

taste

introduction

This is a three week taster into some basics about the Christian faith. We focus on the unique person at its centre – Jesus, a 1st century Jew who lived in Israel during the time of the Roman occupation.

During the three sessions we will read some of the eye witness accounts of those who walked and talked with him. We hope to explore three important claims of Christianity whilst enjoying each others company, eating and drinking. We encourage you to be open-minded, ready to see the man emerging from these writings and to have plenty of questions to discuss with your group members. But this is not just a history lesson.

We admit that this course is not designed to answer all your questions but rather as a taster. We hope it will begin the process towards understanding why 2,000 years after his birth, millions still meet together in his honour each week across the face of our planet and try to live their lives following his teachings.

Enjoy taste.



Three basic claims examined

bread – lets bake

Key verse: "I am the bread of life. John 6.35

Claim 1: Who he was

Christians believe that Jesus was God come to earth as a human being. He spent 33 years here amongst us. He came to the 'ordinary' and made it extraordinary and He can sustain us in the EveryDay.

Food stuff: Bread and/or cake. Get some interesting different varieties. Have soft drinks or hot drinks as well.

vine – lets drink

Key verse: 'I am the vine; you are the branches.' John 15.5

Claim 2: What he came to do

Christians believe that through Jesus' death and resurrection, we can have a restored relationship with our creator, that secures our destiny and can make our lives both challenging and fruitful.

Food stuff: Depending on people's views, wine (in moderation) or, if not, other drinks which have varied and interesting tastes.

banquet – lets eat

Key verse: 2 'The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet'
Matt 22.1

Claim 3: What does it mean, now and in the future?

Christians believe that Jesus will return, resurrection will follow and those who follow him will be part of his eternal new world. The first fruits of that can bring seen in the present.

Food stuff: This can be a light meal, or if you want to, go for a big three course meal!

Today we intend for you to have an opportunity to try out session one and three in groups. Then we would like for some feedback, both on if you learnt something new and what we can do to make this better. I hope now to answer some initial questions you may have about this exciting new initiative.

why write another course?

There are plenty of evangelistic courses around, Alpha and Christianity Explored to name two, which require a lot of time commitment (13 and 8 weeks respectively) and many people, particularly those with young families can find this off-putting. **taste** is a 3 session course.

It's designed to run in our home groups as and when required and mostly with minimum preparation needed. It also means that new people can be easily welcomed in, straight away meet other people from the church and hopefully feel that they can belong. Often, even if people attend CE course it's difficult to find a natural way to then help them integrate into church life. Other more in-depth courses can be run afterwards – this a taster, a beginning.

who is it for?

- Those who know nothing about the Christian faith.
- Those who have some understanding and are interested to know a little more about the Christian faith.
- Those who want a recap after having been away from Church for a while
- Those who want to have their child baptised but aren't baptised themselves (this would not be the only course but a first step)

who is it not for?

This may sound negative, ***taste*** is not an apologetics course, though it does contain apologetics. It's not for people who are convinced evangelical atheists. It doesn't cover all the bases, it doesn't talk about the existence of God, or science and creation debates for instance. It starts and ends with what the Bible says about who Jesus was, what he came to do and his part in our present and in our future. This is as it says, a taste, a beginning

what are this courses intended 'goals'

Of course we would love that people would come to faith through this course, but we are also aware that statistically it can take 7 years for people to begin a journey of faith and to finally embrace it. This short course contains enough for people to make a commitment to Jesus, but is also only meant as part of the journey of faith. It isn't a Bible study, but it does contain biblical ideas and a single verse in the main part. The 'extra bite' for extra material does include some relevant verses.

who runs it?

The idea is that the home group leader, or another member takes a gentle, steering lead, but that all group members are encouraged to help and contribute with open discussion actively encouraged in a relaxed atmosphere. It is worth preparing a member or two on each session to be prepared to share something of their own experience relating to the material.

does this do away with any other courses?

No. We may still run central Christianity Explored / Alpha courses too if they are needed, if there are people who want them.

how do we follow this up?

There are several ways to follow this up. First, encourage the person/people to return to your home group. regularly. This does mean that you will need to continue to be 'seeker-friendly', sensitive to the needs of the individual(s). You could run Christianity Explored Course in your home-group (the DVD's are available). Third, encourage attendance at other church activities.