

## **Asset-Building Ideas for Grandparents**

Being a grandparent means different things to different people. Many children in the United States are being raised by their grandparents or spend a great deal of time with them. Other grandparents live in different states or countries than their grandchildren and rarely, if ever, see them. Whether you see your grandchildren daily or just once in a while, you can do many things to help nurture their assets. Here are some ideas for building assets for your grandchildren:

- Support your children in their parenting. There are different ways to do this, including telling them what you think they do well, giving them a break by babysitting once in a while, and being respectful of the way they do things (even if you'd do them differently).
- Have clear boundaries and high expectations for how you expect your grandchildren to behave. Also talk with your children about the boundaries and expectations they have for your grandchildren. Finally talk with your grandchildren about how you hope they will behave and why those things are important to you.
- Introduce your grandchildren to other caring elders, such as your friends or other relatives. The more exposure older people and youth have to one another; the better able they will be to relate and get along.
- Help make history come alive for your grandchildren. Tell them stories about their parents and about your own life. Help them think about their future by talking about goals and dreams that you had as a young person.
- Model lifelong learning by reading, taking classes or lessons, or trying new things. Talk with your grandchildren about what you are learning and why it is important to you.
- Be involved in serving projects in your church or community. Talk about your experience and why you volunteer. Plan ways that you and your grandchildren can work side-by-side in serving others.
- Attend programs, games, and other events at church or school that your grandchildren are involved in.
- If your grandchildren live far away, try to see them on a regular basis. Also think of creative ways to stay connected with them at other times. Call them often, mail them notes, send e-mail messages, or tape record yourself reading them stories.
- Spend some individual time with each grandchild. Frequently tell each one how special they are and how much you love them.
- Avoid making comparison among your grandchildren. Enjoy what is unique about each one.
- Play games with your grandchildren, such as card games, board games, computer games, or made-up games.

- Share rituals from your culture, church, and family with your grandchildren. Talk about why these are important to you.
- Join children in experiencing experiences with the arts. For example, attend concerts, theater productions, museums, or art exhibits together.
- Talk about your faith, your values, your priorities, and world issues that concern you. Emphasize why these things are important to you and how they influence your life. Listen carefully as your grandchildren tell you about their faith, values, priorities, and concerns.

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