

A legacy for your grandchildren

(Taken from *Complete Guide to Family Health, Nutrition & Fitness*)

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Are you a love-struck grandparent? What an incredible gift it is to help your grown children see their offspring through your eyes. When Grandma's face lights up the instant Jenna toddles through the front door, it helps Mom remember why she became a mommy in the first place. When Grandpa values playing with Travis more than watching a football game, it helps Dad renew his commitment to being a good father. When grandparents regard these little ones with perpetual awe and wonder rather than seeing them as a source of nonstop responsibility, they are blessing two generations at once.

As an older adult, you have an opportunity to make (or continue making) a spiritual investment in your children and grandchildren. Perhaps when your children were younger, your faith was nonexistent or not sufficiently mature for you to provide much spiritual guidance for your kids. It is not too late for you to have heart-to-heart conversations with your grown children about your faith and its importance to you. You might even surprise them by having a candid conversation in which you attempt to make amends for your shortcomings as a parent.

By the way, here's an important piece of advice about *giving* advice: If you are not in complete agreement with the way your grown children are raising your grandchildren, spiritually or otherwise, be careful about the way you broach the subject, especially with a daughter-in-law or son-in-law. Remember, they have the final say and responsibility for the way their children are reared, and your duty in nearly every situation is to abide by their decisions.

The exception to this guideline, of course, is when an irresponsible parent's behavior or neglect exposes your grandchildren to harm. Otherwise, you can offer advice if asked and work at building a relationship in which you can compare notes and share the benefits of your parenting experience. Suggestions that are presented as opinions or observations are more likely to be welcomed than grand pronouncements.

You also have the opportunity to communicate a legacy of faith to a new generation by example. Pray for your children and their children daily. The positive impact of that time logged in conversation with God on their behalf may ultimately be more profound than any advice or gift you'll ever bestow.