

## Idaho Catholic Register Article on Being a Courageous Grandparent

by Gwen Colfer

### What is being a Courageous Grandparent?

I love being a grandmother. I have enjoyed doing fun things with my grandkids. As much as I enjoy the perks that come from being a grandparent, I have no desire to sit around and simply be a good grandmother. I am not content to be nothing more than a good time for my grandkids. I want to live as courageously and intentionally as I can so that they will understand the Gospel and choose to walk in the truth.

I want to be a legacy-builder – the kind of legacy that outlives me for generations to come. I want them to see the glory, the goodness, the grace, and the greatness of God in me, and I want them to want it for themselves.

This certainly does not mean that I am the perfect grandparent, by any means! The dreams that we have for our families are not always fulfilled. As the grandmother now of teen grands, I can say that from experience. I also have my physical limitations, as well as other limitations in terms of skills. But, in spite of my limitations, I am compelled to stay the course, determined to learn from my mistakes, and driven to call upon others to join the cause. There is one thing I am resolved not to do: I will not let my grandchildren grow up not knowing Jesus Christ and what God has done for us....not on my watch!

However, there must be a sense of urgency to compel us to dare to die to self and our own agendas. Only then will we dare to live the life we were meant to live....life with a capital “L”!

Courageous, Godly grandparents, as well as parents, share a passionate commitment to help the next generations know Jesus and wholeheartedly follow Him as Lord and Savior. They are not content to settle for the easy road of a life consumed with leisure and recreation. They want to enable Jesus to look great in the eyes of the next generations.

Our grandchildren don't need **good** grandparents. They need and deserve **courageous** grandparents (and parents) – those who embrace God's purposes for their sake. This is a generational responsibility. We have learned that we *can* do it alone, but that it is better and stronger when it's a community affair.

The Church is the hope of the world. It is God's tool through which all generations experience and display the glory, the goodness, the grace, and the greatness of God for all to see. According to Ephesians 4:16, “*the **whole body**, joined together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love as **each part does its work.**”*”

Courageous grandparenting is an invitation to join thousands of other grandparents in a cause that is much bigger than all of us. Together, we can directly impact the eternal destiny of another generation. We cannot afford to waste our lives. It is time to embrace the moment and live wisely while there is still time.

This is not an easy journey. The worldly opposition is intense and relentless. The task can seem overwhelming and daunting. But Nehemiah faced his share of opposition in Jerusalem when he arrived to build the wall. We need to draw from Nehemiah's courageous journey of

faith to guide us to rebuild the walls of truth that lie in ruins today. It is a journey that is dangerous and one in which the outcome cannot be assured. On the other hand, what could be more dangerous than sitting back, getting comfortable, and doing nothing to rescue those who are perishing on our watch!

### **How do I learn to be a Courageous Grandparent? Where do I start?**

A good place to start is through reading what I call “the bible for courageous grandparents”. It is entitled quite simply, ***Courageous Grandparenting – Unshakable faith in a broken world***, by Cavin Harper. This book clearly outlines what Courageous Grandparenting is all about and what is needed to achieve it. It’s an easy read, and in my opinion a “must read” for every Christian grandparent!

Secondly, take your grandchildren to a summer GrandCamp week. Five are offered throughout the nation, and one in Canada. If, for whatever reason, this is not possible – bring the grandchildren to your home for several days every summer, guided by the “Do-It-Yourself guidebook” entitled, ***GrandCamp Field Guide***, by Cavin Harper and Jim & Gwen Colfer. Combined with the first book mentioned above, these two books will give you everything you need to know to get started. If you are eager to learn more, check out Christian Grandparenting Network online at [www.christiangrandparenting.net](http://www.christiangrandparenting.net) for a multitude of other resources, including how to register for a GrandCamp, and how to purchase the above two books.

### **What is the key to being a successful grandparent when it comes to passing on the Faith?**

The greatest key is a big step called ***determination!*** And then following up on it! And not letting it pass you by! It is a determination to set everything else in retirement aside in order to focus on helping our grandchildren to grow up in a world hostile to the truth, determined to show them the truth in a way that they will believe it and want to follow it! Although we did it essentially alone (with the heartfelt cooperation of the parents of our grands), grandparents will be stronger together. Parishes which set up grandparenting ministries, headed by grandparents – who are truly committed to the mission – does make this task so much easier! Parishes that have done this have found that the ministry grows by leaps and bounds as grandparents experience the satisfaction of having followed this call when they see it reflected in the faces and emotions and lives of their grandchildren!

### **What are some simple things that every grandparent can do in relation to their grandchildren?**

- ~ Ask your grandchildren how you can pray for them.
- ~ Send an appropriate special Bible verse to them a couple of times a week.
- ~ Call or text them when they are struggling with anything in their lives and pray ***with*** them over the phone. Rather than saying, “I’ll pray for you”, instead, pray vocally ***with*** them in person or over the phone, or text a spontaneous prayer to them.
- ~ Call them to offer with them a spontaneous prayer of thanksgiving when something has

gone well in their lives, along with a “Congratulations!” Or text that prayer and a congratulatory greeting.

~ When they have a challenge looming ahead, text a spontaneous prayer to cover them during that challenge.

*(Gwen Colfer is a member of Holy Apostles Parish in Meridian and an advocate for Courageous Grandparentng.)*