

Grandparents

Great Presence



**A RESOURCE FOR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS FROM
THE BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR PASTORAL LIFE**

IN A NUTSHELL

- To encourage families, parishes and schools to affirm the value of grandparents.
- To provide practical suggestions for parishes and schools to celebrate the gift of grandparents.

THIS KIT CONTAINS:

1. A reproducible leaflet to be distributed to students, grandparents and parishioners.
2. Notes for a liturgy celebrating grandparents.
3. Newsletter inserts.
4. A craft activity for children to present to their grandparents
5. Slide show honouring grandparents.

The Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council

WWW.ACMFC.ORG.AU

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

1. Reproduce the handout to distribute to families at Mass or via the school. Alternatively, some of the content of the handout could be included in the parish/school newsletter.
2. Use the liturgy notes for a prayer assembly or dedicated Mass in honour of grandparents.
3. Use the newsletter clipboard for simple ways of affirming grandparents and their role in their grandchildren's lives.
4. Invite grandparents to visit the school for a morning and treat them to a class tour.
5. Take the children to visit the residents of your local aged care home – a source of wonderful grandparent figures especially for those children whose grandparents are deceased or live remotely from them.
6. A time to use this resource is a special occasion such as the feast of St Joachim and Anne (July 26), school Grandparents Day, or in Family Week.
7. Grandparents could use it with their grandchild(ren) to spark discussion.
8. The Parish School could organise, with the Parish Priest, a "Grandparents Sunday Mass", or perhaps a series of these each month on a class-by-class basis – a sure way of boosting Mass attendance over the year.



Dear Friends,

Grandparents are of unique importance in family life generally and particularly in the transmission of faith through the generations. They provide children with a stability and sense of identity and continuity. Many grandparents are also significant carers in the lives of their grandchildren, sometimes even the primary carer.

A 'grandparents day' is an increasingly popular event in the calendar of schools. Evidently it is appreciated by both students and their grandparents. It is a simple and powerful way to affirm and encourage family life and the transmission of the faith.

We are delighted to offer you this resource to assist you in supporting the grandparent figures in your wider school community. It comes with the desire of the Bishops of Australia to see every family flourish as an effective community of Christ's love

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Kennedy".

Bishop Michael Kennedy
Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life



NEWS FLASH: GRANDPARENTS ARE VITAL, POPE TELLS YOUTH

RIO DE JANEIRO, JUL 26, 2013

"Saints Joachim and Anne were part of a long chain of people who had transmitted their love for God, expressed in the warmth and love of family life", Pope Francis told the World Youth Day crowds in Brazil. "How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society! How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family. Children and the elderly build the future of peoples: children because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives. This relationship and this dialogue between generations is a treasure to be preserved and strengthened!"

LITURGY OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

Today we celebrate the gift of grandparents. These ancestors have given us the gift of life. They continue to give us the gift of love.

OPENING PRAYER

Father in heaven, you have blessed the generations with your steadfast love. Keep us faithful to your covenant.

READINGS

Note: these readings have been adapted for children

FIRST READING: GEN 48:8-11,14-16, 20

In this passage, the elderly Jacob (also called 'Israel') blesses his grandchildren.

When Israel saw Joseph's sons, he said, "Who are these?" Joseph said to his father, "They are my sons, whom God has given me". And he said, "Bring them to me, please, that I may bless them". Now the eyes of Israel were dim with age and he could not see well. So Joseph brought them near him; and he kissed them and embraced them. Israel said to Joseph, "I did not expect to see your face and here God has let me see your children also". Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on the head of Ephraim, who was the younger, and his left hand on the head of Manasseh. He blessed Joseph, and said, "The God before whom my ancestors Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life to this day, the angel who has redeemed me from all harm, bless the boys; and in them let my name be perpetuated, and the name of my ancestors Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude on the earth".

So he blessed them that day, saying, "By you Israel will invoke blessings, saying, 'God make you like Ephraim and like Manasseh'."

The Word of the Lord.

PSALM 103

Response: Bless the LORD, O My Soul

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! R

He forgives all our sins, heals our sickness, and crowns us with steadfast love and mercy. R

The LORD is merciful and kind, slow to anger and abounding in love. R

As high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who love him. R

As for us, our days are like grass; for the wind passes over it and it is gone. But the love of the LORD is everlasting. R

His righteousness will be given to our children's children, of those who keep his covenant. R

GOSPEL: MARK 10:13-16

People kept bringing young children to Jesus that he might touch them. The disciples tried to stop them. But when Jesus saw it, he was annoyed. He said to them, "Let the children to come to me and do not stop them. For it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not accept and welcome the kingdom of God like a little child shall not enter it".

And Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them, placing his hands upon them.

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Leader: God has made a covenant of everlasting love. Let us pray with trust in his love.

1. For all grandparents: that their presence be a sign of God's love for their grandchildren and that their memories help younger generations to connect with their origins. We pray to the Lord.
2. For grandparents: may they continue to pass on to future generations their faith and their mature human and spiritual experience. We pray to the Lord.
3. For grandparents raising children: that their selfless love and commitment be recognised and supported by those around them. We pray to the Lord.
4. For grandparents: that they may be blessed in the affection and gratitude of their grandchildren. May they always encounter respect and love. We pray to the Lord.
5. For children who have no grandparents: that they may find encouragement in the friendship and support of faith-filled seniors. We pray to the Lord.
6. For grandparents who have died: that their families will be consoled in their loss of one so precious to them. We pray to the Lord.

BLESSING OF GRANDPARENTS

INVITE THE CHILDREN TO READ THE FOLLOWING PRAYER FOR THEIR GRANDPARENTS.

A PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS

Dear God,

Please bless our grandparents.

Thank you for the life they gave my parents and for the life they give to me.

For the ways they helped me and made me strong, I give thanks.

For the ways they love me no matter what, I rejoice.

For the ways they have paved the road that leads me here, I am grateful.

Let them grow in wisdom and joy in life.

Let them find peace and rest from their work.

Let them be healed of every sickness and pain.

And let them see with their own eyes the glory of your Son, Jesus, in the love of their children and grandchildren.

Bless them always until they come to rest in you.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PRAYER BY DIANA MACALINTAL COPYRIGHT © 2005
[HTTP://DSJLITURGY.ORG/2006/08/27/A-PRAYER-FOR-GRANDPARENTS/](http://DSJLITURGY.ORG/2006/08/27/A-PRAYER-FOR-GRANDPARENTS/)



LITURGY OUTLINE

HOMILY NOTES

BLESSINGS OF A GRANDFATHER

The tender reunion of Jacob (also called Israel) in the first reading, with his son Joseph and grandsons, is a powerful scene. How wonderful for the two grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, to be embraced so affectionately by their grandfather and then blessed so earnestly with Jacob's yearning, even foretelling that the two boys will become role models for the Jewish people into the future. By his blessing, Jacob ('Israel') is reminding them of the special relationship they share with God. Even though his grandsons are living in exile in Egypt, outside the land which God promised to their great, great grandfather Abraham, they must never forget their true homeland. Even though his grandsons are growing up in a foreign culture that worships many gods, they must never forget that they belong to a people that lives by the ways of the one, living God. What a powerful blessing.

Blessings are common in the scriptures and in our Jewish and Christian traditions. In the Jewish scriptures we read often of a father's blessing of his sons as he approaches death. In Jewish homes to this day, it is customary as part of Sabbath rituals for parents to place their hands upon each of their children and say a blessing. The blessing of boys refers back to this blessing of Ephraim and Manasseh, while the blessing of girls refers to the matriarchs Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah; all fine role models of faith-filled men and women. This is then followed by 'the priestly blessing' prescribed by the Lord to Moses (Numbers 6:22-26): The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Similarly, blessings are an important part of our Christian tradition. For example, we have the blessing of food ('grace before meals'), of water ('holy water'), of objects (like rosary beads) and special blessings for people (such as the nuptial blessing at a wedding) and at the end of the Mass.



STS. JOACHIM AND ANNE

Joachim and Anne were greatly honoured by God who gave them a daughter conceived without sin who was to become known as the Mother of God! It would seem that they performed their parenting responsibilities with great grace. Their feast day on July 26 is a day to honour them and all grandparents for their contribution to our lives.

FACT FILE

We know very few facts about Sts. Joachim and Anne, the only recorded stories of them are from an apocryphal gospel dating from the 4th Century AD called the Protoevangelium of James. The legend told in this document says that after years of childlessness, an angel appeared to tell Anne and Joachim that they would have a child. Whatever their names or the facts of their lives, we can assume that Mary was raised in a Jewish family home faithful to God and to the religious traditions of her day such that she was led to respond wholeheartedly to God's request with faith, "Let it be done to me as you will."

(adapted from www.catholic.org/saints)

Newsletter CLIPBOARD

ON SATURDAY, JULY 26,

WE CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF STS JOACHIM AND ANNE, GRANDPARENTS OF JESUS.

To all our grandparents, thanks for all the gifts of life and faith they have given us.

SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE (FEAST JULY 26)

ARE ROLE MODELS FOR GRANDPARENTS. HAPPY FEAST DAY TO ALL OUR GRANDPARENTS!

THE FEAST OF SAINTS JOACHIM AND ANNE (JULY 26)

PICK UP YOUR COPY OF 'GRANDPARENTS - GREAT PRESENCE' IN THE CHURCH FOYER TODAY



EACH GRANDPARENT IS UNIQUE AND IRREPLACEABLE. AS SOCIETY CHANGES, THE ROLE OF GRANDPARENTS CHANGES. BUT SOME THINGS ABOUT GRANDPARENTS ARE CONSTANT. JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE GIFT THEY ARE IN OUR LIVES!

Invitation TO GRANDPARENTS

Date:

Time:

Location:

WHY PRAY THE ROSARY?

At heart, the Rosary is a Christ-centred prayer, in which we sit with Mary and contemplate Jesus. Through the rhythmic meditation of the Rosary, we are led to reflect on the events of his life.

Mary is the model of how to love Jesus. She lived her life with her eyes fixed on him. By reflecting on how she loved her son, we can learn how we also can love him and know him.

Praying the Rosary is a wonderful way to communicate with our spiritual parents - our Heavenly Father and our mother Mary. When we pray the Rosary, we are calling on our spiritual parents to comfort, guide and inspire us. So when family relationships get tense, the Rosary is a powerful way to unite with our heavenly family.

SIMPLE WAYS TO PRAY THE ROSARY WITH KIDS

The Rosary need not be boring if you bring some creativity to your prayer. Try these ideas to engage your children.

- Let them make their own beads using the Keychain plan or even a full Rosary set. Encourage them to make sets for other relatives and friends.
- Create a sense of reverence and mystery when you pray as a family, by lighting candles or dimming the lights.
- Get the rhythm - for a different experience say the prayers of the Rosary to a rap beat!
- Use visual props, such as pictures of scenes from Jesus' life, icons or images.
- Have some members of the family lead the prayers, saying only the first half of each of the prayers, with the other members saying the second part.
- When your child feels helpless or frustrated about a situation, get him to offer a Rosary. Intentions for the sick and troubled help us to connect with those in distress and alleviates our sense of helplessness.
- Integrate the Rosary into your everyday life - say it together in the car on the way to school, while you wait for the train, or when doing dishes.
- Don't just race through the prayers, think about the words. The Hail Mary is based on the words spoken to Mary by the Archangel Gabriel and her cousin Elizabeth. These words express the wonder of heaven on earth - God becomes human in Jesus. Ponder the name of Jesus when you say this prayer.

HERE'S A CRAFT ACTIVITY THAT CHILDREN LOVE AND MAKES A GREAT GIFT FOR THEIR GRANDPARENTS.

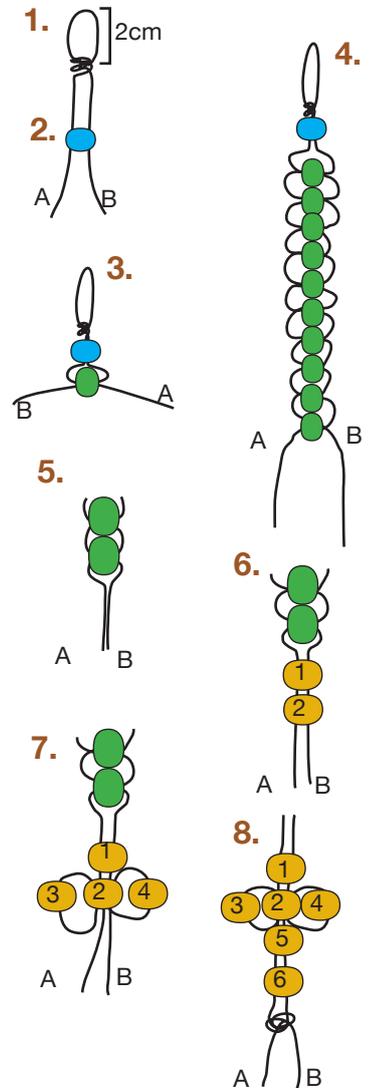
The Rosary KeyChain



MATERIALS:

- 80 cm of cord, fused at the ends for easy threading (Brickie's twine works well)
- 1 bead for the Our Father
- 10 beads for the 'Hail Marys'
- 6 beads for the Cross

1. Fold the cord in half and knot a loop approximately 2 cm from the end. Make it a chunky knot so that the bead doesn't slip off.
2. Put the ends (A & B) through the Our Father Bead in the same direction.
3. To thread a 'Hail Mary' bead on to the cord pass both ends (A & B) through the bead in opposite directions.
4. Repeat with each bead until 10 'Hail Mary's' are inserted.
5. Tension the cord and bring the two ends together.
6. To make the Cross, insert A & B together through 2 'Cross' beads (1 & 2) in the same direction.
7. Separate A & B ends and place one bead (3) on A then pass the cord through bead 2 in the same direction as the previous pass through. Repeat with B end on bead 4, passing through bead 2 and out the bottom.
8. Add two more beads (5 & 6) with A & B ends passing through together in the same direction. Tension and tie with a chunky knot the end.

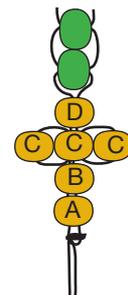


THE JOEY ROSARY

Joseph Benjamin was born in 1972 with a hole in his heart. As he struggled for life in an intensive care unit, his young brothers and sisters prayed a short version of the Rosary which came to be known among family and friends as 'the Joey Rosary'. Long after his death at two months from an accidental overdose while still in hospital, the Joey Rosary continues to bring children and families to prayer.

Using only the six beads on the cross of the Rosary Key Chain:

- A. State your prayer intentions or say the Joey Creed
- B. Say the Our Father
- C. Say three Hail Marys
- D. Say the Glory Be



RAW MATERIALS CAN BE PURCHASED FROM CRAFT STORES

PREPACKAGED CRAFT PACKS WITH MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS:

www.LivingWellMedia.com.au

Saints Joachim & Anne

We know very little about Sts Joachim and Anne. The only recorded stories of them are from an apocryphal gospel dating from the 4th Century AD called the Protoevangelium of James. The legend told in this document says that after years of childlessness, an angel appeared to tell Anne and Joachim that they would have a child. Anne promised to dedicate this child to God. Whatever their names or the facts of their lives, we can assume that Mary was raised in a Jewish family home faithful to God and to the religious traditions of her day such that she was led to respond wholeheartedly to God's request with faith, "Let it be done to me as you will." (adapted from www.catholic.org/saints)

JOIN THE CATHOLIC GRANDPARENTS ASSOCIATION (CGA)!

Newly launched in Australia, its mission is 'to help grandparents pass on the faith and keep prayer at the heart of family life'. It encourages grandparents at a local parish level to come together to help one another to pass on the faith.

IN THE WORDS OF GRANDCHILDREN

"I love my Grandma very much, she always helps me to draw nice pictures."

"Grandpa is a great bowler. We play lots of cricket in the back yard."

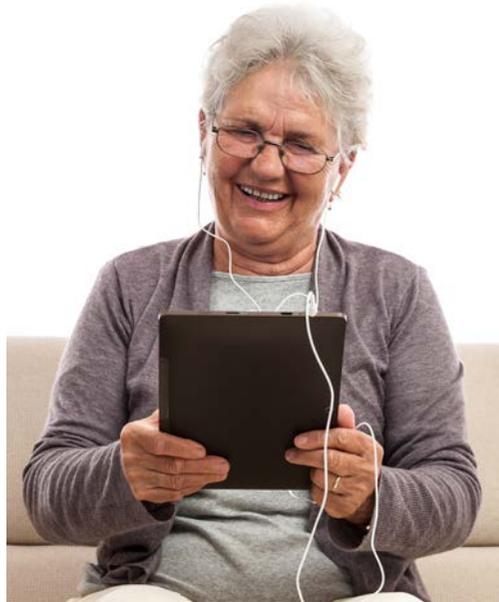
"I feel really special when Grandma and Grandpa come to my school presentation nights and soccer games."

"Grandma and Grandpa did a good job bringing up daddy, he is pretty well behaved."

IDEAS FOR 'LONG DISTANCE' GRANDPARENTS

When distance sets them apart, it takes effort and creativity for grandparents to let grandchildren know of their love for them.

- Skype and Facetime are good, but prepare for it – have some particular news item to pass on each time; have a prompt to remind you at a regular time.
- Texting is quick and easy – make a note of things that pop up in the day to pass on, jot down jokes that you hear.
- Email is so quick – have a store of photos, news items from the week or articles you saw and attach one.
- Snail mail is great – so personal, especially if handwritten. Add riddles, jokes or photos. You can even write a story in serial form!



For more information on how to join, or to start a branch of the Australian Chapter of the Catholic Grandparents Association in your parish, contact the Sydney Archdiocesan Life, Marriage and Family Centre (02 9390 5283) or contact the Australian Catholic Marriage & Family Council (02 9349 1710).

A resource of the Australian Catholic Marriage and Family Council for the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life.

Grandparents

Great Presence



IN TIMES OF RAPID CHANGE, POPE FRANCIS CONSTANTLY REMINDS US OF THE TIMELESS VALUE OF EACH GRANDPARENT AND HIS OR HER IRREPLACEABLE ROLE IN THE FAMILY AND IN SOCIETY. LET'S TAKE TIME TODAY TO REFLECT ON

GRANDPARENTS ALSO BENEFIT FROM GRANDCHILDREN. IT WORKS BOTH WAYS!

As one grandfather said, "They keep us young. We can enjoy playing games with them that we would never play with adults. And they keep us learning. We relearn by reflecting back on our childhood formation and we have to keep up with their way of speaking and their internet technology." (George)

GRANDPARENTS SPAN FIVE GENERATIONS

Grandparents usually can remember their own parents and grandparents as well as knowing the two generations that follow them. They are the only ones who carry with them the collective experience of five generations. This is a huge gift for grandchildren. Children's personal self-esteem is boosted by insights into their origins, by knowing their place in their family's history.

GRANDPARENTS HAVE THE SPECIAL GIFT OF 'PRESENCE'

The major faith influence of grandparents 'rubs off' from being around them. They don't have to be 'doing' so much as 'being' around – available to pick up children after school, playing backyard cricket, helping with homework, celebrating birthdays, reading stories, helping to build something.

SINCE THE START OF HIS PONTIFICATE, POPE FRANCIS HAS CONSTANTLY EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF GRANDPARENTS AND OF CHILDREN:

“How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society! How important it is to have intergenerational exchanges and dialogue, especially within the context of the family. Children and the elderly build the future of people: children because they lead history forward, the elderly because they transmit the experience and wisdom of their lives.”

“A people that does not care for its grandparents, a people that does not respect their grandparents, does not have a future, because they do not have a memory, they have lost their memory”.

“Grandparents are a treasure”

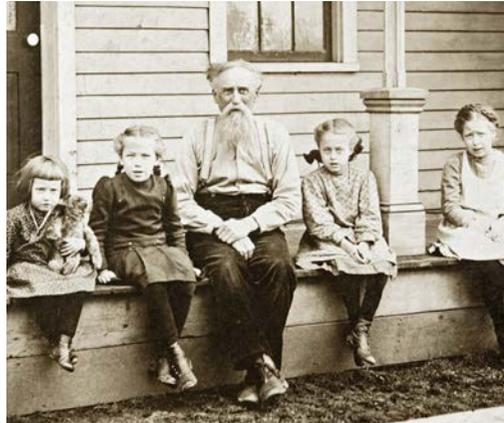
THE GIFT OF GRANDPARENTS IS FOUND IN ALL CULTURES

“When a grandfather dies, a whole library is buried with him” (African proverb). “Our grandmother used to tuck us into bed and tell us stories of our dreamtime. Much of our sense of being part of a people comes from her” (Aboriginal parent).



GRANDPARENTS HAVE GIFTED US WITH THE ORIGINS OF OUR FAITH TRADITION

For centuries, much of the Old Testament was passed down through the generations by an oral tradition. Grandparents were a revered part of that. Some of them are known by name, Abraham and Sarah, Jacob and Rachel, Moses, Miriam and Eleazar, to name but a few.



GRANDPARENTS HELP US TO INTEGRATE ‘FAITH AND LIFE’

They have a breadth of experience that helps them to see the inevitable ups and downs of life in better perspective. In particular, faith helps one to recognise the hand of God in daily events. Their very presence helps us to appreciate what is important in life and to sift out the distractions. Their faith allows them to thank God and to trust in him in all the daily events.

GRANDPARENTING CAN ALSO BE A TIME OF LOSS AND SUFFERING

The deepest hurts can come when we love most deeply. Grandparenting can be a time of loss and unfulfilled dreams. The inability to pass on our dearest values, our faith, can weigh heavily on us. We can experience a sense of helplessness when it seems that all one can do is to stand, like Mary and John at the foot of the Cross.

“EVERY CHILD DESERVES GRANDPARENTS WHO LOVE THEM UNCONDITIONALLY. EVERY GRANDPARENT NEEDS TO LOVE AND BE LOVED.”



‘Grandparents Are A Treasure’

(Pope Francis)

GRANDPARENTS ARE ‘GOOD COMPANY’ FOR OUR CHILDREN

We want our children to ‘keep good company’. What better ‘company’ than grandparents! Apart from parents, no one else loves their grandchildren more than grandparents and no one else yearns more to pass on their faith to them. And they do it so naturally – for example by being present at the milestones of family life (birth, Baptism, First Communion, weddings, funerals).

GRANDPARENTS HELP TO BRING OUT THE CENTRALITY OF OUR FAITH

In the rush and challenge of daily life, we can lose sight of the fact that life is a pilgrimage to the heavenly homeland. Old age is an important stage on the journey. It can be difficult to face. However, faith gives the certainty that those who believe in Christ “shall never die” (Jn 11:25). Being with grandparents who live this faith is a great gift to younger generations.

GRANDPARENTS ARE OUR BEST RESOURCE OF MEMORIES

They are each family’s ‘Central Bank’ of memories. “Every now and then I think of something about the past that I want to check on. Now that my grandmother has passed away, it is too late to ask. It’s part of the loss of her presence.” (Robert)

GRANDPARENTS PROVIDE THE LESSONS OF LIFE

At times we all have to face illness, relationship difficulties, financial challenges, death of loved ones. Grandparents have ‘seen it all’. Their experiences, even their own mistakes and setbacks, help us to develop a balanced view of how to move forward. When the grandparents have lived lives of faith, their experiences, even in different times, are invaluable guideposts.

GRANDPARENTS GIVE HOPE

Faith brings joy. Grandparents with the gift of faith have a quiet joy that is a sign of hope to younger generations. That joy comes from a lifetime of decisions to thank God in all things, to trust at all times. Each expresses it in his or her own unique way and provides it as a gift for grandchildren.