

Getting Started with Praise Factory Investigators:

A Lot More Details...

for those who want it



A Deeper Look

Looking for more information on Praise Factory Investigators? You've come to the right place! Here's what we are going to cover in this section:

Learning More about the Praise Factory Investigators Curriculum, by Resource

Customizing the Curriculum: Know Yourself to Know What You Need

Customizing the Curriculum: The Build-Your-Own-Curriculum Sandwich Approach

Common Customizations: Examples of How the Curriculum Is Implemented for Various Age Groups and Ministry Situations

Maiden Voyage: Testing Out the Curriculum

The Big Launch: Implementing the Curriculum in Your Situation

Protecting Your Investment: Curriculum Storage Tips

Master Supplies List for all Praise Factory Investigators Games

Learning More about the Praise Factory Investigators, by Resource

The extra-depth information starts here! Follow along in the Core Curriculum, Songbook and Pronto Books for Unit 1 (or another unit) as you read below. **We will be describing curriculum elements in the order they appear in the lesson plan. But first, here's a reminder of how a Praise Factory Investigators session is structured:**

Session Format: Regular Classroom or Large Group/Small Group Format

The PFI curriculum can be used in a regular classroom setting, in which all the children participate in the same activities at the same time; or, in a large group/small group format, in which the children gather together for opening activities and the story, then split up into small groups, each with their own activity, and finally coming back together for each group to make a presentation to the other children (or to the parents) at the end of session. Small groups alternate to a different activity each lesson for variety. Each PFI session follows the same three-part format, as described here:

Session Overview

Each PFI session follows the same three-part format, as described here:

PART 1: GETTING STARTED

A time to welcome the children to the class, introduce the class rules and the "Big Question and Answer" (and related songs) of the theological theme they are studying.

PART 2: DIGGIN' DEEP DOWN

The Bible truth (and related songs) is introduced. The Case Questions are revealed, the Bible story told, then the Case Questions answered. The teacher closes with an ACTS prayer (A prayer including Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication related to the Bible truth they are learning.)

PART 3: TAKING ACTION

The children participate in the response activities chosen for the day and (if desired), presenting what they've learned to each other or to parents at the end of the session. Teachers give out take home sheets as children are dismissed.

Session Length

The resources for each PFI session-- as described in the lesson plan--are designed for a 60 to 90 minutes session. However, they can be easily shaped for you to tailor them to fit a shorter or longer session.

PFI Activities with Descriptions *(in order of use in curriculum)*

PFI Activities, by Section

Ok, now let's look at all of the activities included in each Praise Factory Investigator session, in order of use. You can, of course, choose which ones you want to include (or not include) in your own classroom.

Remember! Get out your resources and follow along!

PART ONE: Getting Started (Welcome and Opening Songs)

A time to welcome the children to the class, introduce the class rules and the Big Question and Answer (and related songs) of the theological theme they are studying.



Welcome to Praise Factory: PFI: Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song

PFI begins with the **Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song**--a detective-sounding song that introduces the idea of digging down in the truths of God's Word for answers to our Big Questions about God. Found on the PFI Unit Songs along with all the other songs. These songs are all downloadable off of the Praise Factory website.



Rules to Help Us Worship God and Love One Another:

The WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song

WoGoLOA stands for Worship God and Love One Another--the two things we hope to help the children do during the PFI session. This song reminds the children of ways they can act to help all worship God and love one another. *(PFI Unit Songs)*



Big Question Under Investigation: Big Question & Answer and Songs

The Big Question and Answer for the unit (theological theme) are introduced. There are two Big Question songs to help the children remember the Big Question and Answer and what it means. The Big Q & A song is an adapted familiar nursery song/folk song which simply states the Big Question under Investigation and its answer. The Big Question Song is a new song especially written to help the children remember not just the Big Question and Answer, but what it means. *(PFI Unit Songs)*









Big Question Bible Verse: Bible Verse and Song

Each unit has a Bible verse that is central to the theological theme. This verse has been set to music to help the children remember it. *(PFI Unit Songs)*

PFI Activities with Descriptions *(in order of use in curriculum)*

PART TWO: Digging Deep Down (Key Bible Truth Concepts and Story)

With the unit's theological theme introduced, the session now turns to digging deeper down into the theological theme by looking at one particular aspect (Bible Truth) of the theme.

	<p>Bible Truth: Each unit has from three to fourteen Bible Truths. Each Bible truth is studied for three lessons. There are 104 Bible Truths in the whole curriculum.</p>
	<p>Bible Truth Hymn: One or more verses of a hymn that tie into the Bible Truth can be introduced at this point in the session. It also is offered in Part Three as a response activity with a complete set of discussion questions, sign language and a song game. <i>(PFI Unit Songs)</i></p>
	<p>Bible Truth Bible Verse: Each Bible Truth has a Bible verse that is central to the concept. This verse has been set to music to help the children remember it. The song can be introduced now, but it also offered in Part Three as a response activity with a complete set of discussion questions, sign language and a song game. <i>(PFI Unit Songs)</i></p>
	<p>Extra Bible Truth Bible Verse Song: Sometimes an extra Bible verse song is suggested. The words for this song are included in the response activities along with sign language. It can be used here or as a response activity. <i>(PFI Unit Songs)</i></p>
	<p>Bible Truth Story: (Old Testament, New Testament, or Story of the Saints) There is an Old Testament, New Testament and Story of the Saints story for each Bible Truth. The Old Testament or the New Testament story leads, followed by the Story of the Saints, then ending with the story from the other Testament. In keeping with the detective feel of PFI, each story is called a case and is introduced with two questions for the children to solve as they listen to the story. After the story is read, the teacher asks the children again and together they solve the case.</p>
	<p>Part Two: Digging Deep Down ends with prayer and dismissal to response activities.</p>

PFI Activities with Descriptions *(in order of use in curriculum)*

PART THREE: Taking Action (Response Activities to Choose from)

The children participate in the response activities chosen for the lesson; and (if desired), present what they've learned to each other or to parents at the end of the session. There are eleven different activities from which to choose. How many a teacher uses depends upon how much time you have and on whether you choose for everyone to do the same activities or whether you will split up into small groups and each do a different activity. A description of each activity follows.



Snack (and Discussion Planner):

A snack that includes food mentioned in the story or looks like something from the story, along with a description of how it ties into the story. Always feel free to modify the snack, being sensitive to food allergies. The snack sheet also includes a discussion planner to write down the questions you want to ask the children as they enjoy their snack. A question about the snack is included as the first discussion question.



ACTS Prayer:

In Praise Factory, the children learn the "ACTS" format of prayer. "A" is for Adoration (Praising God for who He is); "C" is for Confession (Saying sorry to God and turning from our sins); "T" is for Thanksgiving (Thanking God for His provisions); and, "S" is for Supplication (Asking God to supply our specific needs). Try to at least weave the Big Idea/Scripture Verse into A, C, T, or S, if not all four. Suggested ACTS applications for each Bible Truth are included on the ACTS prayer sheet.

Younger children can usually think up at least a related "Adoration" and a "Thanksgiving" related to the Bible Truth, while older children can usually think up a connection to all four. This is a wonderful way for them to expand their understanding of who God is, who we are as sinners, what we can thank God for and what we should ask of Him. It is also of great benefit to families who can easily apply this format to their own family devotions and prayer times.



Story Review and Game:

This activity includes discussion questions to understand and a game to reinforce the story.

End of session presentation option: Have children read some of their discussion questions for the other children to answer.









Bible Truth Review and Game:

This activity includes discussion questions to understand and a game to reinforce the Bible Truth.

End of session presentation option: Have children read some of their discussion questions for the other children to answer.



PFI Activities with Descriptions *(in order of use in curriculum)*

	<p>Bible Truth Hymn: This activity is one or more verses from a hymn which relates to the Bible Truth being learned. It includes discussion question for understanding the hymn, sign language of key words, and a song game that can be used with the song and the sign language. The audio and sheet music is available for download on the Praise Factory website.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have children sing and sign their song and teach it to the other children.</p>
	<p>Bible Verse Review and Game: This activity includes discussion questions to understand and a game to reinforce the Bible Verse.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have children read some of their discussion questions for the other children to answer.</p>
	<p>Bible Verse Song: Every PFI Bible verse has been set to music. This song can be used along with the Bible Verse Review discussion questions, listed in the previous activity. Sign language of key words and a song game that can be used with the song and the sign language are also included. The audio and sheet music is also available on the website for download.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have children sing and sign their song and teach it to the other children.</p>
	<p>Case RePlay, Jr: Drama Activity for Youngest Children (children do same story actions together) This is a simpler drama activity in which the teacher leads all the children in doing the same actions as she retells the story.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have the children act out the story for the others to watch.</p>
	<p>Case RePlay, Sr: Drama Activity for Most Children (children re-tell story with individual parts) This is a more involved drama activity in which each child acts out a particular role as the teacher retells the story.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have the children act out the story for the others to watch.</p>
	<p>Craft: This craft activity includes discussion questions to help the children understand the significance of what they are making.</p> <p><i>End of session presentation option:</i> Have children read some of their discussion questions for the other children to answer.</p>

PFI Activities with Descriptions *(in order of use in curriculum)*



VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) Prayer Time, Coloring Sheets and Game
VIPP stands for Very Important Prayer Person. The VIPP Group learns about a VIPP—a Very Important Prayer Person—from your church. This activity really has nothing to do with the Bible Truth or the story. Instead, it is an opportunity to help the children know more about and pray for church leaders and missionaries. VIPPs should include elders, deacons, supported workers, and church staff. However, your church may not have many VIPPs of this kind. Feel free to use special volunteers (such as Sunday School teachers or the pianist) and other regular church members as VIPPs. It never hurts for children to get to know everyone in their church and pray for them! There is a fill-in-the-blank questionnaire that you can use to get information about the VIPP to share with the children. Or, you also can invite the VIPP to the class. There is a game and a set of coloring sheets (called Clue Cards) that you can use to help the children remember what they've learned about the VIPP. This activity ends with praying for the VIPP. The coloring sheets are set up as a take-home activity that they can use to teach and pray with their parents for the VIPP.

End of session presentation option: Have children tell about the VIPP and lead the class in praying for him (kids or the teacher can pray, as desired.)




TAKING IT HOME: The PFI Pronto




A take home booklet, called the PFI Pronto, is available for each lesson. It includes the key concepts, lyrics and track numbers for the songs, the story, and a few review questions is available online with the Praise Factory resources.

Customizing the Curriculum: Know Yourself to Know What You Need

A good, curriculum custom-fit starts with thinking carefully about those involved. Here are six, key factors to consider. (The Children's Ministry Questionnaire will guide you through these issues in much greater depth.)

 <p>Your Children's Abilities</p>	 <p>Your Teachers' Agility</p>	 <p>Your Time Capacity</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + readers/pre-readers? + age groupings in the same class + attention span + exposure to the gospel? + etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + teaching experience + experience with children + classroom experience + their own spiritual maturity + etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Thirty minutes or one hour? + Once a week/five days a week? + A camp session/a V.B.S + School year/a full year? + etc.






Who are we?

What do we need?

What can we do?

What should we do?

 <p>Your Teaching Locality</p>	 <p>Your Ministry Priorities</p>	 <p>Your Practicalities</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Home, church or school? + Urban, suburban or rural? + Storage space available? + Classroom size? + etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Who gives you spiritual oversight? + What do they want you to teach? + Are they willing to look over the curriculum/help find and screen teachers? + etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + What is your budget? + Who will prepare the curriculum? + How much time do they have? + Is there anyone willing/able to oversee the start up and implementation of a new curriculum?

Customizing the Curriculum: Build-Your-Own-Curriculum Sandwich



You've thought about who you are, what you need, what you can do and what you can should do. Now it's time to customize your own curriculum version. We like to think of this process as like creating your favorite sandwich: start with what you know has to be there, then add in extras until you get just what you want. You might be a meat-only sandwich, needing only the very basics of the curriculum. Or, you want "the works"-the whole curriculum, just as it is written. Many people use something in between. The important thing is to keep in mind the specifics of your teachers, your children, your time constraints and your ministry situation, and build your own version of Praise Factory Investigators that works best for you. Bon appetit!

1. Start with the Meat: Core Curriculum



Resources:

- Big Question and Answer
- Bible Truth
- Bible Verse
- Bible Story

These are the backbone of biblical truth for the curriculum. You really only have to have this. Everything else is extra!

2. Choose Your Cheese: Response Activities



Resources:

- Bible Truth Game
- Bible Verse Game
- Bible Story Review Game
- Hymn and Bible Verse Songs
- Drama Activities
- Craft
- VIPP Game and Coloring Sheets
- Snack
- ACTS Prayer Activity

Response activities are second in importance only to the "meat." They are enjoyable, hands-on activities that help the children learn and retain the "meat" of biblical truths.

3. Throw on the Veggies: Zesty Extras



Resources:

- Praise Factory Investigators Theme Song
- WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song
- ACTS Prayer Song

These are few extras that add zest to the curriculum. The WoGoLOA Classroom Rules Song is especially helpful for reminding the children of expected classroom behavior in a fun way.

4. Add Some Extra, Sticky Yum

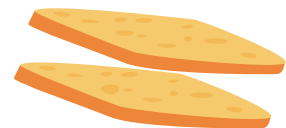


Resources:

- End of Class Presentations listed with materials for each Response Activity

Each of the Response Activities suggests how the children can make a presentation to the other children (or to their parents) of what they've learned through their activity time. While not necessary, we have found the children love these presentations (especially the drama activity one) while at the same time, receive one last review of key concepts before departing for home. That's a win, win situation.

5. Choose Your Bread: Classroom Format



Resources:

- Response Activities

The Praise Factory Investigators in very flexible. Some like to have each grade go through the curriculum separately, while others choose to use a large group assembly/small group break-out session format, which incorporates all the children.

7. Prepare It for Carry Out Take Home Resources



Resources:

- PFI Prontos for each lesson

Take home resources are a great way for parents to know what their children are learning and to provide them with a tool for further discussion.

Common Customizations: Age Groups

Having considered these questions, put this information to work to build your version of the curriculum.

Here are some ways we have customized the curriculum or seen it customized by others:

CUSTOMIZE BY: Age Group	
2-4 year olds	Do not use this curriculum with this age group. Deep Down Detectives offers many of the same Bible Truths as Praise Factory Investigators, in a much more suitable way for these little pre-schoolers.
pre-K 5 year olds	Generally, I still would not use this curriculum with this age group. I would much prefer Deep Down Detectives. However, if you are a small ministry situation and have mainly elementary school age children and a couple pre-K 5's, then you could use it. Have extra helpers on hand to help these children with the activities that require more focus or developmental ability than is typical of these children. And/or, save simple tasks that are part of the activities (such as fetching the balls or holding the limbo stick, or helping to serve the snack, etc. that will engage these children while the other, older children are participating more fully in the actual activity.
Kindergarten 5-6 year olds	Kindergarteners can really do just fine being lumped in with the pre-K 5's and taking part in Deep Down Detectives; or, being lumped in with the older elementary school kids and taking part in Praise Factory Investigators. It all depends on where you want to put them. And THAT depends a lot on your age distribution. For us at CHBC, the Kindergarteners are included in Praise Factory Investigators with the other elementary school age children. We are sensitive to the fact that most of these children cannot read yet and employ the tips included in the curriculum for helping pre-readers as they participate in various activities that are most suited for readers.
1st Graders	This is a great curriculum for first graders, although some still may not be strong readers or even readers at all. We encourage our teachers to still be sensitive to this fact and employ the tips included in the curriculum for helping pre-readers as they participate in various activities that are most suited for readers.
2nd-5th grade	These kids form the "sweet spot" of this curriculum. They are strong readers and are easily able to engage in all the activities as written.
Middle School	While the games may be a bit simple for this age group, the stories are still very engaging. Simply modify/change the games and you are good to go!

Common Customizations: Teaching Situations

CUSTOMIZE BY: Teaching Situation	How to Structure the Curriculum
Single Session One, 60-90 minute session on a lesson, in one day, once a week examples: Sunday School, Church Hour, Mid-week programs	As written. If you do not really have 60 minutes of actual teaching time, you will need to choose what not to use. Choose what you think is most important to have in your session, then continue to add in elements until you have filled up your time budget.
Double Session Two 60-90 minute sessions, on the same lesson, in one day, once a week examples: Sunday School PLUS Church Hour OR, Sunday Morning PLUS Sunday Evening OR, Sunday Morning PLUS Wednesday Evening	First session of the Double: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum as written • Choose a couple activities from: Hymn, Bible Verse Song/Game, Bible Truth Game, Craft • (could use snack and ACTS prayer here) Second session of the Double: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Big Question, Bible Truth and Bible Verse • Sing songs • Review Story using the Drama and the Story Review Game • Introduce the VIPP (Very Important Prayer Person) and pray • Choose another activity from: VIPP Coloring Sheet/Game; Bible Verse Game • (could use snack here)
After School Care Schools/ Bible Class	<p>Schools vary in how many days they teach Bible. Some will have a daily Bible class. Others, will have it only certain days.</p> <p>Here's a suggestion for one Bible Truth a week, Bible class</p> <p>Typically, each session you will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reminding the children of the Big Question, Bible Truth and Bible verse; • Telling them the Bible story (or asking them questions to review it); • Singing the songs; and, • Following up with a response activity. <p>There are three stories per Bible Truth: Use Monday and Tuesday to present the first of the two Bible stories and choose response activities for each day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday and Thursday: present the other Bible story and choose response activities • Friday: present the Church History/Missions Story (Story of the Saints) and choose response activities.
Camps, VBS and Short-term Missions Trips	<p>Since camps, VBS and mission trips usually involve both preschoolers and elementary school children, you will do best use two or three of the Praise Factory family of curriculum to meet everyone's needs. Appendix L provides suggested schedules for these ministry situations. Appendix M lines up the Bible Truths across all three curriculums so you can coordinate the truths you are teaching across all of the age groups.</p>

Maiden Voyage: Testing Out the Curriculum

Making a Test Run

At last it's time to try out the curriculum on your kids. As mentioned before, our favorite way to try out a new curriculum is with a smaller group of children (of the more-likely to be well-behaved variety), when there is an opportunity to do so. This gives the curriculum its best test-run. Ideally, you want to give any curriculum a few sessions trial period. New curriculum is new curriculum. Teachers will be getting used to it as will the kids.

As you introduce the curriculum to your children, also remember that everything will be new to them at first. New ideas and structures use up a lot more attention and energy than when they are familiar and routine...and it takes time for them to become routine. Be patient! Expect this!

With this in mind, you may want to dive in the deep end and introduce the whole curriculum to the children at once. Or, you may take the gradual approach, deciding on lesson elements to introduce gradually, then adding more in as you go. Think about the routine the children are used to in your classroom already. What works? What doesn't work? Slot Praise Factory Investigators resources into the parts of your current framework that work best with your children, then gradually build from there.

For example, you might want to start with just the Bible story and Bible verse the first lesson, adding other elements the second lesson. Also, realize that the children will be doing a lot more watching and a lot less direct participation at first as they are learning the routine.

Give yourself and the children a few lessons to settle into the routine before deciding what is the right amount of activities to include each week. As the children get used to the lesson routine, you will find the children have more attention and energy to devote to the learning activities.

Evaluate and Adjust It

As you test-run the curriculum, you will probably want to evaluate and make changes. Reflect on how the teaching session goes, after each of your test runs and make any necessary changes. As you get closer to a good fit, add in more conditions like the typical classroom--such as your crazier kids, etc. See how the curriculum works with these new elements. Make more changes until you feel good about your fit.

The Real Launch: Implementing the Curriculum in Your Situation

Sign Post It	Once you have figured out what works best for your children and those teaching the curriculum, put sign posts in place in the classroom. If you found that certain activities work better in a certain part of the room (such as drama, games or craft time), put up a sign on the wall near that area indicating that. Or, put down a rug where you want to have story time.
Choose and Train Your Load-Bearers	<p>If the curriculum follows a set time schedule, display the schedule on the wall in large print so a teacher can with just a glance know what he/she should be doing.</p> <p>If particular resources are used in the curriculum, store these and signpost these, too, so that even the newest teacher can easily find what he/she needs.</p> <p>Once you feel that you have adjusted the curriculum to a good fit for teacher and children, begin to teach others how to teach it, too. Ideally, this starts as a mentoring experience between you and another teacher (preferably two) who are willing to learn the curriculum inside and out until they can teach it well themselves and later train others in it, too. I call these teachers, "load-bearers," because they will share the weight of implementing the new curriculum.</p> <p>Have your load-bearers first come observe you as you teach the curriculum. Have them read any introductory materials as well as the curriculum lesson plan you will be teaching from before they observe. After class, de-brief with them about the session. Have them continue to come for a number of session, gradually taking part more and more each session, until they can teach the curriculum themselves.</p>
Bring the Parents Up to Speed	Make sure to include parents in your launch! Communicate with them about the change in curriculum that is happening. Hold a meeting. Send out an email. Hand out the Praise Factory Investigators flyer (found on pp.151-152). Ask them to parents. Invite their feedback. Make them your partners, after all, it is them and their kids you hope to help.
Add Others	With your load-bearers in place and confident in the curriculum, you can now begin to look for more potential teachers to be trained. Follow the same steps as you did with the load-bearers: have them read any introductory materials and the lesson plan before they observe a session. De-brief with them afterwards and gradually add them into the teaching experience.
Want to See More?	<p>Three times a year (the third Saturday/Sunday of March, May and September), we hold a free lunch, learn-and-look workshop and observation time here at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.</p> <p>On the Saturday, we gather for lunch and talk philosophy, child protection policy, encouraging parents, dealing with discipline issues, etc. and, of course, curriculum. After finishing up our group session, we are happy to talk to individual churches about their particular situations.</p> <p>Then, on Sunday, we offer an opportunity to see Praise Factory Investigators and the other Praise Factory curriculum in action in our classes. This can be a great way to help others understand and get excited about the curriculum.</p> <p>The registration form for these workshops can be found on the Praise Factory website.</p>

Protect Your Investment: Tips on Storing the Curriculum for Future Use

This is a curriculum that keeps on giving, year after year. Everything is re-used. If you do a good job storing the curriculum it will serve your church well and at little cost for many years. We find magazine storage files are a great way to store the curriculum.

