

## Kind./Grade 1- Home Activity Sheet for Parents: The Circle of Grace, the Stoplight and Safety Plan



Thank you for using these activities to help your child learn about their Circle of Grace and how it can help us protect our children. Please talk with your child about the Circle of Grace concepts of how much they are loved by God and how much he wants them to be safe. The Stoplight and Safety Plan lesson is to help children identify safe and unsafe situations/secrets and know how to talk to a parent or trusted adult. The children are taught that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them, to understand that God is with them always, even when they are hurting or sad. We want to help them to identify when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*, how to recognize safe and unsafe touch/situations and how to talk to a parent/trusted adult if they feel unsafe or are confused.

**Stoplight activity:** We use the analogy of a stoplight to connect a green signal with safe situations, a red signal with unsafe situations, and a yellow signal with situations in which a child might feel confused or unsure.

It is important for you as parents and guardians to talk with your child about real situations in his or her everyday life and invite your child to identify whether the situations are green (GO AHEAD, this is safe), red (STOP, this is unsafe always talk to a trusted adult before acting), or yellow (BE CAREFUL, always talk to a trusted adult before acting). Learning to be more aware of these signals helps children recognize them as one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.

**There are activities on the following pages to help you talk with your child about real situations in his or her everyday life.** Invite your child to identify whether the situations are green (GO AHEAD, this is safe), red (STOP, this is unsafe always talk to a trusted adult before acting), or yellow (BE CAREFUL, always talk to a trusted adult before acting).

**Secrets Activity:** We also talk about secrets. Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a good secret and a bad secret. This understanding could be key to them seeking help.

**There is also an activity about “how to ask for help” for you to review with your child.** It is important for you as parents and guardians to reinforce these lessons at home with your child.

**The Safety Plan:** After you have finished these activities, please help your child to form a plan to keep them safe if you are not available. Please help your child to name and draw a picture of three trusted adults (in addition to their parents) that could help them be safe. If your child names someone you find inappropriate, please help him/her to identify someone else.

Please contact these individuals to let them know you and your child have identified them as a trusted adult. This can be done in person, by phone, email or a letter. (Letter-writing is a fun activity you can do with your child.) Being identified as a trusted adult will most likely make them feel honored as well as alert them to your safety plan for your child. You may want to hang your child’s drawing up as a reminder of the trusted adults who want to keep them safe.

Please call the parish, school, or religious education office if you have questions.

Thank you for your support of the *Circle of Grace* program. It is essential and appreciated as we strive to provide the safest environment possible for our children.

# Summary of the Key Concepts of “Circle of Grace”



## God gives each of us a Circle of Grace 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.*

*Know 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 grownups about our worries, concerns or “funny/ uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe and take the right action.



## Activity - Red Signal Green Signal

Please discuss with your child how a stop light helps us know when it is safe to proceed and when we need to wait or stop when we are driving, walking or riding a bike.

1. Read each situation aloud. **Make sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.**
  2. After reading a situation, give children a moment to think about if a situation is green, yellow or red. Some situations, though clearly red to adults, may be unclear (yellow) from a child’s perspective. This activity will help children identify their own confusing feelings and to understand that they should talk to a trusted adult. Allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected with these situations.
- GREEN SITUATIONS (**Select two or more**)
    - Your mom or dad gives you a hug when you are sad (*loved, comforted*).
    - You are at the doctor and your mom is with you. The doctor checks your body to make sure it is healthy (*safe, secure, embarrassed*).
    - Your dad is planning a surprise birthday party for your mom (*happiness, excitement, anticipation*).
    - Your grandmother/grandfather wipes your tears when you fall down and hurt yourself (*loved, comforted, safe*).
    - You tell your teacher that a classmate is being mean on purpose (*embarrassed, sorry, happy that you told*).

- **YELLOW OR RED SITUATIONS (Select three or more and reinforce they are always to talk to a parent or trusted adult in a yellow or red situation.)**
  - You are playing outside your house when a group of older kids come by and ask your name. They say they will show you a new App on their phone if you go with them (*cautious, scared*).
  - Your big brother's friend wants you to play a video game your mom or dad told you not to play (*worried, afraid of getting into trouble, excited to play the game*).
  - Someone touches you in a way that you don't think is safe - even if the person says it is safe and says, "Don't tell anyone about this special time between you and me," (*funny feeling in your tummy, confused, etc.*).
  - Your friend's brother takes a picture of you with his cell phone. He asks you not to tell and say that you will get into trouble. (*guilty, afraid of punishment*).
  - You are at a family party. Someone asks you to sit on his/her lap, but you don't want to (*pressured, mad, unsure*).
  - Your friend's big brother/sister wants you to do something you don't want to do because it makes you uncomfortable (*pressured, confused*).



### **Activity- Secrets**

*Most offenders use secrecy as a tactic to control the child from telling about the abuse. It is important that the students understand the difference between a safe secret and a unsafe secret. This understanding could be key to them seeking help. This activity can be a good start to helping them understand the concept of secrets.*

- 1) *On a piece of paper, make a safe secret and unsafe secret chart with two columns, Safe Secret ☺ and Unsafe Secret ☹.*
- 2) *Using the list of green/yellow/red situations from the last activity, can you name a safe secret in the last situations? Can you name some unsafe secrets in the last situations? Who is involved in the secret? Is there a time that it is finally told?*
- 3) *Can you name additional safe and unsafe secrets? Add them to the list.*
- 4) *Continue by saying: "Sometimes secrets can even give us a funny feeling in our heart or tummy. A safe secret is one that does not hurt others or me and it is eventually told. A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell. **It is never safe if someone tells you to not ever tell your parents/trusted adult.** A good way to decide if a secret is safe or unsafe is to ask ourselves, "Can this secret hurt me or someone else?" "Is it a secret I can eventually tell someone else?"*
- 5) *Look at each photo below with your child.*
- 6) **Ask them the following questions:**
  - Is this a safe or unsafe secret or are you unsure?*
  - How would you feel if you were the one telling the secret?*
  - How would you feel if you were the one hearing the secret?*
  - How would you feel if you saw the secret being told?*
  - These photos are about sharing secrets, how would you know that someone has a secret and is scared to share it?*



# HOW TO ASK FOR HELP



LOOK AT THE PERSON



SAY TO THE PERSON "I NEED HELP. I DO NOT FEEL SAFE."



TELL THE PERSON WHY YOU DO NOT FEEL SAFE



TELL THE PERSON "THANK YOU"