

Grandparenting Matters



Hello Grandparents

Welcome to our 4th edition of Grandparenting Matters. This newsletter is prepared just for you, filled with love and encouragement.

Inside this issue

This edition explores Long-Distance Grandparenting, a topic from our recent 'Be Connected' event. Whether your grandchildren live a few towns away or across the globe, we're sharing encouragement and practical ideas to help you stay connected and pass on your faith. From creative ways to make visits memorable and using technology for deeper conversations, to the power of prayer as a lifeline across the distance, we've filled this issue with inspiration just for you.

Be sure to check out the results from our recent **Be Connected** event survey too—you're not alone in this journey! Also, check out the inspiring message given at the last event of bridging the technology gap across the generations by Pete Brown, Youth Minister.

STOP PRESS!!

Don't forget our next
Grandparenting event!
'Rooted...'

Saturday 15th March 2025
10.00am-12.30pm
at Moulton Parish Church
Do please join with us!



Closing the Distance – Long Distance Grandparenting

Long-distance grandparenting: the term itself sounds challenging, doesn't it? We know the feeling all too well. Our grandchildren live in London and Hampshire and with school schedules, sports matches, and times with their friends filling their days, a lot of our time is spent planning how to stay connected despite the miles.

When our children moved away for work and later started families of their own, we quickly realised we were now “long-distance grandparents.”! But rather than see distance as a barrier, we embraced it as an opportunity to get creative. Whether your grandchildren live two towns away or on the other side of the globe, we believe there's so much you can do to stay connected and pass on your faith

Connected through Prayer

Prayer is the most powerful way to close the distance, it transcends geography and brings our heart closer to theirs.

Each morning, we pray by name for our grandchildren, asking God to guide them in their schoolwork, friendships, and faith.

Our grandchildren are all young but we regularly say to them that we are praying for them. One day, we would love them to say, “Nana and Grandad, I've got a big test coming up—can you pray for me?” Just as their parents ask us to pray for things that are important to them and they can see the amazing impact of prayer, so we would love to see our grandchildren doing the same.

Making each visit Count

There's nothing quite like spending time together in person. We keep a family calendar with important dates like birthdays, school performances, sports days, and carol concerts. Armed with our Senior Railcards and a knack for finding the best travel deals, we plan trips to see them whenever we can. They are delighted for us to visit so that we can watch them playing football and cheer them on, watch them in school assemblies playing their instruments and singing in the choir at Christmas. They are so excited to see us and we have so much fun.



Grandparenting Matters
Grandparenting Matters
Grandparenting Matters

Grandparenting Matters
Grandparenting Matters
Grandparenting Matters

Inviting them to Stay



Every summer, we host a “Grandparents Week” in the summer and this last year another week just before Christmas, where the grandchildren come to stay with us. It’s an adventure for them —and for us! We’ve baked together, created elaborate treasure hunts in the garden, and even held “Nana’s MasterChef Challenge,” where they decorated cupcakes (and themselves).

We have even shared with them through photos how we support children in Bantama Christian School in Ghana and over last year

each of our grandchildren asked if they could share some of their pocket money to help buy desks for these children. These times are perfect for building memories and having those quiet moments to talk about God and His love for them. These small seeds of faith are precious gifts we can give them, no matter where we are.

Creative long-distance Communication

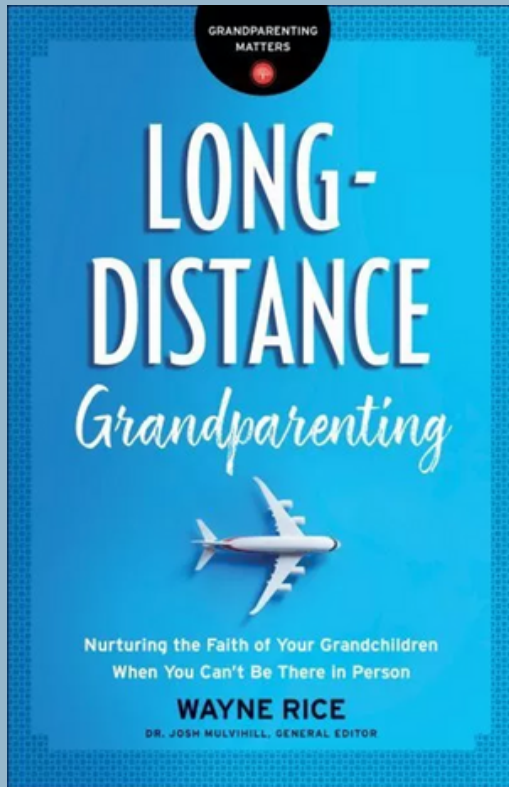
Technology is a game-changer. We’ve had endless fun with video calls, hearing their stories and even listening to impromptu concerts as they show off their developing musical talent. Sharing regular photos on WhatsApp and sending messages via their parents, keeps the connection alive. Telling them stories about our past and sharing photos of their parents when they were their age has been great fun. We’ve also rediscovered the joy of snail mail. Sending surprises occasionally in the post has been a hit.



Sharing faith across Generations

Passing down our faith and God’s love to our grandchildren even though we live at a distance from them is our heartfelt passion. During our visits, we share Bible stories, pray with them, share our faith stories and encourage them to join with us at church. Being a long-distance grandparent isn’t always easy, but it’s deeply rewarding. Whether through prayer, planning trips, or staying connected through video calls and texts, there are countless ways to be a significant influence in your grandchildren’s lives. Let’s embrace the journey together!

GET CONNECTED



Looking for encouragement and practical ideas on staying connected with your grandchildren from afar? Wayne Rice's book, *Long-Distance Grandparenting*, offers inspiring stories and creative ways for building meaningful relationships, no matter how many are the miles between you.

Be Connected



Psalm 78 : 4-7

...‘so each generation should set its hope anew on God’...

Our Grandparenting event in October 24 focused on being connected to our grandchildren, both across distance and across generations. Our hope is that through this we might share God's love and purposes with them, that 'each generation should set its hope anew on God'. Can you imagine the difference this would make? Let's hold tight to these verses from Psalm 78:4-7.

Psalm 78 : 4-7

'We will not hide these truths from our children; we will tell the next generation about the glorious deeds of the Lord, about his power and his mighty wonders. For he issued his laws to Jacob; he gave his instructions to Israel. He commanded our ancestors to teach them to their children, so that the next generation might know them - even the children not yet born - and they in turn will teach their own children, so each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.'

Inspiring Grandparents

Grandparenting at a Distance – How Far Away?

At our last Grandparenting Event on 12th October 2024, called “Be Connected” a quick survey amongst those who were there provided some very interesting information about our distance from our grandchildren and the amount of contact we have with them:

148 grandchildren were represented by the 52 grandparents completing the survey

50% of the grandparents had some grandchildren who lived 10 or less miles away.

Of all the grandparents:

75% had some grandchildren living over 20 miles away

69% had some grandchildren living over 50 miles away

32% had all their grandchildren living over 50 miles away

16% had some grandchildren living abroad

78% saw some grandchildren at least monthly

53% saw some grandchildren at least weekly

50% only saw some of their grandchildren every 3 months – 2 years.

Regarding factors that helped the grandparents to stay in touch with their grandchildren:

56% said technology was important

53% felt visiting was important

20% felt prayer important

A & AM Thompson 10.2024



A Powerful Way to Stay Connected

We have discovered one of the most powerful ways to stay connected with our grandchildren is through prayer!

Whether they live around the corner or hundreds of miles away, prayer keeps us close to their hearts and their daily lives.



It's become a meaningful rhythm in our lives, reminding us that distance doesn't limit the power of prayer. We pray for each grandchild by name, asking God to help them grow in their faith, make wise choices, feel His love and know His blessing in their daily challenges.

What we can pray for :

Colossians 1:9-12 is a wonderful guide for praying for our Grandchildren

v9: 'For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives',

Pray regularly and earnestly that they might know God's will.

Pray for Spiritual Growth by growing in wisdom, understanding and knowledge of God.

v10: 'so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God',

Pray for a Godly Lifestyle: that their lives would be pleasing to God, making good choices in line with His truth.

Pray for Productive Lives: that they would bear fruit in every good work and make a positive impact on those around them.

v11: 'being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,'

Pray for Strength in Challenges: that they would be strengthened by God's power, especially during struggles.

Pray for Patience and Endurance: that they would face difficult situations with grace and resilience.

v12: 'and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light'.

Pray for a Joyful Disposition: that they would be filled with gratitude and joy in their everyday lives.

Pray for a Godly Identity: that they would know they are loved and valued as children of God.

Creative Prayer Reminders

To keep prayer at the forefront of our daily routines, here's a few creative ways to stay reminded!

Why not have a set of mugs featuring photos of your grandchildren. Each morning, as you sip your tea, pray for the grandchild on the mug. It's a simple yet a meaningful reminder to lift them up to God.

You may wish to ask your grandchildren, "How can we pray for you this week?" Sometimes they share a school challenge or a friendship issue. Knowing we're praying gives them comfort, reminds them of God's care in every part of life and that they are not alone.

Praying Together as Grandparents

You're not alone in this either! If you don't have a spouse to pray with, why not occasionally invite another grandparent you know for a prayer time together, when you can lift up your grandchildren confidentially in prayer. It's so encouraging to share stories, swap prayer needs, (where permission allows) and cheer each other and trust God together.

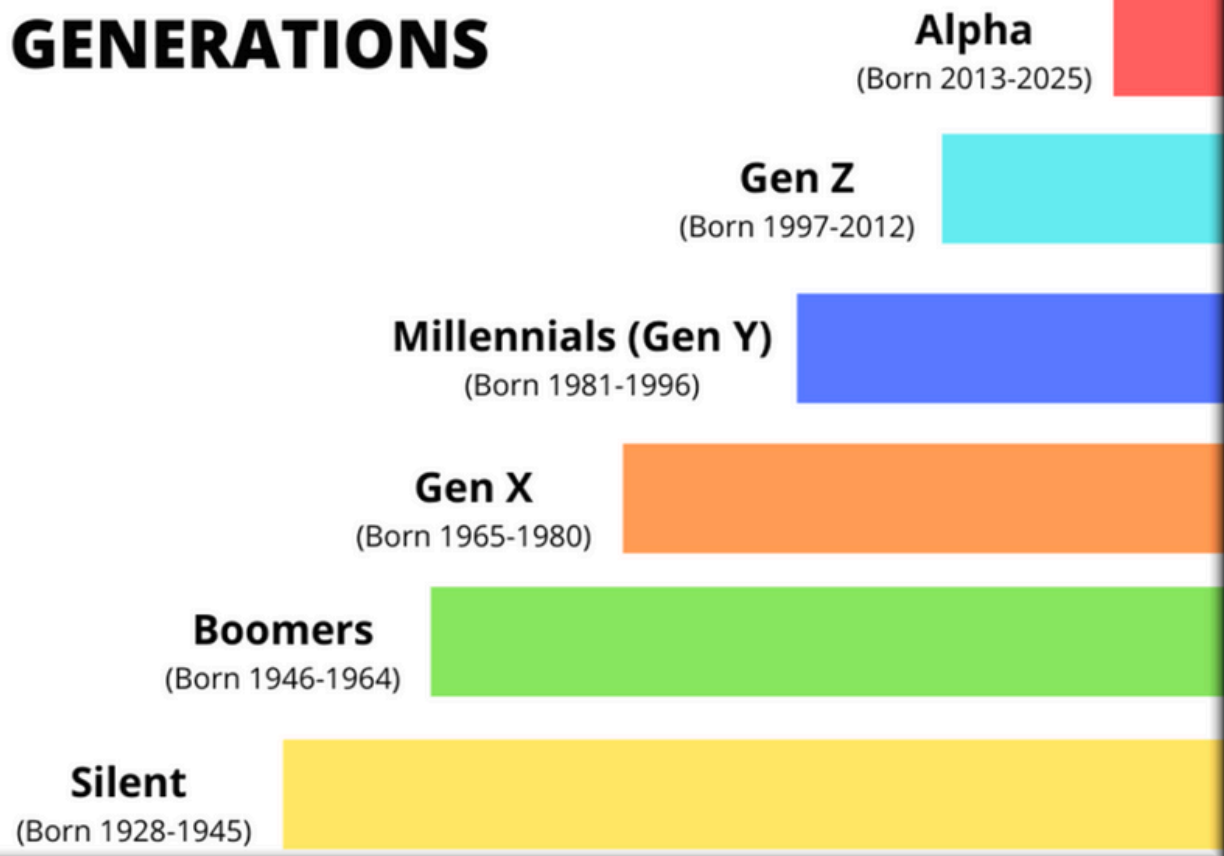
Keep Praying—It Makes a Difference!

Prayer makes a lasting difference, even when we can't always see the results immediately. It shapes our grandchildren's hearts, influences their choices, and strengthens their faith journey. Let's commit together to being grandparents who pray passionately, believing that God is at work in their lives.

How about using 1 Colossians v 9-12 today? Pick a verse, grab a photo, and start praying—one grandchild at a time. Let's stay connected through the most powerful connection of all: prayer!



GENERATIONS



Bridging the Gap between Generations

Today's grandchildren, from Generation Z (born 1997–2012) and Generation Alpha (born 2013 onwards, and now Generation Beta from 2025), are growing up in a world quite different from the one we knew as children. Shaped by constant digital connection, social movements, and global challenges, these young generations think, learn, and relate differently. As Christian grandparents, we have a wonderful opportunity to be faith-filled guides, speaking into their lives with wisdom, encouragement, and love.

How Are These Generations Different?

Generation Z is known for being digitally fluent, socially conscious, and passionate about justice and authenticity. They value openness and personal expression, often questioning tradition but craving genuine relationships and purpose. Generation Alpha, the youngest, (and now Gen Beta) has never known a world without smart devices. Their learning is shaped by interactive screens, and they're growing up with rapid access to information but sometimes less personal interaction.

So How Can We Connect Across the Generational Gap?

Enter Their Digital World:

Instead of feeling left out, why not learn about their world? Send texts, join family group chats, and utilise facetime calls. If they love Minecraft, ask them to show you their creations. If an app puzzles you, ask them to explain it. This simple effort shows you care about their world too.



Be a Storyteller:

Both generations value authenticity. Share real stories of your faith journey—the highs, lows, and answered prayers. Instead of sermons, use personal experiences: “When I was scared about a job loss, I prayed, and God provided.” Your openness invites trust.

Encourage Faith Conversations: Generation Z, in particular, asks big questions. Don't shy away from tough topics like purpose, suffering, or identity. If they ask something you can't answer, admit it and explore the Bible together. Use resources like podcasts or The Bible Project videos to spark deeper conversations.

You Can Make a Difference!

Grandparenting Generation Z and Alpha may feel different, but it's a beautiful, God-given opportunity. By staying curious, being authentic, and praying faithfully, you can leave a lasting legacy of faith. Let's keep pointing our grandchildren to Jesus, one heartfelt conversation and prayer at a time.



Grandparenting Trivia Quiz

Test your knowledge with these 10 fun trivia questions about grandparenting and faith:

1. Who was the oldest person mentioned in the Bible?
2. Which grandparent in the Bible was known for his wisdom and leadership?
3. How many of Jacobs family went to Egypt?
4. Which book of the Bible mentions 'Children's children are a crown to the aged'?
5. Who was Timothy's grandmother who was also known for her faith?
6. What is the traditional gift associated with a grandparent's 50th wedding anniversary?
7. Who was the great grandmother of King David?
8. Which parable talks of small beginnings leading to a big impact?

You can find the answers on the back page!





Generation Z!



STOP PRESS!!

Here is the inspirational talk by our Youth Minister, Pete Brown, on Generation Z, given at our last grandparenting event. Lets tuck in to it and deepen our understanding of how to better relate to our Gen Z family members.

Dear wonderful Grandparents,

I am not a grandparent. In fact, I am not even a parent. I am but a 26-year-old spring chicken who doesn't understand the joys and challenges of parenting and grandparenting. I have a deep respect for you; you will have necessarily sacrificed a great deal for your kids and grandkids. I don't have the authority to tell you how to be a better Christian grandparent.

I do, however, have a number of years' experience working with young people from Generation Z (~1996-2012) and Alpha (~2012-present); into which your grandchildren likely were born. I do hope this article is therefore of some use to you..! Let me begin with an alarming (yet perhaps not entirely surprising) statistic:

"Children aged 5 to 15 are now spending an average of 5 hours and 24 minutes per day engaged in social media activity" according to the UK Parliament. For some young people that time could rise to 15 or so hours a day on social media. Gen Z/Alpha are also affectionately known as the 'Brain rot' generation. The older ones will acknowledge this and sometimes proudly claim this title, but the younger ones are broadly unaware. Technology is absolutely brilliant; think of the genius of the devices and inventions you use every day! What a brilliant way for humans to image God's creativity. That, however, of course doesn't mean there are no issues which come with it...

Brain rot describes the way in which spending so much time watching short videos with low quality information on social media ruins their attention span and ability to connect on a meaningful level with other human beings. It is, quote: "a condition of mental fogginess, lethargy, reduced attention span and cognitive decline that results from an overabundance of screen time." TikTok, among other social media platforms, along with the rise of short videos, is a major cause for this. A complex algorithm presents young people with a personalised feed of short videos, from which they are able to move on as soon as they want. Whilst there's lots of creativity and brilliance on the platform, it's highly addictive and these short videos have had a negative effect on young peoples' attention spans.

One example would be: there are currently around 80 or so "episodes" of 'skibidi toilet' – disturbing cartoon videos with heads coming out of toilets... and skibidi toilet related videos had been viewed more than 65 billion times by November 2023. That figure will be much higher now; it's likely that every single person in secondary school will be aware of it. Look it up at your own peril.

According to the NHS, 'In young people aged 17–19 years, rates of a probable mental disorder rose from 1 in 10 (10.1%) to 1 in 6 (17.7%) in 2020. Rates were stable between 2020 and 2021, but then increased from 1 in 6 (17.4%) in 2021 to 1 in 4 (25.7%) in 2022.' It was then estimated that we were at 1 in 3 in 2024. Mental health has become the key issue facing young people today. The thing is, Young people acknowledge that social media is the main factor in their poor mental health, but will still say they cannot live without it.



Don't fear. Your job is not to stay up-to-date. They don't want you to be using their language or pretending you're with it. They don't care if you know how to work an iPad or not. This generation value authenticity more than anything and just want you to be real with them, to listen and to love them. Don't panic either – and don't knee jerk react and stop them from ever using screens again. Indeed, there are some young people waking up to the reality that, as wonderful as modern technology is, it can be deeply harmful. One of our young people got rid of his phone for a while due to addiction to it.

You have an incredible chance and a large part to play in raising the next generation for Christ. Many, many times I have heard people say they're too old to work with children and young people. 'Not on their level.' 'They don't understand them'. Please do not believe that. In fact – from the book 'Sticky Faith' – research and advice about the factors which help young people keep their Christian faith – one of the key factors, if not the key factor was intergenerational relationships. You're important.

Every piece of youth ministry literature I have ever read has agreed on one thing: Relationships are central in youth ministry and in discipleship of our young people.

How then do you build relationships? Below are just a few practical tips. I'm aware that I don't know how this works in a family context, and you will know how best to apply this to your own family. It's also that little bit more difficult for those of you who live far away from your grandchildren!



You have an incredible chance with shared activities. This can be trips out together, but it can be simple things too such as eating a meal together. Watching a film. Going on a walk. Really try and limit, where that is possible for you, the amount of time they will be spending on screens by doing other things together.

Taking an interest. Listen and remember things which are going on in their lives which are important to them. Ask them about that stuff to show you remember. Projects with a goal.

That doesn't have to be a big thing. I remember I used to love making cakes and tiffin with my granny. Well – she'd make it and I'd "help" !



Build relationships where conversations about Jesus can emerge naturally. And show that Jesus makes a difference in your life. If young people don't see the difference that Jesus makes, they may believe it all to be true, but they won't think he makes any difference to their lives.

If you read nothing else: Listen to them and model what it is to live out your Christian faith. Pray for them each day. Where possible, do things together and you will find those chances to talk about faith with them, to plant those seeds in their lives.

A word on that verse: 'Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.' – please do not see this as a guarantee – and therefore feel immense guilt when your child or grandchild does indeed depart from the way they should go. There will be some reading this who did train their children up in the faith, but have seen them turn away. Please do not see this as your fault. The verse is a 'truism' – like 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away' – great general advice to be healthy and eat fruit. But it's not a guarantee that you'll never get sick if you eat an apple every day. This scripture is great advice, but not a guarantee. Even one of Jesus's disciples rejected him.

One of my favourite verses is 1 Corinthians 3:6:

You cannot make a fully fledged plant just out of materials; by sticking leaves together or by stretching the seed out. You have to plant it, water it and leave it. And somehow, who knows how really, it grows.

The whole church has a responsibility to plant and water the seeds of faith in their lives. However it is God who does the work. And we can rest in that He is the one who grows it.

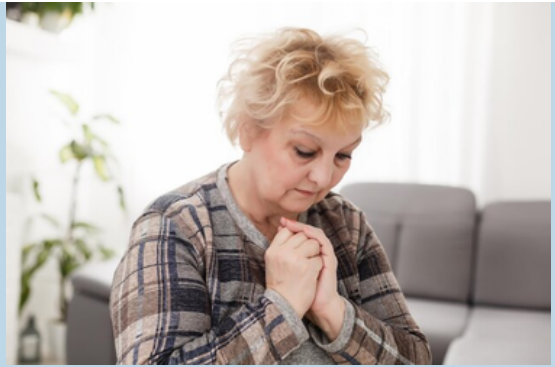
Peter Brown

Youth Minister, Moulton Parish Church

A Prayer

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the precious gift of being grandparents. We praise You for the unique role You have given us in the lives of our grandchildren, whether they live nearby or far away. Help us to embrace this calling with wisdom, love, and creativity.



Lord, we lift our grandchildren to You by name. May You guide their hearts and minds, helping them grow in faith, wisdom, and character. When we cannot be physically present, remind us that prayer bridges every distance. May our prayers bring Your protection, peace, and blessing into their daily lives. Strengthen their faith, help them make wise choices, and surround them with godly friends and mentors who will encourage them to follow You.

Father, grant us creativity as we seek to stay connected despite the miles. Help us make the most of every visit, cherishing the moments we share together. May our time be filled with laughter, encouragement, and meaningful conversations that reflect Your love. Let us be intentional in sharing our stories of faith, answering their questions with honesty, and showing them Your faithfulness throughout our lives.

We thank You for the ways technology can help us stay close. Bless our efforts as we use video calls, messages, and letters to keep our relationships strong. May every interaction, no matter how simple, remind our grandchildren of our love and Your constant presence in their lives.

Lord, we pray for our own hearts as grandparents. Give us patience and endurance when we feel the ache of distance. Fill us with joy and gratitude for the role we play in their spiritual growth. May we be faithful in praying for them, knowing that Your Word promises lasting fruit when we seek You on their behalf.

We also pray for unity across generations. In a world that changes so quickly, help us be bridges of faith and love. Show us how to enter their world with grace, understanding their challenges while pointing them to Your unchanging truth.

Finally, Lord, bless every Christian grandparent. Unite us in prayer and encouragement as we seek to make a difference in the next generation. May our grandchildren grow to know, love, and serve You with all their hearts.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

**We look forward to seeing you at our next Grandparenting Event
on Saturday 15th March 2025. 10.00am – 12.30pm!**

Please feel free to invite other Christian Grandparents you know from other churches near and far as we join together in this growing community of Christian Grandparents.

Together we'll explore God's timeless call for grandparents, diving into scripture to uncover the incredible role you play in shaping the faith and future of your family. With practical tools and biblical insights we will talk together about ways of overcoming challenges while building a legacy rooted in God's love and truth.

We hope you will join us!

**Please register in advance by emailing
christiangrandparents@btinternet.com
or phoning 07986 042553**



This newsletter was produced by the Grandparenting Ministry Team at Moulton Parish Church, Northamptonshire, NN3 7SW

You can find more information on our Grandparenting Ministry on our website,

<https://www.moultonchurch.co.uk>

Or contact Martyn and Angela Thompson by:

email: Christiangrandparents@btinternet.com

phone: 07986 042553

Grandparenting Matters



Rooted...

An Inspirational and encouraging
event for Christian Grandparents

Saturday 15th March 2025

10am -12.30pm

(Join us at 9.45 for coffee)

Moulton Parish Church, NN3 7SW

Please register in advance by emailing:
christiangrandparents@btinternet.com

or

phone 07986 042553

Inspire Series - Christian Grandparenting

Answers to Trivia Quiz: 1. Methuselah (Genesis 5:27); 2. Solomon (1 Kings 4:29-34); 3. 70 (Genesis 46:27); 4. Proverbs 17:6; 5. Lois (2 Timothy 1:5); 6. Gold; 7. Ruth. 8. The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32);