

Celebrate Godly Grandparents

by Derl G. Keefer



When Joshua was 85 years old he was still looking toward the future by driving out the enemy and taking the land God had promised. At that age he had not given up the fight. Twenty-first-century grandparents need to be looking toward the future as well. We are in a spiritual battle for the bodies and souls of our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

National Grandparents Day originated with Marian McQuade, of Fayette County, West Virginia. In 1978, President Jimmy Carter made a proclamation that National Grandparents Day would be celebrated every year on the first Sunday after Labor Day. Our world needs grandparents and senior adults who model godly characteristics, demonstrate virtuous living, and mentor those coming after them in the Christian faith.

- *Model faith.* Fortunate is the grandchild who hears of the experience of saving faith from a grandparent who knows Jesus as Savior. Look for opportunities to nurture your grandchild's natural curiosity about God. Talk about the Creator on walks and outings. Read or tell Bible stories together. Sing praise choruses. Share how God has and is working in your life.

- *Model love.* No one can ever hear the words "I love you" too much. Say it. Write it. Wrap it. Show it. Give it. Communicate, "I love you!" in every way you can think of not only to your grandchildren but to their parents also.

- *Model hope.* Our world is short on hope. Christian grandparents understand the need for hope. They have lived through a World War, the Korean conflict, the Cold War, Vietnam, and two Gulf Wars. These grandparents know their hope is not in politics, stock markets, or worldview philosophies. Their hope is based on Jesus Christ. Christian grandparents can assure grandchildren that no matter what is happening around them, they can have the confidence that comes from knowing the Anchor of Life.

- *Model holy living.* Christian grandparents have the responsibility of living their lives by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. Grandparents in the Wesleyan tradition understand that we, as a church and as individuals, need that power for holy living. This sanctifying power cleanses our heart, sets us apart, creates a Christlike character, and liberates us to a lifestyle that honors God.

Start making plans to celebrate the grandparents in your congregation today. Following are some suggestions your church can use to honor grandparents on Grandparents Sunday.

- Give several senior adults the opportunity to share their walk of faith in the Sunday School opening or morning worship service.
- Interview some senior adults and write their "story" in the church newsletter or bulletin.
- Invite senior adults to be guests in children and teen Sunday School departments.

- Have the children and teens interview them.
- Prepare a bulletin board with information, pictures, etc. about prime time programs and events in your church.
- Invite a senior adult to read a story to the preschool class.
- Honor all grandparents in your service (i.e., have a special prayer, give them a certificate, a small gift, etc.).
- Give a reading about grandparents.
- Interview some children and get their opinion on “What is a grandma or grandpa?”
- Invite a special speaker.
- Honor the grandparents with a breakfast or luncheon.
- Have a choir or small ensemble made up of senior adults present the special music.
- Invite someone to give a testimony on how grandparents have influenced their life.



