

Involving Your Grandchildren in Missions

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"The First Child Is For The Grandmother." This proverb illustrates the international links commonly forged in rural West Africa. Life in the States, however, provides contrasting experiences. Because couples move away and take jobs elsewhere, many kids and grandparents spend little time together. On the other hand some grandparents raise their grandchildren, and even where this is not true, many more interact frequently in the lives of the grandkids. These situations have great potential for passing missions vision and passion to children when they are impressionable - especially where the bond of love between the generations is carefully nurtured. Here are ideas for those who want to see their grandkids following wholeheartedly after God and partnering with God in his kingdom business.

1. The place to begin is PRAYER. Of course, we pray for each of our grandkids by name on a daily basis. But, how specific are we? Are we claiming from God character development and discipleship that leads to the joyous obedience of faith?
2. Do we take them on OUTINGS? Instead of a nearby theme park, how about finding a missions headquarters that is kid friendly with effective displays of world cultures and missions ministry. On the east coast it would be Wycliffe's WordSpring Discovery Center in Orlando, Florida. (407-852-3600) In Southern California, Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) in Redlands is a very welcoming place for families. (909-794-1151)
3. It is common to give MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTIONS to our grandkids. We recommend "Pray Kids!" published by the Navigators. This quarterly, colorful publication is written entirely for kids with the exception of the last page, which is for the parents. Great encouragement to parents to incorporate some family worship time in their busy lives.
4. Make a gift of BOOKS. The finest family/kids book on missions is *Window On The World*, with color presentations on countries and people groups where the gospel is struggling to get a foothold. We also highly recommended the biography series "Hero Tales" especially for younger kids.
5. Host a MOVIE night from time to time. Before the main video feature, show a brief missions presentation. Make the missions presentation the main feature.
6. We can share our own missions EXPERIENCE. Have we traveled abroad? Gone on short term missions trips? Do we have close relationships with missionary friends whose adventures became an integral of our own vicarious missions experience? These can all be shared in interesting ways with our grandkids, either in person or by creating and recording adventure stories.
7. We can take the family on a SHORT TERM MISSIONS TRIP. With some preparation, it's possible to go to an inter city or a rural church planting effort to help with a VBS. If we're reasonably near our southern border, we can take the family camping- but do it in Mexico and serve a national church or a local orphanage.
8. Let's not forget the ADOPT-A-CHILD opportunity which many mission agencies have to offer. Why not challenge all off our grandchildren to pool their money with ours and adopt a boy or girl- until they are old enough to break away and do it on their own.
9. At Christmas time, we can buy GIFTS that bless children overseas in the names of our grandchildren. Consider replacing gifts to a grandchild with this option and explain why to them. Suggest that they can do the same with each other and their parents.
10. Regularly ENCOURAGE AND SHARE visions for God's global cause. Emails and letters written and posted to the kids individually can alert them to special needs for prayer and giving. These help us

model our passion and vision, and make a powerful impact on this generation which is so very precious to us.

Source: David Mays, *Stuff you need to know about Doing Missions in Your Church*, a CD of missions resources for local churches, produced by APMC March 2004. Link: www.davidmays.org