

Family Dialogue

By Bob & Alicia Waning

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Last Summer, while sharing a ride I to the Regional Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, we were introduced to Family Dialogue for the first time. The idea of Family Dialogue was very appealing to us and we made a commitment to start one with our boys. When we mentioned to them our intentions, we saw negative and positive attitudes. However, we proceeded as planned, explaining to them that it would benefit us all to open our lines of communications with one another as a family.

The question on our first family dialogue was "What can I do to make our family a better family? And how do I feel about my answer?" We were all aware that no comment about one's sharing or reading was to be made and confidentiality was expected. After the ten minutes of writing we read our letters to the boys, ending with a love note. Michael (8) was next making the comment 'Nice letter, Dad.'" By this time, Freddie (15) was really into it and he shared feelings unknown to us until this dialogue. It was a shocking surprise to hear him talk about frustrations and apprehensions he experienced in school. His grades have always been good. What we didn't realize till this dialogue was how unsure he was about dealing with his peers or relating to his teachers.

Our first family dialogue was so successful that we decided to continue. We really want to keep in touch with our boys feelings, but especially build their trust and openness with us. So far it has been Bob and Alicia picking the dialogue questions. The rewards have been better than we ever dreamed. It's as if the door of generation gap has been well oiled and unlocked. Our sons know that they can come to us about anything, trusting us to listen and not react to our feelings. Family Dialogue is our key to a happier, more loving and trusting family relationship.

We think every family should give Family Dialogue a try. Pick a time and day right now, you deserve it and so do your children.

Family members can all write a love letter (smaller children can draw pictures) and then all read them and share feelings).

1. What do you like the most about our family life? How do you feel about that?
2. What do you dislike about our family life? How do you feel about that?
3. How do you feel when we pray together as a family at meal time?
4. What do you think you add most to our family life? How do you feel about that?
5. How do you feel when Mom & Dad go out for an evening alone?
6. What possession do I have that I like the best? How do I feel about my answer?

In His Name,
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