

# How To host a video course

**HOPE25**  
HOPE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD



This guide will help you to host a Hope25 faith formation video course in your parish.

## Purpose

Video-based courses that gently help introduce people to Jesus and or to renew their Christian faith have been well-established for the last twenty years. The quality of the production and theological content continues to improve. [Multiple courses are available to satisfy diverse parish contexts.](#) Examples include: Alpha, Pilgrim Course and Hope Explored.

## Planning

### Team

Recruit a core group—this could be as few as 2-3 people who will be helpers in the course. It can be strategic to take an existing Bible study group and ask them to be the core group for the course.

Once you have a core group, you can determine with them the best time of day and week to run the course. Some courses have built-in leader training sessions that may be worth watching before running the course. This may also be a chance to practise the technology.

### Choosing A Video Course

For an overview of faith formation courses, see this page on the Hope25 website:

<https://www.hope25.com.au/courses/>

You will want to prayerfully choose which course to run:

- Watch course video trailers and see what resonates with members of your core group
- Watch the first session of a course (often available for free online)
- If in doubt, choose a shorter course. Or be creative and split a course up into segments.
- You don't have to agree with every detail or style of a course. However, it must have the potential to encourage your hope in Jesus in a fresh way
- Ask others in your diocesan Hope25 leadership what courses they recommend
- Leave prayerful imagination for God to surprise you and bless you through a course

## Communication and Advertising

Advertise the course as being for both church regulars as well as those from outside. It will be a faith refresher for regulars and, at the same time, something that they could invite their friends to. Courses can be of spiritual value and worth even when they contain only parish regulars.

You will want to share the information about the course as early as possible, with as much detail as possible, and to as many people as possible:

- Pew sheet item (with full details of location, time and how long the course goes for)
- Sign-up sheet (with core team members signing up first to show momentum)
- Play the course trailer in church services, especially at any special services with bigger crowds.
- Pray for the upcoming course regularly in intercessions
- Post about it on your parish Facebook page or webpage
- Personal invitation via phone call or in-person conversation goes a long way. You may like to think about asking:
  - those who attend church services sporadically
  - new attendees to the parish in the last six months
  - any recent baptism families or funeral contacts
  - those who attend church regularly and seem hungry to grow in their faith
  - the immediate spouses or family members of parishioners who attend at Christmas and other special seasons
- Remember that most people are hungry for hope and keen to consider big ideas about the meaning of life. God is preparing many to be curious about Jesus's significance - they are just waiting for an invitation to engage with faith.
- The course may provide logos and other advertising materials you can use.

The earlier you advertise, the more chances people have to consider it.

### **Location: Use a home or church building?**

- Homes can be powerful places of hospitality and building deep connections.
- Clergy hosting a course in their homes is an excellent way of building bridges. Some people like to do a course to spend time with their clergy!
- Church buildings have the advantage of size capacity for courses larger than twelve. This location enables familiarity and makes it easier for visitors to attend a service in the future.
- A course can run well with 5-12 people who watch together and discuss in the same room together. Bigger courses will need breakout rooms with separate leaders who lead discussions each week after the main video presentation.

### **Hospitality:**

- Who can be in the dedicated hospitality team?
- Who will arrive early to set up the room? (have more than enough chairs so everyone feels welcomed - God may send you extras)
- Will we have a meal as part of the course each week or just some kind of refreshments? (it may be easier for the first time to do tea/coffee/biscuits, but finish the course with a meal together)
- Will we have refreshments at the start or end of the night?
- Who will make sure the room is at a suitable temperature?

### **Practise the technology:**

- Test the DVD disc or video files on a laptop connected to a TV via HDMI cable. Do a test run for the full video length. Make sure you have charger cables for everything.
- Ensure the sound is loud enough for those with poor hearing (and possible subtitles enabled).
- Be ready to turn up the sound if there are background noises and distractions during the session.

## *Problem-Solving*

## Managing healthy explorative discussion

A key dynamic in faith formation courses is creating space for healthy discussion. This is different from many usual small group dynamics. The great insight of the Alpha course is to create an environment that allows space for open discussion and sharing of questions and discourages letting anyone pounce in to solve or answer-dump. These dynamics apply to any faith journey group.

Church regulars should be gently encouraged not to jump in quickly to give answers or solve others questions. The facilitators will need to be careful not to let any one or two people dominate the discussion. Courses themselves will often provide discussion questions - these may or may not be useful

The best discussions can sometimes happen if you simply 'go around the circle' and invite each person to share one thing they found interesting in the video. Of course, let people know sharing is always optional.

Deepening relationships in a welcoming group that encourages listening to each other and listening to the truth about Jesus is a very fertile spiritual environment!

Touching base with attendees midweek can be very fruitful for engaging with how they are finding the course. If any are away for a week, consider enabling them to watch the video session at home so they don't miss out.

It is nearly always the case that courses end with fewer members than at the start. Consider inviting everyone back to the final week of the course or doing some other kind of follow-up so there is an increased chance any drop-outs will feel good about trying the next course.

## *Paths Forward*

**Celebrate in the course:** Make sure the course finishes well with celebration and affirmation of those who attended. Thank those who hosted or served in special ways. Invite each attendee to share how God grew them in the course. These may be opportunities to say pray aloud for the first time or make a public expression of trust in Jesus.

**Communicate:** Interview a course attendee during the church notices to share with the broader parish what they enjoyed in the course. Church attendees will have been praying for the course so it is good to communicate what God has done.

### Follow up:

- Consider inviting keen course attendees to join a Bible study group. Sometimes, a course cohort may be willing to form a new group and stay together.
- Plan your next course. It could be the same one or something different. The advantage of having a different course next is you can invite the same group to continue and they may invite others.
- Keep praying for everyone who attended the course.

According to Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell [on the Hope25 podcast](#), evangelism “*is best understood as helping people make the journey.*” A faith formation course is a great way to help people move forward on their journey with Jesus!

## Implementation Plan

### Firstly

Recruit a core group of at least 2-3.

Prayerfully discern with your core group which faith formation course has the most potential for engaging with Jesus.

Order any course materials and booklets.

### Secondly

Decide on dates and location for your course and advertise thoroughly.

Invite church regulars to renew their faith as well as contacts and friends.

Prepare advertising and signup materials.

### Thirdly

Start the course and each week briefly review with your core group.

Follow up anyone who misses a week with support and encouragement.

### Finally

Celebrate the completion of the course in the final session.

Invite course attendees to be interviewed in a Sunday service to share how they grew.

Consider the next faith formation course to run.