



# Charting the Course: Forming the Parish as a Community of Small Communities

## ***What Small Christian Communities Need to Know***

1. Small Christian communities need to be aware of a larger parish plan to build community. The Core Community can assist them with information about this plan.
2. Small community members should be acquainted with the vision of the parish as a “community of communities.” The importance of this vision has been highlighted by Pope John Paul II and the Synod of the Laity.<sup>1</sup> It provides a pastoral direction for parish life today and for the future: a vision that inspires and motivates people and results in long-term goals, deliberate objectives, step-by-step implementation, and assignment of tasks to accomplish each objective.
3. Small community members need to understand the importance of a strong Core Community as a way to continue and develop this vision, this pastoral direction. The Core, in relationship with the pastor, parish staff, and parish council, needs to become familiar with parish structure, organizations, and makeup. It must become aware of parish strengths and weakness with respect to six areas: Parish Vision, Parish Core Community, Small Christian Communities, Spiritual Enrichment, Faith and Learning, and Peace and Justice ([www.ParishLife.com](http://www.ParishLife.com)).
4. Small community members should know that the Core Community is committed to the development of all three types of small communities in the parish: seasonal, ministerial, and ongoing small Christian communities.<sup>2</sup> They should be aware that all three types provide an opportunity to share faith in a supportive environment where spiritual growth and action can take place.
5. Small communities need to realize they can take an active role in the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Core Community, and that the Core may come to them for assistance with specific needs.
6. Small community members should be encouraged to talk with parish and/or (arch)diocesan staff for additional ideas for the ongoing development of small communities. Also, they should be informed that there is a workshop on *Charting the Course: Forming the Parish as a Community of Small Communities* ([www.ParishLife.com](http://www.ParishLife.com)) that can be downloaded.

---

<sup>1</sup> *The Church in America (Ecclesia in America)* (January 22, 1999), John Paul II, 140, 141. *The Parish Message to the People of God* (1987), World Synod of Bishops on the Laity (October, 1987), 10.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas A. Kleissler, Margo A. LeBert, and Mary C. McGuinness, *Small Christian Communities: A Vision of Hope for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Revised and Updated (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 36, 37.