

Family, Faith and Circle of Grace

Ideas for Adult Sessions



Information

Below is a summary of the themes of the Family Gatherings to assist you in selecting your adult session activities.

Family Gathering Themes

- a. **Gathering A-** What would our world look like if we all believed that that God is always present in our Circle of Grace? How does that belief affect the life of a child being bullied, someone suffering from a serious illness, firefighter going to a fire, surgeon in the operating room?
- b. **Gathering B-** God wants us to be safe because He loves us more than we can imagine. Does God truly love us more than our parents do? (Families are given blessed Holy Family medals or Saint medals to remind them of God's love.)
- c. **Gathering C-** God is truly present and puts Trusted Adults in our lives to help keep us safe. Safe/Unsafe feelings (Mother Teresa quote is read. Parents name what is special about each child and makes the Sign of the Cross on each child's forehead with Holy Water. Holy water may be given to families to take home.)
- d. **Gathering D-** God gave us each special talents or gifts. How can we use them to help keep ourselves and others safe? (Family Tree activity)
- e. **Gathering E-** God wants us to be safe. How can we help keep ourselves and others safe? Going to Trusted adults; getting help for friends who are being bullied, being unsafe on the internet, sad or depressed... (Holy Family prayer cards distributed.)

Adult Sessions

Below are examples of what parents should learn about *Circle of Grace* to make them more aware of how they can protect their children and the environment around them. This discussion should build on what was discussed in the opening session with the whole family.

Discussion:

- a. The importance of child protection. (Give statistics, including that children are more likely to be abused by someone they know)
- b. Helping their child realize that God is always with them and wants them to be safe more than we can imagine.
- c. How to help their children learn and practice healthy boundaries.
- d. Teach parents about who 'Trusted Adults' are and explain that their children will be asking for their help choosing adults they could go to for help in case their parent isn't available. The parent needs to make sure the Trusted Adults chosen by the child are appropriate (no superheroes, pets, grandparents who have passed away or adults who don't have good judgement themselves!). It is okay to choose an adult who doesn't live in the city if the child has regular contact by phone or social media.

Adult experience of Circle of Grace lessons

1. Examples of activities/content from the *Circle of Grace* lessons. You can choose one or more that are appropriate for your meeting.
 - a. Grade 2 game: safe or unsafe, children's growing understanding of something may not be safe when you are a child (driving), but safe when you are an adult.
 - b. Informing our Conscience: The Holy Spirit lets us know when we are about to do something that is unsafe. Teaching children to be aware of what they let into their Circle of Grace (violent games or videos, adult movies or tv shows, music with inappropriate lyrics....)
 - c. Code of Conduct (setting our own boundaries)- grade 7
 - d. Sacredness: Mirror in the box- grade 3
 - e. Moral Choices: Have parents do the Gr. 8 Ten Commandments activity and talk about the choices that God wants us to make to keep us safe vs. the message our children are getting from society and media.

2. **'Prevention: What Parents Need to Know' handout**
 - a. Discuss talking points on boundaries and discussion questions about ways to keep your kids safe. This can be used for large group or small group discussions.

3. **Parents First newsletter**- pick any grade-level or special topic edition and discuss it with the parents.

4. **Adult topics on child safety:**
 - a. Have an expert come and talk about 'difficult' topics. (Sometimes police departments, sheriffs, CPS, your diocesan staff and other community institutions have speakers who can help. Or you may choose to show an appropriate video or YouTube from a national speaker on one of the topics. Make sure they have a Catholic perspective.)
 - i. Violence
 - ii. Child Neglect and Abuse
 - iii. Bullying
 - iv. Have a police officer or expert come and talk about Media Safety: pornography, sexting, trafficking
 - b. Discuss how our children interact with others they meet during on-line video games, discussion blogs or other media and the danger that they do not really know who they are talking to, only how they represent themselves on-line.
 - c. Talk about what appropriate boundaries look like for our children. Name a situation and talk about what the appropriate boundary for our children to use when interacting with each group below. (example- Someone wants to give you a ride home after school: a family member, a friend's older brother, a teacher.)
 - i. **Familial**- where we are nurtured and parented, where we first learn about relationships and boundaries. We usually do not choose our families.
 - ii. **Personal**- Friends/peers with whom we share common interests, tasks... Personal relationships have a balance of power, resources and status.

- iii. **Institutional**- where we gather in groups with common interests or tasks: Churches (faith), Neighborhoods (homes), schools (education), Sports and activities (teams, groups), Clubs (interests).

5. Formation for Adults: This could be an opportunity to have an expert speaker come talk to the adults about any safety or formation topic that the pastor/DRE think would be good for the adults. Examples- safeguarding your children on the computer, etc.

- a. Sanctity of Life, from Conception to Natural Death
- b. Being the 'Domestic Church'
- c. Raising adult Disciples
- d. Sacraments and Family Life
- e. Domestic Violence
- f. Addictions
- g. Pornography
- h. Surviving Abuse
- i. Technology
- j. Clergy Sexual Abuse and the Church's response
- k. Unresolved Trauma