

Hello

My name is Melanie, I've been coming to St. Peter's with my partner Andy and our daughter Amber for around 8 months now and we've been made to feel incredibly welcome. I want to share my alpha experience with you so that you can know a little more about it and I'd love to encourage others to try it.

Just over 2 years ago, I was blessed with my daughter Amber, after 9 years of being told by medical professionals that it would be unlikely I'd ever have a baby, she really was an unexpected miracle, and my most desperate prayer answered.

There are no words to explain my overwhelming thanks, and sense that she was a true gift from above, and so after much soul searching, I felt the need to explore faith.

I felt a little lost but knew I wanted to attend church, although at this point I couldn't tell you why or what it was I believed.

I had a catholic education, but come from a non religious family and deciding to attend church was a big decision, fortunately Andy felt the same, and so we decided to embark on this journey together. This led us to St. Peter's.

A chance meeting with Rachel who helps to run Alpha, resulted in an invite to the course, I had no idea what it was about but with her encouragement I decided to go. I'll admit after researching online I was a bit dubious about what it involved, but as with most things you should definitely ignore the online extremities and see for yourself first hand what something is really like!

Alpha opened my eyes, my mind and my heart, and allowed me to explore and ask questions without judgement, in a wonderful group of people who were all at different stages of their faith journey.

The course is set over 10 weeks, each week covering a different topic. I found it helped me to have a better understanding of Christianity, and put it into context in the current world.

It also helped me to see that if you have faith, you can find God and Jesus, their truth and love, in every day life.

Alpha has changed me, as cheesy as it sounds, it's changed my life!

It's given me the ability to see things from a different perspective, to allow myself to ask questions and to seek

Comfort and confirmation in the answers.

I feel like the seed of faith already planted within me has bloomed, and this has cemented my decision to be baptised this Easter.

And to prove I'm not a one off, Andy had a similar experience, in a different alpha group and he's also getting baptised this Easter!

So how can you get involved with alpha?

You may be thinking 'well I'm already catholic' or you may be new to the church, or you may attend church regularly but like so many others it's just become habit. You may be a little curious (or bored and in that case I'm sorry I'm almost done!)

If any of these are you, and you want to explore faith, seek answers or even just find company, then please consider coming to the next alpha course. It starts on Tuesday the 17th January at St Simons school at 1.30pm

There will also be a course starting in February at the wellspring on a weekend, to be confirmed in the parish newsletter soon.

It's really laid back, friendly and completely without pressure. Give it a try, and like me, it could just be one of the best things you'll ever do!