

## **St. Ann Catholic Church**

Dear Parent,

The Archdiocese of Indianapolis has implemented the Circle of Grace Program to all of our children attending faith formation classes and who are attending our schools. They researched numerous programs to find one that would best supplement the excellent programs we have already in place. Circle of Grace will not be replacing any of our outstanding programs. Our Safe and Sacred program has assisted the adults in our parishes and schools who work with our children to be mindful of boundaries and has provided education on possible situations that could present an unsafe environment for children. The Circle of Grace program will be assisting our young people with education and guidance on appropriate boundaries, self-respect and respect for others. This program encourages healthy relationships and teaches our children that God is always present with us.

### **Why is it important to help our children understand the Circle of Grace?**

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 safe or unsafe and know how to bring their concerns, fears, and uncertainties to the trusted adults in their lives.

### **How is the Circle of Grace Program different from other protection programs?**

According to research, one in four girls and one in seven boys will be sexually abused by age eighteen. Many protection programs focus on "stranger danger"; however, up to ninety percent of the time the perpetrator of abuse is known to the child or young person such as a relative or family friend. Circle of Grace 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.

If you have any questions regarding the Circle of Grace Program please contact me at the parish office.

God bless you and your family,

Kelly O'Brien

Coordinator of Religious Education