



Alpha in High Turnover Prisons

This information is to aid those looking to run Alpha within a shorter time period to interact with your guests. It is suitable for both the prison context and transitional institutions with set dates.

The following is an overview of the talks included in Alpha. Several can be combined and shortened to fit your desired timeframe. Alpha has been run in as few as five weeks. Some examples of how the sessions have been adapted are provided below. Please visit alphacanada.org/previews/ to preview these talks.

The Alpha Talks

- Is There More To Life Than This?
- Who Is Jesus?
- Why Did Jesus Die?
- How Can I Have Faith?
- Why and How Do I Pray?
- Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
- How Does God Guide us?
- 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?
- How Can I Resist Evil?
- Why and How Should I Tell Others?
- Does God Heal Today?
- What About the Church?

Many prisons have a high guest turnover rate. However, in our experience, it is still valuable to run Alpha even if some people may not be able to complete it. Seeds can still be sown in teens and adults during the time they are with you. Guests who are relocated halfway through Alpha may wish to complete it at their new institution.

Encourage these guests to contact the chaplain at their new institution to see if they are running an Alpha. Holidays (like Christmas) may affect the dates you can run your Alpha due to your team and volunteer availability.

Combining talks

Combining talks helps reduce the length of time Alpha is run.

Talks that can be combined are:

- Why and How Do I Pray? +
Why and How Should I Read the Bible?
- Who Is the Holy Spirit? +
What Does the Holy Spirit Do?
- Why and How Should I Tell Others? +
Does God Heal Today?

Talks that should stand alone:

- Who Is Jesus?
- Why Did Jesus Die?
- How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?
- What About the Church?

Flexibility is key when running Alpha in prison.

Here is a recommendation on how to adapt the sessions for the prison environment while maintaining the basic DNA of Alpha.

Example of a condensed Alpha in an institution:

Week 1: "Is There More To Life Than This?" (Optional, but very beneficial as this talk sets the tone and allows the guests to know what to expect in the upcoming weeks). *Please Note: There are no small groups on the first week.

Week 2: "Who Is Jesus?"

Week 3: "Why Did Jesus Die?"

Week 4: "How Can I Have Faith?"





Week 5: "Why & How Do I Pray?" +
"Why and How Should I Read the Bible?"

Week 6: "How Does God Guide Us?"

Alpha Weekend: "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 7: "How Can I Resist Evil?"

Week 8: "Why & How Should I Tell Others?" +
"Does God Heal Today?"

Week 9: "What About The Church?" (Optional, but if you have guests who will be released, this is a great talk).

If possible, it is best to book an entire day for the Alpha Weekend sessions, including lunch with the inmates; however, we understand this is not always possible. Many prisons have successfully run the sessions in half a day or within the time frame of an ordinary session.

This can be done by combining *Who is the Holy Spirit?* and *What Does the Holy Spirit Do?* talks and shortening the *How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?* talk to allow sufficient ministry time.

Decide on the format for your Alpha.

The Alpha website (www.alphacanada.org) has options for the type of Alpha you would like to run.

The Alpha Youth Series or Alpha Film Series can be used depending on your audience and the comprehension level of your guests. Once you create a MyAlpha account and register an Alpha course, you will have access to tools and tips to help you run an engaging and interactive Alpha.

Decide how you would run the course according to what best suits your institution:

1. Alpha is free and downloadable from our secure website. Visit www.alphacanada.org and select Login/Get Started to create your MyAlpha account. Click on "Create an Alpha" to register your course, and you can design and download the talks, training, and other helpful tools.

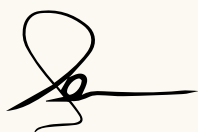
2. Alpha may provide a DVD (or USB) of the talks, which has been used successfully in many prisons. We understand that some prisons have strict rules on DVDs (particularly "burnt" DVDs) or USBs entering the prison. If this is the case, please reach out, and we can discuss alternative methods of accessing the videos in your institution.

3. Some prisons with a high turnover of guests have run an intensive fast-track Alpha. The length of Alpha can be adapted by combining talks or changing the length of your sessions. We also encourage **live talks** using our scripts, as this allows you to shorten and combine talks, make it more interactive, include your own testimony, and adapt it for your context.

Thank you for taking the time to review this guideline for running the Alpha course in your institution. We have seen staff and inmates alike give their lives to Jesus, rededicate their lives to Christ, strengthen their faith, and discuss life's biggest question, *"Is There More To Life Than This?"*

We are excited to hear how God uses this tool as you run Alpha!

God Bless,



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