The Diocese of Knoxville
Office of Christian Formation

Circle of Grace

History and Purpose

Circle of Grace is the children's education component adopted by the Diocese of Knoxville. *Circle of Grace* was developed as a component of the Archdiocese of Omaha's Safe Environment training. It serves the dual purpose of educating and informing children and youth about the value of positive relationships with God and others.

Through *Circle of Grace*, adults assist children and youth to recognize that each of us lives within a *Circle of Grace* that holds our very essence in body, mind, heart, soul, and sexuality. Children and youth are taught to identify and maintain appropriate physical, emotional, spiritual, and sexual boundaries; recognize when boundary violations are about to occur; and demonstrate how to take action when boundaries are threatened or violated. *Circle of Grace* is clinically sound and grounded in the Catholic tradition. Its strong parent component means parents can actively participate in their children's education and formation.

In 2004, the traditional ***Circle of Grace*** was developed by the Archdiocese of Omaha's safe environment committee. The committee was composed of those who do direct ministry and education with youth and families.

These members included clergy, religious education, schools, youth ministry, mental health, social work, ministry coordinators and community members.

The goal of the committee was to develop a faith based and clinically sound curriculum that would meet the USCCB's Charter requirements and much more. The committee believed it was important to let God into the arena of keeping kids safe.

Early on the committee experienced the Holy Spirit guidance to be passionate about protecting our youth and honoring our Catholic Faith.

The curriculum was copyrighted in 2007 and is updated every five years.