

Two Dead Men and a Diamond:

Praise Factory Curriculum in a Nutshell

by Connie Dever

The philosophy behind Praise Factory curriculum can well be summed up by two dead men and a diamond.

Dead Man #1: Martin Luther

The first dead man is Martin Luther. Martin Luther spoke of theology not being just dry, heady stuff, made only for the scholar, but the foundation of how men live and die. Look at your life and see if this is not so: what you think about God, His character, His plans for this world and us; and the things of the world to come affect how you respond to life each day.

This is why children care about theology, too-even if they have never realized it. The lens through which they see and understand their lives and the world around them is also tied to their understanding of God and His plans. God made children-like us-to know Him and understand life through His truth and character.

Kids care about theology, but they also care how they learn theology. That comes to the second dead man: John Bunyan.

Dead Man #2: John Bunyan

John Bunyan spoke of the gates to the heart: the eye gate, the ear gate and such. Kids are full of gates--perhaps far more than John Bunyan had in mind! They are people on the move, both inside and out. They learn by doing, interacting, experiencing, as well as listening. All these provide gates to their minds and their heart. Praise Factory incorporates thoughtful questions and projects into everything from games to crafts to songs and sign language to drama and even story-related snacks. These do not act as filler, but as the actual gate to the heart and mind.

Praise Factory seeks to employ the energy of the children to reach their hearts and minds with God's truth through these many activities; and not just truth through only one side, but from many facets. And that comes to the diamond.

The Diamond

The Puritans loved to hold up God's truth and reflect upon it from different perspectives to appreciate the breadth of its beauty and its applications upon our lives, much like holding a diamond up to the light, turning it in your hand and appreciating the beauty of its many facets. In the two preschool curriculum (Teach, Take and Tell and Big Questions and Answers for little people), the children are first shown the basic beauties of the diamond. They see God's truth is many-sided and yet fits together into God's One Big Plan of displaying and glorifying Himself in this world in marvelous and merciful ways. In Praise Factory, the elementary school curriculum, the children are invited to explore the greater intricacies of God's truth. They learn three different truths are presented that reflect upon the same Big Idea concept: one from the Old Testament, the New Testament and church history/missions, in hopes that the children will see different facets of how God has acted faithfully and steadfastly, yet in many different ways throughout the ages.

Two dead men and a diamond! That sums it up!