

FIRES

Family
Intercommunication
Relationships
Experiences
Services



by Fr. Gabriel Calvo

When *Families Intercommunicate*

The members will have deep *Relationships*

Which engender rich *Experiences*

Which motivate them to be ready to and desire

To be of *Service* to others

Love is the most powerful, universal and mysterious of the cosmic energies...

Love is experienced inside of Families and given to the world...

Love begins when communication begins...

Communication begins when persons encounter themselves...

The encounter is a gift from God to each family that is open to Him, and therefore close to Him.

But we must prepare to receive this gift.

FIRES wants to help each family to discover and to experience the Love of God, who *is* Love, as He manifests that Love through the divine energy of love within the family...

FIRES

A Reflection on Each Letter

F

“F” refers to Families, the heart of society. There are many varieties of families: Complete families; One-parent families; Rich families; Poor families; White families; Black families; Yellow families; Brown families; Christian families; Non-Christian families. These are all concrete families, and not families in the abstract.

Families.

- *Families are the basic community and the irreplaceable foundation of society.
- *Families are the origin of humanity.
- *Families are the fundamental relationship of mankind.
- *Families are the best "Schools of Humanity."
- *Families alone remain permanent.
- *Families are the beginning of everything.
- *Families are created in the image of God.
- *Families are the hope of the future.
- *Families are the best instrument of renewal: If families are improved, mankind is improved; and if mankind is improved, the whole world is improved.

Creating a family is the most profound and most powerful human instinct. It is the common denominator of all societies and religions – a treasure and hope that all have in common.

And so we ask:

1. What is happening in the families of our time?
2. What is happening in our own family?
 - a) Positive aspects
 - b) Negative aspects
3. What is God telling us about the possible problems that we may have in our family?
4. What is God trying to say to our family through the Bible?
5. How can we improve our family life?
6. What can and should we do to reach out to other families?

I

“I” refers to Intercommunication within the family. Such communication can range from humdrum conversation, to discussion, to dialogue (in order to avoid or overcome problems), or to a heart-to-heart interchange (aimed solely at deepening relationship).

Some ways for Family Intercommunication

- Family prayers
- Family meals.
- Family meetings.
- Family games.
- Family songs.
- Family recreation
- Family parties.
- Family trips.
- Family campouts.
- Family encounters.
- Family weekends.
- Family get together.
- Family jokes.
- Family jobs.
- Family walks.
- Family liturgies.
- Family celebrations
- Family letters.
- Family readings.
- Family forums.
- Family planned events

It is impossible to be an authentic family, that is, a basic community of persons with deep relationships, without intercommunication.

When this intercommunication is working the symptoms of a new family life appears. When this intercommunication is missing the symptoms of family "disintegration" appear. This is the experience of many families. Maybe, this is your own experience.

1. Do I consider interpersonal communication within the home to be important? Explain why?
2. What do I think of the quality of interpersonal communication in the homes in our community? Explain.
3. How would I describe the quality of interpersonal communication in our home?
4. Do I feel that we are blessed in this regard?
5. What can I do, or should I do, to respond to God, to my own family, and to other families with regard to deepening the respective relationships through interpersonal communication?

R

“R” refers to Relationships. This is a special bond between and among individuals that can be deepened beyond measure. When this special closeness is experienced within families by husbands and wives, parents and their children, siblings with one another, it is easy for such family members to understand that all the problems in the world have their origin precisely in the absence of meaningful relationships within families.

*The family is the primary place where the notion of relationship, for better or for worse, is experienced; so that where family relationships are wounded or broken, not only that family, but society and even the world itself also suffers because of it. The root of all human conflicts is a problem of personal relations.

A few people dominate, manipulate, discriminate and imprison millions of persons – a terrible sin of social injustice; two thirds of humanity die of hunger because the greed of relatively few; there are wars and conflicts; divisions, misunderstandings, rivalries among the different religions -the adherents pretending to relate to the only true God, the creator, while refusing to relate to one another as creatures of the same God. All of this results from a total ignorance of the meaning of deep relationships, precisely because the “leaders” and their obedient followers never themselves experienced deep relationships within their own families

Millions of people live within families that are broken because they do not communicate or interrelate with one another; but most often basic to that problem is that they never communicate or interrelate with God. They do not pray whether as couples, individuals, or as a family. They live as if God did not exist. And the result of this neglect are undesirable characteristics like divorce, abortion, infidelity, separation, alcohol, drug abuse, suicide, or running away from home etc.

FIRES would like to see a radical change in this worldwide proclivity of many people to destroy themselves, their families, society, and nations. It offers to assist the members of each family to relate in the best way possible among themselves, and with God.

E

“E” refers to Experiences – specifically, experiences resulting from intercommunication and interpersonal relationships within the family. We should want to be among the many witnesses to the fact that “true families” are not disappearing – that there are untold loving families out there striving to live out to the fullest extent possible those two virtues of intercommunication and interpersonal relationships within their own families. The questions listed below can help you to ascertain your situation in that regard. Answer “Yes”, or “No”.

1. In our home do we love each other?
2. Is there constructive communication within our family?
3. When we offend each other do we ask for forgiveness?
5. Generally are we a happy family?
6. Do we have a meal as a family at least once a day?
7. Before we eat, do we thank God for His gifts?
8. Do we share together as a family most weekends?
9. Do we celebrate special family events?
10. Do we sometimes read the Bible together?
11. Do we attend religious services regularly?
12. Do we have any “game rules” that we try to keep?
13. When there is an important problem, do we all join in to find a possible solution?
14. Do we celebrate Christmas, New Years, other holidays at home?
16. Do we consciously share our joys as well as problems as a family?
18. Do we lie to each other?
19. Do we communicate our feelings, worries and desires?
20. Is God Someone very important in our home?
21. Do we try to help the people in our neighborhood?
22. Do we want to improve our family life?

If I answered with a “Yes” to most of the above questions, it is a clear signal that we have important experiences of family life to share with some families that do not have such experiences.

S

“S” refers to Services. FIRES is not a movement or organization. FIRES was born to serve all movements and organizations that work with and for marriages and families. FIRES wants to serve each family in its own home: through the couples and Families of all those movements and organizations that have discovered the need to help people in their own homes and in their neighborhoods and local communities. FIRES was created not to direct, organize, control, possess, dominate, or to be served.

FIRES was created to serve, that is to say, to be a bridge between:

- * Person and person
- * Husband and wife
- * Marriage and marriage
- * Family and family
- * Family and God
- * Family and local community or neighborhood
- * Family and the world of today and tomorrow

Serve what?

The significance of each of the letters of FIRES that we have been reflecting on:

Families; Intercommunication; Relationships; Experiences; Services - within homes.

Serve where?

In each home.

Serve how?

Through materials prepared for this purpose and placed into the hands of couples and families that are now members of different movements and marriage/family organizations.

Serve whom?

All of those persons, marriages and families that know of the manuals and programs of FIRES, and have received the call of God to knock at the doors of the houses in their neighborhoods.

For this reason FIRES will do whatever possible to provide materials to every movement and family organization that believe that within each family there is a mysterious energy placed by God for service to society, and are ready to give testimony of their family experiences according to God's wonderful plan.

N.B.: You are invited to share with us your own experiences individually, as a couple, or as a family, after having reflected and dialogued on the material contained in this booklet; and if you have no objection, to allow us to share those experiences with other families who have also utilized this booklet. You can contact us at the address below.

The following are “Weekends” included under the umbrella of FIRES:

- Original Marriage Encounter (OME) -
For couples to encounter themselves individually and as a couple
- Marriage Re-Encounter (MReE) -
For reconciliation with children while deepening the M.E. experience
- Engaged Encounter (EE)-
For an efficacious marriage preparation course
- Sons and Daughters Encounter (SADE) -
For an encounter with self regarding important aspects of one’s life
- Sons and Daughters Retorno (SADR)-
For an Encounter with the Lord, especially through Sacred Scripture
- Family Encounter (FE)-
For encountering one another as a family
- Self-Encounter (SE)-
For individuals in all walks of life
- Self Retorno (SR)
For an Encounter with the Lord, especially through Sacred Scripture
- Priest Encounter (PE)-
For re-evaluating one’s vocation; evangelizing through families; etc.
- Sisters Encounter (Sr. E)-
For re-evaluating one’s vocation; evangelizing through families; etc.
- Eucharistic Encounter (EuE)
For deeper understanding and experience of the Eucharist
- Fraternal Encounter (Frat. E)-
For aiding animators of family ministry to collaborate.
- Vocation Discernment Encounter (VDE)
For discerning what path the Lord is calling one to
- Family – Identity and Mission Encounter (FIME)
For families in a parish to discover who they are and what they should do
- Returning (RE)
For couples living together without marriage

Additional Experiences

- * Marriage Retorno (MR)-
For an Encounter with the Lord as a couple
This weekend is not presented as a “FIRES” program
- * Family Communication Workshop (FCW)-
For deepening communication among family members (a six hour experience)
- * Marriage Encounter at home (MEH)-
For a Marriage Encounter experience by mail.
- * Around the Table (AT)-
For family sharing over a protracted period of time.
- * Family Encounter at home (FEH)-
For a Family Encounter experience by mail.
- * Family evangelization” a family conference for families.
- * Family Retorno” a biblical weekend for encountered families.

At Home Experiences

- “*Self-Encounter*”: a self-awareness workbook.
- “*Self-Retorno*”: a guidebook for personal prayer.
- “*Marriage encounter at home*” an experience by mail for couples.
- “*Face to Face*” a handbook for married couples.
- “*Little fires history*” a booklet for 5 family sharings.
- “*Around the table*” a workbook for 12 family sharings.
- “*Family encounter at home*” a program for families by mail.
- “*Family marathon*” a weekend for animating families.

For More Information

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