



# Transferring Cherished Possessions

## LESSON 4: HOW CAN WE COMMUNICATE WITHOUT CONFLICT?

### SIBLINGS, SPOUSES, AND SQUABBLES VIGNETTE

Maggie (55) and John (60) have been married for 32 years and have 2 grown children: Amber (30, adopted) and Chris (28, biological). During Thanksgiving dinner, Maggie and John suggest that it's a good time to discuss creating a distribution plan for a few cherished household items. Together with their spouses, they look at the inventory that Maggie and John have set out and begin discussing what they each would like to have. It went smoothly until both Amber and Emily (Chris' wife) wanted Maggie's dish set that belonged to her mother and grandmother. To add to the chaos, Joe (Amber's husband) and Chris began to bicker over a signed baseball that belonged to John.

#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Emily spends most Sundays with her mother-in-law helping her cook. They typically use the dish set when eating Sunday dinners together as a family. Emily has always admired the dishes and would like to have them.
- Amber lives out of state and is unable to visit her parents as frequently as Chris. She only eats off the dishes if she's in town over a major holiday. The dish set has been in Maggie's family for 3 generations. Amber always assumed they'd go to her as the oldest child.
- John caught the baseball when he took his son and son-in-law to a major league game together.
- Joe played baseball through college and loves the sport. He attended several baseball games with his father-in-law over the years.
- Chris has fond memories of that game and watching his dad make the catch. As John's son (opposed to "just" his son-in-law, according to Chris), Chris feels it should go to him automatically.
- Amber and Chris also begin to bicker in defense of their spouses.

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#### ACTIVITY:

What would you do if you were John and Maggie? Why?

What should the family do to increase clarity and decrease conflict concerning these cherished possessions?