

# *Circle of Grace*

## *What is Your Motto?*

### *High School Alternate Lesson*

*Sometimes young people reveal personal information or details about incidents that, in order to respect confidentiality, need to be handled outside of the group environment. If this happens, tell the young person, "Thank you for sharing that, \_\_\_\_\_. That sounds really important. I will talk to you about that later (at the end of class, at the break, as soon as humanly possible, etc.)." When this happens, be sure you talk to the young person at your first opportunity and alert the administration. Remember that you are the responsible reporter in cases of suspected abuse.*

#### **This lesson complements the following Catholic teachings:**

- Church teaching revealed in the Creed applies in our daily lives
- Human relationships are intended to be experiences of Divine Love
- Personal covenant with God
- Live responsibly as fully initiated members of the Church
- Discipleship is our call to holiness
- The relationship between the love of God, our love of self and our love of others
- The image of God is in ourselves and others

#### **Lesson Objective**

##### **Young People will be able to:**

1. Identify and understand key Catholic beliefs/mottos and the beliefs/mottos that popular culture wants youth to believe
2. Recognize the key elements of how to discern when a belief/motto is consistent with our Catholic teaching
3. Understand the connection one's motto has with the *Circle of Grace*
4. Recognize that living one's Christian beliefs/mottos reflect the true person
5. Recognize ways they are pressured to ignore Catholic beliefs/mottos
6. Know appropriate responses when they are confronted with inappropriate messages/interactions of popular culture

#### **Materials Needed**

1. Index Cards for the Opening Activity
2. Whiteboard or chalkboard
3. Art supplies, newsprint/poster board for the Closing Activity
4. Approved magazines for the Closing Activity

## Opening Prayer:

**God,**  
**We ask for Your guidance and a little more:**  
**guidance in relationships,**  
**guidance in decisions,**  
**guidance in love,**  
**and guidance in worshiping You.**  
**Amen.**

## Getting Started

Today we are going to talk about mottos.

You may be asking yourself “What is a motto and how does it fit into my *Circle of Grace*?”

The Farlex Dictionary defines a motto as:

1. A brief statement used to express a principle, goal, or ideal.
2. A sentence, phrase, or word of appropriate character inscribed on or attached to an object.
3. A maxim adopted as a guide to one's conduct.
4. A short saying expressing the guiding maxim or ideal of a family, organization, etc

*Write these definitions on the board.*

Our first activity will help us discuss this connection with the motto we follow and our *Circle of Grace*.

### Opening Activity: Name that Motto

1. *Divide the youth into two groups.*
2. *Each group will come up with 5-10 mottos that are faith based and 5-10 mottos that come from popular culture. The mottos can be positive or negative.*
3. *Groups will take turns presenting a motto to the opposing group. One hearing the motto will have to decide...*
  - *If it is a faith based or culture based motto. If they are correct they will get one point.*
  - *Where the motto came from. If they guess this correctly they will get two points.*
4. *Each group is to alternate presenting mottos to the opposing group. The leader will be the final judge in any disagreement regarding the mottos.*
5. *The points are tallied up to determine the winner.*

*Example 1: Motto - “The Lord is my Shepherd; there is nothing I shall want”. It is a faith based motto and comes from the book of Psalms in the Bible.*

*Example 2: Motto - “May the force be with you!” It is a popular motto that comes from the Star War series.*

### **Large Group Discussion:**

Mottos can also be described as an overall theme. Do you think people have mottos that they live by? Does a motto have a place in our everyday lives? Do people have mottos/themes that they are unaware of? Remember mottos can be positive or negative!

*Allow for a few responses. Write them on the board.*

Let's discuss the Opening Activity.

We are called to follow Jesus, so the theme/motto in our lives should be consistent with His teaching. The opening activity shows us mottos that are faith based and mottos that come from popular culture.

To which ones do we pay attention? How do these impact one's life?

Example: Popular culture motto- "You need to have a perfect body to be desirable and happy".

If one believed this motto, how would one live his/her life? Do you think someone would believe this motto but not realize the impact it has on his/her life?

*Allow for a few responses. Prompt youth to identify key responses:*

1. *Always dieting*
2. *Obsessed about going to the gym*
3. *Compare themselves to celebrities*
4. *Desire to have surgery to alter appearance.*

Example: Faith motto - "God is love and His goodness is always present, especially during difficult times." If one believed this motto, how would one live his/her life?

*Allow for a few responses. Prompt youth to identify key responses:*

1. *Desire to have a relationship with God*
2. *Participate in the sacraments*
3. *Call on God in difficult times*
4. *Ask others for prayers and offer to pray for others in their time of need.*

*Encourage other examples of positive and negative faith based and culture based mottos. Write all responses on the board.*

### **Review**

*It is important that that young people understand the relationship between the Circle of Virtue and the Circle of Grace. The Circle of Grace is always present and never leaves us. Our Circle of Virtue is our response to our Circle of Grace and can change due to our free will.*

**Circle of Grace:** The love and goodness of God that always surrounds us.

**Circle of Virtue:** Our response to the invitation of God's grace by cultivating goodness and virtue in our lives.

**Motto/Theme:** A maxim adopted as a guide to one's conduct. This motto can be derived from our Catholic or popular culture.

1. **Circle of Grace:** God's presence always; the in - dwelling and out - dwelling of the Holy Spirit.
2. **Circle of Virtue:** Our positive response to God's Grace - this response springs from an intimate relationship with God.
3. **Motto:** We develop or adopt mottos/themes sometimes to help make sense of our lives.

We need to discern if our motto/theme is healthy or not. Unhealthy mottos may lead us into unsafe/uncomfortable situations. Healthy mottos are consistent with our faith's teaching. They usually bring a sense of comfort and peace.

### **Closing Activity - "Motto" Micro Blog Infomercial**

1. *Divide the class into two to four groups depending on size.*
2. *Each group will be asked to write a micro blog of 280 characters or less onto a poster.*
3. *The micro blog should be about a positive faith motto or expose a negative culture motto.*
4. *Each group will then make a infomercial advertising their micro blog/motto. They can accomplish this by putting the blog on a poster, as a poem, rap or other musical forms as part of their infomercial presentation.*
5. *Bring the groups back together to present their micro blog advertisements.*
6. *Ask the youth to give their impressions of the activity. Have the group vote on their favorite. Consider presenting it to the principal to be displayed or performed for the school. With parental consent, it could be filmed for sharing purposes.*

**Final Discussion - What are some ways a young person can seek help if they are pressured to take on a motto/theme that would violate personal boundaries?** *Give the youth a chance to respond to the question. Write the responses on the board. Prompt the following responses.*

- Listen to your gut, it is the Holy Spirit prompting you that something is wrong. Learn to recognize the settings and interactions that can get you into uncomfortable situations.
- When someone pressures you, try to take yourself out of the situation. *Encourage youth to list possible ways to remove themselves from the situation.*
- You can free yourself from unhealthy relationships or mottos/themes by seeking help from a trusted adult.
- Tell someone who can help you. Talk to someone you trust – parent, professional, counselor, or other trusted adults.

**Closing Prayer:**

**God help me slow down  
and be present to Your everlasting love.  
Help me have REAL conversations with You  
that guide and heal my the brokenness.  
Cultivate in my heart Your truth  
and help me respond to Your Grace.  
Give me courage to reject the lie  
that You are a "distant" God.  
Bless me with the gift of discernment,  
knowing Your compassion and love is not relative  
but eternal.  
Your greatest desire from me  
is my sincere "yes".**

**Amen**

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