

# 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 Catholics 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.

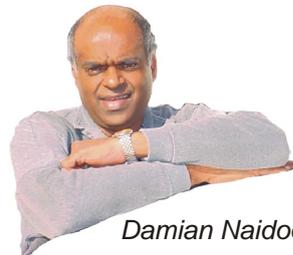
Pasta and Pudding. Each session begins with a light meal which gives people the opportunity to get to know each other.

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 this country and around the world. It is also being used in most prisons.

The late Bishop *R Orsmond* of Johannesburg says: "*Alpha* answers questions that people are asking today. It is not confrontational and presents the message in every day language. Above all it helps many come to know the Lord Jesus... they feel affirmed and enjoy it and so they then in turn invite their friends to the next course and so it grows"



*Damian Naidoo*

"Although a Catholic born and bred, when my children arrived I questioned whether I really believed it! Having done *Alpha* I found the answer to many of my questions. It was such a good course my wife and I took it back and ran it in our parish with great success."



*Alpha* appeals to everyone young and old.

"Through the *Alpha* course I began to realise that God knows me and what's more, loves me! Within 8 months of starting *Alpha* my whole family and I became Christians and joined the Catholic Church."

*John and Brenda Fitzsimons*



# How Does it Work?

The course is usually run one evening a week with a weekend or day away to explore 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 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.

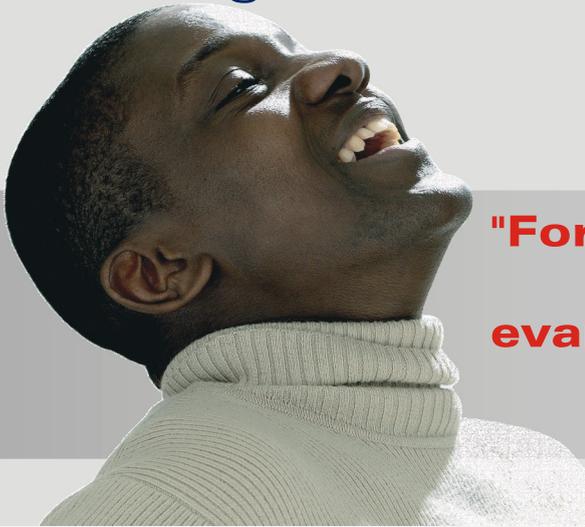
The *Alpha* subjects include:

- *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 to make the most out of the rest of my life.*

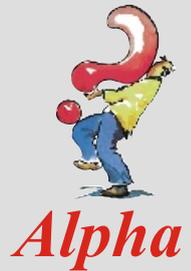
After the talk the discussion will flow quite easily - there is so much to think about.

# The *Alpha* Course

Answering the call to Catholic Evangelisation



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



## What the church is saying about evangelisation

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 to run an *Alpha* course

If you are interested in running an *Alpha* course in your church, the best preparation is to purchase: The Administrators Manual, How to run an *Alpha* course Video, and the Team training video, which will 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. There are a number of resources available to train the team.

*Alpha* Resources Include:-

- Course videos and manuals
- Youth *Alpha* manuals
- Course book, "Questions of life"
- *Alpha* for Catholics, "Questions and Answers"
- Team training materials
- *Alpha* course publicity material

For further information with regards to the *Alpha* course please contact;

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