

BANANAS HANDOUT

Bridging the Miles and the Years

For some of us, relatives who belong in the traditional family picture might live far away. But your family can still share in the joy of growing together. Here are some suggestions or “gifts” to help the children and adults in your family stay close to one another.

For You and Your Child to Send to Grandparents

- Create a height chart decorated with drawings; send yearly updates.
- Start an original story, send it to the grandparents to write the next chapter. When the story is sent back, add chapter 3 and so on.
- Have the child make a collage of what grandparents mean to him/her using magazines, cards, etc.
- Tape-record the grandchild’s and parent’s voices while singing, talking about life, reciting poems, reading an original story, or sending some other special message. These can be mailed at special times of the year, like birthdays or holidays.
- Help the child write a message on the back of homework samples.
- Frame a child’s artwork for a special gift.
- Make gifts using a computer and photos of your child (you can scan prints or use digital photos): print photos onto heat-transfer paper and iron the image onto a shirt or piece of fabric to make a pillow or wall-hanging. Many photo labs offer gifts that can be made from your photographs: cups, paperweights and 12-month calendars.
- Get babies and toddlers into the act by sharing prints of their hands and/or feet.



For Grandparents and Grandchildren to Exchange

- Send photos of yourself doing favorite activities; write a story about the picture.
- Plant a tree or flowering shrub in honor of a child or grandparent. Take photos to show how tall it has grown. If possible, send along a cutting to grow a “twin” at the other end of the line.



For Grandparents to Send to Grandchildren

- When eating in restaurants, save your placemats to use as stationery; write a message to your grandchild.
- Write a message on a balloon that will show up when blown up.
- Write a mystery letter in invisible ink (using milk, lemon juice, etc.) with instructions on how the child can make the words appear.
- Tape-record yourself reading a favorite story, putting in the beeps or chimes to indicate where to turn the pages. Send the book and the tape together.
- Share your recipe for a family favorite (cookies, spaghetti sauce, etc.); something your grandchild or their parent likes to eat.
- Send your grandchild a photo of the child’s parent when s/he was the same age as your grandchild is now.
- Write a story about how you and your family spent the holidays when you were young – to introduce your grandchildren to ancestors they never had a chance to meet.
- Collect mementos to explain the history of your family; use an album or a notebook.
- A surefire winner – the traditional, universal symbol of love: send food!

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