Circle of Grace

Family Activity Instructions

Instructions

This safety lesson is broken into five parts.

A. Part one begins the lesson and should be completed by everyone.
B. Parts two and three provide brief lessons for grades Kindergarten through grade 2.
C. Parts four and five provide lessons for grades 3 through 5.

Everything required for the lesson is provided in the packet with the exception of a writing utensil. *Please return the highlighted activity once completed for St Patrick's safety lesson records, as required by the archdiocese, no later than March 4th, 2026.*

Lesson Goals

Kindergarten through Grade 2

- Children will be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations.
- Children will demonstrate how to take action if they feel unsafe or unsure something or someone is safe.

Grade 3 through Grade 5

- Children will be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations and establishing boundaries
- Students will be able to identify how to cope with stress and pressure and how these can contribute to unsafe behaviors/situations.

Part 1 (for all youth)

Opening Prayer

Together, make the Sign of the Cross. Then say:
"Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen."

The Circle of Grace

Ask the children to stand with enough space between them that they can extend their arms without touching anything or anyone.
1. Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
a. Raise your hands above your head and bring your arms slowly down
c. Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you
d. Embrace all the space around you and then reach down to your feet
f. Know that God is in this space with you
3. Tell the children, "This is your Circle of Grace that you live in." Explain that all persons, every Child of God, lives and breathes in their own circle of God's love and goodness, their own Circle of Grace.

Part 3 (For Children Kindergarten through Grade 2)

Discussion

1. Discuss the meaning or purpose of a traffic signal by asking:
    a. Why do we have traffic signals? *The reason we have traffic signals is to protect people and keep them safe.*
    b. What does each color of the traffic signal mean? (STOP, SLOW or BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.)

Discussion

1. Let's think of the signals God gives us to help keep us safe and protected like the three colors of a traffic signal: green, red, and yellow.
2. Green signal - Means GO AHEAD. Some things are definitely safe. Some examples are telling the truth, being kind and respectful, helping others, and caring about others. You are also safe when others respect your body and feelings. Could you name some other things that would always be safe to do or let someone else do with you?
3. Red Signal - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts. Ask the children to define it and what it looks like etc. Some examples are bullying (being mean to someone on purpose), lying, hitting, fighting, etc. Can you help me think of other things that are never good to do or let someone do to you? When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.
4. Yellow Signal - Means BE CAREFUL. Sometimes you can't tell if a situation is safe or unsafe. You might feel confused or unsure about it. These are like a yellow signal. It may seem like just a funny feeling in your heart or tummy. When this happens, tell someone that you trust, like your mom, dad, leader, or other trusted adult.

Activity - Boundaries Stop Light

Read each situation provided, and allow your child to decide if it describes a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal.Then write the corresponding letter on the correct line.
Then talk about each situation. Allow time for children to discuss their feelings connected with these situations and reinforce that they are always to talk to a trusted adult.
Complete the worksheet and return it to St Patrick's Faith Formation.

***Families may also optionally complete the included "Safe Adult Passport."*

Closing Prayer

Almighty God, we bless you for our lives, we give you praise for your abundant mercy and grace we receive. We thank you for Your faithfulness even though we are not that faithful to You. Lord Jesus, we ask you to give us all around peace in our mind, body, soul and spirit. We ask you to heal and remove everything that is causing stress, grief, and sorrow in our lives.
Please guide our path through life and make our enemies be at peace with us. Let Your angels of peace go out ahead of us when we go out and stay by our side when we return. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Part 5 (For Children Grade 3-5)

Getting Started
Discuss the difference between stress and pressure. Stress is usually internal and can happen when there are too many demands on time, energy, etc., and not enough resources to meet those demands. Pressure usually comes from an external source with a demand for high performance or enticement to healthy/unhealthy behaviors.

What can be done when feeling stressed?

- Exercise and/or go for a walk. It will get the endorphins in motion, reducing stress
- Talk to a trusted adult about ways to reduce feelings of stress
- Pray and meditate with scripture

Responding to Stress vs. Pressure:
In most stressful situations, stress reduction or feeling less overwhelmed is a goal, but in most pressure situations, performing successfully or engaging in healthy/unhealthy behavior is a goal.

What can be done when feeling pressured?

- Realize that all pressure is not necessarily bad. Pressure that comes from parents and teachers may actually assist in reaching potential
- Realize that sometimes pressure can encourage unhealthy behavior that is not in concert with our Circle of Grace
- Talk to a trusted adult about the pressure felt
- Reduce some activity overload
- Pay attention to the workings of the Holy Spirit in our lives

Activity-Stress and Pressure Worksheet
Consider the following four categories: **academics, athletics, peers and family**
Name some healthy expectations and unhealthy expectations from the above four groups and try to discover at least two healthy and unhealthy situations for each of the four categories, and write them on the attached worksheet.

Complete the Worksheet by having your child write a 1-2-3 Plan to assist when they are stressed or pressured, using the unhealthy examples they brainstormed above.

1- Name of a trusted adult
2- Action to be taken if a situation is unhealthy
3- Compose a short prayer (Jesus, help me!!!)

Once completed, *return it to St Patrick's Faith Formation.*

Remember: Faith Makes a Difference

It's the little acts of faith that make a big difference, below are a few:

1. **Be quiet with Jesus for a few minutes. This break from your hectic day will help. Stress and pressure are not new. Check out what our faith says about it in Scripture (Below)**

2. **Pray instantly when anxiety begins to creep in. A short prayer is good enough.**

3. **Celebrate the sacraments (a little more than you do now). Christ's grace can help us achieve the peace that will make us saints.**

4. **Read and meditate on Scripture, specifically the many passages that address worry and peace.**

5. **Take advantage of sacramentals (they confer an actual grace!): holy water, icons, medals.**

6. **Cultivate joy. Peace and joy are unified. Try new things that are healthy and holy. Get out of your comfort zone. Keeping life interesting makes daily life full of joy, and nothing promotes peace like joy.**

Overcoming anxiety is actually a central tenant of our Catholic faith! Getting rid of stress in your life is necessary for maintaining peace, without which you cannot be a saint or help others become saints.

Scripture Verses Dealing with Stress

- Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid. John 14: 27

- In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world. John 16:33

- In this you rejoice, although now for a little while you may have to suffer through various trials, so that the genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that is perishable even though tested by fire, may prove to be for praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1: 6-7

- "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat [or drink], or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Matthew 6:25

- No trial has come to you but what is human. God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it. 1 Corinthians 10:13