

## EVANGELISM IN THE FORCES 1 WHAT IS ALPHA?

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### 1. Introduction

The Alpha Course is one of many ways of sharing your faith, one that has been successfully used in barracks and on operations with several nations world wide. It was originally a four week course run in a vicar's kitchen for members of the church. Since then it has grown significantly and is now running in 170 countries. It is estimated over 25 million people world wide have completed the course. The Alpha course:

- Provides information about Jesus based on the Bible;
- Explains why and how Christians live out their faith; and
- Provides an opportunity for the guests to discuss what they have heard.

### 2. What does Alpha stand for?

- A is for *anyone*. Alpha is for anyone who is, or thinks they might be interested in finding out more about the Christian faith.
- L is for *learning & laughter*. This is an opportunity for you to explore topics and learn about Christianity
- P is for *pasta...and prawns and porridge and chocolate*. Basically it's for food! At every session one of the most important parts is eating.
- H is for *helping* one another.
- A is for ask *anything*.
- L is for *literally*, no question is too difficult, too simple or too hostile. This is your opportunity to spend some time really looking at the Christian faith, so it's only right that you should be able to ask anything. For example Paul Cowley who is speaking at this conference once asked how big Jesus' feet were.

### 3. What topics are included?

There are 15 sessions done over about 10 weeks. They include:

- Who is Jesus?
- Why did Jesus die? Why didn't Christianity die when Jesus was crucified? If he was really God, why did he need to die?
- How can I be sure of my faith? Can I still be a Christian when times are tough or does it depend on my mood?
- Why and how should I read the Bible?
- Why and how should I pray?
- How does God guide us? Is God involved in our lives and does he want to help us?

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- How can I resist evil? Do we have to give in to the temptations that encourage us to do bad things? Some of them are big and some small but if they are ruining our lives then is it possible to stop?
- Why and how should I tell others? How many of you are here because other people invited you? You see that's what happens, once people know what a difference Jesus can make they want everyone to know.
- Does God heal today? This is an opportunity to hear more about the way God restores people to health.
- What about the Church? What is the church? Can I be a Christian on my own?
- The Holy Spirit Day At some point in the course, around halfway, we have the Holy Spirit Day. We will cover three subjects, all about the person of the Holy Spirit and how you can be filled with the Holy Spirit. For many people this day marks a real turning point.

#### **4. Summary/Notes**

During the remaining sessions we will be exploring what we have covered here in more detail and we hope that by the end that you will know:

- What it's like to be a guest on an Alpha course.
- The benefits of the course.
- How the Alpha course can be used in your community/military.
- What role you can play in an Alpha course.
- How to run the course well.