



EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 4: Joy in Knowing Jesus

Suggested Week of Use: September 26, 2021

Core Passage: Philippians 3:8-21

News Story Summary

Ninety-nine-year-old Mary O’Neill and two-year-old Benjamin Olson are next door neighbors in Minneapolis. However, during the isolation created by the pandemic, not only were O’Neill and Benjamin neighbors, but they also became friends. This unlikely pairing was fostered initially by waves from a distance that eventually led to “cane ball” and lengthy conversations at the fence. Upon the ease of some COVID restrictions, O’Neill and Benjamin’s interactions became more frequent and included visits to O’Neill’s home. According to Benjamin’s mother, ““you wouldn’t have guessed that a 99-year-old and a 2-year-old would be friends, but they can be. And they both get a lot out of it.””

For more about this story, search “A 99-year-old woman and a 2-year-old boy formed an unlikely friendship across their fence during the pandemic”

Focus Attention

To supplement the Ask idea under Focus Attention, after discussing the closeness in proximity when forming relationships, share the story about 99-year-old Mary O’Neill and 2-year-old Benjamin. Discuss how this unlikely friendship developed in terms of the time, effort, and intentionality shown by both O’Neill and Benjamin.

Summarize and Challenge

To supplement the Challenge idea under Summarize and Challenge, after the group answers the question concerning encouraging one another in spiritual growth, remind them of the story about 99-year-old Mary O’Neill and 2-year-old Benjamin. Lead a discussion using the following questions: In what ways might O’Neill and Benjamin encourage each other? Could we also use these same means of encouragement in helping one another in spiritual growth?