



# HOW TO BE A “GREAT” GRANDPARENT

Personal Workbook



## INTRODUCTION

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Being a grandparent can be one of the most fun, exciting, and meaningful roles you ever play in your life.

You can create a legacy in future generations and improve your life at the same time. It works best when you partner with your kids (share this material with them!) and support how they are raising their family.

Use the acronym “G-R-E-A-T” to help you remember the steps to becoming a GREAT grandparent!

- **Goals and Boundaries** – Being proactive in making a positive impact.
- **Relationships** – Building a trusted connection of help, healing, and hope.
- **Example** – Being the best grandparent and the best person we can be.
- **Activities** – Creating enjoyable experiences that foster growth.
- **Teaching** – Sharing life, wisdom, and God with our grandkids.



## GETTING STARTED

### GETTING INTO THE GRANDPARENTING ROLE

**GRANDPARENTING GIVES US RENEWED PURPOSE TO CHANGE LIVES. BEING GREAT AT THAT MUCH-NEEDED ROLE INCLUDES INVESTING THE TIME TO MAKE AN IMPACT AND DEVELOPING THE PERSPECTIVE TO BE THE BEST PERSON AND THE BEST GRANDPARENT WE CAN BE.**

We now have a unique responsibility to mentor our grandkids and help build a positive legacy in future generations. We can support our own kids who are now parents themselves. And we can use this stage to improve our own lives and finish our journey strong.

Commit to be the best grandparent you can be knowing that GREAT grandparenting is about who you are and how much you care.

#### **GRANDPARENTING WITH GRACE AND TRUTH**

Grandparenting begins with a mindset about what our role should be all about.

GREAT grandparenting should be infused with grace as we love our grandkids unconditionally rather than expecting them to earn our affection. We recognize we aren't perfect, but God shows us grace, and that sets a wonderful example we can model for them.

Grandparents should represent truth, good morals, and Biblical values through our example and gentle teaching. Our job is not to lecture, discipline, or critique our grandkids, but we should have a proactive plan in mind for how we can impact them positively.

The key is to look for balance in how we represent grace and truth. Much of the time, that involves accepting with serenity things we cannot change and focusing on loving encouragement, and we are called to take the initiative to help support our family.



## GETTING STARTED

### GETTING INTO THE GRANDPARENTING ROLE

#### WHAT IS GREAT GRANDPARENTING?

By looking at what GREAT parents do, grandparents can develop ideas for how to be supportive in these areas:

- **Goals and Boundaries** – Grandparents should focus on a few key goals such as helping their grandkids feel good about themselves and form a positive relationship with God and others, and they should bless them with love and boundaries.
- **Relationship** – This is a key foundational area where grandparents should devote much of their attention. We need to focus on improving our communication, listening more than talking, and building positive connection with our grandkids.
- **Example** – This is the other foundational area for grandparents. Here, we focus on being the best person we can be to model the way for our grandkids. This includes modeling positive emotional behaviors in a real, vulnerable manner.
- **Activities** – Grandparents should have fun with their grandkids just being with them. We also build good memories by scheduling activities that also allow for interaction, learning, and growth and by celebrating milestones in their lives.
- **Teaching** – We want to ask questions so grandkids learn for themselves and share stories about life, including God's grace when we made mistakes. By being trustworthy, we earn opportunities to share wisdom when our grandkids ask us questions.



## GOALS AND BOUNDARIES

### BEING PROACTIVE IN MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

THIS SECTION OF “HOW TO BE A GREAT GRANDPARENT” OFFERS IDEAS FOR GOALS RELATED TO YOUR GRANDKIDS AND YOUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING FAMILY BOUNDARIES.

Grandparents can be more effective in having an impact on their grandkids if they have a few goals in mind along the way. But in this step, you don't need to actually do anything, just consider the big picture and priorities of your grandparenting role.

Think about the type of positive influence you want to have in your grandkids' lives—spiritually, emotionally, mentally, socially, and personally. Later in this series, you can apply the priorities and goals you choose to the other areas of being a GREAT grandparent related to relationship, example, activities, and teaching.

An exercise that can help is to consider the notion of blessing your grandkids and think about the most important things they need to hear and learn.

#### THE POWER OF BLESSING YOUR GRANDKIDS

In the Bible, when a person is blessed, it is a sign of God's grace and presence. It includes attaching high value to the one being blessed and picturing a special future for him or her by saying things such as:

- **“You have great value** – You are a blessing to me. You have wonderful gifts, and you are a good person. I love you, and I am proud of you.”
- **“You have a good future** – You are designed in a special way, and there is a plan for you. I give you my blessings of protection, hope, and faith.”

We should encourage our grandchildren spiritually as well as emotionally, mentally, socially, and personally. Blessing them helps them establish healthy feelings of self-worth, increase their personal faith, and develop resilience for handling life.

We can also bless them by supporting boundaries their parents set. Our role is not discipline or correction as that is the parents' job. But we can let them know we will go along with their parents' boundaries and that we will always expect kindness, obedience, and respect from them.



## GOALS AND BOUNDARIES

### BEING PROACTIVE IN MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT

#### WHAT EVERY KID NEEDS TO LEARN FROM THEIR GRANDPARENTS

It helps grandparents be intentional if we think about goals to help our grandkids grow up in a happy, healthy manner. Here are some suggested examples of goals to consider:

- **Help them form a relationship with God** – Kids form their views of God from authority figures in their life. You're teaching them about God all the time whether you know it or not. Let your grandkids hear things like: "God loves you, you have great value, and you have a good future."
- **Help them be comfortable with themselves** – Help your grandkids feel good about themselves. Explain that everyone has issues so that they don't feel different when they do. Make sure they hear: "It's okay not to be okay sometimes, you're never alone, and we're here to help."
- **Model how to have good relationships** – Your role includes setting a good example for them, and your interactions and relationships teach them about connection. Some things to consider are to always be there for them when they need you, model empathy, and communicate effectively.
- **Teach them that life has boundaries** – Look for gentle ways to equip them to understand how real life works. Ideas to consider include helping them develop their emotional intelligence, equipping them to deal with their emotions, and asking questions to help them learn to make good choices.

With good goals and boundaries, you're on the way to being a GREAT grandparent.



## RELATIONSHIPS

### BUILDING A TRUSTED CONNECTION OF HELP, HEALING, AND HOPE.

**THE STEP OF "RELATIONSHIP" IS A CRITICAL PART OF "HOW TO BE A GREAT GRANDPARENT," AND IT INVOLVES AN INVESTMENT OF TIME AND GOOD COMMUNICATION.**

For grandparents to have a positive impact on their grandkids, they need to build an enjoyable and trusted relationship with them. This won't happen overnight but through a consistent and sustained connection over time.

With that relationship in place, grandparents can share wonderful things with their grandkids. They can offer help (practical life advice), healing (encouragement when grandkids are troubled), and hope (positive assurance of a good future).

This relationship may change as kids grow up, so grandparents should be willing to change as well, especially to stay connected in the teenage years. At every stage, good family relationships are built on effective communication, so it helps when grandparents are willing to work on improving their communication.

#### **HOW GRANDPARENTS CONNECT WITH THEIR GRANDKIDS**

Kids change, especially in the teen years, so how we communicate with them should change too. Parents and grandparents need to understand this change is normal, and the good news is there are things we can do to stay connected to them. Here are some examples of how we can connect:

- **Invest time in their well-being** – One of the best contributions we can make to our grandkids' well-being is the amount of time we spend with them. Quality time with our kids comes from the quantity of time we have with them, and much of it happens simply by having fun together.
- **Seek to understand their world** – Teenagers experience life differently than adults. It helps when we try to understand the issues they are facing and strive to see their world through their eyes. It pays off if we keep trying patiently to get them to talk about what's going on in their life.
- **Strive toward deeper community** – Developing community includes connection plus relationship, belonging, and love. Listening enhances relationship, and being vulnerable helps grandkids feel a sense of belonging, but the deepest community is when we show unconditional love for them.
- **Earn and keep their trust** – Grandparents earn trust with their character and relationship, and being there for our grandkids means being available, aware, and helpful. Over time, deeper levels of trust come when we remain authentic, consistent, compassionate, and safe.



## RELATIONSHIPS

### BUILDING A TRUSTED CONNECTION OF HELP, HEALING, AND HOPE.

#### 10 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Communication is critical in a family, but most of us make mistakes and have blind spots in how we interact with others. Here are 10 ways to communicate effectively and improve family relationships:

1. **Use the Golden Rule** – Speak to other people the way you would like them to speak to you.
2. **Watch your tone** – Recognize a lot is conveyed in your tone, expression, and body language.
3. **Control the tongue** – Ensure the things you say will build up the person you are talking to.
4. **Focus on clarity** – Speak plainly and ensure others understand what you are trying to say.
5. **If all else fails, ask** – If needed, ask for clarification or confirm understanding with others.
6. **Be a good listener**– Make eye contact and listen closely versus talking too much of the time.
7. **Be real** – Be open, honest, and transparent as being vulnerable is an effective way to connect.
8. **Earn trust** – Trust is built with consistency, being honest, and doing what you say you will do.
9. **Give other people a break**– When people make mistakes, don't worry about it and move on.
10. **Communicate without words** – Connect through a look, touch, time together, and service.

We all have communication blind spots, but we can get better if we work at it, and we can improve our family relationships one step at a time. This gives us a foundation to connect with our grandkids in even deeper ways, and this can be one of the most enjoyable aspects of being a grandparent.



## EXAMPLE

### BEING THE BEST GRANDPARENT AND THE BEST PERSON WE CAN BE.

**GRANDKIDS LEARN MANY LIFE LESSONS BY COPYING THE EXAMPLE SET BY THE GROWNUPS AROUND THEM.**

GREAT grandparents are aware of this and seek to model a positive example for their family. This starts by understanding that to be the best grandparent and parent they can be, they should first focus on being the best person they can be.

They also understand the importance of authenticity. Kids spot fake behavior and trust grownups who are real. GREAT grandparents represent both integrity and vulnerability. They let grandkids see that everyone has imperfections, and that’s okay. This sets an example of grace and helps grandkids become comfortable in their identity.

Grandparents can embody concepts from the Goals and Boundaries section by setting an Example and Teaching life-improving principles. They can model the way for grandkids by embracing positive life behaviors that enhance emotional well-being.

#### **EMBRACE WHAT EVERY GROWNUP NEEDS TO HEAR**

The best way to serve as an authentic example is by being real about our own life even as we work to improve it. And to recognize that to be the best grandparent we can be, we need to be the best person we can be.

There are important messages we all yearn to hear in our life which can help us become a whole person who uses our heart, soul, mind, and strength to grow closer to God, improve our life, and help prevent issues and problems. These principles help us find hope for the future, peace with the past, and joy in the present.

Here are messages that increase our own wellness and set a positive example for others:

- **Your heart:** Understanding it’s okay not to be okay – “It IS okay not to be okay sometimes, you can always talk to God, and it’s helps to talk to other people.”
- **Your soul:** Hearing the words you yearn for – We all deeply need to hear the messages: “You are loved, you have great value, and you have a good future.”
- **Your mind:** Being responsible for your choices – “God sets boundaries for our lives, you are responsible for your choices, and God will forgive you if you ask.”
- **Your strength:** Living well no matter what – “You will have challenges and disappointments and life will not be as comfortable or predictable as you may want, but you can find great meaning, purpose, and joy even in the midst of your trials.”

The most important message every grownup—and kid—needs to hear and believe is: “God is good, he loves you, and he is in control.” If you set an example by embracing these truths, your life will be better, and you will help your grandkids improve their lives as well.





## EXAMPLE

### BEING THE BEST GRANDPARENT AND THE BEST PERSON WE CAN BE.

#### ENHANCE YOUR GRANDKIDS' EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

There are behavior traits that influence how people experience life and make choices—good or bad. By encouraging positive behaviors and discouraging negative ones, parents and grandparents can help kids develop in a healthy and happy manner.

This proactive approach helps kids establish a healthy self-image and lifestyle and be protected against issues they will face. Over time, even when they're adults, these behaviors will enhance their resilience, serenity, and emotional well-being.

If grandparents model these behaviors, they set a great example for grandkids:

1. Be thankful rather than feel entitled.
2. Enjoy life more by worrying less.
3. Adopt humility rather than pride.
4. Develop a healthy self-awareness.
5. Choose acceptance over resentment
6. Connect with others to avoid isolation.
7. Make good choices with less impulsivity
8. Handle stress effectively.
9. Become more self-secure.
10. Cope with feelings of depression.

Grandparents and parents should realize that in some cases there may be medical or psychological factors involved with kids. Traumatic situations, family disruption, or the wrong friends can also influence someone toward harmful behaviors. If your kids are moving down the path toward issues, reach out to others for help earlier than later.



## ACTIVITIES

### CREATING ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES THAT FOSTER GROWTH

#### ONE OF THE BEST PARTS OF GRANDPARENTING IS SIMPLY DOING STUFF WITH THE GRANDKIDS.

The time we spend with them should be fun, but it can also shape and mold them for the future. We can support that process by planning some good activities.

Doing things to help grandkids celebrate milestones like birthdays, a new grade, and holidays is a start. Look for activities with the potential to create memories. And don't forget good times can happen in the small moments of just being together.

Think about creating new and interesting experiences for grandkids. Encourage them to be active and expand their mind, exercise their body, and draw on their spirit. These types of activities can be fun and help them grow as a person as well.

Look for positive activities the grandkids like to do that also bring them satisfaction and help them learn about life in some way. Then you're not only having fun together, you're also helping them become the person they are meant to be.

#### THE DOWNSIDE OF DOWNTIME

Everyone needs downtime—as long as there's a balance of good activities as well.

There are reasons to be wary of too much downtime, including the fact that young people face more temptations and risks these days including:

- Negative influences on television and the internet.
- Social media that relentlessly consumes their focus.
- Social pressure and temptations via their cell phone.
- Drugs that are more readily available than ever before.

There are other things that can happen with excessive, unstructured downtime. Those who are sad may become despondent, kids or teens with anxiety may worry more with time to dwell on their perceived failures, and the lonely become more isolated.

A great way to stay active with grandkids is simply to have fun. Do things they enjoy. Goof around and don't be serious all the time. Plan things to do like playing in the yard, board games, hanging out by a fire pit, riding around in a golf cart, working on a puzzle, going to the zoo or a farm, fishing, or walking in the woods or around the block.



## ACTIVITIES

### CREATING ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCES THAT FOSTER GROWTH

Overall, what can grandparents do to promote positive activities?

- Support balance in their lifestyle emotionally, mentally, spiritually, socially, and personally so they have different types of activities to experience.
- Remain aware of what they are doing with clear boundaries and expectations.
- Help them stay connected to other people who can also be a positive influence.
- Educate them to manage their time well including planning positive activities.
- Encourage them to do things that give them a feeling of meaning and purpose.

Our goals are not relentless activity or meaningless busyness but to help grandkids stay engaged in positive activities that also prepare them for life.

#### **HOW GRANDKIDS ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE**

Grandkids can live a life of excellence. It's not something they have to be born with, and it's not reserved for a privileged few. Excellence is a goal they can achieve if they are willing to focus and work to get there, and this learning can start early.

To achieve personal excellence, they must acquire knowledge and experience to become competent at what they do. This will give them confidence to be the best they can be and, in so doing, fulfill their God-given potential in life.

Competence is knowing how to handle situations effectively. Confidence is developing belief in one's abilities. Along with perseverance and work, they form a path to excellence. To help kids achieve excellence, we can coach them to:

1. **Be a Doer** – Help them get involved versus being only an observer. Show them they don't have to be great at everything and focus on progress, not perfection. Let them experience how practice leads to competence. Show them that working hard is part of a healthy and happy life, and that doing their best is the key to excellence.
2. **Be a Learner** – Make learning enjoyable. Read to them, work with them on activities, and help them experience learning as fun. Let them see that learning to learn is a key life skill. Knowledge and experience lead to competence which helps them build confidence. If they are willing to learn, their opportunities in life become limitless.
3. **Be a Planner** – Teach them the power of preparation. Talk about being intentional with choices and help them spend time on things they choose and that matter rather than whatever distraction comes along. Help them pick a goal to pursue for a few months and show them how to lay out steps to make progress toward the goal.

Don't forget to think about things you like to do. Find an activity, sport, hobby, ministry, or area of interest you can do together. Then, enjoy that time!



## TEACHING

### SHARING LIFE, WISDOM, AND GOD WITH OUR GRANDKIDS.

In your role as a GREAT grandparent, the goals and boundaries you used, relationship you built, example you set, and activities you planned position you to share your wisdom and faith with your grandkids as well. That is an honor and a responsibility.

Teaching grandkids won't happen effectively through lecturing, preaching, or sternly telling them how they should live. Instead, it occurs more naturally as you share life with them, and you will find this form of teaching to be worthwhile and enjoyable.

Focus on intimate conversations, interesting stories, and intriguing questions. Include snippets of wisdom in your talks. Tell vulnerable stories of your life including failures, successes, and lessons learned. Ask questions to get them thinking and gently share wisdom with them when they ask you something. Now that's teaching!

Below are some topics and principles worth teaching your grandkids. Use your judgment to share them in an age-appropriate manner. Remember that some of the best teaching comes about as a nice, meaningful conversation with your grandkids.

#### **WHAT EVERY GRANDKID NEEDS TO HEAR**

There are some messages every one of your grandkids needs to hear, including from you. There are other messages they need to be taught by their parents, but by being aware of them, you can play a helpful role in supporting those concepts.

#### **You are special and you have value (share with all grandkids):**

- **You are loved** – We love you very much, just as you are. Nothing can separate you from our love. We are proud of you, just as you are.
- **You have great value** – You are designed in a special way. God did a good work in you, so be comfortable with who you are.
- **You have a good future** – God loves you deeply, and he will be there for you. He has purposes and plans for you. There is meaning and significance in who you are and what you will do with your life, and God will be with you along the way.

#### **It's okay not to be okay sometimes (share as appropriate):**

- **It's okay not to be okay** – If you ever have something bothering you, that is normal, because we all have issues at times. It really is okay.
- **You're not alone** – No matter what is bothering you, there are many people who have felt the same way you do and have gotten better.
- **You can talk to us** – We want to know what's going on in your life, and we will do our best to listen well. We want to earn your trust.



## TEACHING

### SHARING LIFE, WISDOM, AND GOD WITH OUR GRANDKIDS.

#### You are responsible for your choices (share as appropriate):

- **We will have boundaries** – We will support the rules your parents give you, and we expect your respect and honesty with us.
- **You are responsible for your choices** – Because we love you, we won't cover up for you if something serious is going.
- **We will forgive you** – If you make a mistake, please tell us. We will still love you and forgive you, and we will try to help.

#### YOUR GRANDKIDS AND SPIRITUALITY

Kids develop their initial understanding of God from the adults around them. Through your teaching and the example you set, you can guide them as they build their own faith and develop a personal relationship with God. Here are concepts to consider:

1. **Surrender our will to God and make good choices** – Younger kids may struggle with abstract concepts, so share Bible stories with them. With teenagers, help them develop a faith of their own and encourage active discussion of spiritual matters.
2. **Seek transformation by humbly admitting our mistakes** – Set clear rules with kids so they learn to understand right and wrong. With youth, let them see we all have issues, and we all make mistakes, and show them grace in some situations.
3. **Treat other people with empathy and forgiveness** – Let children learn about God's love by seeing it in action in your life. With teenagers, help them experience spiritual community through the warmth and love in your relationship with them.
4. **Make daily progress through prayer and positive habits** – With kids, model a relationship with God with your prayers and help them learn to talk to God themselves. For older kids, applaud their spiritual habits like reading the Bible and meditation.
5. **Continually look to be of service to other people** – Have children help with chores and thank them warmly. Let them see you serve others joyfully. Find ways to expose teens to opportunities to serve so they develop their compassion for others.

Your grandkids will learn about life and God by watching you and comparing what they see to what you say. If your goals, relationship, example, and activities align with your teaching, they will pay attention and you will make an impact on their lives.

And with all the fun you'll have just being with them, what could be better than that?

## CLOSING

We hope you have enjoyed using this workbook and the related Online Toolkit to help you be the best grandparent you can be. As a closing reminder, here is a quick summary of the acronym “G-R-E-A-T” to help you remember the steps to becoming a GREAT grandparent!.

- **Goals and Boundaries** – Being proactive in making a positive impact.
- **Relationships** – Building a trusted connection of help, healing, and hope.
- **Example** – Being the best grandparent and the best person we can be.
- **Activities** – Creating enjoyable experiences that foster growth.
- **Teaching** – Sharing life, wisdom, and God with our grandkids.

You have begun a wonderful journey. Keep this document and refer to it regularly to stay on course and come back frequently to the Online Toolkit: [LifImprovementSteps.com/Grandparents](https://LifImprovementSteps.com/Grandparents)



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