

A Complete Guide To Alpha Online



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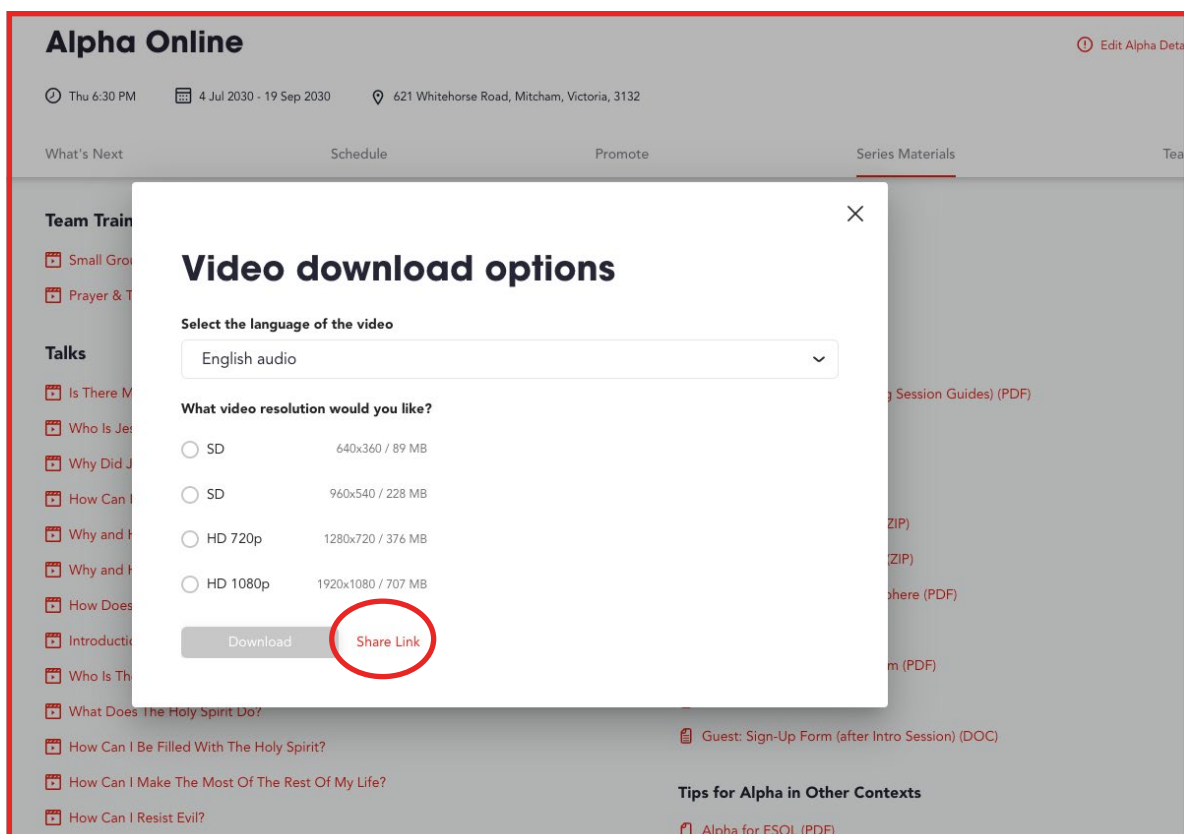
Three Simple Steps

1. **Schedule** a Zoom Meeting for Alpha Online
2. **Invite** Guests
3. **Host** a Zoom Meeting for Alpha Online

To Prepare

Register your Alpha <https://run.alpha.org.au/>
Tick 'This is an Online Alpha'

In 'Series Materials', click on the weeks video, click 'share link' and copy and paste the link and the questions from the Team Guide / Discussion Guide for this week's Alpha into a Google Doc / Word Doc / email etc. ready for you to paste into the chat window at the appropriate time



To Prepare

Either create an account or login <https://zoom.us/>

Schedule a meeting

Select "My Account"

Select "Schedule a Meeting"

The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Zoom 'Schedule a Meeting' interface, connected by a red arrow pointing from left to right. The left screenshot shows the 'Schedule a Meeting' form with fields for Topic (labeled 'MEETING TITLE'), Description (labeled 'MEETING DESCRIPTION'), When (date and time), Duration, Time Zone, and Recurrence. A red note says 'SCHEDULE MEETING (CHOOSE RECURRING MEETING OPTION AND SELECT AMOUNT OF OCCURRENCES OR END DATE)'. The right screenshot shows the 'Meeting Options' section with red circles around the 'Host' and 'Participant' video settings (both set to 'on'), the 'Both' audio option, the 'Enable waiting room' checkbox (which is checked), and the 'Save' button. A red note at the bottom says 'ADD THE EMAIL ADDRESS/S FOR OTHER HOSTS/HELPERS'.

Send the Invitation to guests by sharing this link with them

Invite Attendees

Join URL: <https://zoom.us/j/294325712>

To Begin

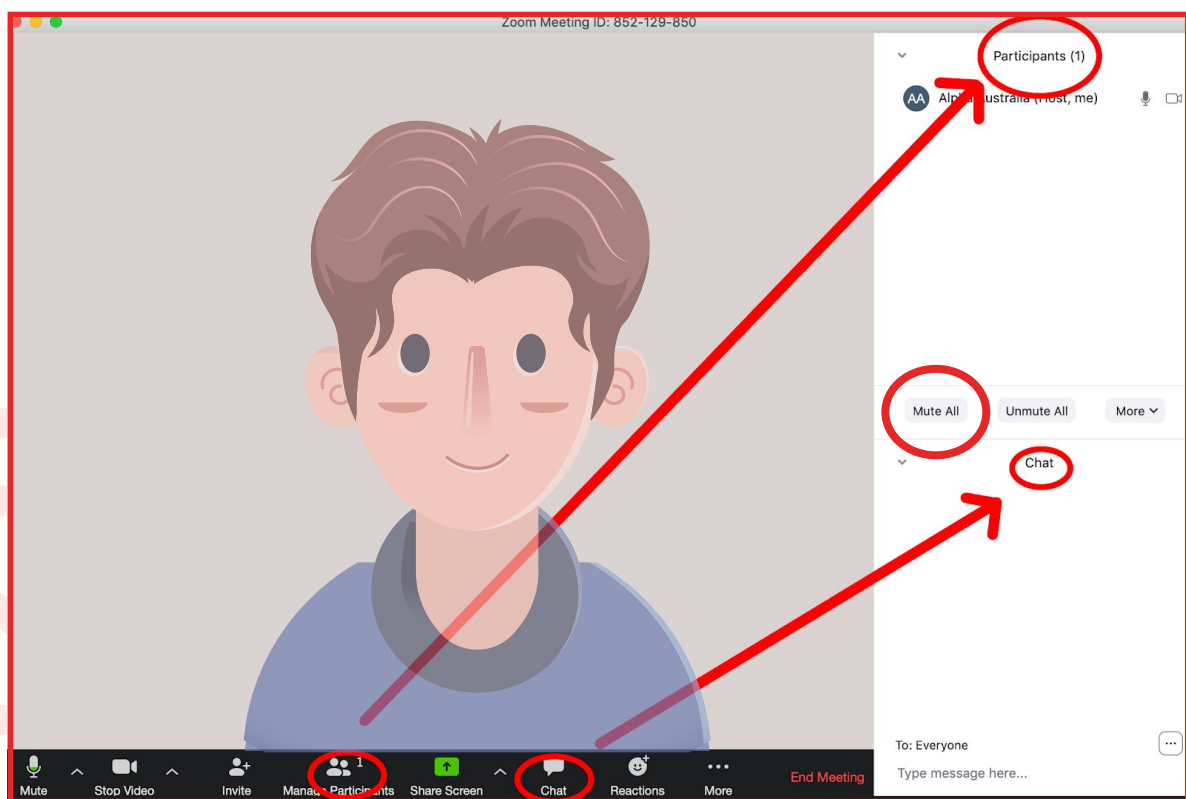
Open zoom using your meeting invite and begin the call

Wait for participants to join, engage in friendly conversation as guests join the call

Once everyone is on, explain the importance of muting

You can “mute all” as shown below

Open “Manage Participants” and “Chat” to get your window set up



Sharing the Video

Option 1

Add the link you copied from MyAlpha to the chat

Ask all attendees to be on mute and watch the video.

Reconvene in 30 minutes for discussion

Option 2

Share screen

Select Alpha Video

Click two buttons at the bottom then click Share

Tell participants to write in the chat if they are having trouble hearing the video

Mute all participants

Click stop share

*A guide for video optimisation can be found here: [Zoom Video Optimisation](#)



The Discussion

Copy and paste the discussion question into the chat window

Facilitate the discussion if you have 1-8 participants

If you have more than 8 participants, use the Breakout room feature (or whatsapp, texts, separate Zoom calls etc, this is based on user preference).

Before the call ends, ask participants if they would be willing for you to take a photo of the meeting to share on Alpha Socials.

Send this to communications@alpha.org.au. You don't need to do this every week, one week is enough.

When it is time to end the call, let participants say goodbye and leave the meeting first then end the meeting

Breakout Rooms

To enable the Breakout Room feature on your account: Sign into the Zoom web portal, click **Account Management**, Click **Account Settings**, Navigate to the **Breakout Room** option on the and select "on" and tick "**Allow host to assign participants to breakout rooms.**"

1 SELECT BREAKOUT ROOMS

2 SELECT NUMBER OF ROOMS

3 ASSIGN GUESTS TO ROOMS

4 ADJUST SETTINGS IF NEEDED

Alpha Virtual Retreat

Option 1

Friday

Send your guests a link to watch Who is the Holy Spirit? (24 mins)

Saturday

- | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30am | Welcome & Icebreaker/Game |
| 9:40am | (Optional) Testimony (No longer than 3 min) Could be live or prerecorded |
| 9:45am | What does the Holy Spirit do? (23 mins) |
| 10:10am | Discussion (20 mins) |
| 10:30am | Morning tea |
| 10:45am | Worship
YouTube lyrics videos
(Note: Hillsong have removed all copyright from their material in this season) |
| 10:50am | Video: How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? (29 mins) |
| 11:20am | The video ends with Nicky praying "Come Holy Spirit". At which time the main hosts lead the group in a time of waiting on the Holy Spirit.

Then one of the main hosts gives people the opportunity to become Christians by praying 'Thank You, Sorry, Please'.

The main hosts then share any words of knowledge that the team has received and then Leader prays overall guests and offers opportunities for individual prayer. (ask guests to respond via the chat if they want individual prayer) |

Prayer Ministry

Go into breakout rooms. Hosts & Helpers arrange to meet each individual who wants prayer in a separate Zoom meeting.

Alpha Virtual Retreat

Option 2

Friday

Send each guest the Alpha Youth Series combined talk Who is the Holy Spirit & what does He do? (24 min)

Saturday

- | | |
|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9:30am | Welcome & Icebreaker/Game |
| 9:40am | (Optional) Testimony (No longer than 3 min) Could be live or prerecorded |
| 9:45am | Worship
YouTube lyrics videos
(Note: Hillsong have removed all copyright from their material in this season) |
| 9:50am | Video: How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? (29 mins) |
| 10:20am | <p>The video ends with Nicky praying "Come Holy Spirit". At which time the main hosts lead the group in a time of waiting on the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Then one of the main hosts gives people the opportunity to become Christians by praying 'Thank You, Sorry, Please'.</p> <p>The main hosts then share any words of knowledge that the team has received and then Leader prays over all guests and offers opportunities for individual prayer. (ask guests to respond via the chat if they want individual prayer)</p> |
| 10:30am | Break for morning tea. |
| | Prayer Ministry
Hosts & Helpers arrange to meet each individual who wants prayer in a separate Zoom meeting. |
| 10:45am | Video: How can I make the most of the rest of my life? (23 mins) |
| 11.10am | Discussion |
| 11.30am | Prayer and close |

Alpha Virtual Retreat

Option 3

Friday

7:00pm	Welcome / Icebreaker
7:20pm	Watch together Who is the Holy Spirit? (24 mins) No discussion
7:45pm	Game Time

Saturday

9:00am	Welcome / Icebreaker / Game
9:25am	Watch together What does the Holy Spirit do? (23 mins)
9:50am	Discussion in break out rooms
10:20am	Morning Tea
10:35am	Worship Live or YouTube video (Note: Hillsong have removed all copyright on their material in this season)
10:45am	Watch together How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? (29 mins)
11:15am	<p>The video ends with Nicky praying "Come Holy Spirit". At which time the main hosts lead the group in a time of waiting on the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>Then one of the main hosts gives people the opportunity to become Christians by praying 'Thank You, Sorry, Please'.</p> <p>The main hosts then share any words of knowledge that the team has received and then Leader prays over all guests and offers opportunities for individual prayer. (ask guests to respond via the chat if they want individual prayer)</p>
11:25am	Prayer and Close

Prayer Ministry Options

After the talk, 'How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit?' have a short time of discussion. Those questions can be:

1. What do we learn about God from this session?
2. What do we learn about people?
3. Did you learn anything new?
4. What questions does this create for you?
5. What would you like to do after this session? (Would you like to be prayed for?)

Pray "Come Holy Spirit" for everyone in the group. Then offer individual prayer ministry from you and another Host or Helper after the call. You could even have people sign up for 15min sessions.

Though we cannot lay hands on people, all the same principles apply in prayer ministry online as they do on any other Alpha prayer experience.

Hosts & Helpers

The role of the host and helper during online Alpha doesn't change much. The group host may need to be a bit more energetic and dynamic than they are in person to help maintain energy within the group. They may also need to keep an eye on the chat window for any comments, etc., that come in that way. This platform may help those who are more reserved or a bit quieter to actually speak up and participate in discussion.

Helpers can also help moderate the chat window for those who may choose to participate that way. Some churches find that guests participating in online Alpha are willing to be more vulnerable and groups may delve into deeper conversation more quickly than they are otherwise used to.

Hospitality

Even though groups are meeting online, churches can still put a strong emphasis on hospitality.

Suggest that your guests prepare themselves their favourite beverage to enjoy during the call like a cup of tea or coffee, and some snacks. (Especially for the weekend sessions.)

Engage from the start: Make sure either the course host or group host is engaging right from the beginning of the online session – saying hello to people, asking questions, telling jokes. Avoid the silence and keep excitement and enthusiasm high.

Chat lots: Encourage hosts, helpers, and guests to utilise the chat functionality to comment and ask questions during the video as well as during discussion time when others are talking.

Logistics

Internet Connection: Make sure you have a strong internet connection. If possible, plug directly into an ethernet cable. If you are using wifi, a way to check your wifi speed is here: <https://www.speedtest.net/>

Short and Sweet: Churches have found that in an online format, people start to lose interest at around the one-hour mark. We recommend keeping the full session to around one hour.

Email more: In a digital setting, more communication is needed than usual:

Send weekly emails re-capping the talk and ask guests to share their thoughts via email. Include the link for the next session.

Check-in if someone missed a night.

Host Preparation

Be prepared: Hosting online is a different experience to hosting in person, make sure your team is ready by ensuring they have access to all video files, discussion questions, and fully understand Zoom.

Be aware: Churches have found that guests tend to feel more vulnerable online than in person. Prepare your hosts so they can expect this.

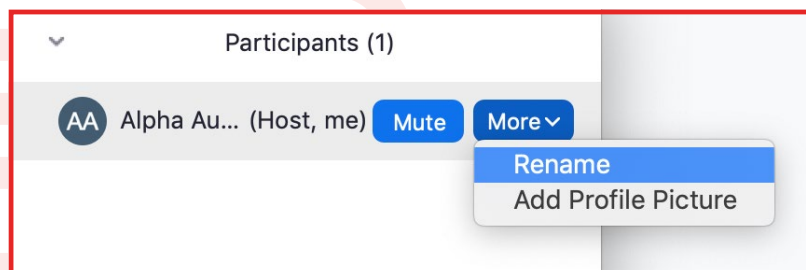
Zoom Etiquette

Ask all guests to be on video, not just audio

Ask all guests to join in a quiet environment if possible

Ask all guests to unmute during discussion (unless in a noisy setting). This allows for more organic, free flowing conversation

Have a host or helper rename participants in the “manage participants” section for those who are not being listed as their name. This makes it easier to assign participants to breakout rooms.



IceBreakers

Describe yourself game (replace name game) – 30seconds to find an object that best describes you, share in turn.

If you were trapped on a desert island (isolated at home and can't go out), what one thing (and one person?) would you take with you.

Do you squeeze the toothpaste tube or roll it? What's the advantage of your method?

When was the last time you square-danced or line-danced? Rate your dancing ability on a scale of 1 to 10.

What's one fashion trend you hope never comes back? Which ones have come back that you wish hadn't?

What magic tricks do you know? Perform one now.

Do you have a collection? If so, what do you collect and why?

As a child, did you ever peek into a wrapped gift before you actually received it? Did you ever get caught? Explain the details.

What room in your house best reflects your personality? Why?

Who's the most famous person you've ever met? What famous person would you most like to meet?

What's your favorite kind of lollies?

What's the wackiest belief you held as a child?

Which movies have you watched over and over again?

Games

Pictionary with the [Random Word Generator](#)

Charades game (everyone to come up with a word themselves)

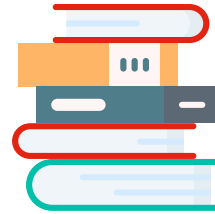
Trivia with the Random trivia generator - <https://www.randomtriviagenerator.com/>
(take time to play around with it- click on the plus, you can do rounds and do this via a screen share. Get everyone to do an honours point system)

<https://www.triviaplaza.com/miscellaneous-general-quizzes/>

Get Creative!



Offer a Deliveroo gift voucher as a prize to one of your guests



Suggest every guest bring their favourite book to show and talk about for 1 minute



Hold a "best dressed" night or a night where you encourage everyone to wear the same colour or their favourite hat



Encourage your guests to fix themselves their favourite beverage before the call starts



At the end of the meeting, play a spotify song and have everyone "dance" off the screen before you end the meeting

If you have a suggestion for getting creative on Zoom, email communications@alpha.org.au and go in the running to win a Deliveroo voucher

Handy Zoom Checklist

Before You Start

Check your connection

- What plan are you on with your internet service provider?
- What speeds can you access?

Check your software

- Ensure web browsers are updated
- If you are having trouble, try an alternative browser (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari)

Understand that different devices have slightly different functionalities

- Mac vs PC; Desktop vs laptop vs tablet vs phone
- Therefore the buttons will be in different places, but should all be there

Close down everything you don't need, especially browsers, for the Zoom call

- This will make your computer run better
- Maybe reboot your computer before the Zoom call

When You First Join The Call

Ensure that **your name is your correct name** on the screen that you wish us all to see

- Sometimes if we use different accounts or our phone/tablet it can be a bit random

Check you have **your video on** so we can all see each other (at the start).

- You can turn your camera off (Stop Video button) when the Alpha talk is playing (helps with bandwidth). But please turn on again at the end
- You can change view to see everyone - Speaker view > Gallery view.

Mute yourself – especially when the video is playing to eliminate any background noise or potential audio feedback. During the discussion often it is easier to have yourself unmuted for flow of conversation, however, your host will let you know if there's feedback or sound issues that require guests to be muted.

- To speak: 3 options to unmute
 - Hover over your pic & click with mouse
 - Use ALT-A on keypad
 - Press space-bar & hold down

Use the **chat function** to connect, comment or ask questions

Check your background (not distracting)

- Noise (levels)
- Lighting (can we see your face clearly?)
- Virtual backgrounds (some devices / cameras don't work well with virtual backgrounds)

Check your presentation

- Are you looking into the camera? ie not at the tv or screens, if they are in a different position to your camera. Phone users can often hold their devices low, so we are viewing up their nose
- What are you wearing?

Remember, Zoom is very new - you can do everything right and have some things not work. The good news is that even if some things go wrong, you can still have a great session!