



# 2018 Alpha Training

Discover Christ!

Latest Revision of Slides  
January 9, 2018

# Hello

my name is

- Name
- Position | Parish
- Ice breaker question

# AGENDA

## Time Frame:

- 8:30-9:00AM: Arrival Time
- 10:30AM: Break
- 12:30PM: Lunch
- 2:15PM: Break
- 3:30PM: Dismal

## Topics Covered:

- Binder Material
- Why and the what of Alpha
- Alpha structure and principles
  - Discipleship process
  - Alpha parts
  - Alpha sessions videos
  - Alpha structure

- Alpha Session One: Is there more to life than this?
  - Discussion of Video
- Alpha Builder Training Videos
  - Small Group Facilitating (or Leading Table Discussions)
  - How to kill Alpha in 10 steps
  - Introducing Prayer
- Alpha Roll Out- Where do we go from here?
  - Promotional Tips
  - Alpha pilot parishes
  - What does success look like?

-Breaks-

10:30 | 12:30 | 2:15

# BINDER MATERIAL

- Left Binder Sleeve:
  - Ultimate Relationship Booklet
  - Alpha- Catholic Context
  - Evaluation Form
- Binder Packet
  - PowerPoints
- Run Alpha Training (Tool Box)
  - Sample Alpha Session- page 3
  - Best practice #1 Prayer- page 4
  - Best practice # 2 Hospitality – page 5
  - Best practice #3 Alpha Talks- page 6
  - Best practice # 4 Listening Leaders- page 7
    - Page 8: Small Group Discussion
    - page 8
  - Best practice # 5 Alpha Day | Weekend away- page 9
    - Praying for others on the weekend – page 10
  - Alpha Weekend Checklist- page 11
  - Best practice # 6 Training- page 12
    - 4 tips for building strong teams- page 13
  - Best practice # 7 Evangelistically Positioned- page 14
  - The Impact of Alpha 2016- page 15
- Alpha Lab
  - Checklist for prep- pages 17-22

# BINDER MATERIAL II

## After Alpha Tool Box

- Session Discussion Questions and Tips
  - No Session Discussion Question sheet for session 15
- How to Kill Alpha in 10 Steps
- A Few Notes on Leading Table Discussions
- Share Prayer
- Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, MI
  - An Alpha Based Parish

# Let me tell you how I met his acquaintance...

I had heard much of him, but took no heed. He sent daily gifts and presents, but I never thanked him. He often seemed to want my friendship, but I remained indifferent. I was homeless, miserable, starving and vulnerable every hour; and yet he offered me shelter and comfort and food and safety; but I was ungrateful still.

At last he crossed my path and with tears in his eyes he entreated me saying, Come and abide with me.

Let me tell you how he treats me now. He supplies all my wants. He gives me more than I dare ask. He anticipates my every need. He begs me to ask for more. He never reminds me of my past ingratitude. He never rebukes me for my past follies.

Let me tell you further what I think of him. He is good as he is great. His love is ardent as it is true. He is as lavish with his promises as he is in faithful in keeping them. He is as jealous of my love as he is deserving it. I am in all things his debtor, but he bids me to call him friend.

*-Robert Hugh Benson*



# Opening Prayer



“Father, I believe that you know me and love me.

I have not always chosen to love you, and have broken my relationship with you through my sins.

Thank you for sending your Son Jesus who proved your love for me on the cross.

Lord Jesus, I open the door of my heart and I invite you to be at the centre of my life — to be my Savior and my Lord.

Direct me by your Holy Spirit and help me to live the Gospel with my **whole life. Amen”**

# FROM UNCERTAINTY TO CLARITY

## FROM CLARITY TO GROWTH



LITTLE TIME



LOTS TO SHARE



MAY FEEL OVERWHELMED

**Long** walks **start**

**with** **one** **step.**

DO WHAT WORKS FOR YOU



Why and the What of Alpha!

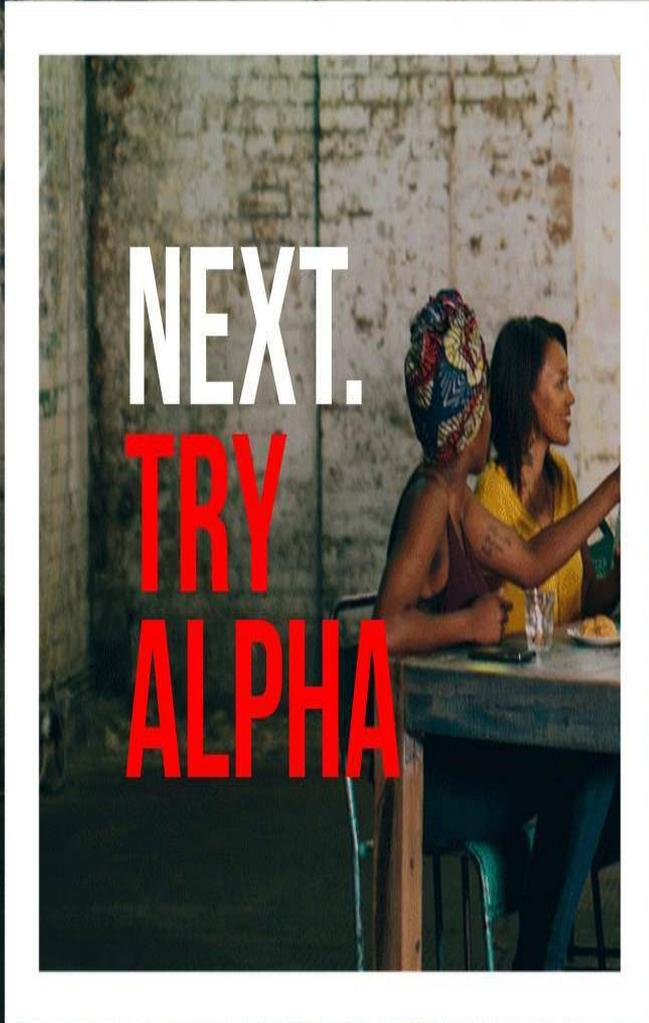
# Alpha for Catholic Parishes

- Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the person of Jesus Christ. It also on-ramp to parish life by introducing seekers, newcomers, and non-churchgoers to those who follow him. However, it is only the beginning of the discipleship process.

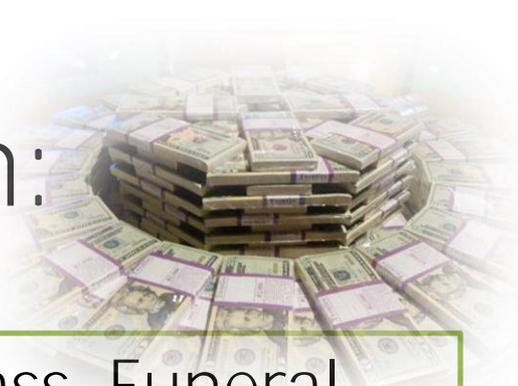
*Discipleship goes at the  
Speed of relationships*

**NEXT.**

**TRY  
ALPHA**



# The Million Dollar Question:



- Christmas Mass:
  - Many who normally do not go church, went to church | Mass on Christmas.
    - How did your parish engage them and plug them into a discipleship process?
    - What incentive did they have to come back to your parish that week?

- Easter Mass, Funeral Masses, Wedding Masses, Fish Fry During Lent, Church picnics
  - Is there a visible and user-friendly onramp to a discipleship process | parish life?

# Fr. James Mallon on Hospitality

## Divine Renovation Guidebook

- The goal of hospitality is not just to maximize the pleasantness of a visit to church, but to maximize the potential for this visit to be the first of a series of steps towards becoming missionary disciples
- The goal of this process is not just to be friendly or help someone register for the parish, but to help them take their first steps on the journey towards becoming a missionary disciple.

# Fr. James Mallon on Hospitality

## Divine Renovation Guidebook

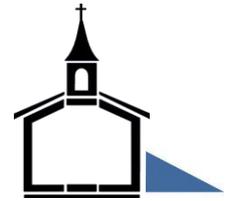
- Pre-evangelization is everything a parish would do to prepare people to hear the Gospel. This includes loving and serving people through ministries, building trust, and inviting them (see the US Bishops comments on slide 30).
- If belonging does lead to believing, which in turn leads to behaving, the immediate goal is to bring people into an experience of belonging as soon as possible.
- Belonging, however, is not an end in itself. The ultimate goal is to make disciples and then to make disciples become apostles.
- **Questions for discussion** (at a later time):
  - Do you have a clearly defined process to bring people from attending church for the first time to becoming missionary disciples?
  - How well does your leadership team, staff, ministry leaders know it?
  - How effective is your process to bring people from attending to being an active part of your community?
  - How are people with a non-Church background or non-Catholics brought into this process?

# Towards Worship

## Divine Renovation Guidebook

- Worship takes place anytime the mind and heart are raised to God in praise and thanksgiving.
- As Catholics, the high point of worship is the Eucharist, where we join ourselves to the eternal worship of Jesus to the Father.
- For us, evangelization is not complete until people are brought to the fullness of the Eucharist- the Eucharist can then be the source and summit of the Christian life.

# WHAT AN ONRAMP TO PARISH LIFE...



*Can look like!*



Every weekend:  
Acknowledge  
and welcome  
newcomers  
and seekers!

Direct them to a  
*welcoming counter*  
staffed by a *hospitality*  
*team!*  
Then refer them  
*according to their*  
*needs!*



*To shared  
prayer!*



*To Alpha or  
a discipleship  
group!*



*To a human  
service!*



*To information  
about your  
parish!*

Another way of visualizing the discipleship process

# A THREE STEP VISUAL- WITH SCRIPTURE

What is the primary foundation of your ministry and of your parish?

According to the grace of God given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But each one must be careful how he builds upon it, for no one can lay a foundation other than the one that is there, namely, Jesus Christ.

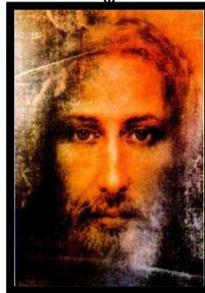
– I Corinthians 3:10-11

The *Discover Christ* Discipleship Step is All About This!



# 1

## Introducing Jesus Getting the relationship started



# A Personal God

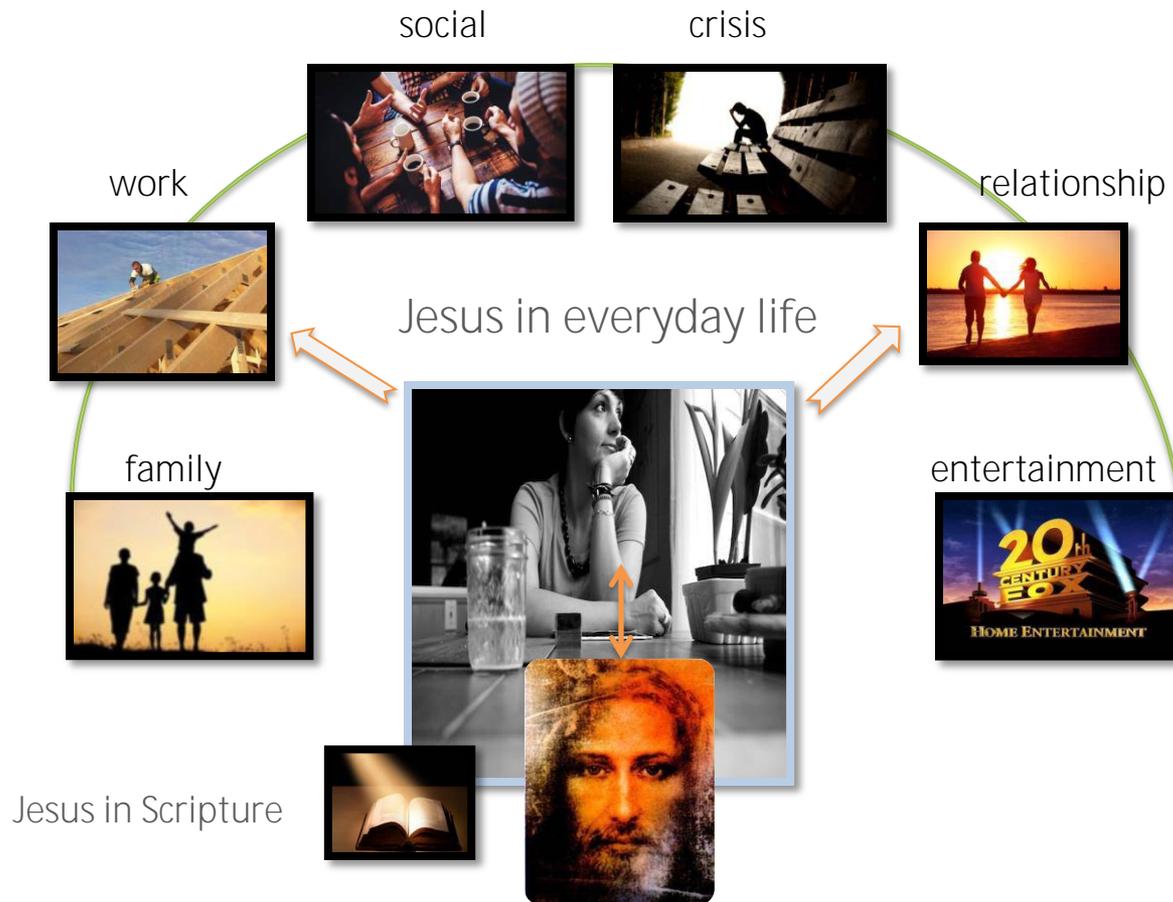
Hope and plans:

- *For I know well the plans I have in mind for you, says the LORD, plans for your welfare, not for woe! plans to give you a future full of hope. When you call me, when you go to pray to me, I will listen to you. When you look for me, you will find me. Yes, when you seek me with all your heart, you will find me with you, says the LORD, and I will change **your lot.***
  - Jeremiah 29: 11-14

Known and loved:

- Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? *Even should she forget, I will never forget you. See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name; your walls are ever before me.*
  - Isaiah 49:15-16

# 2 Discovering Jesus in everyday life



# God in Everyday Life

## God in travels:

- LORD, you have probed me, you know me: you know when I sit and stand; you understand my thoughts from afar. *You sift through my travels and my rest*; with all my ways you are familiar. Even before a word is on my tongue, LORD, you know it all.
  - Psalm 139

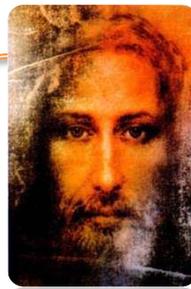
## God abroad:

- Therefore, you shall love the LORD, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. Take to heart these words which I enjoin on you today. Drill them into your children. *Speak of them at home and abroad, whether you are busy or at rest.*
  - Deuteronomy 6:5-7

# 3

Discovering Jesus in the Mass

Discovering Jesus in the Church



social

crisis



relationship

work

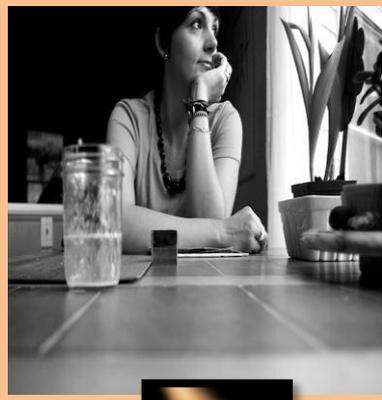


Jesus in everyday life



family

entertainment



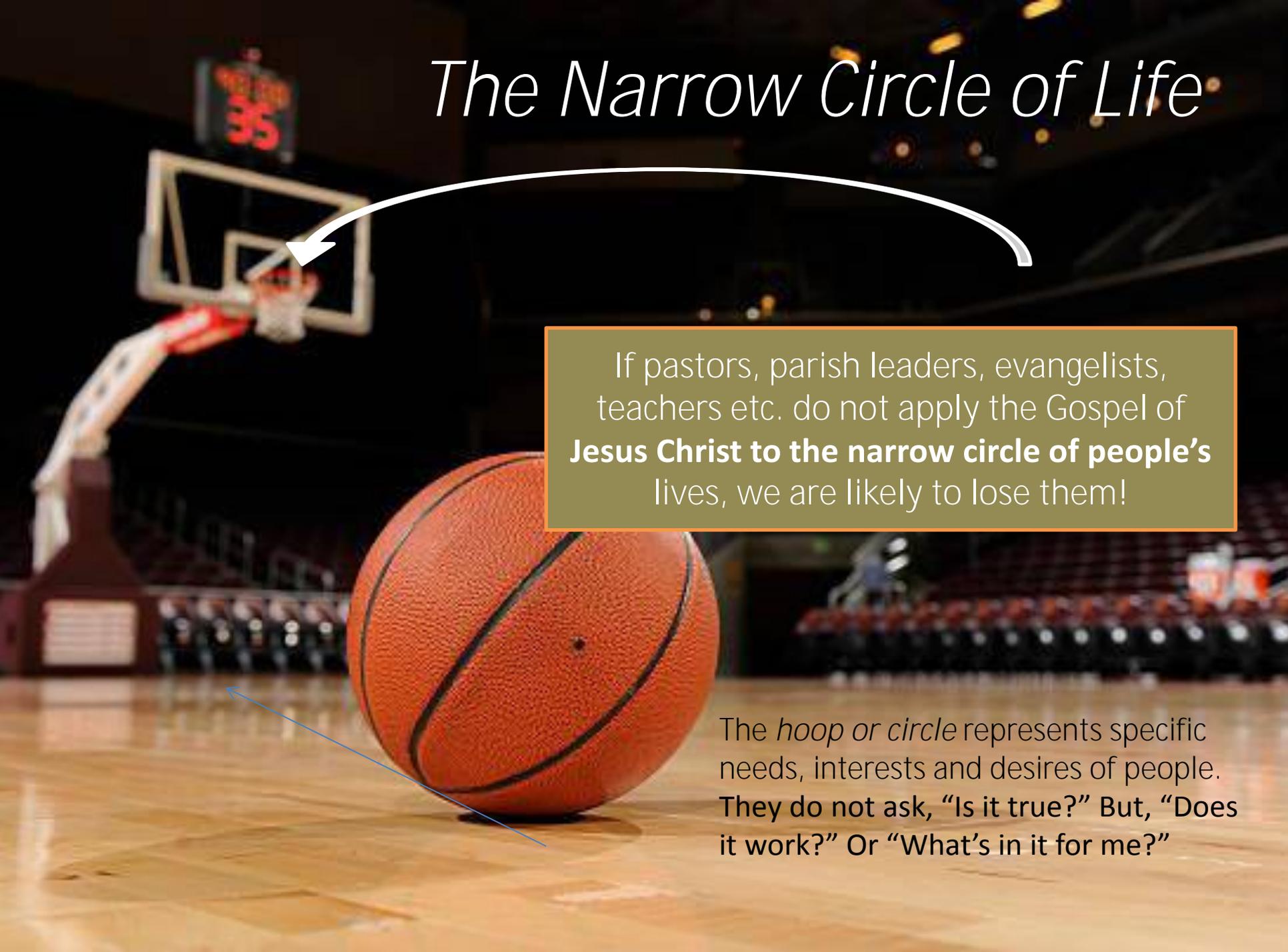
*If I discover Christ in his Word, in relationships and in everyday life...*

*...I will want to discover the fullness of his presence in the Church!*

# God in the Church

- God put all things beneath his feet and gave him as head over *all things to the church*, which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way.
  - Ephesians 1:22-23

# *The Narrow Circle of Life*



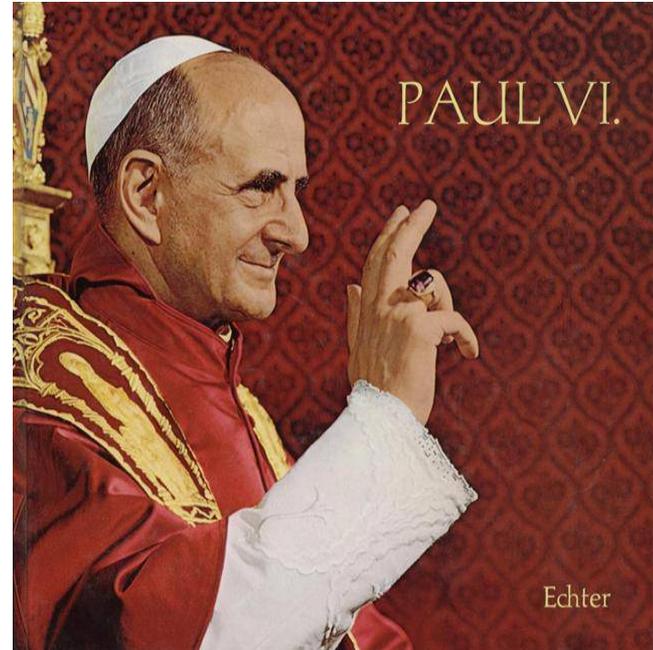
If pastors, parish leaders, evangelists, teachers etc. do not apply the Gospel of **Jesus Christ to the narrow circle of people's** lives, we are likely to lose them!

The *hoop or circle* represents specific needs, interests and desires of people. They do not ask, "Is it true?" But, "Does it work?" Or "What's in it for me?"

# Pope Paul VI:

## *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI*

Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addresses, if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life. (EN, no. 63)



TWO HAZARDS

# THE SACRAMENTAL CONVEYOR BELT EFFECT

No relationship with Jesus Christ- No friendships –No knowledge of the Mass

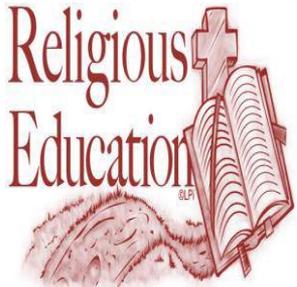


No transformation of life – No repentance –No serving the poor and the needy  
No intercessory prayer- No thinking about heaven- *Just the Sacraments- Thank You!*



# Parish World

Churchy talk:  
Sacraments, Sunday  
worship, church picnic,  
Advent Lent



People need to see how one relates to the other

# People's World

Stress at work, in-law  
problems, kids sports,  
marital stress, health  
issues, addictions





This is why we are doing Alpha

THIS IS WHY A DISCIPLESHIP  
PROCESS IS IMPORTANT

# Alpha structure and principles

1. Alpha in our discipleship process
2. The three parts to Alpha
3. Alpha sessions by topic
4. Three main Alpha video series
5. Alpha structure:
  - What does each session look like?
  - What does the day or weekend away look like?

# ALPHA IN OUR DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS

## *Discover Christ*

- In relationships
  - In his Word
  - In everyday life
  - Forming friendships
  - Ongoing relationship with Christ
  - (Alpha)
- Thresholds:**
- Trust
  - Curiosity
  - Openness

## *Follow Christ*

- Discipleship groups & community
  - Developing habits of prayer & reading Scripture
  - Discernment of good & evil | Repentance
  - Catechesis
- Thresholds:**
- Seeking (decision to follow)
  - Intentional Discipleship

## *Worship Christ*

- Sacramental Life
- Sacraments
- Mass
- Leadership development
- Ministry
  - Helping
  - Serving
  - Teaching
- Consciousness of journey to heaven

## *Share Christ*

- Outward focus
- Inviting
- Story telling
- Testimony
- Evangelizing

MOVEMENT



# ALPHA SESSION: 3-PARTS

## Pre-evangelization



Get to know guests

People need to be:

- Known
- Remembered
- Loved

## Evangelization/Proc.



Introduction to Jesus

Explicit Proclamation:

- Everyday life
- Human experiences
- Relationships

## Accompaniment



We listen:

**They talk...**

- About themselves!
- About their views!
- Corrections come later

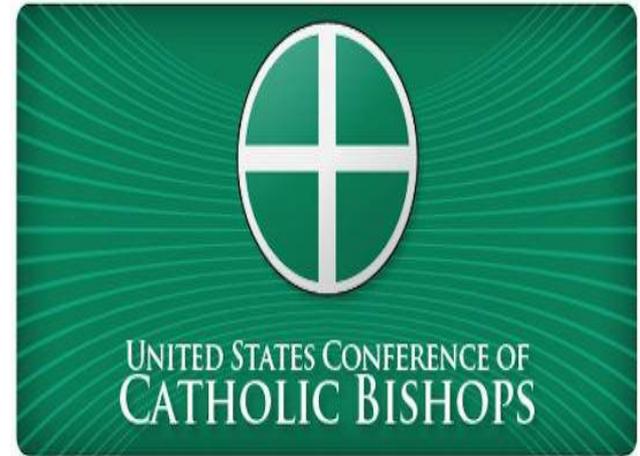
*Building Trust. Inspiring Curiosity and Openness!*



# The Meal and Discussion

## Pre-evangelization Opportunities

- First, the listeners are prepared for the first proclamation of the Gospel, or pre-evangelization. Pre-evangelization ordinarily builds on basic human needs, such as
  - Security
  - Love
  - Acceptance
- And shows how those basic human needs include a desire for God and his Word.



*This is the milk of the Gospel*



*-National Directory for Catechesis, USCCB*

# Alpha Sessions by Topic

## The Universal Question

- Session 1 Is There More to Life Than This?

## The Answer: Jesus

- Session 2 Who is Jesus?
- Session 3 Why Did Jesus Die?

## Getting the Relationship Started:

- Session 4 How Can I Have Faith?
- Session 5 Why and How Do I Pray?
- Session 6 Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
- Session 7 How Does God Guide Us?
  - After session 7:
    - Weekend/Day Away (slides below)

# Alpha Sessions by Topic

## Hazards | The Bad News

- Session 8 How Can I Resist Evil?

## Commission:

- Session 9 Why and How Should I Tell Others?

## God's Interventions:

- Session 10 Does God Heal Today?

## Can't Do It Alone:

- Session 11 What About the Church?

– *This last video should be replaced by a Catholic speaker or a Catholic video of your choice about the Catholic Church*

# Session 11: What about the Church?

*Fifteenth Video in Alpha Film Series*

- Fr. James Mallon, What About the Church?
  - Original is 49 minutes
  - Option: Can start talk 19 minutes into the talk and make it into a 30 minute presentation
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpDwflRGWv0>
- Robert Barron- Catholicism video series
  - Sample 30 segments to find a good summary of Catholicism and why the Church is necessary
- Preferred:
  - Live speaker that can speak to the specifics of your local parish | Catholic school

# Alpha Day or Weekend Away

- Session W1 Who is the Holy Spirit?
- Session W2 What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
- Session W3 How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
- Session W4 How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?

# Three Main Alpha Video Series

1. Alpha Film Series (recommended)
2. Alpha for Youth
3. Nicky Gumbel Lecture Series

# Alpha Session Structure

- Every Alpha session- same elements
- Food 30 minutes
- 30 minute talk
- 30-45 minute Discussion
- Churches, restaurants and homes
- Wednesday
  - 6:30 (team shows up early)
  - Greeters welcome
  - 6:45- meal
  - 7:15- talk
  - 7:45 discussion
    - small group (45 minutes)
  - Say goodbye 8:30
  - Gradually work in moments for prayer

# Alpha Day or Weekend Away

## Principles

- Creating space: connect with each other and God
- Weekend: Turning point
- Relax and have fun
- Get people to pray for the participants
- We want people to encounter the Holy Spirit

## Structure

- No rigid formula
- Parishes can do it by themselves or they can team up with neighboring parishes.
- Alpha ingredients:
  - hospitality,
  - proclamation
  - discussion.
- Some or all of the videos can be replaced by a live speaker.

# For Another Look: Day | Weekend Away

Page 9- Alpha Tool Box  
Best Practice #5 Alpha Day | Weekend Away

## Quick Links

- Alpha

The screenshot shows the mobile website for the Diocese of Green Bay (www.gbdioc.org). At the top, the status bar shows 'Sprint LTE', '4:49 PM', and '41%' battery. The website header includes a navigation menu with categories: DEPARTMENTS AND OFFICES, VOCATIONS, PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN, PARISH RESOURCES, EVENTS, DISCIPLES ON THE WAY, and CONTACT US. Below the menu are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, and a search bar.

The main content area features a large banner for 'The Office of Divine Worship announces auditions for 2017-18 Diocesan Chorale'. The text on the banner reads: 'The Diocesan Chorale is an SATB ensemble, with instrumentalists, providing music ministry for diocesan liturgical celebrations, including the Diocesan Christy Mass and Celebrations. Auditions for readers and instrumentalists are required for participation and will take place Thursday, November 30, 2017, 7-9 PM at St. Margaret Mary, Neenah or by special appointment. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information & to sign-up for an audition.'

Below the banner is a 'QUICK LINKS' sidebar with a list of links: 150th Anniversary Jubilee, All Souls Remembrance Program, New Evangelization Network, Catholic Evangelization Studies Courses, Marriage Prep, **Alpha**, Holy Hour Resources, Calendars, Careers, FCC | Catechetical Certification, Spiritual Direction, Religious Education Curriculum, RCIA (Becoming Catholic), Archives | Genealogy Research, Announcements | Marriage Tribunal, Background Checks & VIRTUSSI, WHO WE ARE (Our Vision and Mission, Our Bishops, Our Diocesan Newspaper, Our Catholic Faith), and DIOCESAN PLACES (Altona Catholic Cemetery & Mausoleum, Camp Tekawetha, Catholic Foundation, Diocesan Campus, McCormick Assisted Living, National Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help, St. Francis Xavier Cathedral, St. John the Evangelist Homeless Shelter). A 'Select Language' dropdown is at the bottom of the sidebar.

The main content area below the banner features a 'Pope Francis, Bishops Launch 'Share the Journey' Migration Campaign' article. The article text includes: 'On September 27, 2017, Pope Francis, the bishops of the United States, and Caritas Internationalis kicked off the "Share the Journey" Migration Campaign. Bishop David L. Ricken invites you to participate in the video shared here. For more information and more resources, please visit [sharejourney.org](http://sharejourney.org).'

Below the article is a 'Wisconsin Catholic Conference Statement on DACA' section. It includes a video player with the title 'STATEMENT OF WISCONSIN BISHOPS ON DACA' and a thumbnail image of the Statue of Liberty. Below the video are two buttons: 'WCC Declaración en Español' and 'WCC Statement in English'.

The 'Press Releases' section lists several recent releases: 'Nov. 28, 2017 | St. Francis Xavier Cathedral to Celebrate Reopening Dec. 3 after Renovations', 'Sept. 27, 2017 | Ecumenical Prayer Service and Workshop to be Held Sunday, October 29', 'Sept. 26, 2017 | Diocesan-wide Diaper Drive Assists Crisis Pregnancy Centers, Parenting Programs', 'U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' (Nov. 29, 2017 | USCCB Offers Advent and Christmas Online Resources for Prayerful Preparation), and 'Nov. 28, 2017 | Jonathan Reyes Named Bishops' Integral Human'.

# ALPHA FILM SERIES

BEGIN THE GREATEST ADVENTURE

Alpha Video: Session I

*Is there more to life than this?*

# Alpha Video: Session I

A preliminary note

## VISION:

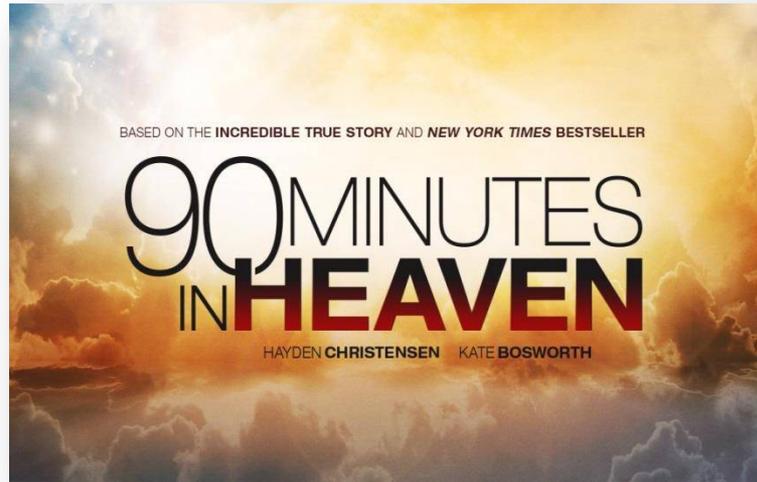
We are missionary disciples striving to lead all people to the kingdom of God



The full manifestation of this kingdom is in heaven!

This is the ultimate end of our discipleship process!

# Is There More to Life Than This?

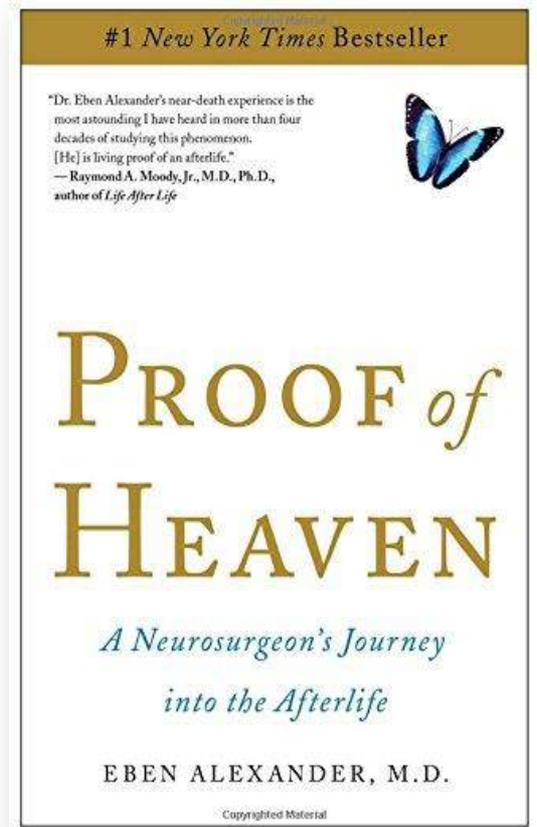


*From the world of shadows to the world of vibrant colors*

# Is there more to life than this?

“**Imagine** being a kid and going to a movie on a summer day. Maybe the movie was good, and you were entertained as you sat through it. But then the show ended, and you filed out of the theater and back into the deep, vibrant, welcoming warmth of the summer afternoon. And as the air and the sunlight hit you, you wondered why on earth **you’d** wasted this gorgeous day sitting in a dark theater. Multiply that feeling a thousand times, and you will still **won’t** be anywhere close to what it felt like where I was.”

– Eben Alexander, *Proof of Heaven*



*New Testament, Saints and the Church has always taught we have yet to really live; that we live in the dark theater.*

# Salve Regina

...**To** thee do we cry, poor  
banished children of Eve.  
To thee to we send up our  
sighs, mourning and  
weeping in this valley of  
**tears...**

...**after** this, our exile,  
show unto us the blessed  
fruit of thy womb, Jesus.  
O clement, O loving, O  
**sweet Virgin Mary...**

WHERE IS YOUR HEART?

Is it in the dark theater or the valley?

Or is it in heaven i.e. “the warmth of the summer **afternoon**”?

*Bottom line: We are pilgrims traveling towards heaven!*



# Alpha Discussion: Session I

WEDNESDAY

Is There More  
To Life Than  
This?

Alpha

DEVOTED  
TO PRAYER

The How of Alpha

# Alpha Builder Training Videos

Get Ready!  
Four Short Videos



# 4 Foundational Values Of Alpha

## 1. Real:

- Be transparent
- Be yourself
- Not just going through the motions

## 2. Relational:

- *“With such affection for you, we were determined to share with you not only the gospel of God, but our very selves as well, so dearly beloved had you become to us.”* 1 Thes 2:8
- Accompaniment and apprenticeship model
- We want to go from **“travel agents”** to **“tourist guides”**

## 3. Reliant:

- Rely on the Holy Spirit
- Share journey and pray that by his power- change
- Shared prayer
- God changes lives
- *Fraternal correction? Not yet!*

## 4. Reproducible:

- Empowering ordinary people to ordinary work
- Leadership Alpha helps with other leadership skills
- When a pastor leaves the parish, we want the good work to continue

Show video

# Milk First

Then Solid Food

“**Brothers**, I could not talk to you as spiritual people, but as fleshly people, as infants in Christ. I fed you milk, not solid food, because you were unable to take it. Indeed, you are still not able, even now, for you are still of the flesh.”

*-1 Corinthians 3:1-3*



*Not the focus yet: Discerning good and evil |  
Call to repentance | Fraternal correction  
Just milk!*

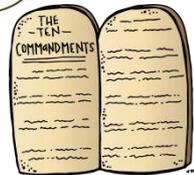
# Milk & Solid Food:

## Parts of One Process

“**Everyone** who lives on milk lacks experience of the word of righteousness, for he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties are trained by practice to discern good and evil.”

*-Hebrews 5:13-14*

One Inseparable Process



*Solid food: Discerning good and evil | Call to repentance | Fraternal correction*

# Five Common Mistakes

- Wishing done differently
- Five most common mistakes
  1. Empty stomach- no food (incentive)
  2. Missing weekend (most experiential)
  3. IKEA- Skip training (bring your whole team through the training)
  4. Cheap cups (use good material) good lighting
  5. Closed doors- open to anyone (non-churchgoers)

Show video

# Creating the Environment

- Walk in home or restaurant- want to come back- feel at home
- First time- intimidating
- Guest experience- fun and welcoming atmosphere
- Venue- lights – temperature
- Music
- Easy parking clear directions
- First thing they see when come in the door
- Host alpha the same way host a party at house
- Lamps- turn off fluorescent lights
- Comfort leads to feeling safe
- Big factor- YOU attitude kindness
- Who you can invite to create environment

# Food on Alpha



# Build a Strong Team

- **Best Alpha's great teams**
- Team roles
  - Food (who loves cooking)
  - Tech (who can sure IT)
  - Design (atmosphere)
  - Welcome team
  - Set up and tear down
  - MC- host
  - Administrator
  - Prayer
  - Host and helpers (one host-one helper)
- Four tips:
  1. Match people with talents
  2. Three alpha training sessions whole team
  3. Meet with team week to week (30 minutes before Alpha begins)
  4. Get feedback

Show video

# Tips for Alpha Leaders

1. Empower others
  - Myth: we need to do all
2. Use the friend test
  - Who would make a small group host?
3. Communicate with team
4. Right tool and in the right peoples hands
5. Get your church on board
6. Think like a guest
7. Plan to pray with team- regularly

# Great Small Groups

- 8-12 people (better yet- 6-10)
- One host- one helper
  - Host: facilitate
  - Helper: help the group and host (stay quiet- pray)
  - Look for: Sincere in faith, hospitable
- Grouping people:
  - How old? Series of questions to consider
- Small Group Facilitator
  - a conversation- less about leading
  - not teacher and student
  - hand pick the people
- Train team- get discussion questions for the next week

WITTO WELCH II

Is There More  
To Life Than  
This?

Alpha

A FEW NOTES ON LEADING TABLE DISCUSSION

# How to Kill Alpha in 10 Steps

1. **Don't have a small meal,** go straight to the talks
2. Cut the Alpha weekend
3. **Don't pray**
4. Teach in small groups
5. Be intense, skip all fun icebreakers and go straight into the big discussions
6. Talk Catholic
7. Choose group leaders who think they deserve to lead
8. Pick a team and keep the same team forever
9. Pick songs that are hard to sing
10. **Don't have a plan for post-Alpha**

PRAYER

REQUEST

Shared Prayer Tips and Activity

# Introducing Prayer



- Essential part of Alpha
- Introduce to guest through several specific moments
- 4 key moments
  1. First few sessions- short prayer at end of talk
  2. Session 5 (why and how should I pray)– end small groups with a short time in prayer
    - Give guests an opportunity to pray out loud
    - Something on their heart
    - Encourage not to begin meals or end session in prayer until – session 5
  3. Alpha weekend- the most life change happen
  4. Session on healing- after talk –pray for healing

*“Progress begins where your comfort zone ends.”*

Show video

# Share Prayer Hour



Offer: Would you like me to pray with you?

- **If they say “no,” that is okay!** We just move on.
- **But if they say, “yes.”** We can do the following:

Optional: You can ask if you can place your hand on their shoulder (When Jesus healed, human touch was important but it **wasn't necessary in all cases**)

1. Assure them that their prayer intention will remain confidential.
2. Call on God in the following ways: God, Lord, Father, Jesus, Holy Spirit etc.
3. Thank God for the person you are praying with and **ask for God's blessing**
4. Then ask God to help the person according to their intention
5. Express gratitude for all that God is doing
6. Finish the prayer with: We ask this through Christ our Lord or We ask this in **Jesus' name.**

# Instructions: Shared prayer activity

- Choose a partner in your Alpha small group
- Have them state their intention about that which they want prayer for
- Then you, as their prayer partner, begin to intercede aloud for them accordingly
- Make sure each person in your group has had the opportunity to pray and to be prayed with
- After this exercise you have the option of talking about your experience with your group.

# Spiritual Warfare is Real

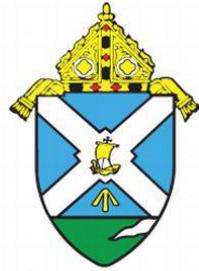
"You may want to start thinking about recruiting special prayer support for what you about to get into. *Spiritual warfare is real.* The evil one does not desire to see the Church come to life. A maintenance parish or a parish in decline does not require his attention.

However, as soon as you begin to shift your focus as a leader and engage your parish to begin this great journey, you will be on his radar..."

**"I strongly encourage you to connect with the leaders of the Intercessory prayer groups in your parish.** You don't need to commit to interceding for all of the specifics, but ask them to commit to interceding for the renovation or renewal of the parish.

Take a moment. Think about the prayer ministry leaders and the prayer warriors in your parish and write their names below."

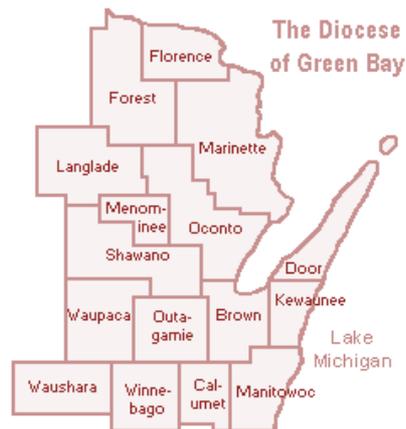
- Fr. James Mallon, Divine Renovation Guidebook



Diocese of  
Green Bay

Where do we go from here?

*Logistics and Roll Out*



# Time Frame for Roll Out

- November of 2017 to January of 2018
  - Alpha trainings
- Any time after the designated small group leaders get trained, the parish personnel can get started with the Alpha Course

- Recommended:
  - Weekly gatherings
  - For at least an hour and a half
  - Winter or spring of 2018
  - Launch for parish- Fall of 2018
- Roll Out
  - Pastoral and parish leaders
  - Parishioners
  - Outsiders or newcomers

# Alpha Roll Out: Diocese of Green Bay

- 2016-17:
  - Alpha was introduced to priests and pastoral leaders as well as curia employees.
- 2017-18:
  - Alpha is introduced to deacons, parish leaders, DRE's, key parish volunteer leaders, and principals of Catholic schools (for more details, see questions 3-5).
- 2018-19:
  - Alpha is introduced to all catechists, teachers and *engaged* parishioners
  - Alpha is introduced to *all* parishioners.
- 2019-20:
  - Alpha is introduced to neighborhoods within parish boundaries.



# Roll Out Alpha to the Parish: Promotions



People need to hear about something 7x before it registers

# Alpha Parishes in Michigan: Promotion Tips



- Flyers in Hand:
  - Greeters with Alpha flyers in the narthex of the church.
- Welcome Counter:
  - A welcome counter of parish representatives answering questions about Alpha or any other upcoming event.
- Banners:
  - A 5 to 6 foot banner was used to promote Alpha (the standard image- simple, no religious imagery) at OLG.
- PowerPoint Image:
  - A PowerPoint Image projected on the wall in the church (place of worship) of an Alpha event with date, location, etc. This projected image was turned off once the liturgy commenced. The benefit of this method is so that all who sit in the pew sees this image.
- Bulletins:
  - Bulletins are used to promote the Alpha event but this method was deemed to be woefully insufficient by itself.
- Announcements:
  - Top-down promotion is critical. That is, an announcement by the music leader and a message by the pastor was key in getting the idea across to the congregation that Alpha experience was a priority for the parish.

# Alpha Parishes in Michigan: Promotion Tips



- Website Content:
  - As for content on parish websites (some of these parish websites are a work in progress): Ideally, parish website content oriented towards life experiences is deemed to be highly effective. Someone said: parish websites use **“churchy” jargon and are church ministry oriented. The principal idea is that our Catholic faith should help us draw closer to Jesus Christ and each other by “doing life together.”**
- School Families:
  - Invite 6 parish school families that may not frequent Mass on the weekends.
- Friends Mass:
  - **Host two “Friends Mass” a year in which parishioners are asked to bring a friend so that they can be invited into a relationship with Jesus and hear about Alpha.**
- Sacramental Prep:
  - One pastor required Alpha for engaged couples while another parish invited engaged couples to attend Alpha.

# Pics of a Growing Parish

Our Lady of Good Help, Plymouth, MI





# Alpha-Based Parishes | Questions & Answers



# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- St. Pius X Parish- Appleton
- St. Thomas More Parish- Appleton
- St. Bernard Parish- Appleton
- St. Joseph | St. Mary Parishes- Appleton
- Sacred Heart Parish- Appleton

- St. Edward Parish- Mackville
- St. Mary Parish- Greenville
- Blessed Sacrament Parish- Oshkosh
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Parish- Green Bay
- St. Joseph-Holy Family Parish- Phlox

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- Advice from one parish:
  - “**We** recommend to parishes to have a well thought out reason to do Alpha. Without a plan and goals, Alpha becomes just another program that can get difficult and burden-some. Know what you are trying to accomplish so when questions arise, you can make decisions that will **meet those goals**”

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- *Multiple Alpha* course offerings seem to create more momentum and interest in Alpha than if just one Alpha course is offered.

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- A preliminary finding is that Alpha courses offered at *restaurants* enjoy a higher rate of participation and retention. Keep in mind that we only have one Alpha pilot parish that has offered Alpha at a restaurant. Yet, this is worth noting because the findings of this one parish in our diocese corroborate what other Alpha-based parishes have experienced nationally.

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- *Testimonies and Alpha videos* featured before or after Mass seem to attract more attention to the Alpha courses being offered and hence have increased the level of registrants. Conversely, when the promotion of Alpha is relegated to the parish bulletin or even the parish website, the turnout is not as impressive.

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- Although this has only been introduced at one of our parishes, I thought it was worth mentioning that having ministries and apostolates (within that same parish) *sponsor an Alpha meal*, especially when participants are newcomers, is a great opportunity for them to be introduced to parish community.

# Alpha Pilot Parishes- GBD

- *People need more time* than what was original thought in terms of discovering Christ in everyday life and in his Word. As stated below, it seems there is a growing need for people to have their life questions answered within the context of their spiritual journey before they are open to receiving catechetical instruction on doctrine, ritual, and tradition.

# What does success look like?

Not just with Alpha but with parish renewal!

- Divine Renovation Guidebook:
  - The truth is that any change will make people upset. Do you know why? Although parishioners **want change, they don't want to change.**
  - If you undertake the path of renewal, you will lose parishioners precisely because it requires change



Divine  
Renovation

# What does success look like?

Not just with Alpha but with parish renewal!

## Divine Renovation Guidebook:

- After five years we had returned to the same number of parishioners we had at the beginning of my tenure as pastor.
- **800 people left...half of these left because of changes...most left quietly...many made a lot of noise**
- **“As I said at the beginning, it has all been worth it. Our attendance is back up, we have 40% involvement in discipleship, and our liturgies are much more dynamic. Our collection has doubled, hundreds of lives have been changed, are pews are full of people who have had conversions, and ministry is flourishing, with more than half of our adults in some form of ministry.**
- It is worth the pain.
- I am often asked, “How did you deal with the negativity and pushback?” The honest answer is, not very well- at least at first.



Divine  
Renovation

# Mission is Ours:

**Changing hearts, minds and lives is God's!**

Lord, although we may utter fine words, we cannot impart the spirit.

Although we speak beautifully, but if You remain silent, we cannot inflame the heart.

We place before them mysteries, but You unlock their meaning.

We proclaim the commandments; You help them to keep the commandments.

We point out the way; You give strength for the journey.

We work only outwardly; You instruct and enlighten their hearts.

We water on the outside; You give the increase.

Imitation of Christ, Book III  
Chapter 2

*This is why our relationship with Jesus and our daily prayer life is so important for ministry.*