



Alpha is Coming to St. Mary's Parish

Would you like to be involved in Jesus' Great Commission that we join Him in making disciples of all people? Perhaps this is your desire but feel uncomfortable with "evangelizing" or you have tried talking with friends, neighbors, even family members about God and the good news Jesus brings, and received a less than great response.

In the new year, St. Mary's Parish is planning to initiate Alpha, a friendship-based program of Gospel outreach to the Aiken community, to introduce them to Jesus and His saving message that God loves them and has a purpose for them.

Alpha is a tool for the New Evangelization. Lives are being transformed by Christ in thousands of Catholic parishes in over 70 countries in the world as Alpha presents the *kerygma*, the basic Gospel message and provides an opportunity to encounter Jesus. Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith, typically run over eleven weeks. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. It provides a safe, non-threatening environment to invite your friends to come, freely explore the major questions of life, and, through this experience, be introduced to God's love for them.

Currently, eight South Carolina parishes are offering Alpha; it is approved and recommended by the Diocese of Charleston.

"In my opinion Alpha accomplishes an incredible task, in making people interested in faith and in making faith relevant to the modern man.

– Father Raniero Cantalamessa, Preacher to the Papal Household

"Alpha is for meeting Jesus."

- Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna

As Pope Francis likes to say, it's a chance for "Jesus to find them"!

As an introduction of parishioners to the Alpha series, a new Adult Education Class will be offered September through November. The purpose of the 11-week class is to familiarize you with this friendship-based approach to evangelization, and to enable you to be comfortable in inviting others needing to meet Jesus to come to the St. Mary's Alpha when we offer it to the public. **All are invited** – believers who would like to become more comfortable sharing the message of Christ as well as those who may still have questions. Bring your friends! Contact Mary Ellen Jackson at 803-642-2676 or mjackson@charlestdiocese.org. <https://alpha.org/catholic-context/home/>

Place: The Oswald building school building

Time: 9:45-10:45 (between Sunday Masses)

Date: starting Sunday September 9th

Questions? Contact Mary Ellen Jackson at 803-642-2676 or mjackson@charlestdiocese.org

for more about Alpha

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsxkE6Yiymw&index=10&list=PLxt_1kPUO5-bUJeOdlzO5jCy1rtSg4T5Z&t=0s

Peter's story

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MhHsL2fiQ-k&list=PLxt_1kPUO5-bUJeOdlzO5jCy1rtSg4T5Z&index=19

Karen's story

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWHytfNkMj0&list=PLxt_1kPUO5-bUJeOdlzO5jCy1rtSg4T5Z&index=20

Paul's story

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IWHytfNkMj0&list=PLxt_1kPUO5-bUJeOdlzO5jCy1rtSg4T5Z&index=20