



CREATING A WELCOMING ATMOSPHERE

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 ideas from churches who made their 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, pubs, and even bike shops.

ROOM DECOR – The way you set up the room, including things like table setup (centre pieces, 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 make people relax.

Showing up to Alpha for the first time can be extremely intimidating for some guests - especially for someone who wouldn't typically go to church. That's why we want 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.

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, bridge 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.

SHARING THE EXPERIENCE

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 and 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 to 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 our blog - alphacanada.org/blog. Stories are the best way to share the heart of what Alpha is all about.

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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.

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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.

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Pray

Pray together as a team that God would bring to mind the people He wants you to invite and will give you the opportunities and the courage you need to extend those invitations.

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