



## DIOCESE OF FALL RIVER

### Guidance on Implementing Circle of Grace for 2020-2021

We recognize that this year has brought a multitude of challenges in delivering Faith Formation to students. With that in mind, this is intended to provide some concrete guidance on how to implement Circle of Grace with students this year. Last year, most of our students enrolled in Faith Formation throughout the Diocese did not receive any safe environment training, largely due to the COVID shutdown. With the stress that children and families are under this year, it is as important as ever to deliver this content. This guidance was developed after consultation with the Circle of Grace developers as well as input from some of you. Please reach out to Carolyn Shipp at the Office of Safe Environment ([cshipp@dioc-fr.org](mailto:cshipp@dioc-fr.org); 508-985-6508) with questions and concerns.

Consider the following a “hierarchy” of recommendations for implementing Circle of Grace this year:

1. Taught in-person by catechist whom the student has been with this year. Circle of Grace is designed to be taught by someone with whom the students are already comfortable.
2. Taught in-person by someone else affiliated with the parish (DRE, another catechist who has experience with the material).
3. Taught in a live virtual environment such as Zoom (keeping in mind the Rule of Two).
4. Taught through parent packets. This option should only be utilized if the parish is not doing any live Faith Formation. Contact Carolyn Shipp for more information.

We know one of the biggest challenges with implementing the curriculum, especially this year, is the limited time available with students as well as limited number of catechists comfortable with the material. Some options to assist with these challenges:

1. Combine separate lessons into the same day so it can be completed in one session.
2. Combine similar age classes (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade) and pick EITHER set of lessons so that catechists can team up and/or a catechist with more experience can take the lead.
3. Have someone who is comfortable with the material (DRE, experienced catechist) provide the introduction lesson and then catechists can lead the activities.
4. For middle school and high school, pick ONE of the alternative lessons to do in place of the standard lessons. Circle of Grace has approved these lessons as alternative options. For example, 9<sup>th</sup> grade has four lessons. In a normal year, this could be done in a retreat setting or in multiple regular sessions. With the time constraints this year, instead of doing those FOUR lessons, ONE alternative lesson can be chosen and will replace all four traditional lessons.

If you or your catechists are in need of more training, we have video files of Mary Beth Hanus, from Circle of Grace, conducting training at a parish. They are available on the Catechetical Leaders Resource tab of the Faith Formation webpage.