

Grade 8: Circle of Grace Parent/Child Home Activities- How to Be Morally Responsible in Today's Culture



Dear Parent,

Thank you for talking to your child about “How to Be Morally Responsible in Today’s Culture” and helping to identify values that reflect moral decisions.

We want to help our children recognize how popular culture can influence our *Circle of Grace*. Popular culture can have a positive or negative influence in our desire to obey the Ten Commandments and live our faith to its fullest.

First, speak with your child about their *Circle of Grace*.

1. **Our *Circle of Grace* is the love and goodness of God that always surrounds us.**
2. **God is with us and within us in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps us to remember that we belong to God. We are always in a special, holy place.**
3. **If we can remember that we are in a *Circle of Grace*, with God and surrounded by his love, we will remember to behave with respect for ourselves and others.**
4. **We are always changing, but God’s love is constant and forever present.**

There may be some things you liked in your *Circle of Grace* when you were younger but do not like now. *Example: endearing family nicknames.* As we get older, we try to become better at knowing what and who is safe to be in our *Circle of Grace*.

Activities:

Ask your child to name some ways we learn about the values of today’s “Popular Culture”? (e.g. news, TV, internet, social media, movies, friends...)

Today we are going to compare and contrast our Catholic values with what popular culture tells us is important. For example, our Catholic faith teaches us to put God first and worship only Him. On the other hand, popular culture often teaches us to put ourselves first, not God. The Ten Commandment Worksheet will help you begin to compare and contrast.

1. **Have your child fill out the “10 Commandments” worksheet.**
2. *When the worksheet is completed, on a blank sheet of paper, have your child write a personal list of what they value, both concrete and abstract (e.g. friends, family, faith, music, and independence.)*
3. **Discuss what your child wrote for each of the ten commandments.**
4. *Talk specifically about Catholic moral values and how they compare to popular culture’s values.*
5. *Discuss how both sets of values relate to the sacredness of our Circle of Grace.*
6. *Talk with your child about their list of values. Where do these values fit into the Circle of Grace?*
7. *Discuss how some things might fit into both the values of our faith and the values of our culture. For example, you have a friend who drinks. You value the friendship, but must set boundaries as to how you spend time together. Always talk to a trusted adult.*

Discussion - Being Morally Responsible

1. Who or what helps you to make the right choices or decisions based on Catholic values? According to the Ten Commandments, what behaviors are right and what behaviors are wrong? What choices should you make based on the discussion about the Ten Commandments?
2. Why is it sometimes hard to follow your Catholic values over cultural values?
3. What are some ways we can resist the pressure to choose popular cultural values over what our Catholic values?

Thank you for your support of the *Circle of Grace* program. It is essential and appreciated as we strive to provide the safest possible environment for our children. If you have any questions, please call your school or parish for assistance.

Ten Commandments Worksheet

Parents, please do this activity with your child. List a value in popular culture that may be in conflict with each commandment.



OUR FAITH'S 10 COMMANDMENTS

POPULAR CULTURE'S TOP COMMANDMENTS

1. I am the LORD your God: You shall not have strange gods before me. <i>-Put God first, worship only HIM</i>	
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. <i>-Use God's name with respect</i>	
3. Remember to keep the Lord's Day holy. <i>-Mass on Sunday and Holy Days</i>	
4. Honor your father and mother. <i>-Respect your parents</i>	
5. You shall not kill. <i>-Do not hurt others, physically or emotionally</i>	
6. You shall not commit adultery. <i>-Be faithful in marriage; respect the dignity of the body</i>	
7. You shall not steal. <i>-Respect other's belongings</i>	
8. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <i>-Do not lie, gossip or spread rumors</i>	
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. <i>-All are called to respect the relationship between a husband and a wife</i>	
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's goods. <i>-Do not be envious of what others possess</i>	

CIRCLE OF GRACE 'PLAAN' Summary

Putting in place our PLAAN for keeping ourselves safe.

Write PLAAN on a piece of paper. Lead the discussion below with your child to come up with a plan to help keep your child safe.

P - Protect
L - Listen
A - Ask
A - Act
N - Notify

➤ The first letter “P” stands for **Protect with Respect.**

- How do you think respect can help us protect our *Circle of Grace*?
 - *Answers should include:*
 - *respecting ourselves as a child of God*
 - *respecting others because they are also Children of God*
 - *keeping unsafe words, touches, and images out of our Circle of Grace*
- The letter “P” is about knowing that each of us has a *Circle of Grace* and respecting it.

➤ The letter “L” stands for **Listen.**

- In every situation we need to remember that the Holy Spirit is always with us to help us stay safe.
- The Holy Spirit gives us feelings or instincts, and we need to listen to them.
- The letter “L” connects us with the Communion of Saints and the qualities we have been given as expressions of God’s love.

➤ The letter “A” stands for **Ask.**

- When you have an uncomfortable feeling, you are recognizing the Holy Spirit helping you know that something is not right.
- The letter “A” asks: “Does this say, ‘Yes,’ to what God has called me to be? Does this belong in my *Circle of Grace*?”
- There are some questions that the letter “A” reminds us to ask ourselves whenever we are in a situation that makes us feel uncomfortable or that just doesn’t feel quite right. The questions are also good ones to ask every so often even when we don’t get a gut feeling. Sometimes asking the questions helps us to hear the Holy Spirit when we did not remember that we needed to listen.
- *Read each question allowing a few moments for quiet reflection between each.*
 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?



➤ The next letter “A” stands for **Act.**

- To protect your *Circle of Grace* you need to tell trusted adults you need help.
- There are other things you can do to protect your *Circle of Grace* when your parents or trusted adults may not be around. Some of them are:
 1. Don’t reveal personal information on the internet. This includes full names, school, grade, address, phone, sports teams, church groups, etc. Perpetrators try to identify young people by learning about their activities and schedule patterns. Be particularly cautious of social networking websites such as myspace.com and personal blogs.
 2. Stay away or get away from situations that make you feel uncomfortable.
 3. Tactics may include saying, “No,” walking away, calling a parent.
 4. Understand that comments about another persons’ physical attributes, race, religion, economic status, etc., that de-value or criticize are never appropriate.
 5. Avoid unsafe situations, which involve alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
 6. Be cautious about situations in which one is left alone with an adult.

➤ The last letter “N” stands for **Notify.**

- Notify your parents or another trusted adult whenever someone or has violated your boundaries, such as manipulating to control you or not respecting your *Circle of Grace* or someone else’s *Circle of Grace*.
- Think of three people besides your parents whom you can trust, whom you feel will listen and would offer help. Ask yourself these questions:
 - Do these people respect your *Circle of Grace*?
 - Do they respect their own *Circle of Grace*?
 - Do they respect the *Circle of Grace* of other people that you know?

Trusted adults want what is best for you. They want your *Circle of Grace* to be respected. Discuss with your parents the three other persons whom you feel are trusted adults. Then let the trusted adults know you have chosen them. Share with them what *Circle of Grace* means to you. Today is a good day to start those conversations.