

	<b>Simply Christianity</b>	<b>Alpha</b>	<b>Coming Alive</b>	<b>Discovering Christianity</b>	<b>Christianity Explained</b>	<b>Christianity Explored</b>
<b>Publisher</b>	Matthias Media	Cook Communications	Rutherford House	Intervarsity Press	Scripture Union	Paternoster
<b>Number of Sessions</b>	5	15	10	10	6	10
<b>Session Topics</b>	<p>Is the Bible true? The Authority of Christ Sin and Our Need for Rescue Jesus' Death Our Response</p>	<p>Intro Who is Jesus Atonement Assurance Reading Bible Prayer Guidance Who is Holy Spirit? What does Holy Spirit Do? How to be Filled with Holy Spirit How to Resist Evil Evangelism Healing The Church Make the Most of Life</p>	<p>New Life Son of God Death Resurrection Faith Holy Spirit Worship Quiet Times Giving Discipleship</p>	<p>Jesus's Claims Resurrection Sin Atonement The Choice—Receiving Life Savior of the Whole World Bread of Life Spiritual Blindness Relationship with Christ Living in the World</p>	<p>Authority of Christ Crucifixion—Substitution Resurrection—Lordship Grace, not Works Repentance Faith</p>	<p>Intro—Meaning of Life Who is He?—Authority Why Jesus came—Sin Crucifixion/Atonement Grace, not Works His Resurrection Weekend—Church, Bible What is a Christian? Assurance and the Devil Choices—Herod Choices—James and John</p>
<b>Gospel</b>	Luke	No particular	No particular	John	Mark	Mark
<b>Presentation</b>	Monologue, questions	Videos or monologue, workbook	Workbook	Monologue, some handouts	Monologue, questions.	Monologue, Study Guide
<b>User Friendly?</b>	Yes. Well-presented information and teaching material. For the student, good handouts that follow the content of the talks.	Somewhat. If you use the videos, very easy. If you prepare the sessions yourself, you'll have to read a long book and write your own material from it. For the students, it has a good workbook that follows the talks with room to take notes.	No. Confusing for the teacher and for the student. A student unfamiliar with Christianity would be lost. First session says, "Read Jeremiah 31:33. Try putting in your own words what lies at the heart of this great promise." That's a tough question to start an evangelistic Bible study with.	More or less. Good essays on questions of John's historical integrity and the difference between other religions and Christianity.	Yes. Material laid out nicely for teacher and for student. Uses handouts for students.	Yes. Includes a CD of the talks as well as a transcript. No outlines of key points. You'd just have to adapt the transcripts to your situation, since they include illustrations from the author's life.
<b>Supplementary Info</b>	Handouts. Assume no familiarity with Christianity. Could be more deeply theological. If people are going to take extra time to read, it should be on a deeper level.	Books by Gumbel for the leaders. Tract for students.	None.	Handouts for the first three sessions. Very useful information on Johannine manuscripts, etc.	Students are asked to read through the Gospel of Mark, a few chapters per session. Tracts "Me? A Christian?" and "Just for Starters."	There are Bible studies that are meant to help the student read through Mark. They are asked questions about it, unlike <i>Christianity Explained</i> , in which they just read it.

<b>Sin</b>	Sin “has to do with the relationship (or lack of it) that men express toward God.” “God is personally insulted by our refusal to honour him in our lives.” We deserve wrath and judgment. We are “lost.”	Sin is “rebellion against God.” It causes pollution in our lives, has power over us, and involves a penalty., namely separation from God.	Discussed little. Not well-defined.	Reluctant to use the word “sin.” Lightly deals with sin as “rebellion” and “evil,” but the dominant sense is that we are “moral failures.” I don’t think it’s very strong. One sentence on judgment.	Not dealt with directly, only in conjunction with the cross. That’s the biggest disappointment in this study.	This has the best treatment of sin, giving it a whole session. Sin is “rebellion against God.” It is treated well. Judgment, though, is described as God saying, “with great sadness and a heavy heart, ‘OK, I will leave you alone. I will confirm the decision you’ve made.’”
<b>Grace and Works</b>	We are “not rescued by pulling up our socks and being good.” Salvation “is not a matter of working hard at being religious.” That is the closest it comes to a clear statement that our own works are <i>not</i> saving.	It’s clear, but brief. “It depends not on what I do, but on what Jesus did on the cross.” That’s the only sentence dealing with that topic.	Not clearly dealt with.	“Trying to get ourselves right with God is like a bankrupt criminal trying to pay his own fine.” Okay, but not dealt with at any length.	Dealt with extensively and well. Uses easy-to-understand illustrations to explain it. No one will be confused about that after this session.	Done well. Uses <i>Les Miserables</i> to illustrate grace, saying that we are “utterly guilty, with no resources.” It’s a good treatment.
<b>Atonement</b>	Substitution is clear. “Jesus is about to accept upon himself the judgment that we deserve.” It repeatedly says that Jesus died for “our sins.” The referent of that is unclear.	Clearly substitutional. “Jesus died instead of us.” Uses good illustrations of substitution, and deals with it at length.	Substitution is dealt with, but not clearly or sufficiently. Moral example is also discussed. “Jesus modeled how to love. In his death, more clearly and starkly than anywhere else, we see what that love is.”	Substitution is articulated, but not really clearly. It does say, “Jesus takes on himself the death that we deserved,” but a sentence or two on Jesus bearing our sin would help hugely. Substitution gets lost amid unnecessary discourses on secondary questions like “How can death be loving?” Not clearly Reformed. Jesus died for “us,” “our sins,” etc. Referent is unclear.	Substitution is clear. “Explain the concept of substitution, that Jesus took both our guilt and our punishment.” Not clear if it is self-consciously Reformed in understanding. In one sentence, it uses excellent language “God imputed to Christ the sins of believers in every age.” But in the next sentence, it says, “God poured out wrath on Christ that belonged to you and me.”	Deals with substitution well. It is careful not to profligately say “Jesus died for everyone.” One of the main points is “God is angry... at Jesus, not us!” That’s a little theologically loose, though the point is that sin is imputed to Christ.
<b>Response</b>	Our response must be to repent and to ask for forgiveness. The last point is very vague.	Response is asked for after session 3 of 15 in the form, “Here is a prayer that you can pray to begin the Christian life.” Neither repentance nor faith is discussed until session 4. They are dealt with cursorily, and under the heading, “How can I be sure of my faith?” Doesn’t seem to be the best place to discuss those.	Response is asked for after Session 3 of 10. Admit need of forgiveness, put yourself under His control.	“Believe.” “Are you willing to take the final step of faith?” It’s not helpful. What exactly is required is unclear.	“God’s forgiveness is not automatically conferred on everyone. If a person does not accept what Jesus has done, he is virtually saying to God, ‘I don’t want anyone to bear my sins—I’ll bear them myself.’ We must individually accept by faith the Jesus of the cross.” One class each on Repentance and Belief.	Asks for faith and repentance through a sinners’ prayer at the end of session 7. The Study Guide moves immediately to saying, “If you have prayed this prayer,” then Jesus lives in you, your sins are forgiven, and you can know for certain that you have eternal life.
<b>Repentance</b>	Means “to stop going in one direction, to turn around, and to go in a completely new direction.” Dealt with well.	Repentance gets one sentence. “Turning away from [sin] is what the Bible calls ‘repentance.’”	Repentance is “putting yourself under God’s control.”	The word is never used. Concept is weakly described as “living a new life in Him.” “New birth” is also discussed, but not explained well.	An entire class is given to this. “Turning from sin.” Good treatment. Based on Mark 9, “Take up your cross and follow Me.”	Good on repentance under sections called, “A Change of Allegiance” and “A Call to Die.”
<b>Faith</b>	Never mentioned. The closest concept is that of “asking for forgiveness,” but there’s no discussion of it as an abiding principle in	“Faith is leaning our whole weight against Jesus and what he has done for us on the cross.” Pretty good treatment for what it gives,	Not really mentioned, unless as belief, commitment, doing things “His way.”	Everyone needs to “take that step of faith.” “Put your life personally into Jesus’s hands.” That’s about it.	One whole class. Faith is trusting, publicly reaching out to Christ. Uses good illustrations of faith. Deals with faith best of any.	The chapter on response is not very clear on faith. The sinner’s prayer doesn’t talk about relying on Christ’s atonement for forgiveness.

	life.	but it's not highlighted.				But chapter 5 says, "I have faith in—I am trusting in—what Jesus did on the cross to pay for my wrongdoing." Pretty good, but not the best explanation of it.
<b>Other Comments</b>	Assumes hostility to the gospel, and perhaps goes too far in accomodating that by avoiding important words, like faith.	¾ of the course assumes salvation. It's very Arminian in its discussion of our response. "There's a door that Jesus knocks on. But that door has only one handle, and that's on the inside. Jesus will never force His way into our hearts." The Holy Spirit gets three sessions, Jesus two. The theology in the Holy Spirit sessions, especially "How can I be filled," is not tight. There are also heavy presumptions made in "Does God Heal Today?"	Half the course assumes salvation. Holy Spirit, worship, quiet times, tithing. Really bad format, not very useful at all.	I like the first session about Jesus's teaching that He is God, and the resultant conclusion that we should listen to Him. The second on the resurrection is also good. It's a little bothersome that in one session on John 6, verses 36-40 and 44-51 are conspicuously avoided.		I like the extra session on sin. The use of the sinner's prayer with immediate assurance is a little disappointing. Also, I think the sessions that are taught in the weekend away and the last three sessions are best taught in and by the church. In my opinion, the purpose of an evangelistic program is to present the gospel clearly. Don't ask people to stay for any more. Church-life, assurance, and sanctification should be taught as someone responds to the gospel by becoming involved in the church.