

Lesson 1

What is a Circle of Grace?

Sometimes children reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the child, "Thank you for sharing that, _____. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.)." When this happens, be sure you talk to the child at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- We are all Children of God
- As Children of God, we are unique and loved by Him
- Jesus teaches us how to love and respect God and others and self
- We are all called to do good

Lesson Goal

Children will come to understand and describe the concept of a *Circle of Grace*.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Demonstrate his/her own *Circle of Grace*.
2. Describe what makes a person's *Circle of Grace* a holy space.
3. Identify the behaviors appropriate for the *Circle of Grace*.

Vocabulary

1. **Children of God:** All people are made and loved by God.
2. **Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds me and all others.
3. **Grace:** The gift of God's goodness and love to help me live as his child.
4. **Holy:** Special because of a connection with God.
5. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God's love.
6. **Respect:** Being kind to others and doing what's best for myself and others because I honor all people as Children of God.
7. **Symbol:** A picture or object that stands for something else.
8. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.

Materials Needed

1. Symbols (examples: stop sign, Nike swoosh, slippery when wet sign, peace symbol, etc.)
2. *Circle of Grace* Logo color (see the end of the Grade 1 Lessons)
3. *Circle of Grace* Logo Black and White (see the end of the Grade 1 Lessons)
4. Whiteboard or chalkboard
5. Chart paper or flip chart paper to make a “happy/sad face chart”
6. (Optional) *Circle of Grace* Song (in the Administrator/Director section)

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and join in the Sign of the Cross. Then say together,

**Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen.**

Optional Prayer- The *Circle of Grace* Song (Located in the Administrator/Director Section)

Getting Started

1. Show symbols one at a time to the children. Ask what each represents. Make the point that symbols are a way of telling us something or reminding us of something.
2. Write the term “Symbol” on the board. State the vocabulary definition of symbol: a picture or object that stands for something else.

Lesson Development

Discussion

1. Show children the *Circle of Grace* symbol. Ask children what they see in the symbol.
2. This is a symbol for our *Circle of Grace*. It reminds us that God loves us and His love is always around us. Everyone has a *Circle of Grace*.
3. Review what each part represents:
 - a. Red Circle of Grace Words - Color of the Holy Spirit
 - b. Person - Child of God
 - c. Yellow Circle - Grace
 - d. Dove - Holy Spirit
 - e. Blue Background - The World in Which We Live

Activity - Circle of Grace Link :<https://vimeo.com/207836764>

1. Review the Circle of Grace movement. Ask children to stand with enough room around them to fully extend their arms without touching each other.
2. Give the following directions while modeling the desired actions:
 - a. Raise your hands above your head
 - b. Bring your arms slowly down
 - c. Extend your arms in front of you and then behind you
 - d. Embrace all the space around you
 - e. Then reach down to your feet
 - f. Know that God is in this space with you
 - g. Tell the children, "This is the Circle of Grace in which you live."

Discussion

1. *Suggested opening:* Now, we will talk about why it is important that we know about our Circle of Grace.
2. *Ask the children:* Do you remember that Jesus told us how he would always love us and always be with us? If God is always with us, we are always in a special, holy place. That place is our Circle of Grace. God is present in our Circle of Grace because he wants a close relationship with each of us. This is the place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us.
3. Remember that we are in a Circle of Grace with God and surrounded by God's love. God wants us to be safe and to behave with the respect for ourselves and for others.

Activity - Happy and Sad Emoji Chart

1. Make a chart with two columns on the poster paper/flip chart paper. Label one with happy emoji (face) and one with sad emoji(face).
2. Ask the children: What are some nice things that other people do or say? What are some hurtful things that other people do or say? What are some nice things you do or say? What might be some hurtful things you do or say?
3. Allow a few responses. List on the board in the appropriate column.
4. Point out that words and behaviors listed in the happy face column are those that respect our Circle of Grace. The words and behaviors in the sad face column are those that do not belong in anyone's Circle of Grace.
5. Keep happy and sad face chart posted for future reference.

Optional Lesson Extender

1. Role-play how you want to be treated by others in your Circle of Grace.
2. Role-play how you should treat others in their Circle of Grace.

Closing Prayer

**Thank you, God,
for always being with me in my *Circle of Grace*.
Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps me know what is good.
Thank you for giving me people who care about me
and want me to be safe.
Amen.**

(Optional) Tell the children you will close by singing a song called "This is Holy Ground" or "Prayer for Peace" or other appropriate song.

Lesson 2: The Stoplight and a Safety Plan

Sometimes children reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the child, "Thank you for sharing that, _____. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.)." When this happens, be sure you talk to the child at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.

This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:

- We are all Children of God
- As Children of God, we are unique and loved by Him
- Jesus teaches us how to love and respect God and others and self
- We are all called to do good

Lesson Goal

Children will be better able to identify safe and unsafe situations.

Children will demonstrate how to take action if their Circle of Grace boundaries are threatened or crossed.

Lesson Objectives

Children will be able to:

1. Understand that God does not want or cause bad things to happen to them and that God is with them and for them even when they are hurting or sad.
2. Learn how to recognize when someone comes into their *Circle of Grace*.
3. Be able to recognize safe and unsafe situations/secrets in a person's *Circle of Grace*.
4. Name one or two trusted adults (in addition to their parents) whom they can seek out for help.
5. Practice asking for help.

Vocabulary

1. **Bullying:** Repeatedly being mean to someone on purpose
2. **Feelings:** Something I sense inside myself (e.g. angry, sad, happy, afraid, embarrassed, confused, excited, peaceful, etc.) that gives me information about others or myself.
3. **Holy Spirit:** God present with and within me in a special way. The Holy Spirit helps me to remember that I belong to God. The Holy Spirit helps me to experience and live God's love.
4. **Safe:** I am safe when my body and my feelings are respected by me and by others.
5. **Safe Touch:** Touch that respects others and me.
6. **Secret:** A secret is something I know but do not tell.

Safe secret: A secret is safe when it does not hurt others or me.

Unsafe secret: A secret is unsafe when I think that someone, including me, might be hurt or get in trouble if I do not tell.

7. **Signal:** A sign that tells me something may be safe or unsafe. This may be internal or external.
8. **Stoplight:** A traffic light (red, yellow, green) that is a visual signal for keeping vehicles and people safe.
9. **Trust:** Being able to count on someone to help me to stay safe within my *Circle of Grace*.
10. **Trusted Adult:** A grown-up who helps me to stay safe in my *Circle of Grace* and to respect others within their *Circle of Grace*.
11. **Unsafe:** Anything that causes harm to myself or others.

Unsafe touch: Touch that is disrespectful and hurts, scares, or makes me feel uncomfortable or confused.

Materials Needed

1. Large picture of a stoplight with all three colors visible - red, yellow, and green (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)
2. One set of red, yellow, and green circle cards for the leader, the backside of each colored card should be white and the front side red, yellow, or green. Put the circle cards on a popsicle stick so they look more like the signal in a stoplight.
3. Feeling Faces Chart is optional to assist with the stoplight activity (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)
4. Completed Happy Emoji and Sad Emoji chart from Lesson 1
5. "Secrets" Photo Discussion poster
6. Paper, crayons/markers
7. "How to Ask for Help" poster for teacher and students
8. Pictures of "Trusted Adult" from magazines
9. Home Activity Sheet for Parents: The Stoplight (see the end of Grade 1 Lessons)

Opening Prayer

Leader calls class to prayer by asking children to quiet down and join in the Sign of the Cross. Then say together,

**Holy Spirit, show us the way.
Be with us in all we think, do, and say. Amen.**

Getting Started

Review

1. Ask children to stand and demonstrate their *Circle of Grace* as learned in previous lesson.
2. Point to Happy Emoji and Sad Emoji chart from Lesson 1. Ask children the following:

- a. What did we write on this chart? (Answer: words and actions we like and don't like from others.)
- b. What were some of the words and actions you liked? Why?
- c. What were some you did not like? Why?

Suggested comment: Today we are going to continue talking about words and actions that we like and don't like in our *Circle of Grace*. We will use the stoplight to identify what doesn't belong in our *Circle of Grace*.

Discussion

1. Show a large picture of a stoplight (sample at the end of the lessons)
2. Review the meaning of a stoplight by asking:
 - a. Why do we have stoplights? *Pause for answers.* The reason we have stoplights is to protect people and keep them safe.
 - b. What does each color of the stoplight mean? (Add STOP, BE CAREFUL, and GO AHEAD.)

Lesson Development

Introduction

The use of the word "signal" (instead of "light") is intentional in order to point to the fact that a "signal" can be both internal and external. A "stoplight", however, is only an external reality.

Most of the time you know what is safe and good to allow in your *Circle of Grace*. Sometimes, though, you need others who respect your *Circle of Grace* to help you know what is safe and what is not, people like our parents or teachers. God has given each of us our own kind of signal to keep us safe and protected. Sometimes these signals are called feelings. Our feelings are one of the main ways the Holy Spirit helps to guide us.

Discussion

1. *Continue by saying:* Let's review how the three colors of a stoplight can remind us of the signals God gives us to help keep us safe and protected.
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? (*Leader points out that everything written on the happy face column of the poster would be a green signal word or action.*)
3. **Red Signal** - Means STOP. Some things are unsafe and always mean trouble. *Be sure to spend some time reviewing general concepts of bullying. Ask the children to define it and what does it look like etc.* Some examples of bullying (repeatedly being mean to someone on purpose), are lying, hitting, fighting, etc. Can you help me think of other things that are

never good to do or let someone do to you? (Leader points out that everything written on the sad face column of the poster would be a red signal word or action.) 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.
5. Define trusted adult and remind them there will be a discussion later in the lesson.

Activity -

Red Signal Green Signal

*The purpose of this activity is to help children learn how to identify dangerous and unsafe situations, feelings, and touch, but not to scare or shame them. Make sure to give clear and concise reasons why a situation falls into the green or yellow/red signal category. For children, it may sometimes be hard to distinguish between red and yellow situations. Take the example of a stranger coming up to them asking for help. The children may be thinking it is "good" to help someone" but "bad" to talk to strangers. They cannot discern which one to takes priority. The children need to be aware of their internal process of conflicting feelings which they might be experiencing. Children will learn that when possible they should always talk to a trusted adult before acting in a red or yellow situation. **Remind children that there are always adults available to listen and talk. Children only need to ask a trusted adult for the time to talk.***

1. The leader needs a set of red, green and yellow circle/stoplight cards to lead the discussion. The leader can choose whether the children should have their own set of cards to use in discussing the situations or just the leader have them for the activity.
2. Suggested instructions:
 - In a moment, I'm going to describe some situations.
 - Please listen very carefully.
 - At the end of each, I'm going to ask you if you think the situation calls for a red signal, a yellow signal, or a green signal. I will hold up the signal and you tell me if I am right or wrong.
 - Then we'll talk about each situation.
3. Read each situation aloud. **Make sure to vary the order in which the green, red, and yellow situations are read.**

4. After reading a situation, give children a moment to think and then hold up a red, green, or yellow card or have the children hold up their own card. 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.

a. 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*).
- You see your friend crying and you ask if you can give her/him a hug (*sad, caring*).
- 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*).
- You decide not to laugh when a classmate falls down and cries even though your friends are laughing (*sad, happy that you did not make fun of them*).

b. YELLOW/RED SITUATIONS (*Select three or more and reinforce they are always to talk to a trusted adult.*)

- 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 - Part 2

Red Signal Green Signal – Secret

This Section is on 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) *Make a safe secret and unsafe secret chart with two columns. This can be done on poster paper/flip chart paper (safe secret 😊 and unsafe secret ☹).*
- 2) *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 chart.*
- 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?"*
- 5) *Display each photo for the class to see. (photos are in back of the lesson)*
- 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?*



Safety Plan

Introduction

1. We have already mentioned the need to talk to a “trusted adult” when you are feeling unsafe, uncomfortable or unsure. Remember that funny/uncomfortable feeling is the Holy Spirit prompting you to seek help from a trusted adult.
2. Today we are going to learn what to do if someone comes into your *Circle of Grace* without your permission or does something that makes you feel unsafe.
3. Write “Trusted Adult” on the board.
4. Let’s review what “Trusted Adult” means.
5. Allow a few responses.
6. A trusted adult is a grown-up who helps you to stay safe in your *Circle of Grace* and to respect others within their *Circle of Grace*. Examples of trusted adults, other than your parents, could be a teacher, a neighbor, an aunt, or uncle, your grandparent, church leader, or a family friend.
7. How do you know you can trust someone?
8. Allow a few responses.
9. You know someone is trustworthy when they help you to be safe, when they tell the truth, and when they are there for you in good times and bad.

An adaptation using a hand puppet to interact with the leader and children during the Activity, Skill Introduction, and Role-Play Introduction is provided at the end of the Grade 1 Lessons.

Activity - Identifying My Trusted Adults

1. Can anyone name a person who loves you and helps you to stay safe? *Encourage the children to name adults in addition to their mom and dad. You are encouraged to bring in photos or magazine clippings of typical trusted adults. These can be of parents, teachers, doctors or clergy. It is important NOT to show the photo until it is mentioned by the children.*
2. *List children’s responses on the board.*
3. These are people whom you can ask to help you if you are unsafe or confused. We call these people trusted adults.
4. *Give each child a piece of paper and crayons or markers.*
5. *Instruct the children to think of one or two trusted adults besides mom or dad whom they could ask for help.*
6. Tell a person next to you the names of the trusted adults that you picked.
7. Draw a picture of each of your trusted adults. *Remind children that mom and dad may be trusted adults even if they are not in the picture.*
8. *Attach the drawing to the Home Activity Sheet for parents for lesson 2. (See the end of Grade 1 Lessons.)*
9. *Instruct the children to have their parents sign the Home Activity Sheet.*

10. *Remind the children to bring the home activity sheet back to the classroom next week. This is to ensure the parents know who their child picked as a trusted adult. Sometimes children may pick someone who is not available or inappropriate.*

Skill Introduction

How to Ask My Trusted Adult for Help

Ask the class to brainstorm a list of Red Signal or Yellow Signal times when they might need to talk to or ask a trusted adult for help. Write their suggestions on the board.

1. *Post the adapted skill poster "How to Ask for Help". (See the end of the Grade 1 Lessons.)*
 - a. *Picture an eye*
 - b. *Picture of a child speaking/mouth*
 - c. *Picture of "?"*
 - d. *The words "Thank You"*
2. *Skill steps are:*
 - a. *Look at the person. (Picture of an eye)*
 - b. *Say to the person "I need help. I do not feel safe." (Picture of a child speaking/mouth)*
 - c. *Tell the person what is wrong, why you don't feel safe. (Picture of "?")*
 - d. *Tell the person, "Thank You." (Words "Thank You")*
3. *This is how we ask for help. You can use these steps whenever you need to ask anyone for help. Today we are going to practice how to ask for help from your parents or a trusted adult.*

Role-Play Introduction

According to research we remember 5% of what we hear and 90% of what we do. Allowing children to role-play greatly increases their chances of remembering what to do when a real problem arises. It is very common for children to use play to help them understand confusing situations

1. *Explain: Role-play is a way to practice something new.*
2. *Pair the students and give each a "How to Ask for Help" poster.*
3. *Instruct them to practice asking for help using the below skills:*
 - a. *Look at the person. (Picture of an eye)*
 - b. *Say to the person "I need help. I do not feel safe." (Picture of a child speaking/mouth)*
 - c. *Tell the person why you don't feel safe (Picture of "?")*
 - d. *Tell the person, "Thank You." (Words "Thank You")*

4. Bring the children back to a large group

Wrapping Up

1. *Direct children's attention back to the "How to Ask for Help" Skill Poster.*
2. *Ask children to repeat the steps for "How to Ask for Help".*
3. *Encourage children to pray for and/or write a note of thanks to each of their trusted adults*

Closing Prayer

**Thank you, God,
for always being with me in my *Circle of Grace*.
Thank you for the gift of the Holy Spirit
who helps me know what is good.
Thank you for giving me people who care about me
and want me to be safe.
Amen.**

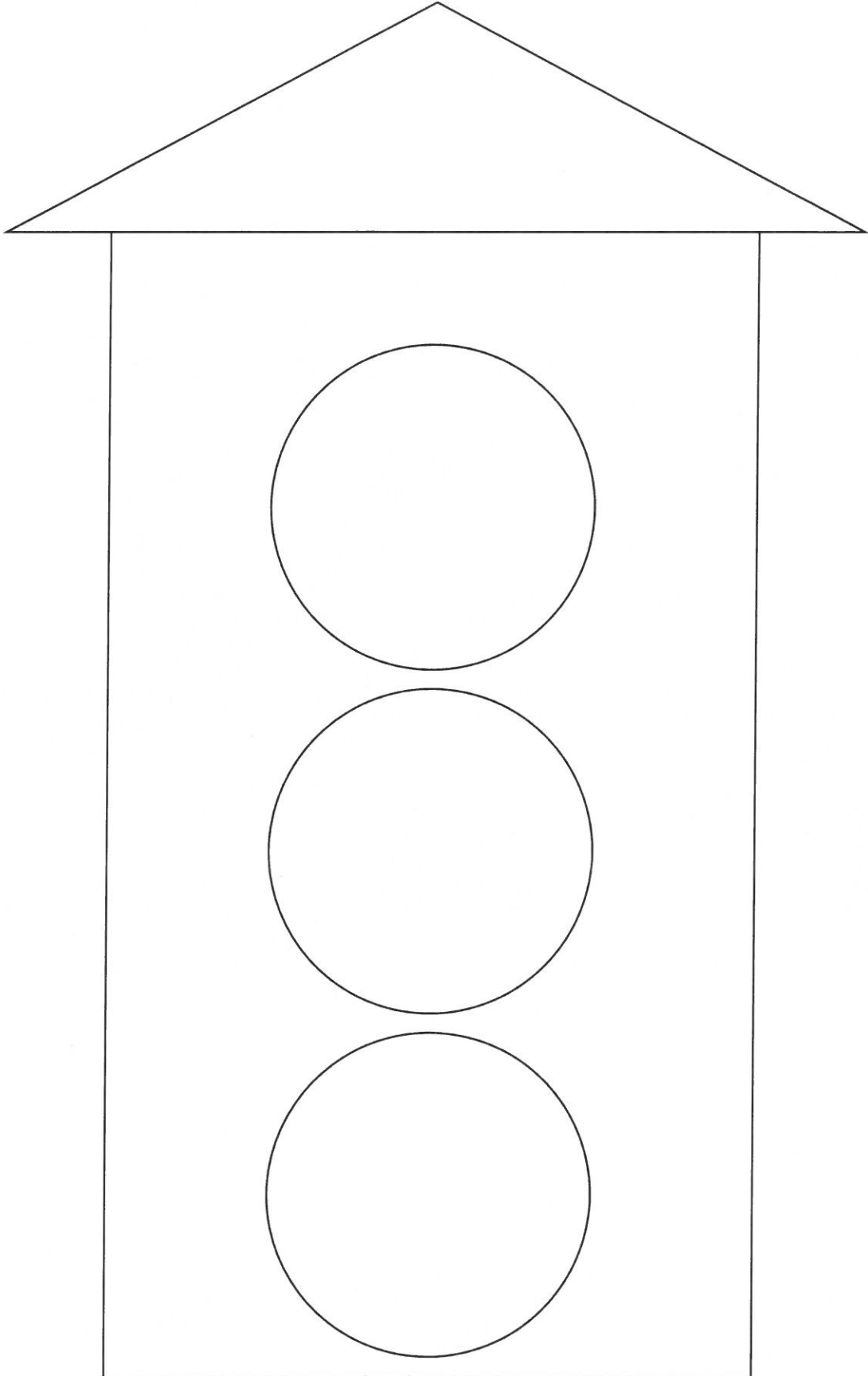
(Optional) Tell the children you will close by singing a song called "This is Holy Ground" or "Prayer for Peace" or other appropriate song.

Optional Hand Puppet Adaptation

1. *Use a hand puppet to interact with the leader and children during the lesson activity, skill introduction, and role-play introduction.*
2. *Activity Adaptation: The leader asks children to name a person who loves them and helps them to stay safe. The leader prompts the children by having the hand puppet respond appropriately. The leader affirms the hand puppet's responses.*
3. *Skill Introduction Adaptation: The leader reviews the adapted skill poster "How to Ask for Help" with the hand puppet. The hand puppet models the skill steps for the children and asks the children to practice the steps with it.*
4. *Role-Play Adaptation: Using one of the situations provided, the hand puppet role-plays the appropriate skills to use when asking for help. Children may also give their suggestions to the hand puppet as to how the hand puppet should ask for help. The leader may also have the children use the hand puppet to role-play the appropriate skills.*







Feeling Faces Chart



Embarrassed



Frustrated



Happy



Lonely



Loved



Mad



Sad



Nervous



Proud



Relaxed



Scared



Stressed

Feeling Faces Chart/No Labels





!



!

This material was developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning with federal funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (Cooperative Agreement N. PHS 90YD0119). The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial projects, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. You may reproduce this material for training and information purposes.

We welcome your feedback on this Training Module. Please go to the CSEFEL Web site (<http://csefel.uiuc.edu>) or call us at (217) 333-4123 to offer suggestions.