

Alpha Course: Stay Curious 2023

Curious about faith?

Why not join a series of group conversations that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith in an open, friendly environment.

At each Alpha Session you'll be hosted in a small group and watch an episode each week on a different question of faith. You will have a chance to share your thoughts and hear what others think. You can say anything you like or nothing at all.

EVERYONE'S WELCOME. You are invited no matter your background or beliefs. It's free and there is no pressure.

Stay Curious: Course Venue, Content and Timetable

Venue

This free weekly course, facilitated by Fr Jamie Houghton and others, takes place in the St Paul's Catholic Church Hall, immediately adjacent to the Church, 103 Maison Dieu Road, Dover CT16 1RU.

Free car parking is available in the Pencester Car Park, just opposite the front of the church and in the church car park located behind the church.

Content

Each of the 10 weekly sessions commences with free light refreshment available from 6.40pm. We are conscious that some men and women may have come straight from work to attend and, therefore, a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit or two are most welcome. **There is also a Saturday given over to the Holy Spirit and the sharing of a meal - Saturday 18th November, is 'The Holy Spirit Day', for both the St Paul's and St Finbarr's Alpha groups, at St Finbarr's Church, Aylesham, CT3 3 EZ, 10.30am – 2pm, including a free fish and chip lunch!**

Each week follows the same structure: welcome, introduction of the theme, video presentation and discussion.

Participation

Those attending are encouraged to say as much or as little as they wish. Experience has taught us that as the weeks progress and as everyone gets to know each other better and people feel more relaxed and comfortable in each other's company, both the number of questions asked increases and more and more people contribute to the discussions. Consequently, we ask that those attending will be generous with their time and the sharing of their knowledge, skills and understandings for the benefit of all.

After refreshment each of the sessions commences promptly at 7pm and finishes no later than 9pm. We are conscious that for those working they will want to see their family before the end of the day.

We encourage those attending to share the topic covered each evening and the highlights of the discussion so that those at home can share in the journey.

Timetable

Programme / Session Topics and Dates

Session 1: Wednesday 4th October, **Is there more to like than this?**

Session 2: Wednesday 11th October, **Who is Jesus?**

Session 3: Wednesday 18th October, **Why did Jesus die?**

Session 4: Wednesday 25th October, **How can I have faith?**

Session 5: Wednesday 1st November, **Why and how do I pray?**

Session 6: Wednesday 8th November, **Why and how should I read the bible?**

Session 7: Wednesday 15th November, **How does God guide us?**

Session 8 Saturday 18th November, **The Holy Spirit Day: Who is the Holy Spirit? What does the Spirit do? and How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?_at St Finbarr's Church, Aylesham, CT3 3 EZ 10.30am – 2pm, including a free fish and chip lunch!**

Session 9 Wednesday 22nd November, **How can I make the most of the rest of my life?**

Session 10 Wednesday 29th November, **How can I resist evil?**

What those who have attended before have said about the course?

Anne Gavin

My name is Anne Gavin & I've been asked to invite you to the Alpha course that is taking place here very soon.

So you may ask What is Alpha? Alpha is all about being curious. Being curious about God, being curious about Jesus, being curious about Faith.

I've been involved in a few Alpha courses over the years and each time I've learnt more about God, more about my faith and found myself getting closer to God each time. And I've got to know some of my fellow parishioners too.

Our next Alpha course begins on Wednesday 4th October 7pm in the church hall, with refreshments before, so come along around 6.40/6.45 so we can start at 7 sharp. We start with a prayer, we try to sing a hymn, watch a short video then discuss it in groups. We cover different topics each week. We look at Jesus, prayer, the Bible and the Holy Spirit. But I don't want to spoil your curiosity by saying too much on the topics!

The evening lasts around an hour and a half each week. We meet weekly and there is a Saturday where we come together for a couple of hours with lunch. The Alpha course will run until the end of December. Now, that may feel like a long time but as we all know the weeks fly by and Christmas will be here very soon!

I encourage you to come along to the Alpha course, be curious.

Anthony Smye Rumsby

I am Anthony who stands before you, but a moment ago I am Anthony who stood with you. I wasn't employed or forced to be here and I come from the same background as you. I am no different to you. So why me, because I'm curious.

Jesus selected his disciples not for their wealth, popularity or importance, he chose ordinary people, people like you and me. Why, because we are curious.

What I am saying is anyone of you can come on a journey right now like the 12 did. Join others and myself in an adventure.

Many questions will be asked and many questions will be answered.

It's in our DNA to ask questions and be curious, I've never been afraid to ask questions and nor should you.

We will come together each Wednesday for 18:40 in the hall, there will be tea, coffee and yes biscuits too. We will play a short video and follow this with a discussion. This is a great opportunity to be curious.

Thank you and God bless you all,

Anthony

Alpha Team Leader

Keith Wells

If you attend Mass here regularly, you will have heard about an Alpha course to begin here soon. My purpose is to tell you a little more about it and to encourage you to attend all or some of the course.

You're all here because either the Catholic faith has been yours from birth, or like me, you were drawn to it by a circumstance of your life, either way you MUST now know that you are called to be heralds of the Gospel of Christ.

Alpha could be a tool in your toolbox to help you to be that herald. Meaningful conversations about how faith influences our lives are difficult at any time, but for reasons, inexplicable to you and I, as committed Catholics, those conversations with Jesus at the heart of them, are almost impossible outside our Christian community. Could that be because in the 21st century Jesus is rarely discussed in family homes or non-Christian schools.

Alpha seeks to change that, to stimulate conversations about faith in a safe and comfortable environment, through an 11-session course of meetings that are free and open to everyone, whether you are curious about Jesus, who he is, what he did, or what he has to offer the world. These sorts of questions come from curious enquirers and from committed Christians, especially those wanting to be more confident in conversations about Jesus with family, friends, co-workers, or casual acquaintances.

The sessions are not formal discourses full of high-powered theology that none of us could easily understand. They are informal gatherings of you, me, your family, friends, and co-workers that you bring along for a tea or coffee, a bun or biscuit, and light-

hearted chat, which is followed by a short themed video, such as, “Is there more to life than this?” or “Why and how do I pray?” or “How can I resist evil?” and many more Christian themes.

After the video there is group discussion about it, which will be authentic and unforced, where opinions are welcomed and not challenged; the sessions end with a short period of prayer and song.

Though the course is 11 sessions, every Wednesday from 4th October to 20th December, and it is hoped attendees will go to each session, there is no commitment to do so. Visitors may attend as many sessions as they want to.

Parish website <https://www.parishofthegoodshepherd.uk/spiritual-guidance/>