

# **THE FAMILY AND T.V.**

*(Edited and adapted by P.Ribes, s.j. from  
The Family and T.V."By Ms Marita Nazareth )*

## **Note:**

The 28<sup>th</sup> World Communication Day, May 15, 1994, had as its theme "Television and the Family: guidelines for good viewing". In his message Pope John Paul II spoke about the advantages and disadvantages of television in the Family.

## **Intent of these jottings**

*These jottings are meant to facilitate a session –cum dialogue on this important theme.*

## **1. Introductory Prayer for the Family.**

Dear God our Loving Father  
We bring to you our dear family  
With all our hopes and dreams  
You know what we need better than we do  
Each one of us, is a gift of your love  
Your trust, a gift to our family,  
A gift to the world.

## **2. Starter:**

**Short Introduction and explanation by the by The Moderator**

### **Some Statistics:**

Nine years of an average person's life is spent watching TV.

TV viewer ship has grown by 217% in India alone. 31% of viewers are children and teenagers alone. Children spend on an average 11,000 hours in school and 10,500 hours watching TV.

### **The Influence of T.V. on people.**

There is no doubt that the T.V. is one of the most powerful and effective forms of communication. Psychologists will confirm that the audio-visual method is a most effective and impressionable form of communication. But every advantage has a disadvantage, however, if kept under control, it can be beneficial to all..

## **3. Discussion Questionnaire**

- Start the session with a discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of watching T.V. in the Family.
- Give the participants a copy of the questionnaire on the advantages and disadvantages of watching T.V. in the family.
- Discuss them one by one, and request the participants to suggest means and ways to benefit from the advantages and avoid the disadvantages

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Part One**

#### **Advantages and Gains of watching TV**

- ✓ Some programs on TV are very educative and enlightening. Time could be spent after each program critically discussing what each family member found good and profitable and not so, about the program.
- ✓ A few programs challenge us to be socially responsible, e.g. Programmers on the environment tell us the dangers threatening us for not caring for it.
- ✓ Watching TV can be very relaxing and entertaining.
- ✓ It can bring the family together.

#### **Advantages and Gains of watching T.V in he family according to the Message of Pope John Paul II, on World Communications Day 1994**

- ✓ “Television is a primary source of news, information and entertainment for countless families, shaping their attitudes and opinions, their values and patterns of behavior.
- ✓ Television can enrich family life. It can draw family members closer together and foster their solidarity with other families and with the community at large.
- ✓ It can increase not only their general knowledge but also their religious knowledge, making it possible for them to hear God’s Word, to strengthen their religious identity and to nurture their moral and spiritual lid

## **QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **Part two**

#### **Disadvantages and Dangers of Watching TV:**

- ✓ It breeds a culture of violence. It is said that a child watches more than 10,000 violent acts by the time she/he finishes school. This results in aggressive, anti-social behavior.
- ✓ Sexual activity and extra-marital affairs are portrayed as the “in thing” between people who are not married, Traditional values are replaced unconsciously by immoral values. This affects the moral life of the family members and the stability of the family.
- ✓ The quality of relationships within the family is affected. Prime time is spent watching the TV instead of sharing the day’s joys and sorrows.
- ✓ Children are unable to distinguish between the fantasy world they see on TV and reality e.g. A child jumped to his death after viewing Spiderman on TV.

- ✓ TV changes the personality and outlook of the person. The brain begins to demand distraction. TV is addictive.
- ✓ We spend very little time developing our creative talents like art, music, sports, readings, etc.
- ✓ “Ready-made” Entertainment “on TV. Dulls our minds and creativity and make us uncritical.
- ✓ Ads create in us artificial needs and wants

**Disadvantages and Dangers of Watching T.V in the Family according to the message of Pope John Paul II, on World Communications Day 1994**

- ✓ T. V. harms family life by Advertisements that fool us to believe to be true what isn't,
- ✓ By propagating degrading values and models of behavior and broadcasting pornography and graphic depictions of brutal violence that make us sensual, revengeful, uncaring and selfish.
- ✓ By Inculcating moral relativism and religious skepticism we lose moral, intellectual and spiritual certitude and convictions
- ✓ By spreading distorted, and manipulative advertising that appeals to our base instincts we become uncritical dehumanized and animalistic
- ✓ By glorifying false visions of life that lower mutual respect for one another's rights we become unjust, insensitive to the needs of others and exploitative .

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Spends some time for silent reflection.

Ask participants to write down the steps they will take to use T.V. in a good, constructive and responsible way

Close the session with a short prayer session.

## **APPENDIX**

### **New Psalm THE T.V. IS MY SHEPHERD**

The TV is my shepherd,  
I shall not want.  
It makes me lie down on the sofa,  
It leads me away from my faith,  
It destroys my soul,  
It leads me in the path of sex  
And violence for the sponsors sake.

Yes, though I walk in the shadow of  
Christian responsibilities,  
Where will be no interruption,  
For the TV is with me.  
Its cable and remote control  
They comfort me.

It prepares a commercial for me,  
In the presence of my worldliness.  
It anoints my head with  
Humanism and consumerism,  
Covering my life over.

Surely laziness and ignorance  
Shall follow me all the days of my life  
And I shall dwell in the house  
Watching TV forever!

*John Pinedo, Houston, Texas.  
(From New Covenant Sep 1986)*