



# RUN ALPHA

---



# BEST PRACTICES

---

PREPARE	RUN
Prayer	Hospitality
Evangelistic Position	The Alpha Talks
Equipping a Team	Open Discussion
	Time Away



# PREPARE BEST PRACTICE #1 PRAYER

As you **PREPARE** to run Alpha

**1 - Recruit** a prayer leader.

**2 - Invite** people to your Alpha prayer team.

**3 - Equip** them to pray before, during and after Alpha.

**"Alpha is perfectly designed to fail unless God shows up."**

## 1 Prayer during the first few sessions

Depending on what Alpha series you are watching, there may be a short prayer led by one of the presenters at the end of the talk. This is intended to give guests a chance to pray along silently if they are comfortable.

## 2 Session 5 is all about prayer

Small groups are encouraged to discuss the topic and then try praying together at the end. Group hosts might simply say a short prayer or give guests an opportunity to pray out loud. In the following weeks, hosts can choose to end all small group sessions with prayer.

**Note:** On Alpha we recommend that you do NOT pray before meals or during small group time until Week 5. This allows the topic of prayer to be introduced thoughtfully and discussed thoroughly in small groups.

## 3 Praying for others on the Alpha Weekend/Day

The Alpha Weekend is usually scheduled about halfway through your Alpha. It's a chance to get away from the busyness of our lives. People can take time to relax, think, have fun together, learn more about God and, if they're willing, experience prayer ministry.

The Alpha talks on the weekend are primarily about the Holy Spirit — who, why, and how the Spirit helps us stay focused on Jesus and gives us power to live. After the last session, there's time for guests to pray

and be prayed for by a host or helper. We want to give them an opportunity to experience God's love through the Holy Spirit.

*There is also a team training video about prayer ministry available through MyAlpha to help prepare your team.*

## 4 Prayer and healing

After the Alpha talk about healing, we encourage small groups to discuss the topic, and pray for healing. It's often in those prayer times that God surprises us. Praying for others can be a bit nerve-racking but if we have even mustard-seed faith, God will show up. God loves to reveal Himself to those who sincerely seek Him.

## 5 Get the whole church praying

Assign a team of people who can pray for Alpha. Encourage them to continue praying for your team and guests through your entire Alpha. Consider supplying them a list of team members and/or guests, so they are able to pray specifically.

## 6 Get your team praying

Have your team pray daily for guests. God moves powerfully through our prayers.

One of the foundational values of running Alpha is to be reliant on God, and prayer is the greatest expression of that value. So take a moment to consider how you will approach each of these different moments for prayer. Pray that guests will connect with God and experience His love in a life-changing way.





## **PREPARE** **BEST PRACTICE #2** **EVANGELISTIC** **POSITION**

*"Then the woman left her water jar, went back into the town, and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' So they left the town and made their way toward Jesus." -John 4:28-20*

### **Alpha is like a front porch**

- Alpha is for \_\_\_\_\_, but especially designed for people who wouldn't call themselves Christians.
- Alpha is a great place to \_\_\_\_\_ people to explore faith and wrestle with the big questions of life.
- The first action the disciples took was to \_\_\_\_\_ people to meet Jesus.

### **Key questions to ask yourself as you prepare for Alpha:**

How can we design Alpha to be an environment that our neighbors would actually **want** to attend?

Who are the people that we are intentionally spending time with that we could invite?

How can we create environments where our people can spend time with others to build trust, so that they could feel comfortable inviting them to Alpha?

# BEST PRACTICE #2

## EVANGELISTIC POSITION

---

When Alpha guests have a positive experience, they tell their friends about it and invite them to the next Alpha. **In fact, 86% of guests come to Alpha because of a personal invitation.**

Things like print, digital advertising and Facebook invitations can help, but advertising at its best simply raises awareness and helps set up a personal invitation. The best thing you can do is inspire and equip your team of volunteers and Alpha guests to invite others.

**Here are some ways to make inviting others easier:**

### 1 Share stories

If you have one or two people who have just experienced Alpha for themselves, have them tell their story to your church. If you haven't done Alpha before, use one of the Alpha video stories from [alphausa.org/blog](http://alphausa.org/blog). Stories are the best way to share the heart of what Alpha is all about.

---

### 2 Provide promotional tools

We have a variety of print and digital assets available for free that you can customize with your Alpha details. Get them into the hands of your team and Alpha guests, so they have something to give to their friends as an extension of their invitation.

Go to <https://run.alphausa.org/> and login or create an account to see the range of the professionally designed promotional pieces available at no cost to you.

---

### 3 Encourage your team to invite

It takes a bit of courage and risk to share something that's important to you, but it's worth the effort. Alpha could be an experience that someone else is looking for. Alpha is a great place for you to invite your friends to come and explore faith. It's designed to be a place where you can invite anyone from any background and know they will be honored and respected.

---

### 4 Be aware of the Bell Curve

The first several Alphas tend to attract lots of "churchgoers" by default. This is a season of introduction, where they are experiencing Alpha for themselves, so they can be confident in what they are inviting their friends to experience. We often see the first several Alphas having a high attendance and then attendance diminishes. Don't be discouraged! This is when Alpha really becomes ALPHA. Encourage your team to invite and fill their groups with people from outside the church. You should begin to see Alpha grow from there. Run Alpha for several years and you will create a great invitational culture.

---



# PREPARE BEST PRACTICE #3 EQUIPPING A TEAM

Don't just assign people to tasks...assign people to responsibilities.

Usually if you take the size of your Alpha team and multiply by 3, you will find the average size of your entire Alpha.

Typically, the larger your team, the larger your Alpha.

1. You have more people praying.
2. You have more people inviting.
3. You have more people fine-tuning the experience to make everything better.

**Here are some team role examples.** These roles might not all apply to your context, but they'll help you think about who you might invite to be involved:

**FOOD** – Think about people you know who love cooking and hospitality. What would it look like if you invited them to help prepare and cook meals/snacks?

**TECH SUPPORT** – Who can make sure you have the right audio and visual gear so that everything goes smoothly? Find those people who love to help out behind the scenes.

**DESIGN** – Who can dream up creative ways to make your meeting space more welcoming and fun? This person probably spends a lot of time on Pinterest.

**WELCOME TEAM** – The greeters and registration team will usually be the first people that guests meet. Look for people with a friendly smile, who love connecting.

**SET UP AND TEARDOWN** – Think about those who are available to come a bit earlier for set up and who can stick around to do clean up afterwards.

**EMCEE** – This is someone who can host your Alpha. Think of one or two high energy people who don't mind speaking in front of groups and can make people feel at ease, especially if they don't typically go to church.

**ADMINISTRATOR** – Find someone who loves lists, numbers and budgets, and can help you pull together all the details.

**PRAYER TEAM** – One of the most important roles on your team is people who will pray. Think of someone who would be willing to lead a group to pray behind the scenes — before and during your Alpha.

**HOSTS AND HELPERS** – The small group host keeps the conversation rolling and makes sure that guests feel safe to share openly. This role requires someone who is a good listener and encourager, and who is sensitive to the needs of others. Helpers provide support to hosts by praying silently, and affirming and encouraging guests throughout the weeks. [See the Team Training video about "Small Groups" for more details.](#)

Being part of an Alpha team can be a very rewarding and fun experience for volunteers. People with a common interest get together and make new friends, develop their skills and learn how to work together. A strong team will also provide a better, more positive experience for your Alpha guests.

# 4 TIPS FOR TRAINING STRONG ALPHA TEAMS

---

## 1 Use the online learning center

We have created a series of short videos that are designed to help the individual running Alpha come to know the DNA of Alpha and to better understand how to train their team. Feel free to share these videos with your team or use however you see fit. You can find these videos at [run.alphausa.org/training](http://run.alphausa.org/training).

---

## 2 Take your whole team through the Alpha Team Training Sessions

Even if some of your volunteers have done the training before, we suggest that everyone attends the training sessions. It's a great refresher and ensures that everyone is on the same page and feels like a team. The team training videos are available on our digital platform, MyAlpha.

**Note:** You can do all 3 sessions in one training day or split them up into two. The videos are interactive with pause prompts designed to get your team talking through the ideas. Have fun when you get your team together; host a meal or provide snacks, do an icebreaker, share some laughs and provide time for Q&A.

---

## 3 Meet with your team each week before Alpha

Alpha teams typically meet for 20-30 minutes before each session. This is a time to share important information and tips for the session. It's also a time to pray together. Utilize the Team Huddle Notes to help guide this time.

---

## 4 Get Feedback

Some groups debrief each week if time allows, but we definitely encourage you to get together with your team after Alpha has ended. Maybe have a meal with them, thank them for their time, and talk about what went well and what could be improved.

---

*"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully."*  
-Romans 12:6-8

---

**Alpha is a natural leadership pipeline.**

**Every time you run Alpha, invite previous guests to be on your team. Try to build your team so that 30-50% are previous guests.**

- They pray regularly, because they are being stretched outside their comfort zone.
- They tend to have the most relationships with people outside the Church.
- They tend to be the most in tune with non-Christian culture.

**Next Steps:** Take a moment and think of some people who might be excited to be part of your Alpha team and write down their names. Pray about what role they can play. Next open up your calendar and schedule a time for team training if you haven't already.



# RUN BEST PRACTICE #4 HOSPITALITY

*"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it! Remember those in prison, as if you were there yourself. Remember also those being mistreated, as if you felt their pain in your own bodies." -Hebrews 13:2-3*

Philo + Xenos = Philoxenos

\_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Belonging, believing, and behavior

A place to be seen, heard, and known



## Ideal Group Size

**2 Hosts**

**2 Helpers**

**8 Guests**



# BEST PRACTICE #4

## HOSPITALITY

---

Showing up to Alpha for the first time can be extremely intimidating for some guests — especially if they wouldn't typically go to church. That's why it's important to create a welcoming and fun atmosphere wherever you do your Alpha. It sets the tone for guests to open up in conversation, to be more receptive to the Alpha talk, to build relationships and to come back each week.

**The key to creating a great atmosphere for your Alpha is to think of it like a casual party. We aim to set the mood as if we're welcoming guests into our home.**

Here are some tips around how to make your Alpha a bit more welcoming. We hope this will help spark your creativity.

---

**FOOD** – Eating a meal or a snack together allows guests to have a space for casual conversations and to get to know each other. Remember to provide a meat-free option and to ask about allergies.

---

**VENUE** – Run Alpha where people are most likely to show up. Think about who you're trying to reach and where they spend their time. Most Alphas have been run in a church, but Alpha has also been run in places like coffee shops, high schools, homes, gyms, breweries and even bike shops

---

**ROOM DECOR** – The way you set up the room, including things like table setup (centerpieces, place settings), signage (welcome sign, menu, food labels) and even lights (candles, table and floor lamps) contribute to the overall guest experience. Try to be creative each week, because these types of things make the Alpha experience memorable and will help you shape your Alpha to best fit the demographic you are trying to reach.

---

**SEATING** – You want seating that will make conversation easy. Try to steer away from office or classroom set up and aim for small groups of 8-12. Use whatever is available — small round tables, big comfy couches, floor pillows — anything that will help people feel comfortable and relax.

---

**MUSIC** – Depending on your context and audience, play upbeat music or invite a local artist to play during meal time. Some groups slowly introduce Christian music and worship after the Alpha Weekend and some begin with it right away. Whenever you choose to introduce it, explain why worship is important to Christians.

---

**TEMPERATURE** – Monitor this throughout the night because if it gets too warm, guests will feel uncomfortable and possibly fall asleep during the Alpha talk. The more people that are in the room, the warmer it will get as the session progresses.

---

**FUN** – Laughing together is one of the best ways to build a sense of community and friendship. It can lighten the mood, smooth over awkward dynamics, and allow people to relax and have a good time. Depending on your group's age and context, you can start with a video clip, tell a joke, or do a short icebreaker game.

---

**These elements make the Alpha experience memorable. When we put some effort into creating a welcoming and fun atmosphere, guests will enjoy themselves, engage in the discussion and be comfortable enough to tell their friends about Alpha.**



# **RUN** **BEST PRACTICE #5** **THE ALPHA TALKS**

*"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ." -Romans 10:17*

## **ALPHA FILM SERIES**

- Week 1** | Is There More to Life Than This?
  - Week 2** | Who Is Jesus?
  - Week 3** | Why Did Jesus Die?
  - Week 4** | How Can We Have Faith?
  - Week 5** | Why and How Do I Pray?
  - Week 6** | Why and How Do I Read the Bible?
  - Week 7** | How Does God Guide Us?
- 

### **Alpha Weekend/Time Away**

Who is the Holy Spirit?  
What Does the Holy Spirit Do?  
How Can I Be Filled With the Holy Spirit?  
How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?

---

- Week 8** | How Can I Resist Evil?
- Week 9** | Why and How Should I Tell Others?
- Week 10** | Does God Heal Today?
- Week 11** | What About the Church?

## **ALPHA YOUTH SERIES**

- Week 1** | Life: Is This It?
  - Week 2** | Jesus: Who Is He?
  - Week 3** | Cross: Why Did Jesus Die?
  - Week 4** | Faith: How Can I Have Faith?
  - Week 5** | Prayer: Why and How Do I Pray?
  - Week 6** | Bible: Why and How Do I Read the Bible?
- 

### **Alpha Weekend/Time Away**

Spirit: Who Is The Holy Spirit and What Does He Do?  
Fill: How Can I Be Filled With The Holy Spirit?  
New Life: How Can I Make The Most Of The Rest Of My Life?  
Evil: How Can I Resist Evil?

---

- Week 7** | Telling Others: Why and How Should I Tell Others?
- Week 8** | Healing: Does God Heal Today?
- Week 9** | Church: What About The Church?



## **RUN** **BEST PRACTICE #6** **OPEN DISCUSSION**

The top qualities they would look for in a person with whom to talk about faith are “listens without judgment” (62%) and “does not force a conclusion” (50%). However, only a minority would say the Christians they know personally possess these qualities (34% listens without judgment; 26% does not force a conclusion). -*Reviving Evangelism* (See page 5 of this guide)

### **SETTING THE STAGE FOR GREAT SMALL GROUPS**

We use the terms “host” and “helper” because on Alpha, it’s less about being a leader and more about helping facilitate a conversation. We want people to feel welcome and included. The format is not teacher/student, but rather host/guest.

**Note:** There are Team Training videos available at [run.alphausa.org](http://run.alphausa.org) to help you learn about Alpha essentials, how to host great small groups, and tips on praying for others. Take some time to watch and discuss these with your team.

#### **What do hosts and helpers do?**

Simply put, hosts are the ones who facilitate the small group discussion. Helpers are there to help with anything that might make the group experience even better. Helpers mostly stay quiet. They listen and pray silently as the discussion is unfolding. Being a helper on Alpha is actually one of the best ways for people to step into a leadership role for the first time.

#### **For the Alpha Youth Series:**

Small group discussion is not only after the Alpha talks, but included throughout each episode. There are 3 pause prompts with questions for you to discuss with your small group. Take about 5-10 minutes and if you want more time to chat, there are additional questions in the Discussion Guide to go through afterwards.

### **KEEP THE CONVERSATION ALIVE**

SHARE THESE GUIDELINES WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

- You don’t have to talk if you don’t want to, but we’d love to hear everyone’s thoughts.
- Any question or comment is welcome (just be brief and respectful).
- Respect each other by listening and allowing different opinions.
- Keep things confidential when you leave this group.

**From Good to Great:** Show guests that they’re important by being 100% committed and consistent. Attend all the team training sessions, the Alpha Weekend, and all the small group discussions. Show genuine care for them by remembering their names and asking how their week is going. Remember, Alpha isn’t about “information transfer,” it’s about friendship and conversation.



# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

---

## TIPS FOR FACILITATING DISCUSSION

Use the discussion questions provided in the Team Huddle Notes. Don't feel like you have to get through all of them. The questions are simply suggestions to help you spark key conversations. Be open to questions that guests have on their own. It will take practice to keep the conversation balanced. Watch for people who tend to dominate the conversation and engage those who seem disengaged or shy.

When guests ask a question, ask the rest of the group what they think or feel about it. If you answer all of the questions, there will be no discussion and your response will be viewed as "the final answer." We want to encourage honest conversation.



## CONVERSATION TIPS

### Questions

- Yes, good question! What do the rest of you think?
- Can you explain a bit more or give an example?
- Are you wondering if... (clarify, rephrase)
- Has anyone else felt that way too?
- And how does that make you feel?
- Can you share with us how that question came up for you?

### Affirmations

- Thank you for sharing that.
- I appreciate your honesty. Tell us more.
- Yes, I can relate to that too!
- It's ok to take a minute and think about it. That's what we're here for. No rush.
- It's okay to have different opinions and disagree. Discussion helps us learn other viewpoints.
- I'm glad you're here!
- Very interesting perspective!

Ask open-ended questions

Allow for self discovery and hear everyone's point of view

Be encouraging

Let the group wrestle with each other's viewpoints

Allow for silence

Redirect or rephrase questions

Don't answer people's questions for them



## **RUN** **BEST PRACTICE #7** **WEEKEND/DAY AWAY**

The Alpha Weekend/Day Away is all about getting away from the busyness of everyday life so people can connect with each other and connect with God. It's the part of Alpha that many people say was the turning point in their Alpha experience. We consistently see hearts more open to Jesus and lives changed; that's why we do it.

The Alpha Weekend/Day Away may run from Friday night to Saturday evening, it may be just a Saturday, or you may choose to take the entire weekend. Choose the format that works best for you and your group. The point is to create unhurried time and space to watch the talks about the Holy Spirit, for waiting on God and praying together, and for people to relax and have fun. It does take some planning, but it's worth it.

### **Why do the Alpha Weekend?**

- Relationships - The Alpha Weekend gives guests a chance to develop deeper relationships with one another and with their leaders. Be sure to build in time for fun and connection. This is often where lasting friendships are formed.
- Time - It gives guests the space, time, and atmosphere needed to thoroughly process and reflect on what they are learning.
- Prayer: The talks on the Alpha Weekend are centered around the Holy Spirit. After the third talk there is time for guests to receive prayer. Often this is the first time a guest has had someone pray directly for them. We want guests to have the opportunity to receive from God in a way that feels natural. This is also an opportunity for guests to make a decision to accept Jesus and to receive the Holy Spirit.

**Tip #1:** Go to a house, cabin, or retreat center nearby — anywhere that is different from your usual meeting space, it's okay to get creative!

**Tip #2:** Watch the Prayer Ministry video with your whole team before the Alpha Weekend so they feel prepared.

### **SAMPLE ALPHA WEEKEND SCHEDULE**

#### **FRIDAY**

- 6:00 pm** - Arrive
- 7:00 pm** - Dinner or Snacks
- 7:30 pm** - Introduction / Icebreaker Game
- 8:15 pm** - Video #1 Who is the the Holy Spirit?

#### **SATURDAY**

- 8:30 am** - Breakfast
- 9:00 am** - Games, Time of connection
- 9:30 am** - Video #2 What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
- 10:00 am** - Break - Refreshments and Snacks
- 10:30 am** - Small Group Discussion
- 11:30 pm** - Lunch
- 12:30 pm** - Free Afternoon (activities can be organized)
- 3:00 pm** - Worship & Weekend Talk #3
- 3:30 pm** - Prayer Ministry Time
- 5:00 pm** - Close

\*Your schedule may change depending on your Alpha material and the number of talks you have on the weekend.

# PRAYING FOR OTHERS ON THE WEEKEND

---

The word ministry, simply put, means service. So when we talk about prayer ministry, we are talking about serving people through prayer. If you're planning to have someone else lead this time, be sure to coach them through it and have them watch the Team Training video on "Prayer Ministry."

After the talk about being filled with the Holy Spirit, groups are encouraged to wait on God, and ask Him to fill them with His Holy Spirit. Since all groups and contexts are unique, there isn't a perfect formula or exact model to do this, but **here are three helpful tips for you:**

## 1 Invite them into a relationship with Jesus

Outline what will happen so they know what to expect. Tell them that you'll watch the Alpha talk, and instead of discussion time, you'll have a time of prayer. Explain that being filled with the Holy Spirit is a gift from God for His followers and then, before a time of prayer, invite people to start a relationship with God. You might ask if they've ever invited Jesus into their lives in a personal way. Make sure they know it's optional. Pray a simple prayer of commitment and allow time for them to give their lives to Jesus.

---

## 2 Wait on God

Start with a prayer for everyone in the room, and invite guests to pray on their own. A simple prayer you could pray is, "Come Holy Spirit and fill our hearts" or something similar. Then just wait on God — this can be the hard part. Wait for minutes, not just a few seconds. It's amazing how long a minute of silence actually feels; as you're waiting, encourage guests to be open to what God might want to do and to be patient.

Note: Some groups want to have music playing in the background during prayer time, others prefer to have silence. The important thing is that people would be able to focus on God and not get distracted. You might want to encourage people to stand in silence and hold their hands out as if they're about to receive a gift.

## 3 Invite hosts & helpers to pray for guests

After some time waiting on God, invite your Alpha hosts and helpers to begin praying with people from their small group. Before you do this, explain to the group what will happen; that hosts and helpers will come around and ask them if they would like prayer, and tell them they can just say "no thanks" if they prefer not to receive prayer.

Prayer time can take anywhere from 15 minutes to over an hour. After a while, as hosts and helpers are praying for guests, it's great to have someone lead in songs of worship.

This time of prayer ministry needs intentional leadership. It takes a bit of preparation, but it is amazing to see all the things God will do. All of this is shaped by a confidence in God and His desire to pour His love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

---

### Practical tips for praying for someone

- Make yourself aware of God's presence
- Make the person feel at ease
- Ask, "How can I pray for you?"
- Ask the Holy Spirit to come
- Be okay with silence
- Pray for specific needs
- Check in



# **ALPHA WEEKEND** **CHECKLIST**

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LEADER TO DECIDE



**Timing** - Will you do an overnight Alpha Weekend or an Alpha Day?



**Dates** - When will you do your Alpha Weekend/Day?



**Number of Talks** - How many Alpha talks will you cover (2-4)?



**Location** - Which venue accommodates structured and leisure time?



**Food** - What are you going to eat? Who will prepare the food?



**Transportation** - How will everyone get there?



**Cost** - How will we pay for this? Will the church subsidize or take an offering?



**Insurance/Liability** - Are there forms or contracts required in advance?

## CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE LEADER TO DELEGATE



**Team** - Do you need an Alpha Weekend planning team to help prepare?



**Promotion** - How will you promote and confirm signups from guests?



**Fun** - What else can you do to make the time memorable and fun?



**Leaders** - Do you have people designated for the prayer ministry time?



**Prayer** - Do you have people praying throughout this entire event?



**Atmosphere** - What can you do to make the space inviting and comfortable?



**Supplies** - Do you need to bring any supplies (e.g., TV, projector, speakers, games, etc.)?



**Handouts** - What materials do you need to prepare in advance to bring along?



**Child care** - Do you need to provide this? Communicate about it to guests ahead of time.

### Possible items to bring:

- Alpha resources (Alpha videos, handouts, etc.)
- Bibles
- First aid kit
- Sound system (projector, computer, cables, etc.)
- Name tags
- Pens/pencils
- Games and prizes
- Tissue
- Sports equipment
- Mints
- Face masks
- Hand sanitizer
- Cleansing wipes

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



# **ALPHA** **CHECKLIST**

Feel free to customize this checklist for your Alpha.

## 3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Log in to MyAlpha ([run.alphausa.org](https://run.alphausa.org)) and create your Alpha. You can choose to publish your Alpha on the Alpha USA website ([alphausa.org/try](https://alphausa.org/try)) which will help guests search for and find an Alpha in their area.
- ☐ Watch the Leader Modules in the Learning Center and preview all of the resources. These are different from the Alpha Team Training videos that you will watch with your whole team.
- ☐ Edit the specific dates of your Alpha in MyAlpha (including your Team Training meetings, weekly sessions, the Alpha Weekend/Day, holidays, etc.).
- ☐ Prayerfully select your Alpha team members including the emcee, tech support, food prep, setup and tear-down, small group hosts & helpers, etc. (Full descriptions of team roles can be found in the Document - *Building a Strong Team*).
- ☐ Consider attending an Alpha training event online or in person with your team and others. To find Alpha training events in your area visit [alphausa.org/events](https://alphausa.org/events).
- ☐ Develop a budget and a system of accounting for all income and expenses including the following:
  - Launch Party/Intro Night
  - Weekly Meals
  - Atmosphere & Decor
  - Promotional Materials
  - Alpha Weekend/Day
  - Celebration Party
  - Online: Determine technology needs and platform
- ☐ Make sure you have someone overseeing the following areas:
  - Food prep for each week
  - Registration
  - Prayer
- ☐ Check on insurance coverage and liability. Make arrangements to cover all aspects as needed.
- ☐ Check out potential Alpha Weekend/Day facilities and book one as soon as possible.

### Notes



# **ALPHA** **CHECKLIST CONT'D.**

---

## **2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE**

- ☐ Review MyAlpha and finish up anything you haven't completed yet: Review the Learning Modules in the Training Center, confirm the weekly schedule and download the videos, etc.
- ☐ Plan and prepare food arrangements. Schedule the kitchen team members.
- ☐ Finalize the budget for all aspects of Alpha including weekly meals, the Weekend/Day, Alpha resources, and other incidentals.
- ☐ Select an appropriate playlist or special music for each weekly session. Check on any permissions you need to print and display the lyrics (as necessary).
- ☐ Organize and plan aspects of your Alpha Weekend/Day. More information can be found in the MyAlpha resources - *Alpha Weekend/Day Planning Checklist*.

## **1-2 MONTHS IN ADVANCE**

- ☐ Gather your Alpha team to watch the Team Training videos, talk about team roles, the timeline, and have fun.
- ☐ Encourage small group hosts and helpers to begin praying for their (potential) group members.
- ☐ Meet with your decor team and brainstorm ways to create a welcoming atmosphere. Think about lighting, seating, table centerpieces, etc.
- ☐ Finalize food arrangements depending on the number of guests you expect.

## **WEEKLY ALPHA SESSIONS**

- ☐ Arrange for the Alpha team to arrive early for set up, create a welcoming atmosphere, and prepare for the session.
- ☐ Double check that all audio-visual equipment is in place before guests arrive. Set up the TV or projector screen, projector or computer, microphone and speakers as needed. (Download the videos in advance to avoid potential streaming issues).
- ☐ Make sure there are enough Bibles and Alpha Guest Guides (optional).
- ☐ Each week, meet with your whole Alpha Team for prayer, updates, and a pep talk before everyone goes to their places. The Team Huddle Notes in MyAlpha can help guide this time.
- ☐ Have a team of people praying while small groups are meeting.
- ☐ On week 2 or 3, place a donation box in an area that is secure but visible (optional).
- ☐ Promote dates for the Alpha Weekend/Day right from the start. Build it up as a fun getaway.
- ☐ Debrief with your Alpha team after guests go home. Celebrate the small wins, talk about what to improve, and encourage each other.

### **Notes**





---

## WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE ALPHA WEEKEND/DAY

- ☐ Finalize the number of people attending the Alpha Weekend/Day (for food and seating prep).
- ☐ Oversee the purchase and preparation of food provided for the Alpha Weekend/Day.
- ☐ Develop the schedule (including leisure time) and communicate this to your team and guests.
- ☐ Determine how/when music will be included. Select a team to oversee worship music and prayer ministry.
- ☐ Hand out copies of your Weekend/Day schedule, map of the facility, waiver form for minors, and list of things to bring (as needed).

## 1 WEEK BEFORE THE ALPHA WEEKEND/DAY

- ☐ Meet with your team to watch the Team Training video on Prayer Ministry and talk about what the weekend will look like for your group.

## WEEKS LEADING UP TO THE CELEBRATION PARTY (OPTIONAL)

- ☐ Promote the Celebration Party and distribute invitations for Alpha guests to invite their friends.
- ☐ Prepare the schedule for the Celebration Party; assign tasks and finalize any entertainment, photo booth, themes, etc.
- ☐ Finalize the count for the Celebration Party, arrange food and atmosphere details.

## CELEBRATION PARTY (OPTIONAL)

- ☐ Arrive early for set up and to create a fun and friendly atmosphere.
- ☐ Double check that all audio-visual equipment is in place before guests arrive.
- ☐ Hand out the Guest and Team Feedback Forms and allow at least 10 minutes for them to fill out the sheets. This will allow time for thoughtful responses.
- ☐ Announce the date and starting time for the next Alpha if it is already set.

## WEEK AFTER ALPHA ENDS

- ☐ Meet with your Alpha team to go over Alpha Guest and Team Feedback Forms to evaluate and improve aspects of your Alpha and to share stories.
- ☐ Send a thank you email or card to all team members who have helped throughout Alpha (Don't forget the Prayer Team).

### Notes





# **RUNNING** **ALPHA ONLINE**

In 2020, much like the rest of the world, Alpha had to adjust to a new reality while managing shifts and restrictions that none of us could have anticipated. It was through this challenging time that Alpha Online was born. The life change experienced as a result of God moving in this on-line context is incredible and through this a new expression of Alpha was born!

Numerous churches around the world adopted running Alpha in an online context during the height of the pandemic and plan to make it part of their regular rhythms. Running Alpha Online isn't that different from running in-person. All of the Alpha Best Practices can be translated in some form to a virtual setting. We've found that offering Alpha this way helps remove barriers for guests who might not otherwise attend Alpha at a church.

We've developed the Complete Guide to Alpha Online, available in MyAlpha, to help you get started. Running Alpha Online is a great place to get started if you've never run Alpha before but it's also great if you've been running Alpha for years as it helps extend reach and influence.

## **Here are some quick tips to help you get started**

- Prayerfully consider if Alpha Online could help meet the needs of your community.
- Think of guests who could benefit from Alpha in a virtual setting - guests with health concerns or child care needs, those who have transportation issues, and many more.
- Visit [run.alphausa.org](https://run.alphausa.org) and register or login to access the Complete Guide to Alpha Online.
- Register your Alpha Online course in MyAlpha today!

# ALPHA RESOURCES

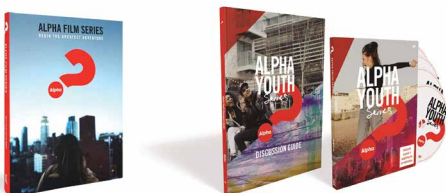


Alpha can be run at little to no cost, as the basic resources needed to run Alpha are available for free through our digital platform, MyAlpha.

We only ask that you register your course at [run.alphausa.org](https://run.alphausa.org) to access these resources. Physical resources are available for purchase at [alpharesources.org](https://alpharesources.org).

## Required Resources

Available as a free download on MyAlpha or for purchase at [alpharesources.org](https://alpharesources.org).



## Additional Resources

Consider these additional resources as a follow up to your Alpha course.

**Life Shared** - [www.alphausa.org/life-shared](https://www.alphausa.org/life-shared)

**Prayer Course** - [www.prayercourse.org/](https://www.prayercourse.org/)

**The Marriage Course** -  
[www.alphausa.org/  
the-marriage-courses](https://www.alphausa.org/the-marriage-courses)



## Friends of Alpha

Our mission is to equip and serve the Church in its mission to help people discover and develop a relationship with Jesus. We are by the Church, for the Church and through the Church. We believe that the Church deserves the best and we believe in giving it all away!

Generosity of friends like you make it possible for us to give Alpha away for free to every church. When more churches run Alpha, more guests attend Alpha. And when more guests attend Alpha, more people come to know Jesus. That's the transformation that comes from your generosity.

### Become a friend of Alpha

Would you consider becoming a friend of Alpha? Visit [alphausa.org/give](https://alphausa.org/give) for more information.





# ALPHA YOUTH

One thing that we all share in common as youth workers is the desire to see the youth we work with discover Jesus and develop a relationship with him. We've journeyed alongside thousands of youth ministries and reaching hundreds of thousands of young people in the past two years. Together we are learning that young people are very interested in conversations around Jesus, life, faith, and meaning, but often feel the church isn't interested in listening.

A recent Barna Report on Reviving Evangelism in the Next Generation found that nearly **1 in 2** (or 47%) of non-Christian Gen Z students would be interested in learning more about Christianity and what it could mean for their life if the Christians they knew were less judgmental about their own beliefs and lifestyle!

This is how Alpha can help. Alpha creates space for judgment free conversations around the basics of the Christian faith. This is the space young people are longing for. Alpha is not designed to replace youth ministry, it is designed to be an effective tool to reach young people and strengthen your ministry with youth.

There are many different ways to run Alpha Youth, but there are four that are most common. We have found the most effective Alpha Youth courses are run by youth ministries who run Alpha 2-3 times per year using a mixture of the following models.

## 1 Whole Youth Group (Centralized)

In this way, youth workers leverage their already existing youth night and replace it with Alpha Youth. This is a good way to introduce Alpha Youth to your youth ministry... BUT be sure to think toward the future and not just the immediate season if you choose this route. Alpha, at its best, is not a content package to be run once, but a space to journey with young people on their discovery of Jesus.

## 2 Whole Youth Group (Decentralized)

This is similar to the first approach, but rather than meeting at one central place, you decentralize the gathering and meet in homes, coffee shops, or even parks while youth continue to invite their friends to these smaller gatherings.

## 3 Different Time Of The Week

This approach positions Alpha Youth on a different time of the week in addition to what is already happening in your weekly youth ministry program. Typically this has multiple alpha groups in one space involving a lot of different student leaders to play key roles on Alpha.

## 4 Youth Led

This is the model where students have full ownership of their Alpha Youth. They can run it anywhere, at any time. The role of the youth worker shifts toward coaching, while the student further expands his or her ownership. Many students have run Alpha in their schools, in their homes, with their sports team, or even at coffee shops with their friends.

# ALPHA PRISONS



Did you know, the prison population of the United States is more than 2.3 million people and continues to increase? Alpha Prisons is a tool used to help respond to this rising trend of incarcerations. Our vision is that every inmate will have the opportunity to explore the Christian faith through the Alpha Course.

## Strategic Partnership

Alpha is more than just a course conducted in a criminal justice facility; it's a strategic partnership between administration and the local community of faith to promote a culture of socially acceptable thinking and behavior within the facility. Through this partnership, trained volunteers provide programming to address offender needs from a Christian perspective. These programs are associated with successful transition into their community. Alpha Prisons currently supports more than 600 facilities in 45 states.

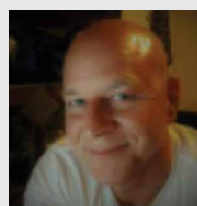
## How it Works

Alpha Prisons helps to train up local churches and volunteers to partner with area criminal justice facilities to plan, host, and facilitate Alpha—generally under the supervision of the prison chaplain.

Alpha courses are always run in full cooperation with prison authorities. Before beginning training, Alpha volunteers are required to attend a security training provided by the Alpha Prisons team in conjunction with local facilities. The Alpha Prisons team also provides ongoing training and coaching to ensure success in the endeavor.

## To Get Started

Alpha is run in prisons, just like anywhere else. The same resources can be used, and inmates will experience the same type of love and hospitality that any Alpha guest might experience. Oftentimes, a facility will run Alpha and then expand their offerings to other courses to support inmates. These include: Jesus Lifestyle, to help with anger management; A Life Worth Living, to help equip inmates with daily living skills; The Addiction Recovery Course, The Marriage Course, The Parenting Course, and several others.



*Bryan is a former Green Beret who spent most of his adult life in prison. After 10 incarcerations, he was introduced to Alpha in prison. Out of prison for several years, he is doing well and attributes his transformation*

*to Alpha. In his words, "If it weren't for Alpha, I would not be here today. I am so deeply grateful for the people of Alpha who helped me find my place in this world. I have lived with so much shame and guilt, to the point of giving up all hope. But then I tried Alpha. The countless volunteers, their willingness to spend time with those of us drowning. I have learned to love again."*