

## GOING FURTHER

### VALLEYDALE SUPPORT

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#### Life Groups

Valleydale offers a variety of Adult Life Groups that offer support. For more information go to [www.valleydale.org/lifegroups](http://www.valleydale.org/lifegroups) and click on the “Find a Life Group” link or stop by the Next Steps Desk in the lobby to learn which group might be a fit for you.

#### Faith Path

Valleydale’s age group ministries offer a partnership with the home to equip families to do home discipleship. For grandparents seeking to influence the faith of their grandkids, this is an important tool to make you aware of how you can partner with the age group ministries of the church. For more information, contact the following based on the ages of your grandchildren.

- Birth - Kindergarten – [hbraswell@valleydale.org](mailto:hbraswell@valleydale.org)
- 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> Grade – [jwillis@valleydale.org](mailto:jwillis@valleydale.org)
- 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grade – [jknierim@valleydale.org](mailto:jknierim@valleydale.org)
- College – [bmallette@valleydale.org](mailto:bmallette@valleydale.org)

#### Counseling

Valleydale provides onsite, Christ-centered professional counseling. Both male and female counselors are available. Counseling is offered for adults, teens and children. All counseling is confidential. For more information, visit [www.valleydale.org/counseling](http://www.valleydale.org/counseling) or call 205.991.5282.

For more  
resources, visit  
[valleydale.org/family](http://valleydale.org/family)  
OR  
visit our resource  
center in the  
lobby

## *Influencing*

# GRANDCHILDREN

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# INFLUENCING GRANDCHILDREN

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**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 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 78:5-7 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.*

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.

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### RESOURCES

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*Extreme Grandparenting* by Ted Kimmel and Darcy Kimmel  
*Timeless and tested principles for grandparenting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.*

*It Starts at Home* by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope  
*Practical suggestions for influencing the faith of grandchildren.*

*Power of a Praying Grandparent* by Stormie Omartian  
*Powerful suggestions for prayer covering your grandchildren, yourself and your grandchildren's parents.*