

PROGRAM OF STUDIES 2026-2027



St. Joseph Junior High

**581 Bridge Street Manchester, NH 03104
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**St. Joseph Junior High School is accredited by the New
England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc.**

Mathematics:

Math 7 (seventh grade):

In this course, we will utilize previous skills learned in elementary school to create new techniques to solve problems. Developmentally, this year will also be an important step in terms of mathematical complexity, as students learn to solve not only word problems but also problems that take more than one step. This class covers simplifying basic algebraic expressions, one-step equations, integer operations, fraction and decimal operations, ratios and proportions, graphing on the coordinate plane, percents, measures of central tendency, angle relationships, and area, volume, and surface area.

Pre-Algebra (seventh or eighth grade):

In this course, we will explore the foundations of Algebra to prepare students for the rigors of a high school-level math course. We will study algebraic, geometric, and other material to bridge the gap between concrete mathematics and the future, which is predominantly abstract. This class covers simplifying algebraic expressions, including exponents, integer and fraction operations, multistep equations, and equations with variables on both sides, solving and graphing multi-step inequalities, ratios and proportions, percents, functions, graphing linear equations, and area, volume, and surface area.

Algebra (eighth grade):

In this course, we will explore fundamental concepts in higher mathematics, including linear algebra, solving quadratic equations, and complex word problems of a new variety that you have never seen. This course is important to your development because this math course makes the final leap into abstract thinking in reference to quantitative reasoning. Since this is a high school level course, it does lay the groundwork for high school math and even college. This class covers word problems of many varieties, basic proof, solving multi-step equations and inequalities, graphing linear equations, solving systems of equations, graphing linear inequalities, polynomial operations, proportions, and factoring quadratics.

Math Lab (seventh and eighth grade)

This course is for students who are identified as benefiting from extra mathematics exposure. Students will do targeted work in multi-step equations, word problems, graphing, negative numbers, and order of operations to reinforce what they are learning in math class. Students will be placed on a year-by-year basis. Math Lab will be taken in lieu of World Language.

English Language Arts:

English Language Arts 7 (seventh grade):

This course is designed to enhance students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Students will explore various literary genres, analyze texts for deeper meaning, and develop their writing style through a variety of assignments and projects. In reading, students will read a variety of texts, including novels, short stories, poetry, and non-fiction articles. They will analyze these texts for themes, characters, and literary devices. In writing, students will practice various forms of writing, including narrative, persuasive, and informational essays. They will also work on grammar, spelling, and organization. In speaking and listening, students will practice effective communication skills through group discussions, presentations, and debates. In vocabulary, students will build their vocabulary through regular vocabulary assignments and quizzes. In research, students will learn how to conduct research, cite sources, and write research papers.

English Language Arts 8 (eighth grade):

This course builds upon the reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills developed in English Language Arts 7. Students will read more challenging texts and be expected to show a higher level of thinking. Assignments include literary analysis essays, creative writing assignments, vocabulary quizzes, research papers, and presentations. By the end of eighth grade, all St. Joseph students should know how to write a five-paragraph essay with a clear thesis statement and supporting details, along with proper citations.

Reading Lab (seventh and eighth grade)

This course is for students who are identified as benefiting from extra English Language Arts exposure. Students will do targeted work in vocabulary, reading comprehension, identification of literary devices, and in developing stronger writing skills. Students will be placed on a year-by-year basis. Reading Lab will be taken in lieu of World Language.

Science:

Life Science (seventh grade):

This course will provide students with a foundation in biology. Topics include cell structure, taxonomy, genetics, and the primary systems of the human body. Evolution, adaptation, and the history of life on Earth are explored, as well as an introduction to chemistry. Students will become familiar with the periodic table, the elements most critical for life processes, and the inextricable link between biology and chemistry.

Earth Science (eighth grade):

This course will provide students with a foundation in Earth science. The primary focus is on the interconnection of Earth's systems. Topics include geology, meteorology, basic chemistry, and the history of life on the planet. The causes, history, and approaches to mitigate the effects of earthquakes, storms, and tsunamis will be explored. Other topics include the energy flow in Earth's systems, radiation, and plate tectonics.

Social Studies:**World Geography (seventh grade)**

In this course, students will go around the world in 180 days. We study all seven continents. Students will examine the history, technologies, cultures, and economies of countries and regions so that they may have a deeper understanding of the world outside New Hampshire and the United States.

U.S. History (eighth grade):

In this course, students will understand and appreciate the legacy of our republic and become responsible citizens in our democracy. Highlights will include the American Revolution, with a special Native American ancestral quilt project. Students come to an understanding of the Constitution and civics, the Civil War, (including an historical soldier dress-up day), becoming a world power and World War I. Students explore the Holocaust and World War II, the spread of communism and the Korea and Vietnam conflicts.

World Language:**French A (first year):**

Prerequisite: None, Grades 7-8. In this course, students will begin their journey to communicate in the French language while gaining knowledge of the many cultures that make up the Francophonie. Students will receive an introduction to vocabulary, phrases, and grammar through sample dialogues, memorization, and classroom activities to reinforce lessons. Culture will also be covered, including songs and dances that are popular in French-speaking countries. This course is typically for seventh-graders, though in some circumstances, eighth-graders will take French A.

French B (second year):

Prerequisite: French A, Grade 8. This is the second half of the French program at St. Joseph. This course is for eighth-graders and will build on the skills learned in French A, including more vocabulary and more advanced grammar. There is also an emphasis on learning cultures, again

including learning songs and dances that are popular in French-speaking countries. French B aims to give students a platform to succeed in French at the high school level.

Spanish A (first year):

Prerequisite: None, Grades 7-8. This full-year course is designed for the student with little or no Spanish language background. The course introduces and reinforces the use of the basic vocabulary and grammatical structures of the language so the student can learn to use these structures in written and oral communication. Students also explore the Catholic and cultural traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

Spanish B (second year):

Prerequisite: Spanish A, Grade 8. This full-year course is designed for the student who has successfully completed Spanish A or demonstrates equivalent proficiency if initially enrolled as an eighth-grade student. The course continues to introduce and reinforce the use of the basic vocabulary and grammatical structures of the language so the student can learn to use these structures in written and oral communication. Students continue to explore the Catholic and cultural traditions of Spanish-speaking countries.

Theology:

Life of Christ (7th grade)

Seventh graders will follow the life of Christ through Scripture, the inspired Word of God, beginning primarily in Matthew's Gospel. They will learn that God sent His only son, Jesus, into a particular place and time through the mystery of the Incarnation. Students will follow salvation history through the covenants, and will learn that Jesus is the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and covenant relationship.

Through a unit of the Theology of the Body, students will explore what it means to be created in the image and likeness of an all-loving God who lives in communion (relationship) as three divine persons. Additionally, students will grow in their own faith journey through exploring different methods of prayer (Lectio Divina, Ignatian Spirituality, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the Rosary) and through the celebration of the Sacraments. Lastly, our monthly saint program will provide students with examples of lives lived with heroic virtue for them to model their lives after, as they strive to live out their call to holiness.

Life of the Church (8th Grade)

Students are immersed in the life of the Church as we engage in the Liturgical Cycle of the Catholic Church, which follows the life of Christ beginning with the Advent season and our joyful expectation of his coming into our world and his Second Coming. Students learn about Christ through the Holy Days, Feast Days and Seasons of our Church. 8th Grade Theology picks up where 7th grade left off. Our promised Messiah, Jesus Christ, brought his Kingdom to earth, remains with us always as he reigns from heaven and continues to save us through his Church, the Magisterium, the Sacraments, and Holy Scripture. Students begin with following the 12

Apostles through the *Acts of the Apostles* in Scripture as they "go out and make disciples of all nations." They encounter tribulations, martyrdom and much more as they preach the Good News in the Roman Empire that has made Christianity illegal. Students follow the early Church Fathers, the Saints, Church martyrs and learn about the issues that led to Ecumenical Church Councils, as Apostolic Succession continues to this day.

Students grow their prayer life through many prayer forms, including Lectio Divina, Prayer Journals and the memorization of traditional Catholic prayers. Students will discover their identity as children of God and their role in living that out through the Catholic Church. Our monthly Virtue/Commandment of the Month program also engages students in living out their faith. The Life of the Church is the story of God, the Holy Spirit. Included in 8th-grade Theology is a unit on Pope St. John Paul II's *Theology of the Body*.

Specials:

Physical Education (seventh and eighth grade):

This course encourages the physical, mental, spiritual, and social growth in each student. Students will demonstrate motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform various physical activities and sports. They will assess and monitor their physical health to meet fitness goals, which will be checked by fitness testing. They will maintain a safe, meaningful, and challenging environment where students are actively involved. They will promote health and wellness, demonstrate the importance of good sportsmanship, teamwork, and practicing the virtues during competition.

Health Curriculum: (seventh and eighth grade)

The Junior High Health program runs throughout the year in conjunction with Physical Education. Junior high health programs in Catholic schools focus on holistic development—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—grounded in Christian anthropology and moral teachings. Curriculum often includes nutrition, fitness, substance abuse prevention, and, crucially, life-affirming, virtue-based education (theology of the body) that respects the dignity of the person. Instruction also includes topics on nutrition, exercise, and personal hygiene to promote active, healthy lifestyles.

Foundations of Art (seventh and eighth grade):

- Students will explore the fundamentals of art and design, gaining hands-on experience with the elements and principles of art while fostering their creativity. Through the "Art and Design Process," they will plan and create their own original artworks. Projects will include Art History and Digital Works, utilizing tools like Google Docs and Google Slides. The final project will be a portfolio and artist statement, presented in a PowerPoint format. Course units cover topics such as Introduction to the Art Room, Medieval Art History, Introduction to the Elements of Art, and Principles of Art.

Band (seventh and eighth grade):

The St. Joseph Stage Band is open to all students who play flute, clarinet, oboe, saxophone, trumpet, trombone, euphonium, French horn, bass guitar, or percussion. It is open to all levels of

musicians, but at least one year of study on your instrument is needed. If you are interested in playing in the band but have not been playing for a year, please see Mr. Jenkins to work out a way you can participate. Rehearsals are going to be during the school day and will not conflict with after-school activities. Band members are required to perform in three concerts throughout the year. This is a pass/fail class, but students are given a grade for conduct and effort.

Choir (seventh and eighth grade):

This full-year course allows students to practice and improve their singing voices. The St. Joseph choir sings at our weekly combined school Mass, at the Holiday Evening of the Arts, the Spring Concert, and at Graduation. Additional singing opportunities might include caroling, sporting events, and other community events.

Academic Support:

Period 9 Study Skills (seventh and eighth grade)

One of our goals at St. Joseph is to help students develop responsibility for their workload and commitments. Each school day ends with a quiet study period from 2:18 to 2:45, during which students may work on homework, projects, or study. Students also have the opportunity to meet with their classroom teachers for additional help with assignments or concepts if needed.

STJ Academic Skills in the Academic Center (seventh and eighth grade)

St. Joseph offers an Academic Skills class, as an alternative to World Language, determined by need, for students who would benefit from extra help with executive functioning and study strategies. An academic coach will work with students on developing executive functioning and study skills, overcoming academic challenges, and homework completion. Through direct instruction and guided practice, students build their skills in organization, planning, time management, goal setting, and effective study habits, promoting independence, accountability, and personal growth.