



**Diocese of Corpus Christi  
Office for Child and Youth Protection**

Dear Parent,

Your child will be offered safe environment/personal safety education in accordance with Article 12 of the *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People* which states:

“Diocese/eparchies 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.”

The *Circle of Grace Curriculum* your school is offering may consist of classroom or small group discussion as appropriate for each age group.

***Why is it important to help our children understand the importance of a safe environment and personal safety?***

God intends our relationships in life to be experiences of divine love. Respectful, nurturing, loving relationships increase our understanding of our own value and help us to love others. It is never too early to help children and young people understand how very special they are and how relationships in life are called to be sacred. Understanding this can help them to protect the special person they are and to be respectful of others. Adults, especially parents, as they strive to provide a safe and protective environment, hold the responsibility to help children and young people understand and respect their own dignity and that of others. A truly safe and protective environment is one where children and young people recognize when they are unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

Safe environment/personal safety education goes beyond just protection by helping children and young people understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help through their relationships with trusted adults. Please feel free to contact Mrs. Barnett, the elementary level counselor, or your child’s classroom teacher if you would like additional information. Should you choose to opt your child out of receiving this curriculum, please fill out the attached form and return to your child’s classroom teacher at Incarnate Word Academy Elementary Level.

**Youth Education – Personal Safety**  
**Non-Participating Children/Young People**  
*(please complete a separate form for each child declining training)*

Text

Parish or School: Incarinate Word Academy Elementary Level Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, decline to allow my child, \_\_\_\_\_  
(print name of parent/guardian) (print name of student)

to participate in the safe environment/personal safety education being offered at:

Incarinate Word Academy Elementary Level

I have been offered materials and information to conduct the training for my child.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent / Guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to child

Mrs. Barnett  
School Representative

Counselor  
Position

For parents who decline training for their child, the *Circle of Grace Parent Information Packet* can be found on the diocesan website <https://diocesecc.org/circle-of-grace>.

## *Common Questions of Parents*

**1) How is this connected to the "Safe Environment" program?**

*Circle of Grace* is the safe environment program for children/youth. The goal is to help children/youth understand the sacredness of who they are and how to seek help when needed through their relationships with trusted adults.

**2) What information can this program give my child that they are not getting already?**

The *Circle of Grace* Program reinforces in a peer setting that their faith community cares about their safety and wants them to understand how to seek help if they feel unsafe for any reason. It will help them identify potentially unsafe situations and know how to handle them by seeking help from trusted adults.

**3) You indicate that this program will provide them with "life skills", what do you mean by this?**

It reinforces that they are valued by God and others. It gives them information on boundaries and practical directives of what to do if someone makes them feel uncomfortable when in their *Circle of Grace*. It is a good foundation for healthy relationships that will help them throughout their lives.

**4) Will this program be age appropriate?**

Yes! The lessons were written with great attention to the stages of child development.

**5) How can parents support what is being taught in the program?**

Parents will receive parent letters as well as take home activities for several of the lessons to do with their children. Talking with your children about the *Circle of Grace* at home will help your children to understand the importance of the lessons and that the lessons apply everywhere, not just at school. Additionally, you are your child's most important teacher in the area of relationships. Much of what your child will learn and later imitate about relationships comes from what they learn by your example. Creating an atmosphere where they know that they can talk to you about anything provides a valuable safety net for your child because they know they have you to turn to whenever they have a concern.

**6) Is there accountability attached to this program implementation?**

Yes! There will be an ongoing evaluation of the program to ensure its effectiveness and to incorporate any suggestions that would improve the quality of the program.

**7) Will there be resources (people and material) available if I have questions?**

Yes! There will be a parent packet given to all parents that includes contact numbers.

**8) Shouldn't parents be the ones teaching their children about sexuality?**

Absolutely! This is NOT a sex education program. *Circle of Grace* will provide children with a sound understanding of their own value and of God's care and presence in their lives. It will also help them notice the signals that tell them when they do not feel safe and how to talk to a trusted adult. All of this will be a good foundation for healthy relationships. However, this is not a sexuality education program. Many parents will appreciate that this program will provide a spiritual framework that will allow parent-child communication about the value of all that they are, including their sexuality. Those conversations are most effective between parent and child. There are grade specific Parents First newsletters to assist you in these conversations.

**9) Is this a mandatory program for my child?**

The United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) developed the Charter for Protection of Children and Young People. Article 12 of this document states that each Diocese will have a safe environment program for adults and children/youth. If you have questions or concerns about your child participating in the *Circle of Grace* Program, please contact your Director of Religious Education, Principal, etc.