

ChristCare® Small Group Ministry: Media Fact Sheet

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History: In 1975 Rev. Kenneth C. Haugk, Ph.D., a pastor and clinical psychologist, saw many needs for care going unmet in his St. Louis congregation and began training lay persons as *Stephen Ministers* who could provide quality one-to-one Christian care to individuals experiencing a life crisis. This was the beginning of the Stephen Ministries organization and the Stephen Series system of lay caring ministry, which now involves more than 9,000 congregations and 450,000 Stephen Ministers worldwide.

In the early 1990s congregations began asking Stephen Ministries to develop another resource that would meet the need for care and spiritual growth of all congregation members—not just for those who were experiencing a crisis. Out of this need grew the ChristCare Series system of small group ministry. ChristCare Groups provide congregations with a nurturing environment where individuals can care for one another, experience Christian community, and become better disciples.

Stephen Ministries began development of the ChristCare Series in 1993 with a pilot phase involving more than 200 congregations, completing it in 1996. Today, more than 900 congregations from more than 50 denominations are involved with the ChristCare Series.

More than 3,000 pastors, church staff, and lay leaders have been trained as Equippers, those who implement and direct ChristCare Small Group Ministry in the congregation. In turn, these Equippers have trained more than 20,000 ChristCare Group Leaders. Tens of thousands of people have grown in community and discipleship as members of ChristCare Groups.

Definition: The ChristCare Series is a complete system of training and organizational resources for growing a Christ-centered, life-changing small group ministry in the congregation.

How the ChristCare Series Works: A congregation enrolls in the ChristCare Series and then sends a team composed of pastors, church

staff, and lay leaders to a one-week Equipper's Training Course (ETC), taught by the Stephen Ministries faculty, where they learn how to implement and direct the ChristCare Series in their congregations.

These trained Equippers then return to their congregations to begin and direct ChristCare Group Ministry. Equippers build a vision for small group ministry in the congregation. They recruit, select, and train lay people to serve as ChristCare Group Leaders. They work with ChristCare Group Leaders to form ChristCare Groups. After beginning to lead their groups, ChristCare Group Leaders continue to meet twice monthly with their Equippers for continuing education and ongoing support and encouragement. As the ministry grows, additional Equippers and group leaders are trained and more ChristCare Groups are formed.



What Are ChristCare Groups? ChristCare Groups are gatherings of 5–12 people that usually meet once a week or twice monthly usually for about 60–90 minutes. ChristCare Groups are led by a trained ChristCare Group Leader and do four basic activities: (1) community building and care, (2) Biblical Equipping, (3) prayer and worship, and (4) missional service. These four key elements, with varying degrees of emphasis, ensure that a small group stays on track and Christ-centered.

The Organization: Stephen Ministries is a not-for-profit religious and educational organization founded in 1975 that serves more than 10,000 congregations from more than 100 different Christian denominations worldwide. The St. Louis-based staff of 45 includes five pastors, including Dr. Kenneth C. Haugk, who serves as Executive Director.

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* If this document is more than a year old, check "Ministry Facts and Stats" on our Web site or call us for a current version.

