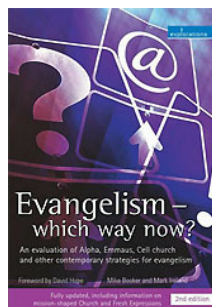


Recommended: Evangelism – which way now?

by Mike Booker and Mark Ireland
(Church House Publishing, 2003; ISBN
0715140752); an excellent introduction
to a wide range of issues to do with
evangelism and church growth. The
authors emphasise that home-grown
courses are sometimes even more
effective than those taken 'off the
shelf'. Courses almost always need
adapting to your situation and some
parishes 'mix and match' different materials.



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Nurture Courses

In parish ministry, I have used a variety of nurture courses and have found them to be invaluable in teaching the faith and integrating new people into the church. There are a variety of courses available and below I have given a summary outline of some of the most popular. More information can be found on the web sites of the different courses. If you would like to see the courses, or even borrow a sample to try out, then contact me and I will do all I can to help. If you would like me to bring samples along to a chapter or cluster meeting then please get in touch.

George Fisher. Director of Parish Mission.

1. Alpha

The Alpha Course is an eleven week course, including an introductory 'taster' evening, and a weekend or day away in the middle. It was developed at Holy Trinity, Brompton and so comes from the evangelical charismatic tradition. It aims to be an introduction to the Christian faith, open to everyone, but with a particular focus on those who are new to Christianity. Each evening begins with a meal, followed by a 40 minute talk (available on video/DVD), and exploratory small group discussion.



Comparison Table

The session topics are:

Introductory session – Christianity: boring, untrue and irrelevant?

Session 1 – Who is Jesus?

Session 2 – Why did Jesus die?

Session 3 – How can I be sure of my faith?

Session 4 – Why and how should I read the bible?

Session 5 – Why and how do I pray?

Session 6 – How does God guide us?

Weekend Away

Who is the Holy Spirit?

What does the Holy Spirit do?

How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?

How can I make the most of the rest of my life?

Session 7 – How can I resist evil?

Session 8 – Why and how should we tell others?

Session 9 – Does God heal today?

Session 10 – What about the church?

There are Alpha conferences to prepare new leaders as well as other training packages. Alpha does a lot of advertising and produces good publicity materials. Alpha material is flexible although they prefer you to use their ways of working. It uses small groups to build relationships and this provides 'safe places' to ask questions as well as the possible continuation of the group beyond Alpha.

Some churches have had to adapt Alpha as the teaching sessions are rather long and some leaders prefer to teach the materials themselves rather than use the DVD, so it can be more interactive. There is a shortened version of the talks. There is very little sacramental teaching and a strong emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

Course	Tradition / Style	No. Sessions	A/V Material	Meals	Week-end/Day Away?	Photocopiable Worksheets?	Minimum Cost for 12 participants and 1 leader
Alpha	Evangelical Charismatic	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	£160.00
Christianity Explained	Evangelical	6	No	No	No	Yes	£9.00
Christianity Explored	Conservative Evangelical	10	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	£94.00
Emmaus	Anglican	15	No	No	No	Yes	£22.50
Essence	Modern Spirituality	6	Yes	No	No	Yes	Free Download
Evangelium	Catholic	25	Yes	No	No	No	£120.40
Knowing God Better	Catholic	7	Yes	No	No	Yes	£34.90
Start	Evangelical	6	Yes	No	No	Yes	£40.00
Y Course	Evangelical	8	Yes	No	No	Yes	£85.97

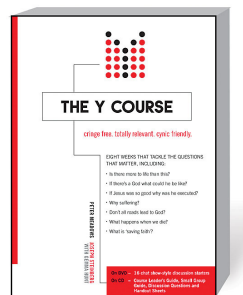
9. The Y Course

This eight week evangelism course helps people face life's biggest questions and introduces them to Jesus.

What makes it different?

The Y Course stands apart from other enquirers' courses because (it says!)—

- Its guests need no knowledge of the Bible or Christian language
 - It includes issues like 'Why does God allow suffering?' and 'What about other religions?'
 - It talks today's language, uses stories that relate, and doesn't rush people to a decision.
- What resources does it provide?



The resources for The Y Course include —

- 16 chat show style DVD segments (6 minutes each) featuring Peter Meadows and Joseph Steinberg with Gemma Hunt
 - A guide for Course Leaders
 - A guide for small group leaders and over 100 questions to stimulate discussion
 - The Book of Y – the core content for the course
- Call +44(0)1903 241975 or here;
<http://www.ycourse.com/>

The Course DVD and various bulk orders of the Coursebook are also available.

The Alpha meal is challenging for some churches. It can be hard to sustain but also in some cultures, they eat at 'tea-times' and don't easily chat to strangers over meals. In one church I know it worked very well with a cuppa and cream cakes – very nice ones!

Cost: £99.95

(this includes the shortened version Alpha Express)

Course Manual for each participant £1.50.

Leader's Manual £3.50.

Plus a many other items (e.g. balloons etc for publicity)

See www.alpha.org

2. Emmaus

Emmaus is a series of course materials which are seen as a journey in different stages.

Stage 1 encourages churches to think creatively about casual contacts (the material is not as developed as the nurture course).

Stage 2 offers a fifteen week nurture course. The topics include:



Part 1: What Christians Believe

1. God is there and he matters
2. We need God in our lives
3. Jesus – his ministry and death
4. The resurrection of Jesus
5. The Holy Spirit
6. Becoming a Christian

Part 2: How Christians Grow

7. Learning to pray
8. Reading the bible
9. Belonging to the church
10. Sharing holy communion

Part 3: Living the Christian Life

11. Living God's way
12. Serving the Lord
13. Your money and your life
14. Learning to love
15. Sharing the faith.



Stage 3 provides a variety of further courses to deepen discipleship; and bible study guides for individuals and small groups. Some churches have followed up Alpha courses with Emmaus material.

Each session includes Bible study, input & discussion, group exercises, meditations, ways to put faith into practice, and prayers. The book is divided into two sections - detailed leader's notes and member handouts. Lay and clergy leaders alike will find everything they need to help develop individuals' personal faith and identity within a Christian community.

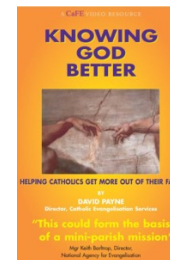
Nurture is an ideal programme for

- an enquirers' group
- a new Christians' group
- a confirmation class
- a refresher course on the basics of faith.

8. Knowing God Better

A seven-session course from David Payne, Director of Catholic Evangelisation Services. The course is available in audio or audio-visual formats as according to budget constraints. A relaxed, fun and practical course which includes mime, music, testimonies and opportunities for prayerful reflection. The Leader's Pack is a practical guide to setting up and running Knowing God Better and includes Scripture reflection handouts for the participants, which can be photocopied. The 7 sessions are...

- Knowing God Better
- Knowing God's Love
- Knowing God's Forgiveness
- Knowing God's Help
- Knowing God's Word
- Knowing God's Spirit
- Knowing God's Hope



Additional posters, flyers and leaflets are available; there is also a Follow-up course – Knowing God **Even** Better. Those 5 sessions are called.

- Knowing the Father's Love
- Knowing Jesus as Lord
- Knowing the Spirit as Friend
- Knowing God's Presence
- Knowing the Great Commission

Knowing God Better and Even Better are available from 'CaFE' – Catholic Faith Exploration.

For more details look at;

http://ctshop.org/acatalog/Knowing_God_Better.html

7. Christianity Explained.

A six-session evangelism course, based on Mark's Gospel. The A4 manual cost £9 and includes photocopiable pages for group members. The course principles are:

ASSUME NOTHING

CE starts from the assumption that the enquirer knows little or nothing about the Bible or the basic Gospel. This is increasingly the case in traditionally Christian countries.

PROCEED SLOWLY

CE seeks to teach the Gospel slowly, one point each lesson, over a six-unit course. It is based on the Gospel of Mark, as this is the shortest and easiest gospel for someone starting out.

LIMITED TIME COMMITMENT

'Would you be willing to give me just six hours of your life?' Enquirers are asked to meet on just six occasions, a limited commitment.

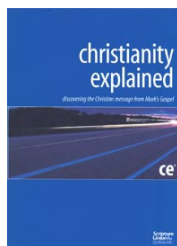
THE THREE FEARS

Enquirers are assured from the beginning they will not be asked to read aloud, pray, sing or answer Bible questions that may embarrass them. Discussion however is encouraged.

Agents for Christianity Explained in the U.K.:

The GoodBook Company
Attn: Tim Thornborough
Elm House
New Malden
Surrey KT3 3HB

Tel : 020 8942 0880
Fax : 020 8942 0990
Email : admin@thegoodbook.co.uk
Website : www.thegoodbook.co.uk



How is the book laid out?

- Leaders' notes – these provide a detailed guide to running the session, including questions for discussion.
- Members' handouts – these may be photocopied for each member of the group or printed directly from the CD-ROM.

What is on the CD-ROM included with the book?

- Handouts and supplementary handouts for all sessions provided as PDF files
- Poster
- Microsoft® PowerPoint presentation
- Supplementary material to use in sessions
- Links to useful web sites.

There are no meals planned into the scheme, and no weekend away. A variety of educational methods are used to enable discussion and exploration.

Churches have appreciated the Emmaus focus on the journey of faith. The flexibility of the material is valued, especially when literacy is not uniformly high (although some still view it as too wordy). Some have found the materials a little complex to handle so more preparation time and organization is needed than for Alpha. Since Emmaus does not have as high a profile as Alpha, more time may be spent encouraging people to participate.

Many churches usually feel that Emmaus aligns well with Anglican tradition, with an appropriate place being given to the sacraments and to embedding experience in the church.

Cost: Each book is £22.50 but it is photocopiable.

www.e-mmaus.org.uk

For more details: www.chpublishing.co.uk/22601

3. Start!

Start! is a six session introduction to the Christian faith, developed by Robin Gamble and produced by LYCIG. It is often used as a pre-nurture course (eg. pre-Alpha or pre-Emmaus). The sessions are interactive, using a mix of clips from the course video, discussion activities, and meditation type activities. It invites questions and discovery.



Each session lasts an hour, and the outline of the six sessions is:

- Session 1:* Life is for living – a general introduction to the course and concept of journey
- Session 2:* Oh my God! – an introduction to God and whether he exists
- Session 3:* Jesus who? – Jesus as an authentic, historical person, divine and human

Although session leaders conduct the course, participants are divided into small groups of five or six (called sets). Each set has a leader, who is briefed before sessions.

- Session 1:* The journey so far – Key concepts: bonding, belonging, community, touch, spiritual highs and lows
- Session 2:* The journey within – Key concepts: identity, image, perception, affirmation
- Session 3:* The journey to a better world – Key concepts: a perfect creation, the eco-system, destruction, creator, stewardship, partnership
- Session 4:* The journey to wholeness – Key concepts: body, mind, spirit, emotions, physical and mental pain
- Session 5:* The journey to spirituality – Key concepts: spirituality, religious experience, seeking God, types of prayer, coming into God's presence
- Session 6:* The journey to the future – Key concepts: hopes and dreams, the future, eternity.

Essence is a good beginning for people outside the church, but it can enrich the experience of established church people as well. Considerable preparation and some expense are required.

Essence is available for free download at:
<http://www.sharejesusinternational.com/#/essence/4532523558>



Materials are available from The Good Book Company.

www.thegoodbook.co.uk/Christianity-Explored/

The Good Book Company Ltd. Elm House.
37 Elm Road, New Malden. Surrey. KT3 3HB.
0845 225 0880

What you will need is:

The DVD set contains 14 talks - £45
How to Run the Course with CD Rom - £10.00
Leader's Manual - £6.00
The participants study guide - £3.00

A Starter Pack is available and includes; 1 x How to Run the Course (with CD Rom), 1 x DVD set, 3 x Leader's Manual and 9 x Study Guide ... all for the bargain price of £85!!

www.christianityexplored.org

6. Essence: Exploring Spirituality

This course is not designed to tell the whole Christian story, or necessarily to lead people to a point of Christian commitment. Our hope is, however, that *Essence* will stimulate many who take part to begin to explore Christian spirituality. It should be seen as the first stage of a journey to a fulfilling and enriching way of life, not its final destination.

There are six sessions, each lasting one and a half to two hours – including chatting and chilling out. Ideally they will not take place in the church. The setting and style should be easy and informal. It is recommended that there should be low lighting, comfortable low seating, and relaxing music.

Session 4: What's gone wrong? – exploring the concept of sin
Session 5: Dying to save us – the cross and resurrection
Session 6: Into the arms of love – advocating a continuing journey with Jesus.

Start! is helpful in that it is brief, both in terms of the total number of sessions and the length of each session. Within a session, each component is never more than 10-12 minutes.

The video is set in Blackpool and interviews people from different backgrounds, which helps a wide range of people to relate to the material. The video makes an interesting use of different images to describe spiritual concepts. Many churches that have tried Start! have found it a helpful introduction to the gospel before moving on to Alpha or Emmaus.

Cost: £40.

It is available from 'Leading your church into Growth at; www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/?p=23



4. Evangelium



This is a Roman Catholic course but is easily adaptable for Anglican churches. It is a DVD based modular course looking at

Creed	(10 sessions)
Morals	(5 sessions)
Sacraments	(5 sessions)
Prayer	(5 sessions)

There is a participants' book which follows the teaching presented in the PowerPoint slides.

CD Rom with 25 PowerPoint viewer presentations.	£25
Participants Book.	£7.95
Presenter's Guide.	£19.95

Available from Catholic Truth Society. 40-46, Harleyford Road, London. SE11 5AY. 020 7640 0042.

www.cts-online.org.uk/evangelium.htm

5. Christianity Explored

Christianity Explored is a ten week course, with a weekend or day away in the middle. It is based on Mark's gospel. It was developed from All Souls, Langham Place and so comes from a conservative evangelical tradition. The course is targeted at those who are interested in exploring the Christian faith, but it would be just as suitable for those looking for a 'refresher' course. Each evening begins with a meal, followed by a talk (available on video/DVD), concluding with small group discussion. The outline of the course is:



Week 1: Introduction
Week 2: Jesus – Who was he?
Week 3: Jesus – Why did he come?
Week 4: Jesus – his death
Week 5: What is grace?
Week 6: Jesus – his resurrection

Weekend away
Exploring Christian life
The church
The Holy Spirit
Prayer
The Bible

Week 7: What is a Christian?
Week 8: Continuing as a Christian
Week 9: Choices – King Herod
Week 10: Choices – James, John and Bartimaeus

The Christianity Explored material is well prepared and easy to use. In addition to the video/DVD material, there are excellent workbooks.

Churches have appreciated the emphasis on reading the bible; and the time given to understanding Jesus and his ministry.

Christianity Explored is popular with churches who want more bible teaching and less emphasis on the Holy Spirit. The course does not explore sacramental teaching, and some churches have found its strong emphasis on sin and human depravity difficult.

Churches adapt the materials as some have found the Videos/DVDs too long, wordy, culturally alien, and insufficiently interactive.

