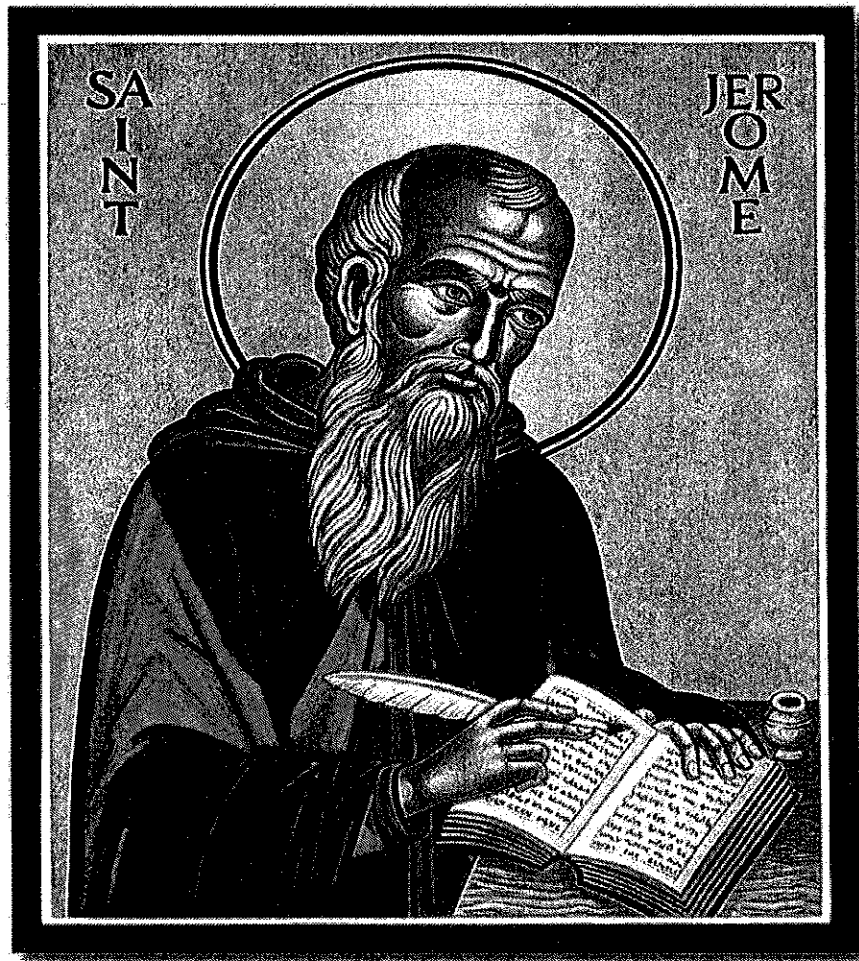


St. Jerome Church

Philadelphia, PA

Religious Education

Growing closer to God together!



2026-2027

Forming Missionary Disciples

Dear Families,

It is a joy for us to welcome you to our Parish Religious Education Program (PREP) at St. Jerome Parish. Together, we are partners in forming your child as Missionary Disciples. Thank you for the trust and confidence you place in us.

Jesus said "let the children come to me." In God's love, you have brought your child to life and have accepted our invitation to assist you in the faith formation of your child. Our PREP program's mission is to hand down the faith and provide experiences to encounter Jesus, but the practice and example of you living out the faith is paramount to making them disciples of Jesus.

We kick off the week together at Sunday Mass on June 14th at 9:30 am. The summer week of intensive instruction begins on June 15th through and including June 19th. It is essential the children attend all the days of instruction during that week from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The year continues with faith sharing at home, Sunday family formation sessions, and family selected devotional and service activities. The new parent orientation meeting is **during the last week of April**. An adult representative from each new family is asked to attend.

No PREP (CCD) can ever replace the central role of parents as “the principal and first educators of their children” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, No 1653*). It is because of your irreplaceable importance in your child’s faith formation that family activities are incorporated in the program. Please read through the entire handbook so that you understand the expectations before enrolling. Our parish staff is very excited about this coming year’s program and hope that it helps all of us grow closer to God and makes disciples of us all.

Please complete the registration form and return it as soon as possible. If you are a returning family and have a new child to add to your family’s registration form or you are new to the program, please complete the New Student Registration Form. Returning families **without** a new student complete the re-registration form.

Thank you for allowing us to accompany your family on your faith journey. If you have any questions, please call me at 267-799-6822 or email dff@stjeromechurchphila.org.

Peace,
Janet Fiatoa
Director of Faith Formation



Introduction

As Catholic parents we are gifted with the responsibility of passing on the faith to our children. Though this is an immense responsibility, it is also the most rewarding. When our children are formed as disciples of Christ (followers of Jesus) who are leading virtuous lives, we know they will be spiritually healthy and morally happy adults who are joyful and content. Our modern world presents many obstacles for parents in achieving this goal but together with your parish catechetical (teaching) staff we can navigate through these challenges and reach our objective.

In a world of contradictory values, we all need support and encouragement in order to grow into mature and responsible Catholic adults. This challenge demands the best of all of us. The Religious Education Program at St. Jerome developed so parents and parish can work together to ensure our children have a solid foundation in the Faith and an authentic friendship with Jesus.

Your Parish Staff solemnly commits:

- To provide regular prayer and worship opportunities for children and their families.
- To offer guidance and support to parents in preparing children for the reception of the sacraments.
- To provide an inclusive systemic approach to teaching the tenets of the Catholic religion to all children according to their abilities, needs, and emotional age level.
- To help parents cultivate a strong Catholic identity in their domestic church (family).

Program Components

- Mass June 14, 2026 at 9:30 am to launch the week (families receive a blessing and catechist commissioned)
- Grade level instruction—June 15-19 (9:00 am to 3:00 pm)
- 4 Family Faith Formation Sessions typically during the Fall, Advent, Lent, and Easter seasons.
- 5 Family Devotional Activities - 2 of the 5 can be done at another location (ex. St. John Neumann's Shrine, St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral, St. Kathrine Drexel's Shrine)
- 5 Family Service Activities
- There will be additional components for families with children preparing to receive a sacrament.

Family Commitment

Each family is asked to faithfully commit to completing all components of the program. The registration form includes a Pledge and Commitment Statement. Families submit a Family Participation Slip for each of the devotional and service activities they complete. Attendance every day of the week of instruction and at the four Family Faith Sundays is a must. Regular Mass attendance on the weekend and Holy Days is expected.

Registration

- Participants must be parishioners of St. Jerome or have permission from their home parish to attend.
- Completed registration form must be submitted as soon as possible along with the registration fee. Arrangements can be made with the Director of Faith Formation to set up a payment plan if necessary. A financial concern **should not** prevent a family from registering.
- Emergency contact must be included when registering.
- Please include an active and monitored email address.
- By registering, parents/guardians agree to fulfill all program components. Failure to participate in all components could prevent re-registration for the following year.

Classroom Management

Our program's goal is to create a learning environment that reflects the virtues of love, holiness, compassion, kindness, gentleness, patience, peace, unity, thankfulness and forgiveness. Our faith environment follows the guidelines of Virtue-Based Restorative Discipline (VBRD), a spiritual approach to disciplining that cultivates virtue and provides a rich foundation for fostering faith both at home and in PREP.

1. We will dedicate ourselves to living the virtues.
2. We will support others in living the virtue.
3. We will commit to constructive thoughts, words, and deeds.
4. When challenges arise, we will find solutions that cultivate virtues for ourselves and for one another.

Student's responsibilities include:

Cooperate with the catechist, in order to maintain a Christian atmosphere of mutual respect.

Participate fully and appropriately in group activities.

Treat others and the property of others with respect.

When challenging situations arises, ask what would Jesus do?

Unacceptable Behaviors:

Disrespect for any adult or student by word or action.

Leaving the premises without permission from the office.

Disruptive or inappropriate behavior or speech.

Defacing books, desks, walls, bathroom, or any property.

Plan for behaviors that do not demonstrate the virtues:

The child, with help from the Catechist or Director, will identify the harm created by the behavior.

The child will be offered an opportunity to make amends.

The child identifies the virtue that helps him/her make better choices.

The parent will be notified about the specifics, if the situation persists.

Catechist Information

The ministry of catechesis is a vocation, an interior call of the Holy Spirit. Commissioned by the Church, catechists participate in a divine calling to teach as Jesus did. St. Jerome's Summer catechists are practicing Catholics who participate fully in the communal worship and life of the church. The Lay staff includes certified school teachers with or working toward their Catechetical Certification, meet the Safe Environment guidelines established by the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and follow the guidelines and curriculum set by the Parish Religious Education office and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

Session Schedule

- Sunday, June 14, 2026 9:30 am Mass
 - Week of June 15, 2026 (all five days of the week)
Drop off at 8:45 am—Pick up at 3:00 pm
 - Arrival—children dropped off at the door of the school.
Dismissal is done by car line in the school yard between the two buildings.
 - Classes begin promptly at 9:00 and exterior doors will be locked.
 - If, due to an unforeseen emergency, your child arrives late, you must call the Director at 267-799-6822 to gain access to the building.
 - Early dismissal is not permitted. In the event of an emergency, call the Director at 267-799-6822.
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Sacrament Preparation

Though some preparation for the reception of a sacrament is done with the children during the summer week of instruction, children will have periodic meetings, throughout the year, with the Director to assess their progress. It is expected that children are receiving a Catholic upbringing in their family which includes regular Mass attendance. Moreover, participating in Mass is a gift for every Catholic and helps a learner of the faith have a clearer understanding of God's love. Parents will be expected to take their children who will be receiving First Communion and Confirmation to Confession before the reception of the Sacrament so that they are properly disposed to receive the graces of the Sacraments.

FIRST RECONCILIATION/FIRST EUCHARIST

Children who have completed two years of religious education prepare for Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Parents are asked to journey with their children as they prepare to receive by reviewing work at home, attending Sunday Mass, and modeling forgiveness and contrition at home. Parents will be invited to attend the Parent Reconciliation meeting and Holy Eucharist meeting. Parent & child will attend a retreat together.

CONFIRMATION

Candidates prepare for Confirmation for two years and receive in the spring of seventh grade. The preparation includes prayer, study, retreat, and service. Candidates will have work to complete during the school year. Parents will be invited to attend the Parent Confirmation meeting in the Fall.

BAPTISM

Arrangements are made with the Director, if an older child desires to be Baptized. Please contact Janet Fiatoa at 267-799-6822 or email dff@stjeromechurchphila.org.

Emergency Closing

In the event classes need to be canceled, families will be notified by email. It is important that we have an email address that is active and monitored regularly.

Illness during Class

Parents/guardians are called to pick up the sick child at the drop off door. If the sickness or injury requires immediate attention, 911 will be called.

Attendance

Daily attendance in the summer week of instruction is essential. Please do not plan doctor's appointments or Friday afternoon travel. Family Faith Sessions are a requirement for children and at least one parent.

Curriculum Guidelines for Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia

Below is a synopsis of the core content guidelines that should be mastered for each grade level. Each year students review the traditional prayers and add new prayers.

Level One: Creation, God the Father and Son, Mary, Mother of God, Sacrament of Baptism, Liturgical Seasons and colors.

Prayers: Sign of the Cross, Our Father, Grace Before Meals, Glory Be

Level Two: God, the Holy Spirit, Trinity, Sacraments of Baptism and Reconciliation, Sunday (The Lord's Day), Parts of the Mass, Preparation to receive Reconciliation & First Eucharist

Prayers: Hail Mary and Act of Contrition

Level Three: The Trinity, Mass, Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist)

Prayers: Prayers of the Mass, Apostle's Creed

CURRICULUM (continued)

Level Four: Ten Commandments, Great Commandment, The Beatitudes (Living a happy life), Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. **Prayers:** The Rosary

Level Five: Seven Sacraments (Healing, Service, and Initiation) Mass (Parts, Vessels, Vestments), Holy Days of Obligation, Liturgical Seasons

Prayers: The Rosary, Nicene Creed

Level Six: The Old Testament, Christ fulfills Old Testament, Types of Prayer

Prayers: Hail Holy Queen, Memorare, Magnificat

Level Seven: Mysteries of our Faith – Trinity, Incarnation, Paschal Mystery, Mission of the Church, New Testament (Gospels), Saints, Social Justice, Confirmation Preparation

Prayers: Lectio Divina, Guided Reflections, Adoration, Daily Examen

The Archdiocesan approved textbook series is Loyola Press' Finding God. Please visit the Loyola Press website to explore wonderful family resources and fun review activities for children.

Evaluations of Progress

An Archdiocesan assessment will be completed at home and submitted at the First Family Faith Session. Families will receive a review for the assessment. Catechist may decide to do periodic assessments to determine student retention.

Assessments will reflect knowledge of the Faith Concepts given to each grade level. Please notify the Religious Education Office of needs your child may have in regards to assessments and/or learning or behavioral disabilities. Accommodations are made for children, so their full potential is recognized.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Families who enroll their children in religious education understand how important it is for a child to have a source of faith in his or her life. Fostering faith requires family and community to work together. Our program could not function without the generosity and support of many people who share their gifts in our program. If you want your child to value his or her religious education, it is important for you to be a part of the program as well. All of our volunteers have completed Archdiocesan Safe Child Training and have all clearances. Please consider filling one of the roles described below, completing the form on the next page and return it with your family's registration form or scan it to dff@stjeromechurchphila.org.

CLASSROOM AIDE: Individuals to assist the teacher with various tasks, i.e. attendance, paperwork, and classroom management. (Adult or teen)

CATECHISTS: All catechists need to be certified teachers. If you are interested in learning more, please contact Janet Fiatoa at 267-799-6822.

OFFICE STAFF: Adults who can help with an orderly arrival and dismissal in the parking lot and monitor the office during classes.

BAKING: We need bakers for various events throughout the year – Family Faith Sessions, Celebrations, Teacher Appreciation during the week of PREP, etc.

Volunteer Form

Name:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Child(ren) names:

Position:

Detach from booklet and return with your family's registration form or scan it to dff@stjeromechurchphila.org.

Thank you very much.

**PLEASE return
registration form as soon as
possible but no later than
March 1, 2026.**
