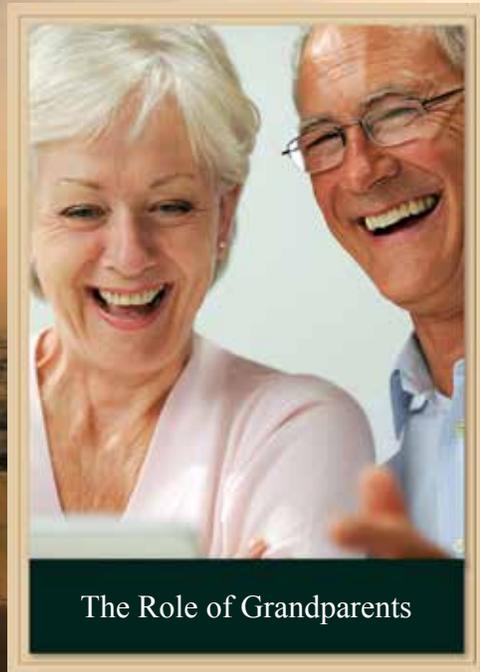


The Life Cycle: The Role of Grandparents



The Role of Grandparents

The[♂]ology
of the BO[♀]dy for families
& single people
plus Family Chastity Formation in Virtue & Purity of Heart

Universal Truths about Human Sexuality for People of All Ages
With extensive references to the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church

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The Role of Grandparents

What the Church Says

735 Pope Benedict XVI stated at the Fifth World Meeting of Families: “I would now like to say a word to grandparents, who are so important for every family. They can be—and so often are—the guarantors of the affection and tenderness which every human being needs to give and receive. They offer little ones the perspective of time; they are memory and richness of families. In no way should they ever be excluded from the family circle. They are a treasure which the younger generation should not be denied, especially when they bear witness to their faith at the approach of death” (Pope Benedict XVI, *Vigil of Prayer, Fifth World Meeting of Families*, Valencia, Spain [July 8, 2006]).

736 Pope John Paul II said in his Letter to the Elderly: “In how many families are grandchildren taught the rudiments of the faith by their grandparents! There are many other areas where the elderly can make a beneficial contribution. The Spirit acts as and where he wills, and quite frequently he employs human means which seem of little account in the eyes of the world. How many people find understanding and comfort from elderly people who may be lonely or ill and yet are able to instill courage by their loving advice, their silent prayers, or their witness of suffering borne with patient acceptance” (Pope John Paul II, *Letter to the Elderly* [October 1, 1999], 13)!

Wisdom of Parents

737 Grandparents have an availability and approachability that allows them to provide unconditional affection and tenderness to their grandchildren. They are a treasure of love and memories and help children develop a sense of family history, faith and identity. Grandparents and grandchildren can find comfort in each other and can lift each other up through the moments of joy, suffering or loneliness. They can also be the link and source for the continuity of the Catholic faith, particularly when they practice daily prayer and devotions dedicated to the good of their children and grandchildren. Faithful, practicing and praying Catholic grandparents are a rich treasure and inheritance worth far more than gold.

738 Grandparents bear witness to the truth of the indissolubility of marriage, to a mature and affectionate love that overcomes every trial and difficulty and to the blessings and rewards God bestows upon those who are faithful. Their generous love and support are essential to helping young families succeed in an often demanding world. And since grandparents are imperfect and often disadvantaged in many ways, both parents and young children can learn the value of respect, honor and care for one’s elders and family.

739 Our Heavenly Father has richly blessed each of his children from conception until

natural death and—together with parents—He is intimately involved in the formation of life and love within the family circle. The family is the divinely ordained sanctuary of life and love where education and formation in chastity is to be carried out in that spirit of parental love which springs forth from the heart of the Father.

Putting this Knowledge to Work

740 Guidelines

Grandparents should support the values and rules that parents set for their children. Conversely, grandparents should not interfere with the rights, duties and responsibilities of their children as parents.

741 Ways to Participate

Grandparents can be a valuable resource for parents. They can also find enjoyment in seeing their family, children and grandchildren grow

and flourish, as well as contribute to the overall integrity of the larger family by:

- Helping the parents with care of the children.
- Helping in matters of discipline, keeping in mind that the discipline should be consistent with the wishes of the parents.
- Knowing when not to interfere in the lives of their grown children and their families.
- Praying with their grandchildren and taking them to church.
- Continuing to set an example for their grandchildren by being people of faith.
- Passing on family stories, history or genealogy.
- Reinforcing the daily need for purity, dress codes, etc.
- Providing affection, tenderness, comfort and understanding.
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