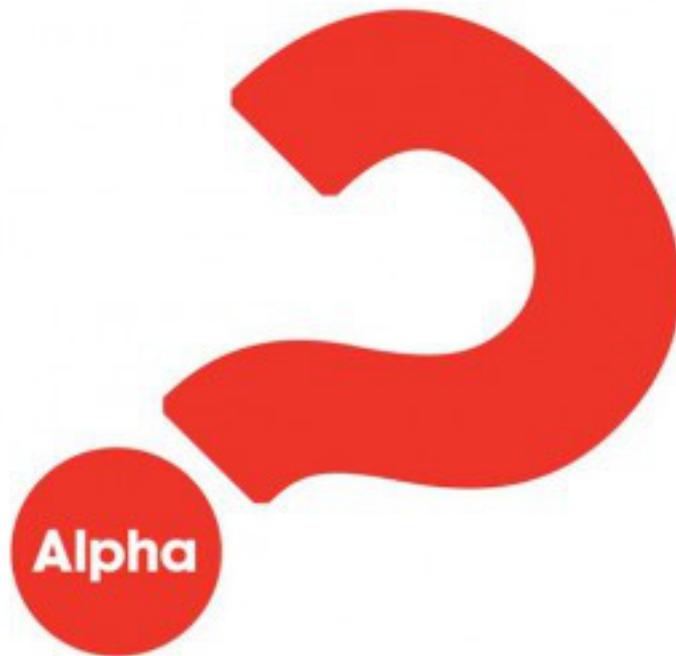


Karen's Story



I'm married with two young children, self-employed and work from home. I didn't have any religious upbringing, and we only went to church for christenings, weddings and funerals.

My husband is a non-practising Catholic and we were married in St Peter's Catholic Church (albeit it wasn't our parish then!). Both children were also baptised at St Peter's and both went to the parish' Catholic nursery school and now both attend St Peter's Catholic Primary School. Attending a Catholic School, the children have started asking religious questions and I feel it's my duty to be able to answer them and that I should have some input into their faith journey of faith as well.

In September 2012, I attended an Alpha Course in my local Catholic Primary school which was a turning point for my faith. Alpha was mentioned to me when my oldest son was about two.

Another turning point came when I read the parish newsletter which was sent home from school. It said PEACE (the removal of all anxiety,

worry and envy). I thought to myself 'I would like some of that' so put it up on the fridge as a daily reminder to me.

I recall, on the occasions we did go to Mass, before I started Alpha, that I used to go to the priest for a blessing and I remember saying to my husband, that after the blessing, I used to feel really emotional in a good way.

Through Alpha I found that I had lots of questions and was doing lots of reading every day. It seemed just a natural progression to do RCIA. I was then received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil in 2014 when I was Baptised as well as receiving my first Holy Communion and Confirmation at the same time! I now read the Bible every day taking the readings from the parish newsletter.

So the decision to attend Alpha and follow the RCIA has come about gradually over two years, and my faith has been growing. I have seen a big shift in me as an individual. Before I did Alpha, I found I was stressed all the time, trying to fit everything in all the time and no time to speak to people. I am calmer now and just find that I'm thinking more about other people, not perhaps as selfish as I was. I really like trying to do good for others. I went to a second Alpha course and became a helper and am now one of the organisers!

We feel really blessed that we are part of St Peter's Parish. It is a thriving parish, with lots of families and lots of activities.