



## **Contract for Winter Alpha for SFDS parents seeking school participation hours**



### **What is this all about?**

As Catholic Christians of St. Francis de Sales parish, we want to champion and support the preeminent role of parents and guardians in cultivating a faith-friendly and faith-deepening environment in the life of their family. Moms and Dads are the primary teachers, influencers and faith-cultivators but... have you ever felt that the well has dried up or maybe you often feel helpless in trying to engage with a generation that's being pulled in so many directions? First of all, you're not alone. And the good news is that there is a solution. In fact, we found that the answer is so crucial and the influential work of parents is so important that we've decided to offer school participation hours (26 hours maximum per family) for a parent or couple who wish to make the Alpha Journey with us in the winter.

### **You mean I have to journey in the winter?? Say what??**

All you have to do is to trek on down to St. Francis de Sales' parish hall, every Thursday night, from January 11 to March 21 (including a 5-hour retreat on a Saturday during Lent). The evenings are two hours long and will cost you zero dollars. There is no entrance fee and, yes, the journey or program is called 'Alpha.'

Alpha is a parish tool, creating a safe space to address life's most important questions. The same Alpha content is run all over the world, by Christians of all traditions, sharing the good news of Jesus. Each 2-hour session has three key ingredients: 'Connect,' 'Watch,' and 'Discuss.'

All our SFDS Alpha nights begin with a time to connect, relax and build friendships. A big part of this is FOOD! ... Free, delicious food!!

### **Will childcare be provided and will the kids get to eat?**

Yes and Yes! Everyone gets to eat, even our kitchen and serving crew. We had a big success this past summer with our first Alpha and the food was certainly a highlight... but not greater than the friendships that were built!

The second component, 'watch,' makes the evenings so enriching. The Alpha talks / videos are designed to engage people from all walks of life and inspire conversation. They explore the big issues of life and faith and unpack the basics of Christian belief, addressing questions like "Who is Jesus?", "Why and how do I pray?" and "How does God guide us?"

The third component is Discussion Time. Here is offered a blessed opportunity for guests to respond to the talk, hear from others and contribute their own perspective in an honest, friendly and open environment.

**Wow, this sounds pretty good... almost TOO good! I get participation hours on top of free delicious dinners? What's the catch?!**

There is no 'catch' but there are expectations that we've outlined to frame this contract.

For those who choose to say 'yes' and sign this contract, you must agree and stay true to the following, non-negotiable expectations and rules...

**#1:** Firm commitment to attend every consecutive Thursday night from Jan. 11 to March 21 (including the two Thursdays in Spring Break). For those who know they'll be absent during Spring Break, they should wait to enroll in our next Alpha so as to not miss the finale and – ultimately – forfeit all their hours.

**#2:** Arrival at 5:50pm departure at 8:00pm.

**#3:** Participation hours will be given at the end of the Alpha journey. Failure to attend all weeks (barring any unforeseen illness) will result in the loss of all hours accumulated. This includes the attendance at a retreat Saturday (from 10:00am to 3:00pm) during Lent.

**#4:** There is no 'in and out' flexibility. Since it is so vital that every Alpha night be attended, we cannot acquiesce to any routines that pick up a few hours and not all. For example, attending just 8 Alpha Session will not result in 16 hours but, rather, 0 hours.

**#5:** 26 hours maximum can be received per family (not 'per person' if a couple decide to attend). We highly encourage couples to attend together – for obvious reasons – but we also want parents to pick up their remaining hours, participating in other school fundraisers / functions / areas of service.

**#6:** Most participants will be attending our SFDS Winter Alpha without the added benefit of collecting participation hours. Because of this, the contents of this contract do not apply to them. The content / expectations outlined here only apply to those seeking hours.

**#7:** Should there be any discrepancies in the above, the parent(s) must contact Fr. Mark McGuckin in writing to discuss the matter.

Please note... there are limited number of eligible seats available for parent participation hours. The parent(s) will be accepted on a "first come, first serve" basis. Once the allotted spaces are filled, the family may not be eligible for parent participation hour collection.

I (we) agree to all of the above.

Parent(s) Name:

Student Name(s) / Grade:

Parent(s) Email & Phone Number:

Signature:

Date: