

Circle of Grace Overview:

Circle of Grace educates and empowers children and young people to actively participate in a safe environment for themselves and others, while being taught in the framework of our Catholic faith. The Diocese provides Circle of Grace training to children in grades K-12 in (diocesan, parochial and interparochial) schools and in church parish schools of religion. Circle of Grace lessons bring God and our Catholic beliefs into the center of child protection by teaching:

- God's presence and assistance in difficult and confusing situations as an essential component in the Pre-K– gr. 12 curriculum.
- A philosophy that can be used at all times that reinforces God's real presence in our lives, respect for self and others, and skills for good decision making.
- The sacredness of each person and how relationships are called to be experiences of divine love. Circle of Grace contributes to the protection of our young children and affirms them as beloved children of God.

Key Concepts:

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 experiencing 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 and “uncomfortable feelings” so they can help us be safe and take the right action.