

DISCUSSION GUIDE

# legacy

## GRANDPARENTING

How to Influence Your  
Grandchildren for Christ

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Rob Rienow • Valerie Bell • Josh Mulvihill  
Larry Fowler • Cavin Harper • Lynda Ransom Jacobs  
Cathy Jacobs • Lynda Freeman



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### DISCUSSION GUIDE

By Sherry Schumann with Cathy Jacobs

General Editor Josh Mulvihill



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# Introduction

*Legacy Grandparents* is a one-of-a-kind resource featuring eight family ministry experts with over six hours of video. This 10-session DVD series, and its companion discussion guide, are packed with powerful messages, sound biblical principles, and practical ideas to help Sunday school classes, small groups, churches, and grandparents intentionally influence grandchildren for Christ.

The Legacy Coalition, a ministry of Awana, is an organization committed to equipping grandparents to reach and disciple grandchildren and help churches to minister effectively to the more than 30 million Christian grandparents who need encouragement, training, and resources. For more information, visit our website at [legacycoalition.com](http://legacycoalition.com)

Josh Mulvihill

Director of Resources

The Legacy Coalition





# Why Establish a Grandparent Ministry?

| LARRY FOWLER |

## Summary:

Christian grandparents have a tremendous potential to influence the hearts of their grandchildren, a potential second only to the parents. Sadly, grandparents are overlooked, ignored, and mislabeled as being “old.” The Church has not recognized what Scripture says about the role of grandparents or provided resources to equip them. Seven books, two video series, and one organization exist to support thirty-million Christian grandparents presently living in the United States. The Legacy Coalition is a movement committed to equipping and empowering grandparents and church leaders through networking, resourcing, and conferencing. You can join this movement by championing ministries for grandparents in your churches.

## Key Points:

- Grandparents are mandated by Scripture to pass on a spiritual legacy to future generations.
- Grandparents have the tremendous potential to minister to their grandchildren, second only to the parents.
- Grandparents are often overlooked, ignored, and mislabeled by their churches.

(key points continued)

- Resources for Christian grandparents are extremely limited.
- The Legacy Coalition is committed to equipping and empowering grandparents and church leaders.

### **Key Passages:**

- Deuteronomy 4:9
- Psalm 78

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What role did your grandparents have in your life?
2. How did you learn to be a grandparent?
3. Why do you think the Church fails to recognize the importance of grandparents?
4. List the four reasons Larry Fowler mentioned for starting a grandparenting ministry at your church.
5. List specific steps you can take to establish a ministry for grandparents at your church.

# What is the Biblical Role of a Grandparent?

| JOSH MULVIHILL |

## Summary:

Every member of the family is given a God-ordained role which is not interchangeable with other family members. God gives husbands the role of sacrificial service as the head, wives are to willingly follow their husbands' leadership as a helpmate, children are told to honor authority, and grandparents are to leave a spiritual heritage to future generations. Unfortunately, American culture is ambiguous about the role of grandparents.

The new social contract, described by Arthur Kornhaber, demands autonomy between the generations, leaves grandparents feeling disconnected, and encourages grandparents not to meddle in the lives of their adult children and grandchildren. The Bible instructs grandparents to leave a rich, godly heritage of faith to the fourth generation. God expects grandparents to tell their grandchildren about the work of the Lord and teach them his commands, so they will set their hope in him and not stray from his path.

## Key Points:

- Every member of the family is given a God-ordained role which is not interchangeable with other family members.
- The role of grandparents is ambiguous in American culture.

(key points continued)

- The new social contract, described by Arthur Kornhaber, demands autonomy between the generations.
- According to Dr. Elmer Townes, the most important thing grandparents can leave their grandchildren is a godly heritage.
- Scripture instructs grandparents to tell their grandchildren about the works of God and to teach them his commands.

### **Key Passages:**

- Ephesians 5:25-31
- Genesis 2:18
- Exodus 20:12
- Psalm 78:1-8

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Evaluate your understanding of the role of grandparents. Do your actions reflect a biblical or cultural view? What changes do you need to make?
2. What are your goals for your grandchildren? How do these align with the goals of salvation and sanctification from Psalm 78?
3. What “gems of faith” can you share with your grandchildren? (For example, how has God answered prayer and provided for you?)
4. Discuss practical ways to tell your grandchildren about the work of the Lord and teach his commands.

# How to Pass Faith to Future Generations

| CAVIN HARPER |

## Summary:

A moral chasm threatens the hearts and minds of children. Therefore, it is imperative that grandparents tell grandchildren the whole truth about Jesus. Grandparents should teach grandchildren who Jesus is according to Scripture: a baby born in Bethlehem, a compassionate and loving friend, a suffering servant, The Lion of Judah, a righteous Judge, a jealous God, and an all-consuming fire. Grandparents make a difference when they incorporate at-home moments, on-the-go opportunities, wake-up rituals, and bedtime blessings to pass a spiritual legacy to their grandchildren. Grandparents make a difference when they embrace God's mandate to disciple their grandchildren—intentionally speaking blessings into their lives, engaging them in the stories of God's marvelous works, and telling them the whole truth about Christ.

## Key Points:

- Grandparents are mandated by Scripture to tell their grandchildren the whole truth about Jesus.
- Grandparents influence their grandchildren by speaking blessings into their lives and telling them the stories of God's marvelous works.

(key points continued)

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 provides grandparents a template for passing a spiritual legacy to future generations.
- Grandparents need to embrace a multigenerational view of family.

### **Key Passages:**

- Psalm 78:1-8
- Judges 2:10-12
- Deuteronomy 4:9
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss the difference between a “teddy bear” image of Christ and the true image of Christ.
2. Read Judges 2:10-12. Why did Joshua’s grandchildren wander far from God? How could this tragedy have been prevented?
3. Describe the ways you’ve attempted to “show-n-tell” the person of Jesus.
4. Discuss ways to incorporate at-home moments, on-the-go opportunities, wake-up rituals, and bedtime blessings for intentionally passing a spiritual legacy to your grandchildren.
5. How can you encourage your pastor and church to embrace a multigenerational view of family?

# Loving Grandkids in Scary Times

| VALERIE BELL |

## Summary:

With words like Columbine and Sandy Hook generating terror, it's no wonder safety is the number-one issue for parents and grandparents. However, grandparents should want more for their grandchildren than physical safety. Grandparents optimize their days by growing in their own faith and trusting their grandchildren to God, as well as making sure their grandchildren are equipped with spiritual tools and know how to use them. Most importantly, grandparents should make sure their grandchildren understand God will never leave them nor forsake them.

## Key Points:

- Grandparents are uniquely positioned to point their grandchildren to Christ.
- Grandparents must provide their grandchildren with spiritual tools and model how to use them.
- Grandparents must teach their grandchildren that God redeems their messes and will never leave them nor forsake them.
- Grandchildren may be more receptive to the supernatural possibilities of God than most adults.
- God always writes the last chapter.

## **Key Passages:**

- I Samuel 3
- Psalm 23
- Matthew 6:9-13

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. What things scare you the most about the times in which we live?
2. What tools are you using to strengthen your own faith in Christ?
3. What spiritual tools are you offering your grandchildren? How are you teaching them to use these tools?
4. Practice saying the knuckle prayer, so you are prepared to teach it to your grandchildren.
5. Have you witnessed God creating beauty from your messes, your children's messes, or your grandchildren's messes? If so, share specific examples.



# Never Too Late: Encouraging Faith in Your Adult Children

| ROB RIENOW |

## Summary:

Statistics reveal that a high number of young adults are disconnected from their faith, church, and family. Two-thirds of Christian parents who have empty nests experience guilt from having at least one prodigal child. There is encouraging news, however. Parents are still in the position to influence the faith of their adult children by following four parenting principles found in Scripture: (1) offer their heart to God, (2) turn their heart toward their children, (3) draw their children's heart toward them, and (4) point their children's heart to Christ. Parents begin by confessing and repenting of their parenting mistakes. They ask God to turn their heart toward their adult children in a spirit of compassion as well as draw their children's hearts toward them with warmth, honesty, and trust. Last, they ask God to give them the ability to share the Gospel message unashamedly.

## Key Points:

- Parents' ultimate goal for their children is that they love God with their heart, trust Christ with their present and future, and arrive safely home.
- Parents are the shortest distance between the hearts of their adult children and Christ.

(key points continued)

- Two-thirds of Christian parents experience guilt from having at least one child who has strayed from the faith.
- Parents must repent of their parenting mistakes and focus their prayers on the condition of their children's hearts.
- A powerful way for parents to build heart connections with their adult children is to ask forgiveness for their failures and to communicate fears about sharing their faith.

### **Key Passages:**

- Ezekiel 18
- Malachi 4:6
- Matthew 9:36
- Proverbs 23:26
- Romans 1:16
- Isaiah 60:1-4

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How did your relationship with your children change when they became adults?
2. Do your actions reflect the belief that you are totally, partially, or not responsible for your children's choices?
3. How are your children connected to or disconnected from their faith, church, and family?
4. What spiritual battles are your children facing?
5. List the four parenting principles mentioned by Rob Rienow. How can you use these principles to encourage your prodigal child to accept Christ as Lord and Savior?

# Grandparenting Through a Child's Divorce

| LINDA RANSON JACOBS |

## Summary:

Parents have to face the reality of their child's divorce. They begin by giving themselves permission to grieve the death of a marriage, broken dreams, and loss of relationships. They need to be aware that their grandchildren may suffer torn loyalties. Their grandchildren will manifest the impact of the suffering differently, depending on their ages. God has placed grandparents in the family for "such a time as this" (Esther 4:14), to provide a safe, empathetic environment, rich in rituals and traditions, where grandchildren are free to express their pain. Grandparents help grandchildren survive divorce, so the pattern of divorce is not repeated through the generations.

## Key Points:

- Grandparents grieve the death of a marriage and the loss of relationships when their adult child divorces.
- Grandparents are in the position to offer their grandchildren a safe environment, removed from the divorce battle zone.
- Divorce may cause grandchildren to suffer torn loyalties between their parents.

(key points continued)

- Rituals are the emotional glue that holds the relationship with grandchildren together.
- Divorce is cyclical.

### **Key Passages:**

- Malachi 2:16
- Psalm 23
- Esther 4:14

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What impact has divorce had on your life or the lives of your family members?
2. Discuss the ways divorce impacts children of different ages.
3. List the do's and don'ts about helping your grandchildren during divorce.
4. In what ways are you the "safe-keeper" for your grandchildren?
5. Discuss the importance of rituals and traditions in your family. Give specific examples.
6. In what ways can you minister to the divorced families in your congregation?

# The Art of Single Grandparenting

| CATHY JACOBS |

## Summary:

Single grandparents have the difficult challenge of being alone. They simultaneously juggle multiple tasks such as babysitting, cooking, and entertaining, without the help of a grandparent companion. Grandmothers, whose husbands have abdicated their role as grandfathers, face a similar challenge. Widowed grandparents face the unique struggle of unexpected grief, which accompanies life's milestones such as the birth of a grandchild. Scripture reminds us that regardless of our circumstances, Christ came to bind the broken-hearted and to set the captive free. The church can assist by investing in the lives of all grandparents, building a community which provides fellowship, support, and sense of purpose.

## Key Points:

- Three types of single grandparents exist: divorcees, widows/widowers, and women whose husbands are absentee grandfathers.
- Single grandparents have the difficult challenge of being alone.
- God graciously fills the lives of the widowed and divorced with grandchildren.

(key points continued)

- Christ came to bind the broken-hearted and to set the captive free.
- God turns our messes into messages of redemption.

### **Key Passages:**

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4
- Colossians 3:13
- Isaiah 61:1-3
- Revelation 21:4

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What struggles are unique to single grandparents? How can the church support or encourage single grandparents?
2. Would your grandchildren describe their grandfather as active or absent in their life? Explain.
3. Discuss ways your church can build community among grandparents.
4. Where are you in the journey between an encrusted acorn and a glorious oak tree?
5. How has God turned your mess into your message?

# Passing on a Heritage of Faith with Enthusiasm and Joy

| LYNDA FREEMAN |

## Summary:

Grandparents must get their grandchildren's attention in order to pass on a faith legacy. The key to getting grandchildren's attention is discovering who they are and what makes them tick. Are they creative or logical? Do they like to tinker or to read? Grandparents gain their grandchildren's attention, so they remember God's Word, understand it, live it, and experience changed lives. Grandchildren are more receptive to God's Word when grandparents invest in their lives and openly praise God for their identities as his handiwork. Opportunities for passing a legacy of faith to grandchildren include reading and discussing books, participating in service projects, creating prayer journals, carrying out science projects, and watching for God's blessings. If grandchildren don't develop their own walk with God, they will eventually forget him.

## Key Points:

- Grandparents need to gain their grandchildren's attention, so they remember God's Word, understand it, live it, and experience changed lives.
- Grandparents need to invest in their grandchildren's lives and let them know they are the handiwork of God.

(key points continued)

- Grandparents can pass on a legacy of faith to their grandchildren by reading and discussing books, participating in service projects, creating prayer journals, and carrying out science projects.
- Grandchildren need to develop their own walk with God; otherwise, they will eventually forget him.

### **Key Passages:**

- Psalm 78: 1-8
- Psalm 139:13-14
- I Thessalonians 5:16-18

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. List three adjectives which describe your grandchildren.
2. List three activities which get your grandchildren's attention and capture their imagination.
3. Discuss service projects that you and your grandchildren can participate in together.
4. How do you model prayer for your grandchildren?
5. What activities have you discovered helps your grandchildren connect with God?



# How to Pray and Read the Bible with Your Grandchildren

| ROB RIENOW |

## Summary:

Family is God’s primary vehicle for reaching the hearts of children and grandchildren for Christ. Reformation churches radically committed to global evangelism recognized faith begins in the home. A shift from “home-centered, church-supported” to “church-centered, home-supported” evangelism and discipleship occurred in the 20th Century. Today, only five percent of church-going families have a regular time for daily prayer and Bible reading. The challenge is to start somewhere. The strongest family worship curriculum available is reading Scripture with a believing heart. The worship toolbox also contains activities, songs, discussions, prayer, and catechism. Satan will target the efforts of parents and grandparents, because the two most important relationships—the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with family—intersect with family worship.

## Key Points:

- Family is God’s primary vehicle for evangelizing and discipling children and grandchildren.
- Five percent (1 in 20) of church going families have a regular time for daily family worship.

(key points continued)

- Family worship is the intersection between right relationships with God and family.
- Family worship is a key target of the enemy.
- Family worship includes activity, singing, Bible reading, discussion, prayer, and catechism.
- The strongest curriculum available is reading the Bible with a believing heart.

### **Key Passages:**

- Deuteronomy 4:9
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Judges 2:6-11
- Psalm 78:1-8
- Hebrews 4:12

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Discuss the effects of the 20th century shift from “home-centered, church-supported” to “church-centered, home-supported” evangelism and discipleship.
2. Who reached your heart for Christ? If comfortable, please share details.
3. What did family worship look like when you were a child? What did family worship look like when you raised your children? What does family worship look like for your grandchildren?

4. Discuss the ideas in the family worship toolbox which appeal to you. Discuss the ones which seem unappealing.
5. What steps can you take toward developing or improving the quality of family worship in your home?
6. Pray for the salvation and sanctification of your family.



# Unleashing the Power of Spoken Blessing

| CAVIN HARPER |

## Summary:

A grandparent's words have the potential to bless or curse. The spoken blessing serves as a conduit through which grandparents affirm their grandchildren's worth as children of God. While prayers are spoken to God on behalf of grandchildren, blessings are spoken to grandchildren on behalf of God. There are two types of blessings: a general (recurring) blessing, such as the Levitical or Aaronic blessing (Numbers 6:24-26) and a personal (specific) blessing which occurs during life's milestones. The Levitical blessing beautifully communicates God's protection, pleasure, and peace. Spoken blessing consists of three critical elements: communicating high value, picturing a special future, and declaring our active commitment. A blessing is accompanied by a form of meaningful touch, such as a hand placed on the shoulder. Speaking blessings into the lives of grandchildren is critical to their spiritual health and well-being.

## Key Points:

- Words have the potential to bless or curse.
- God is the source of blessing with parents and grandparents as his conduits.

(key points continued)

- Prayers are addressed to God on behalf of others; blessings are addressed to others on behalf of God.
- The purpose of the blessing is to boost a child's self-worth (not self-esteem).
- Three elements of the spoken blessing are communicating high value, picturing a special future, and making an active commitment.
- Two types of blessings include general (recurring) blessings and personal (specific) blessings.
- A father's blessing is critical.

### **Key Passages:**

- Genesis 1:27-29
- Deuteronomy 6:7
- Numbers 6:22-26
- Matthew 3:17, Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Words from a grandparent have the potential to bless or curse. If possible, site personal examples for each.
2. Discuss the difference between self-worth and self-esteem.
3. Discuss the difference between prayers and blessings.
4. What part of the Levitical blessing spoke loudest to you?

5. Discuss specific opportunities that you have to speak blessings into the lives of your children and grandchildren.
6. Write a spoken blessing for each of your grandchildren. Be sure to include the following elements: high value, special future, and active commitment.

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