

Information about St Jerome

This week we are using another set of skills for our RE work. First, **skim** the text and highlight all the dates. Next, find the key information about St Jerome that is relevant to that date. Then, write a **summary** sentence(s) for each year mentioned and then plot a timeline of St Jerome and his achievements. **An example for 1 (see below)**

342 CE would be the date and 'St Jerome was born' would be the summary sentence.

Example – could look like this which you can draw either vertically or horizontally.

Your summary goes here

Last week we looked at how Pope Francis showed his faith. St Jerome does it in a different way. **Challenge:** Can you include how St Jerome lived the Spirit of Pentecost? (Spread the word of God like the first disciples).

1. Jerome's Latin name was Eusebius Hieronymus but he was known as Jerome. He was born around 342 CE at Stridon, a town in the Roman province of Dalmatia. Exactly where Stridon was is not known; it could be in modern day Croatia or Slovenia.

<https://www.ancient.eu/article/851/the-extent-of-the-roman-empire/>

2. Jerome's family were wealthy and Jerome was very well educated, first at home and then, as was the custom in wealthy families, in Rome, (359). He was baptised in Rome by Pope Liberius in 366. Jerome probably spoke the Italian, but while in Rome he learned Latin (the official language of the Church) and Greek (the language the Gospels were written in.) Jerome loved literature and reading and read the classics in both Latin and Greek. He also began his own collection of books, copying them out from the originals he read as there was no commercial printing at that time.

3. After a few years in Rome Jerome left to explore the world.

He travelled to:

- ☐ Narbonne and Toulouse (in France)
- ☐ Treves (now Trier in Germany) Where he copied some of the Psalms...
- ☐ Vercilli (Italy)
- ☐ Stridon (Dalmatia)
- ☐ Aquileia, an ancient Roma city in northern Italy, where he stayed for some time, living as a hermit.

4. In the early 370s Jerome left Aquileia for Syria, arriving in Antioch in Syria in 373.

In and around Antioch, Jerome devoted his life to the Bible. He learned Hebrew and Aramaic, the languages of the Old Testament manuscripts. Jerome now spoke five ancient languages.

5. In about 378 Jerome was ordained a Priest by Paulinus, Bishop of Antioch on the condition that he could continue his work of learning about and reading the Bible. It is believed that he never once presided at Mass; his service to the Church was in his devotion to the Bible and its translation.

6. Jerome returned to Rome in 382 where he was immediately commissioned by Pope Damasus to translate the Bible into the formal language of the Church, Latin. During this time he met and became good friends with St Paula, a wealthy widow who would accompany Jerome for the remainder of his life.

Jerome is described as having a fiery temper. His passion and his great intellect meant that some considered him a likely Pope, however, just as many considered him a fraud, one who took money from the very rich and failed to live the self-denial he promoted. He was critical of the Roman clergy and during his life he made many enemies. After Pope Damasus died in 384 an inquiry into Jerome's behaviour was held and he was banished from Rome in 385.

7. In 386 Jerome settled in Bethlehem with St Paula. Together they built two monasteries: one for Paula and her nuns and another for Jerome and his monks.

While the nuns and monks were apart during their work and mealtimes, they came together for prayer. Education and care of the poor were important parts of the life of the communities, but the most important work was continuing the translation of the Bible. Jerome's 'cell' (room – it's actually a cave) is still able to be visited today. St Paula helped Jerome, providing the reference works necessary and, as she could also speak Hebrew, editing Jerome's manuscripts. She and her daughter Eustochium copied out all the translations so they could be shared.

8. Jerome died in Bethlehem in 420 about 20 years after his translation of the Bible was completed. He was buried under Church of the Nativity near St Paula.

9. The big achievement of Jerome's life was his translation of the Bible, out of the ancient languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and common Greek (the Gospels) into the language of the Church, Latin. Jerome's translation is known as the Vulgate (which means 'common speech'). It was used as the basis for translations of the Bible into English, including for the King James version 1,200 years later. There are now several versions of the vulgate, including one promulgated by John Paul II in 1971 (New Testament) and 1979 (old testament) called the Nova Vulgata. In addition to translating the Bible Jerome wrote commentaries explaining his choice of word or phrase form the original language into the Latin.

Jerome's work is now recognised as the earliest form of exegesis, the analysis where someone examines the historical and literary aspects of a passages and proposes what the author might have been trying to say to those they wrote for. Each time we now learn about a place mentioned in a passage, or pay attention to the literary form, or ask about who the author was writing a passage for, we walk in Jerome's footsteps. Jerome's work established the value of reading the Bible thoughtfully so that we can come to understand (interpret) it and what each author was trying to say to their community, and how that message might be powerful for us today.

10. A small order of men and women dedicated to St Jerome still exist. They are called the Jeronimites or the Hierohymitae, they live a closed life as hermit monks and nuns.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hieronimites#Current_communities_of_the_Order_of_Saint_Jerome_in_the_world if you want to find out more.