

## Walking This Path Together

Our new junior high model for 2026-2027 increases engagement, honors your child's unique developmental reality, and creates a clear pathway to lifelong discipleship. By prioritizing monthly gatherings in small groups and relational ministry now, our teens are perfectly prepared to make a seamless transition into High School Youth Ministry when the time comes. Note: *\*This is a drop off program. We encourage you to talk with other parents and coordinate schedules so friends can be in the same groups.*

### **The Power of 15**

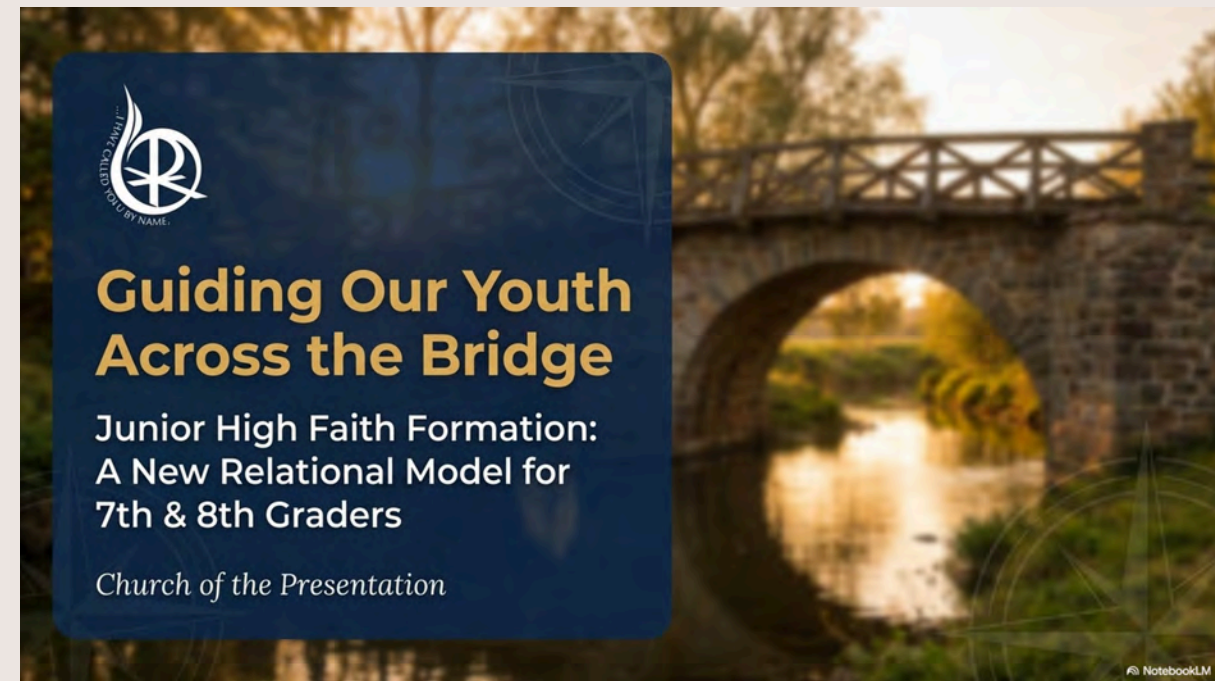
To ensure authentic community and real trust can grow, every single monthly small group is strictly capped at 15 young people. Once a group is filled, it will close.

### **Next Steps for Parents**

- 1. Register on June 15th:** Registration officially opens on June 15th.
- 2 Review the Options:** Review the calendar and scheduling options to discuss the best operational fit for your family's monthly routine.
- 3. Select Your Session:** You will be sent another form later in the summer in which you will select your dedicated monthly session time block. Your teen will stay with this exact peer circle and catechist all year to build deep, enduring trust.

\*As a reminder, we will still host the **JH CONNECT Youth Ministry** which is optional. It is a fun way to meet other kids and to explore your faith in a casual setting. All are welcome!

*If you have any questions, or for more information, please contact Marilou at [mtenazas@churchofpresentation.org](mailto:mtenazas@churchofpresentation.org) or 201-327-1313 ex. 815*



**We are excited to announce that we have created a new Faith Formation program for our 7th and 8th graders beginning in 2026–2027. Here is our purpose:**

#### **Our Mission (What we do):**

Together with parents as the primary educators of faith, our Junior High Faith Formation program accompanies 7th and 8th graders through important years of growth – fostering a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, Scripture, the sacraments, service, and community.

#### **Our Vision (The outcome):**

A welcoming, Christ-centered community where 7th and 8th graders encounter Jesus Christ, deepen their Catholic Christian faith, build authentic friendships, and grow as active, joyful witnesses of God's love in the world.

*Guiding Our Youth Safely Across the Delicate Passage  
From Inherited Belief into Owned Faith*

## The Pre-Adolescent Journey

*“Pre-adolescence is the time in which the image of God received in childhood is refashioned... for this reason, it is important that catechesis should accompany this delicate passage, taking pains to sow within their hearts the seeds of a vision of God that can ripen over time.”* – Directory for Catechesis, §247

### From Childhood Rules to Faithful Friendship

Because abstract thinking is emerging, junior highers can see that moral issues aren't always clear-cut, and they begin actively questioning the world around them. Consequently, their childhood image of God must evolve. Jesus must be presented to them as a faithful friend, a brother, and an authentic anchor who values their unique dreams and walks with them through real-life relationships.



### A Message for Parents: Your Role is Shifting

As your child navigates these bridge years, their relationship with you naturally negotiates a new balance between autonomy and connection. They separate to form *identity*, but they still deeply require you. You have not been replaced. While they look to friends for daily advice and peer norms, they still look to *you* for their *foundational worldview*. Your role is simply shifting beautifully from front-line instructor to *daily witness*.

## Our Relational Ecosystem

Belonging is a profound spiritual need, not a social extra. In early adolescence, relational belonging becomes the very foundation for faith; if a young person does not feel they safely belong, they will struggle to believe. In this program we strive to give our young people this experience of deep belonging and welcome.

To meet this need, our 70-75 minute monthly sessions move into an active, relationship-first rhythm:

1. **GATHER** (Community): Playing games and getting to know each other
2. **PROCLAIM** (Teaching): A short lesson about the person of Jesus
3. **BREAK** (Small Groups): Focused discussion and sharing
4. **SEND** (Prayer & Action): How can they put this lesson into action?

### The Three Circles of Formation

Our program approaches the whole person by intentionally weaving three vital spaces together:

*The Small Group Circle*

*The Domestic Church Circle at home*

*The Parish Circle*

**You are the Domestic Church! And you have an important role in the faith life of your child.**

“The Christian home is the place where children receive the first proclamation of the faith. For this reason, the family home is rightly called ‘the domestic church,’ a community of grace and prayer, a school of human virtues and of Christian charity.” – *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

*We are your partners! We are here for you in this stage of your parenting journey!*