

Some of My Greatest Blessings Call Me GrandMa!

11 Ideas to help Grandparents stay close to their
Grandchildren (whether they are down the street or across the
country)
Betty Stokes

“Grandparents are warm hugs and sweet memories. They remember all of your accomplishments and forget all of your mistakes. They are someone you can tell your secrets and worries to, they hope and pray that all your dreams come true. They always love you, no matter what. They can see past temper tantrums and bad moods, and makes it clear that they don't affect how precious you are to them. They are an encouraging word and a tender touch. They are full of proud smiles. They are the only people in the world who love you with all their heart, who remember the child you were and cherishes the person you've become. “

~Barbara Cage~

1.- **Pocket-full of Posies Apron**

You can use any apron, just cut a tea towel to the size of the apron bottom and sew around the edges to form pockets. Fill the pockets with activities you can do with your grandchildren. *Ideas:* cookie cutters/rolling pin make cookies, box of crayons do an art picture, card game, etc.

2.- **Memory Jar**

What were you like in the olden days??? The grandparent finds objects that represent their childhood and puts the items in a jar. Write or type a list of each item and the memory that goes along with it. This is a great way for your grandchildren to get to know you, a fun way for them to read your “journal.”

3.- **In My Grandmothers Old-Fashioned Garden**

Help plant a garden with Grandma. A.) Let the grandkids make there own stepping stones. Some stepping stone kits can be found at your local craft store, or just buy cement and let the Grandkids create. *Ideas:* they can put their hand/foot prints, add stones, write their names, etc. Place these finished stones throughout Grandma's garden. B.) Create flower picks for each of your grandchildren. Each pick should have the grandchild's name, to designate their area of Grandma's garden. Allow your grandchild to plant the flowers, or vegetables of their choice, and make sure to invite them over to help water, weed, and enjoy GRANDMA'S GARDEN.

4.- **Don't Let the Bed Bugs Bite**

Find your favorite children's book record your voice as you read the story. Send the book and the recording to your grandchild. Now whether you are near or far your grandchild can hear your voice as you read them a bedtime story.

5.- **Someone's in the Kitchen with Grandma!**

Put together a recipe book of your favorite family recipes (be sure to add the ones from your Great, Great Grandma.) Give these recipe books to each grandchild as they go to college or get married.

6.- **Where in the World are Grandma & Grandpa?**

Senior Missions are important. It may be hard to leave your family, but make it fun and remember the blessings! A.) Find a world map. Get a picture of all your family missionaries; write their name, where they served, and the years they served from. Tack each picture to the map in the location they served. Start this tradition with grandpa and work down the line of sons/daughters, then grandchildren...and don't forget to add Grandma & Grandpa's Senior Mission. B.) Make your own stationary with Grandma & Grandpa's name and mission. This is a great way to stay in touch. This stationary can also be used for journal entries to put in your family history.

7.- **These are a Few of My Favorite Things....**

Whether you see you grandchildren everyday or once a year, it is important to make memories and be sure to take lots of pictures...so you do remember the fun. Mini albums are a great way to organize you events and pictures. If you go on a family trip once a year, take those pictures and make a whole scrapbook of just that trip. You can make holiday albums. Example: make a Halloween book, where every year you add a picture of each of your grandchildren in their costumes. Can also be done with with Easter outfits, Santa Claus, summer fun, Birthdays, etc. There are many types of unique mini albums, just do what works best for your family.

**Hint: if you are not a "scrapbooker," there are websites and software that create mini albums for you. iPhoto, www.shutterbug.com, kodak, and some HP Printer software.

100 things I love about you. This is a 12x12 framed scrapbook page. Put a small picture of Grandma & Grandpa in the middle and type up 100 things you love about them. Cut up the list, and add embellishments as needed. This makes a collage of words and pictures, which represents what you love about your grandparents/Grandchildren.

Get your favorite picture of your grandkids and turn it into a puzzle. Many of your local photo developers can turn any picture into a puzzle, a t-shirt, a mouse pad, a mug, etc. Send it to your grandparents or great grandparents as a fun present.

8.- **Traditions**

It is important to keep your family close. Make your own traditions, plan activities, just be creative. What does your family like to do??? Examples: Family reunions, family vacations, golf tournaments, annual campouts, holiday parties, etc.

Create your own “Old Maid” game. Make or buy some type of card deck. Cover the cards with activities you can do with your grandchildren. Example: Picture of a bike- go on a bike ride, picture of a cookie jar- make cookies, picture of bugs- go on a nature walk, picture of a craft- color or create a art and crafts activity, etc.

Make a “Cousin Quilt.” Grandma has her whole family (children and grandchildren even Great Grandmas) pick two types of fabric. Each person takes their fabrics and creates a “9-block” for each person in the family. From that you create a quilt with all of your cousins, aunts, mom, and Grandmas “9-block” fabrics.

Family tablecloth. Make a tablecloth out of canvas or cotton fabric that fits your family table. Get fabric markers, and let each family member write a memory or draw a picture on the tablecloth. This tablecloth can be done on any holiday (Birthdays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, etc.) Each year pull the tablecloth out and let the family read from years past, and add to the fun.

9.- **Rainy Day Fun**

Everyone gets restless on a rainy day, invite your grandchildren over for a “tea party” or “3 little Indians.” Create a themed party or day activity. “3 little Indians” would include a setting up a teepee to do a craft, or just to eat lunch inside.

10.- **Remember When?**

It is important to remember birthdays and anniversaries, upcoming family events. A few ways to stay organized would be to make a family calendar that includes all of your family’s important dates. At the beginning of each year create a birthday box. Have a folder for each month, and in each folder have a card for each family member that has a birthday that month.

Create a family website. Make links for each family, that they can update themselves. You can update the site with pictures and important news. There can also be a place to type messages back and forth. This is a simple way for large families to stay in touch and be able to communicate with each other, and is great for families that are spread all over the world.

11.- **A Little Birdie Told Me...**

Fun little ways to show expressions of love: When a bird flies by it is bringing “Hugs & Kisses” from grandma and grandpa. Mail ahead of time a paper chain or a box of candy with the number of chain links/or candy equaling the number of days till’ grandma comes. When the candy is gone or the chain is pulled apart

Grandma will be there. Make a set day and time each week that you call and talk to each grandchild. Make sure you stick to it. You want to know your grandchildren and they want to know you. Ask questions, and make sure they know the “line” is always open.

Have your children and grandchildren put together a list of questions they want to ask you. Set up a video camera and designate a reader, have the reader ask a question and you answer it. This is a good way to get to know one another and keep up with journals and genealogy, that can pass down from generation to generation.

Grandparents need to realize that when their children get married and leave home, they do not leave you without children. Enjoy your Grandchildren the same way you would your children. Remember what you loved to do with your children and do *that* with your grandchildren. Staying involved with your family will enrich your marriage, and make your life more interesting!

-Virginia M. DeHart
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