

RUN ALPHA



WHY ALPHA?

- **Nearly half of Millennial practicing Christians say it is wrong to evangelize (47%).**

In fact, they are more likely than non-Christians (20%) and lapsed Christians (17%) to strongly agree that “It is wrong to share one’s personal beliefs with someone of a different faith in hopes that they will one day share the same faith.”

- **Almost two in five practicing Christians say they have no non-Christian friends or family members (38%).**

This is true of only one in five Millennials (21%), who are also more likely than older Christians to have seven or more non-Christian friends (32% vs. 25%).

- **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).

The takeaway?

We have a crisis on our hands.

Popular strategies for sharing faith are no longer compelling to Christians.

Popular strategies for sharing faith are no longer compelling to non-Christians.

Our Millennial generation has the greatest opportunity for growth.

Reflect & Discuss

What other challenges are you experiencing in our rapidly-changing culture?

The statistics on this page are found in *Reviving Evangelism*, a study Alpha USA commissioned Barna Group to conduct. The data was released in January 2019.



WHAT IS ALPHA?



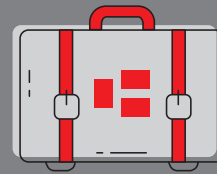
FOOD.



TALKS.



DISCUSSION.



TIME AWAY.



169 COUNTRIES
112 LANGUAGES
127 DENOMINATIONS
MILLIONS OF PEOPLE

HOW DID ALPHA START?

1977 _____

1990 _____

1993 _____

1994 _____

Reflect & Discuss

What are you longing for more of in the life of your church?

What are you longing for more of personally?

*“Just as a nursing mother cares for her children, so we cared for you.
Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not
only the gospel of God but our lives as well.”*

-1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you
will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to
the ends of the earth.”*

-Acts 1:8

*“People come to church for a variety of reasons, but they stay for only
one—friendship.”*

—John Wimber

WHY DOES ALPHA WORK IN TODAY'S CULTURE?

Alpha is Real _____

Alpha is Relational _____

Alpha is Reliant _____

Alpha is Reproducible _____

Reflect & Discuss

Which of these 4 qualities of Alpha will come most naturally for your team?

Which of these 4 qualities will be the most challenging?

WHAT ALPHA CAN DO OVER TIME

RESTORE unity of the Church

"I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me." -John 17:23

REVITALIZE a culture of

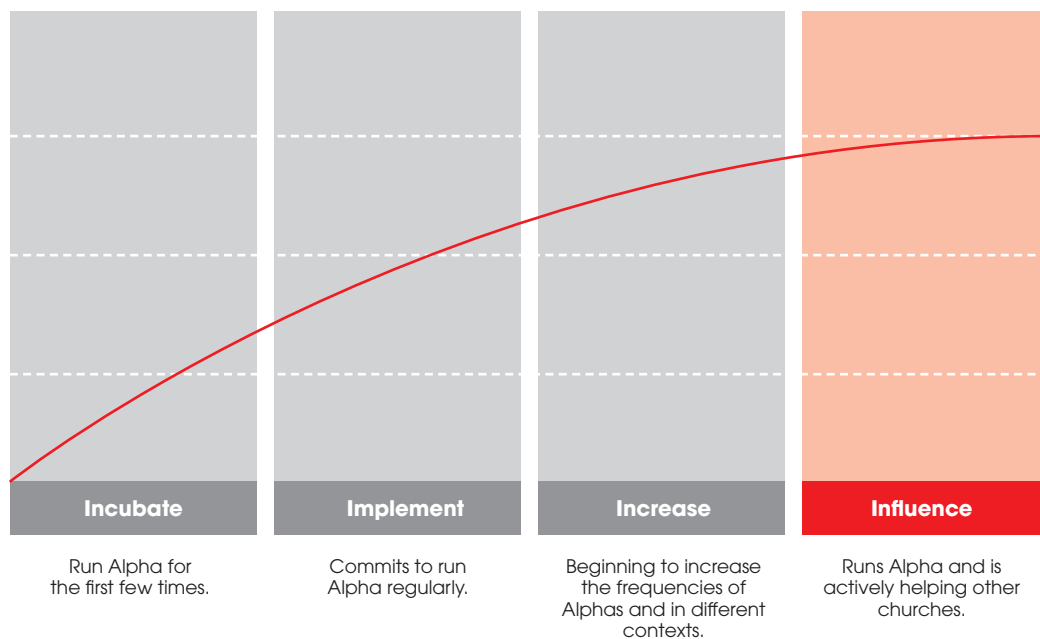
1. Expectancy and Prayer
2. Listening
3. Hospitality
4. Empowerment for Mission
5. Invitation

Level 4
Alpha as a Culture

Level 3
Alpha as a Ministry

Level 3
Alpha as a Program

Level 1
Alpha as a Curriculum



REACH a broken world

"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."
-1 Corinthians 2:4-5

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. 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.

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 during Alpha

Usually teams meet together about 30 minutes before Alpha begins. It's a time to share important info or top tips for that session, answer any questions and then pray together.

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 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 Guide, but 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	
<p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?	<p>Affirmations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 TIME AWAY

The Alpha Weekend 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 typical Alpha Weekend runs from Friday night to Sunday morning. This creates unhurried time and space to watch all the talks about the Holy Spirit, for waiting on God and praying together, and for people to relax and have fun.

For some groups, getting away for a whole weekend is not possible. Sometimes people can only do the Friday night and all day Saturday, or even just the one full day. It does take some planning, but it's worth it.

Why do the Alpha Weekend?

- It gives guests the space, time, and atmosphere needed to thoroughly process and reflect on what they are learning.
- It helps guests, hosts and helpers get to know each other better and form lasting relationships.
- 3-4 of the talks are given during the weekend (25% of the Alpha material).
- It provides an opportunity for guests to ask to be prayed for and filled with the Holy Spirit.
- It's a special time to let God bless and encourage guests and leaders.

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
- 8:00 pm** – Introduction / Icebreaker Game
- 9:00 pm** – Show Video: Introduction To the Weekend

SATURDAY

- 8:30 am** – Breakfast
- 9:00 am** – Leaders' Meeting
- 9:30 am** – Weekend Talk #1
- 10:00 am** – Refreshments and Snacks
- 10:30 am** – Weekend Talk #2
- 11:00 am** – Small Group Discussion
- 12:00 pm** – Lunch
- 2:00 pm** – Free Afternoon (activities can be organized)
- 4:00 pm** – Snacks, Coffee, and Tea
- 5:00 pm** – Worship & Weekend Talk #3
- 5:30 pm** – Prayer Ministry Time
- 6:30 pm** – Dinner
- 8:00 pm** – Free Time

SUNDAY

- 9:00 am** – Breakfast
- 9:30 am** – Leaders' Meeting
- 10:00 am** – Small Group Discussion
- 11:00 am** – Weekend Talk #4
- 11:30 am** – Prayer Ministry Time
- 12:00 pm** – Lunch and Depart

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

Refer to page 19 for Weekend/Day Away talk titles. All talks are available and noted for this time away in MyAlpha for your convenience.

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. 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
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



ALPHA **CHECKLIST**

Feel free to customize this checklist for your Alpha.

3 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

- ☐ Log in to MyAlpha (run.alphausa.org) and create your Alpha. You can choose to publish your Alpha on the Alpha USA website (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 a local Alpha training with your team and others. To find Alpha training events in your area visit 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
- ☐ Make sure you have someone overseeing the following areas:
 - Food prep for each week
 - Fundraising (if necessary)
 - 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.
- ☐ 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



PRAYER MINISTRY

*"You fathers—if your children ask for a fish, do you give them a snake instead? Or if they ask for an egg, do you give them a scorpion? Of course not! So if you sinful people know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give **the Holy Spirit** to those who ask him."* -Luke 11:11-13

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened...." -Matthew 7:7-8

*"Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, **be filled with the Spirit**, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."* -Ephesians 5:18-20

Principles for praying for others
Rely on the Holy Spirit Respect the individual Remain consistent with Scripture Enter with expectation Relax and be okay with silence

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 to access these resources. Physical resources are available for purchase at alpharesources.org.

Required Resources

Available as a free download on MyAlpha or for purchase at alpharesources.org.



Optional Resources

Available as PDF through MyAlpha or for purchase at alpharesources.org.



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 for more information.



One thing that we all share in common as youth workers, youth pastors, and youth ministers is the very real desire to see the youth we work with discipled. We know that this is not as easy as it seems. In the last year, we have been able to help around 1,800 different churches and youth ministries reach more than 80,000 students.

As we learn together how to best disciple students, one of the recurring key learnings of doing this is to position Alpha Youth for those not currently in your youth ministry.

However, be sure to invite your current youth who participate in the youth ministry to own this mission. Let students be the hosts and the helpers, empower them to invite their friends, let them be a part of the prayer team, or even let them be a part of the team that prepares the food. The bottom line: Empower students and activate them from the sidelines to the frontlines with Alpha Youth—their faith will flourish.

When we position Alpha Youth evangelistically and empower teens to be leaders inside of Alpha, we see students come to know Jesus, and many students move from a “borrowed” or “hand-me-down” faith to a new level of ownership in their own faith.

You can think of it through this lens: The Alpha Youth experience is typically an amazing experience for the first time a student goes through it. If they go through it again, a student may begin to say, “I’ve already done this.” This is a clear indicator that Alpha has drifted from being positioned for those who don’t know Jesus, to a curriculum intended for those who already do. Alpha just won’t work in that context. Letting Alpha drift toward curriculum rips the heart out of why Alpha was created to begin with.

As youth workers, volunteers, pastors, and ministers look to launch their Alpha Youth, we have found four different strategic ways to do so.

1 Whole Youth Group (Centralized)

This is one of the most common ways that we see Alpha Youth launched across the country. In this way, youth workers leverage their already-existing youth night and replace it with Alpha Youth. This is a great way to introduce Alpha Youth to your youth ministry. Be sure to think toward the future, and not just the immediate season if you choose this route. Be intentional about the direction of where you want to take Alpha Youth, so you can better empower your students and position Alpha evangelistically for those outside of your current ministry.

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 Alpha. People often leverage this way in the summer season of student ministry since the youth rhythm of life shifts in the summer.

3 Different Time Of The Week

This approach positions Alpha Youth as an addition to what is already happening in your weekly youth ministry program. For example, your youth ministry may meet on Sunday nights but also would run Alpha Youth on another night of the week. The core idea behind this is to create a space where your students can always invite their friends. Alpha Youth then becomes an on-ramp to the student ministry as a whole. We have seen this approach help in amazing ways with the relational ministry of a youth program. It creates a space for students to invite their friends and empowers them to serve, while keeping intact their own youth night experience.

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, or in their homes with their teams, 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.

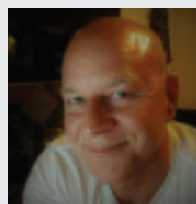
How it Works

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."

HOW CAN WE HELP? CONTACT US

Got questions? Need local coaching? Below is a list of local Network Directors. If you are not located in an area listed below, please call 1-800-Do-Alpha to speak with one of our Church Relationship Coordinators.

Washington, Seattle

Christian Downs
christiandowns@alphausa.org
253-431-2555

Arizona

Scott Bagshaw
scottbagshaw@alphausa.org
480-205-1943

Oregon, Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming

Kirk Petersen
kirkpetersen@alphausa.org
503-819-2605

Michigan

Katie McNinch
katiemcninch@alphausa.org
480-272-3531

Iowa

Amy Thorson
amythorson@alphausa.org
515-205-4216

Minnesota, SD, ND, Western Wisconsin

Brittany Williams
brittanywilliams@alphausa.org
509-679-3223

Nebraska

Jodi Meyer
jodimeyer@alphausa.org
402-669-0972

Ohio

Jessica Gatton
JessicaGatton@alphausa.org
614-425-1952

Chicagoland/Illinois

Gabriel Lerma
gabriellerma@alphausa.org
630-688-7962

Bruce Farley
brucefarley@alphausa.org
440-864-4505

Colorado

Gerald Bargaineer
geraldbargaineer@alphausa.org
720-837-9080

New York City/Long Island

Nada Pottinger
nadapottinger@alphausa.org
646-684-6626

NOTES: _____