

**CIRCLE OF GRACE**  
*Safe Environment Program*  
*Kindergarten through Grade 12*  
*"Respecting All God's People"*

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Dear Parent,

Out of concern for all God's people and in response to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*, we have a program for the safe environment education of children and young people supported and mandated by Patrick R. Cooney, Bishop of the Diocese of Gaylord.

*Dioceses/parishes will establish 'safe environment' programs. They will cooperate with parents, civil authorities, educators, and community organizations to provide education and training for children, youth, parents, ministers, educators, and others about ways to make and maintain a safe environment for children. Dioceses/parishes will make clear to clergy and members of the community the standards of conduct for clergy and other persons in positions of trust with regard to sexual abuse.*

*Article 12 – Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*

This program is called *Circle of Grace*. It is meant to supplement and be integrated into the excellent programs and curricula for the formation of children and young people in our schools and religious education programs. *Circle of Grace* aims to equip our children and young people by arming them with essential knowledge and skills grounded in the richness of our faith. This program helps children and young people to understand their own (and other's) dignity in mind, body, and spirit.

***What is a Circle of Grace?***

The Catholic Church teaches that God has created each of us as unique and special. Genesis 1:27 tells us that we are created "male and female in God's image" and that God saw this as "very good." In that goodness, we are meant to respect ourselves and everyone else as persons created and loved by God.

Adults assist children and young people to recognize God's love by helping them to understand that each of us lives and moves in a circle of grace. You can imagine your own circle of grace by putting your arms above your head then circle down in front of your body including side to side. This circle, front to back, holds who you are in your body and through your senses. It holds your very essence in mind, heart, soul, and sexuality. **Bl**

## CIRCLE OF GRACE PARENT OPT-OUT FORM

I understand that our parish or school is scheduled to present lessons from the Circle of Grace program to children in an effort to help create and maintain safe environments for children. I understand that this faith-based curriculum teaches that each person is sacred and encourages children to have greater respect for themselves and others. I am also aware that the lessons include personal safety information specifically regarding child abuse, child sexual abuse and Internet safety, and that children will receive instructions about what to do if they are harmed, or perceive potential harm, in any way by another person. Further, I have been offered the opportunity to review the materials to be presented and discuss the lessons with our parish or school.

After prayerful consideration, I have decided to exercise my right to have my child excluded from participation in the Circle of Grace lessons. I understand this "opt-out" form must be completed and returned to the parish or school before the lessons are scheduled to take place.

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish or School: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Please provide materials so that I might teach the information to my child at home.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not wish to receive any materials.