

# Parent Letter

## Grade 6: Lesson 2: Safe Relationships

### Putting the Puzzle Together

Dear Parent,

Your young person has just completed the second of four lessons in the *Circle of Grace* Program. Lesson one focused on the *Circle of Grace* as the love and goodness of God which always surrounds him or her. The focus of lesson two was healthy relationships and situations.

Lesson three will be about boundaries. The goal of lesson three is: "Young people will be better able to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships." The activities and discussion will help them be better able to recognize safe and unsafe situations, acknowledge and respect the boundaries surrounding their own *Circle of Grace* and those of others, and identify actions or words that violate one's *Circle of Grace*.

Your young person will be given the following guidelines to help him or her decide whether a relationship or situation is safe or unsafe.

1. How long have you know 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?

Your young person will also learn about potentially unsafe and dangerous situations and relationships. *Ask your young person what they learned after Lesson Three. Your ongoing conversations with your young person are very important. It is important to reinforce that they can come to you with any situation and that you are willing to talk with them and help them.* In Lesson Four, they will learn that they are to talk to a trusted adult about any situation that confuses them or is unsafe.

Caution your young person:

1. Not to reveal personal information on the internet. That 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.
2. To let you know about any time they feel bullied. Help them understand how to respond to bullies, whether that is in an internet chat room, at school, or in another setting.
3. Be sensitive to comments that devalue or criticize others for their physical attributes, race, religion, economic status, etc. Model appropriate respectful behavior yourself. Watch the jokes you tell. Your children do.
4. To avoid unsafe situations involving alcohol, drugs, and smoking.
5. To be cautious about situations in which they are alone with an adult.

### **Unsafe Behaviors**

The young people will not be presented the following information about unsafe and potentially dangerous behaviors. They will be asked to talk with you about it. We encourage you to discuss this with your young person.

- Cutting is a form of self-harm in which a young person cuts or scratches themselves deep enough that it bleeds. This cutting can be on their wrists, arms, legs or stomachs, places where they can hide the scars that will form. Cutting is a problem that stems from a teen trying to deal with the stress of an emotional issue. It is important to seek professional help for your young person.
- Sexting is when someone sends sexually suggestive photos to another person by way of the cell phone or social networking site. This behavior has significant legal and emotional consequences.
- In recent years, both nationally and locally, young people have died playing asphyxiation games (also known as the choking game and the fainting game) either alone or in groups.
- There is also a prevalence of potentially dangerous behaviors including genital contact (Rainbow Parties, Chicken Games). In these situations, problem-solve with your young people the appropriate ways to remove themselves from this environment (e.g. I have to call my mom/dad now, I have to go to the bathroom, I don't feel good, etc.).

*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 young people. If you have any questions please call your school or parish office.*

# Parent Take Home Sheet

## Grade 6: Lesson 4

### Safety PLAAN When Something Doesn't Fit

**Lesson 4 Goal:** Young people will be better able to safeguard their *Circle of Grace* from violations.

In this lesson, we ask young people to identify three trusted adults (in addition to their parents). They were asked to consider the following criteria when identifying trusted adults.

- Do these people respect your *Circle of Grace*?
- Do they respect their *Circle of Grace*?
- Do they respect the *Circle of Grace* of others you know?

Adults to be cautious of are those...

- who enjoy having kids, rather than adults, as friends
- who tell you it's OK to disobey the rules of parents or leaders
- who give you gifts that make you feel uncomfortable
- who plan "private" activities for you or other groups of young people
- who ask you to keep secrets.

Please contact these individuals to let them know you and your child have identified them as trusted adults. This can be done in person, by phone, or a letter. Being identified as a trusted adult will most likely make them feel honored as well as alert them to your safety plan for your young person.