



GETTING STARTED

Welcome to Smith For Christ Publishing

A guide for new authors — from first idea to finished book

You have a book in you — a story, a study, a word worth keeping. This guide explains how Smith For Christ Publishing walks with you from that first idea all the way to a finished book a reader can hold. It describes what we do, the questions we will ask, and the road ahead, stage by stage.

NEW AUTHOR GUIDE • 2026

WELCOME

Who we are

Smith For Christ Publishing is a faith-driven book publisher. We exist to help authors bring Christ-centered books into the world with craft, care, and excellence.

We are a partner, not a printing service. From the first conversation, our aim is to understand your book, your reader, and what you are hoping the book will do — and then to carry the technical and creative weight so you can stay focused on the message. Some authors come to us with a finished manuscript; others come with little more than a conviction and an outline. Both are welcome, and this guide is written for both.

Publishing a book well takes a series of distinct steps, each with its own craft. The pages that follow lay those steps out plainly so there are no surprises — what happens, in what order, what we handle, and what we will need from you.

OUR PROMISE We will never rush your book to market at the cost of its quality, and we will always tell you plainly where a book stands. A book published under the Smith For Christ imprint is one we are proud to put our name beside.

WHAT WE DO

Our services

Smith For Christ Publishing offers the full range of services a book needs between idea and shelf. You can engage us for the whole journey or for a single stage — see the packages near the end of this guide.

- ◆ **Editorial support** — developmental guidance, structural editing, line and copy editing, and proofreading, matched to where your manuscript actually is.
- ◆ **Interior design & formatting** — a clean, readable book interior: front matter, body pages, and back matter, typeset to professional standards.
- ◆ **Cover design** — a complete cover: the front, the back, and the spine, designed as one piece, plus a matching ebook cover.
- ◆ **Ebook production** — conversion to a reflowable ebook file built and checked for Kindle and other readers.
- ◆ **ISBN & metadata** — guidance on ISBNs for each format, plus the title metadata that helps readers find the book.
- ◆ **Print setup & proofing** — print-ready files built to exact specification for paperback and hardcover, with a proofing pass before anything is approved.
- ◆ **Launch support** — practical help getting the book live and into readers' hands, and a sensible plan for the weeks after release.

WHERE YOU ARE

What services do you need?

The right starting point depends on how far along your book already is. Most new authors arrive at one of three points — find yours below, and we will build the engagement around it.

If you have an idea

You have a conviction, a theme, perhaps a rough outline — but not yet a manuscript. We start at the beginning: helping you shape the vision, build the structure, and set a writing plan you can actually keep. From there we move with you through drafting, editing, design, and production.

If you have a draft

You have written the book, or most of it, but it is not yet finished or edited. We pick up with an honest read of where the draft stands, then move through the editing stages into design, production, and launch.

If you have a finished manuscript

Your manuscript is complete and edited. We focus on everything from interior design forward — formatting, cover, ebook, ISBN and metadata, print setup, and launch — and get the book to market.

FIRST CONVERSATION

Key questions we will ask you

Our first conversation is mostly listening. These are the questions that help us understand the book and recommend the right path — it helps to think them over before we talk.

1. What is the book about, in a sentence or two — and what do you hope it does for the reader?
2. Who is the reader? Who did you picture as you wrote, or as you imagined writing?
3. Where is the book right now — an idea, an outline, a partial draft, a finished manuscript?
4. Has any of it been edited yet, and by whom?
5. Which formats do you want — ebook, paperback, hardcover, or some combination?
6. Do you have a timeline or a date in mind, and what is driving it?
7. Do you have cover art, a design direction, or photographs you want used?
8. Do you already own ISBNs, or will you need guidance on getting them?
9. Is this a standalone book, or the first of a series?
10. What does success look like for you a year after the book is out?

THE JOURNEY

How we take a book from idea to shelf

Every book moves through the same sequence of stages. You may not need all of them — but knowing the whole road helps you see where you are and what comes next.

1. Ideation & vision

We clarify what the book is and is not — its message, its promise to the reader, its scope, and its working title. A book with a clear vision is far easier to write and far easier to finish. This stage ends with a one-page concept you can hold onto through the whole project.

2. Structure & architecture

We build the skeleton: the outline, the chapter map, the order of ideas, and the arc that carries a reader from the first page to the last. Getting the architecture right before drafting saves months of rewriting later.

3. Writing & drafting

You write — and we keep you moving with a realistic schedule, milestones, and check-ins. If you would rather speak the book than type it, we will talk through ways to capture it. The goal of this stage is a complete draft, not a perfect one.

4. Editing

A finished book is edited in layers: developmental editing for structure and clarity, line editing for voice and flow, copy editing for correctness and consistency, and a final proofread. We apply the layers your manuscript actually needs, and we are honest about which those are.

5. Interior design & formatting

The manuscript becomes a book interior — title page, copyright page, dedication, table of contents, the body pages, and the back matter — typeset for comfortable reading. The final, formatted interior also sets the page count, which every print decision after this depends on.

6. Cover design — front, back & spine

We design the cover as a single piece. The **front** carries the title, subtitle, and your name over original art. The **spine** carries the title, author, and the Smith For Christ mark. The **back** carries the description, a short author bio and photo if you wish, and the imprint logo. We also produce a matching ebook cover.

7. Ebook production

We convert the finished interior into a reflowable ebook, built and checked so it reads cleanly on Kindle and other devices — proper chapter breaks, a working table of contents, and a cover sized to specification.

8. ISBN & metadata

Each print format needs its own ISBN. We walk you through the choice between owning your ISBNs — which keeps Smith For Christ Publishing as the publisher of record and keeps the book portable — and using a retailer's free ISBN, which costs nothing but ties the book to that retailer. Then we prepare the title metadata that helps readers discover the book.

9. Print setup & proofing

We build the print-ready files to exact specification — the interior and the full cover wrap — for paperback, hardcover, or both. The spine width is driven by the final page count and the paper, so this stage waits until the interior is locked. A proofing pass catches anything before the book is approved for printing.

10. Publishing & distribution

We get the book live: the files uploaded, the listings built, the formats linked, and the book moving into the channels you have chosen so readers can actually buy it.

11. Launch & beyond

A book's first weeks matter. We help you plan a sensible launch — early readers and reviews, the announcement, the people who should hear first — and set you up for the long, quiet work of letting a good book find its readers over time.

WORKING TOGETHER

What we will need from you

The work is genuinely shared. To keep your book moving, here is what we will count on from you.

- ◆ **Your manuscript and materials** — the text in a standard editable document, plus any photographs, art, or quoted material you want included, with permissions where they are needed.
- ◆ **Timely decisions and reviews** — each stage has a point where we need your eyes and your approval before the next stage can begin. Quick, clear feedback keeps the timeline honest.
- ◆ **The back-cover and matter details** — the book description, your author bio, dedication, and the other front- and back-matter pieces. We provide a questionnaire and help you wordsmith every answer.

- ◆ **Your final page count, settled** — print setup cannot finish until the interior is locked, because the spine depends on it. Late interior changes ripple through the cover.
- ◆ **Honest goals** — tell us what you actually want from this book. The plan we build should serve your goals, not a generic template.

A NOTE ON TIMELINES Every book moves at its own pace. The single biggest factor in how long a book takes is how quickly drafts, edits, and approvals come back. We will set a realistic schedule together — and protect its quality if a date and the work ever pull against each other.

INVESTMENT

Service packages

You can engage Smith For Christ Publishing for the whole journey or for a single stage. The packages below are the common starting points; every engagement is shaped to the book in front of us.

PACKAGE	BEST FOR	WHAT IT INCLUDES	INVESTMENT
Manuscript to Market	Authors who want a guided, done-with-you publication from the first idea onward	Editorial support, interior design, full cover (front/back/spine), ebook, ISBN & metadata, paperback + hardcover setup, launch support	<i>Custom quote</i>
Design & Production	Authors who arrive with a finished, edited manuscript	Interior formatting, full cover design, ebook conversion, ISBN & metadata, print-ready file prep for KDP	<i>Custom quote</i>
Cover & Files	Authors who only need the design and production files	Front/back/spine print cover, ebook cover, and print-ready file preparation	<i>Custom quote</i>
À la carte	Targeted help on a single stage	Any individual service — a developmental edit, a cover rebuild, ISBN guidance, an ebook conversion	<i>Per service</i>

PLEASE NOTE Pricing is set per project, because no two books need exactly the same work. After our first conversation we will send a written quote with the scope and the investment laid out clearly — no surprises, and nothing begins without your sign-off.

BEGIN

Your next step

If you are ready to start — or simply ready to ask questions — reach out and we will set up that first conversation. Come with your idea or your manuscript and the answers to the questions on the earlier page, and we will take it from there.

Whatever stage your book is in, it does not have to be polished to begin. It only has to be *started*. That part is yours; the rest, we carry together.

Walk well.

SMITH FOR CHRIST PUBLISHING