



When? This Experience is offered by St Mary's Parish, on Tuesdays at 7:00 pm beginning October 4th, online.

Where can I attend?

From the comfort of your own home, via online Zoom.

[Please Register here](#)

What is Alpha?

Alpha is a series of interactive sessions exploring the basics of the Christian faith. Each session looks at a different question and is designed to create conversation. There's no pressure, no follow-up and no charge; it's just an open, informal, and honest space to explore and discuss life's big questions together.

Is Alpha for everyone?

Alpha covers the essentials which all Christian Churches agree on, so it's a starting point, a beginning to build upon.

For those who are hurting, Alpha provides the opportunity to meet and share with others who are ready to listen and share their experiences too. Most hurts arise from a misunderstanding between family members and friends, or of God's Love.

For those who challenge, reject, or are confused by the Christian Faith, it is possible that misconceptions have arisen, perhaps by errors postulated by a believer. Others may agree or disagree, but together, by observing revealed truth (easily fact-checked), one's understanding may be bolstered or mitigated.

For those who already know that God is Love, our needs and roles are different. We may know the truth, but can we express it? If we have not ever, or recently, felt the tangible warmth of God's Love, how can we encourage someone at the start of their journey? We want to be gentle in sharing why we believe, but don't find it easy. That is why Alpha was created to

be gentle and to encourage seekers to ask the questions they have.

Everyone deserves to be exposed to the Son, and it is the hope of all that have experienced Alpha for themselves that their family, friends, and colleagues, and even strangers be offered the invitation to participate themselves.

Encounter Him. He will say, "Spend time with Me. If you want the Truth, come as a child".

A is for Ask!

Alpha is intended for those who do not yet have a relationship with Jesus and for those who have never yet felt the amazing and ongoing deep warmth of God's Love. It is also for believers who want to use their own experience, to help others draw closer to Jesus or experience Him for the first time.

When we have needs, situations are going awry, or we are desperate, it becomes natural to ask God for help – for ourselves, and those closest to us.

Jesus has asked us to be His witnesses: to bring others He already loves, to Him, so that they too can experience His Love. He is counting on

us. Some may be of other faiths, have no faith at all, or even be antagonistic to Christianity.

Some used to be Catholic but left that or other traditions for reasons known only to themselves

What do we do when He has a need and asks for our help? He doesn't ask in desperation. He asks in trust and love, knowing that those who truly love Him, will not find excuses, but will do everything in their power and with His help, to meet His needs, which are not selfish; they are for the eternal benefit of those He urges to follow Him.

We soon discover that those who already participate in Church life have formed solid friendships and are anxious to introduce their friends to each other. Some of these friendships were built during the Alpha Experience which provides the means to build relationships with others, and with Him.

Within the Church we frequently ask God to guide our families, our friends and ourselves to improve relationships with each other and with those in need and we can count on Him to open our hearts.

What happens in Alpha?

Each Alpha session begins with connections, to become acquainted with others, to start to establish a relationship. We receive teaching from a film which we watch together, and in a group setting, we dialogue on what this means, respectfully and actively listening to one another. We are free to agree or disagree without argument, or further teaching, because over time, our own views may change and become more finely tuned.

Each session builds on what was experienced earlier. This is not primarily referring to the teaching content of the film, because of more importance is the relationship building which occurs within the small groups as we learn to listen to one another, overlook flaws we may initially perceive, grow to like, and even love others, and develop trust from the risk of deep (not superficial) sharing. As we actively listen to others, we become more open ourselves, and we allow God to become closer.

Alpha is an Experience which requires time and commitment to allow this to happen. The experience purposely

starts slowly, ostensibly, and initially, without prayer.

We aim to be accepting and inclusive of everybody, which is why we avoid correcting or teaching within the group sessions but encourage everyone to say what they think or feel without judgement or probing. New guests can join even after the first couple of sessions, although they miss some of the vital relationship building that has already occurred.

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