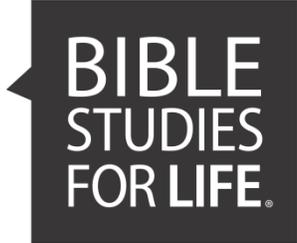


## EXTRA! Ideas for Adults – Dealing With Messy Relationships Session 6

Date: May 31, 2020

Accept

The Point: Strong relationships are not hindered by differences of opinion.

The logo for Bible Studies for Life, featuring the text "BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE" in white, sans-serif, uppercase letters on a dark grey background. The text is arranged in three lines: "BIBLE" on the top line, "STUDIES" on the middle line, and "FOR LIFE" on the bottom line. A small registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of "FOR LIFE".

### Get Into the Study

Use the following information to introduce Question #1.

The Gerber Baby Products Company has a ten-year history of including all babies in their Gerber spokesbaby family. Bill Partyka, president and CEO of Gerber Baby Company says, “At a time when we are yearning for connection and unity, Magnolia and her family remind us of the many things that bring us together: our desire to love and be loved, our need to find belonging, and our recognition that family goes way beyond biology.”

Since their annual Photo Search began in 2010 Gerber has featured a baby with Down Syndrome, babies of at least four races and cultures, and now a baby who is adopted.

Magnolia Early, the California 1-year old, was selected for her “joyful expression, playful smile, and warm, engaging gaze.”

Her mother added, “Adoption is incredibly special to our family’s story,” Earl said. “Winning Photo Search is an opportunity to tell Magnolia’s story and shed light on all the beautiful and different ways families are made.”

Ask: *What brings us together as Christians? How do we find similarities that help us build relationships?* Continue to question 1 (How do you decide what’s not worth arguing about?)

Information for this post was gleaned from:

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/2020/05/08/gerber-spokesbaby-californias-magnolia-earl-wins-2020-photo-search/3097051001/>

<https://www.parents.com/news/new-gerber-baby-2020/>

## Study the Bible

*Use the following information to supplement Question #5.*

One of God's gifts during COVID-19 social distancing is repeated experience with the fact that church goes beyond the four walls of a worship/learning building, and fellowship goes beyond shaking hands and hugging necks. Believers are discovering ways to connect that bring the "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" described in Romans 14:17.

Share this news item:

Eleven-year-old Emerson Weber sent her postal carrier a letter to thank him for his work amid the coronavirus pandemic. She watched him smile when he removed her letter from the mailbox. She figured she had made his day and reached her goal. But that's not how the story ended.

Her letter to her postal carrier began: "I'm Emerson. You may know me as the person that lives here that writes a lot of letters & decorated the envelopes. Well, I wanted to thank you for taking my letters and delivering them. You are very important to me. I make people happy with my letters, but you do too..."

Emerson received in return an outpouring of letters from postal carriers. Her care created unexpected connections. The content even includes corny jokes. One letter writer asked if she would write to a son in Kuwait. Others asked to drop her a line from time to time.

Emerson's dad said, "It is relatively easy, if we take the time, to give others the one thing they need to be well—human connection...we all just want to be seen, known, and loved."

Interestingly Emerson had never met her postal carrier. She reached out amidst social distancing and met him only after the letter.

*Ask: How can the written word share Christ's love in ways a hug or handshake might not be able to do? Discuss Question 5 (How does serving Christ in this way change how we approach disagreements?).*

Information for this post was gleaned from:

<https://www.thenewscommenter.com/news/good-news-11-year-old-sends-thank-you-letter-to-mailman-receives-outpour-of-appreciation-packages-from-post-office/1308503>

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/columns/heidi-stevens/ct-heidi-stevens-girl-befriends-mail-carrier-flooded-with-letters-0507-20200507-wxh7jpavojej7kvdz54ak7bywi-story.html>

— Karen Dockrey wrote these Leader Extras. Karen is a managing editor, teacher, and author of 30 books. Karen is an active member of a local church near Huntsville, Alabama.

## **Additional Questions**

### **Icebreakers**

- Who do you know that demonstrates genuine acceptance of others?
- When have you seen an act of acceptance?
- When have you been the grateful recipient of another's acceptance?

### **Romans 14:1-4**

- How would you summarize Paul's instruction in these verses?
- How should we behave when we disagree as Christ-followers?
- What issues provide opportunities for Christians to treat one another with patience and understanding?

### **Romans 14:13-15**

- How would you summarize Paul's words of caution in verse 13?
- What should we do instead of judging fellow Christians?
- What's your initial reaction to Paul's message in verse 15?

### **Romans 14:16-19**

- How would you describe our responsibility for building peace among Christ-followers?
- How can a strong Christian use his or her strength to help other Christians?
- What can you do this week to spread peace and mutual edification among Christians?