

You are Invited to *Alpha in a Catholic Context at AOL*

What is Alpha?

Alpha is a 12-week course about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, the core foundation of the Catholic faith, plus a “Day-Away” all-day Saturday midway through the course which includes three presentations on the Holy Spirit. Alpha covers the beliefs that are common to all Christian faiths - it is not fully Catholic, Baptist, or any other faith. For example, the Catholic Sacraments, Saints, and Mary are not presented during Alpha.

Is Alpha approved for Catholics?

The Archdiocese of New Orleans introduced Alpha in a Catholic context to the Archdiocese in January 2017. Archdiocese wide training was held at Ascension of Our Lord (AOL) in October 2017. At least three Alpha courses were held in the Archdiocese during the spring of 2018 - at St. Catherine of Siena, St. Angela Merici, and AOL. The AOL course was conducted jointly by parishioners from St. Joan of Arc, St. Peter’s, Our Lady of Grace, and AOL. For more information on Alpha in a Catholic Context go to the website AlphaUSA.org and click on the “Catholic” link at the bottom of the page. For an online copy of the booklet *An Introduction to Alpha - Catholic Context* go to <https://alphausa.org/catholic/resources> and look for the “Intro to Alpha: Catholic Context Booklet” which can be viewed online or downloaded by clicking on the “download” button.

Is Alpha something new?

Alpha is new to Catholic churches in this area, but Alpha started over 30 years ago in an Anglican church in London. It has been attended by over 29 million people in over 130 countries, and has been translated into 112 languages. Alpha has been in the US for 20 years. Alpha is growing each year - 2017 US attendance was 347,995 which is up 10% from 2016. Over one-third of the Alpha guests in the US in 2017 came through Catholic parishes. Alpha is currently being run in more Catholic churches worldwide than any other faith.

Who is Alpha for?

Alpha is for everyone who wants to know Jesus and have a close or closer personal relationship with Him. It is for people of any faith or no faith, it is for people who attend church daily, for those who attend church only on major holidays, and for those who have never been in a church. Alpha is for people of ages 13 and up and in all walks and stages of life, including those that don’t know Jesus or believe in God. Feel free to invite your family members, relatives, co-workers, and/or friends and neighbors to attend Alpha with you. Our first Alpha had attendees from 5 Catholic parishes and a Baptist parish.

Why is it called Alpha “In a Catholic Context?”

Because it is being offered at a Catholic church, being conducted by Catholic parishioners, and will have followup courses or instruction in the Catholic faith available after the course is over for anyone wishing to look further into the Catholic faith. If you are Catholic and want to help by serving as a small group host or helper contact Mark at markw24@aol.com No experience needed - full training is provided.

What are the sessions like?

Each session consists of a meal (1/2 hour), a video (1/2 hour), and a small group discussion (1-1/4 hour) in a welcoming, loving, and caring environment where personal stories, questions, and comments related to the videos are welcomed and shared confidentially within the group. Each small group consists of 2 hosts, 2 helpers, and 8-9 guests. You can preview the videos at alphausa.org - click on “Watch” across the top. Alpha creates communities of friends that frequently get together for years after Alpha ends.

What is the atmosphere like?

There is no pressure at Alpha meetings (you don’t have to say anything), there is no follow up (you don’t have to come back after the first meeting, it’s entirely up to you), and there is no cost to attend. If it will make you more comfortable, donations will be accepted to help cover the cost of the food - but donations are not required or expected. It’s all done in a casual, fun, caring way - with good food too!

How do I register to attend the course?

Pick up a registration form in the AOL parish office or request one from Mark at markw24@aol.com - the dates and topics for the next *Alpha in a Catholic Context at AOL* are listed on the back of this sheet.

Fall *Alpha* in a Catholic Context at AOL - Training and Seminars

TRAINING The training is for Catholic parishioners who want to help with Alpha by serving as small group hosts and helpers. Both days are the same (attend one). The training is a full day with lunch provided. Two hosts and two helpers are needed for every eight guests that attend Alpha. The hosts facilitate the group discussion by asking the prepared questions and offering some control - they are not teachers or leaders - the videos do the training/teaching. The helpers say nothing during the first several sessions; instead they pray silently and help as needed - they keep quiet until all guests are comfortable enough to contribute/share - so that the guests who are initially not comfortable sharing do not stand out as the only ones not sharing. Hosts and helpers also help with room setup and takedown. The training and seminars will be held at Ascension of Our Lord School in the Don Bosco Hall.

08/11 Saturday **Training 1 - First Training Day**

08/25 Saturday **Training 2 - Second Training Day**

10/09 Tuesday **Watch the prayer video in preparation for the Day-Away (1/2 hour plus discussion)** This video is for hosts and helpers and follows that night's session.

SEMINARS These are the seminar topics. Each session consists of a meal (1/2 hour), a video (1/2 hour) and a small group discussion 1-1/4 hours). Prayer is introduced at week four - from then on, prayer is part of each session including prayer music-videos which precede and follow the main video presentation. There is no cost to attend - meals are typically provided by participating parish's KCs, other parish ministry groups, and hosts/helpers.

09/04 Tuesday **Is There More to Life Than This?**

09/11 Tuesday **Who is Jesus?**

09/18 Tuesday **Why Did Jesus Die?**

09/25 Tuesday **How Can I Have Faith?**

10/02 Tuesday **Why and How Do I Pray?**

10/09 Tuesday **Why and How Should I Read the Bible?**

Do you think you already know all there is to know about some of these topics? You will be surprised, learn something new, and enjoy each of them. The videos are amazing and so are the new friendships you'll make!

DAY-AWAY The day-away is a full day event with three videos, group prayer, one-on-one prayer, times for individual prayer and reflection, small group discussion(s), and a fun friendship forming activity. This day will be held at the St. Joan of Arc Family Center.

10/13 Saturday **Who is the Holy Spirit?
What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?**

SEMINARS CONTINUED

10/16 Tuesday **How Does God Guide us?**

10/23 Tuesday **How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?**

10/30 Tuesday **How Can I Resist Evil?**

11/06 Tuesday **Why and How Should I Tell Others?**

11/13 Tuesday **Does God Heal Today?**

11/20 Tuesday **What about the Church?**