



Parish Grandparent Ministry Manual

“How important grandparents are for family life, for passing on the human and religious heritage which is so essential for each and every society.” – Pope Francis

1. Mission Statement:

The Archdiocese of Dubuque believes grandparents are essential for evangelizing their own grandchildren by leaving a legacy of faith through word, action, and their witness of love.

2. The Scope of Grandparent Ministry

Grandparent Ministry in the Archdiocese of Dubuque covers a multitude of forms and methods to aid grandparents in passing on the faith. Grandparent Ministry helps grandparents to share their love of Jesus with their grandchildren through parish offerings and Archdiocesan events.

The Rationale for Grandparent Ministry: Grandparent Ministry extends beyond showing pictures of adorable grandchildren, telling cute stories of toddlers, or sharing a grandchild’s attributes or accomplishments. Grandparent Ministry is all about the New Evangelization—the need to evangelize our own children and grandchildren. Grandparent Ministry is all about leaving a legacy of faith by sharing the faith we treasure with our beloved grandchildren.

Now is the time to begin this ministry. There is an urgency, as we are not getting any younger and our grandchildren are growing before our eyes (studies show our own children are “leaving” the Church by age twelve), with “nones,” the unaffiliated, as the fastest growing religious group in the United States. Also, cultural realities such as long-distant relationships and grandparents raising grandchildren affect our relationship with grown children and their children. Parents are to serve as “primary educators” of the faith, yet many of our own children (though fully catechized and initiated), have chosen to leave the faith or have simply neglected this role by being preoccupied with work, sports, culture, etc. Grandparent Ministry is vital because many of our parents are open to a grandparent’s loving influence on their children. Parents may not take their own children to church or pray with them at home but are open to a grandparent’s witness to love and faith.

3. Implementing Grandparenting Ministry in Parishes/Clusters

- **Consult:** Begin by consulting with the pastor/pastoral leadership to share the vision and asking for support and collaboration. Send your pastoral leadership the link to [Grandparent Ministry](#) materials and resources. Approval must be given by the pastor and other parish leadership before any further steps may be taken.
- **Form a Committee:** Start with men and women you know, who are active and interested members of the Church and are passionate about their grandchildren.
- **Work Closely with Pastoral Leadership:** Always keep the pastor/pastoral leadership informed of your ideas, seek help in meeting parish needs, collaborate in creating a plan for grandparent ministry, and work closely in implementing ideas (scheduling, materials, speakers, marketing, etc.).

- **Offer Parish/Cluster and Large/Small Group Event Opportunities:** Grandparents—as with all age demographics—have different needs, goals, availability, and learning styles. Therefore, it's wise to listen, discern, and then plan accordingly; the parish may have several different offerings in an annual plan: i.e., support groups, faith-sharing groups, one-time events. We recommend gathering grandparents who are interested in this important ministry of evangelization for an initial large group informational/listening session.
- **Get the Entire Parish/Cluster Involved:** Keep all members of your parish/cluster informed by placing quotes on the importance of grandparenting in your bulletins, creating Facebook posts on grandparenting, blessing and including grandparents when possible, and extending invitations to the entire parish/cluster to all events. You may even want to invite someone to speak to the entire parish on the importance of grandparent ministry, as it relates to evangelization.

4. Archdiocesan Grandparent Ministry

- **Parish Consultation:** The Archdiocese of Dubuque is committed to providing consultation, guidance, and recommended resources to any parish/cluster for implementing Grandparent Ministry. We are pleased to share the rationale—the pressing need for Grandparent Ministry—as well as ideas and resources for creating a parish/cluster plan. Please contact the Archdiocese of Dubuque Office of Adult Faith Formation for consultation.
- **Archdiocesan Events:** We realize the most important ministry occurs at the parish level, where parishioners are able to form relationships and create a plan geared toward their specific needs and desires. However, we have also learned there are offerings more easily presented at the archdiocesan level. Therefore, the Archdiocese of Dubuque is also committed to providing resources and opportunities for Grandparent Ministry at the archdiocesan level. This includes Archdiocesan Grandparent Conferences or workshops that can educate and motivate grandparents to become involved in Grandparent Ministry in their own parishes. Sometimes we need to be inspired by what is happening in other areas and to hear the success and stumbling of other parishes/clusters. These conferences and workshops can inspire as well as give practical ideas on how to live more intentionally our mission of forming our grandchildren in the faith.
- **Pilgrimage/prayer opportunities for grandparents/grandchildren:** We have designed opportunities for grandparents and grandchildren to gather to pray and play together. We also believe pilgrimage is an important, ancient tradition, suited well for grandparents/grandchildren, whether at the Cathedral of St. Raphael in Dubuque, the Basilica of St. Francis Xavier in Dyersville, the Trappist Monastery in Peosta, or any of the Religious Orders. Pilgrimages allow Christians to travel, pray, and have fun together on the journey of faith. We also encourage parishes to plan a parish Pray & Play, as well as a pilgrimage suited to grandparents/grandchildren. Check out this site for pilgrimage options: www.DBQArch.org/pilgrimages.

For further information on leaving a legacy of faith, visit: www.DBQArch.org/grandparenting.

[Resources for Grandparents \(Faith Sharing, Support Group, Books Discussion\)](#)

[Creative Ways for Passing on the Faith \(prayer, play, conversation, blessing, scripture\)](#)

[Inspirational Quotes on Grandparenting \(for bulletins\)](#)

[Grandparent Pray and Play Materials](#)

[Prayers and Blessings for the Feast of Joachim and Anne, Grandparents of Jesus](#)