

# Small Christian Communities

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## Mission Statement

***"Ordinary People helping each other connect everyday life and faith regularly."***

In the large church setting, many people often feel disconnected from the pulse of the parish. They want their faith life to be more than just Sunday worship and look for ways to connect what they pray and learn at Mass with their everyday life. Small Christian Communities provide a forum for people listening to each other and reflecting on how God is found in their daily lives. They are designed to provide individual members with a core community to journey and share with... and the small groups are then connected to the larger church. Please contact us if you are interested in joining a Small Faith Community.

**Core Team:**, Shirley Axelson, Jan Brooker, Jean Daniell, Rosanne Druckemiller, Sue Gillespie, Cecily Langolier, Barbara O'Brien, Pat Schopp, Diana Szmurlo,

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## How Does Small Christian Communities Function?

Six to twelve adults who gather in homes, usually twice a month, monthly or even weekly. These groups grow together through faith sharing experiences that develop in fullness over time. The following is an example of the stages that some groups can choose to follow.

### ***Stage 1: Focus on belonging***

Members share in group exercises that introduce them to each other and to group sharing.

### ***Stage 2: Focus on prayer***

Members work to develop a comfort level with praying as a group, as well as deepening their own commitment to prayer.

### ***Stage 3: "Owning Your Own Church Story"***

The Long Haul– Groups that choose to stay together....

Provide support and affirm each other pray, share and experience fellowship on a regular basis. Sharing can be bible based or other study, which changes with the desires of the group. Group will be connected to the parish and many resources. Develop friendships and experience fellowship explore ways to serve the parish and others.

The key is that each group is connected to the larger parish through a pastoral facilitator (PF) that meets quarterly with the Core Team. This person will receive support through access to resources and continual interaction with other facilitators.

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## Sample of a Small Church Meeting

**Prayer** : Most meetings start with prayer, which can be as simple as the Our Father or someone praying from the heart.

**Catching Up**: People have some time to catch up with what has happened in each other's lives since the last meeting.

**Connecting Life & Faith**: This portion of the meeting will be centered on some study that the group has chosen. Many times it will be a study that opens up the Sunday readings, but groups can choose from a large array of resources. Many resources are built on a six to twelve session series, so each group can share a variety of topics. All these studies are meant to help the participant to connect their daily lives to their faith.

**Final prayer**: Groups may end with simple intercessory prayer.

Most meetings are held in the members' homes, with simple refreshments and hospitality. Each session usually lasts an hour and a half.

## Testimonials

"My Small Church Community is truly a family in that we range in age from middle 30's to 70 's. There are two married couples, 3 widows, and two married women. This diverse group has become very close because of our varied backgrounds, the lives we have led or are leading and the wisdom of life offered by all. One of the most spiritual events for me was when my husband passed away suddenly ... Many of my other Church family also came, but the love and strength from the family I am with every other Monday was God's way of letting me know He was right there beside me and that we will always have each other to lean on." – Gayle Roth

***"For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20***

"One of the most beautiful blessings we received from experiencing CRHP 13 was our decision to continue meeting together regularly as a Small Church Community. We have found our group gatherings to be a very special spiritual experience for each of us. It brings us closer to God, our family and to each other. Ours is a diverse group in age, talent and spirituality. We have developed a unique closeness to each other and are available to reach out to one another as well as anyone else who may be in need. ... We thank God for this opportunity to share His love." – Shirley Dreyer

***"So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the holy ones and members of the household of God." Ephesians 2:19***

"It seems to us that it is quite easy for friends to get together and form a Small Church Community. We believe that it is more of a challenge for existing friends to welcome strangers into their group. As strangers, we were welcomed immediately into our Small Church Group! It was almost as if we had known everyone for a long time, they were so welcoming! This has been the beauty of our SCC for us. Whereas we hardly knew anyone, this SCC took us in and made us one of theirs. For us the Holy Spirit was at work in our SCC." – Bob and Sue Degitz

***"This is how they will know you for my disciples: by your love for one another." John 13:35***

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