



# Why Use the ChristCare Series?

There are many small group ministry approaches out there, and countless books, seminars, and classes about organizing a small group ministry. *Why use the ChristCare Series?*

Very simply, the ChristCare Series provides the most complete approach to small group ministry. It provides everything you need to succeed. The ChristCare Series offers:

1. A Complete System for Small Group Ministry
2. Inspiring and Practical Training for Those Who Will Direct Your Small Group Ministry
3. High-Quality, Enjoyable Group Leader Training in Your Congregation
4. State-of-the-Art Small Group Resources
5. An Effective Model for Supporting and Guiding Group Leaders
6. Christ-Centered, Mission-Minded Small Groups
7. Ongoing Support from Stephen Ministries St. Louis
8. System Flexibility to Fit to Your Congregation
9. Groups That Can Meet Many Ministry Needs
10. A Way to Turn Your Congregation's Vision into Reality
11. A Very Cost-Effective Ministry
12. A Lasting, Growing Ministry

## 1. A Complete System for Small Group Ministry

The ChristCare Series is a complete system for organizing a small group ministry, training small group leaders, beginning and growing small groups, and providing ongoing support and guidance for your group leaders.

More than a theory, a vision, a curriculum, or just training, the ChristCare Series provides a step-by-step plan, extensive training and resources, and proven solutions for every aspect of organizing and administering a highly effective small group ministry in your congregation.



You don't have to reinvent the wheel. You don't need to patch together ideas and techniques from books, seminars, and classes, filling in the holes through trial and error. The ChristCare Series provides the answers—all the whats, whys, whens, and how-tos.

"I worked with small group ministry at my previous church, but there we were reinventing the wheel. Stephen Ministries has the whole system figured out—the structure, the training, the resources, and what to do in different situations. And ChristCare Groups are transformational. People are being cared for and coming to a deeper expression of faith by studying God's Word and applying it to their lives."

Rev. Pete Mueller  
St. John's Lutheran Church  
Ellisville, Missouri



The ChristCare® Series is a complete system that provides training, resources, and support to direct and grow a Christ-centered, life-changing small group ministry in your congregation.

## 2. Inspiring and Practical Training for Those Who Will Direct Your Small Group Ministry

The one-week Equipper’s Training Course (ETC) allows your congregation to equip a team of its members as **Equippers**—the people who become your congregation’s small group ministry



“experts” and who oversee and direct your small group ministry. No longer must your small group ministry depend on one key church staff person. Lay leaders can be trained at the ETC to function at a very high level of overall leadership.

“I came to the ETC to become an Equipper for our church’s small group ministry. I leave as a man touched by the Spirit, ready to help lead Christ’s small group ministry. I’ve been leading small groups for more than 10 years and feel confident that ChristCare will take our groups to a whole new level.”

**Dr. Mark Greenawald, M.D.**  
St. John Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
Roanoke, Virginia

Best of all, your congregation can send additional participants to ETCs as needed in future years as your small group ministry grows or current Equip-ers retire. The result is a strong, deep core of committed, knowledgeable, visionary leaders upon whom to build your small group ministry.

## 3. High-Quality, Enjoyable Group Leader Training in Your Congregation

Well-trained group leaders are essential to successful, life-changing small groups, and ChristCare Series training is excellent training for small group leaders. ChristCare Group Leaders are well equipped to:

- keep their groups Christ-centered and focused on the mission and vision of the congregation;
- lead group members through the four Christ-Care Group activities—community building and care, Biblical Equipping, prayer and worship, and missional service;
- encourage group members to pursue spiritual growth between group meetings;
- build community among group members, leading them through the various stages of group life;



- care for members and help members care for one another;
- recognize when a group member’s needs exceed the care the group can provide and know

when, how, and where to refer the person for additional care;

- keep the group mission-minded and outward-focused;
- identify and nurture apprentice leaders;
- lead group members through the birthing process as the group grows;
- know how to handle the challenges and difficulties small group leaders typically encounter;
- and many other practical topics.

“Our group leaders absolutely love the ChristCare training. It gives them the skills, confidence—and the fire—to lead a group well. And so much of what they learn is applicable at home and at work, too. It’s phenomenal to see the transformation that takes place in them.”

**Natalie Huen**  
Menlo Park Presbyterian Church  
Menlo Park, California

ChristCare Group Leader training combines multiple learning approaches and encourages trainees to build on their life experiences. The result is a highly effective and enjoyable learning experience—for both the ChristCare Group Leader trainees and the Equippers who do the training.

#### 4. State-of-the-Art Small Group Resources

The ChristCare Series provides your congregation with access to state-of-the-art ChristCare Series resources. The *Equipper's Manual* contains more than 250 documents organized into 60 file folders and includes everything that your Equippers will need to begin, direct, and grow a vibrant, life-changing small group ministry in your congregation, including:



ministry in your congregation, including:

- a complete road map for the ChristCare Series system with step-by-step instructions for building a successful small group ministry;
- a wealth of tools, ideas, sermons, publicity, and ready-to-use resources that you will use to run your ChristCare Group Ministry; and

"I am amazed at the wealth of information that is available in my *Equipper's Manual*. I continue to find new and helpful ideas there. Everything I need for the day-to-day running of ChristCare Group Ministry is right there at my fingertips."

Jeff Ruiz

Christ Lutheran Church  
Costa Mesa, California

- twenty-two user-friendly, fully scripted training presentations with experiential exercises that provide everything you need to train highly effective ChristCare Group Leaders in the congregation.

You will also be able to provide your group leaders with the *ChristCare Group Leader Training Manual* and the other resources of ChristCare Group Leader

training. The result will be skilled, committed group leaders who will confidently and joyfully lead Christ-centered, caring, welcoming ChristCare Groups.

#### 5. An Effective Model for Supporting and Guiding Group Leaders

Coaching, mentoring, or supervising group leaders is a vitally important but frequently overlooked aspect of small group ministry. With the ChristCare Series, coaching is done through SEA™ Groups. (SEA stands for Support, Encouragement, and Accountability.) In twice-monthly SEA

"The excellent ChristCare training and the oversight of SEA Groups have made our group leaders into powerful disciple makers. ChristCare has made a really big difference in our congregation."

Pastor Don V. Haas  
Covenant Presbyterian Church  
Simsbury, Connecticut

Groups ChristCare Group Leaders receive care, nurturing, and direction to keep their groups healthy, growing, and focused on the mission and vision of the congregation. Best of all, SEA Groups provide peer support. They are facilitated by an Equipper but draw on the creativity, experience, and enthusiasm of other group leaders. The proven



SEA Group process provides multiple benefits—group leaders receive the insights and encouragement from their experienced peers, and Equippers provide valuable coaching to 5–7 group leaders in one meeting rather than scheduling time to meet with each of them individually on a regular basis.

#### 6. Christ-Centered, Mission-Minded Small Groups

ChristCare Groups intentionally focus on four primary activities—community building and care, Biblical Equipping, prayer and worship, and

missional service. These four activities help group members to grow as Jesus' disciples by reaching up to God and out to others. Small groups can be nurturing places where people care for one another and grow in Christian community. Yet



"ChristCare Groups provide the perfect balance between the inward journey of prayer, Bible study, and faith sharing and the outward journey of Christ-like service."

**Dr. George Thompson**  
Providence United  
Methodist Church  
Charlotte, North Carolina

a group that is concerned only with its inward growth can lose sight of its purpose to make disciples. ChristCare Group Leaders help their groups strike the delicate balance between inward care and growth and outward mission.

## 7. Ongoing Support from Stephen Ministries St. Louis

A major benefit of enrollment is the ongoing support that Stephen Ministries provides ChristCare Series congregations.

If your Equippers have questions, encounter a problem, or need to brainstorm ideas, our consultation staff is just a phone call away. Our experienced consultants share possible solutions, experiences, and insights from working with hundreds



"Not only does ChristCare provide a week of Equipper training that can change lives and an *Equipper's Manual* that answers every conceivable need or question, but a live person at Stephen Ministries is just a phone call away—they care about us and help work out the wrinkles."

**Rev. Heather Entrekin**  
Prairie Baptist Church  
Prairie Village, Kansas

of ChristCare congregations for nearly a decade and with thousands of Stephen Series congregations for more than 25 years. In addition, the special-access, Equippers-only section of our Web site puts a wealth of creative resources, practical information, and downloadable documents just a mouse-click away.



## 8. System Flexibility to Fit Your Congregation

What works well in one congregation simply may not translate to another congregation because the leaders, people, demographics, and other circumstances are different.



Stephen Ministries developed the ChristCare Series over a five-year period, drawing on the experiences and input of more than 200 pilot-test congregations. We continue to refine and strengthen the system by building on the experiences and

feedback of hundreds of Equippers and congregations. As a result, the ChristCare Series offers great flexibility and is being used effectively in hundreds of congregations of all sizes and settings:

- in mission startups and mega congregations;
- in urban, suburban, small town, and rural settings;
- in congregations across the United States and Canada; and
- in churches representing 44 different Christian denominations.

"What I appreciate about the ChristCare Series and ChristCare training is that it can be used by people in Christian churches among a wide range of theological traditions. Its broad appeal does not in any way dilute its effectiveness. Top quality!"

**Rev. Betsey Crimmins**  
First Presbyterian Church  
Elmira, New York

Some ChristCare congregations had no prior small group experience; some had tried and failed; others had dozens—or even hundreds—of existing groups and were turning to ChristCare for better organization, training, and group leader support. The ChristCare Series provides great structure—but retains the flexibility to work in your congregation.



The ChristCare Series can adapt to meet your congregation’s specific goals and needs for small group ministry. Some ChristCare congregations weave ChristCare Groups into the very fiber of their congregation’s structure

by turning boards and committees into ChristCare Groups, becoming a church *of* small groups. Other ChristCare congregations choose to make ChristCare one of many ministries in the congregation, a church *with* small groups. The ChristCare Series provides the training, resources, and structure you need for effective small groups however you envision they will best serve your congregation.

### 9. Groups That Can Meet Many Ministry Needs

A ChristCare Group can be an all-purpose small group, one that virtually anyone could join. Congregations can also form ChristCare Groups to meet specific wants or needs. Some of the specialized groups congregations have formed include

ChristCare Groups for:

- young moms
- singles
- parents of teens
- couples
- retired persons
- blended families
- professional women

“ChristCare Groups have empowered people in our congregation to serve God in ways they never thought they could.”

Neil Hawkinson  
St. Mark United Methodist Church  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

- divorced dads
- empty nesters
- new Christians

The list is endless. ChristCare congregations have found ChristCare Groups to be a powerful ministry tool to fill many specific niches that may have been overlooked or unaddressed before.



In addition, ChristCare congregations have found ChristCare Groups to be a tremendous tool



for youth ministry, forming ChristCare Groups for high school and middle school children. ChristCare Groups become a safe place where a congregation’s

youth (under the guidance of adult group leaders) can care for one another, encourage each other, study God’s Word together and apply it to daily life, pray with and for one another, and worship God together.

“Involving our youth in ChristCare Groups is the best thing we’ve ever done for them. I can’t imagine a greater blessing for a youth program than to have ChristCare Group Ministry.”  
Melody Brummett  
Christ United Methodist Church  
Farmers Branch, Texas

ChristCare Groups effectively meet specific ministry needs across the entire spectrum of your congregation’s ministry.

### 10. A Way to Turn Your Congregation’s Vision into Reality

ChristCare Groups aren’t an end in themselves. They are an effective, versatile tool for carrying out your congregation’s vision or mission statement—turning ideas into concrete discipleship. We encourage ChristCare congregations to find ways that ChristCare Groups can help carry out their congregation’s vision or mission.

What’s your congregation’s mission statement? Does it involve:

- caring for your members—and nonmembers—during times of need?
- introducing people to Jesus and bringing them to faith?
- helping congregation members grow in faith and become more fully devoted followers of Jesus?
- reaching out to the community by meeting physical, emotional, or spiritual needs?



people as necessary to direct your small group ministry. Congregations don’t have to worry about “putting all their group ministry eggs” into one basket—namely, a small group staff person whose departure can leave their small group ministry in s h a m b l e s .

While most ChristCare congregations have at least one pastor or other staff person trained as an Equipper, lay (volunteer) Equipppers typically handle most day-to-day responsibilities of coordinating ChristCare Small Group Ministry. And as the number of small groups grows, the congregation can send more lay people to ETCs to expand your Equipppers Team—instead of having to hire additional paid staff to manage your small group ministry.

“The ChristCare Series is far more comprehensive than anything else out there. It doesn’t just tell you what you should be doing, it tells you how and gives you everything you need to do it. I’m convinced it’s been worth every penny—and more!”

**Rev. Cynthia Carter**  
Shadle Park Presbyterian Church  
Spokane, Washington

“We have a strategic plan mapped out for the next five years to help us carry out our mission. Small groups are an important aspect of that plan. Our ChristCare Groups, with their emphasis on worship, prayer, study, fellowship, and serving others, give us a practical tool for fulfilling our mission.”

**Dr. Richard Randolph**  
Christ United Methodist Church  
Greensboro, North Carolina

Congregations are finding ChristCare Groups to be a very effective way to turn their mission statement into action. ChristCare Groups can help your members become actively involved in turning your congregation’s vision into reality.

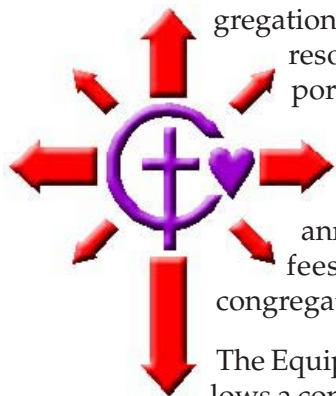
ChristCare Groups offer many ministry benefits to congregations as they:

- strengthen the faith life of a significant percentage of your members;
- provide an open door through which the unchurched can be warmly invited and welcomed into your fellowship;
- keep people connected to your congregation and prevent losses through the back door;
- build community and expand congregation care;
- involve more and more lay people in significant ministry;
- equip a steady flow of lay leaders;
- improve the stewardship of time, talents, and



## 11. A Very Cost-Effective Ministry

The ChristCare Series is a very cost-effective way to begin, manage, and expand a highly effective small group ministry in the congregation. The initial enrollment fee, which provides your congregation with lifelong access to the resources, training, and support of the Stephen Ministries staff and organization, is a one-time investment. There are no subsequent annual dues or membership fees to remain a ChristCare congregation.



The Equipper’s Training Course allows a congregation to train as many

resources as people joyfully and generously respond to God's grace;

- increase outreach and missional service to the community; and
- involve everyone in your congregation in living out your congregation's vision or mission statement.

The ChristCare Series is an investment in people, ministry, and mission that will continue to pay rich dividends for years to come.

## 12. A Lasting, Growing Ministry

The ChristCare Series is not a one-time program or a ministry that runs its course in a year or two. It is built to last. A growing number of ChristCare



- The Equipper's Training Course provides the means to train additional "experts" to direct your small group ministry so that it doesn't fold up if a key staff person moves on.

- ChristCare Group Leaders are trained to help their groups grow and birth so that more and more people become involved in life-changing small groups.
- The SEA Group process keeps your groups going strong, prevents leader burn-out, and helps your groups remain focused on your congregation's vision.
- The enrollment process means that your Equippers will receive the ongoing support of Stephen Ministries year after year after year.



ChristCare is built to last so that ChristCare Groups can be a source of life change, spiritual growth, and mission outreach for years to come.

"The ChristCare Series is the most exciting and fulfilling ministry I've ever been part of in 30 years of ministry. Seeing the lives of others transformed through this ministry strengthens my own faith. I see the power of the gospel and the Holy Spirit at work in ChristCare Groups energizing people to serve, helping them change their values, and transforming their lives."

**Dr. Norman Pavey**  
The Community Church  
Vero Beach, Florida

congregations have now had ChristCare Group Ministry going strong for six, seven, eight or more years.

- The systematic approach lets you build a small group infrastructure that endures.

For more information on the ChristCare Series system and how to begin ChristCare Small Group Ministry in your congregation, contact:



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