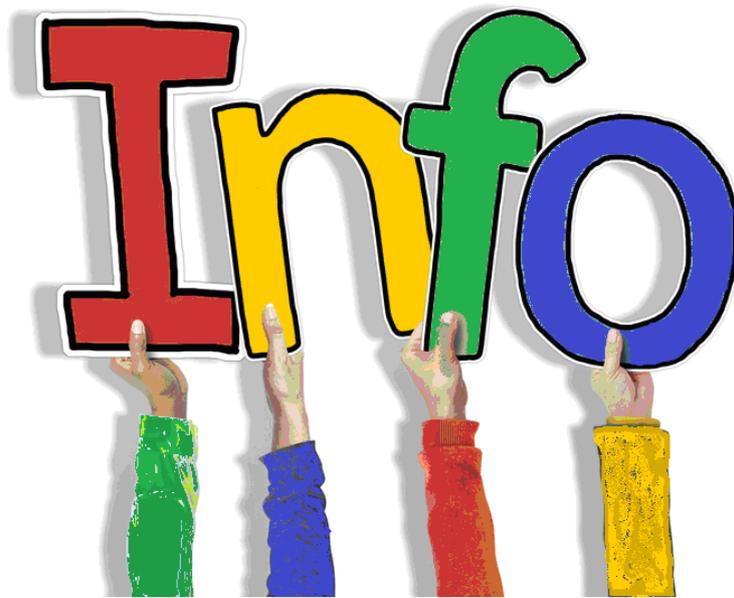


Equipes Notre-Dame

The Information Couple



International Leading Team

The Information Couple

Why have an information couple ?

Vocation and mission are at the heart of the Teams of Our Lady. Pope Francis reminded the Responsible Couples of the Teams of Our Lady of this when they gathered for a private audience in Rome on 10th September 2015 :



"...Indeed I would like to insist on this missionary role of the Teams of Our Lady. Certainly, every committed couple receives a great deal from its Team experience, and its conjugal life is deepened by refining itself through the spirituality of the Movement. However, after receiving from Christ and from the Church, a Christian is irresistibly sent out to witness to and pass on what he has received."

To answer the call to be an information couple, is to say "yes" to this mission entrusted to us by Pope Francis.

"The information couple: a bridge between the motivation and the vocation of a couple on their journey towards God."



I) Spiritual mission

**By our baptism we are all called to become
priests, prophets and kings :**

- * **Priest** : to serve as a pathway between man and God by prayer
- * **Prophet** : to proclaim, to be a witness ; to live only for this mission
- * **King** : to commit oneself and to place oneself at the service of society

We are called to speak about our faith, to explain the hope which lives within us, to put into words which are easily understood, what it is that makes that hope come alive. As a couple, we must give witness to the graces of the sacrament of marriage. It's a matter of telling others and giving witness to how much the "*sacrament of marriage*" is really and truly "*a great grace*", active, fruitful, working, and not a remote, useless doctrine. We must help others "*to rediscover how God's grace works in the life of a couple*", even at "*the most difficult times*".

***Service and mission are part of every
Christian's life***

It is every Christian's mission in his or her daily life, to proclaim the Good News which enables that person to live fully. To be part of Teams is to have chosen to journey together towards God (to help each other, to support each other, to pray) relying on the source, the sacrament of marriage. The mission of every couple is to proclaim the Good News of marriage and to witness to it.

***The role of prayer is essential in this
mission as in every other.***

The Lord prays to his Father ceaselessly: therefore it is by we ourselves turning towards Him in prayer that we can direct somebody else towards Him.

At that time, Jesus went up into the mountains to pray, and he spent the night praying to God (Luke 6, 12).

Prayer allows the Spirit to work within us and to help us in our weakness.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness, because we do not know how to pray properly.

The Spirit himself intercedes for us. (Romans 8, 26)



II) The mission of right judgement

The information couple must initiate a conversation with one or more enquiring couples to help them to put into words what they are looking for, to explain their own life of faith, to gauge their personal willingness to go further along the road.

The Teams of Our Lady does not suit everybody.

Listening

For the information couple, the requirement is to work out correctly what the enquiring couple are asking and what their expectations are. This creates an atmosphere of confidence which allows the other person to express himself in all simplicity.

The information couple listens to everything that is said without passing judgement. They appreciate the ideas that the enquiring couple have formed about the Movement, that have brought them to want to find out about the Teams of Our Lady, but they also appreciate their apprehensions and shyness.



Witnessing

They talk courageously about and confide why and how they joined Teams of Our Lady.

They explain what the Movement has brought to them as a couple, the pathway they have followed with its joys and difficulties, that it is their desire to continue in this Movement helped by its framework.

They emphasise the importance of the life of the team, meeting other Christian couples, the sharing and help (for the moment they should still be discreet about the methods, they should avoid talking too much about the organisation and structure.)

Invitation to dialogue

Then, they make an effort to invite questions and discussion. The couple who are wanting to know more about the Teams of Our Lady have taken the first step, they have expressed a desire. At this first meeting the information couple must try to meet them halfway in their questions.

For the enquiring couple the first “official” contact with the Teams of Our Lady is going to give them a picture of the Movement. This first contact is always very important and often determines what will happen next.



III) 1-The Information Mission

It is necessary to tell the enquiring couples that the Teams are there to offer them real support, to accompany them faithfully, to educate them gradually and in a structured way, in the blessing of a Teams life.

Important points to approach :

The *Teams of Our Lady* propose to Christian couples united by the sacrament of marriage :

- A way of being happy as a couple and as a family,
- A privileged environment in which to live the Gospel every day,
- A pathway, teaching and support through the team to live in the Faith as a couple.

The Movement of the Teams of Our Lady offers different means of support to help couples on their journey of faith :

- listening regularly to the word of God,
- personal prayer,
- couple and family prayer,
- a real time to talk to each other as husband and wife : the sit-down,
- an annual retreat to recharge the batteries and for prayer,
- a rule of life ...

The family of Teams

The Movement of the Teams of Our Lady is a Church movement, an international Movement, a large family of 130,000 Members.

Teams has taken root in the five continents in more than 80 countries.

It will also be important to explain, in addition to the supporting documents, what Teams is in today's world, and how it fits within the Church.

Life in a team

It is in exchanging ideas with others that one can make progress : life in a team is important.

Each team is made up of 4 to 7 couples and a spiritual counsellor. In God's sight, the team prays and, during a meal, shares together the significant events of the month, sharing how they have tried to progress in their spiritual life, and they discuss a religious theme that they have decided to reflect on during the year.

To clearly point out how to begin, then to function as a team, and how it is supported by the Movement : the piloting, the formation plan given for the first years of a team, the Weekend at the end of piloting (if provided).

 The document "Guide to the Teams of Our Lady" (the document of the International Leading Team) will serve as a reference for your introduction to the Teams.

III) 2-The information meeting

According to the number of people, the meeting can take place in the information couple's home or in a parish room...

A meeting may be organised with several couples, up to about a dozen. Each couple will have personally met the information couple beforehand, which will allow a better preparation for the information meeting.

Begin with prayer. Entrust the meeting to the presence of the Lord...

The couples introduce themselves :
They state the parish where they were married
They talk about their expectations.

Throughout the meeting, create an atmosphere of listening and respect, and take turns to speak, so that each person can say all they need to...

Then the information couple begin to explain things and to give their own experience about:

- the purpose of Teams of Our Lady
- the charism of Teams of Our Lady
- the methods of Teams of Our Lady

Their pathway in life and actual examples of personal actions and life in a team. The explanation should be brief, lively, and illustrated by examples from real life.

The idea of a "pathway" must be well explained and the idea of gradual progression, adapted to each person's pace

Make provision for questions and answers as the meeting progresses...

The information couple will be able to pick up on answers given by each of the couples.

Finish by asking each person if the meeting has lived up to their expectations, if not, encourage them to explain...

Before the final Magnificat, the information couple should explain that everybody has two weeks at the most to make a decision by themselves and as couples, before giving a definitive answer. During this time, the information couple remain available to give further information, and to go more deeply into the information given about Teams of Our Lady...

IV) The accompanying mission

In the two following cases, it would be advisable to give different counsel to enquiring couples :

1 : After a period of reflexion sufficient for them to feel unpressured, the couple choose to commit themselves to the pathway proposed by Teams.:

In this case, the information couple should remain in touch with the couple until they join the movement :

The sector couple, in close co-operation with them, should take responsibility for the next step towards integration into a team.

- Either a new team will be set up
- Or it will be suggested that they join an existing team.

The period of time before joining should be as short as possible (less than a few months)... During this waiting period, the information couple should keep in contact with the new couple: they should hear their news, invite them to a sector day, a Mass, a social occasion, etc...

2 : The couple is not ready to join Teams but is still searching. It is therefore necessary to find out what other solution would suit them best:

The information couple must not abandon the couple :

For this reason they must have a good knowledge of other Church Movements and various parish organisations for assisting couples.

It is part of the mission of the information couple to encounter the enquiring couple on a more personal level, in order to help them find an answer better suited to their search. This follow-up is important, it is part of our duty to evangelise. We should not leave "these sheep" alone in darkness.



And now, put out into deep water.... (Luke 5. 4)

*“They aspire to carry out fully their baptismal commitments...
Aware of their weakness and of the limits of their strength, if not of their good intentions, because they experience daily how difficult it is to live as Christians in a pagan world and because they have unshakeable faith in the power of fraternal mutual help, they have decided to form a team.”*

Charter of the Teams of Our Lady.



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