

INFLUENCING GRANDCHILDREN

GOING FURTHER - RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED BOOKS AVAILABLE FROM THE FAITH @ HOME CENTER

▶ ***Extreme Grandparenting*** (by Tim Kimmel and Darcy Kimmel). Are you ready to take grandparenting to the next level? This book offers timeless and tested principles for grandparenting in the twenty-first century.

▶ ***It Starts At Home*** (by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope) gives grandparents practical suggestions for influencing the faith of their grandchildren.

GOING FURTHER - CHURCH SUPPORT

▶ ***Life Group Ministry:*** Authentic Christian community and mentoring is available through Riverview's Life Group ministry. Contact our Life Groups pastor Michael Beene at Michael@rbclake.org for more info.

▶ ***Pastoral Counseling:*** Pastors are available to counsel those who would like more Godly wisdom on this issue. Please call the church office for more info: 573-348-3515

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Grandparents in the 21st century face for 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. Are they just a good source for gifts and free babysitting? What's the most important thing a grandparent can do?

STEP ONE: *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 TWO: *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 presents a concept of extended spiritual heritage:

He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers 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 (Psalm 78:5-7).

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.

Here are only a few simple ideas you can put into action:

- Pray with your grandchildren whenever you can.
- Read Bible stories with your grandchildren and explain to them why they are important to you.
- Share with them what God has done for you and things He is teaching you.
- Write them hand-written letters—today children rarely get mail, and almost never receive hand-written letters.
- When you watch movies, play games together, or do fun activities... consider ways to bring God into the moment by speaking about Him, praying, or reflecting on His creation.