

GRIEVING:
DEATH,
DIVORCE,
SEPARATION,
CHANGE



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.

GOING FURTHER RESOURCES

WHEN GOD DOESN'T MAKE SENSE by Dr. James Dobson

An excellent resource for those who feel betrayed by a good God who allows suffering in our lives.

SOMEONE I LOVE DIED by Christine Harder Tangvald

WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN: A GUIDE TO HELP KIDS COPE by Ted O'Neal and R.W. Alley

Can help parents comfort young children through the process of grief.

PRAYING THROUGH CANCER by Susan Sorenson and Laura Geist

A 90-day devotional for women battling cancer or have a friend or family member who is battling with the disease – a collection of stories by women who have faced cancer and, with triumphant spirits found comfort & sometimes even joy in the midst of it.

LET ME GRIEVE, BUT NOT FOREVER by Verdel Davis

Offers a source of hope and healing of anyone experiencing grief.

GOING FURTHER SUPPORT

GRIEFSHARE

If you have lost a loved one, you may feel people don't understand your pain and suffering. Although this is a confusing and challenging time, GriefShare provides a safe place to join a group of others who understand the emotions you're enduring. You don't have to suffer through the grieving process alone. For more info, email griefshare@hcbc.com

COUNSELING AT HILL COUNTRY

Hill Country Bible Church has the vision to offer professional counseling along with excellent pastoral care to help those in need find an anchor to weather the storms of life. Life's burdens can be so heavy to carry at times, and we find ourselves needing support and guidance. As a ministry of Hill Country Bible Church, we want to come alongside you in your time of need and embrace the power of community on the road of healing. For more information, please visit hcbc.com/counseling

SMALL GROUPS

Hill Country believes that we are better together and we need one another to continually grow, learn, and mature in Christ through all stages of life. We build that community through small groups. For more info and to get connected, visit hcbc.com/groups