



Alpha BEST Practices Coaching Guide

The first three best practices help you PREPARE for Alpha. The second set of 4 best practices help you RUN a great Alpha.

PREPARE

Best Practice 1. Prayer

One of the unique elements of Alpha is its consistent focus on prayer. Have a prayer team that prays behind the scenes. Expect each team member to pray for the guests daily during the entire Alpha experience. If we don't enlist God then our efforts will not bear fruit. This is a movement of the spirit that we get to be a part of.

- We have a person who leads our prayer team.
- We have a dedicated prayer team.
- We have equipped our team to pray for guests daily.
- Prayer happens regularly before, during and after Alpha.

Best Practice 2. Evangelistically Positioned

Alpha is for everyone. However, it really seems to resonate best with those who would not call themselves followers of Christ or who have no church background. Make sure that you orient your experience towards those that have little or no understanding of Christianity. When you talk about Alpha, describe it as "A place where you can invite people from any background to explore faith, ask questions and share their point of view."

- Team regularly invites the unchurched to Alpha.
- Our team knows how Alpha fits into the life of the church.
- We have equipped our team around how to invite people.
- Intentional ratio of hosts/helpers to unchurched guests in each group.

Best Practice 3. Equipping a Team

The Alpha process is a paradigm shift for many and we regularly see the Alphas that train their teams do far better and last longer than those that jump in with no training. When training is offered each term, new hosts and helpers will have the place they need to step into leadership roles. Visit run.alphausa.org for free training resources.

- Have recruited a team to oversee key aspects of Alpha.
- We utilize online training center for key leaders.
- Provide team training 1 (groups) before Alpha launches.
- Provide team training 2 (prayer) before Weekend Away.

RUN

Best Practice #1. Hospitality

One of the most common ways that Jesus met with people was over a meal. This is a great way to connect with people who may be skeptical. Hospitality literally means "to love the stranger." As people experience radical hospitality, they begin to experience the grace of God and are able to develop great friendships.

- Environment demonstrates visible hospitality.
- Extra care is given to make guests feel welcome
- Food is great.
- Team is punctual.
- Spirit of generosity from team.

Best Practice #2. The Alpha Talks

The 15 Alpha talks cover several core elements of the Christian faith in a unique way. The tone is very gentle, kind hearted, clear and compelling. They are not intense and keep the balance of appealing to the head as well as the heart without ever coming across as preachy. Whether the Alpha talks are on video or live, utilizing them in their order is a best practice.

- At least 8 weeks long.
- We use the Alpha film series or Alpha manuscripts
- We provide follow up resources ie books, podcasts for the relevant sessions.

Best Practice #3. Open Discussion

Alpha small groups are unique because our small group hosts don't answer questions. Instead they facilitate group discussion and let people share their point of view. The litmus test for a small group host is: "Would you entrust your best non-Christian friend to be in this person's group?" Look for those with the gift of hospitality and encouragement.

- Hosts generally do not answer questions.
- Hosts create an environment not just about content, but about friendship where everyone is respected.
- Guests would say they have plenty of time to share their point of view and enjoying hearing from others.

Best Practice #4. Time Away

The Alpha weekend or Day away is the place where great friendships are solidified. It is also the best place to introduce people to the Holy Spirit. The special Alpha experience provides an opportunity to minister to people in prayer one on one and train team members in 1:1 Prayer ministry.

- Clear and helpful time of prayer ministry.
- We deal with the supernatural in a natural way.
- Our time away would be described as fun.
- Strong focus on relationships. It's not just about the content of the sessions.