circle of Grace*. The Holy Spirit distributes special graces among the faithful – the Communion of all the Saints – for the purpose of building up the Church and the common good.

Closing Prayer

St. Teresa of Avila understood her *Circle of Grace*. She also understood being part of something bigger, the Communion of Saints. She understood that choosing to live out the qualities with which God had gifted her was her way of saying, "Yes," to the will of God. That is true for us, too. Please prayerfully reflect on her words.

Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which He looks
with compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
Amen.

Lesson Extender Option 2

Have young people cut the logo from their handout (with personal qualities written on it) and display them within the larger circle on the board. Connect this activity with the universal Communion of Saints, the Ultimate Circle of Grace – God's love.

Lesson 2

Mary and Joseph Say, “Yes”

Sometimes young persons 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. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

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Lesson Goal

Young people will be better able to understand their boundaries and safe relationships.

Lesson Objectives

Young people will be able to:

1. Recognize the influence of media and culture on their image of themselves and on their relationships
2. Recognize decisions that Mary and Joseph made to say “Yes” to God’s will
3. Understand physical, sexual, emotional and spiritual boundaries

Materials Needed

1. Poster paper
2. Markers
3. Mary and Joseph Handout (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
4. Bibles
5. Guidelines for Protecting Boundaries Handout for each young person (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)

6. Copies of Opening and Closing Prayers (see the end of the Grade 9 Lessons)
7. Optional: "The Truth about Body Image"² video
8. Optional: "Jesus of Nazareth"³ movie
9. Optional: Age appropriate magazines (provided or approved by leader)

Opening Prayer

1. Distribute "The Magnificat" prayer and invite young people into their preferred prayer posture.
2. Now it is time to quiet ourselves and call to mind the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us. *Pause.*
3. The prayer I am about to pray with you is called "The Magnificat". It is also called the Canticle of Mary and is recorded in the Gospel of Luke 1:46-55. These are the words of Mary as she contemplated the Angel Gabriel's announcement to her that she was to become the Mother of the Son of God. Just as St. Teresa of Avila understood that by choosing to live out the qualities that God had gifted her with was her way of saying, "Yes," to God's love, Mary did, too. This prayer is Mary's prayer of saying, "Yes," to God's love. You are invited to pray with me.

*The Magnificat*⁴

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age to those who fear Him.
He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry He has filled with good things; the rich He has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel His servant, remembering His mercy,
according to His promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to His descendants forever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

² "The Truth about Body Image" VHS, copyright date 2001, AIMS

³ "Jesus of Nazareth", VHS/DVD Copyright 1977, Director: Robert Powell

⁴ From the New American Bible

Getting Started

Today we are going to look at our *Circle of Grace* in relationship to ourselves, God and others. We remember from last time that not only are we unique images of God's love, but also that we share in a common creation and that we are members of the Communion of Saints. We are each given qualities and gifts for the good of all and are called to share them according to God's will for the building of the kingdom. The question for us is, "How do I know God's will?" With all that influences us today, it can be difficult to know what the right decisions are. As Catholics we have the Holy Scriptures and the Tradition and wisdom of the Church to help us. We also live with the Holy Spirit in and among us.

Lesson Development

Introduction

Before we can ask the question, "What is God's will for me and my relationships?" It might help to look at what our culture today tells us about:

- who we should be.
- our relationships with others and what they should look like.

Then we may be better able to decide what God wants.

Choose one of the two activities:

Activity 1-

1. *Divide the young people into same gender small groups. Give each group the same gender questions.*

Young Women

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman? How should she look?
- What should she spend her time doing?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the "ideal image" - men or women? Why?

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
- What does he need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the "ideal image" - men or women? Why?

2. Give each small group poster paper and marker. Allow 5-7 minutes to answer the questions. Have each group write their responses on the poster paper.
3. Have each group post their responses and present to the large group. Allow female groups to present, followed by male groups (or vice versa). Depending on the number of participants, small groups may be asked to present only ideas that have not yet been presented or prioritize and present the top five responses.
4. Optional: To facilitate discussion, view the Barbie/GI Joe digital imaging clip from "The Truth about Body Image" or provide small groups with magazines that advertise to a high school market. This will help to identify further examples of gender specific societal and cultural norms.
5. Distribute Mary and Joseph Small Group Discussion Guide. Have the young people return to their small groups for a discussion of the handout. (10 minutes)

Mary and Joseph were both counter-cultural. They stepped out of what their culture expected. They chose to live according to God's will, to respond to God's call.

Optional: To facilitate discussion, view the clip from "Jesus of Nazareth" movie depicting Mary and Joseph's engagement through Mary's visit with Elizabeth and Mary telling Joseph of her pregnancy through Joseph's dream of the angel telling him to take Mary as his wife.

6. Continue to "Discussion – Large Group" following Youth ministry activity.

Activity 2

The object of the lesson is to help young people recognize stereotypes about the other gender.

1. Divide the young people into same gender small groups. Give each group the opposite gender questions.

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the "ideal image" - men or women? Why?

Young Women

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
 - What does he need to have or do to be considered important?
 - According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
 - How does marketing and image affect people your age?
 - Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” – men or women? Why?
2. *Give each small group poster paper and marker. Allow 5-7 minutes to answer the questions (see the end of Grade 9 lessons). Have each group write their responses on the poster paper (See the end of Grade 9 lessons).*
 3. *Have each group post their responses and present to the large group. Allow all female groups to present followed by all male groups (or vice versa). Depending on the number of participants, small groups may be asked to present only ideas that have not yet been presented or prioritize and present the top five responses.*
 4. *Optional: To facilitate discussion, view the Barbie/GI Joe digital imaging clip from “The Truth about Body Image” or provide small groups with magazines that advertise to a high school market. This will help to identify further examples of gender specific societal and cultural norms.*
 5. *Distribute Mary and Joseph Small Group Discussion Guide. Have the young people return to their small groups for a discussion of the handout. (10 minutes)*

Mary and Joseph were both counter-cultural. They stepped out of what their culture expected. They chose to live according to God’s will, to respond to God’s call.

Optional: To facilitate discussion, view the clip from “Jesus of Nazareth” movie depicting Mary and Joseph’s engagement through Mary’s visit with Elizabeth, and Mary telling Joseph of her pregnancy through Joseph’s dream of the angel telling him to take Mary as his wife.

6. *Large group discussion following.*
-

Large Group Discussion

1. God’s standards for beauty and femininity, strength and masculinity, are different than society’s standards. Mary, our Blessed Mother, and St. Joseph are examples of people who recognized God’s will for them and said, “Yes,” even though they knew what that would mean in their culture. Do you have any modern day examples of someone choosing God’s standard of femininity/masculinity over how culture tells us to be?

2. *Discuss the following questions:*

- a. How are Mary and Joseph's decisions easier than the ones young people face today?
- b. How were they more difficult?
- c. Do you think Mary or Joseph ever second-guessed their decisions?
- d. Who do you think Mary and Joseph turned to for support?
- e. Who can young people today turn to for support in following God's will in their lives?
- f. What happened in those days to women who committed sexual sin? What happens today?
- g. What other cultural influences did Mary experience?
- h. What is Joseph's original plan before the dream? What does this say about him as a person?
- i. Joseph shows Mary incredible compassion, honor, and respect. What would it look like today to honor and respect women? What would it look like today to honor and respect men? What are some ways in today's society that men fail to honor and respect women? Are there ways that women today fail to honor and respect men?

Presentation – Boundaries

1. In our society today we are bombarded with influences on our decisions - media, coaches, friends, family and our teachers. Sometimes it may be difficult to recognize the will of God in all of it. Do we believe that saying "yes" to God will bring us immense blessings and grace thus ultimate happiness? Why are we afraid to say "yes"? What do we believe will happen if we say "yes" to God's will? Allow for a few responses.
2. Sometimes it may be difficult to know what to say, "Yes," to. If we look back at our personal *Circle of Grace* and the ultimate *Circle of Grace* - God's love - we know that there are going to be limits to what we should and should not do. Those guidelines are ways to live out our gifts in safe and healthy relationships. Those guidelines or limits are often referred to as personal boundaries.
3. Some boundaries are physical. Those boundaries help decide activities and behaviors that say, "Yes," to God. What are some physical boundaries? *Allow for responses. Examples: What do I allow regarding touch, eating, drinking, tanning, body piercing etc.*
4. Other physical boundaries may be more intimate, for instance, where you let another person touch you, what parts of your body you allow others to see, what parts of another person's body you see or touch. These boundaries are many times referred to as sexual boundaries.

5. Emotional and spiritual boundaries are not always as easy to identify. Emotional boundaries protect our feelings and help us recognize who we can share our feelings with and who we cannot. Spiritual boundaries protect our deepest part of who we are; our sense of hope, mystery, wonder and awe, and most importantly, our personal relationship with God. All of these exist within the spiritual boundaries. The guidelines below help us decide what feelings/emotions should be in our *Circle of Grace* and in our relationship with God and others. What are some emotional and spiritual boundaries? *Allow for responses. Examples: What do I allow regarding insults, prejudice, apathy, and hatred?*
6. Boundaries help us to know what safe relationships look like as well as who and what should not be in our *Circle of Grace*.

Guidelines for Protecting Boundaries

- a. How long have you known this person?
 - b. Is your knowledge of this person face-to-face?
 - c. How much do you know about this person?
 - d. How have you verified what this person has told you about themselves?
 - e. What do your feelings (instincts) tell you about this person or situation?
 - f. How many things do you have in common with this person?
 - g. Is the relationship respectful of your boundaries and the other person's?
 - h. Are you able to say, "No," to this person?
 - i. Does this person's age or status influence your behavior in the relationship?
 - j. Does this person ever ask you to keep secrets?
7. *Distribute Guidelines for Protecting Boundaries Handout (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons).* These questions will help you to determine if a relationship is safe.
 8. Mary and Joseph knew that they could not rely only on culture or society to tell them what to do. They listened to God's call in their life. They lived out their personal talents and qualities in the way God wanted them to. We've seen that this wasn't the easiest choice for them either. Yet, by saying, "Yes," to God, they have given us an example of how to live in the ultimate *Circle of Grace* – God's love.

Activity

Pass out paper to the students. Ask them to write a prayer to either Mary or Joseph. The prayer should reflect the struggles of expressing God's gift of sexuality in today's world. You can either give them time during class or have them bring it to the next session.

Closing Prayer

1. *Distribute Prayer to St. Joseph to young people (see the end of the lesson).*
2. *Invite young people to join you in praying this Prayer to St. Joseph.*
3. *Optional: Choose one of the youth's prayers if collected this session.*

Prayer to St. Joseph

**O blessed Joseph, faithful guardian of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ,
protector of thy chaste spouse, the virgin Mother of God,
I choose thee this day to be my special patron and advocate
and I firmly resolve to honor thee all the days of my life.**

**Therefore I humbly beseech thee to receive me as thy own,
to instruct me in every doubt,
to comfort me in every affliction,
to obtain for me and for all the knowledge and love of the Heart of Jesus,
and finally to defend and protect me at the hour of my death. Amen.**

Lesson 3

When the Circle is Broken

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. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- Belief in the Creed
- Church teaching revealed in the Creed applies in our daily lives
- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- Personal covenant with God
- Belief in the Communion of Saints
- Live responsibly as fully initiated members of the Church
- Discipleship is our call to holiness
- 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 Goal

Young people will be able to distinguish between safe and unsafe relationships.

Lesson Objectives

Young people will be able to:

1. Recognize physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual boundary violations.
2. Recognize manipulative behaviors used to gain control (emotional grooming).

Materials Needed

1. Markers
2. Poster paper
3. Feeling Faces Chart for Young People (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
4. Copy of Opening and Closing Prayers for Young People (see the end of Grade 9)
5. Unequal Power Handout for Young People (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
6. Optional: Unmasking Sexual Con Games: Leader Guide by Kathleen M. McGee and Laura J. Buddenberg, Boystown Press, 2003, used with permission.
7. Student’s Prayers from Lesson 2

Opening Prayer

1. *Invite young people into their preferred prayer posture.*
2. Now it is time to quiet ourselves and call to mind the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us. *Pause.*
3. Please join with me as we pray:

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Getting Started

We have talked about our *Circle of Grace* in relationship to ourselves, God, and others in our previous lessons. We reflected on our unique qualities as expressions of God's love for us. Saying, "Yes," to those gifts within the Communion of Saints is what God has called us to do. Lesson 2 discusses the many influences on our choices we make about ourselves and our relationships. Listening to the Holy Spirit within us and among us along with Holy Scriptures, Tradition and wisdom of the Catholic Church provide us with guidelines for our behaviors.

Ask if any student would like to read his/her prayer that was written for lesson 2. Allow for students to respond to this invitation.

Lesson Development

Choose one of the two activities below:

Introduction

Guidelines and boundaries protect us in our *Circle of Grace* and help us have safe relationships. Boundaries protect us in four areas of our lives: physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual. Physical boundaries are probably the easiest to see so we are going to begin by doing an activity to help us be aware of our physical boundaries.

Activity 1

1. *Ask each person in the group to find a partner. Designate one partner "A" and the other "B". Have all the young people designated "A" move to one side of the room and have the "B's" move to the other side of the room. The partners should be across the room from each other, facing one another with cleared space between them.*

2. *Instruct the “A” group to begin walking across the room toward their partner. Instruct the “B’s” to say, “Stop,” at the point which they become uncomfortable with the distance between themselves and their partner.*
3. *Now have the young people go back to their respective sides of the room and repeat the activity with partner “B” approaching partner “A”.*
4. *Now ask two participants to volunteer to do the activity again. Privately instruct one person who will be approaching their partner to disregard his/her partner when the partner says, “Stop.”*
5. *Have the participants return to their seats.*

Discussion

1. The activity we just finished helped demonstrate physical boundaries. It also demonstrated that when we say stop and the other person doesn’t; our *Circle of Grace* has not been respected. The type of relationship you have with someone helps determine how close you allow that person into your *Circle of Grace*.
2. *Allow the young people to reflect on how they felt during this activity by asking the following questions.*
 - a. As your partner walked toward you, at what point did you become uncomfortable?
 - b. How much of your comfort depended on the relationship you have with your partner? (Unknown, acquaintance, friends, etc.)
 - c. How did you feel during the last activity when the partner did not stop?
 - d. *Go to Brainstorming Session*

Introduction

Guidelines and boundaries protect us in our *Circle of Grace* and help us have safe relationships. Boundaries protect us in four areas of our lives: physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual. Physical boundaries are probably the easiest to see so we are going to begin by doing an activity to help us be aware of our physical boundaries.

Activity 2

1. *Ask the group to name all the individuals and groups with which they have relationships of any kind. Allow a few minutes for a variety of responses which may be recorded on poster paper or whiteboard/chalkboard.*
2. *After sufficient time, divide the large group into small groups (5-7 persons) and assign each group one of the following Relationships Types. (Small groups may need to take more than one type of relationship.) Provide marker and newsprint for each relationship assigned.*

3. *The Relationship Categories/Types are:*
 - a. *our relationship with God*
 - b. *our relationship with Family*
 - c. *our relationship with Significant Others*
 - d. *our relationship with Casual Friends/ Acquaintances - Same Sex*
 - e. *our relationship with Casual Friends/ Acquaintances - Opposite Sex*
 - f. *our relationship with Teachers, Ministers, Clergy*
 - g. *our relationship with all others.*
 4. *Have each group brainstorm 5-10 adjectives that describe their assigned relationship.*
 5. *Have each small group present their adjectives and post the lists. Summarize similarity between adjectives describing our relationship with God and the other relationships in our lives to draw the conclusion that God is a part of all relationships.*
 6. *Go to Brainstorming Session*
-

Brainstorming Session

(Refer to the Boundary Presentation in Lesson 2)

1. *Divide into at least four small groups (5-10 young people). Hand each group poster paper and markers. Assign each group one of the four boundaries (physical, sexual, spiritual, and emotional). Ask the groups to brainstorm ways in which their assigned boundary can be violated (or has been violated) in the lives of young people.*
2. *After sufficient time, ask each group to present their results to the large group.*

Optional: If the group size is not sufficient for small groups; invite the large group to brainstorm all four boundaries together.

Discussion

1. We have looked at several ways in which young people's boundaries are violated. The boundaries violations were fairly easy to list. Why then, even though we know about boundary violations, do they still happen? One reason may be that it is hard to identify why we are uncomfortable with a person or a particular action. It is important to take time to listen and reflect WHY we are uncomfortable. Is it because we thought they were our friend or that they "liked" us? Discussing these concerns with an adult we trust is essential to gain clarity regarding the situation. The behaviors of offenders are for the sole purpose of putting a youth in a vulnerable position to be exploited (to take unfair advantage of someone/situation in order to get some benefit). *Pass out the Unequal Power handout and begin to discuss it.*

2. Unequal power, secrecy and isolation are key strategies offenders often use to put someone in a vulnerable position to be exploited or abused. Write these three strategies on the board. Handout is available at the back of the lesson.

Unequal Power: When one person has more power in a relationship. This can be in the areas of age, size, position, resources, status or knowledge.

- Does this person have more status than you? (An upper classmate.)
- Is he/she in a position of authority?
- Is he/she more popular?
- Is he/she significantly older (more than two years?)
- Does he/she have more resources such as money, knowledge, car etc. than you do?

Healthy personal relationships almost always have a balance of power.

Secrecy: The condition of being hidden or concealed. The habit or practice of keeping secrets or maintaining privacy or concealment

- What would your parents/family think if they knew ALL aspects of the relationship/interaction? (Example: This person treats you significantly worse when you are alone with them as opposed to when the two of you are with others.)
- This person has done something to hurt you and they pressure you to keep it a secret. Or they may pressure you to keep secret some aspect of the relationship like gifts or activities that your family/parents would not approve. They say no one will understand or that you will be blamed.

Remember as Catholics we believe that help and healing will come when we bring our concerns into the light. The person who is pressuring you to keep a secret is not protecting you but themselves.

Forced Isolation: When someone forces/pressures another to be separated from others in order to gain control.

- Does this person say that they are the only one who understands you?
- Do they get mad if others join you in an activity or just hang out with you?
- Do they use their words or gifts to control you?
- Do they get mad/ explosive if you do not text or answer you phone right away?

Individuals in healthy relationships respect each other's need for friends and family. You do not have to act in a certain way in order for them to trust you

Activity

We have talked about ways a young person’s physical, sexual, emotional, and spiritual boundaries can be violated. The behaviors of offenders are for the sole purpose of putting a youth in a vulnerable position to be exploited or abused. Let’s see if these real high school situations are safe or unsafe.

Present one of the following sets of scenarios and questions to the large group. Ask the young people to also identify any of the offender’s behaviors/attitudes that put a youth at risk for a boundary violation. The Feeling Faces Chart is available at the end of the Grade 9 lessons for use as needed. Allow time for discussion on each scenario.

Special note to leaders

Before presenting the scenarios, re-emphasize the following: “Some of you may have been in the type of situations we are going to talk about where there has been a boundary violation or grooming behaviors. It is my hope and desire that you do not hold this inside of you but rather find an adult that you trust to talk about it.”

Choose one of the two sets of scenarios

Scenario - 1

1. A teacher/instructor comments about how you are dressed that day while looking at you in a way that makes you uncomfortable. Is this safe or unsafe?

Pause.

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- An adult talking about things that make you feel uncomfortable.
- Differences in age and status influence your response.
- What key offender strategies are involved in this scenario?

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

2. You are the first one in your family to get home after school. Your adult neighbor, whom you have known since kindergarten, often waves at you and calls on the phone to check on you. One day you hear a funny noise in the house when you are alone. You call your neighbor to ask for help. The neighbor says he and his wife will be over and tells you to call your parents and let them know what is going on. Is this situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is safe. Why is it safe?

- It is important to identify trusted adults who are respectful of your *Circle of Grace* and their own.

- Two adults are coming over and parents are aware of the situation.
- The adult told the young person to notify parents. He did not try to keep it a secret.

3. A new friend asks you to come over to his house and hang out. You go over to the friend's house and the two of you start to surf the internet and social networking sites (SNS). He makes the comment that it would be so cool to post some crazy photos on the SNS. He asks you to take your shirt off so he can take a photo with his phone. You decide to keep your school sweatshirt on and instead just make funny faces for the photo. Is this safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is confusing but unsafe. Why is it not safe?

- Removing clothing is not an appropriate request or action.
- The young person still revealed personal information via his/her school sweatshirt.
- The young person was pressured into doing something that was uncomfortable/ unsafe instead of saying, "No," and leaving.
- Postings on SNS can be widely distributed to millions of unknown persons. This can be viewed and manipulated without a young person's knowledge or permission. This would include images sent via cell phones. The images on the cell phone can also be distributed to a number of people. Be aware! "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. What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

4. A teacher at your school invites you and a friend to go to a movie on Friday night. She stated that the two of you are her favorite students. The teacher offers to take you and bring you home. She says she will pay for the movie and the refreshments. Is the situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation may be confusing. But it is not safe.

- An adult lures youth into her company with gifts or special attention/information.
- What key offender strategies are involved in this scenario?

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

5. Your best friend confides in you that she tried some beer at a party she attended last week. She says it made her laugh and made her sick. She says it was not a great experience but she asks you to keep it secret from your parents and hers. *Pause.*

This situation is not safe. What is unsafe here?

- A young person is asked to keep a secret from an adult.

- The friend is put at risk for future problems.
- The person who provided the alcohol is protected.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

6. You are alone watching TV. The show you are watching features people who are dressed in a sexually suggestive manner. They are dancing and acting in a suggestive manner by themselves and with other people. You know your parents would disapprove but you continue to watch. Is this situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- Watching shows that feature people being disrespectful to their own *Circle of Grace* does not help you to respect and protect yours and those of others.
- It is important to know what boundaries you should set for yourself about what you watch, read, listen to, etc., when you are alone in order to protect your *Circle of Grace*.
- When you routinely view images that are inappropriate, you become desensitized to what is safe and unsafe.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

Proceed to the Discussion following Large Group Discussion.

Scenario - 2

1. One of the popular church leaders in your parish invites you to a special meeting or trip. The adult leader gives you a permission slip to take to your parents but tells you not to tell other adult leaders in the church because he wants this to be your special time together. Is this safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is confusing and unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- Adult tries to get youth to keep secrets from parents or other respected adults. When in a situation like this, you should let your parents and other trusted adults know that this adult leader is telling you to keep a secret from them. Then your parents and other adults who care about you have more information about the situation and can better keep you safe.
- Adult planning private activities with young people.
- What key offender strategies are involved in this scenario?

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

2. One of your coaches thinks you can make the select team if you work a little harder on some skills. The coach offers to stay late after everyone has gone home and work one on one with you to help improve skills. He says it is important to not talk about this with others because they may be jealous. *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- An adult arranges to be with a young person alone.
- What key offender strategies are involved in this scenario?

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

3. Your best friend confides that she tried beer at a party she attended last week. She says it made her laugh and made her sick. She says it was not a great experience but she asks you to keep it secret from your parents and hers. *Pause.*

This situation is not safe. What is unsafe here?

- A young person is asked to keep a secret from an adult.
- The friend is put at risk for future problems.
- The person who provided the alcohol is protected.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

4. A person you know from the internet wants to meet you at the mall this weekend. You have been IM (instant messaging) and texting for six months. Is this situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- You have never met the person face-to-face.
- You do not really know this person.
- You have no way to verify whatever this person has said.
- You have no way of knowing who else has seen the information that you have shared. They may have cut and pasted the information into a blog or website or shared it with a group of friends.
- What key offender strategies are involved in this scenario?

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

5. You stay overnight at a friend's house. After his/her parent's go to bed, your friend starts to sneak out to go to a party. Your friend expects you to go. You don't want to go. You tell your friend that you feel sick and want to call your parents to come get you. Is this situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe but the young person's response is safe. Why?

- The young person has listened to his/her feelings (instincts) that tell him/her not to go to the party.
- The young person states his/her need to call parents.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above.*)

6. You are alone watching TV. The show you are watching features people who are dressed in a sexually suggestive manner. They are dancing and acting in a suggestive manner by themselves and with other people. You know your parents would disapprove but you continue to watch. Is this situation safe or unsafe? *Pause.*

This situation is unsafe. What is unsafe here?

- Watching shows that feature people being disrespectful to their own *Circle of Grace* does not help you to respect and protect yours and those of others.
- It is important to know what boundaries you should set for yourself about what you watch, read, listen to, etc., when you are alone in order to protect your *Circle of Grace*.
- When you routinely view images that are inappropriate, you become desensitized to what is safe and unsafe.

What would need to change to make this situation safe? (*Brainstorm ideas with the young people to address the unsafe circumstances listed above*)

Proceed to the Discussion following Large Group Discussion.

Large Group Discussion

- We have talked about when our *Circle of Grace* is broken by boundary violations. We have also discussed that the behaviors of offenders are for the sole purpose of putting a youth in a vulnerable position to be exploited or abused. We reviewed three of the key factors in a offender's behavior. Sometimes those behaviors are easy to see, sometimes they aren't.
 - It is always important for us to listen to the Holy Spirit for guidance and direction.
 - The Holy Spirit will help us to decide what we should do.
 - Often that help comes by way of an uncomfortable feeling inside us. It is hard to explain or describe other than to say it's our gut feeling. (*Refer to the "Feeling Faces Chart" as needed (see the end of Grade 9 lessons)*)
 - We need to listen to our gut feelings - they can help us answer the questions of whether or not this behavior would be saying, "Yes," to what God has called us to be - or whether or not this behavior should be in our *Circle of Grace*.
 - Even though it may be hard, we need to confide in a trusted adult. This will help us gain clarity and know that we are not alone.
- There are times when we realize that something that happened in our past was not the best thing for us. That, too, may be the Holy Spirit inviting us to heal. Our Church gives us two Sacraments of healing: Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. Many times we think of the Sacrament of Reconciliation is only for when we have done something wrong but it's really is meant to be a gift of grace and healing from God. Reconciliation is about healing and restoring our relationship with God.
- *Review the sacrament of Reconciliation by discussing the following questions:*
 - Why does the Church have the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
 - Who benefits from the Sacrament of Reconciliation?
 - How would the Sacrament of Reconciliation be connected to our *Circle of Grace*?

Lesson Extender

1. *Ask the young people to gather in groups of 5-8. Give each group a piece of poster board or butcher paper.*
2. *Ask each group to brainstorm on one side of the paper the different physical boundaries of:*
 - a. *Our Planet*
 - b. *Our Country*
 - c. *Our State*
 - d. *Our City*
 - e. *Our Home/Yard*
 - f. *Our Person.*
3. *Then ask them to brainstorm how those boundaries protect us.*

Optional: If the group size is not sufficient for small groups; invite the large group to brainstorm all four boundaries together.

Closing Prayer

Close by praying with the young people:

**Good and gracious God,
help us to see Your image when we look in the mirror,
help us to see Your goodness in all those we meet,
help us to recognize Your love through the Communion of Saints,
help us know Your will through the whisper
of the Holy Spirit,
help us to say, "Yes,"
when Your call us to be all that we have been created to be,
help us to serve Your and others without pushing ourselves forward,
help us to know our limits and to respect the limits of others,
and help us to respect our *Circle of Grace* and live always in
the ultimate *Circle of Grace* – Your Love. Amen.**

Lesson 4

Action PLAN

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. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- Belief in the Creed
- Church teachings revealed in the Creed applies in our daily lives
- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- Personal covenant with God
- Belief in the Communion of Saints
- Live responsibly as fully initiated members of the Church
- Discipleship is our call to holiness
- 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 Goal

Young people will learn steps to take if boundaries are threatened or violated.

Lesson Objectives

Young people will be able to:

1. Identify appropriate responses to boundary violations.
2. Name trusted adults in addition to parents whom they could seek out for help.

Materials Needed

1. Whiteboard/ Chalkboard
2. Marker/Chalk
3. Opening and Closing prayer handout (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
4. Post-assessment (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)
5. How Safe are your Relationships Handout (see the end of Grade 9 Lessons)

Opening Prayer

1. *Invite young people into their preferred prayer posture.*
2. Now it is time to quiet ourselves and call to mind the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us. *Pause.*
3. Please join with me as we pray:

**Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.**

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

**O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to
rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Getting Started

Ask the following questions:

- Do you remember the last *Circle of Grace* lesson in which we provided you scenarios about unsafe behavior? Today we are going to talk about a practical plan for times when you might find yourself in those types of situations.
- *Distribute copies of How Safe Are Your Relationships?*
- *Give youth 2-3 minutes to complete.*
- *Ask youth to hold on to their copies until the end of the lesson.*
- We are going to look at current events in which youth have been in unsafe situations or relationships.

Review the following points:

- All unsafe relationships have the potential to become dangerous.
- Anytime a person is in a relationship where the other does not respect your *Circle of Grace*, it is a time when hurt and damage may occur.
- Unsafe relationships are particularly hurtful and dangerous when there is exploitation or abuse.
- Often, young people who are in unsafe situations/relationships don't tell their parents because they don't think they can handle it or are afraid they will get into trouble.
- Unsafe situations usually happen when there are no witnesses so young people are afraid that they will not be believed even if they do tell someone.

- Young people who are in unsafe situations, who believe they have experienced boundary violations or who are confused about a relationship should always tell a trusted adult.

Lesson Development

Introduction

We are going to discuss some steps you can take to avoid getting into a bad relationships or situations in the first place. And we are also going to talk about ways to help someone who is already in a bad situation. It is important to know that:

- One in four girls and one in seven boys will experience some sort of sexual abuse/exploitation by the time they reach 18 years.⁵
- Up to 90% of the time, the perpetrator of the abuse is a relative, family friend, or other person known to the youth.

Invite the young people to get into several small groups (no more than 8 people).

- Now we want to look at our own country, our own community and try to name instances from news and media where kids have been at risk or involved in dangerous situations (e.g. passing out, cutting, suicide, drinking and driving, overdose, sexual abuse, a party that has gotten out of control, inappropriate internet usage, sexting etc). Brainstorm up to three examples in the small groups.

Give groups 3-5 minutes to brainstorm followed by a report to the large group.

- By a show of hands, how many of you personally know someone who has been in serious danger, where their *Circle of Grace* was threatened?
- What could they have done to avoid this? (*Allow for responses.*)
- In the middle school lessons, you may remember learning an acronym to help in unsafe situations. That acronym was PLAAN.
- Let's review PLAAN.

Write on board.

1. **"P"** reminds us to **Protect with Respect**.
Protecting with respect values our uniqueness, honors boundaries, creates healthy relationships.
2. **"L"** reminds us to **Listen**.
Who do we need to listen to? The Holy Spirit's presence in our *Circle of Grace*.
3. **"A"** reminds us to **Ask**.
Asking questions helps us decide what to do.
4. Another **"A"** in there to remind us to **Act** by recognizing and resisting in a dangerous situation.
5. **"N"** reminds us to **Notify**.

⁵ www.usccb.org, or <http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov>

Tell a trusted adult when we are feeling uncomfortable/threatened or when we think abuse has happened.

Activity

In small groups, have youth design their own acronym that will help them act for unsafe situations. Provide poster board/newsprint and markers. Give them at least 10 minutes for this, and at the end of time invite each group to present their acronym to the large group. Post on the wall. After all groups have presented, invite the large group to vote on the one they like the best.

Closing Activity

Invite the young people to return to "How Safe are Your Relationships?" handout from the beginning of this lesson. Have them individually apply the acronym voted on by the group to each situation from the handout. Ask the large group whether the acronym is useful in addressing the situations listed? If not, what would you change? Share the following information with the young people using a display board or by making a copy for each of them.

If you or a young person are concerned about his/her safety, child abuse, or neglect, contact the local **State Child/Family Services** and **Law Enforcement Agency**. If assistance is needed in assessing difficult situations, resources and information are available at: **Boys Town National Hotline 1-800-448-3000**. Your diocese also has a **Safe Environment Coordinator** that may be able to assist you with your concerns.

Distribute and collect the completed post-assessment. The results will be recorded as part of the evaluations.

Closing Prayer

Invite young people into their preferred prayer posture.

Now it is time to quiet ourselves and call to mind the presence of the Holy Spirit in and among us.

Pause.

Please join with me as we pray:

Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Pre-Assessment Grade 9

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition.

<i>Circle of Grace</i>	Respect	Trusted Adult	Talent
_____	1. A grown-up who helps me to stay safe in my Circle of Grace and to respect others within their <i>Circle of Grace</i> .		
_____	2. A special God-given ability or gift.		
_____	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 answer.

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 answer for the following situations.

Safe	Unsafe	8. You are in a swimming pool and an adult that you know approaches you and begins to tickle you. At first you think it is fun. Then you begin to feel uncomfortable and ask him/her to stop. The adult just laughs and continues tickling you.
Safe	Unsafe	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 call to 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 call 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.

<i>Circle of Grace</i>	Respect	Trusted Adult	Talent
Trusted Adult	1. A grown-up who helps me to stay safe in my Circle of Grace and to respect others within their <i>Circle of Grace</i> .		
Talent	2. A special God-given ability or gift.		
<i>Circle of Grace</i>	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 answer.

- True** 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** 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 answer for the following situations.

- Unsafe** 8. You are in a swimming pool and an adult that you know approaches you and begins to tickle you. At first you think it is fun. Then you begin to feel uncomfortable and ask him/her to stop. The adult just laughs and continues tickling you.
- 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 call to 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 call your parents and let them know what is going on.
- 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.

Additional Instructor Resource:

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church

PART ONE

THE PROFESSION OF FAITH

SECTION TWO

THE PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHAPTER THREE

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

ARTICLE 9

"I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

Paragraph 5. The Communion of Saints

946 After confessing “the holy catholic Church,” the Apostles Creed adds “the communion of saints.” In a certain sense this article is a further explanation of the preceding: “What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?”⁶ The Communion of Saints is the Church.

947 Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others.... We must therefore believe that there exists a communion of goods in the Church. But the most important member is Christ, since he is the head.... Therefore, the riches of Christ are communicated to all the members, through the sacraments.⁷ As this Church is governed by one and the same Spirit, all the goods she has received necessarily become a common fund.⁸

948 The term “communion of saints” therefore has two closely linked meanings: “communion in holy things (*sancta*)” and “among holy persons (*sancti*).”

Sancta sanctis! (“God’s holy gifts for God’s holy people”) is proclaimed by the celebrant in most Eastern liturgies during the elevation of the holy Gifts before the distribution of communion. The

⁶ Nicetas, *Expl. Symb.*, 10:PL 52:871B

⁷ St. Thomas Aquinas, *Symb.*, 10.

⁸ *Roman Catechism I*, 10,24.

faithful (*sancti*) are fed by Christ's holy body and blood (*sancta*) to grow in the communion of the Holy Spirit (*koinonia*) and to communicate it to the world.

I. COMMUNION IN SPIRITUAL GOODS

949 In the primitive community of Jerusalem, the disciples “devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of the bread and the prayers.”⁹

Communion in the faith. The faith of the faithful is the faith of the Church, received from the apostles. Faith is a treasure of life, which is enriched by being shared.

950 *Communion of the sacraments.* “The fruit of all the sacraments belongs to all the faithful. All the sacraments are sacred links uniting the faithful with one another and binding them to Jesus Christ, and above all Baptism, the gate by which we enter into the Church. The communion of saints must be understood as the communion of the sacraments... The name ‘communion’ can be applied to all of them, for they unite us to God... But this name is better suited to the Eucharist than to any other, because it is primarily the Eucharist that brings this communion about.”¹⁰

951 *Communion of charisms.* Within the communion of the Church, the Holy Spirit “distributes special graces among the faithful of every rank” for the building up of the Church.¹¹ Now, “to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”¹²

952 “They had everything in common.”¹³ Everything the true Christian has is to be regarded as a good possessed in common with everyone else. All Christians should be ready and eager to come to the help of the needy...and of their neighbors in want.”¹⁴ A Christian is a steward of the Lord’s goods.¹⁵

953 *Communion in charity.* In the *sanctorum communio*, “None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.”¹⁶ “If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”¹⁷ “Charity does not insist on its own way.”¹⁸ In this solidarity with all

⁹ Acts 2:42.

¹⁰ Roman Catechism I, 10,24.

¹¹ Lumen gentium 12 § 2.

¹² 1 Cor 12:7.

¹³ Acts 4:32.

¹⁴ Roman Catechism I, 10,27.

¹⁵ Cf. Lk 16:1, 3.

¹⁶ Rom 14:7.

¹⁷ 1 Cor 12:26-27.

¹⁸ 1 Cor 13:5; cf. 10:24.

men, living or dead, which is founded on the communion of saints, the least of our acts done in charity redounds to the profit of all. Every sin harms this communion.

II. THE COMMUNION OF THE CHURCH OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

954 *The three states of the Church.* “When the Lord comes in glory, and all his angels with him, death will be no more and all things will be subject to him. But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating ‘in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is’”¹⁹

All of us, however, in varying degrees and in different ways share in the same charity towards God and our neighbors, and we all sing the one hymn of glory to our God. All, indeed, who are of Christ and who have his Spirit form one Church and in Christ cleave together.²⁰

955 “So it is that the union of the wayfarers with the brethren who sleep in the peace of Christ is in no way interrupted, but on the contrary, according to the constant faith of the Church, this union is reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods.”²¹

956 *The intercession of the saints.* “Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness... They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits, which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped.”²²

Do not weep, for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life.²³

I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth.²⁴

957 *Communion with the saints.* “It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened. Exactly as Christian communion among our fellow pilgrims brings us closer to Christ,

¹⁹ LG 49; cf. *Mt* 25:31; *1 Cor* 15:26-27; Council of Florence (1439):DS 1305.

²⁰ LG 49; cf. *Eph* 4:16.

²¹ LG 49.

²² LG 49; cf. *1 Tim* 2:5.

²³ St. Dominic, dying, to his brothers.

²⁴ St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Final Conversations*, tr. John Clarke (Washington: ICS, 1977), 102.

so our communion with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace, and the life of the People of God itself"²⁵

We worship Christ as God's Son; we love the martyrs as the Lord's disciples and imitators, and rightly so because of their matchless devotion towards their king and master. May we also be their companions and fellow disciples!²⁶

958 *Communion with the dead.* "In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and 'because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins' she offers her suffrages for them."²⁷ Our prayer for them is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective.

959 *In the one family of God.* "For if we continue to love one another and to join in praising the Most Holy Trinity - all of us who are sons of God and form one family in Christ - we will be faithful to the deepest vocation of the Church."²⁸

IN BRIEF

960 The Church is a "communion of saints": this expression refers first to the "holy things" (*sancta*), above all the Eucharist, by which "the unity of believers, who form one body in Christ, is both represented and brought about"(LG 3).

961 The term "communion of saints" refers also to the communion of "holy persons" (*sancti*) in Christ who "died for all," so that what each one does or suffers in and for Christ bears fruit for all.

962 "We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one Church; and we believe that in this communion, the merciful love of God and his saints is always [attentive] to our prayers" (Paul VI, CPG # 30).

²⁵ LG 50; cf. *Eph* 4:1-6.

²⁶ *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 17: *Apostolic Fathers II*/3,396.

²⁷ LG 50; cf. *2 Macc* 12:45.

²⁸ LG 51; cf. *Heb* 3:6.

Biography Handout

Blessed Pope John Paul II

Born in 1920 in Wadowice, Poland, Karol Wojtyla (voy TIH wah) was the second son of Karol Wojtyla Sr., a retired army officer and tailor, and Emilia Kaczorowska Wojtyla, a school teacher of Lithuanian descent. The Wojtylas were good Catholics, and so they didn't share the anti-Semitic views of many people at the time. Karol's early years were difficult ones. During his childhood, both his mother and older brother died. He and his father moved to Krakow so the younger Karol could begin studying literature and philosophy at Jagiellonian University. He was a member of a theater group and a noted poetry reader. He worked the difficult jobs of a stonecutter and a boiler tender at a local chemical plant. Following the death of his father in 1941, Wojtyla continued his studies at the university, but he also studied to be a priest. He had to study theology in secret to protect himself from the Nazis who weren't allowing any more Catholic priests to be ordained. In 1946, he was ordained a priest in secret and continued his studies to earn two Masters degrees and a doctorate.

During the early years of his priesthood, Wojtyla served as a chaplain to university students and worked on a second doctorate degree. Fr. Wojtyla loved this time of his life because he was able to be with young people. He worked very hard to teach them how God made them to be holy which meant respecting themselves and respecting each other. In his own way, he taught these young people about their *Circle of Grace*.

On October 16, 1978, the Holy Spirit chose Karol Wojtyla to be the new pope. At age 58, Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II, the youngest pope in 132 years. Pope John Paul remembered the lessons he taught young people about respecting themselves and others. Now that he was the Pope, he taught these lessons to the whole world. He called it "Theology of the Body". We have been applying the Theology of the Body to our lives by learning about our *Circle of Grace*.

Pope John Paul II was a brilliant and holy man with so much love for every person. His greatest hope was that each person could recognize how important they are in God's eyes, and in recognizing that in themselves, recognize it in others. In May, 2011 he was elevated to the status of Blessed.

Biography Handout

Blessed Mother Teresa

Born in 1910 in Skopje, Yugoslavia, Gonxha Agnes Bojaxhiu, was the youngest of five children born to Nikola and Drona Bojaxhiu. Only three of the five children lived, Gonxha, an older sister Aga, and older brother Lazar.

Gonxha's father died suddenly when she was only 7 years old. Much of her early life was centered around the church, although it wasn't until the age of 18 that Gonxha began to think about being a nun. In 1931, she made her first vows as a Loreto Sister and chose the name Teresa, honoring both Teresa of Avila and Thérèse of Lisieux.

The new Sister Teresa spent the next 15 years of service to God as a teacher at St. Mary's, a high school for girls in a district of Calcutta, India. In 1946, when returning to Darjeeling for a retreat, Sr. Teresa began to realize that God was calling her to something different and very special. She was called to give everything up and serve Christ by going into the slums to be among the poorest of the poor. Sr. Teresa received the permission of the Church to leave the Sisters of Loreto and live independently. She took a course in nursing, returned to Calcutta, and began teaching the children in the slums. Very soon, she began visiting the poor and ill in their families. Within a year, young women came to her to volunteer their services to help with this hard but important work. These women later became the core of her Missionaries of Charity.

Through the generosity of others, the Missionaries of Charity have grown to include more and more services to the huge numbers of suffering people: homes for the dying, refuges for the care and teaching of orphans and abandoned children, treatment centers, and hospitals for those suffering from leprosy, alcoholism, and homelessness.

Despite the endless hard work, Mother Teresa never left out prayer. Prayer was the greatest source of support, strength, and blessing for her and her sisters. Mother Teresa was a woman so close to God that she easily recognized the infinite value of each person. She gave dignity back to people who were forgotten by the world. She respected their *Circle of Grace* without question because she knew their *Circle of Grace* was a gift from God. Right up until her death in 1997, Mother Teresa continued God's work among the poorest of the poor.

Biography Handout

St. Maximilian Kolbe

St. Maximilian Kolbe was born in Poland in 1894 and became a Franciscan priest in 1919. In 1930, he went to Asia, where he founded friaries in Nagasaki and in India. In 1936, he came back to his original friary near Warsaw. In 1939, when Germany invaded Poland, he dismissed most of the 700 friars as he knew that the friary would be seized. It was, and he was imprisoned briefly and then released and returned to the friary where he and the other friars began to organize a shelter for 3,000 Polish refugees, among whom were 2,000 Jews. The friars shared everything they had with the refugees. They housed, fed, and clothed them, and brought all their machinery into use in their service.

In May 1941, the friary was closed down by the Nazis, and Maximilian and several companions were taken to Auschwitz, where they worked with the other prisoners, chiefly at carrying logs. Maximilian continued to function as a priest, hearing confessions, and celebrating Mass while at the death camp.

In 1941, a man escaped from the bunker in which Maximilian lived. In Auschwitz, a policy existed to discourage escapes by executing ten men in retaliation for every single prisoner who escaped. So when the breakout was discovered, all the men from the bunker were led outside. Ten men were designated to die by starvation. One of the men, Franciszek Gajowniczek, was a member of the Polish Resistance and a husband and father of small children. He was terrified of dying, but Maximilian stepped forward and reportedly said, "I am a Catholic priest. Let me take his place. I am old. He has a wife and children."

Observers believed in horror that the commandant would be angered and would refuse the request or would order the death of both men. The commandant remained silent for a moment, but agreed to the switch. Fr. Maximilian took the man's place. Fr. Kolbe and the other men were sent into Building 13 and left to starve. One by one, the men died of hunger and thirst. After two weeks, only four were alive including Fr. Kolbe. At that point, an executioner came in and injected a lethal dose of carbolic acid into the left arm of each of the four dying men. Kolbe was the only one still fully conscious and with a prayer on his lips. And so Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was executed on August 14, 1941, at the age of forty-seven years, a martyr of charity. His body was removed to the crematorium, and without dignity or ceremony was disposed of like hundreds of thousands who had gone before him and hundreds of thousands more who would follow.

The cell where he died is now a shrine. Fr. Maximilian Kolbe was beatified by Pope Paul VI in 1970 and canonized as Martyr by Pope John Paul II in 1981.

Biography Handout

Catherine Doherty

Catherine was born in Russia in 1896, to parents of deep Christian faith. Catherine Doherty was a woman in love with God. The implications of that love story, as it unfolded throughout her life, brought her enough adventure, heartbreak, and joy to fill several lifetimes. She survived two World Wars, the Russian Revolution, and the Great Depression. She experienced being a refugee, knew the pain of a broken marriage, and the struggles of single parenthood. She knew the privileged life of aristocratic wealth, as well as the grinding poverty and uncertainty of a refugee.

Through it all, her faith in God and love for Him remained intact and lead her to work with the poor in small, humble ways, forsaking material comforts in order to do so.

Her work in social justice in both Canada and the United States led to the establishment of Friendship House, and later the community called Madonna House. Since Catherine's death in 1985, her group has grown and serves people throughout the world.

When she was young, in her school chapel, there was a crucifix graphically portraying the sufferings of Christ. One day Catherine went with soap and water and tried to wash the blood off Christ's wounds so he wouldn't suffer. This inspiration grew into Catherine's all-consuming passion.

She recognized that Jesus, in a real sense, continues to suffer in the members of His body, the Church. It was her life-long passion to protect the dignity of others, to protect their *Circle of Grace*, and help those whose *Circle of Grace* had been violated or disrespected.

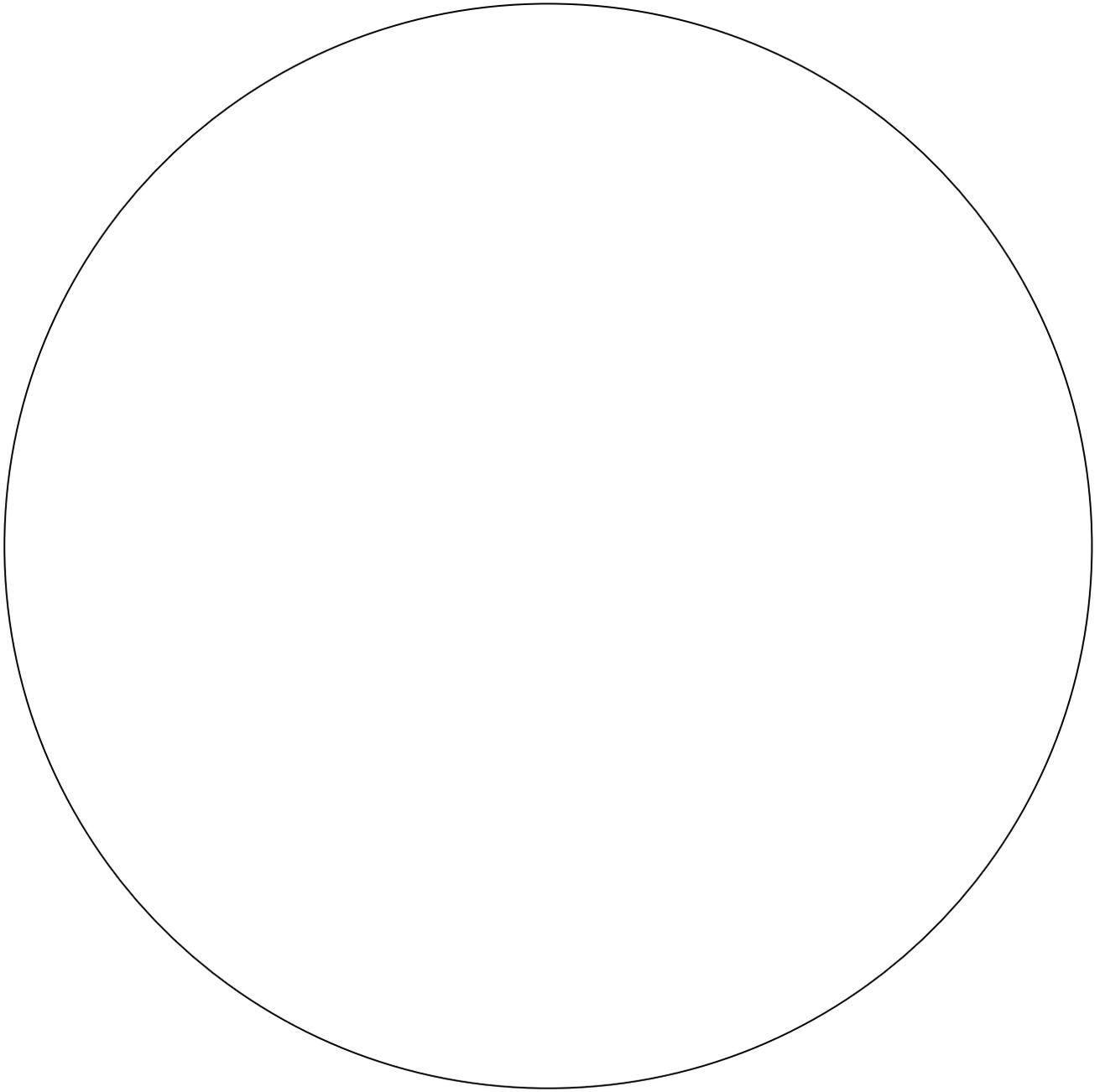
She spent her life caring for the poor, the suffering, and the broken. Catherine had a deep respect for all people because she saw Christ in them and returned the love God had for her by loving his poor ones.

Eventually, Catherine gave away most of her possessions to the poor, keeping only enough to provide for her son. With the blessing of her bishop, she went to work with the poor in the slums of Toronto, Canada, where she founded Friendship House. She later established Friendship Houses in New York City, Chicago, and other cities in the 1930s and 1940s.

Through the years, Catherine became well known for her social justice work with the poor and minorities. She was a forerunner in the Civil Rights movement in the United States.

The Madonna House Association which Catherine founded is a family of Christian men, women, and priests striving to incarnate the teachings of Jesus Christ by forming a community of love. Madonna House serves the poor and downtrodden in many areas throughout the world. Founded in 1947 by Catherine Doherty, today the community has more than 200 lay men, women, and priests dedicated to loving and serving Christ by loving and serving his poorest and neediest brothers and sisters.





The *Circle of Grace*: The Communion of Saints

“We remember those who have gone before us, marked with the sign of our faith.” (First Eucharistic Prayer)

1. What has your experience of death been?

2. Do you know anyone who has died?

3. If so, how are they still with you?

Opening Prayer

**Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.**

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

**O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light
of the Holy Spirit,
grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise,
and ever to rejoice in His consolation.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Closing Prayer

St. Teresa of Avila

**Christ has no body now but Yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but Yours.
Yours are the eyes through which He looks
with compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but Yours.
Amen.**

Circle of Grace Reference Guide and Reflection Questions

1. *Each part of the Circle of Grace Logo (symbol) is significant.*
2. *The yellow circle represents grace.*
 - What is grace?
 - What definition would you use? *(To facilitate discussion you may wish to introduce the vocabulary definition: “Grace: the gift of God’s goodness and love to help me live as a Child of God.”)*
 - Why is grace sometimes hard to describe?
 - We call the prayer before meals “Grace”. Why do you think that is?
 - Do you hear people talk about grace? Why/why not?
 - Do you think people forget - or don’t realize - they have received the gift of God’s goodness and love?
 - Why do you think it is good to be aware of God’s grace?
3. *The blue background represents the world.*
 - Why do you feel the world is included in our *Circle of Grace*?
 - Can we live in this world but not be of this world? What does that mean?
4. *The dove represents the Holy Spirit.*
 - How would you define holiness? *(Lead definitions to “Open to being connected with God who loves me always and living in God’s Spirit.”)*
 - How have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life?
 - If you had to, how would you describe or define the Holy Spirit?
 - When is it hard to remember that the Holy Spirit is part of your life? When is it easy?
5. *The person represents a child of God (each of us). The Catechism of the Catholic Church states our belief that “Man occupies a unique place in creation:”*
 - a. *He is “in the image of God.”*
 - b. *In his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds:*
 - c. *He is created “male and female”:*
 - d. *God established him in friendship.” (CCC 355)*
 - What does it mean to be created “in the image of God”?
 - In what ways do human persons unite the spiritual and material worlds?
 - What does it mean that God creates male and female in his image yet male and female are so physically different?
 - What does friendship with God mean to you? To God?

6. *The words "Circle of Grace" name our unique and holy space and are written using the color red to represent the Holy Spirit.*
- What significance is in the word "Circle"?
 - How do the words "*Circle of Grace*" give meaning to our relationship with God, others, and ourselves?
8. *Young people may get a sense of their Circle of Grace through the following instructions:*

Please stand.

Raise your hands above your head and then bring your arms slowly down keeping them outstretched.

**Extend your arms in front of you
and then behind you**

**embracing all of the space around you
knowing that God is in this space with you.**

Then slowly reach down to your feet.

This is your *Circle of Grace*.

You are in it.

*The Magnificat*²⁹

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord;
my spirit rejoices in God my savior.
For he has looked upon his handmaid's lowliness;
behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.
His mercy is from age to age to those who fear him.
He has shown might with his arm, dispersed the arrogant of mind and heart.
He has thrown down the rulers from their thrones but lifted up the lowly.
The hungry he has filled with good things; the rich he has sent away empty.
He has helped Israel his servant, remembering his mercy,
according to his promise to our fathers, to Abraham and to his descendants
forever.
Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

²⁹ New American Bible

Lesson 2

Mary and Joseph Small Group Discussion Guide

Young Women: Read Luke 1:26-56 and answer the following questions:

1. What is God asking of Mary?
2. Why would this be difficult?
3. Mary followed God's will by saying, "Yes," to God. What risks did Mary take by saying, "Yes"?
4. How does Mary's faith and trust in God help her in this situation?
5. What can we learn from Mary about true femininity?

Young Men: Read Matthew 1:18-25 and Matthew 2:13-25 and answer the following questions.

1. Who tells Joseph that Mary is pregnant?
2. Why would this be difficult for Joseph to hear? How might he feel about this?
3. What risks is Joseph taking by saying, "Yes," to God's call for him? What does the angel ask of him?
4. What does Joseph do after the Wise Men visit his family? What challenges will he face in order to protect his family?
5. What can we learn from Joseph about true masculine strength?

Young Women

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman? How should she look? What should she spend her time doing?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Women?

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman? How should she look? What should she spend her time doing?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Women

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman? How should she look? What should she spend her time doing?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Women

- What does modern society say is desirable in a woman? How should she look? What should she spend her time doing?
- What does she need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a woman?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
- What does he need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
- What does he need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
- What does he need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Young Men

- What does modern society say is desirable in a man?
- What does he need to have or do to be considered important or popular?
- According to the media, peers, parents, siblings, and teachers, what is the purpose of a man?
- How does marketing and image affect people your age?
- Who has a harder time living up to the “ideal image” - men or women? Why?

Guidelines for Protecting Boundaries Handout

Ask Yourself:

1. How long have you known this person?
2. Is your knowledge of this person face-to-face?
3. How much do you know about this person?
4. How have you verified what this person has told you about themselves?
5. What do your feelings (instincts) tell you about this person or situation?
6. How many things do you have in common with this person?
7. Is the relationship respectful of your boundaries and the other person's?
8. Are you able to say, "No," to this person?
9. Does this person's age or status influence your behavior in the relationship?
10. Does this person ever ask you to keep secrets?

Guidelines:

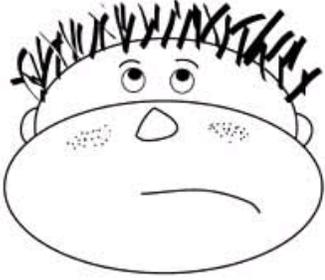
1. Do not reveal personal information on the internet. That includes full names, school, grade, address, phone, sports teams, church groups, etc. Those who want to exploit young people identify potential victims by learning about their activities and schedule patterns.
2. Let a trusted adult know anytime you feel bullied. Know how to respond to bullies, whether in an internet chat room, at school, or in another setting.
3. Comments which devalue or criticize others for their physical attributes, race, religion, economic status, etc., are not appropriate.
4. Avoid situations which involve alcohol, drugs, smoking, or other risk taking behavior.
5. Be cautious about situations in which you are alone with an adult.

Prayer to St. Joseph

**O blessed Joseph, faithful guardian of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ,
protector of thy chaste spouse, the virgin Mother of God,
I choose thee this day to be my special patron and advocate
and I firmly resolve to honor thee all the days of my life.**

**Therefore I humbly beseech thee to receive me as thy own,
to instruct me in every doubt,
to comfort me in every affliction,
to obtain for me and for all the knowledge and love of the Heart of
Jesus,
and finally to defend and protect me at the hour of my death.
Amen.**

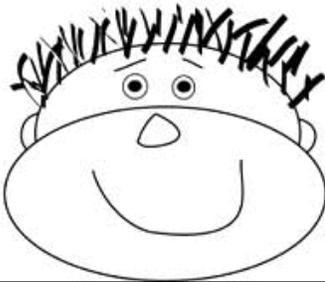
Feeling Faces Chart



Embarrassed



Frustrated



Happy



Lonely



Loved



Mad



Sad



Nervous



Proud



Relaxed



Scared



Stressed

Feeling Faces Chart/No Labels





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We welcome your feedback on this Training Module. Please go to the CSEFEL Web site (<http://csefel.uiuc.edu>) or call us at (217) 333-4123 to offer suggestions. ¶

Unequal power, secrecy and isolation are key strategies that the offenders use to put someone in a vulnerable position to be exploited/abused.

Unequal Power: When one person has more power in a relationship. This can be in the areas of age, size, position, resources, status or knowledge.

- Does this person have more status than you?
- Is he/she in a position of authority?
- Is he/she more popular?
- Is he/she significantly older?
- Does he/she have more resources such as money, knowledge, car etc. than you?

Healthy personal relationships almost always have a balance of power.

Secrecy: The condition of being hidden or concealed. The habit or practice of keeping secrets or maintaining privacy or concealment

- What would your parents/family think if they knew ALL aspects of the relationship/interaction? (Example: This person treats you significantly worse when you are alone with them as opposed to when the two of you are with others.
- This person has done something to hurt you and they pressure you to keep it a secret. Or they may pressure you to keep secret some aspect of the relationship like gifts or activities that your family/parents would not approve. They say no one will understand or that you will be blamed.

Remember our faith teaches us that help and healing will come when we bring our concerns into the light. The person who is pressuring you to keep a secret is not protecting you but themselves.

Forced Isolation: When someone forces/pressures you to be separated from others in order to gain control

- Does this person say that they are the only one who understands you?
- Do they get mad if others join you in an activity or just hang out with you?
- Do they use their words or gifts to control you?
- Do they get mad/ explosive if you do not text or answer you phone right away?

Individuals in healthy relationships respect each other's need for friends and family. You do not have to act in a certain way in order for them to trust you.

Opening Prayer

**Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.**

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

**O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to
rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Closing Prayer

**Good and gracious God,
help us to see Your image when we look in the mirror,
help us to see Your goodness in all those we meet,
help us to recognize Your love through the Communion of Saints,
help us know Your will through the whisper
of the Holy Spirit,
help us to say, "Yes,"
when You call us to be all that we have been created to be,
help us to serve You and others without pushing ourselves forward,
help us to know our limits and to respect the limits of others,
and help us to respect our *Circle of Grace* and live always in
the ultimate *Circle of Grace* - Your Love. Amen.**

Opening Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Your faithful and
enkindle in them the fire of Your love.

V. Send forth Your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, Who did instruct the hearts of the faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit, grant us in the same Spirit to be truly wise and ever to
rejoice in His consolation. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Prayer of Saint Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O, Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love;

for it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

How Safe Are Your Relationships?

Check those that have happened to you or someone you know (in person or via technology such as texting or SNS)

Do your friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, or family members...

_____ Embarrass you by calling you names/put you down?

_____ Look or act in ways that scare you?

_____ Control your friends and those with whom you hang out?

_____ Pressure you into doing things that make you feel uneasy?

_____ Threaten to start a rumor about you if you don't do what they want?

_____ Tell you to keep a secret that makes you feel uncomfortable?

_____ Destroy your property or write bad things about you in notes or texts that are passed to others?

_____ Pressure you into group activities you would not usually do?

_____ Shove you, slap you, or hit you?

_____ Threaten to hurt you, themselves, or others?

_____ Invite you to look at inappropriate material (print, video, DVD, phone or on the internet)?

_____ Flame you on the internet or post inappropriate or untrue statements about you?

_____ Ask you to pose for a photo taken by their phone or webcam that made you uncomfortable?

_____ Ask you to take and send a sexy picture of yourself?

Post-Assessment

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition.

Circle of Grace

Trusted Adult

Emotional Grooming

- _____ 1. Manipulative behaviors used by an abuser to gain control.
- _____ 2. The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
- _____ 3. A grown-up 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 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 approaches you and begins to tickle you. 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 tickling you.
- Safe Unsafe 8. A person you know from the internet wants you to meet at the mall 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. PLAAN stands for:

P _____

L _____

A _____

A _____

N _____

Post-Assessment - Key

Write the correct word or phrase for each definition:

Circle of Grace **Trusted Adult** **Emotional Grooming**

- Emotional Grooming 1. Manipulative behaviors used by an abused to gain control.
Circle of Grace 2. The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
Trusted Adult 3. A grown-up 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 approaches you and begins to tickle you. 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 tickling you.
- Unsafe** 8. A person you know from the internet wants you to meet at the mall 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. PLAAN stands for:

P _____ Protect _____

L _____ Listen _____

A _____ Ask _____

A _____ Act _____

N _____ Notify _____

Grade 9 Evaluation

Date _____

Parish/School _____ City _____

Leader _____ Number of young people in class _____

Each grade's curriculum was designed to meet the overall program objectives.

Please check if each of the objectives of the *Circle of Grace* 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 *Circle of Grace* that God gives each of us.
3. YES _____ NO _____ Young People will be able to identify and maintain appropriate boundaries.
4. YES _____ NO _____ Young People can identify types of boundary violations.
5. YES _____ NO _____ Young People can demonstrate how to take action if a boundary is threatened or violated.

Number of Young people who got 70% or better on their pre assessment _____

Number of Young people who got below 70% on their pre assessment _____

Number of Young people who got 70% or better on the post assessment _____

Number of Young people who got below 70% on the post assessment _____

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, Director of Religious Education, or Director of Youth Ministry.