



Mental Health
365, Inc.
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Start Here:

Why This Keepsake-Journal Matters

Grandparent + Grandchild Weekly Connection Keepsake-Journal

A 7-week faith-friendly journey of memory, meaning, and small holy moments



This keepsake-journal was created to help Catholic grandparents and grandchildren slow down, notice one another, pray together, and remember the small moments that shape a family.

Research continues to affirm what many families already know by heart: children grow through steady, caring, interactive relationships. When a child shares a thought, feeling, question, or story — and a loving adult responds with attention — something important is happening. The child is learning, “I matter. I am heard. I belong.”



Grandparents are uniquely positioned to offer this kind of presence.

They carry memory, faith, family history, patience, humor, and wisdom. When they sit with a grandchild and say, “That matters. Let me write it down,” they are doing more than filling out a page. They are helping form a child’s sense of identity.



This journal is simple on purpose.

It gives grandparents and grandchildren a place to write, draw, reflect, pray, and remember. Over time, these pages become more than weekly activities. They become a living record of love.

— ♥ —
A walk.
A question.
A drawing.
A prayer.
A story.
A shared memory.
— ♥ —



“Small moments become lasting memories.”



One day, these pages may be handed back to the grandchild as a reminder:

“You were loved.”

“You were listened to.”



“You belonged.”

“God was with us.”



Created by Edward L. De La Loza

Bridging mental health, Catholic faith, and family formation





What Grows Through Journaling?

When a grandparent and grandchild journal together,
something deeper begins to form.

The child is not simply filling in blanks.
The grandparent is not simply recording a memory.

*“ Together, they are building what
I call contextual identity. ”*

A child grows within a living context: family, faith,
relationships, parish, school, neighborhood, culture,
tradition, prayer, encouragement, and love. These layers
shape how a child begins to understand who they are,
where they come from, and how they are called to live.



This is why the journal matters.

It gives the child a repeated experience of being
noticed, heard, guided, and blessed. It also gives
the grandparent a meaningful way to remain
engaged, purposeful, and connected across generations.



The Seven Dimensions Work Together

The 7-DTL model invites families to grow across seven connected dimensions:

- Biological** — caring for the body
- Psychological** — naming feelings and building inner strength
- Relational** — growing love, trust, and connection
- Philosophical/Spiritual** — noticing God, meaning, and values
- Inspirational** — discovering gifts, beauty, and hope
- Educational** — learning, wondering, and growing wisdom
- Social** — building belonging, service, and community



*Each dimension is valuable. But together, they create something more powerful.
Body, mind, heart, faith, imagination, learning, and belonging begin to support
one another. This synergy helps a child grow toward their God-given identity —
more grounded, more connected, more hopeful, and more able to offer their
gifts to the world.*



*Developed through the lens of mental health, Catholic faith,
and intergenerational family formation.*



Looking Ahead:

A Gift for Today — and for Years to Come

This keepsake-journal is not meant to be perfect. It is meant to be personal.
A child's drawing may be simple. A grandparent's note may be brief.
A prayer may be only one sentence.
That is enough.

“The goal is not perfection. The goal is presence.”



For the grandchild

This journal can become
a treasure of belonging —
a record of the grandparent's
voice, attention, wisdom, faith,
humor, and love.



For the grandparent

It becomes a reminder of
something deeply important:

- ♥ “I helped shape a life.”
- ♥ “I passed on faith.”
- ♥ “I gave my grandchild memories.”
- ♥ “I contributed to our family's story.”



In later years, these pages may become part of the child's own family narrative. They may remember the walk, the prayer, the cinnamon roll after Mass, the question asked with love, the picture drawn, the blessing spoken, or the moment a grandparent wrote down their words because they mattered.



That is the quiet power of a keepsake-journal.
It helps love become visible.



It helps memory become lasting.



It helps faith become part of the family story.



And through the wisdom, love, and grace of God,
it helps grandparents and grandchildren grow together
toward the people they are called to become.

- ♥ One week.
- ♥ One memory.
- ♥ One prayer.
- ♥ One meaningful connection.

Together, we grow closer in love, faith, and purpose.

References & Research Notes

Research-informed foundations for this keepsake-journal

This keepsake-journal is inspired by research and practice in child development, family memory, intergenerational connection, cognitive health, and Catholic family formation.



1



Child development and relationships

The Harvard Center on the Developing Child explains that early brain architecture is built over time and shaped by experience. It also highlights the importance of 'serve and return' relationships — the back-and-forth moments when a child reaches out and a caring adult responds.

2



Whole-child growth

Harvard's InBrief on the science of early childhood development also notes that cognitive, emotional, and social capacities are deeply intertwined throughout life. This supports the 7-DTL idea that body, mind, relationships, faith, learning, inspiration, and community work together rather than separately.

3



Grandparenting and cognitive health

Research discussed by the American Psychological Association and Psychology Today suggests that grandparents who care for grandchildren may show stronger memory and verbal fluency, and caregiving grandmothers in the reviewed study showed less cognitive decline over time.

4



Grandmothers, caregiving, and the brain

A 2025 neuroscience study found that grandchildren can be represented in grandmothers' brains as a distinct and meaningful social category, connected with affection and supportive caregiving.

5



Family memory and identity

NDSU Extension describes grandparents as bridges to the past and emphasizes their role as family historians, mentors, storytellers, teachers, and stress buffers. Passing on memories can connect generations, teach values, bestow identity, and support meaning in later life.

6



Contextual identity

The ecological systems model helps explain that a child develops within layers of influence — family, school, community, culture, values, media, and life events. This supports the idea that identity is shaped within a meaningful context of relationships and experiences.



These summaries are offered in a family-friendly voice rather than as technical abstracts.



See recommended reading and listening on the next page.



Recommended Reading & Listening

Grow in faith. Grow in wisdom. Grow together.

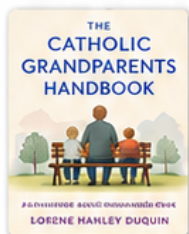
These books and audio resources can inspire grandparents and grandchildren to pray, learn, reflect, and grow closer to one another and to God.



Many of these titles can be found through local libraries, Catholic bookstores, Amazon, Audible, or other booksellers.



For Catholic Grandparents and Faith Formation



The Catholic Grandparents Handbook

by Lorene Hanley Duquin

Creative, practical, and faith-filled ideas for showing love, sharing faith, and building strong family memories. A perfect companion for this series.



For Prayer and Spiritual Encouragement



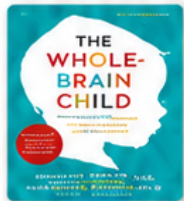
Bless My Grandchild: A Catholic Prayer Book for Grandparents

by Julie Cragon

A beautiful collection of prayers, blessings, and reflections to help grandparents lift their grandchildren to God and trust in His loving plan for their lives.



For Understanding Children and the Developing Brain



The Whole-Brain Child

by Daniel J. Siegel, M.D., and Tina Payne Bryson, Ph.D.

A clear, encouraging guide to help adults understand how children's brains grow and how relationships shape their emotions, behavior, and learning.



For Family Stories and Memory Keeping



Making Memories for Grandchildren

by NDSU Extension

Practical ideas for sharing stories, photos, recipes, traditions, faith memories, and family history. A wonderful resource for creating a legacy of love.



The best gift we can give our grandchildren is not things, but our time, our attention, and our faith.



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A Note for Families

This resource is faith-friendly and research-informed.

Families are encouraged to use Catholic wisdom and discretion when selecting outside books, videos, or listening resources.

Not every recommended title is written from a Catholic perspective, but many can offer helpful insights when received through the lens of faith, prudence, and family values.



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for Everybody Everywhere.



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5