

## For Small Group Leaders (scroll down for weekly questions)

**Why small groups?** Meeting in Small Groups is not only a Biblical model, but it's in this setting that people form friendships and feel safe to share their opinions and ask questions.

**How many people in each small group?** It's recommended that each group consist of 6-8 guests including 1 leader and 1 helper. The leader facilitates the discussion questions. The helper is a positive presence, affirming guests' comments and modeling sharing when appropriate.

Share these **4 Group Guidelines** at the beginning of your first 3 Small Groups:

- 1/ You don't have to talk if you don't want to.
- 2/ Any question or comment is a good one (be brief so everyone can share!)
- 3/ Let's respect each other by listening to & allowing different opinions.
- 4/ Please keep things confidential when you leave this group.

**How to use Small Group Questions:** The suggested Weekly Questions (below) are to assist you in facilitating discussion in your groups. You do NOT have to cover each question. You might only discuss one or two questions.

**End on Time:** It is important to end the groups promptly at the designated time. Guests are more likely to return if you keep your word and the night doesn't drag on. Let guests know that you are available to chat after the small group ends if they have further questions or comments. Summarize the variety of opinions at the end of the small group and thank guests for sharing. Let them know what the topic is for next week so they won't want to miss it!

**Guest Feedback Form:** During the final small group time, distribute a copy of the "Guest Feedback Form" to each person and allow time to complete the questions before everyone leaves. Use the responses to these surveys to help you see how the course needs to be improved next time.

**Other Resources:** Visit [www.alphacanada.org/tools](http://www.alphacanada.org/tools) to download: Considerations for Christians, Effective Small Group Discussions, Challenges and Solutions, 4 Ways to Respond to Questions, Answering with a Question. Please do not share this info with your guests. They are only for Alpha team members.

REV 2013-08-01



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## Week 1 ~ Alpha Questions

“Who is Jesus?” (Q of L, Chp 2)

*Icebreaker: Have each person say his/her name preceded by a positive adjective that describes him/herself. Ask the next person to repeat the previous names before adding his/her own name. (eg. Dynamic Diana)*

1. How did you **hear about Alpha**? What made you decide to come?
2. Before tonight’s talk, what was your **understanding** of who Jesus is?
3. Do you think Christianity is a **‘blind leap of faith’** or is there adequate **evidence** of Jesus’ divinity?
4. We were presented with a **snapshot of who Jesus is**. Did any of these ‘facts’ stand out to you, either as an aha moment or something you disagreed with? (*proof that Jesus was fully human, His teachings, character, works, fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, resurrection*)
5. Tonight’s talk presented **evidence for the resurrection** of Jesus. Which of these seemed like solid ‘proof’ to you and which did not seem valid? (*disciples stole body, soldiers stole body, appearance to 500+, growth of church, Christian experience*).

**Tip:** Don’t pray yet with your small group until Week 4, after the talk on Prayer. Thank your guests for coming, tell them the topic for next week and that you look forward to seeing them again!

*Next week’s topic: Why Did Jesus Die?*



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## Week 2 ~ Alpha Questions

“Why Did Jesus Die?” (Q of L, Chp 3)

*Icebreaker: If you were stranded on a desert island, what 3 things would you wish you had with you? (intro to needs...including spiritual needs)*

1. Jamie talked about the **power** of sin, that it distorts reality. What is your understanding of “sin”?
2. In the talk Jamie said sin is **addictive and destructive**. Have you seen evidence of this? (*anger, greed, laziness, jealousy, pride, etc*)
3. What are your thoughts about the **penalty** for sin? Should all sin be punished in some way? Even our own?
4. Jesus took our place on the cross, not only so we can go to heaven, but so that our **quality of life** on earth might be very different. What difference could faith make in your life? (*Eg. freedom from sin, forgiveness, clean conscience, relationship with God, peace, joy, strength, hope, healing, future security*)
5. How would you answer someone who said that “God is unfair because He punished Jesus, an innocent party, instead of us?” (*Consider: Jesus was God in the flesh; “I and the Father are one”, John 10:30; “I am in the Father and the Father is in me”, John 14:10,11*)

Next week’s topic:    *How Can We Have Faith?*



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## Week 3 ~ Alpha Questions

“How Can We Have Faith?” (Q of L, Chp 4)

*Icebreaker: Tell us about a time you took a “leap of faith”, a risk, or tried something new!*

1. What do you think it means to have a “relationship” with God?  
(**Tip:** Begin with key elements to any friendship or relationship)
2. Jamie said he is as sure of his faith as he is about being married – based on:
  - God’s promises about His love for you
  - the death and resurrection of Jesus
  - witness of the Spirit (experience of the relationship)Which of these makes you feel more secure in your faith?
3. Some days we might feel like we’re close to God and other days we feel distant. If feelings are deceptive and not to be trusted, how do we deal with those feelings when they come up?
4. The Bible says we cannot earn our way into heaven. What are some examples of people trying to be ‘**good enough**’ to get to heaven or for God to be pleased with them?
5. Jamie said the Holy Spirit helps us to be sure of our faith in Christ, because we will see changes in our lives. What **changes or differences** have you seen in the lives of Christians that you know (little or significant)?

*Next week’s topic: “Why and How Do I Pray?”*



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*Next week’s topic: “Why and How Do I Pray?”*



## Week 4 ~ Alpha Questions

“Why and How Do I Pray?” (Q of L, Chp 6)

*Icebreaker: Share how your week is going and what area is stressing you out the most. (Leader: you will be praying about these at the end of the small group discussion)*

1. If God knows our needs, why do we need to we pray about them?  
*(Consider: Jesus’ example; to experience his love, brings peace, drawing ourselves closer to God)*
2. In the talk, we heard some reasons we **may not always get** what we pray for. Which ones stood out for you?  
*(Consider: unconfessed sin, the intention to sin, wrong motives, desires not in line with God’s will, God says “wait”...)*
3. Can anyone share about an incident where prayer really did **change** circumstances?
4. According to Jesus’ example in the Bible (Matthew 6:9-13), there are four **major themes in a prayer**. As I mention each one, tell me what your understanding is of each of them.  
*(“ACTS”: What is Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication/requests)*
5. What are some **tips and ideas** we can share with each other to have a vibrant, creative, regular prayer time?

**Leaders:** Take 15 minutes at the end of the group to pray for each other.

“Let’s take this opportunity to each pray a one sentence prayer. For some people it will be your first time praying. We’ll go around the group and each pray either “Thank you God for X” or “God I need help with X”. That’s it. If you’d rather not pray, feel free to tell the person next to you, “I’ll pass” and that’s perfectly fine. The next person will go ahead.”

The Small Group helper can begin the prayer and the Leader can end the prayer.

Next week’s topic:  
“Why and How Should I Read the Bible?”



## Week 4 ~ Alpha Questions

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## Week 5 ~ Alpha Questions

“Why and How Should I Read the Bible?” (Q of L, Chp 5)

Icebreaker: Name a favourite book you read as a child or adult, and explain why you liked it so much.

1. If anyone has read parts of the Bible, share with us your initial thoughts. Was it inspiring, offensive, hard to understand?
2. The Bible is described as a manual for **all of life**. What advice does the Bible give that relates to us today? (*purpose in life, emotions, money, relationships, leadership, health, death, etc*)
3. In the talk tonight we learned that God speaks to us through the Bible. What are some **tips and ideas** to make Bible-reading dynamic and inspiring and not boring?
4. Reading the Bible is only one aspect of the Christian faith. Responding and putting it into practice is another vital element. Why do you think **prayer and Bible-reading** go hand-in-hand?
5. Have you ever read anything in the Bible and felt God was sending you a message? Or read something that **changed** your thoughts or actions?

**Small group leaders:** You may wish to download and distribute the “Father’s Love Letter” handout and “Bible Comparison Chart” for your guests.

*Remind people about the Weekend Away coming up!*



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## Weekend Away (1) - Alpha Questions

“Who is the Holy Spirit?” (Q of L, Chp 8)

“What Does the Holy Spirit Do?” (Q of L, Chp 9)

Icebreaker: *What modern-day gadget do you rely on the most?  
What would you miss the most if you had to give it up for 7 days?*

1. Although the Spirit is part of the Trinity, some people get spooked about Him. The Bible describes Him as our Comforter, Defender, Teacher, Guidance Counselor us (16:13) and source of power to live for God. Which of these **characteristics** appeal to you the most?

2. Jesus said “*You yourselves will have the spirit flowing out from you, you will be a source of blessing (John 7:38)*”. What would that look like if a **person was filled with the Spirit? (examples)**

*Consider: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” Galatians 5:22*

3. The Bible says the Holy Spirit also gives us a **variety of gifts**. We are all ‘called’ to fulfill a purpose in life and the Spirit will empower us (*wisdom, knowledge, faith, healings, miracles, prophecy, discerning spirits, tongues, interpretation of tongues*). How have you been blessed by these gifts? Or do you have questions about them?

4. Another thing the Holy Spirit does is **empower us to be witnesses**. What are some ways Christians can be respectful while sharing their faith (rather than abrasive, bold, and annoying)?

**Tip:** Remind your guests that the rest of the talks this weekend will explain more about the Holy Spirit, so if they have a lot of questions, they might be answered by the end of the weekend.

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## Weekend Away (2) - Alpha Questions

“How Can I Be Filled with the Holy Spirit?” (Q of L, Chp 10)

*Icebreaker: Share with us if you've ever had a supernatural experience and you thought it could be God speaking to you at that moment?*

1. Jamie talked about the Day of Pentecost when the people were filled with the Spirit and spoke ‘**in tongues**’. What are your feelings about being filled with the Spirit and speaking in tongues?
2. What are some reasons a person might be **hesitant** to be filled with the Holy Spirit? (*fear, doubt, inadequacy, etc*)
3. If speaking in tongues is a form of prayer, and God already knows our thoughts, **why** do you think He gave us the ability to speak ‘in other tongues’?
4. Jamie mentioned **3 situations** when speaking in tongues would be helpful. Have you ever struggled to find the right words during these situations? (*Praise and worship, Praying under pressure, Praying for others*)

**Tip:** Allow for an opportunity to pray together, perhaps women with women, and men with men, and ask for the Holy Spirit to come and fill each one.

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## Weekend Away (3) - Alpha Questions

“How Does God Guide Us?” (Q of L, Chp 7)

“How Can I Make the Most of the Rest of My Life?” (Q of L, Chp 15)

*Icebreaker: Who do you go to for advice and why?*

1. Jamie talked about **five ways** in which God speaks to people today. Share if/how have you experienced these. (Go through each one)

- a) *Commanding Scripture – reading through the Bible*
- b) *Compelling Spirit – listening to thoughts, impressions, desires in your heart*
- c) *Common Sense – thinking rationally and practically about a situation*
- d) *Counsel of Saints – through the advice/feedback from mature Christians*
- e) *Circumstantial Signs – watching with discernment as God “opens and closes doors” (aware of opportunities)*

2. One of the ways Christians are “different” is **in their relationships**.

Which of these areas do you think God may be guiding you?

- > **Eyes:** We treat people with respect and not with lust or jealousy.
- > **Mouths:** We speak words that encourage and don't cut.
- > **Ears:** We listen to what builds us up and not gossip with others.
- > **Hands:** We serve others and not only take.
- > **Sexuality:** We reserve this pleasure with our marriage partner.

3. What are some practical tips and ideas you can share with each other to be more attentive to **God's guidance**?

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## Week 6 ~ Alpha Questions

“How Can I Resist Evil?” (Q of L, Chp 11)

“Does God Heal Today?” (Q of L, Chp 13)

*Icebreaker: What was the most valuable possession you’ve ever lost or had stolen? Tell us about it briefly.*

1. Jamie described several **tactics** the devil uses to misguide a person: *deception, doubt, temptation, distraction, shame and blame, false guilt.*

Can you think of a time in your life when **you’ve experienced** one of these tactics? What was the situation?

2. What is the **difference** between “temptation to sin” and sin itself? Why is that distinction so important? (*Consider: Jesus Himself was tempted but was without sin!*)

3. Do you know anyone who has been healed miraculously? What was the circumstance?

4. What do you think about **ordinary Christians** being used by God to pray for and heal other people? (and not only priests & pastors)

5. What are some ways God can heal people emotionally? Mentally? Socially? Financially?

*Next week’s topic:  
What about the church and telling others?*

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## Week 7 ~ Alpha Questions

“What About the Church?” (Q of L, Chp 14)

“Why and How Should I Tell Others?” (Q of L, Chp 12)

*Icebreaker: Tell us about a favourite groups/club/league you have been involved with and why you loved it.*

1. Since everyone is at a different place in his or her spiritual journey, what are some things you can **‘tell others’** about what you’ve learned or experienced on Alpha so far? (*love, acceptance, forgiveness, etc*)
2. Jamie says that when people experience something life-changing, they want to share the good news. It’s an act of **enthusiasm, love and concern**, not mere duty. What is your experience with Christians sharing their faith (no names please!)?
3. There seems to be so much **division** between churches and sometimes within churches. What do you think about the theologian’s quote: “*On the necessary points, unity; on the questionable points, liberty; in everything, love.*” Is it okay to agree to disagree on some theological issues?
4. If you were looking for a church to attend, what are some important **qualities** that you would look for?
5. Jamie said that “*praying for people to know the love of God for themselves*” is essential. Is there someone you know that we can pray for, someone who might be searching for more to life? Let’s pray they will come to Alpha when it starts again next term.

*Don’t forget to hand out and collect the **Guest Feedback Forms!***



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