

Formation as Evangelism

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Bible Study: Acts 8:26-40

Some Formation Programs for Evangelism

- Living the Questions
 - <http://www.livingthequestions.com/>
 - A DVD and online small group study, with 20-minute video segments and small group discussion questions.
 - 21 sessions divided into 3 units: “Invitation to Journey,” “Honoring Creation,” and “Call to Covenant.”
 - Features scholars such as Diana Butler Bass, Brian McLaren, Marcus Borg.
 - LtQ’s tagline is “resourcing progressive Christianity,” and that is accurate. Living the Questions is firmly founded in “progressive” Christianity, and thus is very interested in openness and uncertainty. This curriculum is good for generating discussion, but doesn’t give a strong foundation for teaching the true “basics of the faith.”
 - Requires purchase of DVD (\$295) and license for downloadable written materials (\$50)

- Church Next
 - <https://www.churchnext.tv>
 - Short video courses designed for individual (home) or group (church) use
 - Many topics, ecumenical
 - Some courses free (The Big Class)
 - Features people such as Rob Voyle, Chuck Robertson, Jay Sidebotham, Rachel Held Evans, Laurie Brock, Mary Gray-Reeves
 - \$9/month individual
 - \$29 – 149/month for congregations
 - \$10 per course

- Animate (Spark House)
 - <https://wearesparkhouse.org/adults/>
 - A video and discussion based study. Each session features a video from a leading voice in Christianity, time for personal reflection, and group discussion. Each session also includes action points to encourage people to practice what they’ve learned during the week.
 - 21 sessions divided into 3 units: “Animate: Faith,” “Animate: Bible,” and “Animate: Practices.”
 - Features scholars such as Nadia Bolz-Weber, Brian McLaren, Lauren Winner, and Rachel Held-Evans.
 - Well-done curriculum that addresses many of the basics of the faith in a thoughtful and compelling way. The videos use a “trendy” white-board

style that might be off-putting to some. Animate teaches firmly centrist theology, a good middle ground between conservative and liberal curricula.

- Requires purchase of a “Starter pack” for each of the three units, which includes the DVD, Facilitator’s Guide and Participant Guide (\$84.99), plus a Participant guide for each person (\$14.99)
- Alpha
 - <http://alphausa.org>
 - A British video and discussion based study. There are four different options for video choices. Each session begins with a meal, then a 30-minute video talk, followed by table discussion.
 - 11 sessions plus a weekend retreat. Each session focuses on a key question of the Christian faith such as “How Can I Have Faith?” or “How Can I Resist Evil?”
 - Alpha does a great job of getting down to basics and reaching out to those who are “un-Churched.” Alpha comes out of the Church of England’s evangelical/charismatic movement, so the theology of the sessions reflects that perspective. In particular, the session on Jesus’ death is heavily focused on penal atonement, and the sessions on healing and the Holy Spirit are charismatic in nature. However, it largely includes solid theology, uses an effective small group model, and the resources are helpful.
 - Free video downloads. Some additional resources available for purchase.
- Transforming Questions
 - transformingquestions.org
 - Downloadable course with instructor & participant guides
 - Intro to basics of the Christian faith; bonus session for Episcopal Church
 - 10 questions
 - Adaptability
 - Alpha-like format or Sunday morning
 - All the sessions at once, or break it into “units”
 - You can modify the content, adding personal stories, etc.
 - Free (!)
- What next?
 - Living Discipleship! (also free!)
 - Forma

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