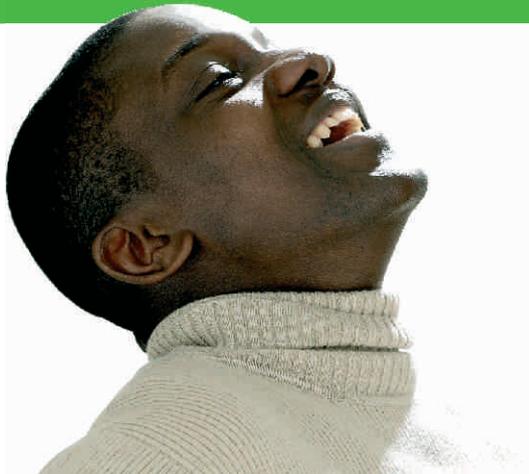


# THE ALPHA COURSE

Answering a call to Catholic Evangelisation



▶ "For the disciple of Christ to evangelise is an obligation of love"  
Pope John Paul II



*Alpha*

## What the church is saying about evangelisation



**Pope Benedict XVI** ✦ Reaffirmed the Church's evangelizing endeavor, stressing that "Christ's missionary mandate is more important than ever."  
Rome, April 26, 2005 (Zenit.org).

**Pope John Paul II** ✦ "The laity must be urged and helped to play their part in the task of evangelisation and to serve in the spirit of the Gospel." (India 1989)

**Pope Paul VI** ✦ "The person who has been evangelised goes on to evangelise others."  
(Evangelisation in the Modern World)

**Pope John Paul II** ✦ "There is a need for us in the fullness, joy and enthusiasm which comes from the Holy Spirit to take on the task which is more urgent than the other; that of making the unfathomable riches of Christ known to our brothers and sisters."  
(Chile 1989)

"Every baptized person must be a missionary", Pope says, "In collaboration with every person of good will, the Church has another primary and specific task: to help every man and woman encounter Christ, the only Redeemer,"  
Vatican City, May 16, 2002 (Zenit.org).

## How does it work?



The course is usually run one evening a week over ten weeks. A weekend or day away explores the person and work of the Holy Spirit.

Alpha can be run in a church hall or in a home and the atmosphere throughout is designed to be welcoming, relaxed and non-threatening.

A typical Alpha evening starts with a simple meal. This is a vital part of the evening as it brings people together and breaks the ice.

A talk follows the meal. In most cases this can be done by simply sitting down to watch a video, although a course book is available to help speakers give the talk themselves. The videos, which are very well made, are lively and fun to watch.

An important aspect of Alpha is the small group discussion after each talk. Guests meet in the same small group each week, usually made up of two leaders, two helpers and about eight guests.

Topics on the Alpha course include:

- ▶ Who is Jesus and why did He die?
- ▶ Why and how should I read the Bible?
- ▶ Why and how should I pray?
- ▶ How does God guide us today?
- ▶ How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

## What is Alpha?



Alpha is helping Catholics respond practically to the challenge of evangelisation.

Alpha is a ten-week course providing a basic introduction to Christianity. It is primarily aimed at those who have little or no knowledge of the Christian faith i.e. the unchurched or the lapsed. It is also proving to be a great blessing to church-going Christians who are seeking renewal in the basics of their faith.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Christian faith is welcome on Alpha.

Learning and Laughter. It is possible to learn about the Christian faith and have fun at the same time!  
Pasta and Pudding. Each session begins with a light meal



which gives people the opportunity to get to know each other.

Helping one another. The small groups give people a chance to discuss issues raised in the talks.

Ask anything. Alpha is a place where no question is regarded as too simple or too hostile.

Alpha originates from the Church of England and is now being run by churches of all denominations in South Africa and around the world. It is also being used effectively in most prisons.

## Archbishop Buti Tlhagale of Johannesburg



"The South African opportunity for evangelisation is immense, as is the opportunity for re-evangelising those already attending church but not yet enjoying a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ our Saviour.

*It is with much enthusiasm that we in the Catholic Church embrace and support the Alpha initiative and we encourage all Christians to work together in spreading the Good News.*

Alpha has proven its effectiveness in engaging and mobilising the laity in playing a more meaningful role in introducing the Christian faith within churches, in education institutions, with our youth, in our prisons and at the work place."



Alpha appeals to everyone young and old

## How to run an Alpha course



If you are interested in running an Alpha course in your church, the best preparation is to attend an Alpha Conference or a training day. Details of both are found on our website or via the Alpha National Office. Helpful resources to purchase are: the Administrators Handbook, How To Run The Alpha Course video and the Alpha Leader's Training Material. These all explain in detail the principles and practicalities of the course.

Selecting a team to run Alpha is the first step. The Alpha course can be run effectively by the laity. The team needs to be dedicated, prayerful people who have a real desire to evangelise, while at the same time being sensitive to other people's needs.

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Youth Alpha



Alpha for Prisons



Alpha in the Workplace



Alpha for Students

