



INFLUENCING Grandchildren



HomeLife

Building your family's faith at home

— **Guides** —

INFLUENCING GRANDCHILDREN

You are not called “grandparent” because you have been retired from the parenting process. You are called “grand” because you have been promoted! Those blessed with the gift of grandchildren are called to inspire and nurture the faith of the next generation as life’s greatest privilege and priority.

> *Grandparents in the 21st century face a mix of new opportunities and challenges. Extended life expectancy has dramatically changed the length and look of the empty nest years. Many grandparents now have greater opportunities for work and travel. Tight-knit family relationships have increasingly given way to family members spread over wide geographic distances. Some grandparents face the challenge of getting time with grandchildren because of divorce. A growing number of grandparents have watched circumstances drive them to take primary responsibility for raising their grandchildren.*

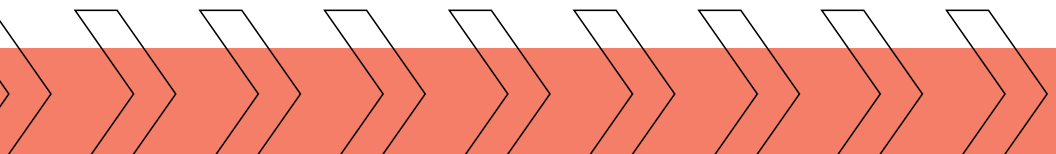
In this context, it's become less clear what role grandparents can best play. They are not just a good source for gifts and free babysitting.

What’s the most important thing a grandparent can do?

STEP 1

Be There for Them

A grandparent’s first priority is to “be there” one way or another. For the active grandparents whom *The Wall Street Journal* has described as having a full slate of work and travel, it means stopping to remember how much you depended on grandparents when you were younger – and knowing how critical your presence is. For others, “being there” means taking on the challenge posed by miles or strained



relationships that might be keeping you from your grandchildren. Technology solutions such as video chatting have helped some grandparents close the gap.

Being there gives you the opportunity to show the kind of unconditional love that even parents can struggle to maintain on a consistent basis. It gives you a chance to tell the family story – the people, places and plot twists that have made your family distinct. Being there also allows you to teach things that parents may not have found time for – how to skip a rock, how to build and fly a kite, how to make fudge, and other priceless lessons.

STEP 2

Nurture Their Faith

Most importantly, being there and making memories with your grandchildren gives you the opportunity to impress your faith on them. Psalm 78:5–7 (NIV) presents a concept of extended spiritual heritage:

He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.

Nothing you can give as a grandparent is more valuable than your spiritual legacy. Your gifts, time, games, food and other contributions find their primary value when they are offered in the context of a spiritual heritage. So be very intentional about creating opportunities to nurture faith during the years your grandchildren are receptive to your influence.

Going Further Resources

Extreme Grandparenting by Ted Kimmel and Darcy Kimmel

// Offers timeless and tested principles for grandparenting in the 21st century

It Starts at Home by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope //

Gives grandparents practical suggestions for influencing the faith of their grandchildren

Power of a Praying Grandparent by Stormie Omartian

// Offers powerful suggestions for prayer covering your grandchildren, yourself and your grandchildren's parents

Going Further Prestonwood Support

LifeGroups

Through our LifeGroup Bible Studies, every person who comes to Prestonwood is provided an opportunity to build key relationships that can last a lifetime. LifeGroups will help you to be renewed in your faith, to realize your purpose in life, and to relate with others in a similar stage of life. For more information, visit prestonwood.org/groups.

For additional resources, scan code:



Dr. Jack Graham, Senior Pastor
972-820-5000 | prestonwood.org/homelife