

Lesson 1

What is a Circle of Grace?

Sometimes children reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the child, "Thank you for sharing that, _____. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.)." When this happens, be sure you talk to the child at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Christian teachings:

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

Lesson Goal

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

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

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

Vocabulary

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

Materials Needed

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

Lesson Opening

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and leads them in prayer. Leader may use their own words or the below example.

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

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

Getting Started

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

Lesson Development

Discussion

1. *Show children the Circle of Grace symbol. Ask children what they see in the symbol.*
2. *This is a symbol for our Circle of Grace. It reminds us that God loves us and His love is always around us. Everyone has a Circle of Grace.*
3. *Review what each part represents:*
 - a. Red Circle of Grace Words - Color of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Person - Child of God
 - c. Yellow Circle - Grace
 - d. Dove - Holy Spirit
 - e. Blue Background - The World in Which We Live

Activity - Circle of Grace Link :<https://vimeo.com/207836764>

1. *Review the Circle of Grace movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.*
2. *Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:*
 - a. Raise your hands above your head
 - b. Bring your arms slowly down
 - c. Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you
 - d. Embrace all the space around you
 - e. Then reach down to your feet
 - f. Know that God is in this space with you
 - g. *Tell the children, "This is the Circle of Grace in which you live."*

Discussion

1. *Suggested opening:* Now, we will talk about why it is important that we know about our *Circle of Grace*.
2. *Ask the children:* Do you remember that Jesus told us how he would always love us and always be with us? If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. That place is our *Circle of Grace*. God is present in our *Circle of Grace* because he wants a close relationship with each of us. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us.
3. Remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace* with God and surrounded by God's love. God wants us to be safe and to behave with the respect for ourselves and for others.

Activity - Happy and Sad Emoji Chart

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

Optional Lesson Extender

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

Lesson Closing

Leader directs children to quiet down and leads them in prayer. Leader may use their own words or the below example.

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