

Searching for more

Explore the meaning of life
alphausa.org | #alpha

Alpha

Who / What / Why / How

We're all searching for more.

What is the point of life? / Why is there suffering in the world? / What happens when we die? / Is forgiveness possible?

What is Alpha?

The Alpha course is a practical introduction to the Christian faith that gives guests an opportunity to explore the meaning of life. Alpha is fun, relaxed and totally non-pressured (that's probably why over 19 mil. people around the world have already done it!).

Listen, learn, discuss, and discover. Ask anything. Alpha is a place where no question is off limits.

Alpha's Three Main Elements



Good Food



Alpha Talk



Discussion

How does it work?

Each Alpha course session begins with food, followed by a short talk looking at a different aspect of the Christian faith. After that, there is a time for discussion in a friendly small group.

Who is Alpha For?

Alpha is for everyone, especially:

- Those who have given up on Church
- Those wanting to investigate Christianity
- Those who are new to the Christian faith
- Those wanting to grow in understanding and faith

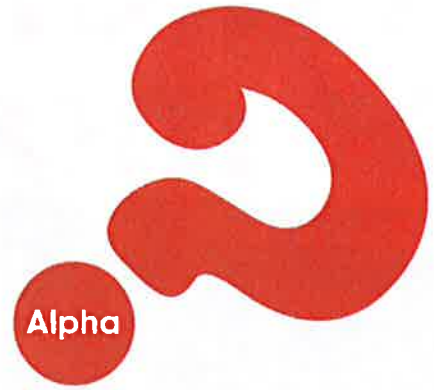
What is the Cost?

There is no "charge" for the Alpha course, although there will be opportunities to make free will donations to offset program costs.

When will Alpha Start? – Monday, January 13, 2014 – 5:15 pm St. Cecilia Social Hall

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“Come & See”

What Alpha is All About!

Monday, January 13, 2014

St. Cecilia Catholic Church

Social Hall

- 5:15 – 5:45 pm – Meal
- 6:00 pm – Video
- 7:00 pm - Discussion



Growing in FAITH™

Discovering **hope and joy** in the Catholic faith.

January 2014

St. Cecilia Church

Rev. James L. Secora, Pastor

One Minute Meditations

Mother Seton

Wife, then widow, Elizabeth Ann Seton converted to

Catholicism

despite rejection by her wealthy Episcopalian family and friends. With no means of support for herself or her children, she welcomed the invitation to open a Catholic school for girls near Baltimore.

Joined by like-minded women, the community became the Sisters of St. Joseph in 1809, and Elizabeth became Mother Seton. The community grew and so did their schools and orphanages marking the beginnings of the U.S. parochial school system.

Bessed are the peacemakers

The world sure could use more peacemakers. The key to becoming one is to practice forgiveness and offer peace. That way everyone around us will feel the love of Christ.

God's Laws

"Happy the man who meditates upon these things, wise the man who takes them to heart! If he puts them into practice, he can cope with anything, for the fear of the LORD is his lamp"

(Sirach 50:28-29).



Fall in love with God

From the moment God created you, he has been deeply in love with you.

He made you deliberately so he could love you. *"Before I*

formed you in the womb I knew you" (1 Jeremiah 1:3). What

about you? Are you in love with God?

You have no secrets from God ... and he loves you anyway. We all have some small shameful part of ourselves that we

are too afraid to show even our closest family or friends. God sees all you are and loves you infinitely anyway. *"I praise you, because I am wonderfully made ... My very self you know"* (Psalm 139:14).

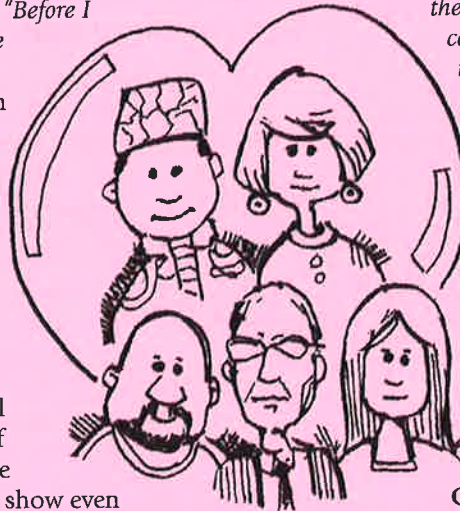
God thinks loving thoughts of you all the time. *"How precious to me are thy thoughts, O God. How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand"* (Psalm 139:17).

Our bodies are holy because God put his precious life within us. *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?"* (1 Corinthians 3:16).

Prayer is about falling in love with

God. *"I love the Lord,*

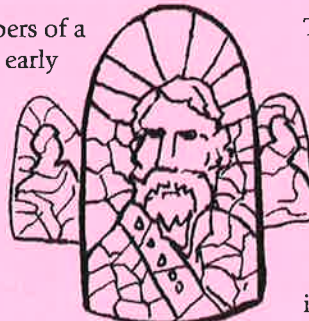
because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:1-2).



Why Do Catholics Do That?

Why do Catholics honor saints?

Christians are members of a large family. From the early days of the Church, there have been members of the faithful who have strived to live in the kingdom of God here on Earth and see its fulfillment in Heaven.



These holy people have allowed themselves to be emptied out and to be filled with the love and grace of Christ.

The Church holds up these brothers and sisters of ours as examples to help us follow in their paths.

Make one change for God this year

When making New Year's resolutions this year, consider one change that will bring you closer to God. Here are some ideas other Catholics have used to strengthen prayer, serve the poor, and evangelize our faith ...

Norma felt her prayer life growing stale, so when her parish asked for adorers for the perpetual adoration chapel, she jumped at the chance. Now, Mondays at midnight, Norma can be found in the presence of the Eucharist. She said, "I really look forward to my peaceful hour



each week. It's just me and Him."
 Peter's law practice is incredibly busy, but he takes an afternoon off every month to work at the local soup kitchen serving hot meals to the homeless and working poor. When asked why he said, "Jesus said, 'When I was hungry, you gave me to eat.'"
 JoAnn's children are grown, yet she teaches a religious education class at her parish. "What better way to spread our faith than to children? That's where I can do the most good," she said.

from Scripture

Matthew 4:12-23, The common call.

The way Jesus gathered his followers seemed almost casual. For example, he passed the Sea of Galilee, saw Andrew and Simon and called to them. It sounds as if the men dropped what they were doing, left their homes and livelihoods to follow Jesus after very little thought. There must have been something very arresting about Jesus and his call to them.

Scripture makes it clear that discipleship means leaving everything behind and surrendering to the will of God. He will provide whatever a disciple

needs to follow him but nothing comes before our relationship with God and his call to us. The compelling part of his call is the chance to serve him and be close to him. Jesus chose twelve special people to be his closest followers and he became their leader. They went where he told them and did what he asked, and accomplished amazing deeds in Jesus' name.

Jesus is still calling people to be his disciples and work amazing deeds in his name. In fact, he has called each of us to be his disciple.



Feasts & Celebrations

January 17 - St. Anthony (356). Anthony was a wealthy young man when he heard and followed Christ's call to "sell all you have, give it to the poor, and follow me." Afterwards he went into the desert to live as a hermit and dedicate his life to prayer. Others followed making him the founder of Christian monasticism.

January 24 - St. Francis de Sales (1622). As bishop of Geneva, St. Francis bolstered the faith of others by his writings and works. For the laity, St. Francis wrote Introduction to the Devout Life, which is as applicable

today as it was in his day.

January 31 - St. John Bosco (1888). St. John Bosco combined catechetical training and fatherly guidance to teach young men and women how to unite their spiritual life with their work and play. He opened the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales and provided workshops for boys in shoemaking and tailoring. In 1859, he founded the Salesians who were committed to education and mission work.



Q & A Are there qualities that would make me a better Christian?

Actually, when you were baptized, made your First Communion, or got Confirmed, the Holy Spirit conferred gifts to help you grow in strength and holiness. Recognizing these gifts and nurturing them will certainly make you a better Christian.

Wisdom: This gift helps us stay focused on God's will and his plan for us.

Understanding: Lets us grasp truths. It means seeing with the heart and the mind.

Counsel: Also called "right judgment," counsel enables us to weigh alternatives to make the right choice.

Fortitude: The ability to remain firm against pressure. (Also called courage.)

Knowledge: A person with knowledge sees more than one dimension of an issue to determine the right path.

Piety: Helps us think of ourselves as children of God and be eager to serve him.

Fear of the Lord: The wonder and awe God inspires encourages us to respect him and all his creations.

The more you use these gifts, the more you will grow in faith and holiness.

Our Mission

To provide practical ideas that promote faithful Catholic living.

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